



BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

DECEMBER 6, 2014 • News Journal of North Carolina Baptists • VOLUME 180 NO. 25 • BRnow.org

A graphic with a background of blue and orange triangles. In the center, a blue banner reads "CAMPUS MINISTRIES MANEUVER OBSTACLES". Below it, an orange triangle contains the text "Non-discrimination laws & how Christians can respond". The graphic is flanked by two sets of blue chevrons pointing towards the center. Small inset images show a group of people, hands raised in prayer, and a person reading a book.

“For many years now, colleges and universities have required student organizations to use non-discrimination clauses in their constitutions,” said Tom Knight, collegiate consultant of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC).

Despite discrimination incidents across the nation, North Carolina churches and Christian organizations continue to minister to its university campuses.

Campus clubs, organizations, fraternities, sports groups, and others are called recognized student organizations (RSOs). They are led, governed and directed by college students. Universities request that RSOs attract the larger

student body without duplicating other RSOs on campus. Many colleges also desire for RSOs to affirm and reiterate the school’s educational mission.

Most groups wishing to become RSOs have to apply to a university’s leadership office to gain official RSO status. “From the university’s perspective, the organization is not led by a pastor or campus ministry or even an off-campus volunteer; it is led by a group of students,” said Jonathan Yarboro, leader and consultant of BSC’s collegiate partnerships.

Depending on the school, Knight said,

some want to interpret its non-discrimination clauses more broadly while others in a narrower sense. The Hastings Law School of California is an example of the broader perspective. Their clause states that all students can take leadership positions in a student group even if they are opposed to the student group’s mission or beliefs.

The Christian Legal Society (CLS) chapter at Hastings did not comply with the non-discrimination policy of the school, and thus, their application to gain RSO status was rejected on the grounds

that the group’s bylaws did not comply with the school’s open-access policy.

CLS didn’t want individuals who (1) did not adhere to its system of beliefs or (2) those who were in an unbiblical sexual relationship to lead Bible studies or hold office within CLS.

CLS filed a suit alleging that Hastings’ refusal to grant the group RSO status violated its First and Fourteenth Amendment rights. The case went to the United States Supreme Court – *Christian Legal Society vs. Martinez* – but CLS lost five-to-four.

At California State University (CSU) this past summer, the school officially

[See Campus page 7](#)

N.C. church perseveres on journey to embrace people group

By **PAIGE TURNER** | International Mission Board

They sit on the floor in a “T” people fishing village home with their eyes fixed on the pastor from North Carolina. The men and women listen as he speaks, especially the young men. The pastor’s gaze rests on them and he knows he has their attention – he sees it in their eyes.

The sky threatens, but rain no longer pounds on the

bamboo roof as it did when the pastor began sharing. The group of three or four is now nearly 20 as people from the village climb the bamboo ladder upstairs and crowd in to listen. The pastor continues on with the creation story. “Have you ever thought about where this beautiful place came from?” Mark Harrison asks the group surrounded by lush, green mountains and a sandy shore. “This all came from the Word of the Living God. No one created the Living God.”

Harrison, missions pastor at Old Town Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, finishes the story and then asks how many had never heard the story before he came. Nearly every hand in the room goes up.

Harrison leads Old Town teams to “T people” (as the church identifies the people group) villages several times a year, ever since they became involved with the International Mission Board’s (IMB) Embrace initiative

[See Journey page 6](#)

Advent and our mission

I stared in disbelief at the online advertisement for Starbucks products. As part of the famous coffee company's "holiday" promotion they invited me to purchase an official Starbucks® 2014 Advent calendar that tracks the 25 days leading up to Christmas day.

If you've paid any attention to the "war on Christmas" in recent years, and if you've noticed how quickly most large companies act to distance themselves from any semblance of Christianity, perhaps you understand my amazement. Starbucks is not known for embracing Christian beliefs. Yet, here they are promoting the first coming of Jesus to the world. Kudos to Starbucks!

Maybe some people see Advent as a fairly neutral "holiday" celebration. Some celebrate it merely from tradition and are clueless as to its rich meaning. But we know better.

The word "advent" means "coming." The traditional celebration of Advent points to the first coming of Jesus to this world, focusing on the anticipation for Messiah in the heart of every ancient Jewish worshiper and the fulfillment of God's Old Testament promise of a Messiah for His people.

For the Christian, this is a time to keep the focus on Jesus daily in the middle of a season that keeps drawing our attention to material items. As we relive the unbridled anticipation of the Jews, the value of the Savior's birth comes alive. But we know that His first birth is not the end of the story. Advent reminds us that He is coming again!

I did not grow up in church that recognized the Advent season. Churches with a more liturgical leaning have typically given attention to this annual celebration.

But as a young pastor I received a gift from an International Mission Board (IMB) missionary couple serving in Germany. I was the pastor of their home church at the time. So Warner and Roberta Bumgardner sent a very decorative,

German Advent calendar to our family in 1979. I had heard of Advent but always brushed it aside as something only liturgical churches did. I learned it is a very popular tradition in Germany, the homeland of my family name.

I began a multi-year investigation into the history of the Advent tradition. The Internet was not available in those days, so basic, old-fashioned footwork was my method of research. The more I studied, the more I wondered why evangelicals were missing out on all of the rich meaning and pure joy of advent celebrations.

Pam and I began a tradition of celebrating Advent in our home with our son. For each day of the four-week Advent season, we met every evening for about 15 minutes. Each evening a new candle was lit in the long advent log on the mantle. As we came closer to Christmas day, the light in the room grew brighter.

From literature I found in my research, we developed short devotionals that focused on the scriptural prophecies leading to the day Emmanuel, the Light of the world, was born in Bethlehem.

This daily family time – at the busiest season of the year – developed into our most treasured aspect of the Christmas season.

We read the scriptures, we sang, we prayed, we lit candles and we enjoyed a daily family-building experience. Our

hearts shifted from the secular to the spiritual.

That shift had an effect on our gifts to international missions. Each day of Advent as we prayed for people in our community, we also prayed for specific IMB missionaries by name. Sometimes we wrote them a note of encouragement. But we also prayed for ourselves.

We asked God to allow us to give more generously to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO). Our resources were small, but we thought "Why not ask God to guide the process of redirecting our priorities?" Why could we not give as much to international missions as we were giving to ourselves?

The daily Advent devotion slowly refocused our priorities until we were asking God, "Will you provide for us to give \$1,000 to LMCO this year?" That was so far beyond our resources! There was no way that was going to happen on this pastor's salary!

Would it surprise you to learn that God provided the amount we asked? Our young son was able to see God's provision while the Father was shaping all of our hearts for the unreached of His world. It is impossible to describe how our family Advent celebration shaped every aspect of our lives forever, not the least of which is our giving to LMCO.

We shared our practices with others in the church, and many of them implemented it in their Christmas celebrations. The church began weaving the celebration of Advent into worship services.

People came to Sunday School classes every week with exciting reports of how their family was blessed through daily Advent celebrations in their homes.

Year-by-year, the movement grew. The church's MOPS (Mothers Of Preschoolers) ministry published a daily Advent family devotional guide. Our Lottie Moon offerings grew. Our attention was drawn to the birth of Jesus Christ.

In every church I served in the last 35 years, hundreds of families have personalized Advent celebrations in their homes.

The impact has been impressive. Our discovery of this very old Christmas tradition was remarkable. And maybe some of us have helped our children see the difference between the way the secular world celebrates Christmas and the way believers celebrate Christmas.

I believe this is one way we can respond to Milton Hollifield's plea to disciple our families. (See "Disciple your family, Hollifield says," page 4.)

I also believe a family Advent celebration can make a big difference in our Great Commission assignment. Please read IMB President David Platt's appeal on page 16 in the Nov. 22 edition of the *Biblical Recorder*. Pray for our missionaries and pray that your family will give your largest gift to LMCO this year.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Please share your Advent experiences with us. To learn more on how to make the most of the true meaning of Christmas, visit our Celebrating Advent page at BRnow.org under "Resources.") **BR**



K. ALLAN BLUME
Editor



BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

(ISSN 0279-8182)

News Journal of the Baptist State Convention
of North Carolina
Founded 1833 by Thomas Meredith

Volume 180 No. 25
(919) 847-2127
Fax (919) 469-1674
BRnow.org

K. Allan Blume, Editor/President
editor@brnow.org

Michael McEwen, Content Editor
michael@brnow.org

Dianna L. Cagle, Production Editor
dianna@brnow.org

Alison McKinney
Business and
Advertising Manager
(919) 459-5691
alison@brnow.org

Emily Blake
Editorial Aide

Erin Gandy
Circulation Manager
(919) 459-5693
erin@brnow.org

Kelly Hunter
Graphic Designer

Board of Directors

Chris Byrne, chair; Nathan Finn, vice chair; Cindi Stevens, secretary; Jo Andrews; Kevin Atchley; Kelli Benfield; Kevin Clubb; Gene Fowler; Robert Ivey; Chester Jones; Lee Pigg; Michael Smith; Gerald Stephens; Peggy Weiss; and Ed Yount

Subscriptions

- Individual subscriptions, \$15.99 (one year); \$27.99 (two years); \$39.99 (three years)
- Bulk Plan (10+) \$11.50
- Family Plan, \$12.50
- Club Plan, \$13.50
- Single copies, .60 cents each

Payable in advance. N.C. sales tax is included. Digital rates: \$5.99 (one year); \$10.99 (two years); \$15.99 (three years).

Publication

Published biweekly on Saturdays by *Biblical Recorder* Inc., 205 Convention Drive, Cary, NC 27511, as authorized by the Baptist State Convention in annual session at Winston-Salem, November 21-23, 1939.

Periodicals postage paid at Raleigh, NC 27676.

Postmaster

Send address changes to *Biblical Recorder* Inc., P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512-1185.

N.C. composer releases new Christmas album

By K. ALLAN BLUME | BR Editor

Jan Mulder is a world renowned composer, pianist and recording artist. He's also a North Carolina Baptist. After recording more than 260 albums over a 20-year period, Mulder just released a Christmas album that includes his talented friend, Andrea Bocelli, with the London Symphony Orchestra.

He was born into a famous Dutch family of pastors, musicians and teachers. "When I was 17 years old, I went to the Conservatory in the Netherlands and received a classical education in music. I graduated in 1992," Mulder said.

Several record producers asked Mulder to play the piano, compose and arrange music, or conduct orchestras and choirs for their CD productions in Europe. "Last year I decided to focus more exclusively on composing and arranging instrumental Christian music, because there are not enough people working in that area on a professional level," he said. "God gave me a musical talent, and I would like to serve Him by using that talent for creating Christian-based music. I

simply pray: Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of Thy love."

In 2013 he recorded "Love Divine," an album that features many favorite hymns. It received a 2014 GMA Dove Award nomination for Best Instrumental Album of the Year. It rocketed to gold status, but has now reached double-platinum. "It is a very blessed project," Mulder said. "I very much like traditional hymns like

Abide with Me, Amazing Grace, As the Deer Pants for the Water, Great is Thy Faithfulness and Thine Be the Glory."

He said it is very important to honor

God with music. "It's not about me and what I can do, but it's about praising God. Actually, every minute that we live we have to think about [God's greatness] and give Him the glory."

The overwhelming response to his Love Divine album immediately prompted him to record a second Love Divine album. "But then I thought, my last Christmas album was 12 years ago, so it was time to do another Christmas album," Mulder added. "So for many weeks I thought about the best tunes to include. I like the traditional Christmas

carols like *Silent Night, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, O Holy Night* and many others. So I composed music for this album and arranged the music for piano and orchestra."

With the simple title, "Christmas," the album was released October 1, 2014. Mulder conducted the London Symphony Orchestra at Lyndhurst Hall in London and played the solo piano part simultaneously for the recording. It features traditional Christmas carols such as, *O Holy Night, O Come All Ye Faithful, Silent Night* and *Angels We Have Heard On High*. In addition to famous traditional carols, he composed new music for "Christmas:" *The Birthday of a King, Prince of Peace* and *Mary's Lullaby*.

The Dutch musician has recorded many albums with Christian artists. But the "Christmas" project includes guest artist Andrea Bocelli, arguably the most popular musician in the world. Bocelli sings *A Choir of a Thousand Angels*.

Mulder said, "Doing the album with Bocelli was kind of an experiment. But people like it very much because Bocelli is a very famous singer, and he is also a Christian."

He was born into a very warm Christian family in Italy. At a young age he learned to play many instruments. He played the organ at church, which he liked very much, so he did that for many years. He is involved in supporting pro-life organizations, and I think he is a wonderful Christian. I've known him for many years."

The journey from the Netherlands to his current home in Hendersonville, N.C., was a circuitous route for Mulder and his family.

His first concert tour of the United States and Canada was in 1992. The Mulders liked what they saw and the people they met. Subsequent tours led them to consider a move. In 2007 he moved his wife and three sons to Holland, Mich., near Grand Rapids.

He said, "They are Dutch people [in the town], but it was very cold, so after two years we moved to Florida. We lived close to Orlando for two years, and it was too hot. So we bought a home in Hendersonville, N.C. three years ago. It's a beautiful state, and we like the people here."

The Mulders were members of Baptist churches in the Netherlands, so they began looking for a Baptist church near their new home.



Jan Mulder, known worldwide as a composer and pianist, has recorded 260 albums during the last 20 years. His latest is not only a 2014 GMA Dove nominee but it has reached double platinum status in sales. (Contributed photo)

"We really like hymns with an orchestra and piano, and very important, of course, is a good sermon," he said. "We found First Baptist in Hendersonville. There was a very good preacher and now we have a new preacher, Steve Scoggins, and he is a wonderful pastor."

Last year the church invited Mulder to present a premier concert of his "Love Divine" album. Again this year the church invited him to play a premier presentation of the "Christmas" CD. It is scheduled for all three Sunday morning services on December 14. Mulder will play for the first half of the service, followed by a sermon from pastor Steve Scoggins.

Stephen Cutchins, worship pastor of First Baptist Church (FBC), Hendersonville, said "Jan is a world class musician and a strong believer who worships regularly with us at FBC. It is a true honor to have such a gifted musician in our church who is focusing his projects on the truths we find in the Bible. I have found Jan to be a humble and gentle man and our congregation is looking forward to him sharing his music with us during the Christmas season."

Albums, sheet music and listening samples are available at JanMulder.us, iTunes and Amazon. CDs may also be ordered by calling Miller Music at (615) 763-3886. For more information on the Dec. 14 worship services at FBC visit www.fbchnc.org. **BR**



Recommend individuals to serve on the:
CONVENTION BOARD OF DIRECTORS
INSTITUTION & AGENCY BOARDS
CONVENTION COMMITTEES
www.ncbaptist.org/recommend

Submissions received after January 31 of each year
will be held for consideration the following year.



Baptist State Convention of North Carolina • Milton A. Hollifield, Jr., Executive Director-Treasurer
2815 Convention Drive, Cary, NC 27511 • (919) 467-5100 • (800) 395-5102 • www.ncbaptist.org
The missions and ministries of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina are made possible by your gifts through the Cooperative Program and the North Carolina Missions Offering.

Disciple your family, Hollifield says

By K. ALLAN BLUME | BR Editor

The theme of the 2014 annual meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) was drawn from John 14:12. Jesus said, “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*”

Milton Hollifield, executive director-treasurer (EDT) of the BSC, read the scripture to launch his annual address to the messengers attending the Tuesday morning annual session in Greensboro, Nov. 11, giving emphasis to the potential of “greater things.”

He said the promise of this verse not only applied to the disciples to whom Christ spoke in the first century, but it applies to every believer who follows Jesus today.

“It’s not enough for you and me to embrace the promise of doing greater things *for Christ*; I am convinced we must accept the challenge of doing greater things *through Christ*,” Hollifield added.

He called for N.C. Baptists to make disciples through the power of the Holy Spirit. But he cautioned, “Disciple-making does not happen simply because a congregation has a series of programs, or engages in a number of missionary endeavors. Disciple-making is intentional and is dependent upon people, not facilities, programs or activities.”

Making disciples is so very simple, but we’ve made it unnecessarily complicated, he said. “As I have met with North Carolina Baptists across our state this year, I have heard a very familiar refrain: ‘What do you mean by disciple-making?’”

Hollifield said disciple-making is the heart of the Great Commission. “Disciple-making is evangelism that leads to conversion and also includes discipleship that results in disciples who make disciples. Disciple-making is teaching others Biblical truths that God has taught you so that they can in turn teach others,” he said, citing 2 Tim. 2:2.

“I am convinced that the only way to effectively impact more of the 5.8 million lost people living in N.C. is to build an army of Christ followers who will become passionate about reaching and discipling others in their sphere of influence,” he said. “... we are not satisfied with just reaching our state alone, for the Bible compels us in Acts 1:8 to impact lostness through disciple-making in our state, across our nation and around the world.”

He said disciple-making is not simply a ministry of the church; it is the mission of the church. Disciple-making is not just a program within the church; it must



“I am convinced that the only way to effectively impact more of the 5.8 million lost people living in N.C. is to build an army of Christ followers who will become passionate about reaching and discipling others in their sphere of influence,” said Milton Hollifield during his Nov. 11 address to messengers at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina annual meeting in Greensboro. (BSC photo by K Brown)

become the passion of the church. Disciple-making must become the lifestyle of all church members.

One area where Hollifield believes the failure to make disciples is most glaring is within family relationships. The lack of disciple-making in Christian homes may be a cause for declining baptisms for youth in the SBC. “Why are so many of our children never returning to church when they leave home for college?” he added.

Reading from Judges 2:10 the EDT said we understand how quickly a nation can lose the blessings of God because of disobedience. The scripture says, “*And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel.*”

“How did this happen?” he asked. “It happened because those who knew God and all the great things He had done for Israel failed to communicate this to their own children and grandchildren. But these same words do not have to be said about our children and grandchildren if we will follow the commands of God.”

As we consider reaching and discipling individuals in our state, nation and world, he said we should not overlook the mission field in our homes – our own children and grandchildren. “If you take some time to reflect on your own Christian heritage, most of you will remember someone or maybe two or three individuals that had a

strong influence on your life,” Hollifield said. “It may have been a parent, a grandparent or another relative. It could have been a pastor or a friend. God sent those individuals to teach you things that He had taught them through others.”

Teaching the next generation is best fulfilled by the most influential teachers of Christianity that our children have – a dad, a mom and grandparents, Hollifield emphasized. “Yes, you do have the support of your church, but that will not take the place of the home-life influence.”

Three questions were posed to the messengers: Do your children see Christian virtues in your life? Do they know you spend time reading the Bible? Do they believe that prayer and fellowship with God is important to you?

“Will you lead your children and your grandchildren to Christ and disciple them? Don’t leave that to chance, hoping someone else will do it. Help your adult children to understand how important it is for your grandchildren to come to faith in Christ and grow in that relationship,” he said.

Sharing his personal story of how God worked through his parents, Hollifield told about his father, 88, a Baptist pastor for over 60 years who passed away on July 14, 2014. He spoke fondly of his “lay preacher” great-grandfather, his Sunday School director grandfather and his “saintly” grandmother. “I was blessed to be born into the home of Christian parents. My parents read the Bible to their children and prayed with us every day. There was never a question where we would be when it was time to be in church. My father invested his life in me because he loved me, and he wanted me to serve Jesus,” he said.

The EDT recognized that others were not raised in a Christian home.

“Some of us were raised in Christian homes, but others of you have a different story. You did not grow up with Christian parents. Maybe you did not even get to enjoy your parents living together in love and harmony. Some of you are still praying that your dad or mom will accept Christ. Don’t give up!” he pleaded.

Disciple-making is not complicated, but it requires a faithful commitment and obedience to Christ.

Hollifield issued a final proposition. The call to discipleship is personal, but must expand across the whole church.

“I’m asking you to also challenge your church family to join forces with other N.C. Baptist congregations as we impact lostness through disciple-making.”

Visit <http://vimeo.com/channels/783219>. **BR**

Agencies share blessings of ministry

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Production Editor

North Carolina Baptists rely on several agencies for various ministries. Each one – North Carolina Baptist Foundation (NCBF), Biblical Recorder (BR), N.C. Baptist Hospital and N.C. Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) – were given time during the Nov. 10-11 Baptist State Convention of N.C. (BSC) annual meeting in Greensboro to share with messengers.

The Baptist Children’s Homes of N.C. had a separate presentation on Nov. 10 that was previously reported in the Biblical Recorder. The story is available online at BRnow.org.

N.C. Baptist Foundation

Clay Warf, NCBF’s executive director, reported that the convention marked the 94th birthday of NCBF, the oldest of the 36 state Baptist foundations.

NCBF has recently begun a partner-

ship with the youngest of the state Baptist foundations: the Baptist Foundation of New England.

Warf said NCBF will distribute about \$9 million this year for “Kingdom causes because of the generous gifts of North Carolina Baptist folks.” Since 1920 when the foundation began, it has distributed more than \$100 million to causes around the world. In 2013 about \$34 million was loaned to 52 churches for growth. More than \$41 million was invested in

the church growth investment fund to help churches with low interest loans for building endeavors. “I’m thankful for this convention and for the estate planning emphasis next year which is ‘Pay the Blessings Forward,’” Warf said.

“Our Lord paid a debt He did not owe because we owed a debt we could not pay. He paid the ultimate gift forward so that whosoever believeth in Him, for generations to come, whosoever believeth in

See Blessings page 13

Bordeaux: ‘Let’s rebuild altars’

By K. ALLAN BLUME | BR Editor

Convention president C.J. Bordeaux Sr. asked North Carolina Baptists, “How can we possibly expect to see greater things in our churches, in our associations and in our state conventions,” in today’s cultural environment? The pastor of Gorman Baptist Church, Durham, delivered the traditional president’s address in the Monday evening session of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina annual meeting, Nov. 10, giving emphasis to the theme, “Greater Things.”

He said we are not living in the same world most of us knew growing up. There is a radical difference in values.

“The commonality and the cohesion of the faith of Christians that once was strong and vibrant, unfortunately does not seem to be that way today,” Bordeaux said. “It is not only that we must learn to be cooperative, we must learn to be obedient unto God. I believe that is the key element to seeing greater things....”

The scripture text was 1 Kings 18:20-29. One prophet of God, Elijah, faced a contest with 450 prophets of Baal. In the context of a “*famine in the land*,” the prophet Elijah asked, “*How long halt ye between two opinions?*”



C.J. Bordeaux preaches about the spiritual famine in North Carolina. (BSC photo by K Brown)

Bordeaux said there is a spiritual famine in North Carolina today as well.

“It is a famine for civility, a famine of moral consciousness, a famine of leadership, a famine of godliness, a famine of spirituality. ... So, how do we see greater things given the circumstances of the culture around us?”

He offered three challenges Christians face in order to see greater things in the process of impacting lostness in N.C.

First, we must live believable lives in an unbelieving world.

Second, we must repair some of the altars that have been torn down, and

third, we must live convicted lives in a dying world.

In their attempt to ignite the altar with fire, the prophets of Baal worked all day with no response from their god. They believed their god, they had zeal for their god, and they persevered with commendable dedication. Bordeaux said as wrong as they were, “You gotta give them credit. They stuck to their belief. Even in the face of overwhelming proof of failure of their belief, you seldom see unbelievers back down. They stick to it. The prophets of Baal had a false faith and false hopes, but they stuck to it.

“Our challenge is to live-out our beliefs in such a way that we can show them, and they can see our faith is alive ... and that our God still reigns,” he said.

Referring to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Ronnie Floyd’s call to prayer, he said the source of our power is found in prayer. “Prayer is the answer. Prayer is our power. ... Apart from North Carolina Baptists praying collectively and cooperatively we can never do greater things ... because we have no power, but we serve a God who has all power.”

Before Elijah could respond to the failure of the false prophets, he had to repair the altar. “Apparently the altar was destroyed by the prophets of Baal in their attempt to call on their god,” he said.

Bordeaux sees a parallel in our culture. “Every chance the world gets to tear down some part of our belief system, they do it,” he said. “They don’t like what we believe, they don’t like what we stand for, they don’t like our doctrine, so they are going to do everything in their power to tear it down and destroy us ... under the guise of religious reform.”

Four specific altars need to be repaired, he emphasized.

The altar of the family must be restored. “The home is God’s first institution. It was God’s prime institution. It was the centerpiece of God’s creation,” he said.

Second, the altar of the centrality of

the Bible must be rebuilt. He said Southern Baptists fought for and stood on the Bible and must continue to stand on it.

“In June, 1979 I drove to my first SBC [meeting] in Houston, Texas,” Bordeaux shared. “I remember listening to Adrian Rogers speak with such authority and boldness about the Bible. Little did I know that at that convention ... I was witnessing the beginning of a movement that would turn the SBC from following a liberal bias and agenda, and return us to our conservative, fundamental and biblical roots.”

The third altar to rebuild is the necessity of the church. He said churches in the state are very different in many ways. “It does not matter if you come from a small church or if you come from a big church. It does not matter if you come from a contemporary church or a traditional church.

“It does not matter if you play drums or if you have a 200 year-old pipe organ. ... what we need to understand is that the church is the bride of our Lord Jesus Christ. ... we need to learn to accept each other as we are, because if we don’t do that, we are allowing the world to divide us and separate us[over unimportant matters].

“It does not matter if you meet in a schoolhouse. It does not matter if you meet in a home. It does not matter if you meet in a building with a tall, spire steeple, ladies and gentlemen, the church has never been about brick and mortar. We’ve all got to be busy about rebuilding the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The fourth altar to restore is the essentialness of discipleship. “I would not be where I am, who I am and be the man that I am had it not been for my father and other men ...,” he said. “So many of those dear men of God who never had their names written in a book, who never got asked to stand on a stage, who never get any recognition – all of those dear men were giants of the faith to this young preacher-boy. They disciplined me, and led me, and taught me, and that’s what we must be busy about.”

Finally, Bordeaux said Baptists must face the challenge of living convicted lives in a dying world. “There is a difference between believing something and being convicted of something,” he said. “Elijah had to stand upon his convictions.”

In verse 38 of the text, God shows up, he said. “Mark in your Bible: ‘God done put a whoopin’ on ‘em,’” he told a chuckling audience. God did His work because one man took a stand.

N.C. Baptists must take a stand and trust only in God’s power in order to see greater things. **BR**

#discipleNC

1 STORY

Hear. Connect. Share.

Disciple-Making Conference
ncbaptist.org/disciplenc

Featuring



Afshin Ziafat

Pastor, Providence Church, Frisco, Texas



Ed Stetzer

Vice President, LifeWay, Insights Division



Robby Gallaty

Pastor, Brainerd Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tenn.

February 23, 2015

Center Grove Baptist Church
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.



NEW Women's Track
Featuring
Lori McDaniel, Global
Mission Catalyst, IMB



Baptist State Convention of North Carolina • Milton A. Holifield, Jr., Executive Director-Treasurer
205 Convention Drive • Cary, NC 27511 • (919) 467-5100 • (800) 395-5102 • www.ncbaptist.org
The missions and ministries of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina are made possible by your gifts through the Cooperative Program and the North Carolina Missions Offering.

Journey Continued from page 1

four years ago and committed to engage an unreached, unengaged people group with the gospel. During December, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is collected in many Southern Baptist churches to support efforts like this with IMB.

He learned about this particular village through Southeast Asian believers Khin* and Thet* (their culture does not use surnames). The men left their hometown to be closer to where the majority of T people live and where they focus their ministry. Although they are from a different people group, they feel called to serve among an unreached people group, specifically the T people in Southeast Asia.

Most T people don't know the creation story Harrison shared in the fishing village because they've never heard the gospel. Less than one percent of T people are believers in Jesus Christ.

Yet, Old Town members are seeing T people turn from Buddhism and believe in Jesus. When Harrison and church members come to Southeast Asia, they share the gospel, encourage believers and try to find areas where the people group live.

The problem lies in getting to these people. It isn't easy. Few outsiders make it to the remote villages nestled in the steep, wet mountains of Southeast Asia.

Just to tell this one Bible story about creation, Harrison and several local believers ride 45 minutes in a three-wheeled motorcycle taxi, with little protection from the rain and wind.

Along one road, the group walks while the taxi slowly maneuvers through the mud. Then, they ride motorcycles another 30 minutes straight up a mountain to the fishing village.

The journey is even difficult for local residents to reach the remote villages. Khin and Thet often walk three hours one-way during rainy season, when their motorcycle can't make it up the mountain through the mud, to share the gospel.

"I prayed to be a minister for the gospel," Khin says. "In my heart was a calling to be a missionary. I prayed to be somewhere no one had been before."

When Old Town began the journey to embrace the T people, they prayed God would send people to help them.

"Many people back home are praying for you," Harrison says, offering encouragement. "They pray for you every day."



With each trip to the T people, Mark Harrison, missions pastor at Old Town Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, seeks to disciple local believers. He helps them learn how to share the gospel with Buddhist background T people and encourages them to be bold in their witness. T people are so strongly tied to Buddhism (below left) that when they come to faith in Jesus Christ, pressure and opposition from religious leaders, and family, is common. (IMB photos by Hugh Johnson)

Old Town prays for believers such as Khin and Thet, who are lonely away from family and friends, but stay because they want T people to believe in Jesus.

"The people don't know Jesus – that is the most difficult part," Khin says. "They don't know other religions; they only know Buddhism."

That's why Khin and local believers want to learn from Harrison how to naturally start conversations about creation and the Living God.

In an outdoor market, elbow-to-elbow with people, Harrison stops to talk with a woman sitting in the midst of rows of fish for sale. He asks if she knows where the fish came from. When she says "no," he shares the gospel beginning with creation.

In a village home a local believer asks Harrison how to share the gospel with other Buddhist background T people. After an afternoon of conversation, this is exactly what the pastor wants to hear – local believers stepping up and Old Town helping them to advance the Great Commission among their people.

Harrison wastes no time answering his question.

He explains how scripture teaches that in Athens, Peter spoke to Jewish believers about the Old Testament, and they were familiar with those Scriptures.

Yet, when Paul spoke to Gentiles in Athens, who had no knowledge of the Old Testament, he started with what they did

know – their own religion and idols.

"Both men tried to understand how people were already thinking," Harrison explains to the local believers. "You are from their [T people] background and you understand how they think. God has chosen you to help the T people understand the gospel."

Harrison pauses for a few moments and then asks, "What do you think of these stories, these examples?"

Quickly, but quietly, the man says, "A fisherman knows how to teach other fishermen to fish."

A simple, yet bold statement, because the T people tell Harrison that when they share their faith and teach others to do the same, they often pay a price. Their very identity is wrapped around Buddhism, so when they convert, pressure and opposition from religious leaders and family is not uncommon.

Harrison has seen how opposition often keeps believers

from other people groups from reaching out to the T people.

Shein* recently moved from his hometown to serve among the T people and experienced opposition.

"People tried to talk me out of it, but my mom encouraged me," he says. "It is my heart's desire that these people may be saved."

For years Shein wanted to reach this people group, but leaders at the Christian school where he taught said the need was too great at home – until now when they see God working among T people.

Thura,* who recently came to faith and is leading others to Christ, shares the gospel despite opposition from his father who is the village leader and sees the gospel as a waste of time.

"I know believing the gospel is precious. When I share, there is peace in my heart," Thura says.

Nanda* and Mya,* a husband and wife in Thura's village, moved to another village because family pressured them to leave after they became followers of Christ.

A group of men watch and stare from across the street as Harrison and local believers get out of the tuk-tuk and go inside to pray with Mya.

She voices hope that one day she can live and worship freely in her village. Mya shares other prayer requests for Harrison to take back to Old Town. At the top of her list is a request Harrison hears time and time again: that family members and T people will believe in Jesus.

*Names changed

To learn more about how your church can embrace an unreached, unengaged people group, visit www.imb.org. To contact Mark Harrison, email mharrison@otbclife.org.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Paige Turner is an IMB writer living in Southeast Asia.) **BT**



Campus Continued from page 1

‘derecognized’ InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) as an RSO. In 1877, InterVarsity was started by British students at the University of Cambridge. The first IVCF chapter opened at the University of Michigan in 1938.

After failing to comply with a 2011 executive order from former CSU chancellor, Charles Reed, IVCF no longer has official RSO status at any of CSU’s 23 sites that boasts more than 450,000 students.

Cal State representatives have stated that some Christian organizations complied with CSU’s 2011 order.

Susan Westover, a lawyer for the CSU system, told *The New York Times*, “Lots of evangelical groups are thriving on our campuses. ... Our mission is education, not exclusivity.” CSU administrators insist they welcome evangelicals, yet they want them to agree to the same policies as all RSOs.

Another typical non-discrimination clause can be found at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Their constitution reads:

“Membership and participation in recognized student organizations must be open to all students without regard to age, race, color, national origin, disability, religious status or historic religious affiliation, veteran status, or sexual orientation. Membership and participation in registered student organizations must also be open without regard to gender, unless exempt under Title IX (as outlined in SBS §7-1.5).”

Many benefits are afforded for being a RSO such as the use of certain campus facilities, library usage, a personalized campus email address and most importantly, official recognition by the university.

“Please remember that in dealing with private schools, there is more legal room for the school to exert its own vision such as at Vanderbilt,” Knight noted.

In early 2012, Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., also enforced a non-discrimination policy and a new all-comers policy. Baptist Press reported that even though Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM) was approved as a recognized

student organization on the campus of Vanderbilt, the BCM declined that status.

Randy C. Davis, executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, told Baptist Press: “[O]n April 22 [2012], it came to my attention that the application included our representatives signing the revised non-discrimination policy,” he wrote. “It is our understanding now that ‘to abide by,’ means ‘to accept without objection’ and ‘to accept as our own.’”

Davis noted that signing onto the policy would require the BCM “if the occasion should ever arise, to open the leadership to those who were not Christian. Perhaps we should have known this earlier, but we did not,” he wrote.

Knight said several states including Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Virginia have already passed or are in the process of passing laws directing their state college systems to add exemptions to their non-discrimination clauses for religious and political groups.

North Carolina is included in this list.

Effective in June, the General Assembly of North Carolina granted that no public university or community college could deny recognition of student organizations entirely because of their faith, beliefs and mission.

Rather than overreacting to events like Hastings Law School, Cal State and Vanderbilt, Knight counsels churches and Christian organizations to explore alternative models of ministry on collegiate campuses.

Yarboro said they have identified seven different models of campus ministry in North Carolina: the missional community model, the collegiate church plant model, the campus-based model, the church-based ministry model, the satellite church model, the shared-space partnership model and the unreached people group model.

BCM, for instance, utilizes the campus-based model. This model assigns a campus minister to a specific university to serve as a bridge between the campus and a local church.

Knight emphasized that the seven campus ministry models were not created because of the court cases happening across the nation; rather they were already previously identified.

“It is important to understand that these models weren’t identified to replace something; they were identified to give people options.

“If for some reason one option is removed, then another option becomes critical.” **BR**

God’s love is different

Jeremiah 31:3, “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love ...”

Dwight L. Moody was called the evangelist of the people. His sermons, while Bible-based, were chock-full of personal and real life stories and illustrations. Moody aimed for the heart as he preached and called for a decision to follow Jesus. He would start with the truth of God’s judgment on fallen man, but he would quickly move toward the need that sinners have to experience God’s redeeming love through faith in Christ.

This emphasis on God’s love had its roots in Moody’s conversion experience. Moody was converted while working in his uncle’s shoe shop. Edward Kimball cornered him and quickly told Moody of God’s love for him. Moody would later testify that the love of Christ had broken his heart.

That love became the compelling factor behind his burning desire to tell others of Christ. In today’s text, the Lord reminds His people of His patient, outwardly flowing and loyal love for them. The two major terms for God’s love in the Old Testament are used in this verse.

First Jeremiah uses the term for

God’s outwardly flowing love (*ahab*). It is sacrificial love and has the recipient’s best interest in mind. Paul reminds us of this kind of love when he says, “*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*” (Romans 5:8).

The second term refers to God’s loyal love for His people (*hesed*). It demonstrates His patient and covenant love that is centered in His relational loyalty and desire to show mercy toward His people. This “longsuffering” love is extended toward his people who deserve judgment and who are guilty in their sin – yet He stays His hand of

wrath and renders mercy. The Psalmist would say of this love that it “*endures forever*” (Psalm 136). Revival is only possible because of God’s love. His love is sacrificial, patient, loyal and full of mercy. God’s love should compel us to seek Him for revival with hopeful, broken and desperate hearts. Have you started?

(EDITOR’S NOTE – *Chris Schofield is director of the Office of Prayer for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. For more information you can reach him at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5514, or cschofield@ncbaptist.org.*)



DR. CHRIS SCHOFIELD

Kivett's - Your Source for Renewal

Complete Renovations • Refinish
New Pews • Steeples • Stained Glass
Steeple Cleaning • Baptistries

www.kivetts.com

KIVETT'S INC.

The Largest Family Owned
Church Furniture Manufacturer in the US

1-800-334-1139 • Clinton, NC


PEW UPHOLSTERING & REFINISHING
REVERSIBLE PEW CUSHIONS
NEW PEWS CARPETING
COMPLETE RENOVATIONS
1-800-289-7397
Church Interiors Inc.
The Nation's Leading Church Renovation Specialists
High Point, North Carolina
www.churchinteriors.com



FRUITLAND BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE
ENROLL NOW FOR NEW QUARTER ON JAN. 6, 2015

- Preparing the “God Called” to minister since 1946
- Our graduates are serving churches all across the S.B.C.
- Earn an Associates Degree in Religion (choose from Christian Ministry, Church Planting, and Christian Worldview tracks)
- Our Associate degree is now fully available online
- Courses offered for Spanish speaking students at several N.C. locations (Call Robert Fernandez at 828-399-0109)

For more information call (828) 685-8886, or write: David Horton, President
Fruitland Baptist Bible College, 1455 Gilliam Road, Hendersonville, N.C. 28792
Owned and operated by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina



BE SURE TO CHECK
OUT OUR WEBSITE



Visit **BRnow.org**

[nc]connect

Baptist State Convention of North Carolina



ncbaptist.org



facebook.com/ncbaptist



twitter.com/ncbaptist

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."

What will it take to accomplish 'Greater Things'?

by Chad Austin



North Carolina Baptists learned how God wants to work through them to accomplish greater things for the Kingdom by making disciples across our state, nation and world during the recent Annual Meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC).

"Greater things," a reference to John 14:12, was the theme for this year's meeting, held Nov. 10-11 at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro.

The theme verse describes how Jesus promised His disciples that they would accomplish greater things after His death, burial and resurrection. Jesus' promise remains true for believers today as we seek to make disciples and fulfill the Great Commission in the power of the Holy Spirit.

"It's not enough for you and me to embrace the promise of doing greater things for Christ," Milton Hollifield told attendees during his executive-director treasurer address. "We must accept the challenge of doing greater things through Christ."

Throughout the two-day meeting, speakers and worship leaders encouraged and challenged the messengers in attendance to develop a grand view of God, submit themselves to His authority and live according to the power of His Spirit.

BSCNC president C.J. Bordeaux Sr., pastor of Gorman Baptist Church in Durham, challenged attendees from 1 Kings 18:20-38 during his president's address.

Drawing from the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal, Bordeaux called on North Carolina Baptists to rebuild some of the altars that have been torn down in today's society. If Christians are to impact culture, Bordeaux said, the altars of the family, the Bible, the church and discipleship must be rebuilt and restored.

"whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these."
John 14:12

In elaborating on the meeting's theme, pastors Rob Peters of Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem and Noah Crowe of First Baptist Church Robbinsville both said accomplishing greater things requires having a high view of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Speaking from the book of Hebrews, Peters reminded attendees that Christ is greater than the prophets, greater than the angels, greater than Moses and greater than the high priests of old.

"We must have great esteem for our savior," Peters said. "As we strive to do greater things, we must have a greater vision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

A greater vision of the Savior should motivate believers to do greater things to impact lostness within North Carolina. With more than 5.8 million lost people in the state, followers of Jesus Christ must become passionate about reaching and discipling those individuals within their sphere of influence.

"Disciple-making is not complicated, but it does require commitment and obedience to Christ," Hollifield said.

Jonathan Falwell, senior pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va., and son of the late Jerry Falwell, delivered the annual convention sermon to close out the meeting. In his message, Falwell used Philippians 4:1-9 to encourage and exhort church leaders to renew their commitment on taking the gospel to the ends of the earth.

"Let's be the church that knocks down the gates of hell," Falwell said.

The 2015 Annual Meeting will be held at the Koury Convention Center Nov. 2-3 in Greensboro, North Carolina. Continue to visit ncannualmeeting.org throughout the year for added updates.

Connect now

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

News articles, videos, first-person columns and many resources are available for you to use.



ncbaptist.org

NEXT STEP VIDEOS

NC Baptists are taking the next step in making disciples. These videos are available for download and would be helpful tools to encourage your church to do the same.



ncbaptist.org/nextstep

TWITTER

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



twitter.com/ncbaptist

INSTAGRAM

Get a behind-the-scenes look at how God is using North Carolina Baptists.



[instagram.com/ncbaptist](https://www.instagram.com/ncbaptist)

2015 Events

'Greater Things'
continued through
prayer

Devotional Prayer Guide



praync.org

North Carolina Baptists joined together to pray for God to do greater things in October. They surrendered their hearts in prayer through guided prompts surrounding topics such as disciple-making, spiritual awakening and obedience to personal holiness through Christ.

As we look toward 2015, we ask that you continue to faithfully seek the Lord through prayer. The devotional prayer guide is a great tool that can be utilized at any time and is available as a free download at praync.org. Please consider working through this devotional individually or with a group.

There are several opportunities throughout 2015 for training in continued prayer. The statewide prayer conference titled "Awaken" is scheduled

for March 13-14 at Village Baptist Church in Fayetteville, N.C. This is a free event featuring Gary Frost, Chuck Lawless, Richard Owen Roberts and Chris Schofield. Find out more information by visiting ncbaptist.org/stateprayer.

There is also a 50-day prayer emphasis from April 4 - May 24 for the multiplication of Hispanic churches in North Carolina. Find out how you can intercede for your brothers and sisters in Christ by visiting ncbaptist.org/50dias for more information.

Vocational Evangelists Retreat

January 8-9

ncbaptist.org/ver

Disciple-Making Conference

February 23

disciplenc.org

Childhood Ministry Retreat

March 5-6

ncbaptist.org/wind

Statewide Prayer Gathering

March 13-14

ncbaptist.org/stateprayer

Embrace & Flourish Equipping Day

March 28

ncbaptist.org/ministrywives15
50 Days of Intercession for
Hispanic Church Plants

April 4 - May 24

ncbaptist.org/50dias
One Day: Equipping Leaders to
Make Disciples

May 2

onedaync.org
ncbaptist.org


Disciple-Making Conference

Society is drifting further from a biblical understanding of God's redemptive plan and many Christians are left wondering how to effectively share the gospel. You are invited to attend the 2015 Disciple-Making Conference (previously the State Evangelism Conference) on Feb. 23 in Clemmons to learn how to be prepared to connect with unbelievers in a modern context.

Featured guests include Afshin Ziafat, Ed Stetzer and Robby Gallaty. There are also expanded equipping sessions that will offer

hands-on, practical steps for Christ-followers to reach the lost in today's world. New for 2015 is a special women's track featuring Lori McDaniel the Global Mission Catalyst at the International Mission Board.

Check out #disciplenc on Twitter or Facebook to join in the conversation leading up to this amazing opportunity.

Learn more at

disciplenc.org

Awaken: Humble Yourself

James 4:10 says, "humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up." The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina believes that prayer is the key to spiritual awakening and the office of prayer is hosting the statewide prayer event to equip believers to become effective kingdom-focused prayer warriors.

Everyone is invited to join with us on March 13-14 in Fayetteville at Village Baptist Church for a free opportunity to

hear from Gary Frost, Chuck Lawless, Richard Owen Roberts and Chris Schofield surrounding prayer for spiritual awakening.

Also included is worship, messages, prayer focused times, dialogue and a prayer leader luncheon. Visit ncbaptist.org/stateprayer or call (800) 395-5102, ext. 5513 for more information.

Learn more at

ncbaptist.org/stateprayer

One Day: Equipping Leaders to Make Disciples

Join us for one day filled with intensive training surrounding disciple-making on May 2 in High Point.

Bruce Raley, the director of church partnerships for LifeWay Christian Resources will be our featured guest. His experience at LifeWay has led him to train many across the country, and his passion for seeing people mature in Christ will be evident in the information he shares at this event.

You don't want to miss any of the equipping opportunities such as training in Sunday School and small groups, children and youth ministry, worship and music, women's ministry, evangelism, special needs ministry, pastoral leadership and much more! Early bird rates are available until April 17 at onedaync.org, so sign up today.

Learn more at

onedaync.org

1 STORY

#discipleNC

AWAKEN
HUMBLE YOURSELF

A NORTH CAROLINA PRAYER GATHERING MARCH 13-14, 2015

1 DAY
EQUIPPING LEADERS TO MAKE DISCIPLES

Clay Stevens didn't step back into the pulpit Oct. 5; he rolled ... in a motorized wheelchair.

"I'm not going to cry," Stevens said after Cross Culture Church members stood to their feet and applauded their pastor's return. "Your faithfulness has prayed me into this place today."

Stevens was involved in a traffic accident Aug. 14 in Rural Hall, N.C. He and two other men were riding their motorcycles to the mountains for a weekend getaway. Their wives had driven separately to Stevens' mom's cabin.

They took back roads because "it's a safer place to be," he said.

A car had slowed to turn left. The vehicle behind that one slowed as well, but the driver behind that vehicle was texting and failed to see the cars slow. Police estimate that the distracted driver was traveling at 40+ miles per hour when she struck the automobile in front of her. The impact forced the car into the oncoming lane and straight into Stevens' path.

"I still see it in slow motion," Stevens said of the crash. He said he felt the impact on his leg.

The collision sent him into the air. He remembers landing on his back and head, which caused multiple fractures to his left shoulder.

"God did not make that young lady text that day," he said. "But God knew that that accident was coming. It's not worth it folks. It'll wait."

Just a few weeks earlier his wife, Cindi, had bought him a new helmet with Bluetooth so they could communicate on the road. He bought one for her too.

"The helmet fit so tightly, so snugly that I was even complaining about it on the ride up there," he said. "God used that helmet, the tightness of it, to save my life."

The medical personnel could not believe he did not have head and neck injuries but Stevens said the helmet kept that area protected.

He flipped at least three times in the air, slamming his helmet on the ground each time until he slid to a stop. His motorcycle came to a stop about six feet away and caught fire.

He recalls people yelling about moving him. They were arguing back and forth about whether to move him because of the fire or leave him where he was because of his possible injuries.

One of Stevens' riding companions stood between him and the fire and repeatedly said "You're going to be all right Pastor."

Someone from the automotive repair place in front of where the crash occurred came out and extinguished the fire.

"I knew it was bad," he said. "I knew I was in pain ... everything was hurting on my left side."

Learning to receive

Raleigh pastor appreciates help, prayers after motorcycle accident

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Production Editor



When Clay Stevens preached Oct. 5 he had new obstacles to overcome in even preparing his message for Cross Culture Church in Raleigh. His August motorcycle accident put him in a wheelchair for the time being. He is going through therapy and hopes to be able to walk with the aid of crutches by Christmas. (BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle)

He recounted some of his injuries: two broken toes, crushed heel, multiple fractures of both bones of his left leg, broken or dislocated kneecap; one broken finger; partial amputation on little finger; and multiple fractures on his left shoulder.

"The first time I knew it was really serious was in the ambulance ride," he said after overhearing the emergency medical technician communicating with the hospital about possible amputation.

Rural Hall, where the accident occurred, is only 17 miles from Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, a level one trauma center.

During his almost month in the hospital, Stevens said the church came through in a big way.

His voice cracked as he recounted the people all over the world who had offered prayers on his behalf.

His church has stepped up and helped the Stevens' family with ramps at the house, tools to help make life easier and many meals.

"We're always looking for ways we can minister," he said. "We need to learn how to let them do for us."

Learning how to receive help has been hard, he and Cindi said.

"He's become immobile," she said. "He can't even cut [his] food."

Accidents like Clay's are "life changing," she said. While he was in the hospi-

tal, staff members rotated two weeks at a time to fill the pulpit.

He admits he's been emotional after his accident and his voice is still weak from having a tube down his esophagus those first days.

"Through this process... you think about a lot of stuff," he shared.

His first sermon upon his return to his church dealt with how God remains faithful through adversity and was based on Job.

"Adversity comes in different shapes and sizes," he said, "[and] may vary in its intensity at times ... one thing is certain: adversity is part of life. No one escapes it."

He encouraged his church members to deny the why questions that crop up when adversity comes.

"We rarely ask why about the good stuff," he said. "Why questions destroy the element of faith. They demand an answer ... that don't require any faith."

Job's friends introduced why questions for Job.

"Why questions focus on us and not God," Stevens said. "Why questions need to be ... rejected."

"Why questions have to be intentionally replaced ... with the Word of God."

"Why questions lead you to lie ... God's not there; He doesn't care."

In rejecting the why questions, Ste-

vens encouraged believers to declare the how and what questions:

- "God, how can You use this for Your Kingdom purposes?"

- "What way can I bring You the greatest honor?"

- "What can You teach me to bring me in a closer relationship with You?"

- "God, how can I learn in this to be content in my circumstances?"

Stevens' accident has started a lot of conversations: at the hospital, in transit between appointments and church, etc.

Stevens is in a "race against time" for healing to take place, he said. While his bones are healing nicely, it's still too soon to tell if his shoulder will fully repair. It might be a year before he knows for sure.

He can only put a little weight on his left leg, but the bones are healing. Cindi has worked diligently to keep his wounds cleaned and fresh bandages applied.

Clay Stevens recently published a book called *I Get It: Discovering How to Really Live in the Promises of God* published through Xulon Press.

He was also hospitalized in November because of a pulmonary embolism. It was a short stay but did not crimp his recovery process too much.

He has begun some intensive physical therapy three days a week and is encouraged by his progress. He wants to be able to walk again at least by Christmas.

While the accident wasn't planned, Cindi and Clay pray God continues to use this to further His Kingdom. **BR**

"Adversity comes in different shapes and sizes [and] may vary in its intensity ..."
— Clay Stevens

Southeastern honors Sam & Rachel James

SEBTS Communications

Former International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries Sam and Rachel James were awarded the Southeastern Presidential Award in chapel on Nov. 6.

The Presidential Award is the highest honor given from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS).

Sam is a three-time graduate of Southeastern, and he and his wife served with the IMB for over 50 years prior to their retirement earlier this year.

Sam and Rachel are long-term missionary heroes because of their work in Vietnam during the Vietnam War. He is the author of *Servant on the Edge of History: Risking All for the Gospel in War-Ravaged Vietnam*.

Southeastern President, Daniel Akin, said, "Sam James is a modern day missionary hero. I have the highest respect and regard for him. Sam has been a faithful, wonderful servant in some very hard places."

Sam and Rachel's daughter, Deborah, and granddaughter, Ana, were in attendance. They have three sons, one daughter and nine grandchildren.

Sam became a Christian while in the United States Navy in Japan. He studied Greek at Wake Forest College before being appointed as a missionary in 1962. He wanted to be able to translate the Bible from the original Greek to the native language without having to use English.

He met his wife, who was a student of nursing at Duke University in Durham, on a blind date and has been married for 57 years.

Sam has deep roots in North Carolina. In his hometown of Liberty, N.C., there were eight churches in the town of 1,400 people. After coming home from the war, he decided to go to a place where people did not have the opportunity to hear the gospel.

While a student at SEBTS, he pastored the church that would eventually become The Summit Church in Durham. Two of his children and his wife have also attended Southeastern.



Danny Akin, right, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, presents a plaque to Sam James with James' wife, Rachel, by his side. James was awarded the Southeastern Presidential Award in chapel on Nov. 6. (SEBTS photo)

Chuck Lawless, vice president for graduate studies and ministry centers, interviewed Sam during chapel, giving students the opportunity to hear the James' story.

Sam and Rachel originally sailed with their three young children from San Francisco to Asia, eventually making their way to Vietnam.

During 14 years of war, the James family served the people of Vietnam.

Sam helped found a seminary in Saigon, Vietnam, where Southeastern professors have gone to teach.

Lawless highlighted Sam's ability to become the people he was trying to reach by learning the language and immersing himself in the culture. "You are for me what we want our students to become," Lawless said.

"When you learn their language and culture, you learn to love them," Sam said.

When asked why he stayed through all of the trials, Sam responded, "The call of God."

Sam noted the reality of being surrounded with God's presence and the privilege it was to be in Vietnam. "We're glad we stayed," he said. "It was the call of God. The call of God is always sufficient."

Lawless asked Sam what it takes for a missionary to stay focused and faithful on the mission field. He responded by encouraging students to maintain their spiritual maturity, learn the local language well and keep a sense of humor.

A luncheon following chapel featured the dedication of the "Sam and Rachel James Seminar Room" in the Center for Great Commission Studies. The room displays photos of the James Family and pieces from Vietnam. **BR**

Ed Stetzer on statistics and the church

By WARREN COLE SMITH | World News Service

Ed Stetzer is the president of LifeWay Research, an organization that does polling and statistical analysis. Though associated with the Southern Baptist Convention, LifeWay and Stetzer's influence has spread well beyond Southern Baptist circles. Stetzer has two master's degrees and two doctorates, and he is the author of nearly 20 books. He's also a social media phenomenon with 135,000 Twitter followers.

He's become the go-to guy to learn about trends in the Christian world.

Q: What is LifeWay Research? As its leader, you have become an evangelical guru.

A: We do research for evangelical clients to help inform churches, organizations and ministries to be more effective and engaging their culture for the gospel.

Since I lead an organization that's seeking to accumulate knowledge, I get to read a lot. Some of those pastors will say, "How do I keep up on this or that?" I'm not sure that's their job; they should keep up on the lives of the people in the congregation. I get to read and do research and do data, so we have a lot of great partnerships through a lot of good research. I think it's helpful for people to understand where we are, what the

cultural moment is, and how we are to function as biblically faithful Christians in that cultural moment.

Q: How did you become such a phenomenon on social media?

A: Being a big deal in social media is an odd thing. My wife once said to me that being a big deal on Twitter is like being the dungeon master in a Dungeons and Dragons game. You are just a big deal in a fake world of geeks. ... It works well for what I do. I try to encourage pastors. ... I can do so with short phrases, so I blog and I'm on Twitter and Facebook and Instagram, but not Pinterest. The end result is, is I use it to communicate, so it makes sense.

Q: Is it fair to say that, back a number of years ago, you were one

See Stetzer page 16



Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research, talks to pastors in 2013. (Photo by Thomas Graham)

I love our state conventions

A few weeks ago I took a couple of students with me to our state convention gathering in Greensboro to speak at a couple of breakouts on the *Life on Mission: 3 Circles* approach to gospel conversations. What great crowds and a great spirit we shared! I love this one because I get to see so many of my former students who faithfully serve across North Carolina. I'm so grateful for friends at the convention like Milton Hollifield, Brian Upshaw, Lynn Sasser and Marty Dupree who allow me to do what I love in service to them.

Then, I flew to Oklahoma, taking another student with me, to speak at the annual student pastor forum for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. I'm grateful for Todd Sanders and his team there. After that, I will be in Columbus, Ohio, at a meeting with North American Mission Board leaders and evangelism leaders from all across the state conventions in the Southern Baptist Convention. Each year I have the joy of being with a dozen or so of our statewide network of churches to serve them in the gospel. This is a day of change and fluctuation. The gospel does not change, but our culture has. Many today struggle with how best to take the timeless gospel to our world in a timely way.

And, we have questions about funding, declining baptisms, and other metrics that tend to be less than encouraging. We definitely need a God-intervention! At the same time, there is much for which we can thank God.

I'm thankful for networks like state conventions that help churches who struggle, pastors who have been terminated, in church planting and evangelistic strategy, and in other ways. Our individualistic culture and our cynicism from sensory overload and over-hyping pretty much everything on social media can easily make

us jaded and isolated. But the gospel calls us to do even more than love the lost and love our Lord; it calls us to love each other, and to encourage one another in the advancement of the gospel.



ALVIN REID
Guest column

I'm thankful for men of God who genuinely love the gospel and people who are in positions of strategic influence in state conventions. I was a state evangelism director back in the day; I know how easily one can become entitled with a position. But I have so many friends whose passion is gospel advance and who use their role in their states for that.

Our network of churches is far from perfect, and our structures need consistent evaluation. We are a broken people, but we are the children of God called to be on mission for God. And we will fulfill that mission

much better striving for unity in the gospel over pushing dissension over non-essentials. Our convention president Ronnie Floyd just produced a wonderful little eBook calling us to revival and to fervent prayer for the fulfillment of the great commission. If you have not read it, please do so. He calls us, using the nomenclature of Jonathan Edwards, to "visible union." I believe that in the face of a Christ-less world like ours, what we can do together for the gospel matters more than our

personal preferences. If you are a Southern Baptist, perhaps you could take time each week to pray for your state convention, and for particular leaders, and take time occasionally to let them know you love them

and pray for them. Perhaps we will have to get to a level of persecution unknown to us previously to bring us together; my hope is our love for Christ and His church will be motivation enough.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – This article originally appeared at alvinreid.com. Download Floyd's eBook at pray4awakening.com.) **BR**

"The gospel does not change, but our culture has. Many today struggle with how best to take the timeless gospel to our world ..."

Unspeakable grace during the holidays

Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays are special opportunities God has given us to enjoy and evangelize.

At Thanksgiving we can remember primarily the common grace afforded to us that includes food, shelter and clothing. At Christmas we remember primarily the supernatural grace afforded to us including salvation through the person and work of Christ.

But consider not only the opportunity to enjoy these holidays, but also for the gospel to go forth in evangelization. Everyone is invited to participate in these holidays. In their essence they require all people to recognize God as the Giver. So, holidays are special opportunities afforded by God to us believers to enjoy and evangelize.

Even so, this evangelization is done by God already, so the holidays in themselves are gifts of God's decree in our time. Not to say that these holidays will not change with culture, but for now, they still afford to us and to others joy found only in God.

Walter A. Maier, a professor at Princeton University, stated it this way when speaking about Christmas:

"The great gift of Christ is not granted to God's friends, but to His enemies, to those who in their sins have risen up against God and declared war against the Almighty. To every one of us, suffering, as we and our world are, under the destructive power of sin, God offers His gift of 'unspeakable' grace. Christmas does not offer rejoicing to a selected few; it cries out, 'Joy to the world!'"

"We stand before that supreme and saving truth, the holy of holies of our Christian faith, the blessed assurance that 'Christ Jesus came into the world,' not



BRIAN J. MANN
Guest column

See Holidays page 13

One sacred effort

Since our Convention's founding, Southern Baptists have worked together in "one sacred effort for the propagation of the Gospel."

Those words come from the preamble to the original constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), adopted in 1845. Fittingly, "One Sacred Effort" is also the theme for this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

Last year, Southern Baptists gave an unprecedented \$154 million to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO). I'm happy to report that once again, North Carolina Baptist churches were the leaders of this special offering. In 2013, when compared with all SBC state conventions, North Carolina

Baptist churches led the way by contributing \$12.5 million to the International Missions Board (IMB) for the LMCO.

As you pray and give in support of the LMCO, you join this one sacred effort of helping fulfill the Great Commission. Our Lord's final words to His followers were to "go and make disciples of all nations." That effort is one that God still calls all believers to join today.



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

Lottie Moon spent almost 40 years of her life making the name of Jesus known and sharing His love among the people of China.

Until her death on Christmas Eve in 1912, she urged Southern Baptists to make a greater commitment to reaching the world for Christ. Now, the offering that bears her name helps

support more than 4,800 missionaries in countries around the world who are serving through the IMB.

Although we have made great progress in advancing the gospel, there is still much work to be done – 6.3 billion people on earth are not Christian.

Approximately 1.7 billion people still have no access to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and people are dying every day without having had the opportunity to hear and respond to the good news of Jesus Christ.

The goal for this year's LMCO is \$175 million. Meeting this goal would enable us to send even more missionaries to the field, and every penny that is given to this special offering goes to support our international mission work. The goal is lofty, but so is our task.

Lottie Moon lived in complete surrender, sacrifice and service to the Lord.

As we approach this year's LMCO, I ask that we all prayerfully consider how God would have us respond and participate in this special offering to support global missions.

Your prayers and financial gifts allow you to become directly involved in what God is doing to build His Kingdom all over the world.

And as you pray and give, you become part of this one sacred effort that has been the foundation of SBC life since our beginning.

Our collective efforts to reach the world for Christ serve as a reminder of the principle that has guided Southern Baptist missionary endeavors from the start: We can accomplish more together than we can by ourselves.

"May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ."

– 2 Thessalonians 3:5 **BR**

Blessings

Continued from page 4

Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

“As followers of Christ, we can do greater things if we take our service to Him seriously, and do the planning in such a way as to pay the blessings forward until our Lord returns. In other words, we can bless generations of people who we will never know until we meet them in heaven, if we’ll be good stewards of the resources that our Lord has given us in our lifetime.”

As part of the “Pay the Blessing Forward” campaign NCBF gave away 30 \$50 gifts during the annual meeting. They encouraged people to use the money to bless someone else.

Biblical Recorder

Allan Blume, *BR* editor, told messengers about the five main ways the *BR* delivers news and information to N.C. Baptists – newspaper, digital edition, website (*BRnow.org*), smartphone apps and the e-newsletter (*BRweekly*). He also encouraged people to follow @biblicalrecord on Twitter (readers can also follow @biblical and @BRnow) and “like” *Biblical Recorder* on Facebook ([facebook.com/biblicalrecorder](https://www.facebook.com/biblicalrecorder)). “We are your news agency,” said Blume. “In Hosea 4:6, God said, ‘My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.’ God’s primary concern was the people’s knowledge of Him. But, the principle is that people cannot serve God while being ignorant of Him or His activity in the land.

“In the same way, people in our churches need to know what God is doing in our world. Baptists may know what is going on in the worlds of entertainment, sports, politics, music, business and other fields, but are they getting news and information from a Christian worldview?”

Blume stressed the importance of its slogan: “People Need to Know.” “The *Biblical Recorder* is your partner,” Blume said. “We want to support the work of the pastor, the staff and your church. But we cannot exist, and we cannot help you if your people are not aware of our ministry.” If church leaders and members read the *Recorder*, they will be “better informed, and I believe they will be better tithers and supporters of the local church, the Cooperative Program and all Kingdom work.”

He shared that website traffic has increased 341 percent since January. “It is a very popular website, and we are constantly making improvements,” he said.

N.C. Baptist Hospital

Sharon Engbreton, associate vice president of Faith Health Ministries for the North Carolina Baptist Hospi-

tal (also known as Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center), began the N.C. Baptist Hospital report by recounting the history of N.C. Baptists setting aside \$100,000 to help build the hospital which opened in 1923.

“Many things have changed since [then],” she said, sharing that the hospital is ranked among the best.

While there have been many changes since 1923, “what remains constantly the same is our shared commitment with each one of you to provide compassionate ministry to hurting persons in the spirit of Christ,” she said.

Leland Kerr, liaison with FaithHealthNC, shared about the success of the annual Mother’s Day offering each year which helps with bills for those who have recently faced physical and financial crisis.

“The Mother’s Day Offering began in 1924, a year after our facility was opened, and it continues to touch the lives of [patients],” he said.

In the last fiscal year, the offering helped 59 patients “find the help they need through the generous support of this offering. Thank you, N.C. Baptists, for giving \$550,000” to this year’s offering.

He reminded messengers offering materials would be available in March 2015 for next year’s offering. Because of N.C. Baptists’ giving to the Cooperative Program, Kerr noted that the hospital is able to fund ministries like care.net pastoral counseling.

N.C. Baptist Aging Ministry

Wearing a birthday hat, Sandy Gregory, director of NCBAM, asked messengers to celebrate five years of ministry. It was at the BSC annual meeting five years ago that this ministry began through the Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina.

“God has blessed us,” Gregory said, noting tremendous growth. “He has blessed our team to develop our vision for ministry making a difference in the lives of aging adults across [the state].”

Gregory thanked N.C. Baptists for “making a difference” as well as for their gifts and support.

He thanked North Carolina Baptists on Mission (also known as North Carolina Baptist Men) and state fire marshalls who have helped with installation of smoke detectors.

NCBAM is “on the cutting edge of ministry,” Gregory said and, highlighted the Red Bag ministry to help keep medicine together so emergency personnel know what people are taking and how to respond.

“We are making a difference,” he said. **BR**

Holidays

Continued from page 12

to build big and costly churches, not to give His followers earthly power and rule, but – and this is why the angels sang their praise – ‘to save sinners.’ He came, not to establish social service, social consciousness, social justice, but first and foremost He came to seal our salvation. No wonder the apostle calls the mercy of God as shown by the gift of Christ ‘unspeakable’; it goes beyond the limit of human speech. Just as beholding the glare of the sun, men lose their power of vision, so raising our eyes to the brilliance of Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, we are blinded by the splendor of the greatest gift that God himself could bestow. Christ came to save – blessed assurance! But more: He came to ‘save . . . to the uttermost,’ so that no sin is too great, no sinner too vile, to be blessed, when penitent and believing, by this gift.”

Get this, at least two holidays which we are afforded as Christians, actually self-perform the evangelization for us: Thanksgiving and Christmas. Followed by one another, people are put face-to-face with who they think they should thank for what they have, and who the Christ is in Christmas.

We need say very little to make these holidays evangelistic. We simply need to remember the turkey on the table at Thanksgiving, and the tree in the room on Christmas are not our enemies, but friends in setting forth an important message to our culture, namely that all that we have and enjoy comes from God via creation (Thanksgiving) and via incarnation (Christmas).

That doesn’t mean we do not endeavor to verbally share Christ at the Thanksgiving table or around the Christmas tree.

But it is helpful to note that trying to witness to an unbelieving family member at Thanksgiving may be done more in a rested and happy countenance that you have because you are in on the secret.

And sharing the gospel around the Christmas tree may not be simply reading the Christmas story to your children this one time of the year, but more in your children seeing Christ has entered you this Advent, and made you so glad that you don’t have to prove something at the tree, because they see in your countenance and they hear it in your voice that you can’t stop thinking about a better one, the cross. Now that’s an unspeakable grace.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Brian J. Mann is pastor of Catherine Lake Baptist Church in Richlands. His column, which was originally published at banneroftruth.org, was used by permission.) **BR**

Biblical Recorder prize winners

At the Greensboro annual meeting, the *Biblical Recorder* gave away prizes that included a 32GB iPad mini, Jan Mulder Christmas CDs, as well as items donated by LifeWay Christian Resources and B&H Publishing. With approximately 400 entries submitted for the drawing, 13 winners were chosen. Below are the winners and their prizes.

● **iPad mini** – Cameron McGill; Dublin First Baptist, Dublin

● **Truth Matters* 10-book Leader Kit** – Michael Rakes; New Friendship Baptist Church, Winston-Salem

● **Truth Matters* 10-book Leader Kit** – David Hayes; Hopewell Baptist Church, Monroe

● **Holman Rainbow Leathertouch Study Bible*** – Leland Holland; Rocky Hill Baptist Church, Brevard

● **Daily Chronological Bible*** – Harvey Gates; Blazin’ Trails Cowboy Church, Lincolnton

● **Daily Chronological Bible*** – Wendy Godowitz; Cornerstone Baptist Church, Clemmons

● **Women’s Leathertouch Study Bible*** – Dakota Spurling; Hulls Grove

Baptist Church, Vale

● **HCSB Compact Bible*** – Edith Caraway; New Beginnings Baptist Church, Delco

● **Holman NKJV Leathertouch Study Bible*** – Gene Wells; Elm City Baptist Church, Elm City

● **Holman Bible*** – Mark Perko; Deep Creek Baptist Church, Wadesboro

● **Holman Bible, large print*** – Larry Wilkerson; Roxboro

● **Holman Bible, large print*** – Terri Lamkin; Carthage Baptist Church, Carthage

● **King James Bible, large print*** – Carlyle Hall Jr.; Castalia Baptist Church, Castalia

Special thanks to N.C. recording artist Jan Mulder and Miller Music who provided six CDs of Mulder’s newest release, “Christmas,” featuring Andrea Bocelli and the London Symphony Orchestra. These items along with *BR* coffee mugs and additional books were given away to those who were present at the drawing Nov. 11.

* Donated by LifeWay Christian Resources or B&H Publishing **BR**

December 14

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

December 21

The Shelter of God's Salvation

Focal Passage: Psalm 27:1-6

OK, let's admit together: There is a power outage, and when you walk into a room you still hit the light switch to turn on the lights. Be honest. Yes, it is human nature. Why? Because we depend upon it. It is always there, most of the time.

Moreover, when it isn't, we feel totally let down. People will fail us, material things will fail, plans will go awry, and all that we see and know around us can fail us when we count on them most. Someone has said that there are two things we can depend upon: "Death and Taxes." The Bible says that we can be sure of two things (Hebrews 10:27) – death and judgment. The entire Word of God shows us clearly that the one thing that is unchanging (James 1:17) is God.

In Psalm 27, David gives us a clear picture that the One he ultimately relied upon was God, and it is God who we can rely upon today.

The ultimate reason Jesus came into the world was to "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). Moreover, because He is God, we can rest assured that what He

has provided is enough. When He completed the work of salvation that day, He provided us an assured guarantee of our safety, security, guidance and rest.

David had a desire "to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, gazing on the beauty of the Lord and seeking Him in His temple" (Psalm 27:4). Jesus came and provided the way that anyone "who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13).

I have always loved this verse – it is infinite in its scope, and finite in its meaning. Anyone who comes to Jesus and trusts Him is guaranteed eternity in the presence of God. Because of this promise, we do not need to fear the future, we have confidence in what we have and know the security that only God can give.

As you consider this truth, do you know the security that comes from a personal relationship with Christ? Have you shared this with others around you so that they too can have security of salvation?



THOMAS MARSHALL
Spring Hill Baptist
Church, Wagram

The Shelter of God's Forgiveness

Focal Passage: Psalm 32:1-7

Someone said life assurance is far more valuable and important than life insurance. I read that not long before Marghanita Laski died in 1988 – a well-known secular humanist and novelist – she said, "What I envy most about you Christians is your forgiveness; I have nobody to forgive me."

God designed man to have a need to relieve the guilt he has in life. Guilt is a spiritual issue, not a psychological issue. We try to cope and explain away the mechanism of guilt, while continuing to struggle with it. We seek all sorts of ways to conceal, to release, to endure the pangs and feelings of guilt that is unresolved in our souls.

This reminded me of Val Patterson who died on July 12, 2012, due to cancer. He knew the end was coming, so he chose to write his own obituary notice. Through media outlets, this obituary went viral.

In this account he said, "Now that I have gone to my reward, I have confessions and things I should now say. As it turns out, I am the guy who stole the safe from the Motor View Drive Inn back in June 1971. I could have left that unsaid, but I wanted to get it off my chest."

Forty-one years earlier as a teen, he had committed a robbery.

Though the police did not catch him, he was never able to escape the voice of a guilty conscience. Just as many today seek to hide or remove this voice, it keeps coming back to cause us pain and remorse.

King David said in Psalm 32:1-2 (HCSB): "How joyful is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How joyful is the man the Lord does not charge with sin and in whose spirit is no deceit!" Jesus Christ came into this world to offer us forgiveness for our sins, and to remove them completely from us (Psalm 103:12).

It will be no small comfort when we come to the end of our journey to know that our sins are forgiven, and that they are not screaming at us in the corridors of our mind as we pass from this world to the next.

December 14

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

December 21

God Provides Deliverance

Focal Passage: Esther 4:6-17

Have you ever heard the adage: "Caught between a rock and a hard place?" That statement indicates a situation wherein a person has two options available to them, neither of which is desirable. You likely have been in such a situation at some point in your life. So what will you decide? And, what things will you take into account in order to help you make your final decision?

There are many resources you can use when considering your course of action. You can simply weigh the pros and cons of each option and try to determine which has the best outcome or the least undesirable outcome. Hopefully, you will seek God's wisdom and direction in His Word and in prayer.

Esther is caught between that proverbial rock and a hard place. On the one hand, Haman is seeking to have Esther's people (the Israelites) killed because of his retaliation against Mordecai. On the other hand, Esther has not been in the presence of her husband, the king, in over 30 days. To go before him uninvited could cost Esther her life. To do nothing would mean the death of her people and

her death as well. She sought the wisdom of Mordecai. She, along with those around her, fasted and prayed as she approached the necessity of action.

While Mordecai challenged Esther to consider the fact that she could have become queen "for such a time as this," and while Esther risked her life by going uninvited before the king, the real hero in this story is the covenant-keeping God of Israel. God's providence is seen at every step. His faithfulness is seen in His rescue of His people from the hand of Haman. God made a promise to Abraham to bring from him a great nation – a nation from whom the Savior would come. No earthly tyrant would thwart the redemption plan of our covenant-making, covenant-keeping God.

While God may sometimes call us to walk in great faith and trust Him in the midst of extremely challenging circumstances, we can trust Him to be faithful to keep His promises and to providentially work in a way that is both for our good and His glory.



RANDY MANN
Lead Pastor, Central
Baptist Church,
Henderson

Focal Passage: Luke 2:8-20

As I read through this familiar passage again, I couldn't help but think of the words to the song "A Strange Way to Save the World."

The chorus of the song is sung from the perspective of Joseph, Jesus' earthly father. He is standing in the stable at Bethlehem, asking: "Why me?/I'm just a simple man of trade? Why him?/With all the rulers in the world? Why here?/Inside this stable filled with hay? Why her?/She's just an ordinary girl? Now I'm not one to second guess what angels have to say. But this is such a strange way to save the world."

Consider how strange this must've been from a human perspective. It began with an unusual announcement to a barren, elderly couple – Abraham and Sarah – about their son who would be the forerunner of God's messiah. Then came an unusual announcement from an angel to a teenage girl who was engaged to a carpenter – not exactly the expected family line for the birth of a

king. This young couple ended up in an unusual, small town and was forced to go to a most unusual birthing place like the stable where a king's animals might eat. This couldn't be where the king should be born.

Then an unusual heavenly host brought this joyful announcement to simple shepherds who were keeping their sheep on a hillside outside of town.

From our human perspective, this whole endeavor seems a most unusual approach, but it was God's perfect provision of exactly what man needed.

As D.A. Carson so aptly reminds us, "If God had perceived that our greatest need was economic, he would have sent an economist. If he had perceived that our greatest need was entertainment, he would have sent us a comedian or an artist. If God had perceived that our greatest need was political stability, he would have sent us a politician. If he had perceived that our greatest need was health, he would have sent us a doctor. But he perceived that our greatest need involved our sin, our alienation from him, our profound rebellion, our death; and he sent us a Savior." Go tell the Good News of this Savior! His name is Jesus!

CLARIFICATION

In the Nov. 22 edition of the *Biblical Recorder* we published a story on page 3 titled, “Group proposes purchase of UNC Battle House.” The story referred to the “Carolina Christian Study Center,” which is the legally chartered name for the ministry that proposes to purchase the Battle House. However, the organization is now operating under the name, “North Carolina Study Center,” as listed on its website. We want to clarify the organization’s name for our readers.

Steve Green’s Bible curriculum shelved by school district

By ADELLE M. BANKS | Religion News Service

An Oklahoma school district has shelved a Bible curriculum that Hobby Lobby President Steve Green had hoped would be used by students in January. Two legal groups that opposed the elective said Nov. 25 that the Mustang Public Schools decided not to feature the curriculum, which was approved in April by the school board.

Opponents, who say the curriculum is biased and

supports the conservative Christian belief that the Bible is inerrant, or without error, welcomed Mustang School District’s decision.

Jerry Pattengale, executive director of education of the Green family’s Museum of the Bible, said, “[The] Museum of the Bible remains committed to providing an elective high school Bible curriculum and continues work on an innovative, high-tech course that will provide students and teachers with a scholarly overview of the Bible’s history, narrative and impact.” **BR**

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Pastor

Peachtree Memorial Baptist Church, Murphy, NC, is prayerfully seeking a **Senior Pastor**. Average attendance of 210 in worship service and 135 in Sunday School. Seminary graduate and pastoral experience preferred. Please send resume to Pastor Search Committee, Peachtree Memorial Baptist Church, 1650 Highway 141, Murphy, NC 28906. Resumes will be accepted until February 1, 2015.

Baptist Chapel Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a **full-time interim pastor** led by God and willing to lead our church by glorifying our Lord and Savior through worship, discipleship, fellowship, prayer and ministering to our church family. Preferred candidates should have a seminary degree as well as 10 years pastoral experience. The interim pastor will be bridging the gap between our retiring pastor of 18 years and our future pastor. Primary duties will include Sunday morning service, Sunday evening Bible study, Wednesday evening prayer, visiting the sick and shut-ins and ministering to the needs of the congregation. Please send resume and references to Baptist Chapel Pastor Search Committee, 9339 High House Road, Salemburg, NC 28385, csbrown@intrstar.net. Resumes will be received thru December 31, 2014.

Senior Pastor. First Baptist Church, Forest City, NC (<http://www.fcabc.com>), is seeking a full-time Senior Pastor for a 160+ year old church located in the foothills of North Carolina. We are a moderate, traditional Baptist fellowship primarily aligned with CBF but also have SBC and BSCNC ties. Qualifications include a degree from an accredited seminary or divinity school and five to ten years of pastoral experience. Applicants should submit a resume with references to: fbcforestcity@bellsouth.net or to Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 211 West Main Street, Forest City, NC 28043. Responses are due by December 31.

Full-Time Senior Pastor needed. Sandy Plains Baptist Church in Gastonia, N.C., is prayerfully seeking the man whom God has chosen to lead and shepherd our congregation. We are a Bible-believing, Bible-teaching Southern Baptist church. We are looking for a Pastor who is biblically grounded and mission minded. Experienced pastors and seminary graduates need only apply. Send resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, Chairman David Lynn, 4211 Beaty Rd., Gastonia, N.C. 28056; 704-962-4403; davidlynn2014@outlook.com.

Lake Lynn Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a **spirit-filled leader**, excelling in preaching and teaching skills, and possessing a strong passion for fulfilling all duties of a pastor. Pastoral candidate must submit resume by January 1, 2015, to lakelynnbaptistchurch@embarqmail.com or Pastor Search Committee, Lake Lynn Baptist Church, 3363 Gillespie Street, Fayetteville, NC 28306.

Calvary Baptist Church in Lincolnton, NC, is prayerfully seeking a **senior pastor**. We are a Southern Baptist church with an average attendance of 250 in worship service an average of 165 in Sunday School. Please send resume with cover letter and personal references to Pastor Search Committee, c/o Calvary Baptist Church, 493 Calvary Church Road, Lincolnton, NC 28092. Resumes will be accepted until December 31, 2014.

Church Staff

Mount Olive Baptist Church of King, NC, seeks **part-time music leader** to oversee all areas of music ministry. This includes, but is not limited to, all worship services, special services, and event oriented services in which music is needed. Experience in a church music setting with traditional and contemporary styles is preferred. Send resume to Carl Goodman, c/o Mt. Olive Baptist Church, 5413 NC 66 Hwy S., King, NC 27021, or email to carlgoodman@mtolivesbc.org.

Associate Minister of Youth and Congregational Life. Roxboro Baptist Church in Roxboro, N.C., is seeking a minister to provide a broad-based program for our youth that would deepen their faith and assist them and their families as they grow. The minister will also serve as part of a ministerial staff team that works together to provide outreach and caregiving ministry for persons in the church and community. A degree from an accredited seminary or divinity school is preferred. Email resume and cover letter to chawkins@roxborobaptist.org by Dec. 31.

The First Baptist Church of Burlington, NC, is seeking a **full-time Associate Pastor** to minister to our children, youth, and their families. First Baptist Church of Burlington is a downtown Baptist church in friendly cooperation with The Southern Baptist Convention and The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The position description for this opening is available on our website. Applications accepted by mail or email. Salary and benefits for this position commensurate with qualifications of the candidate chosen. Candidates should be graduates of fully accredited colleges/ universities and seminaries/divinity schools. Emails concerning this opening should be submitted to pastor@firstbaptistburlington.com. Mailing address: P.O. Box 2686, Burlington, NC 27216. In order to receive full considerations, applications should be received by December 15, 2014.

First Baptist Church of Woodbury, TN, is seeking a **full-time Associate Pastor for Student Ministries and Education**. This position will involve primary responsibility for student ministries from ages 12-25 and education administration for the church. Break down of position will be approximately 60% student ministry, 30% education and outreach, 10% pastoral care. Previous ministry experience, seminary degree, and strong relational skills are required for this position. This church values traditional worship and is affiliated with the SBC. Please submit resumes and cover letter to: First Baptist Church, Personnel Committee, PO Box 218, Woodbury, TN 37190; or send email to fbcwbry@dtccom.net.

Crestwood Baptist Church, a conservative congregation in Winston-Salem, NC, is prayerfully seeking a **part-time Youth Minister**. Please send resume to crestwood.baptist@yahoo.com or Crestwood Baptist Church, 530 Motor Road, Winston-Salem, NC 27105.

Samaria Baptist Church, Raleigh, seeks **part-time Minister Music, Piano/Organist** to provide choir direction for Sunday morning music, Wednesday night rehearsal and special events. Traditional music with an occasional blend of praise/worship. Prefer 4-year music education degree or 5 years music experience. Send resume by December 15, 2014, Attention HR, Samaria Baptist Church, 3621 Poole Rd., Raleigh, NC 27610.

Southern Baptist church seeks **full-time Associate Pastor for Family Ministry**. MRE/MDiv from SACS accredited seminary. Requires a detailed understanding of children/youth. Work/volunteer experience helpful. Send resume and salary requirements to First Baptist Irmo, Associate Pastor Search Committee, 7068 Nursery Road, Columbia, SC 29212.

Crestwood Baptist Church, a conservative congregation in Winston-Salem, NC, is prayerfully seeking a **part-time Pianist**. Must have experience with blended worship; both traditional and contemporary music styles. Please send resume to crestwood.baptist@yahoo.com or Crestwood Baptist Church, 530 Motor Road, Winston-Salem, NC 27105.

Chestnut Ridge Baptist Church, Laurens, South Carolina, a dynamic and growing congregation, is searching for a **Full-time Associate Pastor and Minister of Students**. Send resume to alex@chestnutridgechurch.org.

Miscellaneous

Holy Land Treasures invites you to Christmas shop for beautiful hand carved olive wood gifts made by Christian artisans in Bethlehem in The Holy Land. Nativity ornaments, nativity sets, crosses, Last Suppers, religious necklaces, and hundreds of other gifts are available. A unique gift from The Holy Land is the perfect Christmas gift to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas. **Shop www.holylandtreasuresonline.com or call toll free 1-866-416-4659.**

NCBAM needs handymen to weatherize the homes of aging adults. It’s nice not to have to choose between groceries and heat. Call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

Do you have staff changes at your church or association? Let the *BR* know by calling (919) 847-2127 or email editor@BRnow.org.

MOVED? Don’t forget to change your address with the *Biblical Recorder*. Contact Erin Gandy at (919) 459-5693 or erin@BRnow.org.

Placing a classified ad in the *Biblical Recorder*

Choose one of three avenues:

- Send e-mail to: alison@BRnow.org.
- Submit the information via the *Recorder’s* website at BRnow.org.
- Send a Fax to (919) 469-1674.

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.

Stetzer

Continued from page 11

of the guys who created some meaning and currency around the word “missional?” Define for me what the word “missional” means. A lot of churches are now calling themselves missional churches.

A: I think somebody put that on Wikipedia, so I think there is some truth to that.

“Missional” [has] become an ecclesiological junk drawer. If somebody wants more social justice in his or her church, that’s missional. If someone wants to be contextually relevant, that’s missional. A lot of times missional is the desired change if someone wants to be something else.

Missional is, at its simplest, us joining Jesus on His mission. ... When the church has become a distributor of religious goods and services, when the show is what drives people and people are passive spectators rather than active participants in the mission of God, there needs to be a change. ... A few of us got together, and we created a Missional Manifesto that lays out how we are using the term.

Q: You recently released some research in conjunction with Ligonier Ministries. What is that research

telling us about the state of the country and the state of the church today?

A: We asked 43 questions about issues of faith. We looked at sin, salvation, the Bible, afterlife, all kinds of things. At the end of the day, I think most Americans really like a do-it-yourself approach to things of religion, to things of faith. They are not necessarily looking to the church to be a part of that. Let me give you a couple of examples. “The Bible is helpful but not literally true.” Forty one percent of Americans say that. But when you look at other categories, 18 percent of people who call themselves evangelicals say the Bible is not literally true. Here is one: “Everyone sins, but most people are, by nature, good.” That view would be outside of orthodoxy. Fifty one percent of evangelicals, 79 percent of Catholics, 76 percent of mainline Protestants, and about two-thirds of Americans think that people are, by nature, good. Only 18 percent believe the smallest sin deserves damnation. I think their view of people is very humanist: We are good; God is up there.

Q: What can a pastor do with this data that will help them maybe move the needle on some of these?

A: What’s fascinating to me is there is still a lot of theological confusion, even among evangelicals. ... We are not raising up believers who understand basic theological views. Let me give you an example. We might come from different traditions, but if you are Wesleyan or Pentecostal or Baptist or Calvinist, Presbyterian – all of those groups believe, in one way or the other, that salvation is initiated by God. Yet, that’s not how people answer on our survey.

Q: It seems to me that too often people use religious data for one of two purposes. Either they say, this survey shows how bad things are, and if you’ll buy my book or go to my seminar that will solve your problem. Or, they just use the data to beat up the church or to get the church to change its practice in a way that suits their ideology. Are those concerns valid?

A: I think the answer is yes. I’ll give you an example of the famous statistic that went around the world: 86 percent of evangelical youth drop out of church after high school never to return. I’ll tell you where it came from: A basic group of youth pastors guessed, and an average of their guesses is one of the most

widely quoted stats. Your listeners could Google that and find it all over the place. You can tell immediately it’s not true because how in the world would you know if they never return? ... I would encourage people to look at Brad Wright’s book called *Christians are Hate-Filled Hypocrites and Other Lies You’ve Been Told*. ... I wrote the forward to it, and it really looks at how we have fallen for some bad statistics.

Q: History tells us that when a culture abandons biblical ideals, especially as they relate to moral questions in the basic building blocks of culture, like the family, that culture is in big trouble. Do you see that as the future for America?

A: Right now, it’s very confusing to the world that 75 percent of Americans say they are Christians.

Many of those people [who] say they are Christians hold views that are very contrary to the texts of what Christians [believe]. As the nominal Christians become the “nones” – nones fill out a survey and they say, “I’m nothing; I’m none of the above” – society will become increasingly secular and that will put pressure on Christians. They will become increasingly serious. **BR**



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM
How North Carolina Baptists Support Missions