

# BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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## MISSIONARIES ENGAGE A JEWISH COMMUNITY IN SOUTH AMERICA

International Mission Board

**I**t's not easy for David Harris\* to arrange an evening meal with a friend he's made since moving to South America. Weekends are off limits because Aaron\* is an Orthodox Jew and carefully observes the rituals of Shabbat, the Sabbath. On weekdays their meals together have to be taken at kosher restaurants, of which, perhaps surprisingly, there are plenty in their city.

"I went with him to a kosher McDonald's. It wasn't my favorite burger experience," David recalled. But the fact that kosher McNuggets exist in the city shows the strength of the Jewish community there, the largest in Latin America.

### Learning faith traditions

David and his wife, Hanna Harris\*, both 25, grew up in Baptist churches in Kentucky, but as International

Mission Board (IMB) Journeymen, they spend their days at a Messianic Center in the heart of the Jewish community in a South American megacity. Or you might find them frequenting a local Jewish synagogue, taking a Hebrew class, or building relationships in the neighborhood in a variety of ways.

The couple moved last year from a small town in Kentucky to a city with more than 13 million in its metropolitan area.

They are there to share gospel truth with the Jewish community of more than 200,000. Since the first Jews immigrated to this city in the 19th century, there has been a thriving community there, which grew with further influxes, particularly in the 1930s and after World War II when thousands of Jewish refugees fled Europe.

Many who live there are cultural Jews – from Jewish parentage but not practicing Orthodox Jews.

Because of their flexibility, they are easier for David

and Hanna to interact with. Nevertheless, the two have been on a learning curve since arriving in September 2015.

"It's been a really huge journey coming from not having a Jewish background," said David.

Even though his grandfather was a Messianic Jew, he grew up in a very Baptist environment. "We're trying to soak up as much of the language and culture as we can," Hanna explained.

David and Hanna are Week of Prayer missionaries for the IMB's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering this month.

### Christian expressions

Working with others at the Messianic center, the Harrises celebrate Jewish holidays based on Old Testament stories, but always use those opportunities to bridge to New Testament truths.

See Engage page 15



## ‘Unto us’

I’ve sometimes wondered what Isaiah and those who read his prophecy were thinking when they heard this great text the Holy Spirit gave to the prophet.

*“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”* Isaiah 9:6 (NKJV).

More specifically, the words “unto us” cause me to pause. Who is “us”? The text does not say that a child is born to one specific family; not even to a specific people group, village or country. Many years before the Savior was born, Isaiah said the child will be born to “us.”

Unto “us” a Son is given.

If a friend is expecting a child, I would not say, “A child will be born to us.” I would say, “A child will be born to THEM.”

The prophecy is clear. The Savior did not simply come to Mary and Joseph. He came to us. He came for those in Isaiah’s day who longed for a Savior. He came for those in the first century who needed a Savior. He came for people in the 21st century who need forgiveness of sin. He

came “unto us.”

He came to rich and poor, young and old, male and female, educated and uneducated, religious and profane. He came to all races in all nations of all times.

He did not come to start a religion. He came to give himself to the Father so He could give himself sacrificially to us.

He said to His disciples, *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45).

We demonstrate our convictions about these truths in many ways. At Christmas we give sacrificially to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions so the world will know that He came to them. They don’t know unless we tell them. They need to know!

As you, your friends and your family celebrate the Savior who came to us, the staff of your *Biblical Recorder* wishes you a very merry, Savior-centered Christmas.

We are grateful that the grace of God allows us to serve Him in partnership with you, your church and all followers of Jesus Christ for all eternity. **BR**



**K. ALLAN BLUME**  
Editor



## Celebrate Christmas in the fetal position

As I prepare for another Christmas season, I find myself reading Luke 1:39-45 repeatedly as the Holy Spirit reveals something new with each reading.

*“In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,*

*and she exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?’*

*For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”* (ESV)

My favorite part of the Christmas narrative (this year) does not occur in Bethlehem, but rather in the hill country of Judah.

An expectant Mary does what most women in her condition do; they seek council from another woman.



**Cameron McGill**

In her case, the betrothed virgin traveled to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was expecting a child of her own. I’m sure they compared maternity experiences and traded advice on the process of carrying a child, but something amazing happened.

When Mary greeted her cousin, the babe in Elizabeth’s womb leaped for joy. The fetal position – usually one of stillness – became a place of excitement in anticipation of the unborn child.

Of course, we know that the unborn babe in Elizabeth’s womb was none other than John the Baptist, and the babe in Mary’s womb was the Messiah that would soon make His entrance into this world.

It thrills me to think of the pre-natal prophet’s excitement. Why was he overwhelmed with joy? I believe it was for two reasons: Jesus was coming soon and John was charged with preparing the world for Jesus.

Every believer should be stirred with excitement and celebrate with great joy. Why? Because Jesus is coming soon, and we have been charged with preparing the world for His arrival.

If an unborn child can get excited, we can too. Oh that we too would find ourselves this Christmas in the fetal position. Maranatha! (*Editor’s note – Cameron McGill is pastor of Dublin First Baptist Church and the newly elected president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.*) **BR**

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# IN FOCUS

A WORD FROM OUR LEADER

## Celebrating Christmas with the overlooked and avoided

**E**ach Christmas, I enjoy spending time meditating on the miracle of Jesus' birth. God became man, dwelled among us and died for our sins. It is profound to realize that the sinless, perfect, only living God of all creation stepped outside the realm of eternity, took upon Himself the form of humanity and entered the realm of time when



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

He came into the world to become our Savior. I'd like to invite you to take some time during this holiday season to focus on another specific part about the Christmas story – the people who were invited to be in Jesus' presence when He was born.

Now, we all know that wise men followed the Christmas star and came bearing lavish gifts for Jesus – however, they were not present at His birth. In reality, these powerful, wealthy men arrived at Jesus' home later; He was no longer an infant when He met them, but rather a child in a house (Matthew 2:11).

Scripture does tell us, though, that there were others present at Jesus' birth in the stable. In Luke 2, we find that the angel of the Lord appeared to shepherds and announced Jesus' birth. Can you imagine the scene – the greatest, most powerful king was born, and present at His birth were not noblemen, but rather poor shepherds – shepherds who might have been overlooked and avoided by the rest of the world because of their menial position in life. In thinking about the shepherds, I am reminded of another truth encapsulated in a statement often attributed by some to Abraham Lincoln: "God must have loved the common people; He made so many of them."

Though man overlooks and avoids people, our Heavenly Father does not. In fact, He deeply, deeply cares about those who are overlooked by the world. In Matthew 25:40, the King tells us, "... *inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.*"

I hope that this Christmas season, you will take some time to reach out to those who are overlooked and avoided by the world. When you spend time this Christmas season with family, recognize that some of the most wonderful and effective disciple-making can come out of the loving and trusting relationships between family members. In addition, also remember that at Christmastime, there are many who might not have the same blessing of family as we do. Take this opportunity to reach out to those who might need a tangible sign of God in their lives – a reminder that our Heavenly Father not only sees them, but that He truly loves them and came to be their Savior, too.

Reach out to others in this way during your Christmas celebrations. May our actions and words be truly representative of our Father, whose love knows no bounds and who invites all to come sit at His table.

"And the angel said unto them, *Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*" – Luke 2:10-11. **BR**

## How to give an amazing Christmas gift

**T**he period between Thanksgiving and Christmas always ignites the stress of finding just the right gifts for loved ones and friends.

The reality is that Christmas in America is more of a commercial event than a religious holiday. Decrying commercialism won't change things much, but there are some ideas to make your holiday season a more spiritual experience for your family.

Let me recommend an amazing gift you can give this year that will have long-lasting impact.

I propose that you write your conversion story.

You could print it on parchment paper and perhaps frame it as a gift, or just write it as a letter.

OK, so your kids and grandkids will want something more but, in the end, your story will be the greatest gift they receive.

As Christians, we need to leave a legacy of faith to our families. This could be a wonderful way to tell your faith story to your family. Title it your "Legacy of Faith."

Here is an outline of how you might approach writing your story. It doesn't have to be complicated; just share your story from your heart. And be sure to sign it when you finish.

### First, place your life in context.

For me, I can tell my family of the rich spiritual heritage I enjoy because of the faith of their great-grandparents and grandparents. I can tell of the spiritual umbrella that was cast over our home because of the living faith in Christ and unreserved commitment to the church displayed in our home.

Your story may be different. The context of your journey may be filled with brokenness and pain. Share your story with truth while not glorifying your past.



**ANTHONY L. JORDAN**  
Guest Column

### Second, relate what led to your decision to follow Christ.

I cannot remember a time I did not love Jesus. As a child, I knew the plan of salvation. Yet, one morning in Sunday School, my teacher told us the story of the cross and said, "Boys and girls, someday you will give your heart to Jesus and trust Him as your Savior."

At that moment, the Holy Spirit made the reality of my sin and Jesus' death on the cross for my sin collide. I made the decision then to ask Jesus to forgive me and become my Savior. I went forward in the service that morning, but I really decided to follow Jesus in Sunday School.

### Third, share your faith journey since your decision.

What are the ways you have learned to follow Jesus? How has Christ made a difference in your life? What are some of the life situations you have faced when Christ has walked through with you? There may have been times of financial struggle, sickness or death. How has Christ blessed you and your family throughout your Christian life?

My life is transformed day by day as I follow Jesus. As I learned to feed on His Word and communicate with Him through prayer, He became my forever friend. In every circumstance, I know I have a friend who will walk with me. Space will not allow me to elaborate, but you get the picture.

Even if your family members are younger and do not understand the significance of the gift you place in their hands, there will come a day when this gift will mean more than gold.

So give a gift to your children, your children's children and generations who follow. Leave them a written "Legacy of Faith."

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Anthony L. Jordan is executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.) **BR**

## 16 ways to pray for missionaries

**A**cts 13 and 14 communicate one of the most pivotal stories in all of missions history. They relay the first recorded sending of missionaries by a local church in scripture. Paul and Barnabas were commissioned for their particular task in a worship service, complete with singing, prayer, fasting and the laying on of hands.

Pastor John Piper claimed of this passage, "This moment of prayer and fasting resulted in a missions movement that would make Christianity the dominant religion of the Roman Empire within two-and-a-half centuries and would yield 1.3 billion adherents of the Christian religion today with a Christian witness in virtually every country of the world."

The people in that room in Antioch were together for a particular reason.

They were not all the same, but they found themselves agreeing on a common purpose: they were united by the gospel of God, enthralled in the worship of God and intensely focused on the mission of God. In that moment, the Spirit called out two men to be sent out, and the church responded with immediate obedience. The synergy between the call of the Spirit and

the prayerful response of the church resulted in a supernatural spread of the gospel that continues to this day.

The Spirit and the church sent Paul and Barnabas – the whole church, not simply a few people. The church demonstrated a commitment to upholding those they sent out, even when separated by time and distance.

Essentially, the church said to the missionaries, "We are with you." Remarkably, the primary manner they did so was through Spirit-empowered prayer.

Today, our prayers remain the greatest way we can support those we are sending out, invoking the very power of God to intervene in ways that are beyond our human limitations to save the lost. So, I'd like to lay out [16] ways I see in this passage of Scripture to pray for our missionaries continually.

### 1. Pray that they would be confident in God's Word (Acts 13:4-5).

Missionaries are sent not just to learn culture or do humanitarian relief but to confidently proclaim the Word of God.



**DAVID PLATT**  
Guest Column



# Baptist Children's Homes 'resolves concerns' over foster care reform

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

**T**he Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) said it has 'resolved concerns' with lawmakers over foster care reform legislation that could defund most congregate care programs.

The organization is celebrating changes to the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016 after holding "day-long negotiations," although no official congressional action took place before the legislative session ended.

In its current form the Family First Act severely limits federal funding for group homes to redirect money to foster care placement prevention and family services, such as drug abuse programs and parent skill-based training.

The bill's purpose is to "keep children safe and supported at home."

BCH President Michael Blackwell said the legislation is well intentioned but could lead to unintended consequences.

"Baptist Children's Homes is a proponent of some aspects of the proposed legislation," said Blackwell. "Prevention is an essential part of the continuum of care to children and families. However, with the specific kind of family-focused and trauma-informed services many residential care organizations such as BCH offers, Family First in its original form would only allow children to be placed in care for two weeks before having to move them yet again. This is not enough time to do a proper assessment and determine the best possible care for a child depending on his or her unique circum-

stances.

"In addition, because of the family environment BCH provides, sibling groups that had to be removed from their families are able to stay together in our care. This is seldom the case with other child care placement options as many of them are not able to accept multiple children."

Blackwell said in an email to the *Biblical Recorder* that he and BCH Chief Operating Officer J. Keith Henry were "heavily involved in the process of negotiating the language" of the alleged changes, although lawmakers involved in the talks were not named. Details about alleged changes to the bill have not been released.

Blackwell described the bill as "effectively amended," although no vote was taken before Congress adjourned. Congress will reconvene Jan. 3, 2017.

"We are thankful to the U.S. Senate and House representatives from North Carolina who stood with us in believing that all high-quality care options must be available to children," Blackwell said. "They have worked tirelessly to ensure that the Family First Act will allow all children to receive the care that will best meet their needs."

"We also thank the thousands of BCH supporters who rallied to let Congress know that in its original form, the Family First Act would have had a devastating



impact on many of the children that BCH serves. This support absolutely turned the tide in this uphill battle!

"It is BCH's hope that when the new Congress convenes in January that the amended legislation will be accepted and that all of us who are passionate about the welfare of children and families can celebrate this good news together."

Some proponents of the bill say group care organizations like BCH come at a high cost to taxpayers but offer standard services.

A report by *The Huffington Post* called BCH programs "lucrative" and described congregate care as "warehousing neglected children."

Blackwell said the description is "ludicrous and grossly inaccurate," adding that BCH provides excellent support for children removed from dysfunctional homes and federal reimbursements are determined on a county-by-county basis by local departments of social services.

"When the Council on Accreditation (COA) [an independent human service

accrediting organization] last reviewed us ... the team leader said BCH had a clear 'Culture of Excellence' and they had not encountered an organization quite like ours in all their years of visiting similar ones across the country," Blackwell said.

"Annual licensing and every-four-year accreditation by COA guarantee the highest quality of care. This, combined with in-house training, which holds staff to a high level of competence, makes BCH the leader in its field. The money that BCH receives from the federal government ... doesn't cover the cost of care of one of our precious children, costs such as food, clothing, education, counseling, instruction, house parents, case managers, support staff, recreation, travel, training and special events."

BCH operates 21 facilities across the state serving more than 20,000 at-risk youth, single mothers, special needs adults and aging adults.

In their 2016 report to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's annual meeting, BCH said the number of children under their care rose 24 percent in the past two years. In addition, the number of mothers and children coming into their Family Care residential program increased by 314 percent. **BR**

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# Billy Graham statue finds new home at Ridgecrest

By **AARON EARLS** | LifeWay Christian Resources

**A** larger-than-life statue of evangelist Billy Graham has been installed at its new location at Ridgecrest Conference Center in the North Carolina mountains.

The sale of LifeWay Christian Resources' 14-acre downtown Nashville campus prompted the move from middle Tennessee to LifeWay's conference center near Asheville, N.C.

The statue was removed from LifeWay earlier this summer and placed in storage until the new site at Ridgecrest was ready. Workers installed the sculpture in October near the main entrance to the conference center, just a few miles from Graham's mountaintop home.

Bi-vocational pastor Terrell O'Brien's sculpture depicts the evangelist in front of a 17-foot-cross with arms outstretched holding an open Bible in his left hand. At the foot of the cross are three nails and a stone inscribed with the words of John 3:16. "My grandfather is a humble man who would never want to be lifted up or memorialized in this way," said Will Graham, son of Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan's Purse and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. "However, there are two great things about that statue that I really appreciate. First, the cross is above all else, and second, my grandfather is holding up the Word

of God. Those two things – the cross and the Bible – exemplify my grandfather's life and decades-long ministry more than anything else."

Chris Fryer and Matt Samuelson, two Southern Baptist businessmen from Atlanta, donated the sculpture to LifeWay. It was unveiled at the 2006 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting and placed on LifeWay's Nashville property later that year.

"It was an honor to be at the dedication of the statue in Nashville several years ago with 'Uncle Cliff' Barrows, who just went Home to be with Jesus," said Will Graham. "It's just as exciting for me to see the statue moved to Ridgecrest."

The Southern Baptist evangelist has preached the gospel to an estimated 215 million people in live audiences in more than 185 countries and territories, with hundreds of millions more having been reached through television, video, film and webcasts.

The author of 33 books, Graham has been listed by Gallup as one of the "Ten Most Admired Men in the World" for 53 straight years and 59 years total. Now in frail health, he recently celebrated his 98th birthday in the western North Carolina home he shared with his wife, Ruth, who died in 2007, and their five children.

*(EDITOR'S NOTE – Aaron Earls is a writer for LifeWay Christian Resources. Biblical Recorder staff contributed to this story.)* **BR**



Workers install a Billy Graham statue near the entrance to Ridgecrest Conference Center in Black Mountain. (Ridgecrest photo)

## Former Mars Hill president dies

Mars Hill University Office of Marketing and Communications

**A**. Max Lennon, 76, former president of Mars Hill College (now university), died Nov. 29. A memorial service was held Dec. 5 at First Baptist Church of Asheville. A celebration of life service and interment was scheduled Dec. 13 at Clemson University.

Lennon was a 1960 graduate of Mars Hill College, receiving his associate's degree in agriculture. He received a bachelor's degree in animal science from North Carolina State University and operated a farm for several years before returning to N.C. State to earn his doctorate. He began his education career in 1970 as an associate professor at Texas Tech University, followed by teaching and administrative positions at the University of Missouri and Ohio State University.

He became president of Clemson University in 1986, and served there until 1994. His presidency included Clemson's first multi-million-dollar capital campaign, which raised \$101 million; an increased focus on research and graduate programs; significant growth in enrollment during a time of severe state budget cuts; and a major building program.

After leaving Clemson, Lennon became president and chief executive officer of Eastern Foods, Inc.

In 1996 Lennon was selected to succeed retiring Mars Hill College President Fred Bentley, who had served in the position for 30 years.

Besides his own time as a student, Lennon had many family ties to Mars Hill. His mother and all seven of his siblings attended the school, as did several nieces and nephews.



**A. MAX LENNON**

His brother, Bernard, served on the college's board of trustees in the 1980s.

He met Ruth Ann Carter, a fellow student and a descendant of one of the institution's founding families, during his freshman year at Mars Hill. They married in 1961.

Under his leadership Mars Hill experienced strong growth in fundraising; secured a \$10 million bond issue from the state of North Carolina; more than doubled its endowment; developed a \$5 million capital improvement fund; and implemented a 10-year strategic planning process.

Lennon's time as president saw major repairs to Harrell Pool, installation of new lighting around campus and new roofs on several buildings, and the initiation of the complete overhaul and renovation of Brown and

Turner (formerly Melrose) residence halls. He resigned in January 2002 and became president of the Education and Research Consortium of the Western Carolinas (ERC), which worked to bring the communities of Western North Carolina the advantages of high speed computing and Internet access.

In retirement, Lennon remained a staunch supporter of Mars Hill University and was very active with the institution and the Mars Hill community.

He and Ruth established a scholarship in his mother's memory, and were regular contributors of money, time and talent to the university's advancement efforts.

Lennon received special recognition in 2010 for his efforts around the 50th reunion of his graduating class of 1960, receiving the Class Reunion Fundraiser of the Year Award.

Lennon was succeeded by current Mars Hill University President Dan. G. Lunsford.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Ruth Carter Lennon; son, Daniel Lennon; daughter, Robin Bylenga; five grandchildren; and seven brothers and sisters, Lynwood, Beth Fleetwood, Denver, Ruth Dowell, Sybil Tucker, Foy Wiles and Bernard.

Memorials to: Asheville Academy for the Arts First Baptist Church, 5 Oak Street, Asheville, NC 28801, or a charity of your choice. **BR**



# Packathon feeds physical, spiritual hunger

By K. ALLAN BLUME | BR Editor

In a single October weekend, 520 volunteers at Lake Norman Baptist Church in Huntersville packed 155,520 nutritious meals that will be distributed worldwide by the church and by Feed The Hunger (FTH), a ministry based in Burlington, N.C.

Feed the Hunger partnered with Lake Norman to hold four packathon events in the past three years, according to Ron Hoppe, lay minister of missions for the church. “These meals are a powerful, powerful tool for sharing the gospel here at home, in our country and around the world,” he said. “The meals not only alleviate physical hunger in the short term, but feed the spiritual hunger for now and for all eternity.”

Each packed box has enough food to feed a child for a full year. The packets of dry food contain 20 vitamins that most children in developing nations do not get from their normal diet, according to FTH.

Ingredients packed at the Lake Norman packathon included vegetables, chicken soy, vitamins and pasta. With a shelf life of two years, the total cost of each meal is 28 cents.

Joseph Williams, CEO of FTH, said the meals packed by Lake Norman’s volunteers will arrive in Haiti in about three weeks. Other containers of food are meeting human needs in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Jamaica and Brazil. Large containers of packed food recently went to ISIS victims in Iraq. Boxes of food fed survivors of natural disasters in West Virginia, Louisiana and North Carolina this year.

FTH was founded as New Directions ministry in 1968 by Williams’ parents, J.L. and Patt Williams. In the early years the organization emphasized racial cooperation



People of all ages and abilities joined in Lake Norman Baptist Church’s October Packathon organized by Feed the Hunger. (BR photo by K. Allan Blume)

among Christians through the use of traveling music groups, but later transitioned into a cross-cultural outreach.

After leading the organization for the past 10 years, Williams said three years ago they changed the name to ‘Feed the Hunger.’ “People think ‘physical hunger,’ but we’re obviously thinking ‘spiritual hunger’ on equal footing. We want to do both at the same time,” he explained.

Williams believes that just as food ministers to the recipient, the packathon is designed to minister to the church. “It’s about getting the whole church in a service project together,” he said. “We want the packathon to be an extension of the church’s mission, not ours.”

Each church is encouraged to keep some of the packed food for use in their local outreach and their overseas mission partners. Lake Norman has delivered boxes of food to local mission needs, as well as to the Eastern European countries of Moldova and Ukraine.

Churches and schools held approximately 75 pack-

athon events this year. Schools, both public and private, often use it as a service project. In some locations food from the packathon is placed in the backpacks of school children to take home for their family.

“We don’t hide who we are or why we do it – we are openly Christian,” said Williams. “We want anyone to feel welcome to do a packathon just like we want anyone to receive the food. Most schools are OK with that.”

FTH leads packathons at a large, major university in the southeast. Most participants are members of Greek fraternities and sororities on campus that require service projects of the membership, making the project an ideal function.

“We tell them why we do what we do, and they don’t feel threatened with our message,” he added. “We get to share about Jesus in general, and often in specific ways. ... We just rest in the Lord that He will open doors and we’ll just walk through them.”

Williams said the organization was asked to conduct a packathon for one of the largest travel websites in the world. “The feedback was 100 percent positive,” he said. “But after the fact, someone in their HR department was worried that someone might get offended and we have not done one there since. There was no complaint – just the worry that a complaint might come. It’s a shame that it’s come to that.”

Haiti is the destination for more boxes of food than any country served by FTH. “There is an excessive amount of humanitarian aid in Haiti so we focus on feeding school children,” said Williams. “We want to be part of the process of raising up a generation that’s going to make a difference. We feed 3,500 school children every weekday. Some of these kids have been on

**See Hunger page 8**

**FREE**




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# Friendly Avenue pastor, Pat Cronin, dies

BR staff

**P**atrick “Pastor Pat” Michael Cronin died Dec. 4 after a massive heart attack while driving he and his wife home from the airport.

Cronin had been the pastor at Friendly Avenue Baptist Church in Greensboro for more than 20 years. He and his wife, Brenda, had just arrived in town after a trip and were driving home when Cronin had a heart attack at the wheel of the car and drove off the road. She was able to grab the steering wheel and was not injured.

A funeral service was held Dec. 8 at Friendly Avenue Baptist Church.

“He’s been a real good friend,” said Rob Miller, Friendly Avenue’s minister of music and worship, in an interview with Fox 8 Greensboro.

“I’ve lost a good friend and our church is obviously hurting right now, but what we find is that the Lord has given us strength to get through it, and we feel like we will.”

The church’s Wednesday activities were cancelled except for visitation, and the church was planning a combined service Dec. 11. The church also planned to continue a ministry Dec. 9-11 encouraged by Cronin – the living Christmas tree.

It was Cronin’s idea to move the Christmas tree, made up of the church choir, to Four Seasons Town Centre. The tree has been hosted at the church for 14 years. Miller was at the mall in the early morning hours Dec. 4 setting up the tree when he and their crew received news about the pastor’s death.

“Our goal is to share the love of Christ

to people at the mall while they are shopping, and we think we can do that better through song than any other way,” Miller said. “It was his idea to come here. For us to not to, it in a sense it would be to dishonor him.”

There were three performances each day.

A New York native, Cronin apprenticed as an iron worker before being called to ministry.

Cronin earned bachelor’s degrees in biblical education and religion at Florida Bible College and Palm Beach Atlantic University. He received a master’s of divinity degree in

pastoral studies from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and a doctor of ministry in pastoral leadership from Denver Seminary.

Cronin was ordained in 1979 at Sheridan Hills Baptist Church, Hollywood, Fla., where he served as minister of youth.

He pastored Gardens Baptist Church, Hollywood, Fla., Sunnyside Baptist Church, Shepherdsville, Ky., First Baptist Deerfield Beach, Deerfield Beach, Fla., and Friendly Avenue Baptist Church, Greensboro, since 1995.

He is survived by his wife, Brenda, and his children Ryan Patrick (Daren) Cronin, Timothy Brenin Cronin and Erin Elizabeth Cronin; two grandsons; four brothers, Thomas Cronin of Mineola, N.Y., Michael Cronin of Malverne, N.Y., Peter Cronin of Boca Raton, Fla., and Sean Cronin of Deerfield Beach, Fla.; and two sisters, Peggy Hannan of Malverne, N.Y., and Marian Cronin, Lynbrook, N.Y.

Memorials to the Friendly Avenue Baptist Church Building Fund, 4800 W. Friendly Ave., Greensboro, NC 27410. **BR**



PAT CRONIN

## Churches can serve foster children, says Moore

Tennessee’s new foster care initiative offers churches in the state the opportunity to provide crisis ministry to vulnerable children and families, Russell Moore says.

Tennessee Fosters – launched by Gov. Bill Haslam and his wife Crissy at a Dec. 5 event in downtown Nashville – is a campaign to encourage government, churches, non-profit organizations and businesses in the effort to recruit more families for children in foster care and to support foster families. The state has more than 6,000 children in foster care and more than 4,000 foster parents.

“I’m excited beyond description by Tennessee’s leadership in this area,” said Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. “Foster children and their families are among the most vulnerable people in our society.

“If the church were fully mobilized, we would not see the sort of crisis we now have in our foster care system. I look forward to working in this effort and seeking to ignite similar efforts around the country.”

Information on Tennessee Fosters is available at [tnfosters.gov](http://tnfosters.gov). **BR**



# With 52 Sundays, the Cooperative Program becomes personal

By EMILY ROJAS | BSC Communications

**T**he Cooperative Program (CP) can sometimes seem impersonal, Mike Creswell says. So in 2010, when he created a resource that made the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) main budgeting program seem more approachable to congregations, the idea took off.

Creswell, the Cooperative Program (CP) consultant at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), created the "52 Sundays" resource to be primarily used to introduce North Carolina Baptist congregations to the missionaries they support through their Cooperative Program giving.

Originally, this resource was a printed booklet with weekly devotions and missionary spotlights. Missionaries from the International Mission Board (IMB) and North American Mission Board (NAMB) were among those featured, and congregations could pray for a different missionary every week.

For the first time, congregants were able to consistently associate a name and face with their Cooperative Program giving. The CP had transformed into something more than just a budget – it became personal.

"This was a way to help churches to share with their people information and introduce them to the people that they're supporting overseas so they can pray for them," Creswell said. "It's a very basic, basic thing."

It wasn't long, however, before other state conventions heard about 52 Sundays and wanted to be a part of it themselves. Virginia was the first state to adopt this resource, and soon, other states followed suit.

Quickly, the resource changed to adapt to the digital age.

It became a PowerPoint and was sent out to churches as a DVD when more churches acquired overhead projectors for their services.

Soon, Creswell said, 52 Sundays will be sent out in digital format.

The resource was also designed to be versatile – it can be used in a small group or Sunday School setting. 52 Sundays will be sent out to churches this month in time to be used in the new year, but the 2017 resource is also available for free download at [ncbaptist.org/cpresources](http://ncbaptist.org/cpresources). 52 Sundays is also available on the same website in Spanish.

In 2015, this resource from North Carolina captured the attention of the Southern Baptist Stewardship Development Association (SDA), which comprises stewardship and CP workers on the staffs of various Baptist state conven-

tions. The group decided to produce the resource on a national level, making it available to all 42 state conventions in the United States.

In North Carolina alone, this resource has become popular. Former BSC president, Timmy Blair, uses it weekly at his church, Piney Grove Chapel Baptist Church in Angier.

Frank Page, CEO of the SBC's Executive Committee, has also spoken highly of 52 Sundays.

"Presenting a balanced Acts 1:8 missionary strategy in their church is a high priority on the list of every SBC pastor," he said. With 52 Sundays, congregations gain a constant understanding of what it means to follow God's lead and be obedient to His call to the mission field.

"With this resource, we are basically trying to bridge that gap of 'We support thousands of missionaries, but who are they, where are they serving,'" Creswell said.

"These are not just some anonymous people – these are our missionaries, we sent them overseas, and we need to support them with prayer and get people behind them financially."

To Creswell, one of the great benefits of 52 Sundays is the fact that it helps churches to remember their Cooperative Program giving every Sunday. Today, he said, many people might not fully understand why they give to the Cooperative Program – some people might not even know exactly what the CP is. When they see 52 Sundays at church, however, they are reminded that the Cooperative Program allows the featured missionaries and many others to follow God's call to serve on the field.

About 41 percent of all North Carolina Cooperative Program giving goes to global SBC ministries. Of that amount, about 50 percent is allocated to the IMB, and about 23 percent is allocated to NAMB. Last year, a slump in Cooperative Program giving resulted in about 800 missionaries returning home from the field. To Creswell, this fact only underscores the importance of 52 Sundays and using it to engage and educate congregations.

However, income within North Carolina Baptist churches is increasing, and things seem to be looking up for CP. This year, the BSC's Executive Committee of the board approved a budget with a 3 percent increase over last year's. In fact, this is the second year in a row that the committee has approved a budget increase.

This year's budget also includes increased financial support to national and international missions through the SBC.

"The Cooperative Program is one of our hidden mysteries, so we need to get



information into the hands of the churches," Creswell said.

"It's basically the foundation of everything we do."

If you or your church would like

more information on 52 Sundays, please contact Mike Creswell at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5541, or at [mcreswell@ncbaptist.org](mailto:mcreswell@ncbaptist.org). 52 Sundays is available for download at [ncbaptist.org/cpresources](http://ncbaptist.org/cpresources). **BR**



Families worked together to mix packets of food for Lake Norman Baptist Church's outreach and for Feed the Hunger, a ministry based in Burlington, N.C. (BR photo by K. Allan Blume)

## Hunger Continued from page 6

these meals for five to six years, and you can see the difference it's making – not only physically, but in their ability to pay attention in school."

Williams has felt a growing concern for needs in the United States. "God commands us to help the needy and poor in our land. That has convicted me because I was ignoring 75 percent of the Great Commission. I was working only in the [last part] of the Great Commission. ... We're all troubled for our country. I think the need is going to grow more and more here."

Last summer FTH held their first All-American Packathon. "We wanted to create an extra supply of food to help in America in a time of need – not knowing that a couple of months later there would

be Hurricane Matthew. ... We were immediately able to deploy food to Lumberton and Fayetteville."

They partnered with three other organizations in Fayetteville. Some were cooking barbecue, combining it with FTH meals, and distributing the food on site.

Hoppe said Lake Norman joined the special summer packathon. "As a result, we had half of a pallet here when the hurricane hit Lumberton. We were able to get that delivered in two days. It was not enough to meet all of the needs, but it helps in the immediacy of the crisis."

For more information about Feed the Hunger visit [feedthehunger.org](http://feedthehunger.org). Contact them at P.O. Box 2347, Burlington, NC 27216 or (888) 772-9634. **BR**



# Bet-el led Hispanic churches in CP giving

By MIKE CRESWELL | BSC Communications

Iglesia Bautista Bet-el (Bet-el Baptist Church) in Lumberton has been honored for leading all other Hispanic Baptist churches in North Carolina in contributions through the Cooperative Program during 2015.

Bet-el Pastor Cipriano Moreno and his wife, Petra, accepted the award during the annual meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina on Nov. 14 at Koury Convention Center in Greensboro. The presentation came during the annual Hispanic conference.

The Cooperative Program (CP) is the unified budget which allows churches of all sizes to support both the state convention's many missions and ministry programs, plus the Southern Baptist Convention's missionaries serving around the world and across North America, and the six Southern Baptist seminaries, including Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest.

Messengers at the convention's Annual Meeting approved a CP budget for 2017 totaling \$30.375 million, and 40.5 percent of the budget will go to the ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention, an increase of .5 percent over the 2016 percentage.

The presentation was the first time a Hispanic church has been so honored and indicates the growing numbers of Hispanic Baptist churches that are partnering with the BSC.

North Carolina Baptists have ramped up outreach and support for Hispanic Baptist churches greatly in recent years as the number of Hispanics in the state has climbed to an estimated total of about 1 million. Hispanics are by far the largest of immigrant peoples now living in North Carolina.

More than 120 Hispanic Baptist churches are now affiliated with the convention, and the number increases each year. Already several Hispanic pastors have served on the convention's Board of Directors.

The state convention now provides conferences for Hispanics, including a conference at Caswell over Labor Day weekend that draws more than 400 Hispanic young people each year.

Since January 2012, nearly 2,000 Hispanics have accepted Christ as Savior and been baptized in the state



Pastor Cipriano Morena and his wife, Petra, pose with the award honoring the Cooperative Program giving of their church, Iglesia Bautista Bet-el in Lumberton, N.C. At right is Guillermo Soriano, Hispanic consultant with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Soriano presented the award during the annual Hispanic conference held in conjunction with the convention's annual meeting at Koury Center. (BR photo by Steve Cooke)

as newly-started Hispanic churches made nearly 30,000 evangelistic contacts to share the gospel, according to Mark Gray, leader of the convention's Church Planting Team.

This year the convention is financially supporting the planting of 10 new Hispanic churches. William Ortega, Hispanic church planting consultant on the Church Planting Team, leads that ministry. He is also working with more than 50 new Hispanic churches across the state to provide training, materials, coaching and other convention resources.

The Nov. 14 Hispanic conference filled one of the Koury center's larger meeting rooms and was another indication of the growing Hispanic partnership, as were several of the convention's Spanish-speaking consultants now working with Hispanics.

Convention Hispanic consultants like Guillermo Soriano are meeting regularly with Hispanic pastors and lay leaders for leadership training and disciple making.

Fruitland Baptist Bible College, owned and operated by the state convention, offers classes in Spanish taught by native Spanish speakers and coordinated by Fruitland staffer Roberto Fernandez. Fruitland also offers several satellite centers which teach classes in Spanish. **BR**

## AGENCY REPORTS

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) held its annual meeting Nov 14-15. Below is a synopsis of agency reports:

### Fruitland Baptist Bible College

In its annual report to the messengers of the BSC, Fruitland Baptist Bible College (FBBC) reported total enrollment numbers of 423 students (240 on-campus), including 110 Hispanic students.

FBBC President David Horton said many students come from a variety of professions seeking practical, biblical training so they can be gospel witnesses more effectively in their vocational and professional settings.

"They want to impact the lost by making disciples wherever God places them," Horton said.

FBBC offers an associate degree in religion and certificate programs for English and Hispanic students.

### Baptist Children's Homes

Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) operates 21 facilities across the state that serve more than 20,000 at-risk youth, single mothers, special needs adults and aging adults. In its 2016 report to the BSC's annual meeting, BCH said the number of children under their care rose 24 percent in the past two years. In addition, the number of mothers and children coming into their Family Care residential program increased by 314 percent.

### North Carolina Baptist Foundation

The North Carolina Baptist Foundation (NCBF) added 42 new accounts last year, according to their 2016 report, increasing the total number to 2,264.

The financial services organization took in more than \$5 million and distributed nearly \$8 million to mission endeavors and individuals through charitable trusts. NCBF reported \$37 million in debt holdings across 68 accounts.

### Biblical Recorder

Allan Blume, editor and president of the *Biblical Recorder*, told messengers to the 2016 BSC annual meeting that the organization would "end the year financially in the black for the first time in about 10 years."

He emphasized the importance of news reporting from a biblical worldview.

"The clouds of doubt and distrust hang heavily over most secular news sources," Blume said. "The extremely partisan worldview of many news sources is pumping out information that is not accurate, untruthful and severely biased."

Blume reported that *BRnow.org*, the news website for the *Biblical Recorder*, ranks second-highest in the world among Baptist news outlets. The site receives 20,000 to 35,000 unique visitors on average each day.

Despite the *Biblical Recorder's* success, the financial slump afflicting newspapers across the U.S. has not left the 183-year-old North Carolina journal untouched. Blume said not enough Baptists rely on the *Biblical Recorder* for news vital to the ministry of their churches.

"In four years we will not exist unless North Carolina Baptists allow us to serve you," said Blume. **BR**

# Gatlinburg fire: Volunteers urged to be patient

By DAVID ROACH | Baptist Press

The Tennessee Baptist Convention (TBC), the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) and Southern Baptists serving in local government are among those providing aid in the wake of wildfires that killed at least 14 people in and around Gatlinburg on Nov. 28.

But TBC disaster relief officials are urging those wishing to volunteer to be patient.

TBC executive director Randy Davis wrote in a Dec. 1 open letter to Tennessee Baptists that "Tennessee Baptist Mission Board missionaries were able to get to the sites of three of our Tennessee Baptist churches, ministering to pastors while their destroyed buildings still smoldered."

Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief (DR) leaders have presented checks for short-term relief to two Gatlinburg congregations whose buildings sustained major damage: Roaring Fork Baptist Church and First Baptist Church, the *Baptist and Reflector* newsjournal reported. A third congregation that sustained major damage to its facilities,

Banner Baptist Church, also was slated to receive funds.

The largest newspapers in both Knoxville and Nashville published a report Dec. 4 on Roaring Fork's first worship service after fire destroyed both of its buildings.

Roaring Fork Pastor Kim McCroskey told church members assembled at a local Baptist camp facility, "We're God's church. Fire couldn't take that away. Fire can't take our resolve away. I'm weak in the knees and overwhelmed with grief about what's happened, but I'm also overwhelmed with joy about seeing all of you here today," Knoxville's News Sentinel and Nashville's Tennessean reported.

### Eager to help

Although media reports indicate some 1,684 structures have been damaged or destroyed by the fires and at least 134 people have been injured, TBC DR officials are urging those wishing to volunteer to be patient.

"We know there are people eager to come" to Gatlinburg to help, TBC disaster relief specialist Wes Jones

See Fire page 16



# BSC president urges compassion for those ‘crying from the ditches’

By SETH BROWN | BR Content Editor

**T**immy Blair, 2016 president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, closed the first day of this year’s Nov. 14-15 annual meeting in Greensboro by urging messengers to have compassion for the downtrodden.

He spoke from Luke 10:25-37 in the annual presidential address, “We have an answer for those who cry from the ditches of life. Jesus Christ can change those lives. ... We know someone who can set those people free. Jesus Christ can do it. He has the power.”

Blair, who serves as pastor of Piney Grove Chapel Baptist Church in Angier, warned against nominal Christianity, calling for obedience to God and confidence in the gospel.

“You can have religion,” said Blair, “but religion won’t give you compassion. Every church has been placed in every community for a specific reason. That reason is to be a beacon, a shining light, pointing people ... to the old rugged cross.”



“You can have religion, but religion won’t give you compassion,” said Timmy Blair during his president’s sermon for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina annual meeting in Greensboro. (BR photo by Steve Cooke)

Near the sermon’s end, actors dramatized unfortunate life situations and cried out for help as they joined Blair on stage, illustrating his point.

“There are people laying in the ditches of life all around us tonight,” Blair emphasized.

“Can you hear them?”

He drew everyone’s attention to a cross displayed on the projection screen above the stage.

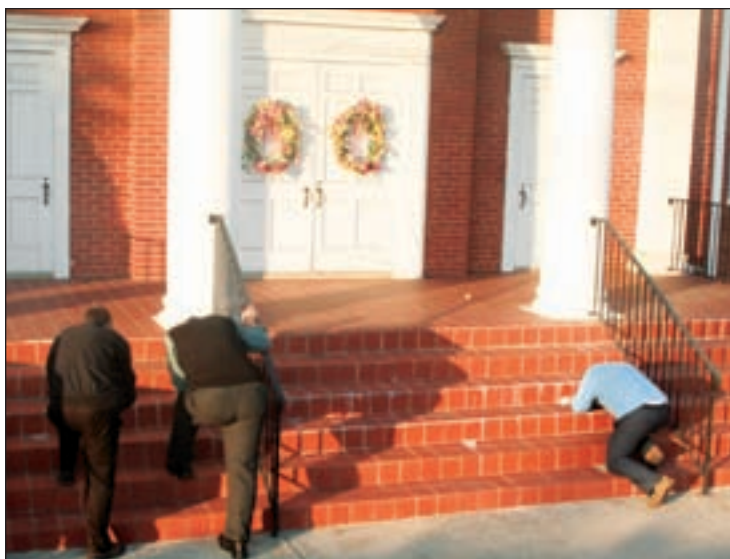
Pointing, Blair said, “I know a place, a place where there’s hope, a place where there’s help. I know someone that will forgive you. His name is Jesus. Look, go to the cross. There, He can help you.”

Blair has served five consecutive years in BSC official roles: two years as president (2015-16), one year as first vice-president (2014), and two years as second vice-president (2012-13). He was elected in 2015 to serve as president of the 2017 North Carolina Pastor’s Conference (NCPC).

Thanking North Carolina Baptists for his leadership opportunities, Blair said, “What a blessing you have been to me – thank you so much for the privilege to serve you.”

Messengers elected Cameron McGill as the 2017 BSC president.

McGill is the immediate past president of the NCPC and pastor of Dublin First Baptist Church. **BR**



Some of the men on the Nov. 15 prayer tour of Greensboro gather at a church’s steps to pray. (BSC photo by Emily Rojas)

## Praying for revival, spiritual awakening on a bus tour

By EMILY ROJAS | BSC Communications

**A**mong Christians, prayer walking around towns and neighborhoods is a common practice – it’s a way to see an area’s particular needs and cover them in prayer.

But when a group at the Annual Meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina decided to prayer walk around the city of Greensboro in under two hours, they decided it would be easier to take a bus.

On Tuesday, Nov. 15, two buses full of Annual Meeting attendees embarked on a guided prayer tour around Greensboro to pray for needs in the areas of church planting, church revitalization, church bodies, unreached peoples and college campuses. Each bus drove through a separate “pocket of lostness” as identified by the convention’s Strategic Focus Team. Four of the top 30 pockets of lostness in North Carolina are located in Greensboro, so the buses traveled through areas inhabited by some of the largest populations of lost people in the state.

This “Pray Greensboro” prayer vision bus tour was organized and planned through the cooperative efforts of the Piedmont Baptist Association and the Baptist State Convention’s

**See Tour page 12**

## WMU-NC leader highlights purposes

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Production Editor

**L**adies involved in Woman’s Missionary Union of North Carolina (WMU-NC) raise funds for missions, pray and provide mission education for all ages, Amy Pardue Boone said to the messengers of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina in Greensboro in her Nov. 14 report.

“I believe that the WMU has a very rich history in impacting lostness, but I believe also that our future is very bright as we teach preschoolers and children and youth and young ladies and adults of all ages,” said Boone, WMU-NC executive director-treasurer.

Boone focused on heroes of the faith during her report.

She shared that both Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong were role models to her. She also mentioned Fannie E.S. Heck, a woman who served 29 years in North Carolina’s WMU. Boone said Heck is the most quoted WMU state president in WMU history.

One of the main reasons WMU was formed was to raise funds for missions. Using the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO) and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (AAEO), funds are raised for both the International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board.

Part of raising awareness of the offerings, WMU offices across the United States are filling orders from churches for materials for the LMCO now and will be working in the spring to get information out about the AAEO.

Another reason for the WMU is prayer, Boone stressed.

“Prayer is the mighty engine that moves the missionary work,” Boone said. “We as Southern Baptists must work much harder to get to know our missionaries. We literally support thousands of missionaries; it’s very easy not to know any of their names.”

Self-funded missionaries have a stronger bond with their supporters because they have to return more often and give reports and raise funds.

But, it was Southern Baptists who helped Boone’s family when they were serving in Mozambique and South Africa. Their salary paid for guards for their home and a vehicle with a winch and an extra fuel tank. The money was also used for malaria medicine and for counseling after Boone was carjacked. It provided two years of language school as well as many Bibles, Jesus films, theology books and agricultural supplies.

This year, “1,123 missionaries had to be sent home because of lack of funds,” Boone said, and “many Baptists did not even know that was happening. We must never allow that to happen again.”

Besides raising funds and prayer, WMU was begun “to provide excellent missions education,” Boone said. “We were the first ones to tell the missionary story.”

Boone shared about one church in Clyde, N.C., who is using Girls in Action (GAs) and Royal Ambassadors (RAs) for afterschool programs. She highlighted one GA director who is now hosting GAs in her home after the flooding in Lumberton after Hurricane Matthew.

A Christian Women’s Job Corps (CWJC) site in Wilmington took some of its ladies on a mission trip to Lumberton to throw a party for a group of GAs. The CWJC women are trying to escape poverty and addiction with the training and mentoring provided. One woman that participated in the mission trip said, “Wow. I love being a missionary.”

CWJC has 18 sites in North Carolina and one in South Africa.

Boone told of a woman who works full time, has four children and faithfully teaches Mission Friends to 28 children. “She is a modern-day hero,” she said. “The leaders that teach GAs, RAs and Mission Friends, they are my heroes.”

While there were many ministries, state and national, that Boone mentioned, she stressed the importance of working together.

“We want to work with you as we impact our world for Christ,” she said.

Visit [wmunc.org](http://wmunc.org). **BR**



# Heavenly Banquet focuses on refugee ministry

By LIZ TABLAZON | BR staff writer

“A glimpse of heaven on earth” is how Ken Tan, leadership development consultant for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), described the Heavenly Banquet Nov. 15 at the Koury Convention Center.

The luncheon, an event during the BSC annual meeting, celebrated diversity as families of different ethnicities worshiped and shared a meal together.

Standing in front of a banner with “Hallelujah” painted in various languages, Phil Kitchin, former pastor of Clarkston International Bible Church in Clarkston, Ga., challenged attendees to actively see and serve refugees and immigrants coming to North Carolina.

Speaking from Luke 10, Kitchin drew on the story of the Good Samaritan to illustrate what it takes to reach and care for immigrants and refugees in the state.

Before pastoring the multi-ethnic congregation of Clarkston International, Kitchin served as an International Mission Board missionary to Belgium, where he ministered to refugees.

The first step N.C. Baptists must take,



“Two things – English and jobs – is what they think they need,” said Phil Kitchin, former pastor of Clarkston International Bible Church in Clarkston, Ga. “What we know they need is a relationship with Jesus Christ.” Kitchin was speaking to participants in the Heavenly Banquet Nov. 15. (Photo by Jayson Cruz)

he said, is to stop and look. He acknowledged that many in the hall were pastors

of ethnic churches and encouraged them to look beyond their own familiar places.

“You see your people group, you know exactly where your people group is. Do you see the other people groups that are in North Carolina?” Kitchin asked.

Second, he said, Christians must stoop down and use their resources.

“To bandage this guy, the Good Samaritan had to get off his donkey and use what he had: oil and wine,” said Kitchin.

Likewise, N.C. Baptists can offer the two things refugees perceive as their greatest needs: jobs and the English language.

Kitchin spoke about Clarkston International’s decision to clear out the church library, which was not being used, and turn the space into an internet cafe used solely for helping refugees and immigrants find job openings, create resumes and practice interviews.

Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., partnered with the church and provided 10 new computers for the cafe.

“Two things – English and jobs – is what they think they need,” Kitchin said. “What we know they need is a relationship with Jesus Christ.”

So Christians must make financial sac-

rifices and be willing to face the messiness that comes with cultural differences.

“In order for this guy to get a wounded man on his donkey, what did the Good Samaritan have to do? He had to walk,” Kitchin said.

“Are you going to walk beside immigrants and refugees so that they would know Jesus?”

“When I read this story, here’s what I see: I am the priest, I am the Levite, some days I’m the Good Samaritan,” said Kitchin.

“But you know where I was when Jesus first found me? ... I was wounded, and I needed him. ... He picked me up and took me to his house and adopted me as His son and said, ‘Whatever the cost is, I will pay it.’”

At a breakout session that later followed the banquet, Kitchin elaborated on other channels of refugee and immigrant ministry, such as providing furniture for families moving into apartments, after school tutoring and healthcare classes. He emphasized that the purpose of each service was ultimately to tell immigrants and refugees about Jesus.

“This is how you earn the right to teach them about Christ.” **BR**

## Annual Meeting breakout sessions fuel outreach, discipleship

BSC Communications

During the 2016 Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s (BSC) annual meeting Nov. 14-15 in Greensboro, attendees had the opportunity to attend two of 23 different breakout sessions offered on Tuesday afternoon. The sessions offered training and equipping in a variety of ministry areas. Following is a sample of some of the topics covered.

### Understanding pockets of lostness

BSC strategy coordinators Chuck Campbell and Michael Boarts led a breakout session aimed at helping individuals and churches understand what a pocket of lostness is and how to engage those pockets with the gospel.

The BSC has identified 250 pockets of lostness across the state, 100 of which are located among the eight major population centers.

The remaining 150 are located in smaller cities, towns and communities.

Campbell said pockets of lostness are sites that have the highest concentrations of unreached households in an area which can serve as a starting location for missionary activity. Members of the BSC Strategic Focus Team are available to assist directors of missions, pastors and church leaders in identifying pockets of lostness and helping them develop an engagement strategy in those areas.

### Discipling a congregation via preaching

Consistent and regular preaching is an important aspect of a pastor’s disciple-making ministry, but it shouldn’t be the only way a pastor makes disciples.



Cathy Moffett, who serves on the women’s ministry leadership team at Glen Hope Baptist Church in Burlington, led a breakout session on discipling women through studying the Bible. (BR photo by Steve Cooke)

Jim Shaddix, professor of preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary encouraged pastors to model their preaching and disciple-making ministries after those of Jesus.

Jesus preached to the crowds, but as He did, He called individuals to deeper levels of commitment in their walk with Him. By the time He ascended into heaven following the resurrection, Jesus had a core group of disciples who were entrusted with the spread of the gospel.

A pastor’s preaching ministry should also help move individuals from the crowds to deeper levels of commitment, Shaddix said.

“It’s very difficult to be intentional about disciple-making in my preaching if I am not discipling people in my personal life,” Shaddix said.

When considering those who may be ready for a deeper disciple-making commitment, Shaddix encouraged ministers to look for individuals with “HEART” – those who are hungry, engaged, available, reliable and teachable.

### Robbing the early college cradle

North Carolina churches have a unique ministry opportunity to reach students of early colleges, which are prevalent in the state.

Early colleges allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. Upon completion, students graduate with a high school diploma and an associate’s degree.

More than 100 early colleges are located in North Carolina, equal to about one-third of the total number of early colleges nationwide.

Because these students are too young to be considered college age but are still not in a traditional high school, they can fall through the cracks when it comes to community involvement. Churches can engage these students on the campus with volunteers and support in a variety of ways such as serving as test proctors, providing food, conducting mock job interviews, contributing school supplies and becoming tutors or mentors.

“This builds a trust relationship,” said Jonathan Yarboro, leader of BSC Collegiate Partnerships Team. “Administration begins to trust you, and they begin to open up the doors of the campus greater than you thought would happen, and then a reproducing gospel presence happens.” **BR**



# Biblical Recorder gives away prizes at annual meeting



Allan Blume, right, editor of the *Biblical Recorder* congratulates prize winner Robert Wise of North Brook Baptist Church in Lincolnton. The *Recorder* gave away several prizes in the exhibit hall during the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina annual meeting as well as prizes at the Pastor's Conference, the Minister's Wives event and via social media outlets Twitter and Facebook. Among the prizes were a Yeti cooler and tumblers as well as handmade pens, Bibles and books. (BR photo by Steve Cooke)

## Tour Continued from page 10

Strategic Focus Team and Office of Prayer for Evangelization and Spiritual Awakening.

Brad Roderick, director of missions of the Piedmont Baptist Association, was the guide for one of the buses – he gave passengers information about the sites they passed so they could better pray for the area. Roderick's bus passed by five main areas that needed prayer: North Carolina A&T State University, 16th Street Mosque, apartments that are home to many refugees, Northside Baptist Church and Magnolia Street Church.

These landmarks were areas of prominence – North Carolina A&T State University has been named the best of the Historically Black Universities in America; 16th Street Mosque is the largest of the six mosques in Guilford County. As the buses passed these landmarks, passengers offered up prayers for the needs of students, for the mosque's 450 members and for God's Spirit to fall on both areas.

"Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world," Roderick said, quoting 1 John 4:4. "I pray that Christians would have the confidence of the Lord to share (the gospel) with them."

The churches that the groups visited were also places in significant need of prayer – Northside Baptist Church is a church in desperate need of revitalization. J.S. "Bud" Parrish, the church's

interim pastor, has helped the church grow in outreach to its neighborhood over the past two years. He's expanded Northside's homeless outreach, feeding about 170 homeless people each week.

But still, the need for revitalization at Northside is great.

"There are 19 churches on the north side of (Greensboro); now 17 are in decline," Parrish said. "That's why we're not reaching this community. So pray for revitalization."

Passengers also prayed for revitalization at Magnolia Street Church. The church has a rich history but in more recent years has seen a transition in its community's demographics. Attendees prayed not only for those who are new to the city, but also for those who have remained in the area as it's changed.

"It was very evident the Spirit was working in individuals and in the group, just bringing our hearts together," said Gretchen Roderick, who is married to Brad Roderick and was a contributor in orchestrating the prayer tour. "I am anxious to see how (God) is going to respond to all the prayers we've lifted up."

More prayer vision tours are being planned for 2017 in different lost pockets across North Carolina. For more information on the 2017 prayer tours, contact the Strategic Focus Team or the Office of Prayer at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina: (800) 395-5102. **BR**

BR staff

The *Biblical Recorder* (BR) booth attracted many visitors during the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's annual meeting Nov. 14-15.

Each year the *BR* gives away prizes at the booth and elsewhere to those who register. This year the bigger prizes included a Yeti cooler and tumblers as well as handmade ink pens in the *BR*'s trademark red. Four women won books at the Nov. 14 North Carolina Baptist Minister's Wives event, and this was the first year the *BR* gave away prizes via social media. LifeWay Christian Store in Greensboro donated books and Bibles for the giveaway.

Below is a list of prizes with the winner's name and church.

- Yeti cooler (booth): Phil Oakley, Center Grove Baptist Church, Clemmons
- Yeti tumbler (via Facebook): Kris Estep, pastor of Barberville Baptist Church, Waynesville
- Yeti tumbler (via Twitter): Scott Talley, student pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Hillsborough
- Yeti tumbler (via Pastor's Conference program): Stephen Nicholson, Baynes Baptist Church, Burlington

- Yeti tumbler (booth): Elizabeth Gibbs, FBC, Midland
- Yeti tumbler (booth): Robert Wise, North Brook Baptist, Lincolnton
- Pen and Bible: Chuck McKnight, Cobb Memorial Baptist Church
- Pen and Bible: Bud Russell, Mount Vernon, Boone
- Pen and Bible: Ester Brinkman, Dublin FBC
- Pen and copy of *Fervent: A Woman's Battle Plan to Serious, Specific and Strategic Prayer* by Priscilla Shirer: Steve Parker, Lenior
- Copy of *Giddy Up, Eunice: Because Women Need Each Other* by Sophie Hudson: Diane Smith, Jonesboro Heights Baptist Church, Sanford
- Copy of *Giddy Up, Eunice: Because Women Need Each Other* by Sophie Hudson: Gladys Campbell, Piney Knob Baptist Church, Rutherfordton
- Copy of *She Reads Truth: Holding Tight to Permanent in a World That's Passing Away* by Raechel Myers and Amanda Bible Williams: Sarah Maples, Mount Elam Baptist Church, Roseboro
- Copy of *She Reads Truth: Holding Tight to Permanent in a World That's Passing Away* by Raechel Myers and Amanda Bible Williams: Daisy Chestnut, Evergreen Baptist Church, Rose Hill **BR**



## DISCIPLE-MAKING

CONFERENCE

EVANGELISM + DISCIPLESHIP = DISCIPLE-MAKING

Join N.C. Baptists for the 2017 Disciple-Making Conference. If you've been changed by Christ, it should lead to a life that's marked by being a disciple who makes disciples. Equipping and main sessions will focus on the pillars of disciple-making: evangelism and discipleship. A featured women's evangelism and discipleship equipping session will be led by Tabatha Frost of Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh.

MONDAY, FEB. 27, 2017 | 8:45 A.M. - 3:45 P.M.

CENTER GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH  
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**ED NEWTON**



**D.A. HORTON**



**MICAH FRIES**



## OPPORTUNITY CORNER



The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) is hosting two adult handbell festivals. The N.C. Baptist Adult Handbell Festivals offer a unique experience for bell choirs.

Festivals are open to any church, denomination, school, group or individual of like mind and principle and are an opportunity for growth and training of handbell choirs. Brian Childers, minister of music at First Baptist Church in Mount

Holly is the director for the 2017 festivals.

The West festival is Feb. 24-25 at The LeGrand Center in Shelby and the East festival is March 24-25 at Winter Park Baptist in Wilmington.

Registration deadline is Feb. 3, or until space is filled. Cost is \$25 per individual, \$250 per BSC affiliated church or \$300 per non-affiliated group and does not include lodging or meals. Visit [ncbaptist.org/adulthandbell](http://ncbaptist.org/adulthandbell).



The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina is hosting Awaken: Rend Your Heart, a North Carolina prayer gathering March 10-11 at Osborne Baptist Church in Eden. The gathering provides a rich environment for participants to encounter the Lord and refocus their hearts on Him through seasons of directed prayer, the preaching of God's Word and Christ-

centered worship. Participants will also be challenged to return to their churches and communities with a renewed burden to call others to seek Christ in heartfelt prayer toward revival, spiritual awakening and impacting lostness. Speakers include Gordon Fort, Steve Griffith, Mel Blackaby, K. Marshall Williams Sr. and Chris Schofield. Visit [ncbaptist.org/awaken](http://ncbaptist.org/awaken).



Baptists on Mission is hosting the 2017 Missions Conference March 17-18 at Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem. The event is open to all Baptists. Special features include general sessions, mission action breakout sessions, mission fair exhibits, the volunteer supper and mission testimonies. Program personalities include John Ortberg, Anne

Graham Lotz, Gary Chapman, Jennifer Rothschild, Terry Rae, Taylor Field and music by the Annie Moses Band. Cost is \$20 per person and includes program fee, materials, all general sessions, breakout sessions and Saturday lunch. Friday night supper is an additional \$8 per person. Visit [baptistsonmission.org/events/missions-conference](http://baptistsonmission.org/events/missions-conference).



Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina is hosting its annual Missions Extravaganza March 24-25 at First Baptist Church in Greensboro. The theme for 2017 is "By All Means." Participants will meet missionaries and choose from a wide variety of breakout sessions that will encourage, challenge and equip. There will be worship music by Cindy

Johnson of Old Town Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, renewal and fellowship with women (and men) on mission across the state. Featured speakers include Nik and Ruth Ripken and Linda Cooper. Registration fee is \$50 if received by Feb. 1 or \$60 after Feb. 1 and includes Friday dinner and lunch on Saturday. Visit [wmunc.org/mission-extravaganza](http://wmunc.org/mission-extravaganza).

## CDC reports abortion rate at all-time low

WORLD News Service

**T**he number of women and girls seeking abortions in the United States dropped by one-fifth between 2004 and 2013, a new report shows. The abortion rate is the lowest it's been since 1969 when the government started tracking the procedure.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released its 2013 abortion surveillance in late November. It shows a 20 percent drop in total abortions since 2004, another tick in the decades-long downward trend.

Pro-life leaders see the new data as more proof the pro-life movement has changed public opinion about abortion.

"Legislation, education, outreach that exposes the reality of abortion and the abortion industry, that increases knowledge and use of alternatives to abortion, and a general increase in public awareness about the humanity of the unborn child and the injustice of treating our fellow human beings in this way have all played a part, I believe, in our

culture's general movement in a pro-life direction," said Randall O'Bannon with National Right to Life.

According to the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute, nearly one-third of all pro-life laws since *Roe v. Wade* were passed between 2011 and 2016.

The Family Research Council's (FRC) Arina Grossu calls the trend "a tsunami of pro-life laws. FRC credits this to the advances in science which reveal the humanity of the baby, a growing pro-life public and a decrease in sexually-risky behavior."

Grossu cited "4D" ultrasounds, which show the mother a three-dimensional picture in real time (the fourth dimension), as well as new, intricate digital mapping of human babies in the first few weeks of gestation for influencing views on abortion. The CDC report, which drew on data from 49 reporting areas, showed a decrease not only in total abortions, but also in the rate of abortions for every 1,000 females ages 15-44 as well as the ratio between abortion and every 1,000 live births since 2004. **BR**

## Gardner-Webb University ranks in top 50 of best online colleges

Gardner-Webb University Communications

**A**ccreditedSchoolsOnline.org recently recognized Gardner-Webb University (GWU) among its listing of the best online colleges for 2016-2017.

The university ranked 35th out of the top 50 institutions of higher education in the nation, ahead of notable programs such as Auburn University, Villanova University and New York University.

"We are delighted to see this ranking for GWU's online programs by AccreditedSchoolsOnline.org," said Ben Leslie, GWU provost and executive vice president. "Controlling costs and tuition rates is indeed a priority for Gardner-Webb, because we recognize the critical importance of keeping higher education affordable and achievable for every income bracket. But our greatest priority is ensuring that the online educational experience is of the highest possible quality."

Students at Gardner-Webb can take online courses to earn credits toward a range of degrees, and some undergraduate programs are offered in online-only formats through the Degree Completion Program (DCP). In addition, master's degrees in accounting, business administration, English, international business administration, nursing, and sport pedagogy are also available in online formats at GWU.

Schools are ranked by Accredited Schools Online based on a scoring system that includes key qualitative and quantitative measures including cost/financial aid, number of program offerings, student-teacher ratios, graduation rates, placement and support services offered, academic/career counseling services, employment services and other factors. Other schools in North Carolina to make the top 50 are: North Carolina State University at Raleigh ranked 10th and East Carolina University ranked 25th. **BR**

## AROUND THE STATE

### Staff changes

**DANIEL MERRITT** has been called as pastor to Ivy Green Baptist Church, Mount Airy. Merritt previously served as interim pastor for 13 months at Ivy Green.

Truett Baptist Association, Marble, has called **AL HOOD** as director of missions. Hood previously served as director of missions at Winston County Baptist Association, Double Springs, Ala.



December 25

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

January 1

God’s Living Word Saves

Focal passage: Psalm 119:41; Luke 1:30-35

When God makes a promise, He always keeps it. The Old Testament promised a Savior, and Psalm 119:41 speaks of this promise.

The psalmist equated God’s steadfast love with the promise of salvation.

In Luke 1:30-35, the promise begins to be fulfilled as the angel explains to Mary that she will “bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus ... the Son of the Most High.”

Mary gave birth to a son, fully human, so that we could each receive the salvation through Son Jesus, who is fully God.

As we study this lesson this week, we may be in Bible study with those who have experienced broken promises.

The idea that God makes promises and keeps them might be a hard concept for them.

When our most familiar experience has been that someone makes a promise and then fails to keep it, we may struggle to trust God.

One way we can make a real impact in our work environment, neighborhood or even a church committee is that if we say

we are going to do something, we do it. Are you that kind of person?

One of my daughters and I met my parents at a theme park this past week. It is a park full of music and my mother, who has Alzheimer’s disease, finds joy in the music.

So, we love to take her there.

After parking the car, I was riding on the tram up to the front gate. The tram guide shared that the park had been voted “Friendliest Park” for the fifth consecutive year. I smiled and thought, yes, that has been our experience, and we love it here.

However, when we took my mom in a wheelchair through what we thought was the right door in a theater and were fussed at by an usher, I thought, what happened to the friendliest park?

When people fail us and our expectations are not met, it is disappointing. But, isn’t it great that God never fails? We can always count on Him to save and that is a great message to share.



SHERRA STILL  
Member,  
University Hills Baptist  
Church, Charlotte

God’s Word Is Always Relevant

Focal passage: Psalm 119:89-96

Our passage this week begins with the word “forever.” What does that word mean for us today? It may no longer apply to happily ever after, job security and mortgage, but does apply to God’s Word. His Word is relevant today, tomorrow and forever.

Many have tried to question the relevance of scripture to certain politically correct subjects. However, Psalm 119:89 explains that God’s word is “firmly fixed” in the heavens. In other words, it is not shaken or insecure.

The same truth we learned as children, we now teach to our children and grandchildren. Its relevance is true today as His “faithfulness endures to all generations.” I had the privilege of homeschooling our children for a period of years. One of my favorite approaches to teaching scripture and character building was to look for teachable moments. A teachable moment is a God-given opportunity during everyday life to teach

a valuable lesson. The lesson might be found in nature, a conversation or even something broken at home.

Homeschooling provided many special memories and aided in a smooth transition to educating our children when we went overseas. The idea of homeschooling however was a new one to my generation. One of my sisters and two sisters-in-law blazed the trail for me and shared with me how to begin the big responsibility.

As you ponder tradition in your generation of family members and perhaps the next generation you have raised, is there a way that you are seeing how relevant God’s word is to all generations? Is there something new and different that you need to begin because God is giving you the opportunity? Take time to consider what you want to pass on to the next generation that will change for the better.

Take time to reflect on Psalm 119:93, “I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have given me life.”

What words of life do you need to share with the next generation? Your life has been changed by following scripture, and you have a gift of eternal significance to give others through your testimony.

December 25

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

January 1

Savior Announced

Focal Passage: Luke 1:26-38

The Christmas season is the season of miracles, and young Mary needed one. She was six months pregnant, not fully married and totally perplexed about her future. She had more questions than answers: Would Joseph complete his marital vows, or would he send her away? Did she really want to have this baby? Would she have a future?

Her miracle was that God intervened. He sent His messenger angel Gabriel to her with wonderful words of comfort. She was told to rejoice because she was favored by God. The child growing inside her womb was the promised Messiah. A new eternal Kingdom was coming with the birth of her son, Jesus. He would be called the Son of God. After Gabriel’s shocking and amazing announcement, Mary made her peace with God. Yes, she agreed to be God’s servant, and to experience God’s unusual and unexplainable plan for her life.

Anyone who has ever faced a problem without identifiable answers can appreciate Mary’s dilemma. Anyone who

has ever experienced God’s intervention in a time of crisis can appreciate Mary’s joy. Sometimes we need to “let go and let God.”

Christmas provides Christians opportunities to help others in need. Perhaps God might be saying, “Be the intervener; be the agent of Good News to someone in your church family or community.” For those who seek to model the humility and compassion of Christ, Christmas can be a time of doing less for ourselves and more for others globally.

Some years ago a church I served was blessed to have a retired Baptist pastor and his wife as members. Malcolm and Jenny Lind Fuller were “salt of the earth” Christians. One of their Christmas traditions was to take the money they might have spent on themselves and give that amount to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Christmas is the season for miracles. God provided for Mary and Joseph, and God will provide for you and yours. Share the best news in the world!



WAYNE PROCTOR  
Pastor, Eure  
Baptist Church, Eure

Focal passage: Joshua 22:1-8

From 1986-’96 my family lived in Virginia, but in January 1996 I took a ministerial position in North Carolina. Since it was the middle of the school year and my wife was a public school teacher, she and our two children remained in Virginia until June while I was living mostly in North Carolina.

Our family was unsettled. We had a plan for all of us to be permanently together, but it would take some transitioning. In the meantime we had to make decisions regarding the house in Virginia and a future residence in North Carolina.

What seemed relatively simple became quite complex.

Our house did not immediately sell, so we rented it out for a year. Then we decided to purchase land and build a new house, meaning that while we had an unsold home in Virginia, we became renters in North Carolina.

Moving into our new home during

Settled

Christmas 1998 was a glorious time. We were finally “home.”

The nation of Israel led by Joshua was composed of 12 tribes. These tribes, represented by the original sons of Jacob, consisted of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children. Their goal was to fully inhabit and settle this land to be called Israel.

To do this most effectively, all of the tribes needed to work together, and the ones who sacrificed the most were the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh. Their promised territory was to be on the eastern side of the Jordan River, however, the settlement plan called for these two and one-half tribes to forego their settlement until all the lands west of the Jordan had been fully conquered. Our text describes both exhortation and blessing to these eastern tribes; exhortation to obey God no matter what, and blessing upon their settling in their new “homes” (vv. 5-7).

Settlement comes with its own unique challenges. Because rivers, like state lines, can divide, their settlement required extreme diligence to keep the family, Israel, together.





## Engage Continued from page 1

For example, during the Jewish holiday of Purim in March, which celebrates Esther's part in saving her people from Haman's plot to kill the Jews in the ancient Persian Empire, David and Hanna helped with a play performed at the community center for the neighborhood.

It drew in more than 100 visitors.

One of their deep desires as they seek to touch lives there, is to equip believers to share their faith.

"We want to see Jews come to faith in Christ," David said.

"We also think it's important to be modeling evangelism and to be modeling how to study the Bible. Though it sounds really basic, one of the core aspects is knowing the Bible."

### Pray for:

- Jewish leaders to come to know Jesus. If the leaders come to know Jesus, it would radically change the community.

- The equipping of Messianic Jews, those who have embraced Jesus, so they will learn how to share the truth of the Messiah with their own people.

- U.S. churches that feel led to partner with the Messianic Center in the work to reach the Jewish community in this South American megacity.

\*Names changed

(EDITOR'S NOTE – For more about the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering visit [imb.org/lottie-moon-christmas-offering](http://imb.org/lottie-moon-christmas-offering). For videos relating to this story and other IMB missionaries, visit [youtube.com/brnowvideo](http://youtube.com/brnowvideo).) **BR**

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

### Pastor

Hillside Baptist Church is a conservative Southern Baptist church, and is seeking God's will in finding a **Bi-Vocational Pastor**, who has a heart for people, is evangelistic and mission-minded. Please send resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 1400, Cornelia, GA 30531-1400; Or, please email resumes to [timneamp@windstream.net](mailto:timneamp@windstream.net) by Friday, January 20, 2017.

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

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

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

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

### Church Staff

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

Mountain View Baptist Church of Hamptonville, NC, is seeking a **full-time Director of Worship Ministries**. Responsibilities include leading blended worship, directing a comprehensive church music program including choirs, vocal groups, praise band and instrumental ensembles and coordinating church media. E-mail resume to [mvbc@yadtel.net](mailto:mvbc@yadtel.net).

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

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

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

First Missionary Baptist Church (FMBC) seeks a **Youth & Young Adult Minister of Music & Arts**. Seeking professional, spiritually mature Christian. Primary focus: prepare designated groups for worship services. Will plan, prepare & perform musical selections weekly. Must have excellent communication, organization, computer & administrative skills. The worship style of FMBC youth & young adults consists of but is not limited to Urban Gospel and Contemporary Christian artists, i.e.: Israel Houghton, Tye Tribbett, Mary Mary, Canton Jones, Matt Redman & Jesus Culture. Position is salaried, part-time. All resumes must be submitted electronically to [musicandartssearch@fmbc-concord.org](mailto:musicandartssearch@fmbc-concord.org).

### Miscellaneous

**Rodgers organ for sale** model T807 manufactured 2000 ... Asking \$18,000 ... This beautiful organ has all the bells and whistles your music ministry wants! Call Sue (828) 692-0170.

**For Sale: Chancel furniture and 43 pews of various lengths.** Light finish solid oak with light blue padding. Available for immediate pickup. \$8,100 for entire lot. Contact Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Olin, NC, office between 9am-1pm Monday-Thursday 704-876-4025 or email [pastordavid.mtvernon@gmail.com](mailto:pastordavid.mtvernon@gmail.com).

**NCBAM needs aging adults to GET ALARMED!** Attend an alarm installation training in your area and receive free 10-year smoke alarms to install in the homes of aging adults in your church or community. Call 1.877.506.2226 to learn more.

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

**Do you have staff changes at your church or association?** Or special news you would like to share (significant church or church staff anniversaries or a mission effort to reach your community)? Let the *Biblical Recorder* know by calling (919) 847-2127 or email [editor@BRnow.org](mailto:editor@BRnow.org).

**Share the Biblical Recorder – FREE.** Order three months free. Contact [liz@BRnow.org](mailto:liz@BRnow.org).

**BRnow.org**  
BE SURE TO CHECK OUT  
OUR WEBSITE

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

#### Choose one of three avenues:

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

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

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



# Fire

Continued from page 9

told the *Baptist and Reflector*. “But until residents are allowed to return to their homes and damages are assessed, there is little that can be done.”

A separate *Baptist and Reflector* article listed “wait” among the best ways Baptists can help fire victims.

“Yes wait,” the *Baptist and Reflector* stated. “A needs assessment can’t be done until after first responders have cleared the area. It takes several days to identify and prioritize how best to use available volunteers. Help arriving too early often can’t be administered.”

Other avenues to provide help include prayer and participation in DR training events. Volunteers will be needed in fire-stricken areas for months, the *Baptist and Reflector* reported.

When it comes to giving, Davis reported more than \$20,000 in special gifts to Tennessee Baptist DR efforts between Nov. 30 and Dec. 1.

Another source of relief money is National WMU and the WMU Foundation, whose HEART (Humanitarian Emergency Aid for Rebuilding Tomorrow) Fund awarded a \$5,000 grant to help meet immediate physical needs of local residents who lost their homes.

The grant will be administered through the local Sevier County Associational WMU and Smoky Mountain Resort Ministries, according to a WMU news release.

“Many have been affected by the horrific fires with the loss of their homes and some with their life,” National WMU President Linda Cooper said. “May [God] magnify our efforts as we attempt to minister to those affected.”

Among local Southern Baptists serving in government leadership are Pigeon Forge, Tenn., mayor David Wear, a member of First Baptist Church in Sevierville, Tenn.; Gatlinburg city manager Cindy Ogle, a member of First Baptist Gatlinburg; and Gatlinburg mayor Mike Werner, also a First Baptist Gatlinburg member.

“If you really want to do something for Gatlinburg,” Werner said during a Nov. 30 press conference, “come back and visit us.” **BR**

# Pray

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## 2. Pray that they would be filled with God’s Spirit (Acts 13:6-9).

Believers already have the Holy Spirit in them, but at times the Spirit fills someone in a special way to enable him or her to proclaim God’s Word.

## 3. Pray for their victory in spiritual warfare (Acts 13:10-12).

When our brothers and sisters take the gospel into the nations, they are going into a war. The devil is dead set on destroying souls and diverting mission.

## 4. Pray for their success in gospel witness (Acts 13:12).

Pray that many would come to know Christ in all walks of life from the faithful witness of our missionaries.

## 5. Pray for peace with other believers (Acts 13:13).

Satan attacks from all angles, both inside and outside. Pray for peace within families, in marriages, with children and with companions and ministry partners.

## 6. Pray for favor with unbelievers (Acts 13:14-15).

Nonbelievers are blind to the gospel, and many are violently opposed to its message. Pray that missionaries would find favorable opportunities to share the gospel with them.

## 7. Pray that the gospel will be clear through them (Acts 13:16-47).

Although cross-cultural communication is difficult, pray that missionaries, by grace, would clearly communicate the character of God, the sinfulness of man, the sufficiency of Christ, the necessity of faith and the urgency of eternity.

## 8. Pray that God will open hearts around them (Acts 13:48).

God alone draws people to himself. Pray that he will open hearts and minds to believe and be drawn to eternal life with Christ.

## 9. Pray for their joy in the midst of suffering (Acts 14:1-2).

Missionaries often face various forms and levels of suffering in their work. Pray that they would experience the joy of intimacy with Christ in the midst of it.

## 10. Pray for their kindness in the midst of slander (Acts 14:1-2).

Though missionaries face suffering and difficulty, pray that the character of Christ and the power of his Spirit enable

them to respond with grace.

## 11. Pray for supernatural power to accompany them (Acts 14:3).

Pray that missionaries would speak the Word with boldness and that supernatural power would accompany its proclamation.

## 12. Pray for Christlike humility to characterize them (Acts 14:4-18).

Pray that missionaries would overcome the temptation to be prideful in their work by the power of the Spirit.

## 13. Pray for their patience (Acts 14:8-18).

Missionaries face ups and downs and wins and losses in their work. Pray that they might respond with longsuffering.

## 14. Pray for their perseverance (Acts 14:19-20).

In 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 Paul wrote, “We are ... struck down but not destroyed.” Pray

for missionaries to persevere through setback after setback, beatdown after beatdown, and struggle after struggle.

## 15. Pray that God would use them to make disciples (Acts 14:21-23).

Pray that missionaries would see fruit in their ministries as they seek to make disciples among the nations.

## 16. Pray that God would use them to multiply churches (Acts 14:24-28).

Pray for the multiplication of churches filled with people who know the Word led by pastors who teach the Word.

We know this: joining God on his mission will not be easy, but it will be absolutely worth it. Let’s send out all those whom God has called with faithful support in prayer.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – David Platt is president of the International Mission Board. You can find him on Twitter @plattdavid.) **BR**

## 5 STEPS TO REACHING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students have the potential to not only make a global impact, they can make a significant Kingdom impact, as well.

Reaching these students for Christ while they are here so they can take the gospel back to the people in their home countries is a strategic investment. But how can the local church reach international students? Here are five steps you and your church can take to reach international students.

### 1. Pray

Like all other ministries, reaching international students starts with bended knees. Most international students are coming from a non-Christian background. Like Moses, many will need a burning bush experience to meet Christ and follow Him as their Savior and Lord. Only God can do this. Not us.

### 2. Meet their physical needs

When new international students arrive at the airport in their host city for the first time, they bring nothing but one or two suitcases. Meeting physical needs provides a great opportunity to engage international students in your city.

### 3. Meet their emotional needs

During their first year, international students may experience a “honeymoon” period when they will be excited to learn new things about America. As their time here progresses and the honeymoon period comes to an end, emotional turmoil heightens, and they begin to feel as though they are in a virtual wilderness. Students

desire community because they just want to belong somewhere. Invite them into your home for dinner or a cookout. Don’t hesitate to accept if they invite you to their home. Allow them to stay in your home for few days during holidays. In this way, you will become a family to them away from family – a home away from home.

### 4. Meet their spiritual needs

As you become friends and establish trust with international students, they will likely share more about themselves. As you listen to their struggles and pains, share about difficulties in your life. Share your story of how you met Christ

and how He has walked with you in your life. Offer to study the Bible together with students who show interest. Read the Bible together and use questions to teach them to observe Scripture carefully and to discover the truth for themselves.

### 5. Make them disciple makers

When international students come to Christ, encourage and celebrate baptism with them. Immediately teach them to share the gospel with their non-believing friends. Let the students learn from your example and challenge them to reproduce themselves as you have with them.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Sammy Joo is a multi-culturalist consultant for the collegiate partnerships team at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Contact him at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5562 or sjoo@ncbaptist.org.)



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