



### Call to prayer

The Southern Baptist Convention is encouraging people to pray missionally. They are setting aside time in January and have released a helpful guide for churches. [Page 2.](#)

### Joining hands in the harvest

Westfield Baptist Church shares in a bigger giving plan called the Cooperative Program. Because they give, more missionaries can share the gospel. [Page 4](#)

# BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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## Who will tell them?

N.C. couple thankful for Lottie Moon offering allowing them to share true meaning of Christmas in Asia

By SHAWN HENDRICKS | BR Managing Editor

Jane was in the middle of explaining how God had called her family to one of the toughest areas in Central Asia when the Skype connection went dead.

A few minutes later the couple called back. Their backup generator kicked on and the conversation resumed. Jane and Jack, who are unable to use their real names for security reasons, seemed almost apologetic about having a generator in a place where most of the locals at that moment were without power and sitting in the dark. Still, through Southern Baptists' support of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and Cooperative Program, this IMB (International Mission Board) couple is able to do their work with as few interruptions as possible. Jack and Jane, both of North Carolina, are two of nearly 5,000 IMB missionaries serving overseas. Most live in challenging parts of the world where there is little to no access to electricity, running water, Wal-Mart – and most importantly – access to the gospel.

[Continued on page 5](#)

istock photo illustration by Carly Conley

## Task force to report Feb. 20 on SBC name change

By ERIN ROACH | Baptist Press

The task force appointed to study the possibility of changing the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) name has reached a decision that they believe "will please the Father and greatly strengthen our ability to reach more people with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The 20-member group appointed by SBC President Bryant Wright gathered for its second meeting Dec. 7 in Atlanta.

"Every member was represented in this important meeting," task force

chairman Jimmy Draper said in a statement to Baptist Press following the meeting. "Again, I was impressed with the seriousness of the group as we discussed vital issues related to this issue and the openness to discuss every aspect of the assignment given to us."

"There was a unanimity both in the discussions and in the decisions we made."

The task force, Draper said, has been asked by Wright to present recommendations "with full explanation and rationale" during the president's report to the Executive Committee meeting Feb. 20 "so all Southern Baptists can

understand how we arrived at our conclusions."

"We are excited to make these recommendations," Draper said. "From the beginning we have desired only to discern God's will in this matter."

The task force meeting came on the same day a study was released by LifeWay Research saying the majority of Americans have a favorable impression of Southern Baptists but 40 percent of respondents had an unfavorable view of the denomination.

More than a third strongly assumed an SBC church was not for them, and the negativity was higher among the

unchurched, the study found. (See results of the study on page 9.)

In comments to Baptist Press Dec. 8, Draper said the task force had the study results in hand when they met in Atlanta.

Wright announced the formation of the task force during the Executive Committee meeting in September, prompting a lively debate across the convention. The task force first met Oct. 26 in Fort Worth, Texas.

The lone North Carolina representative is Cathy Horner, Bible teacher and wife of David Horner, pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh.

## AROUND THE STATE

### Obituaries

**JAMES DALE HAGAMAN**, 75, of Zionville, died Dec. 8.

A U.S. Army veteran, Hagaman did two tours with the field maintenance unit of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The son of a preacher, Hagaman was an ordained minister and led Zionhill Baptist Church, Rich Mountain Baptist Church and Beech Mountain Baptist Church. He was also an employee of Austin & Barnes Funeral Home for more than 20 years.

He is survived by his wife Mayselle Glenn Hagaman; one daughter, Sue McGhinnis of Sugar Grove; one son, Jeff Hagaman of Vilas; three grandchildren; and his brothers and sisters, Royce Hagaman of Huntersville, Margaret "Peggy" Sipe of Zionville, Janice Ritenour of Springfield, Va., Jerry Hagaman of Johnson, S.C., David Hagaman of Vilas, Terry Hagaman of Ellenboro, and Barbara McElyea of Zionville. Memorials to Baptist Children's Home of North Carolina, P.O. Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361.

**RUSSELL THOMAS CHERRY JR.**, 84, died Dec. 2 at Wesley Pines Retirement.

A Virginia native, Cherry was a graduate of Southern Seminary (master's and doctorate degrees).

Campbell University honored Cherry with the Doctor of Divinity degree in 1989. He served as pastor of churches in Indiana, Kentucky, Virginia and North Carolina, including 22 years at First Baptist Church, Lumberton, where he was given the title pastor emeritus. He led First Baptist Church, Bladenboro, for 10 years. From 1996 to 2009, he served as an adjunct professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at UNC-Pembroke. For a number of years, Cherry wrote Sunday School lessons for the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He authored two books, published by the Brentwood Christian Press: *At Calvary* and *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever*.

In Virginia, he served on the General Board of Baptist General Association and taught for the University of Richmond School of Christian Education. In North Carolina, he served as trustee of both Chowan and Campbell universities,

and served on Campbell's Presidential Board of Advisors. In November 1969, he preached the convention sermon at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Cherry was also active in the Baptist World Alliance, serving on the Mission and Evangelism Committee and the Church Leadership Commission. He is survived by daughters, Jeannie Cherry May of Winston-Salem and Judith Cherry Smith of Greenwood, S.C.; son, Russell T. Cherry III of Louisville, Ky.; and nine grandchildren.

Memorials to: First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 938, Lumberton, NC 28359, or First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 176, Bladenboro, NC 28360.

**ANN TRIPP BOULDIN** died Dec. 1. Known as "Miss Ann," Bouldin served the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina as a specialized preschool consultant.

She is survived by her husband, John Robert "J.R." Bouldin Sr.; daughters, Beverly B. Butler of Oak City; Teresa B. Lindley of Bear Creek; son, John R. Bouldin Jr. of Rocky Mount; brothers, K.B. Tripp of Chapel Hill and Auburn Tripp of Pittsboro; nine grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Memorials to JR & Ann Tripp Bouldin Sr., Campbell Divinity School Endowment, Campbell University, P.O. Box 116, Buies Creek, NC 27506 or Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina, P.O. Box 18309, Raleigh, NC 27619-8309.

### Staff change

Victory Baptist Church, Thomasville, has called **JIM VICKREY** as pastor. Vickrey has served several churches in N.C. including Southside Baptist, Salisbury.

### Retirement

**ROY E. HOUSTON** is retiring from New Morgan Hill Baptist Church, Candler, on Dec. 31 after over 17 years of service. Houston has served churches in Burke and Haywood counties as well as on staff at Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute. He and his wife, Dana, will retire in Haywood County, and he can be reached for interim and supply work at (828) 230-9246.

## SBC Call to Prayer coming in January

By **JOE CONWAY** | Baptist Press

In January, Southern Baptists are again being called to a time of prayer and spiritual awakening. The Southern Baptist Convention Call to Prayer is an opportunity to focus on praying missionally.

"I can't think of a better way for our churches to start the New Year than to be in prayer for our families, our churches, our new church plants and our efforts to reach the unreached people groups of the world," said Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB). "NAMB is pleased to have the privilege to coordinate this effort this year. We want to make it easy for every Southern Baptist pastor to lead his congregation in focused prayer," Ezell said. "I can't think of anything more essential in our efforts to reach North America and the world."

NAMB will provide resources to assist churches in participating in the prayer emphasis.

"We are encouraging Southern Baptists to begin the New Year praying for spiritual awakening that will penetrate lostness," said Al Gilbert, executive director of NAMB's Love Loud ministry. "Continuing in the spirit of what happened at the SBC in Phoenix, NAMB and the IMB are working together to provide specific ways for people to pray for our communities, our nation and our world."

"We are providing tools for pastors to use anytime in January. These tools will assist church leaders in calling their people to prayer," said Gilbert, former pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem.

State convention prayer leaders will assist churches in their states to implement Call to Prayer strategies. Roger Byrd with the California Southern Baptist Convention is one of those prayer advocates.

"Our desire is to see our people, our churches praying for God's movement among us," Byrd said. "The most important thing as an outcome from the SBC Call to Prayer is that our churches will pray together in unity of spirit. We desire people to pray that God's Holy Spirit will be working among us, ... leading us to reach our communities for Christ."

Suggestions for the Call to Prayer include five areas of emphasis:

• **My Family and Friends.** Select a

friend or family member and pray that they would come to faith in Christ.

• **My Church.** Select a church staff member, volunteer or ministry, and pray for them in their efforts to penetrate lostness.

• **My Nation.** Select a Send North America city and pray for the church planting efforts in that area ([namb.net/cities](http://namb.net/cities)).

• **My World.** Select an unreached people group and pray that the gospel would be advanced among these people ([imb.org/prayerthreads](http://imb.org/prayerthreads)).

• **My Southern Baptist Convention.** Selected a national, state or local leader and pray for guidance in leading the Southern Baptist Convention.

Byrd, along with most SBC prayer leaders, is a member of PrayerLink, the SBC fellowship of prayer advocates. The group's members include representatives from all SBC entities, each SBC state convention and association, the Canadian National Baptist Convention and other prayer ministries.

Claude King, PrayerLink representative for LifeWay Christian Resources, said, "Throughout North America, leaders, denominations and ministries are calling for days and seasons of prayer and fasting for nearly every conceivable prayer target. We probably have more people praying than ever in history, and our culture seems to be growing darker and more ungodly than ever."

"As we seek to mobilize people to pray to penetrate the lostness in our families, with friends, in cities, our nation and the world, let's keep in mind the wonderful promise from James 5:16 that the intense prayers of righteous people are powerful and effective," King said.

"Let's help each other prepare ourselves to be right with God and one another so when we pray we pray with penetrating power."

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Joe Conway writes for the North American Mission Board. To plan your church's Call to Prayer, visit [namb.net/sbccalltoprayer](http://namb.net/sbccalltoprayer).) **BR**



### Submissions

The *Biblical Recorder* is pleased to publish staff changes, church news, mission trips, retreats, and events with a statewide interest. One of the most frequent questions the *BR* staff gets is "Why isn't my church in your paper?" The answer usually is that we didn't know about your news. Contact Dianna Cagle, *BR* assistant managing editor, with questions about submissions or deadlines: (919) 847-2127. Please send information to [dianna@BRnow.org](mailto:dianna@BRnow.org) or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512.



## CHURCH NEWS



### Momeyer Baptist Church, Nashville

Royal Ambassadors (RAs) and Girls in Action (GAs) kicked off a new mission emphasis with about 20 children and their leaders came up with the idea to raise money with bologna sandwiches. After being made aware of the need for clean water in Bihar, India, The children sponsored a Friday night "Sacrifices for Christ Bologna Banquet," asking people to donate what they would normally spend in a restaurant for a nice meal. In addition, they set up a miniature well for people to place donations in for several weeks. More adults began to join in too. A study group using author David Platt's *Radical Together* as its text soon got on board followed quickly by the Woman's Missionary Union, Baptist Men and deacons. The same month of the banquet, enough money was raised to sponsor five wells (at \$800 each). The church hopes to sponsor five wells for God's glory nine more times to total 50 wells. The well project is a partnership with the North Carolina Baptist Men and Transformation India Movement. Visit [baptistsonmission.org](http://baptistsonmission.org) for more. Paul Arnold is pastor.

## OPPORTUNITY CORNER

### Spanish speakers can learn Greek

Spanish speaking pastors are welcome to join pastors from all over Latin America in a New Testament Greek class taught by Thomas Hudgins, a Southeastern Seminary doctoral student. The class will use David Black's *Learn to Read New Testament Greek*. The class will be Thursday evenings at Apex Baptist Church in Apex, starting in January and ending in April. It will also be broadcasted live online. The class is being offered for free. For more information contact Thomas Hudgins, [thomashudgins@hotmail.com](mailto:thomashudgins@hotmail.com), and contact [thomasylesly@gmail.com](mailto:thomasylesly@gmail.com) to register.

### Youth to share handbell talent in festival

Friendly Avenue Baptist Church in Greensboro, will be hosting the Youth Handbell Festival on Feb. 17-18. Register by Jan. 27; fees are \$250 per Baptist State Convention church or \$300 for a non-affiliated church. Visit [ncbaptist.org](http://ncbaptist.org), or contact Jim Davidson, [maestrojim42@yahoo.com](mailto:maestrojim42@yahoo.com).

### Adult handbell festival opportunity

On Feb. 24-25, the adult handbell festival for the East region will be at Winter Park Baptist Church in Wilmington. The clinician is Kath Wissinger, and choirs must bring their own tables and equipment. Registration ends Jan. 27, but space is limited. Fees are \$250 for a BSC affili-

ated church and \$300 for a non-affiliated group; or \$40 for an individual. For registration and more information, visit [ncbaptist.org](http://ncbaptist.org), or contact Jim Davidson: (336) 245-8023.

### N.C. youth plan ski retreat

Bring your youth group to the eighth annual youth ski retreat on Feb. 24-26 at Winterplace Ski Resort, Beckley, W.Va. The retreat is put on by CTI Group Adventures and BeDoTell, the Baptist State Convention's student ministry. Registration is \$170 per person. The BeDoTell team will lead worship, and there will be plenty of time to fellowship. Contact Sandra Crute at [scrute@ncbaptist.org](mailto:scrute@ncbaptist.org) or Tim Wilson at [twilson@skicti.com](mailto:twilson@skicti.com), or (800) 285-7273.

### Equipping church librarians for ministry

Church librarians are welcome to get equipped with fresh ideas at the North Carolina workshop. Training events will be in several locations across the state. A LifeWay church library ministry specialist will be at each event. Contact DeAnn Hudson with questions at [dhudson@ncbaptist.org](mailto:dhudson@ncbaptist.org) or (828) 273-4224. Registration is at [churchlibraryministries.org](http://churchlibraryministries.org); and the early price is \$30. Event dates and locations are: March 24 at Memorial Baptist Church, Williamston; April 28 at Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest; and May 19 at First Baptist Church, Waynesville.



### Rutherford Second Baptist Church

Thirteen members of Rutherford Second Baptist Church traveled to New York in August for a mission trip in connection with a partnership with Park Slope Community Baptist Church in Brooklyn. The group held Kidz Klub meetings every afternoon for the children of the community and set up prayer stations on the street to pray with people, give out tracts and lemonade and invite them to church. They cleaned and repaired areas of the church and had a community-wide cookout and movie. The church's prayer shawl ministry made hats and scarves for people in need. Members of Second Baptist are already making plans to return to New York during Easter break. Keith Stephenson is pastor.

### First Baptist Church, Welcome

Welcome's First Baptist Church recently celebrated 100 years of ministry. The church began in 1911 with 12 people meeting in a home. Its first building is now Community Fellowship Moravian Church. The church changed its name in 1971 from Welcome Baptist Church to First Baptist Church of Welcome. The church held a special service Oct. 23 featuring John Welborn, a pastor in Harrisonburg, Va. He grew up in the church as the son of former pastor Allen Welborn, who led the church in the 1980s. There was also a covered dish lunch and a special concert highlighting music from the previous 100 years. Mark Blair is senior pastor.



### Lillington Baptist Church

A trip Aug. 1-6 inspired youth from Lillington Baptist Church to return to Red Springs Mission Camp Nov. 18-20 for further ministry. During the first trip youth participated in a home cleanout and remodel project, various landscaping projects, pressure washing, vinyl and gutter cleanup/restoration, bed building for a needy family, mission camp facility restoration projects. They also were personally invited by the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore of Red Springs, John and Eula McNeill for their work in the city during the week. They had the opportunity to serve the elderly of the community a chicken bog meal. "Our youth came away very excited and look forward to once again being able to put faith into action in service to others," said Adam Self, minister of youth. During the group's second trip, they repaired some storm damage for a 92-year-old retired school teacher's home. They also cleaned gutters, did lawn maintenance, installed clotheslines and poles and served a community Thanksgiving meal to 500 residents. Visit "Photo Gallery" at [BRnow.org](http://BRnow.org) for more photos from these trips. From left - first row: Dylan Salmon, Frankie Sudia, Sheila Sudia, Billy Agnew, Marshall Salmon; second row: Darrell Salmon, Dylan Matthews, Jordan Jones, Natalie Thomas; and third row: JT Mellish, Homeowner Agnes Page, Haley Pauley.

# Joining hands in the harvest

## Why Westfield Baptist is a CP church

By MIKE CRESWELL | BSC Communications

**P**astor Joel Stephens tells his church members they're supporting nearly 10,000 missionaries across Asia, Africa and all around the world and across the country.

He tells them they're helping start new churches in California, New York City and all over North Carolina – nearly 30,000 new churches a year – and start more new churches across North America than any other church group.

It's the world's largest Christian missions program that averages baptizing a new believer every 35 seconds.

Stephens tells his members they are helping educate 16,000 future pastors and missionaries through six of the country's top seminaries.

Stephens holds M.Div. and D.Min. degrees from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, one of those six schools, located in Wake Forest.

His members rescue and care for abused children, support the largest Christian youth program in North Carolina and have a hand in supporting scores of Christian ministries.

How does a church of 200-plus members manage all that? "It's the Cooperative Program," Stephens says.

Westfield Baptist Church sits at a crossroads in the rural Westfield community near Pilot Mountain, north of Winston-Salem and not far from Mount Airy, the mythical Mayberry in the long-

running TV show. Stephens is well-traveled and has an earned doctorate, but he turns to his farming background to explain the Cooperative Program to his members.

He recalls how farm families pitched in to help other families at harvest time, because one farm could not manage the challenge alone.

Churches today, he says, are like those farms.

"Our crops are not soybeans or corn: the harvest we look for is spiritual – a harvest of souls saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. But no one church has the resources to bring in this harvest individually. We need to employ the same principle of pooling our resources," he says.

He tells members that it starts with their personal stewardship. "Out of gratitude and obedience to God for what

He has done for you, you give a portion of what He's provided you back to Him by giving to Westfield Baptist Church.

"This is commonly called a tithe and represents 10 percent of your income. Westfield Baptist Church then takes the amount you give and combines it with what

others give to the church.

"Each year, during our annual business meeting in September, our congregation decides what percentage of our total receipts that we will forward to the Cooperative Program.

"Our church currently sends 11.33 per-

cent," he says, explaining how the funds are sent to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and 35.5 percent goes on to the Southern Baptist Convention.

"This is not about great institutions or about a great denomination. It's about the Great Commission. It's about souls. It's about the harvest. Due to the faithful giving of SBC churches like Westfield, we were able to pool our resources and engage in Great Commission ministry all over the globe.

"To God be the glory!" he says.

A new prayer guide called "53 Sundays" is being sent to North Carolina Baptist churches during December.

Produced by the Baptist State Convention's Cooperative Program office, the guide will help churches pray for missionaries they support through their Cooperative Program giving. The guide includes devotionals on prayer by Chris Schofield, Baptist State Convention consultant who works with churches on prayer and spiritual renewal. **BR**



Joel Stephens encourages members of Westfield Baptist Church to give to the Cooperative Program through their personal tithe and special offerings. A new prayer guide is being sent to churches this month to help them pray throughout the "53 Sundays" of 2012. (BSC photo by Mike Creswell)

**"This is not about great institutions or about a great denomination. It's about the Great Commission. It's about souls. It's about the harvest."**  
– Joel Stephens

## CP: 11.14% below last year's pace

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) – Year-to-date contributions to Southern Baptist national and international missions and ministries received by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee (EC) are 11.14 percent below the same time frame last year, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Frank Page. The total includes receipts from state conventions and fellowships, churches and individuals for distribution according to the 2011-12 SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget.

As of Nov. 30, gifts received by the Executive Committee for distribution through the Cooperative Program Allocation Budget totaled \$28,427,727.02, or \$3,563,526.89 behind the \$31,991,253.91 received at the end of November 2010. Designated giving of \$7,258,271.13 for the same year-to-date period is 6.47 percent, or \$502,322.88, below gifts of \$7,760,594.01 received at this point last year. This total includes only those gifts received and distributed by the EC and does not reflect designated gifts contributed directly to SBC entities.

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# Who will tell them?

N.C. couple thankful for Lottie Moon offering allowing them to share the true meaning of Christmas in Asia

Continued from page 1

For more than a year, the couple and their two children have lived in a Central Asian city. Because of the risks involved with living there, few details about the people, the city and their work can be shared in this story. It's a difficult and spiritually dark place where fathers have been known to kill their own sons or daughters for converting to Christianity.

"That is a big issue here – persecution," Jack said.

"What do you do? How do you handle it? How do you spread the gospel in the midst of persecution? I mean violent persecution – even from family."

The couple already had to move earlier this year out of one house into another because of security issues. Leaving their house to run a simple errand can even become a logistical nightmare.

Being there, however, has already created some unexpected ministry opportunities for the family – especially during the Christmas holiday season.

"The holidays have been a huge way to talk about [faith]," Jane said. "You can actually prepare a little speech," she added, noting her struggle to learn the local language.

"You can memorize three or four sentences of why you've done what you've done – whether it be decorating your house or whatever."

In recent weeks the couple has put up a Christmas tree with all the lights and decorations. But step outside their door, Jack said, and it's "just another day."

"We play Christmas music to get us in the mood, but once you hit the street ... it's not a holiday season at all."

Living in this part of the world as missionaries wasn't always something the couple thought they'd be doing with their lives.

"We never – as children, as teenagers, after we were married – had any intention of being in any sort of ministry role much less anywhere other than small town North Carolina," Jane said.

"We were set up on the family farm with our house, and our jobs and our cars and set to do small-town life. It's very different than we thought our lives would look like, but we don't doubt that this is what God had planned."

Early next year, Jack plans to begin teaching a local believer what a church would look like in that part of the world. Jack and Jane also will continue their language lessons.

"Language learning has definitely been more challenging than I was anticipating," Jane said.

"It's been a hard thing. You're pumped up ready to be here, and you get on the ground and can't speak a word. [But] we've seen a lot of God's goodness and bringing people across our path ... who have been a huge encouragement to us."

Jane remembers telling one local friend – while practicing the language – about how Jesus rose from the dead three days after being crucified.

"Her eyes just got so wide, and she looked at me and she [said] 'Back to life? After death, he came back to life?' The truth of such an unbelievable story was really hitting her."

Jane spoke of another woman with whom she continues to build a relationship.

"She's not open right now to having a copy of [the Bible] in her home," Jane said.

"We're praying she would be willing to take a copy of it and read it herself. She's

very close. Every time we talk about it ... I think she is getting close. That's encouraging to me to stick it out and try to pursue these relationships."

Jane remains thankful for support from Southern Baptists. It allows her family and other IMB missionaries to live among their people group and build ongoing relationships.

"[Without the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering,] we wouldn't be able to have the conversations we're having with people ... to be able to tell somebody 'yea, Jesus is alive' and them be shocked because they have never heard."

That support also gives missionaries the opportunity to provide logistical support and advice for churches with a desire to engage – or "embrace" – unengaged, unreached people groups and build relationships over time.

Southern Baptist churches – including many N.C. churches – continue to seek to

help engage people groups with no church planting strategy and less than a 2 percent evangelical presence.

Relationships must be built in order to talk about deep spiritual issues, Jane said.

"You can't build relationships with people ... over the Internet or by just sending funds for food distribution," she said. "You have to have a relationship with these people [for them] to be comfortable ... to ask you questions."

"If there is nobody here [to build those relationships] they'll never know," she added.

"They'll never hear [the gospel]. How can they hear it unless somebody tells them?"

For more information about this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering go to [imb.org](http://imb.org) and click on "Your Lottie Moon offering resources." Or for more information about embracing an unengaged, unreached people group, go to [call2embrace.org](http://call2embrace.org). You can also read more stories at [BRnow.org](http://BRnow.org); under "Resources," click "2011 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering." **BR**

## LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING 2011

## Grandma confronts thief over missions money

By ERICH BRIDGES | Baptist Press

**T**hey knew something was wrong when they spotted a strange car in their driveway.

A black Honda. No one was in it, but it was idling.

It was Nov. 8, Election Day. Roger and Vicky Simpson, a retired couple living in Louisville, Ky., had gone out to vote that morning. Afterward, they stopped at McDonald's for breakfast, then headed home. They pulled in behind the Honda and walked around it, not sure what to do next.

"I thought, 'This is weird,'" recalled Vicky, a 61-year-old mother of three and grandmother of five. "I'm one of those who always thinks the worst. If it's good I'm surprised and if it's bad I'm prepared for it."

Roger raised the garage door. "I ... noticed right away that the glass had been broken out of the door off of our deck," said Roger, 64, who worked 37 years for the Kentucky Farm Bureau. But he didn't see anyone inside, or out back. Before calling the police, he figured he'd better warn his wife. Vicky, meanwhile, was waiting in the driveway. Before Roger came back out, a young man walked around the far corner of the house into the front yard, carrying several items belonging to the Simpsons – including a plastic bucket full of coins. "It was like he was out for a stroll," Vicky said. "He was a little bit spaced out, I think."

Vicky and Roger are members of Poplar Level Baptist Church in Louisville, the small congregation she has attended since childhood. They met there, got married there 42 years ago; most of their family members still go there. For years Vicky has led the GA (Girls in Action) mission discipleship group for girls in primary grades. It's never been bigger than four or five girls.

Only one or two currently participate, including one of the Simpsons' granddaughters, 11-year-old Loren.

Every year, the Poplar Level GAs join with the RAs (Royal Ambassadors, a mission group for boys) to raise funds for missions. Last year, about half of the \$1,200 Poplar Level contributed to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering came from the girls' efforts.

"We're a small church, but we've had several people who've come there and worked with the youth or music who have gone on to be missionaries, so missions has always been a thing for us," Vicky said.

The coins (plus some dollar bills) in the plastic bucket – about \$200, by the Simpsons' count – were intended for international missions through the Lottie Moon offering.

Something about the bucket swinging from the hand of a casual thief rubbed Vicky the wrong way. "It ticked me off, actually," she said. "That's a lot of work and a lot of saving, and he was probably going to do something with it that wasn't nearly as im-

portant as Lottie Moon."

When the thief reached the idling car, where Vicky was still standing, she didn't back away. "Put the bucket down," she said. He ignored her. Without saying a word, he opened the car door and got in with the loot. "Put the bucket DOWN!" Vicky repeated. He looked at her this time, apparently sensing she meant business. "OK," he replied after a moment, and set the bucket on the ground before closing the car door.

Roger jotted down the license plate number as the thief drove away and called the police. Within an hour the thief and an accomplice had been spotted and stopped. The Simpsons identified him to police and later recovered the other things taken from their home. **BR**



Roger and Vicky Simpson, a retired couple, live in Kentucky. They are happy a thief didn't take their missions money. (BP photo)

# Coach: Career opened opportunities to make a difference

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Former three-time Dallas Cowboy Super Bowl champion Bill Bates is proving that life after football has provided him with an even greater opportunity to influence thousands of young people. Roman Gabriel III who will be providing a sports perspective in this and future Biblical Recorder issues, spoke with Bates about his passion for coaching, his faith, his family, and a successful football career that provided a strong platform through coaching to make a difference in the next generation of young people – including Tim Tebow, now the quarterback for the Denver Broncos.)



ROMAN GABRIEL  
Sports Q & A

**Q:** Bill, I'm so excited to talk with you ... you were able to play for one of the great teams in NFL history, three Super Bowl victories, how closely do you follow the Cowboys?

**A:** As much as I can, but I now live in Jacksonville, Fla. I coached with the Jaguars, five years with the Cowboys, and I was able to coach my kids in high school here in Jacksonville. I coached them at Nease High School where I also had the privilege of coaching Tim Tebow.

**Q:** What was it like to coach Tim?

**A:** Timmy is a phenomenal person. He is a great leader ... how he handles life and how he takes care of himself. He's one of those guys people want to be around. Everyone just gravitates to him. That is good from a football standpoint and for a team. You want your players to gravitate to him ... especially when it's the QB position.

**Q:** He seems to have a great balance and perspective about life and his career?

**A:** He's committed to football, but even more importantly, [he's] committed to the Lord Jesus Christ, which is what it's all about ... That kind of leadership is hard to find.

He has "it." People just want to be around him. He's big, fast and strong, which helps as a QB. He is a great leader, and Denver has a great QB.

**Q:** I had the privilege to be coached by my father in college. What was the experience like to coach your own children?

**A:** To be able to coach my kids in high school and be a part of their lives created so many great memories.

**Q:** It had to be even more meaningful to experience winning with your two boys. What was that experience like for you?

**A:** We won the state championship their sophomore year, Tim Tebow's senior year, and went back to the state championship twice more. Now they're both playing college football – Graham at Arkansas State, and Hunter at Northwestern. My daughter (Brianna) is playing sorority volleyball at Florida. I am very blessed to have the memories of being able to coach them. That's what it's all about. I've had that opportunity to coach so many players. If just one thing I said to them helped them it made it worth it.

**Q:** [The Cowboys] were so great. Tell us what it was like to play on such a dominant team.

**A:** Obviously it was a dream come true. The one thing about our team was that we were so competitive, competed every opportunity we could, a great will to win. We competed on each and every occasion ... Obviously we had so many great players.

**Q:** Bill, tell us about Bill Bates Cowboy Ranch in Texas.

**A:** In 1989, I had no idea I would play as long as I did, so I knew I had to start some business that I could fall back into once I stopped playing. We started this corporate party dude ranch and have been doing it for 20 years now in McKinney, Texas. Having a lot of fun, providing a lot of great church and family events, hopefully being able to change people's lives in a positive way in helping create some good memories for parents and kids.



**Q:** Of course if our readers want to know more they can look you up at [billbatescowboyranch.com](http://billbatescowboyranch.com). You obviously had a great football career. How has that experience allowed you to make a difference in others lives today as a Christian?

**A:** My platform and career gave me the ability to reach more ears ... hopefully change the lives of at least one person, a platform that allowed me to share what happened to me ... the direction I was headed in until I met the Lord Jesus Christ ... to be able to hopefully see someone else have the opportunity to find the Lord.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Roman Gabriel III is president of Sold Out Ministries and host of a radio show called Sold Out Sports. Visit [soldouttv.com](http://soldouttv.com). A feature about Gabriel was printed Oct. 1) **BR**

## Bivocational pastors needed for church planting

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) – If the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) Send North America evangelistic church planting initiative is to succeed, it must include thousands of bivocational pastors who are willing to plant churches.

"We must leverage the laity to plant churches," said Aaron Coe, NAMB's vice president of mobilization, "and we need to do it through a bivocational church movement.

"There are thousands of men sitting in church pews listening to their pastors each week who more than meet the qualifications for being pastors and church planters. We need to mobilize them to be involved in church planting if we're serious about the Great Commission," Coe said.

NAMB church planting leaders and members of the Bivocational and Small

Church Leadership Network (BSCLN) have begun to explore ways for bivocational pastors to become involved.

Ray Gilder, the BSCLN's national coordinator from McMinnville, Tenn., and a retired bivocational pastor himself, describes a bivocational as a pastor who has another source of income over and above his church. Gilder says a church running a weekly attendance of 100 or

less probably has a bivocational pastor – and 75 percent of SBC churches run 75 or less. Most of them are in rural areas.

Send North America is NAMB's evangelistic church planting strategy to involve more churches and individuals in direct church planting activity.

For more information or to become involved, visit [www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net) and click "Mobilize Me." **BR**



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# Oglesby uses aviation ministry to impact lives

By MELISSA LILLEY | BSC Communications

**B**ob Oglesby's dad is a pilot and his son is a commercial pilot, but it wasn't until much later in life that Oglesby moved into the cockpit and learned to fly.

He always had an interest in flying and even flew some with his dad. In 1994, when Oglesby felt like he could afford the cost of getting his pilot's license, he turned to his son. "My son was my instructor. He's the one who taught me to fly," Oglesby said.

Oglesby, who described himself as "semi-retired," went in with a few others to buy an airplane and in 1999 made his first flight.

"I wanted to be able to use that airplane to help people out," Oglesby said.

Not long after buying the plane Oglesby found a way to do just that when he attended an Angel Flight orientation near Winston-Salem. Angel Flight is a non-profit organization that helps coordinate volunteer pilots with patients needing transport in order to receive specialized medical care.

Soon after the orientation, Oglesby learned about the N.C. Baptist Men (NCBM) aviation ministry. NCBM works with Angel Flight and also coordinates a fuel fund to assist pilots in making flights. Individuals, churches and other groups may donate to the fund.

With help from the fuel fund, Oglesby is able to fly about once a month with Angel Flight. "I do it because I enjoy flying and I want to share that with others. I want to use that resource to help other people," he said.

Oglesby usually flies in North Carolina or to neighboring states, such as South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. He and



Bob Oglesby looks back at his passengers Karenina and her daughter Juliana. Oglesby was a part of an Angel Flight mission transporting the mother and daughter from Stafford, Va., to their home in Winston-Salem. (Contributed photo)

other volunteer pilots can see from the Angel Flight website the available flights and then sign up for the ones they are willing to take.

All the flights are unique, as each passenger is unique, and Oglesby prays with each passenger. Sometimes he flies with people expecting a good report from a check up with a cancer specialist. "Those are some of the really good flights," he said.

Other flights are not as easy, as Oglesby has transported cancer patients who eventually lose their battle with the disease. Oglesby shared about a recent flight that was particularly unique – and humbling. His task was to help transport Captain Greg Amira from Beaufort, S.C., to Winchester, Va.

Steve Purello, President/CEO of Mercy Flight Southeast, flew Amira from Beaufort to Winston-Salem, and from there Oglesby flew him the rest of the way.

Oglesby was scheduled to fly into Winchester, but he planned to reroute to nearby Martinsburg, W.Va., when he learned the Winchester airport was closing early. Just 15 minutes into the flight to Martinsburg, air traffic control alerted Oglesby that the Martinsburg air show had experienced a fatal crash. The airport was closed and Oglesby would need to reroute again. Oglesby turned his sights to Front Royal, Va., a small airport near Winchester.

"Captain Amira was dog tired when he got on the plane. He slept the whole way," Oglesby said.

**"I do it because I enjoy flying, and I want to share that with others. I want to use that resource to help other people."  
– Bob Oglesby**

Amira was in Beaufort that day participating in a Wounded Warriors event. Amira was wounded while serving in Iraq when his convoy was hit by an improvised explosive device.

Amira served in the United States Army until he went on the reserved list and went to work as a vice president for Morgan Stanley at the World Trade Center.

When the first tower was hit on Sept. 11, 2001, Amira left his office in the second tower and went to help the victims. He was injured while trying to help people escape, and a fireman had to help him out of the building after it collapsed. While waiting for help, Amira was buried in rubble after the second tower collapsed. It took rescue workers hours to get him out.

A few years after 9/11 the Army reactivated Amira because they wanted him to help supervise special projects. He served less than one year before getting injured.

"Helping transport Captain Amira was a distinct honor and privilege," Oglesby said. "He is an American hero."

Flights like that, Oglesby said, are extra special. Oglesby is grateful to God for allowing Him to serve others. For more information about NCBM Aviation Ministry visit: [baptistsonmission.org/Projects/Type/Aviation](http://baptistsonmission.org/Projects/Type/Aviation). **BR**

## North Carolina Baptists called to prayer

To kick off the year in prayer, pastors, church staff and prayer leaders are invited to gather Jan. 10-11 at the LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in Ridgecrest for the Empowered: North Carolina Pastor/Staff Prayer Retreat.

The theme for this year's prayer retreat, "Empowered," is based on Acts 4:31. "When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak God's message with boldness."

Chris Schofield, director of the Office of Prayer at the Baptist State Convention (BSC), described the event as a combination of speaking, dialogue and prayer with a "two-pronged approach toward missional prayer and prayer for

revival and spiritual awakening. This is an opportunity for leaders to gather to be refreshed and renewed and reenergized and their focus [to be] dependence on the Lord. We do these conferences for awareness and training ... and equipping people in Kingdom prayer that focuses on praying toward revival and praying toward the great commission."

The prayer retreat will take place the same month the Southern Baptist Convention will call Baptists to prayer and spiritual awakening and focus on praying missionally (see p. 2). To learn more about planning your church's Call to Prayer, visit [namb.net/sbccalltoprayer](http://namb.net/sbccalltoprayer).

Praying for revival in N.C. and across the nation is critical, Schofield said. "We've got to get away from temporal

praying and even reactionary praying," he said. "We've got to [look] toward intentional, proactive, kingdom-focused praying that seeks to move the kingdom forward. That's what we're encouraging, challenging."

The speakers at the prayer retreat include: John Franklin of John Franklin Ministries; Richard Owens Roberts, president of International Awakening Ministries; James Walker, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Ga.; Chad Pollard, worship pastor at Parkwood Baptist Church in Gastonia and Schofield.

Other BSC prayer events will include Pray2Go: A Kingdom Focused Prayer Gathering, March 6-7 in Hendersonville. Morning sessions will be held at Fruit-

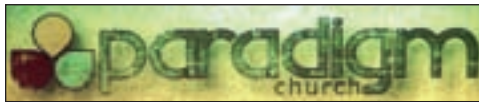
land Baptist Bible Institute, and evening sessions will be held at Mud Creek Baptist Church. On April 27-28, a regional prayer conference, Renew: A Northeastern North Carolina Prayer and Spiritual Life Summit, will be held at Corinth Baptist Church in Elizabeth City in the Chowan Baptist Association. In partnership with N.C. Baptist Aging Ministry, BSC will also offer Connection for Life: 2012 Senior Adult Prayer Retreat Oct. 22-24 at Ridgecrest.

For more information, go to [praync.org](http://praync.org). To register for the upcoming Empowered prayer retreat contact the LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center at (800) 588-7222. Or, contact Betsy Roland at the Office of Prayer; [broland@ncbaptist.org](mailto:broland@ncbaptist.org) or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5513. **BR**

# Church planting snapshots

By MIKE CRESWELL | BSC Communications

(EDITOR'S NOTE – In his travels across North Carolina, Mike Creswell, who is a senior consultant for the Baptist State Convention, visits churches who receive Cooperative Program money. Here is a look at four churches attempting to share the gospel with their communities.)



## Paradigm

Terry Hollifield is seeking unchurched people, but in a targeted way. Think of Paul addressing the Greeks of Athens.

The Paradigm Church Hollifield leads as pastor meets in the second floor of a strip shopping center near Asheville's Biltmore Square Mall; downstairs there's a sandwich shop and a martial arts center ([paradigmasheville.org](http://paradigmasheville.org)).

Hollifield says Paradigm is specifically seeking people who are unchurched or dechurched – especially those who have embraced other, non-Christian views. Paradigm's aim is to clearly present the Good News of Jesus Christ, but is being innovative in its approach.

He says he is actually targeting himself, as he once was, growing up in “the new Asheville,” before the gospel changed his life and led him into ministry. He served as minister of education for six years at Pole Creek Baptist Church in nearby Candler; Pole Creek now supports his church-planting ministry.

“We invite people from all backgrounds, all belief systems, skeptics, you name it. We discuss things that really matter. We discuss the most important things in life like truth, the nature of God, and who God is, and has God spoken, and how do we know that?” he said.

Along with more traditional Bible studies, Hollifield seeks to answer such questions in small group meetings around the city. He wants to start a conversation about beliefs and answer questions from a biblical, Christian perspective, not just preach.

Many people in the Asheville area reject Christianity for New Age ideas or embrace spiritual truths from Eastern religions such as Hinduism or Buddhism, he said. “Asheville is interesting. People are asking the right questions here. Sadly, though, the church hasn't done a very good job of answering them, engaging them with the Bible, who Jesus is,” Hollifield explained.

After a Sunday service, Hollifield throws the service open for questions and assures those present that any question is OK. An open atmosphere is needed for sharing Bible truths, he believes.

“Here, people are seeking, but they want to do so in an environment where I'm not going to shove truth down their throat. They want to talk about it. So we try to do that. It is a reflection of the culture here.”

Since Paradigm launched Oct. 10, 2010, the church has grown steadily, mostly as people engaged in small groups eventually become confident enough to attend a Sunday service.

## River of Leland

Mention “Thunder Alley” in relation to most churches and maybe you'd be talking about the pastor's preaching style.

But for River of Leland, a new church in Leland, near Wilmington, Thunder Alley is where they meet ([riverofleland.com](http://riverofleland.com)).

It's a 20,000-sq.-ft. bowling alley. When co-pastors John McIntyre and Travis Currin looked for meeting space, the new, modern and well-placed bowling alley looked promising.

Owners/operators Ricky and Ginger Roberts were delighted to be asked to host a new church. As Christians and longtime staffers with a Christian family ministry, they were already exploring how to help churches.

The name-emblazoned River of Leland van and trailer parked outside are reminders of the set-up duties that come every Sunday with such meeting locations. Still, the facility's lobby area has served well. The church is casual dress – who dresses up to go to a bowling alley? – and strong, contemporary music.

McIntyre grew up near Wilmington and served several churches, including Southside in Wilmington, before committing to starting a new church. Currin grew up in Angier.

The best problem the church faces now is that the seating space in the bowling alley is near capacity. Soon they'll



Nathan Cline, inset, a church planter from South Carolina, began a church in February at the Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts in Winston-Salem. The target group for the church is young adults because they are 83 percent unchurched, unreached and unevangelized in that area. (BSC photos by Mike Creswell)

need a bigger meeting space. They're hoping a new shopping area, delayed by the recession, will be completed when they're ready to move. Home groups, an important part of the church, have grown from three to eight just this year.

As Greater Wilmington continues to grow, McIntyre and Currin want River of Leland to grow as well, helping bring increasing numbers of people to faith in Christ and helping start multiple new churches.

## Reflection Church

Head out North Center Street in Hickory on a Sunday morning and you'll come to one of many strip shopping centers that dot the area.

Some of the Sunday morning traffic heads left to a gym for a physical workout. Even more people head to the right for the spiritual workout available in two Sunday morning services at Reflection Church ([reflectionchurch.com](http://reflectionchurch.com)). Lead pastor

Ken Case and his staff recently contracted for more space in their former restaurant building by taking out a wall; steady growth was the reason.

Contemporary worship and casual dress do not obscure the truth delivered in Case's plain talk and Bible-based sermons, usually delivered verse-by-verse and organized in series.

Home groups, studies and other activities are designed to bring people to faith in Christ and then to reflect Him in their lives, hence the church's name.

## Revo Church

Church planter Nathan Cline was living in South Carolina two years ago when God began to call him to start a new church. Over the next year he developed a core group of some 30 people who also wanted to “spark a revolution of life change through Jesus,” hence the name, Revo Church ([discoverrevo.com](http://discoverrevo.com)).

The church started Sunday services Feb. 27 with several hundred people present; already they are considering moving to another location.

But their first meeting place has been impressive — the Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts in downtown Winston-Salem. Though actually a refurbished building, the center looks crisply new and modern. It opened September 2010 and is equipped with an auditorium.

The casual observer may question whether one more church is needed downtown; other church buildings are visible from the arts center.

But Cline answers that of young adults between the ages of 18 and 35 in the city, 83 percent are unchurched, unreached, unevangelized. That is their primary target group, he says.



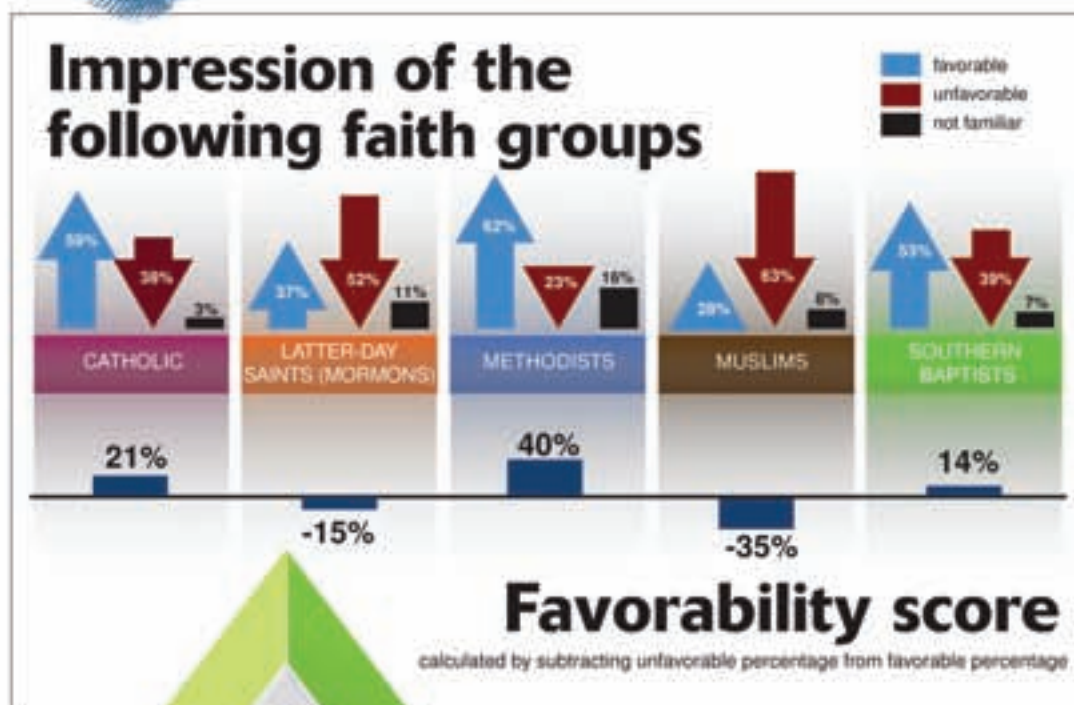
Kelly and Terry Hollifield, from left, talk with a visitor to Paradigm Church in Asheville. The church began in October 2010 and meets in a shopping center. Paradigm not only receives support from the Baptist State Convention, it gets help from Pole Creek Baptist Church in Enka where Hollifield was minister of education.

# SBC Identity

online survey of adult Americans

## Americans' view of Southern Baptists studied

LifeWay Communications



The majority of Americans have a favorable impression of Southern Baptists, according to a recent LifeWay Research study. However, 40 percent of respondents have an unfavorable view of the denomination; more than a third strongly assume a Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) church is not for them; and the negativity is higher among the unchurched.

The LifeWay Research study was conducted in September after Bryant Wright, SBC president, appointed a task force to consider a possible name change for the 166 year-old convention.

The study indicates a segment of Americans have unfavorable opinions of Southern Baptists in comparison to other faith groups. However, with 53 percent being favorable toward Southern Baptists (including 15 percent very favorable), both sides need to be considered, said Ed Stetzer, vice president of research and ministry development at LifeWay Christian Resources.

“On one hand it does look like the SBC has higher negatives than other faith groups – and the unchurched numbers are particularly disconcerting,” Stetzer said. “But on the other, most people don’t seem to be concerned either way because there is a level of indifference to denominations or religion in general.”

In fact, two-thirds of Americans are without strong feelings in regard to all the Christian faith groups included in the survey, with a third or less either very favorable or very unfavorable to them.

Respondents were shown the names of five “denominations or faith groups” and asked to “indicate if your impression is very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, very unfavorable, or you are not familiar enough to form an opinion.” The study indicates 62 percent of Americans have a favorable view of Methodists compared to 59 percent for Catholics, 53 percent for Southern Baptists, 37 percent for Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and 28 percent for Muslims.

The study sought to determine how the name might impact the interest or connection with a congregation. When asked their level of agreement with the statement, “When I see (fill in denominational affiliation) in the name of a church, I assume it is not for me,” 35 percent “strongly agree” a Southern Baptist church is not for them – higher than for Catholics (33 percent), other Baptists (29 percent), Methodists (26 percent) and community or nondenominational churches (20 percent).

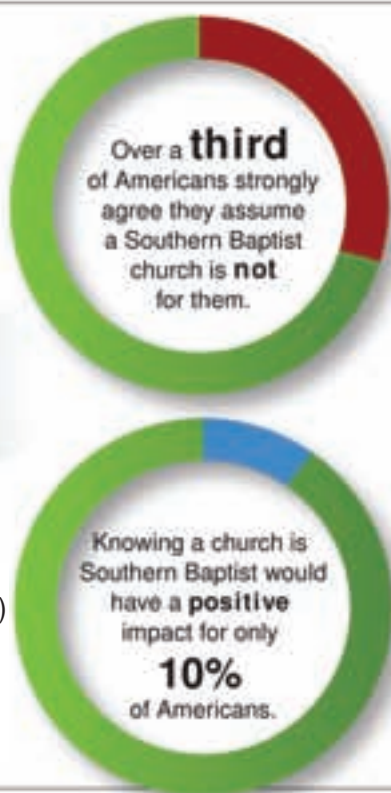
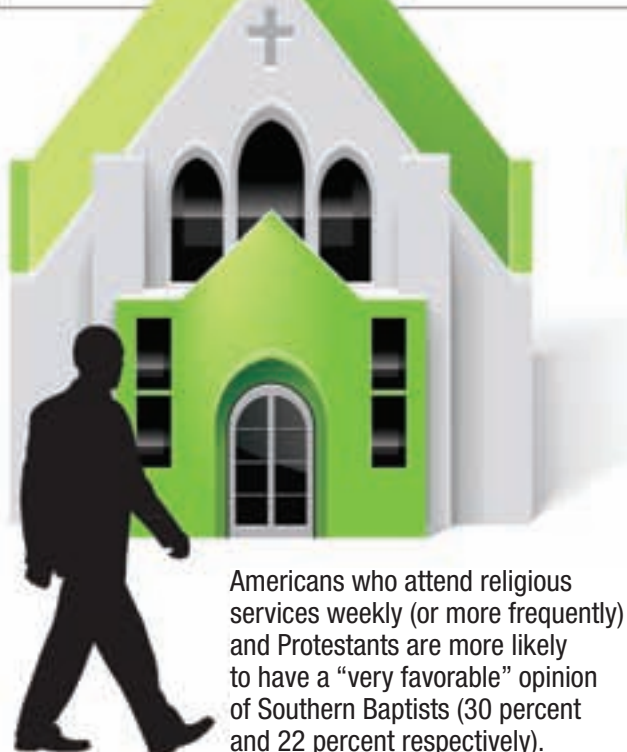
Significantly more respondents – 58 percent – disagree with this statement for community or nondenominational churches, indicating that such churches are considered as a possible fit more often than other Christian faith groups included in the survey. When considering Baptists (not specifically SBC), 44 percent disagree with the statement; Catholics, 43 percent; Methodists, 42 percent; and Southern Baptists, 38 percent.

This positive reaction to community or nondenominational churches reflects other recent LifeWay Research analysis that showed growth among nondenominational churches while Southern Baptists are trending in a membership decline.

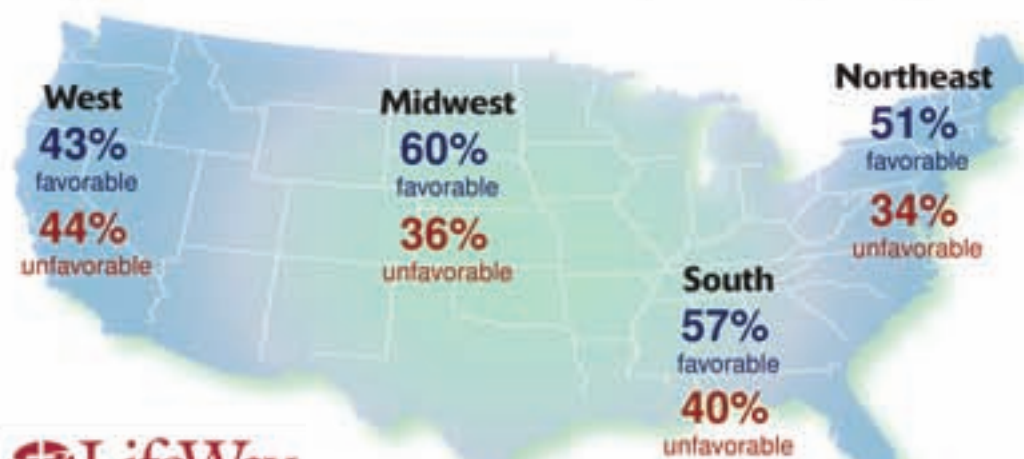
Respondents also were asked: “If you were considering visiting or joining a church, would knowing that the church was Southern Baptist impact your decision positively, negatively or have no impact?” The study found that 44 percent of Americans indicate knowing a church is Southern Baptist would negatively impact their decision to visit or join the church; 36 percent say it would have no impact; and 10 percent say it would positively impact their decision. “The study did not explore why some respondents hold a negative view of Southern Baptists,” Stetzer said. “For instance, one reason may be because they disagree with positions Southern Baptists take on certain issues such as sanctity of life or the exclusivity of the gospel, and that is the only point of reference they have for Southern Baptists.”

Stetzer said he is “hopeful the results will be useful to the members as well as to all Southern Baptists seeking to be more effective in their witness by better understanding the culture in which their churches exist.”

Methodology: The survey was conducted Sept. 23-26 using an online panel. A representative sample of the U.S. adult population was invited to participate. The sample of 2,114 provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed + or -2.2 percent. **B3**



### Impressions of Southern Baptists by region



LifeWay  
RESEARCH

# GuideStone helps make ‘happy days’ for older couple

By JOHN AMBRA | GuideStone Financial Resources

“Sunday, Monday, happy days...Tuesday, Wednesday, happy days...” Who can forget the familiar tune from the popular mid-70s TV show “Happy Days”? Seeking to capture the nostalgia of the 1950s, the sitcom focused on teenager Richie Cunningham and his family. Life for the Cunningham clan usually turned out happy by the end of each episode.

For Floyd Woodard and his family, pastoring in rural churches for 52 years was definitely not a sitcom. While life for him and wife, Ivey, usually turned out happy, too — it was for a much different reason.

Floyd was 25 years old when he felt God calling him into a life of ministry. Married just five years, Floyd was teaching a Sunday school class when he was approached about becoming a preacher.

“I knew the Lord was dealing with me and so finally I came to the place that I decided I would answer the call, that God called me to preach,” Floyd said. “I started pastoring back in 1955 in a church that had us preach two Sundays a month. They paid us \$15 a Sunday. We drove about 55 miles one way to get there.”

When a church in Forsyth, Montana, offered \$150 a month in the mid-60s, Floyd readily accepted the call. He fondly remembered talking to a church member about receiving a weekly check. “When I talked to him and asked him about giving me a check every week, he said, ‘Well, there are five Sundays in some months,’ and I said, ‘We have to eat that Sunday, too!’”

At times, it was difficult to make ends meet on the small salary Floyd received, but God was always faithful. In looking back, Ivey recalled, “There were several times when I would go to the grocery store and I’d spend my last dollar for milk, and I didn’t know where the next dollar was coming from, but it always came.”

Over the years, Floyd and Ivey were not afraid of hard work and often took additional jobs to make ends meet. “We did some work for different people like



Floyd and Ivey Woodard served low-paying small churches their 52 years in the ministry. Now in retirement, they’re seeing God’s faithfulness through Southern Baptists’ Mission:Dignity gifts. (Contributed photo)



in the sugar beet fields and helping cut corn in the silage and stuff like that occasionally. I did a little carpenter work to help supplement our income. Roofed a few houses,” he said, chuckling at the memory.

As with many small churches, food from members’ gardens or farms was also part of the “pay” received by most preachers. For the Woodards, the meat served at the dinner table could be of an unusual variety. “When we first moved to Eureka, a man from Great Falls had killed a deer. He didn’t need it, so he gave us that deer. It was so big it looked like a cow to us, but that was our meat for the winter,” Ivey said as Floyd chimed in, “Even gave us a little elk and a little moose – we got to try out. Only thing I never tried was the bear meat.”

Retirement made getting the necessities of life even more difficult. When a fellow pastor died, his widow applied and began receiving help from Mission:Dignity. That prompted the Woodards to seek assistance, too. The monthly check from Mission:Dignity

helps in a variety of ways.

Through Mission:Dignity, GuideStone Financial Resources assists about 2,000 retired Southern Baptist ministers and their wives who have critical financial needs. Most of these pastors served small congregations in decades past with little, if any, contributions toward a retirement plan. Sixty percent of Mission:Dignity recipients are widows. One out of every four recipients is a pastor’s widow age 85 or older. Qualified recipients are eligible for grants of \$200 to \$530 each month.

The ministry, which receives no Co-

operative Program gifts, is funded by the generous support of individuals, Sunday school classes and churches across the Southern Baptist Convention. Gifts of any size are welcome, and 100 percent of contributions are paid out in grants with nothing taken out for administrative expenses. Individuals who want to join in providing dignity to these retired ministers and their widows can learn more by visiting [MissionDignitySBC.org](http://MissionDignitySBC.org) or by calling (888) 98-GUIDE or (888) 984-8433.

“I am just thankful that somebody thought of this — that sometimes retired pastors might need extra help. It’s a real blessing to a lot of people besides us,” Ivey quietly shared.

Floyd had a special word to donors, “I am grateful to the donors for their sacrificial giving because it has enabled us to come to the end of the month meeting our bills without getting so far behind.”

Through it all, Floyd and Ivey trusted in God’s provision and kept smiles on their faces.

“We talked about the hard times and all the lean times we went through in earlier years with the salary being low and not knowing where the next dollar was coming from all the time, but it’s always been a happy time,” Ivey said. “We felt we were doing what the Lord wanted us to do, and we knew He would provide. And He always did provide.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – John Ambra is director of development at GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.) **BR**

## Court allows NYC schools to ban churches

NEW YORK CITY (BP) – The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected an evangelical church’s plea to overturn New York City’s ban on renting public schools for religious worship services. That means the city now has a green light to begin evicting congregations that pay rent to use public school buildings for church services.

The Supreme Court’s Dec. 5 decision not to hear the case leaves in place a federal appeals court ruling that upheld the city’s policy.

Churches will have to vacate public schools after services on Jan. 1.

About seven of the 220 Southern Baptist churches in the city will be impacted by the decision.



The *Biblical Recorder* staff has moved into the Baptist State Convention (BSC) building in Cary. Our last day in the Raleigh office was Dec. 16.

Our new street address is 205 Convention Drive, Cary, NC 27511, and our new mailing address is P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512. Any mail sent to the old address will be forwarded. Our phone and fax numbers have remained the same. Thank you for your patience during our transition.

As always, we welcome any questions and inquiries. Contact the *Biblical Recorder* at (919) 847-2127, or e-mail Alison McKinney at [Alison@brnow.org](mailto:Alison@brnow.org).

— BR Staff

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# Money talks ... when it comes to gambling expansion

“Money talks,” says an old proverb. But when it comes to the expansion of gambling, it’s more like something Bob Dylan once said, “Money doesn’t just talk, it swears.”

Opened in 1997 under a 1994 compact negotiated by then-Gov. Jim Hunt, Harrah’s Cherokee Casino is currently in the midst of a \$650-million-expansion project, and for quite some time the tribe has been pushing the state to allow for Class III, Las Vegas style gambling as opposed to the video-based games that they currently offer.

The Cherokee have been arguing the new games would create hundreds of new jobs at the casino, bring more tourists to western North Carolina and increase collateral spending on area hotels and businesses in the region.

Those arguments resonated with Gov. Bev Perdue last month when she struck a deal with the Eastern Band under a new compact granting them “exclusive live table gaming rights west of Interstate 26.” In exchange for these exclusive rights, they would pay the state between 4 and 8 percent of gross gambling revenues for the next 30 years. The revenues would go directly to school districts and be used for classroom instruction. The Cherokee would also be given the right to open additional casinos on tribal lands (a five county area) after notifying the governor and agreeing on revenue sharing that could be as high as 8 percent of gross revenues.

Money talks. None of this, however, can become a reality without the North Carolina General Assembly’s approval. Something the leadership has signaled it supports, which is most difficult to understand. It was the Republican leadership that was the stalwart opposition to a state operated lottery in 2005 and has supported efforts in the past to ban video poker and sweepstakes gambling across the state.

Could this change of position reflect money talking, too?

Democracy North Carolina, a campaign finance watchdog group, reports the Cherokee have given quite generously to both the Democratic and Republican parties. Nearly \$700,000 has been contributed to state legislative candidates and committees within the last two years.

Again, money talks and the pressures on lawmakers to approve the new compact are great.

Nevertheless, if the compact is approved the stakes are high. The expansion will, without question, draw a riskier clientele than the current video-based games and increase the number of problem gamblers in North Carolina,

as well as attract more of the same from other states.

Families affected by problem gambling are at greater risk for divorce, bankruptcy, child abuse, domestic violence, crime and suicide.

According to *Winner Takes All* by *Wall Street Journal* reporter Christina Binkley, casinos are the most predatory business in the country, making 90 percent of their profits off 10 percent of their customers who are addicted to the forms of gambling they promote.

Granted, Harrah’s Casino in Cherokee has employed a lot of people and proven to be a boon for the area’s economy. But it should be noted the casino can only milk existing wealth. It does nothing to create new capital, and all the prosperity the Cherokee are now enjoying is basically a redistribution of monies syphoned off of other economies.

And, yes, the casino has provided jobs to the area, but they are jobs without justice. The failed energy giant Enron, subprime lender Countrywide Financial and jailed investment manager Bernie Madoff are all examples of industries that provided people with employment and made a lot of money. Yet who believes these kinds of predatory business practices are the right direction for North Carolina? Neither would an expansion of the vulturine ways of casino gambling be right, even when “virtue-ized” by hitching it to public education.

Moreover, gambling revenues never turn out to provide real help for education. In an editorial opposed to the Cherokee expansion, the *Raleigh News and Observer* rightly warned:

“[L]et’s talk about the benefits, specifically money for education. Sure, it will come in, just as lottery money does. But as financial crises arise, as they do from time to time, that money will become vulnerable to a raid by lawmak-

ers who will argue that it is needed for more pressing things. Or, those who hold the purse strings in the General Assembly will use the gambling proceeds to substitute for regular appropriations, not as supplemental money to make schools better.”

Still, money talks. This is why the lure of such ill-gotten gain must be zealously countered by the compassionate admonishments of God’s people, who not only argue gambling is a failed government policy, but also contend gaming in any form is a misuse of God’s resources.

Gambling maximizes covetousness and minimizes stewardship. It turns men from the worship of a benevolent Sovereign God, promoting pagan superstition and the gods of luck and chance. It is a method of theft by mutual consent – something that isn’t moral just because two people agree to it.

It diminishes brotherly love, justice



MARK CREECH  
Guest column

## Submissions for Tar Heel Voices (letters to the editor)

Please send no more than 300 words, along with contact information, to [editor@BRnow.org](mailto:editor@BRnow.org) or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512.

## Seeking input into future issues

*Biblical Recorder* staff members encourage you to send story ideas to [editor@BRnow.org](mailto:editor@BRnow.org). What are areas of ministry you want covered? What topics should be covered? What do you wish could be explained better? The *BR* staff cannot do every story or idea submission but we would like to have better-informed readers. Help us to do that by sending in your ideas and also sharing your church news.

In 2012, we are looking for ways to better serve our readers. Tell us how you’ve been encouraged by being involved in missions. What stories would help you be a better pastor? What stories would help your Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, etc.?

Please give us your feedback. You can also send information to *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512, or call (919) 847-2127.



# Suggestions for pastor search committees

Baptist Press

**C**ongregations across America call pastors to their churches in a variety of ways. As church polity varies, so do the approaches of calling a pastor. A bishop or other authority appoints some pastors. Sometimes an elder board decides who will be considered as the next pastor. Many times, however, the responsibility for recommending a pastor to a congregation falls upon a pastor search committee.

The search committee is typically comprised of lay leaders voted on by the congregation or nominated by some group in the church.

Occasionally, the membership may include a current pastoral staff member. It is this latter approach, the utilization of a pastor search committee, which I would like to address in this article.

I have heard from a number of pastors who have been contacted by pastor search committees. What I have heard from these pastors recently is consistent with that which I have heard for the past few years.

The concerns and desires are very consistent from pastor to pastor.

So I am admittedly presenting a one-sided view, that of the pastor who has been contacted by a search committee. I am certain that members of pastor search committees could offer their unique perspectives as well.

## The pleas and requests

When a pastor is contacted by a search committee, his life is often disrupted. Even if he has no sense of call to change churches, the very fact that a search committee contacted him at least causes him to pause. In some cases the contact is very disruptive to his life and ministry. For that reason, pastors have shared with



THOM S. RAINER  
Guest Column

me a number of requests (and sometimes pleas) that they would respectfully ask search committees to consider:

- Understand the potential disruption caused by your contact of a pastor. Most pastors at least pause and pray when they hear from another church. They often include their spouses in the early discussion. They may wonder if the contact is indicative that God may be leading them to another place of ministry. If a search committee contacts a pastor, at least be aware of the disruption that could take place. Perhaps it's not best to send 200 inquiry letters to 200 different pastors to see if anything sticks.

- Have a clear plan for the process of calling a pastor. Let the contacted pastor know that plan on the front end so he won't be left wondering what the next steps are.

- Prepare any questions before you contact the pastor. I have heard from many pastors who meet in person with the search committee, as well as those who first communicate via phone or

Continued on page 13

## TAR HEEL VOICES

# Special thanks from Pennsylvania

A very special "THANK YOU" to approximately 40 churches and associations who came to Pennsylvania this year to help us in the "fields that are white unto harvest and the laborers are so few." Construction, backyard Bible clubs, sports camps, [Vacation Bible Schools] and prayer walking are just some of the things that these teams did. Many of the teams came through our North Carolina/Pennsylvania Partnership and others came because they have established a rapport with churches during the five years of our partnership.

If your church or association feels God calling you to Pennsylvania next summer, please check the Baptist on Mission web site and click "Pennsylvania" for listings from churches that need help. Maybe God is calling you to come and be part of His work here in the "fields that are white unto harvest!"

May God bless every one of you for what you do for Him.

**Roger Carlson NAMB MSC**  
**Construction Coordinator**  
**Baptist Convention Pennsylvania/**  
**South Jersey**

## We do 'get it!'

In response to the editorial, "Pastors, do we get it?" (BR, Nov. 26) as a pastor in North Carolina, at first I was angered and frustrated by this question. Every pastor I personally know does "get it!" We emphasize missions and encourage participation in missions, and we lead by example toward fulfilling the Great Commission. As far as being "ensnared by routine church life" as a root of the problem addressed in the editorial, that is far from the case. Yes, it is easy to become almost overburdened with caring for the needs of a congregation, especially when there is a tendency for "inward" thinking among the congregation. But, to think that this is why some pastors "don't get it" is not fair.

Some congregants reply to mission pleas with, "Why should I be concerned about people 'over there' when there are so many needs here?" It is as if the peoples "over there" are a plague upon

the earth. I recall what David Platt mentioned in *Radical*, and realize that I have faced those kinds of remarks. I know more than one pastor whose job security has been threatened because of his emphasis of "missions."

What is the problem? It comes down to a change of heart through Jesus. Without that, it does not matter how much emphasis a pastor places upon fulfilling the Great Commission, it will not happen. I have led the church I pastor to increase its Cooperative Program giving significantly, but motivating them to increase the giving to specific missions offerings has been like pulling teeth at times. It took several years to motivate church participation in a mission trip to another area of the U.S. Am I discouraged? Yes! Do I stop? Emphatically, NO!

We do "get it," and I pray every day that others will as well!

Name withheld

## 'Create a Christmas memory'

**E**very year I very much look forward to the Christmas season. I enjoy visiting with family, singing Christmas carols, and attending special church programs. I love to see the Christmas decorations in stores and towns. I also like to drive through neighborhoods and observe how people display their own expressions of the Christmas season through their decorations. I especially delight in observing the excitement of children as they enjoy this most special time of the year.

This year, I hope we will not be so busy that we fail to make some special Christmas memories that will not be soon forgotten. What can you do this year that will be remembered for years to come? Perhaps you will make a Christmas memory reading the story of Jesus' birth with your family.

Or, maybe you will share with your children or grandchildren how you came to faith in Jesus Christ. Many of you know that Gloria and I have two young grandsons, and you can imagine how much we love those little boys. It is important to me that they will always be confident of my unconditional love for them, but I also hope they will always remember that their "Poppy" greatly loved the Christ of Christmas.

Due to the economic challenges in our state, many individuals and families will have much less materially than they have in some past years. Some parents are already worrying about how they will be able to help their young children have an enjoyable Christ-

mas morning because they don't even have sufficient money to pay their bills. Maybe God will impress on you to do

something special during this Christmas season for someone who is not expecting a gift from you. Many of us have friends and neighbors who have not yet accepted the Christ of Christmas as their personal Savior. What better time than now to be intentional in our witness for Christ?

More people attend church on Christmas and Easter than any other Sunday of the year. Have you thought about inviting someone to attend a Christmas program at church with you? This could provide an opportunity for a follow-up conversation with them



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.  
BSC executive  
director-treasurer

about receiving Christ. You just might get to enjoy a Christmas memory about the year when a family member or friend became a follower of Jesus.

In Luke's account of the Christmas story, he tells us that following the visit of the shepherds, Mary was "treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them."

She remembered the significance of what was going on around her and what God allowed her to experience.

Let's rejoice greatly in God's incredible love to us through Jesus Christ! Will you do something this year to help create a Christmas memory?

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2:13-14 **BR**

# Fear of God brings peace

Peace is one of those beautiful words everyone likes to use at Christmas. Both the believer and the unbeliever have a concept of peace that is comforting and positive. The word is probably the most heavily used word in Christmas cards and public displays. Even our Jewish friends publicize this word from the Hebrew language, shalom. The word is perceived as non-religious and non-threatening to a sensitive society that is overly cautious of offending someone.

Obviously, peace fits comfortably in the Christmas celebration. Luke reports the words of the angels, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14, KJV).

But there is another important word in the narrative of Christ’s birth which we avoid. I’ve never seen it on a Christmas card or a public display. It is hardly ever mentioned, except in the reading of the Christmas story. The word is “fear.” It is addressed many times in the story of the nativity.

Mary must have been terrified when she learned she was with child. The fear of damage to her reputation, the fear of violating community standards and the fear of God – all of these must have paralyzed her soul. But God sent an angel to address her fear, saying, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus” (Luke 1:30-31).

Joseph had his own set of fears. The

news of Mary’s condition immediately brought to mind the accusations he would face, the charges of personal failure, his standing in the community and the fear of God’s retribution.

But God did not leave his fears unanswered. God sent a message in a dream.

“Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:20-21).

A group of shepherds were faithfully doing their job, expecting nothing out of the ordinary, when an angel showed

up, surrounded by a very bright light. Fear of the supernatural overcame them. This heavenly phenomenon took them completely off guard. Raised as devout Jews, their first reaction was fear and awe of a holy God.

But God, had a word for them. The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).

Fear can be a good thing. In each of these cases fear had the potential to overwhelm them. From that point God took their hand and walked them down the road to peace. The fear of God is the only way to experience the peace of God.

The psalmist said, “Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways” (Psalm 128:1, NIV). Fearing God is a vital

ingredient to walking in God’s ways.

The fear of God is not a bad thing. It gives perspective to all of life. He is eternal; I am temporal. He is perfect; I am a sinner. He is almighty; I am weak. He is judge; I am accountable. A healthy respect for Him is an unending reminder that we are always in His presence – all is sacred.

A fear of God is appropriate in His presence. What other response makes sense?

It keeps a check on our heart and mind. It challenges our actions. It forces us to evaluate our direction.

Ultimately, godly fear will introduce us to a “peace that surpasses all understanding.” We don’t have to remain in a state of fear. This is one of the core messages of the Christmas story.

Jesus brought to the world a peace we had never known. His message is clear,

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27, NIV).

His peace is a gift. It is his Christmas gift to all who fear God to the extent that we accept, believe and receive God’s plan – not the world’s shallow plan. While searching for peace, our atheistic culture is working hard to instill an element of fear in the hearts of Christians. I can’t count the number of news reports about opposition to caroling, to nativity scenes, to the use of the word “Christ,” and other acts of intimidation toward Christians.

How do we respond? Fear not man! Fear God! His peace is the longing of those who oppose Him. Pray that each one of them will experience the fear of God, so they can come to the peace of God. Merry Christmas to you. **BR**



**K. ALLAN BLUME**  
Editor

## Suggestions for pastor search committees

Continued from page 12

Skype. They are often frustrated at the randomness of questions asked, and how different members of the search committee don’t know what the other members will ask.

- Do your homework thoroughly before showing up in the pastor’s present church. Many congregations recognize a search committee immediately when they attend a worship service. These church members soon become worried, frustrated or angry at either the pastor or the inquiring church. The presence of a search committee can be highly disruptive. Many pastors do not even know that a committee is visiting his church. He, too, is caught off guard.

- Communicate regularly and clearly with the prospective pastor. As long as the process is open, stay in touch with the pastor. Many times the greatest frustration is the lack of communication. One pastor recently told me that he resolved not to talk further with a church because he had not heard from them in such a long time. He assumed that they had moved in another direction. The search

committee was shocked when they heard that information from the pastor several months later.

- If the search committee decides to move in another direction, let the pastor know immediately. A courtesy call, even an email, will always be appreciated even if the committee concludes that the pastor is not a fit for the church. Many pastors have told me that they thought they were still under consideration, only to discover some time later that the church had called another pastor.

### An imperfect process

There is no perfect way to call a pastor to a church. Regardless of church polity, mistakes and miscommunication will take place.

But these suggestions by pastors who have been contacted by search committees could prove very helpful.

At the very least, they could help minimize frustration and disruption in the lives of pastors and the churches they serve.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Thom S. Rainer is president of LifeWay Christian Resources. Visit ThomRainer.com.) **BR**

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If you look at the box on the left our information looks the same, but we are in the process of filing the correct paperwork with the U.S. Postal Service so we can legally change our information. Our phone and fax numbers and our email addresses will remain the same. New address: P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512 or 205 Convention Drive, Cary, NC 27511.

January 1

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

January 8

## Thriving in a Fast-Food Culture

**Focal Passages:** Prov. 23:20-21;  
Daniel 1:8, 11-16; Rom. 13:12-14

In 2004 actor Morgan Spurlock produced a documentary entitled “Supersize Me.” For 30 days Spurlock ate nothing but McDonald’s restaurant foods, with many of these meals being supersized portions. Can you imagine eating 90 McDonald’s meals? The healthy 32-year-old Spurlock gained 24.5 pounds and increased his body mass by 13 percent. As a result of his increased weight, loss of muscle, and increasingly sluggish arteries, he experienced a dramatic loss of energy and noticeable mood swings. It took him 14 months to lose the weight and regain muscle tone. There is no doubt that obesity is epidemic in America today, which was the point of doing the documentary. The saying “you are what you eat” has much truth to it.

Good health is a biblical issue. One finds in the life of Daniel the exact opposite of Spurlock’s experiment. Daniel and his friends had been taken into exile in Babylon. They were chosen to serve in the king’s court because of their youth and vigor and intelligence. But Daniel

drew the line regarding what he put into his body.

When presented with the fatty foods and alcoholic beverages of the royal court, Daniel abstained. He asked permission to eat only vegetables and drink water for 10 days to prove that the Hebrews’ diet was healthier. His request was granted, and his test succeeded. From that time forward, Daniel and his Hebrew friends were allowed to eat and drink according to their traditions and conscience. Being healthy was one of the reasons Daniel excelled as a leader.

Likewise King Solomon and the Apostle Paul identified the dangers of indulgence. Not only was it unhealthy to be gluttonous or drunken, it was a poor witness to one’s faith. Paul encouraged the Christians to put on the “armor of light.” This was a call to reflect Jesus in everyday living. While we Baptists might prefer potluck dinners or “buffets” to “vegan,” there is something to be said for eating healthy. Bon appétit!



**WAYNE PROCTOR**  
Pastor, Eure  
Baptist Church

## Seeking Purity in a Sensual Culture

**Focal Passage:** Ephesians 5:1-5,  
8-12, 15-16

In 1819 Washington Irving published the short story “Rip Van Winkle.” It was the fictitious tale of a lazy and unproductive man who meets up with some strangers, drinks their drink, and finds himself asleep for the next 20 years. When he awakens the world as he knew it had drastically changed. I’ve often thought about how our world has changed in the past 20 years. Twenty years ago we didn’t have so-called “gay marriage” in any state, or rampant porn on the internet. And then I wonder what the next 20 years will bring us.

Dealing with morality within the church has always been a struggle. Does a pastor marry folk who are “living together?”

Does a church grant membership to the same? What does a congregation do when they discover their pastor has a problem with pornography, or is having

an affair with his secretary, or announces to the congregation that he is a homosexual?

These issues are not just theoretical, unfortunately they are sometimes real.

While the pendulum of social mores may change, right now we live in a most sensual culture. Is the church going to become like the “world,” or is the church going to be the light that transforms culture?

Perhaps you’ve heard the phrase, “If you want to talk the talk, you have to walk the walk.” The word “walk” is key to this passage (v. 2, 8, 15). J.B. Phillip’s translation calls it our “sense of responsibility.” I call it our lifestyle.

It begins with what we put in our thoughts, and continues with how we live every moment of every day. As Paul wrote this passage, he gave us a proactive formula for winning the battle of the mind and heart. Be imitators of God (v. 1), let our actions be dominated by love (v. 2), and let our speech be filled with thanksgiving (v. 4). Ultimately it is all about relationship. None of us can live a truly holy life apart from a living, vital, real relationship with Jesus Christ.

January 1

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

January 8

## Stay Grateful for God’s Care

**Focal Passages:** Numbers 22:4b-6,  
31-35; 23:19-23

It’s a new year! For many, this brings thoughts of gratitude about the previous year and excitement about the year ahead. There is overwhelming thankfulness for all the blessings God has provided. There is excitement and anticipation about all that God is going to do.

For others, however, the beginning of a new year is different. There are the ongoing burdens of last year – relationship burdens, financial burdens, family burdens, occupational burdens. And, if anything, the burdens of last year seem to be snowballing into an avalanche this year. In the midst of such challenges, our minds can easily gravitate toward these difficult circumstances rather than resting in our knowledge of our great God who sovereignly reigns over our circumstances and loves His people with an unconditional, everlasting love.

If you happen to find yourself in the latter category, allow God to use this week’s lesson to encourage you. Despite the fact that God’s people were in the midst of God’s 40-year discipline for their unbelief and unwillingness to enter

the land God had promised to them, God still showed His covenant love for them and His faithfulness to keep His promise (Gen. 12:1-3). God did this in order to demonstrate His glory among the nations. In this particular case, God used some unusual circumstances and characters to demonstrate His covenant-keeping faithfulness. God used a pagan king’s desire to curse God’s people as an opportunity to show His determination to bless His people. God used a Gentile diviner to proclaim His blessing. And, God used a faithful donkey to save the life of this hot-tempered spokesman from immediate divine judgment. Even when His people didn’t see it, God was working.

So, are you rejoicing today in God’s faithfulness to you through Christ – perhaps in spite of your circumstances? Praise Him! If, today, you are overwhelmed with burdens and difficult circumstances, remember, God is sovereign and faithful. Trust Him, today and throughout this year, being grateful for His loving care for you.



**RANDY MANN**  
Minister of education  
and evangelism, Wake  
Cross Roads Baptist  
Church, Raleigh

## Stay Focused on the Goal

**Focal Passage:** Numbers 32:1, 5-8,  
16-18, 20-24; 33:51-53

When I read through this passage, I did not expect to have a musical flashback to a Disney movie. But, that is exactly what happened. As I pictured in my mind the request of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and then Moses’ subsequent response, I must admit, one of the songs from Disney’s movie *High School Musical* came to mind – “We’re All in This Together.”

Moses interpreted the request of the Reubenites and Gadites as a statement of their desire to avoid participating in the taking of the land of promise. The leaders of these tribes very quickly dispelled this idea, strongly declaring their readiness to participate in the conquest alongside their brothers, while maintaining their personal request for a certain provision of land.

While thinking about this exchange, I could not help but think about God’s

grand plan of redemption and our part in it. God is now working toward the end goal of the final establishment of His kingdom, where His will is being done on earth as it is in heaven – the end toward which Jesus taught us to pray.

With the first coming of Christ, this kingdom is, in a sense, “already.” That is, Christ ushered in the kingdom, which is being built and established now in and through the lives of those who know and follow Him. In another sense, however, that kingdom reality is “not yet” – awaiting final fulfillment as Christ returns to overthrow the powers of darkness and establish His rule and reign forever among His people.

Between now and then, we, as the people of God are “All in This Together.” We do not seek or serve our own wills and desires. Instead, we stay focused on the goal of serving our King and the advancement of His kingdom. This does not mean that we are not concerned for our individual needs and desires, but it does mean that our own needs and desires are always viewed as secondary when compared to the pursuit of the God-given task of serving together with His people for the sake of His glory.

# Campbell breaks ground on new medical school

Campbell Communications

BUIES CREEK – One simple but powerful word was repeated during the Dec. 8 groundbreaking ceremony of Campbell University's School of Osteopathic Medicine. Big.

Fittingly, a big crowd gathered under a big tent at the site for Campbell's 97,000-square-foot medical training facility Dec. 8 to see the ceremonial golden shovels break dirt on North Carolina's first medical school in 35 years. More than a dozen speakers, including North Carolina Governor Bev Perdue, talked of what the school – scheduled to open in the fall of 2013 – will mean not only to the area's economy, but to health care in general in North Carolina and the southeastern portion of the U.S.

"The question I'm always asked is, 'How can North Carolina compete?'" Perdue said to the crowd of more than 250. "The answer is simple. We compete by having big ideas and big dreams. Campbell's big dream will transform the town of Buies Creek, Harnett County and the state."

Campbell's efforts to launch a medical school will directly address the growing shortage of physicians in North Carolina, according to Dr. John Kauffman, the school's founding dean.

"Our state currently ranks 35th out of 50 in primary



Gov. Bev Perdue speaks Dec. 8 during the groundbreaking ceremony at Campbell University's new medical school. (Photo courtesy of Bennett Scarborough)

care physicians," Kauffman said. "There are 20 counties without a single general surgeon and at least that many without an obstetrician. The future, however, is bright."

Kauffman said Campbell's medical school will eventually graduate about 200 physicians and physician assistants each year, many of whom will practice in rural, under-served regions of the state. Students will spend their first two years training at the new facility in Buies Creek and Years 3 and 4 training at community hospitals, where he expects many will live and put down roots.

The primary focus of the School of Osteopathic Medicine will be training for primary care and family medicine, general surgery, pediatrics, psychiatry and other

services, with an emphasis on rural areas or regions with little or no health care options.

That focus is important to Tim McNeill, chairman of the Harnett County Board of Commissioners. McNeill fought back tears Dec. 8 when talking about the school's potential impact.

"It's hard to believe there are still people in North Carolina who have to travel 80 miles to see a doctor," McNeill said. "This is what many are dealing with, especially in the eastern portion of the state. This school, I believe, will alleviate this. This is truly the Lord's work."

He was equally emotional talking about the school's immediate boost to Harnett County, which will also see a new 50-bed hospital open in Lillington in 2012. The regional economic impact of the medical school over its first 10 years of operation will be \$300 million and 1,158 new jobs, according to a recent study.

Campbell also announced the name of its medical facility, the Leon Levine Medical Sciences Center, named for the Charlotte-area philanthropist and member of the North Carolina Business Hall of Fame.

"This will be a day long remembered," Campbell President Jerry Wallace told the crowd. "I hope each of you can look back and say, 'I was at Campbell the day they broke ground on the new medical school, and it was a grand and glorious day.'" **BR**

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Watkins Chapel Baptist Church of Middlesex, NC, is currently seeking a full-time **Senior Pastor**. Send resume to: WCBC Pastor Search Committee, 5897 NC Highway 231, Middlesex, NC 27557-8471.

Bellview Baptist Church in Woodruff, SC, is prayerfully seeking a **full time senior pastor**. Must have a Southern Baptist seminary degree and minimum 5 years pastoral experience. Please send resume and references to Pastor Search Committee, 901 Bellview Rd., Woodruff, SC 29388.

### Church Staff

**PART-TIME YOUTH LEADER.** Sharon Forest Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC, is seeking a bivocational/part-time youth leader. Send resume: [rlanfordfamily@aol.com](mailto:rlanfordfamily@aol.com).

Marshall Baptist Church is seeking a full time **Minister of Youth & Music**. Send resume to [youth\\_music@marshallchurch.org](mailto:youth_music@marshallchurch.org) or Marshall Baptist Church, 436 Marshall Church Road NE, Thomson, GA 30824, Attn: Personnel Committee.

Elizabethtown Baptist Church in Elizabethtown, NC, is looking for an energetic and innovative **Music/Worship Leader**. Responsibilities include planning, organizing, conducting and evaluating a comprehensive music ministry for all worship services and assisting the senior minister in leading and planning services of worship and ministry. Submit all resumes to EBC Music Search Team, PO Box 1712, Elizabethtown, NC 28337, or [sbridgers@ec.rr.com](mailto:sbridgers@ec.rr.com).

Calvary Road Baptist Church, a conservative Southern Baptist church with a membership of 615 is seeking a **fulltime Youth Minister/Associate Pastor**. CRBC is located in Waynesville, NC. If led by God to pursue, please send resume to 149 Red Swanger Road, Waynesville, NC 28786. Additional information concerning CRBC and its ministries can be found on our website [www.crbcnc.org](http://www.crbcnc.org). Resumes/references will be accepted until February 1, 2012.

**MINISTER OF MUSIC & WORSHIP LEADER.** Sharon Forest Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC, is seeking a part-time/bivocational worship leader. We use a blended style of music. Send resume: [rlanfordfamily@aol.com](mailto:rlanfordfamily@aol.com).

Lakeview Baptist Church, Monroe, NC, is seeking a **full time Minister to Students** (children through college). Ordination and experience required. E-mail resume to [resumes@lakeviewfamily.org](mailto:resumes@lakeviewfamily.org).

**Pianist/Worship Leader:** Enon Baptist Church in Salisbury, NC, has a part-time position available for a ministry-minded person who wants to serve the Lord in a bi-vocational music ministry opportunity. We are looking for a musically experienced person to play the piano for the choir and lead our congregation in worship. The candidate must be an energetic and enthusiastic team player with a passion for helping people of all ages worship the Lord, Jesus Christ, through music. Contact us by e-mail [enon@carolina.rr.com](mailto:enon@carolina.rr.com) or phone 704-633-3404.

### Miscellaneous

**NCBAM needs grab bars and other fall-prevention devices** funded and installed across the state. Keep aging adults on their feet and in their homes. Call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

**NCBAM needs teams of 2-4 servant volunteers to "adopt" an aging adult** and provide friendly visits 1-2 hours a week. All counties needed; training provided. Call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

**Share the Biblical Recorder — FREE.** Order a three-month free subscription for your family and friends. Contact Daphne Woodall at (919) 847-2127 or [daphne@BRnow.org](mailto:daphne@BRnow.org) to make arrangements. Encourage others to be more informed about N.C. Baptist life and missions.

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- Submit the information via the *Recorder's* website at [BRnow.org](http://BRnow.org)
- Send a Fax to (919) 847-6939

For more information, call the office at (919) 847-2127.

Cost for Baptist churches and 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 that run in the paper also are carried online.

# Christmas season prime time for sharing Jesus, leader says

BR Staff

**A**mid the hustle and bustle of the Christmas holiday season, it can be easy for Christians to get caught up in last-minute shopping, music programs and parties like everyone else. But Marty Dupree, evangelism and church growth team leader for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), urges fellow believers not to miss one of the best times of the year for sharing Jesus with neighbors, friends and those they meet in stores.

Dupree spends much of his time encouraging and teaching N.C. Baptists how to share their faith daily and not to limit evangelism to mission trips and outreach events.

“Life is a mission trip,” Dupree said, while leading an “Evangelism Crash Course” workshop in November at the BSC annual meeting in Greensboro.

“Everywhere you go you have opportunities to talk to people, and you share with people as you go.”

But Christmas, he later added, is one of the best times of the year when it comes to inviting others – specifically those who don’t normally attend services – to church.

In a 2008 survey, Lifeway Research found that 47 percent of respondents cited that “during the Christmas holiday season” they were more open to considering issues of faith. The study also found that “67 percent of Americans say a personal invitation from a church



Marty Dupree, left, talks with Pastor Rick Crouse of Dry Ponds Baptist Church in Granite Falls in the exhibit hall at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's annual meeting. (BSC photo by K Brown)

going family member would be the most effective method a local congregation or faith community could use to invite them to attend.” Invitations from a friend or neighbor were nearly as successful with 63 percent indicating this type of invitation would be effective.

Dupree shared several ideas about incorporating evangelism into fun and easy seasonal activities in a neighborhood.

- Christmas caroling.

Dupree said his family reaches out to their neighborhood through Christmas caroling each year. The first year

they tried it, he said, about nine people showed up to participate. But in recent years the number of neighbors who participate has grown to 40.

- Holding an open house party.

Dupree encourages carolers to invite neighbors to attend an open house for food and fellowship. The host family can

use that time to read the Christmas story, as well as share prayer requests and testimonies. Children could also prepare a Christmas skit. The open house soon becomes “ministry time,” Dupree said.

A family also can invite neighborhood kids over for a birthday party for Jesus, where the story of Christ can be shared.

● Share “True meaning of Christmas” tract. Visit [ncbaptist.org](http://ncbaptist.org) for tract.

The tract – or as Dupree calls it “a Bible study” – can be shared door-to-door through Christmas caroling or even while shopping. The booklet also can be handed out as Christmas cards, he said.

Flyers for Christmas events, musicals and dramatizations at church also can be evangelistic tools and provide opportunities to invite neighbors and friends to church. For the upcoming year, Dupree suggested hosting a New Year’s resolution party or incorporating evangelism into other events, such as Super Bowl and Valentine’s Day parties.

For more information or suggestions contact Dupree at (919) 467-5100, ext. 5565, or his ministry assistant Janet Packard at ext. 5565.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Brooklyn Lowery, a writer for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, contributed to this story.) **BR**

## BSC Board reports alcohol findings

BSC Communications

During its annual report to messengers of the annual meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), the Board of Directors presented the findings of the Social Use of Alcohol Committee. This committee was appointed after messengers during the 2010 annual meeting approved a motion calling for the development of a policy concerning the social use of alcohol by convention staff, convention funded church planters, and individuals serving on convention boards and convention committees.

The 2010 motion asked for the Board to bring a report back to messengers of the 2011 annual meeting. The Board reported that the committee found the current policies related to the social use of alcohol sufficient. During the miscellaneous business session which followed the Board report, a messenger brought a motion asking that the policies be placed on the BSC website.

The motion came from Benny Vickrey,

messenger from Hillside Park Baptist Church in Thomasville. Messengers approved the motion.

During the September meeting at Caraway Conference Center, the Board of Directors affirmed a statement from the committee. That statement said the current policies related to the social use of alcohol for the BSC staff, BSC supported church planters, and those individuals recommended to serve on the committees and boards of the BSC: “BSC policies prohibit the use, sale, manufacture, distribution, or possession of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time on BSC premises or while conducting business off BSC premises. Being under the influence of alcohol while on BSC premises or while conducting business off premises is also prohibited.”

A copy of the policy is available at [ncbaptist.org](http://ncbaptist.org); under Administration & Convention Relations, choose Board of Directors & Executive Committee. On the right-hand side under “Downloads” click “BSCNC Alcohol Policies.” **BR**



### from your Biblical Recorder Staff

During the holidays our office will officially be closed Dec. 23-27 and Jan. 2. After Dec. 16, our new office will be located in the Baptist State Convention (BSC) building, 205 Convention Drive, Cary, NC 27511. Our new mailing address is PO Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512. Please contact us at (919) 847-2127 if you have questions or need more information. Thank you for your patience during this time of transition. Merry Christmas!

... He will be named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

