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Pastors 'preach the Word' at conference Page 2

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N.C. Baptists challenged to 'Awaken'



Annual meeting highlights prayer, missions, call to increase CP

By **SHAWN HENDRICKS** | *BR* Managing Editor

After weeks, and even months of focused prayer and a call for spiritual awakening, this year's 182nd annual meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) ended with 34 North American Mission Board missionaries being sent out to plant churches in some of the least evangelized areas of the country and Canada.

This year's meeting was held Nov. 12-13 at the Greensboro Coliseum Complex Special Events Center and drew a crowd of 1,889 – which was

See Awaken page 7

'It's all about obedience' Ezell says to N.C. Baptists



NAMB President Kevin Ezell, left, interviews Brad O'Brien, a former intern from The Summit Church in Durham. O'Brien will be a NAMB church planter in Baltimore. (BSC photo by K Brown)

By **SHAWN HENDRICKS** | *BR* Managing Editor

Church planting, revitalization and developing a “farm system” of new missionaries throughout North America were the focus of a message to North Carolina Baptists by Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Ezell gave the convention sermon to N.C. Baptist messengers on the final evening of their annual meeting Nov. 13 in Greensboro.

Pulling scripture from Luke 10:2, Ezell focused his message on how “the harvest is abundant, but the workers are few.” Just before beginning his sermon, he led

NAMB in commissioning 34 missionaries, many of whom will plant churches throughout the Northeast and into Canada where there is little evangelical work.

“We desperately need people who are courageous and willing to go to places [that] are desperately needing the gospel,” he said. “It’s not that the people in the Northeast and the Northwest don’t want to hear the gospel. The problem is that we don’t have enough people [who] want to share it.”

Ezell shared how an average of 900 to 1,000 Baptist churches die each year in the United States. NAMB’s goal is to see an annual net gain of 500 churches. Right

See Ezell page 4

Pastors encouraged to ‘Preach the Word’

By **BUDDY OVERMAN** | BSC Communications
& BR staff

The theme of this year’s annual Pastors’ Conference, held Nov. 11-12 at Lawndale Baptist Church in Greensboro, was “Preach the Word.”

With urgency

With this year’s theme based on 2 Timothy 4:2, Greg Mathis, senior pastor of Mud Creek Baptist Church in Hendersonville, opened the conference with an appeal to pastors to embrace the Great Commission with a renewed sense of urgency.

“There is one last great hope for the world, our nation, our children and our churches, and that hope lies in the person and power of Jesus Christ and no one else,” he said. “How can we love the Lord Jesus Christ so passionately tonight and not share Him immediately and continually with those around us?”

Mathis said the exploding global population and increasing number of people who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior has created an urgent need for missions locally and internationally. Yet, too many believers are unaware of, or unconcerned about, the growing numbers of lostness.

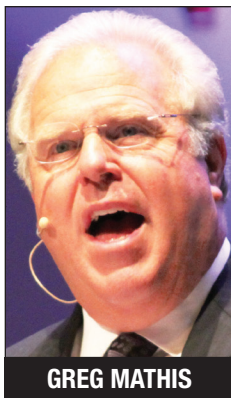
“We cannot keep this to ourselves,” he said. “God help us, North Carolina Baptists, to be urgent with the gospel.”

With passion

When he finished, no one could accuse Bobby Welch, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, of not being passionate.

With an occasional run up and down the aisle to make a point or two, Welch challenged pastors from Matthew 9:36-38 to pray that God would send them out of their comfort zones and into the harvest fields. He said he sees much passion in modern preaching, but believes there is a deficiency in compassion. Without compassion, pastors will never feel the need to act on God’s Word.

“They have great passion but it stops



GREG MATHIS



BOBBY WELCH



From left to right: Dale Robertson, pastor of North Main Baptist Church in Salisbury, was elected as treasurer for the 2014 pastors’ conference. Scott Faw, pastor of Moons Chapel Baptist Church in Siler City, will serve as president for next year’s conference. Josh Phillips, pastor of Cherry Grove Baptist Church in Cerro Gordo, was elected as president for 2014. Marc Sanders, pastor of Sandy Branch Baptist Church in Bear Creek, was elected as vice president for 2014. (BR photo by Shawn Hendricks)

at the doors of the church, and it leaves them by the time they get out of the parking lot,” he said.

“Herald the gospel with passion and compassion. Don’t just talk about it. Put some action in it.”

With commitment

Joe Brown, former pastor of Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte, opened day two of the conference by calling pastors to consider carefully what it means to be called by God to preach in modern times.

He cautioned pastors about the dangers of becoming discouraged during an era of widespread sin and godlessness. He called pastors to consider it a privilege to preach even in these difficult times. “I believe God made you for the day we are living in right now,” Brown said.

“That is a great and high calling.”

Brown urged pastors to remain faithful to their calling to preach the gospel, to correct and rebuke sin, and to call people to repentance. He said pastors who are faithful with that message will see lives transformed. “In the currency of heaven, the value of your preaching and your church is determined by the lives that are changed,” Brown said.

With relevance

Pastors must remain relevant without conforming to society, as the sweeping changes in society have disturbed many pastors to the point of despair, said Don Bouldin, interim pastor of First Baptist Church Marshville.

“Change is an absolute fact of life,” he said. “The complicated factor to this day is the speed of change. Who would have thought 50 years ago that the culture God called us to minister to would have the



DON BOULDIN

kind of things that we have today?” Echoing the words of Brown, Bouldin said this is no time for pastors to despair, but to recognize that God has called them for this time in history.

With conviction

Mike Whitson, pastor of First Baptist Church Indian Trail, spoke to pastors about the role they can have in bringing about spiritual revival in the United States.

“I am convinced with all my heart that God is looking for leaders with convictions and leaders who will stand on those convictions,” he said.

Speaking from Philippians 3, Whitson shared several characteristics that godly men must possess in order to bring about revival. Above all, a man of God must seek to know God intimately, and should evaluate how well he knows God – not by his education or experience – but by the factors that motivate and lead to action.

“What you live for, and what you love, is what will put the energy in your life,” Whitson said.

“Is the real purpose to grow a bigger church or to know God?”

“God is not looking for extraordinary people,” Whitson said. “He is looking for extraordinary faith.”



MIKE WHITSON

With thanksgiving

Pulling his sermon from Hebrews 12, Mac Brunson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., offered a challenge of thanksgiving.

He contended we live in a time in this country when more and more people are lacking hope for tomorrow.

“Over the last week, I’ve had so many people write and tweet and text,” he said. They ask, “What is happening to our nation? What’s happening to the church in our day?”

“People are living in despair,” Brunson said. “I’ve watched people – especially, I’ve seen this in ministers in my life – who become angry and upset and bitter



MAC BRUNSON

over a period of time. And for some reason it eventually leads them to an act of immorality.”

The solution? “Thanksgiving, thanksgiving,” Brunson said.

“We don’t thank God nearly enough. We need to give thanks to God for a

new covenant.

“When somebody dies for you, you say ‘thank you.’”

With power

There will be times that God may call on pastors and church leaders to do things that may not seem logical or safe, said Mark Harris, pastor of First Baptist Church in Charlotte.

But for those who walk with God, God will empower them.

“If we are ever going to step into the pulpit and preach the Word with urgency and preach the Word with passion,” he said, “then we’re going to have to recognize that it’s going to take some time of just you walking with God.”

In a society of rising divorce and immorality, Harris said pastors cannot confront the challenges they face – in and out of the pulpit – alone.

“All of us are walking through those waters,” he said.

“Preach the Word in power – you’ll do that when you walk with God ... There is nothing ... that compares to the sweet companionship that is yours when you are walking with God.” **BR**



MARK HARRIS

Ministers' wives can be bright star

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Assistant Managing Editor

Wives of pastors can be shining stars for Christ if they are willing.

"To be a star is something you really need to accept," said Dwaine Bouldin when addressing 44 minister's wives and guests Nov. 12 at Lawndale Baptist Church in Greensboro.

Bouldin, a pastor's wife for 50 years who lives in Matthews, N.C., serves on the Budget Committee of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. She said minister's wives "have a special place as a star because of your position."

Bouldin spoke at the 57th Annual North Carolina Baptist Ministers' Wives meeting. Using Philippians 2:14-15 and Colossians 1:24-27, she discussed how to "Polish Your Shine."

"People notice what you do ... what you wear," she said, noting that a certain celebrity spends \$49,000 a month on her look. Bouldin encouraged the women not to get too distracted by the finer things. She told of a time when she took great care in choosing a new outfit, and the day she wore it to church, four other ladies

wore the same attire.

Bouldin encouraged the ladies to do things that are helpful to their husbands, and especially not to argue with them on Sunday morning before the service.

She challenged the women to see each church where their husband ministers as an opportunity to touch lives for Christ. But also, take time to find other minister's wives nearby so "you can minister to one another. You are not in it alone," Bouldin said. "You have to get used to living in a fish bowl."

Each minister's wife should have at least one friend that is not a member of her church.

"You do need somebody to listen," but Bouldin warned that telling someone in the church tempts women to succumb to the sin of gossip. Each woman

needs to find her source of power in the Holy Spirit, too. "You have to pray that every morning that God would fill your cup again," she said. "It will revolutionize your life how God is taking care of you. If you drift away from the Lord your shine won't be as bright."

She also warned not to take their position for granted. "Being a pastor's wife is not a gift ... it's an honor," she said. **BR**



DWAINE BOULDIN



From right: Chrissie Redding, president; Diane Smith, Central 1 representative; Gina Powell, secretary/treasurer; Harriet Lovett, president elect; and Lisa Miller, vice president elect. Other officers not pictured: Dakota Spurling, vice president; Susan Stamper, publicity; Marlene Hampton, retreat chairperson; Judy King, retreat vice chairperson; Beverly Spears, Eastern representative; Amy Harmon, Central 1 representative; Julie Pierce, Western 1 representative; Sylvia Murphy, Western 2 representative; Becky Blakely, 2014 retreat chairperson; and Donna Burnop, 2014 retreat vice chairperson. (BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle)

EC hears ministry updates, committee reports

By MELISSA LILLEY | BSC Communications

The Executive Committee (EC) of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) met Nov. 12 in conjunction with the 2012 BSC annual meeting in Greensboro.

First on the agenda were committee reports. Wanda Dellinger, chair of the Christian Social Services Committee, reported that the annual Thanksgiving Offering for Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina is underway. This year's goal is \$1,450,000 and the offering theme is "Sharing Hope." The week of prayer was Nov. 11-19 although churches are still collecting donations. Visit www.bchfamily.org.

Dellinger also shared that through N.C. Baptist Hospital, new CareNet counseling centers are now located in the Raleigh Baptist Association, New River Baptist Association and Baptist Children's Homes' Oak Ranch near Broadway. CareNet has provided outpatient counseling services across North Carolina since 1972.

Rit Varriale, chair of the Christian Higher Education Committee, shared that the committee continues to make progress regarding establishment of a Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute scholar-

ship. The two-year scholarship would be awarded to Fruitland students who, upon graduation from Fruitland, desire to continue their education at one of the educational institutions affiliated with the BSC. A maximum of two students at each affiliated institution would be eligible for the scholarship.

The anticipated start date for the scholarships is Fall 2013.

Dana Hall, president of N.C. Baptist Men, reported that North Carolina Baptists continue working in New York and New Jersey following Hurricane Sandy and expect to remain in the area for up to six months. To date, North Carolina Baptist volunteers have served 250,000 hot meals and recorded about 2,500 volunteer days. Recovery teams are also doing tear-out work and other tasks at Graffiti Church on New York City's lower east side. The mass feeding and recovery effort is being supported by a number of teams such as shower, laundry, communications, chaplaincy, medical, assessment and administration.

No old or new business was brought before the committee. At the request of Administration and Human Resources, the EC approved updates to the Convention employee handbook.

Beverly Volz, director of accounting services, reported that Cooperative Program receipts through Oct. 31 totaled \$24,353,143.05, which represents a change of less than one percent as compared to the same time last year.

The next EC meeting is Jan. 29, 2013, at Caraway Conference Center. **BR**

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Ezell

Continued from page 1

now, this means 1,500 churches would need to be planted each year. Realistically, if there is going to be a net gain of 500 churches, Ezell said church revitalization is crucial. “We need to decrease our death rate,” he said. “We need revitalization. Too many churches are struggling. There are literally hundreds of churches that cannot pay their light bill and cease to exist. There are hundreds of churches and hundreds of church properties that sit vacant with no outreach and no ministry.”

NAMB hopes to reduce the church death rate by 20 percent, he said. They plan to help lead more church planters to come alongside dying churches and replant new, healthy churches. In April, they will host a church growth and revitalization conference at Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Raleigh. For more details go to http://www.namb.net/revitalization/North_Carolina/.

In North Carolina, there have already been thriving churches that have worked with struggling congregations to replant a new church and better reach their community. But not only must Southern Baptists decrease the death rate, they also must increase the birth rate.

“How do we find 1,500 planters? Ezell asked. “They don’t just happen. You have to intentionally pray and develop those missionaries.”

Seminaries and church leaders can help by encouraging and training students to plant churches, rather than automatically gravitating toward existing congregations. “We must set the bar so we can find 1,500 planters who

are faithful and willing to go where others will not go,” Ezell said. A key part of that effort will involve building a “farm system.” This system, he explained, focuses on three specific areas: student missionaries, interns and apprentices who ultimately become church planters.

“Part of our problem is that we just parachute someone into a town [where] they [have] no experience at all,” Ezell said. “We want to develop them in a farm system ... if we’re going to be able to do what Luke 10:2 says.”

Last year, NAMB had less than 600 student missionaries. But next year, they plan to increase that number to 1,000.

“In my opinion, with 45,000 churches, ... [600 student missionaries is] abysmal,” Ezell said. “We must do better.”

Reaching this goal will depend on better recruiting in church youth groups, high schools and colleges.

“They’re in your churches,” he said. “They’re in your youth groups.”

“It’s amazing how ... I look and see where some of those ridiculously immature high school students are today, and how God radically changes their life and redirects them in incredible ways.”

Right now NAMB has 125 interns, Ezell said. Pastors mentor these interns for a year before they become an apprentice, and ultimately church planters. Next year, NAMB hopes to double the number of 125 interns. They also hope to double the number of 125 apprentices.

“We really need 6,000 student missionaries,” Ezell said. “We really need 3,000 interns, and we need 1,500 apprentices.”

Ezell turned to the newly commissioned missionaries and thanked them for their willingness to follow God’s call. “Many of their parents don’t understand why they passed over good opportunities to make a very good living to do what they do,” Ezell said. “Many of their parents have shared with them that they had much higher hopes for them.”

Ezell encouraged them to press past the difficult days ahead and to keep their eyes focused on God’s calling on their lives.

“There are going to be days when you are going to feel very lonely,” he said. “You church plant in a city, and the response is sometimes slow, and you feel all alone. I want you to understand and remember the power of One, the power of influence of [the] One.”

Ezell then shifted his message toward N.C. Baptists.

“North Carolina Baptists ... you are one of the finest and one of the strongest conventions the Southern Baptist Convention has,” he said. “You’re one of the finest leaders. You’re some of the finest pastors. That [puts] you in a very dangerous situation because we can look at all that is going right and lose a sense of intensity and tenacity and urgency.”

“Obedience,” he said. “It’s all about obedience. Please join us in praying Luke 10:2. The harvest is indeed abundant. The workers are few.” **BR**

Convention agencies bring ministry reports

By MELISSA LILLEY | BSC Communications

North Carolina’s Baptist agencies reported to messengers at their annual meeting Nov. 13 in Greensboro how God has blessed those ministries – and through His grace – lives are being impacted.

As a 7-year-old, Travis went to live with his aunt and uncle because of the alcohol and drug abuse issues in his home. But the impact of growing up in that environment had already impacted Travis.

“I had a lot of anger problems and took that out on my aunt and uncle,” Travis told messengers, with his aunt Karen standing with him on stage. “We decided we needed help.”

Travis’ family turned to Baptist Children’s Homes and Cameron Boys’ Camp, where he learned about God’s love and forgiveness.

“This is not my story; this is God’s story,” Travis said. “It’s about the kids who still need help.”

Travis, now 15, experienced hope and healing during his time at Baptist Children’s Homes.

He asked N.C. Baptists to continue praying for him and his family, and all the children whose lives are being changed because of Baptist Children’s Homes.

The theme for this year’s Thanksgiving



Michael Blackwell, center, president of Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina (BCH), shares about the Children’s Homes and the affect N.C. Baptists have on families like Travis, left, and his aunt Karen, right. Because of their family’s involvement with BCH Travis came to a saving relationship with Christ and found healing with his family. (BR photo by Shawn Hendricks)

Offering for Baptist Children’s Homes is “Sharing Hope,” based on Romans 8:24. This year’s goal is \$1,450,000.

“You have truly made a difference in changing Travis. When you change him, you change everyone around him,” said Travis’ aunt, Karen. “You change his family and his church family. He will be a different husband and father than he would have been because of you.”

Messengers also heard a report from the N.C. Baptist Foundation, which focused on highlighting ways N.C. Baptists can be good stewards of the material and financial resources the Lord has provided.

“As Christian stewards, we have a responsibility to determine what will happen to our stuff when we don’t need it anymore,” said Foundation president Clay Warf.

“An estate plan should be our greatest act of Christian stewardship.”

Through endowments and charitable trust funds, Christians can ensure that they continue making a difference in ministry and missions for years to come. Believers should also be good stewards as they prepare documents such as their last will and testament.

The N.C. Baptist Foundation is ready to assist North Carolina Baptists with

financial services, investment planning, gift planning and church growth investment funds.

“We want all North Carolina Baptists to finish well,” Warf said.

“We are robbing God when we fail to tithe our estate. We need to wake up to what we can do for God if we’ll be faithful stewards.”

Church and community relations director Paul Mullen and Vice President of Faith and Health Ministries Gary Gunderson brought the N.C. Baptist Hospital report. Since 1923, N.C. Baptist Hospital has sought to provide excellent care to patients.

“Our founders in the Baptist State Convention had a simple dream that would extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ,” Gunderson said.

The hospital continues to prove a national leader in healthcare, being ranked among the “Best Hospitals in America” by *U.S. News and World Report* in specialty areas such as cancer and geriatrics.

Gunderson thanked N.C. Baptists for their support of the Mother’s Day Offering, which helps patients in serious financial need pay their hospital bills. In 2012, N.C. Baptists gave more than \$620,000 to the Mother’s Day Offering.

Also bringing a report to messengers was *Biblical Recorder* Editor Allan Blume,

See Agencies page 16

NAMP VP urges N.C. Baptists to be obedient, pursue Kingdom

By MELISSA LILLEY | BSC Communications

Although Jeff Christopherson's first church plant birthed two more new churches, he knew something wasn't right. Somehow, his focus had become building the church instead of building God's Kingdom.

"I had strayed a long way from what I had first learned. God, in His providence, gave me an opportunity to repent," Christopherson said. "This time I remembered the things my spiritual fathers taught me."

This time, when Christopherson planted a church in Toronto, Ontario, he set out to make the name of Jesus great and not the name of the church.

"Somehow, we as modern-day evangelicals have put the emphasis on the wrong thing. We put the emphasis on the local church," he said.

"When we do that, we make decisions to preserve the church because it is the highest goal. The church is the vehicle to engage the goal; it's not the highest goal itself."

Christopherson shared during the Great Commission Partnerships missions breakfast, held in conjunction with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's recent annual meeting in Greensboro, that the highest goal is God's Kingdom.



JEFF CHRISTOPHERSON

Christopherson is the North American Mission Board regional vice president for Canada and the Northeast.

Also participating in the missions breakfast was Boto Joseph, pastor of House of Worship Church in New York City, and Mark Harrison, missions pastor at Old Town Baptist Church in Winston-Salem.

The need for churches to regain a passion and commitment to pursuing God's Kingdom so burdened Christopherson that he wrote *Kingdom Matrix*, a book devoted to helping churches understand Kingdom principles.

Kingdom Matrix deconstructs several myths of Christianity,

such as the myth of the third Kingdom. Believers are either helping expand God's Kingdom or the dominion of darkness; there is no middle ground.

"At any given moment we are either building the Kingdom of God or the kingdom of darkness. Every decision is inspired by one of these two sources. Everything we do has spiritual implications," Christopherson said. "When we're not expanding the Kingdom we have one other idea: expanding our own kingdom."

God's Kingdom is about everyone having an opportunity to hear the gospel and less about church growth.

Too often the local church seeks to gather and then control the most resources instead of seeking to serve others by giving themselves away to the cause of Christ.

In *Kingdom Matrix*, Christopherson writes that, "Our efforts of consolidation have reduced us from a counterculture movement of Little Christs to a religion preoccupied with how many we sit in our bleachers."

Christopherson suggests four quad-



Boto Joseph, above, pastor of House of Worship in New York City, sings with the participants of the Great Commission Partnerships breakfast Nov. 13. (BR photo by Shawn Hendricks)

rants or aspects of the Kingdom Matrix: self-seekers, brand expanders, Kingdom seekers and Kingdom expanders. Self-seekers love self and are motivated by whatever proves to be in their best interest.

Brand expanders get caught up in ensuring that their brand is the most competitive and has the greatest market share. Although Kingdom seekers value morals, ideals and helping a good cause – even Kingdom causes – they do not know the King.

Only the Kingdom expanders are truly engaged in the Kingdom of God, for they live with the "unshakable conviction that the improbable ways of God are the only paths to accomplish the eternal purposes of God."

Commitment to God's Kingdom requires believers to be aware of influencers that will drive them to or away from biblical truth. For example, the influence of change. Change is often necessary in churches in order for the church to fulfill God's purposes. Yet, leaders cannot

manipulate change and they cannot make decisions based on the will of the majority without regard to the Holy Spirit's leading.

"In leadership when you want change, unity of the Spirit is important; unity of man is not," Christopherson said.

Another critical influencer in the lives of believers is authority. Self-seekers believe they are their own authority, whereas brand-expanders want to build a corporate identity that becomes the authority. Kingdom-expanders recognize God as the highest authority and seek His purposes and plans.

In order to make much of God's Kingdom believers must make much less of self.

"Our whole purpose is to be salt and light and to have a transforming presence," Christopherson said. "The Kingdom of God has a king. Our only job on earth is to be obedient to the King."

Find out more about Great Commission Partnerships at ncbaptist.org/gcp or email msowers@ncbaptist.org. **BR**

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NEWS AND INFORMATION

It's time to 'Awaken,' N.C. Baptist president says

By SHAWN HENDRICKS | BR Managing Editor

During his presidential address at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's annual meeting Nov. 13 in Greensboro, Mark Harris challenged Baptists to fight off apathy that can hinder true spiritual awakening.

Southern Baptists have to focus more on becoming servants, and understand that one of the signs of spiritual awakening is service.

"[Service is] a fundamental principle that the Word of God teaches," Harris said.

"What's amazing is the humanists out there understand that all too well as they're running the modern welfare system. They figured out that whatever agency serves the needs of people will ultimately gain the allegiance of those people. So they're serving and our church is missing it."

Far too many Christians do not realize that there is a direct link between serving others and authority, Harris said.

"Authority is earned through service, and early in American history, it was the church that understood this," he said. "The church was awake."

Harris added, "It was the church that operated hospitals in this country. It was the church that operated orphanages in this country. It was the church that operated the rescue mission."

"It was the church that operated the soup kitchens. It was the church that operated the welfare agencies. It was the church that operated the schools. It was the church that operated the universities. ... The church was a home to the homeless and a refuge to the rejected."

"And as a result, the church had authority in this nation."

Today Christians are facing increasingly difficult times, but they "have to keep fighting for what is right," he said.

Harris said many have approached him recently and said Christians need to let go of pro-life issues or traditional marriage.

"I've heard people saying ... 'Listen,

"Authority is earned through service ..."
— Mark Harris

we have to accept that day is gone. Let it go," he said. "I share with you all the fervency in my being 'We will not let that go.'"

"We've got to be willing to stand on these issues in our day and refuse to back up."

Harris shared how churches used to take a stand on political issues and candidates running for public office. He said that changed in 1954, when an amendment to a tax code bill passed in the United States Senate. The amendment prohibits non-profit entities from making public statements in support of

or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

Harris said a day is coming in this country when many believers will have to pay a heavy cost for standing up for their faith.

What will taking that stand cost?

Harris said, "Earlier this year, a Catholic Bishop in New York, who is now a Cardinal made this statement recently ... 'I expect to die in my bed. I expect my successor to die in prison. I expect his successor

to die a martyr's death in this country.'"

"I know there's a cost," Harris continued. "And we have no choice but to pay it. We desperately need a church. We desperately need people in those churches [who] are willing to risk their own reputation in order to be counted among people like Noah, Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Amos, Ezekiel and John the Baptist."

Harris said he prays God will help N.C. Baptists to be a convention of churches that are awake. "When we awaken, the world will know it," he said.

"When 61 percent of North Carolinians went to the polls in May and said marriage is between one man and one woman, I've got news for you ... they knew we were awake. When you and I begin to engage ... it will make all the difference." **BR**



"Authority is earned through service, and early in American history, it was the church that understood this," said Mark Harris, president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, in his Nov. 13 address to messengers at the annual meeting in Greensboro. (BR photo by Shawn Hendricks)

Are you depending on God?

Charles Spurgeon knew that he was nothing apart from Christ. For nearly 30 years God filled the Metropolitan Tabernacle with souls hungry for the bread of life as Spurgeon, the "Prince of Preachers," preached the truth of God.

Countless souls were ushered into God's Kingdom through his life and pulpit ministry. Spurgeon was always quick to say that prayer was the secret to the success of his ministry. He not only believed that corporate prayer unleashed God's power, but Spurgeon knew he personally had to be a man

of prayer in order to be God's instrument. He often commented, "Nothing can so gloriously fit you to preach as descending fresh from the mount of communion with God to speak with men."

Today, the spiritual life of the church is so predictable and it seldom shows the results of God's work in our lives. Without the power of Christ in our lives we can do nothing. It is not that we can do some things, but we can do nothing. Do we dare pray that God would surprise us by His presence and power in our lives? Can we really accept that our efforts are futile without Him?



Dr. Chris Schofield

Prayer Points

- Pray for the Lord to search your heart for spiritual pride
- Pray toward an unwavering desire to abide in and depend on the Lord for everything

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



NCBM capable of extraordinary work using ordinary people

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Assistant Managing Editor

When someone thinks of North Carolina Baptist Men (NCBM), Richard Brunson wants women and students – not just men – to come to mind.

"Think about the thousands of volunteers," Brunson, NCBM executive director, said Nov. 13 in his report before the messengers of the Baptist State Convention annual meeting in Greensboro. "Think about Red Springs and Shelby mission camps. Think about thousands of students who go on Deep Impact and Transform 122 every year."

Even though disaster relief efforts get the most press coverage, NCBM does more than disaster relief. Ministries include agriculture, aviation, medical missions, sports, lay renewal as well as dental ministry.

With two mobile dental units, N.C. Baptists served "more than 4,000 hurting people every year in our state," Brunson said.

"Jesus showed His love for us through His actions," Brunson said. "If we change a life, we can make a difference and



Richard Brunson, executive director of North Carolina Baptist Men, presents a report Nov. 13 to messengers at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina annual meeting. (BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle)

change a community."

Currently, Baptist Men has volunteers in New Jersey and New York serving on a variety of teams: kitchen, laundry, shower, chainsaw, etc.

Church leaders can involve their members in NCBM ministries. Each person who goes plants seeds, helping villages, cities, churches expand God's Kingdom.

"God is using ordinary people," Brunson said. "Ordinary people with ordinary gifts whom God is using in extraordinary ways; True love which shows itself in actions." **BR**

Awaken

Continued from page 1

made up of 1,605 messengers, 284 visitors and 762 churches. The number of messengers was slightly down from last year's count of 1,700, but there was an increase of the 138 visitors from the year before.

This year's annual meeting theme was Awaken, based on Romans 13.

On the opening night, many people fell to their knees – some face down on a concrete floor – in prayer. Much of the routine business was merely a side note to a meeting focused on spiritual renewal, prayer and missions.

"Our time together in Greensboro ... has been the object of much prayer," Mark Harris, president of the BSC and pastor of First Baptist Church in Charlotte, told the crowd. During the month of October, in response to the request of the convention, some N.C. Baptists set aside time to pray daily for the upcoming meeting.

"We've been praying that hearts would be awakened," he said, noting that coordinators sought to make this year's event "unlike any annual meeting."

"They sense the Holy Spirit calling North Carolina Baptists to action."

Brad O'Brien, a former intern at The Summit Church in Durham, shared how he and his wife, Jenna Marie, who have two daughters, will serve as NAMB church planters in Baltimore.

"We're going into a city that is less than 9 percent evangelical," he said. "We're asking for God to open doors for us that we couldn't open for ourselves."

In addition to the commissioning service and ministry reports, messengers did tend to a variety of business.

Budget

Messengers approved a proposed 2013 Cooperative Program budget of \$33.5 million, which is not an increase over the year before.

"Our year to date receipts are significantly under the \$33,500,000 approved budget for 2012," said Stan Welch, chair of the Board of Directors' budget committee. "We felt it would be unwise to increase the budget at this point."

For the eighth year, however, the budget did include a one-half percent



Messengers to the Baptist State Convention re-elected its officers Nov. 13. Pictured, from left: Timmy D. Blair Sr., second vice president; Wendy Blair; C.J. Bordeaux, first vice president; Beth Harris; and Mark Harris, president. (BSC photo by K Brown)

increase of the allocation that will go to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). This will bring the SBC allocation to 36 percent.

To accommodate an increase to the SBC in 2013, messengers approved a 3 percent decrease for most of the institutions and agencies of the BSC. Exceptions included the Baptist Children's Homes and Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute, which will receive the same allocation as they did the year before. The 3 percent decrease did include N.C. scholarship programs.

Messengers also approved a 2 percent cost of living increase for the convention staff. To offset the increase, convention team leaders will reduce program budgets by 3 to 5 percent for the upcoming year. The 2013 N.C. Missions Offering goal and allocations remain unchanged from 2012.

CP challenge

Messengers were challenged to increase their Cooperative Program giving by 1 percent.

Welch noted that since 2006, N.C. Baptists have shifted a greater percentage of the budget to international missions, North American missions and to the six Southern Baptist seminaries, which includes Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest.

The budget allocation for the SBC has increased every year for the past seven years from 27.08 percent in 2006 to 35.5 percent in 2012.

During the same period, the budget allocation for N.C. ministries has increased from 34.8 percent in 2006 to 39 percent in 2012, Welch reported.

The increase in funding for N.C. ministries, he said, has allowed N.C. Baptists to increase support for church planting in the state 90 percent from 2006 to 2012. As a result in 2012, more than \$1.5 million was allocated for church planting in N.C. Support for the Baptist Children's Homes has also been increased by 31 percent over the same period of time.

"But there is a problem," Welch said. "The Cooperative Program budget pie has been shrinking from 36.4 million in 2006 to 33.5 million in 2012 – nearly 3 million less for ministry."

The 1 percent Cooperative Program increase will help solve the problem by providing \$9 million in additional dollars for N.C. ministries and \$2.1 million for the Southern Baptist Convention each year.

"Our state convention's church planting team could help start 26 more churches across North Carolina each year, helping to reach 5.6 million lost residents of our state with the message of the gospel," Welch said.

"The Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina could provide for an additional 155 children who need to know of God's unfailing love."

Resolution

This year messengers approved a resolution calling for the pursuit of holiness. Messengers voted down a proposed amendment to the resolution that called for churches to support their pastors in taking a stand against cohabitation before marriage.

To read the resolution, go to <http://www.brnow.org/News/October-2012/Resolution-on-pursuit-of-holiness>.

Proposals and amendments

Messengers approved three recommendations from the Board of Directors

Articles and Bylaws Committee to amend the bylaws of the convention.

The first motion, presented by committee chairman Bartley Wooten, involved amendments to two sections of a bylaw that addressed qualifications of non-board members serving on special committees of the board of directors. The motion limited the service of non-board members to a single place of service.

The second motion involved changing the bylaws to reflect the title change of North Carolina Baptist Hospital's School of Pastoral Care to the Division of Faith and Health Ministries.

According to the amendment, the change will not impact the relationship between N.C. Baptist Hospital and the Convention.

The third approved motion was a series of proposed amendments that clarified inconsistencies involving the work of the Committee on Nominations. The amendment addresses how to handle situations involving individuals who are unable to complete a full term of service. To read the entire recommendation go to <http://www.brnow.org/News/October-2012/Summary-of-proposed-amendments-to-bylaws>.

Messengers also approved amended and restated articles of incorporation and bylaws for the *Biblical Recorder*.

Gerald Hodges, chair of the Board of Directors for the *Biblical Recorder*, explained the purpose of the changes were to make the documents consistent with those of the Baptist State Convention, bring them into line with N.C. nonprofit corporation law, and to reconcile them with current day-to-day operations of the *Biblical Recorder*.

Officers

The three top leaders for the BSC were re-elected Nov. 13 to their respective posts for 2013.

All three ran unopposed.

Messengers re-elected Mark Harris, pastor of First Baptist Church in Charlotte, as BSC president. Harris was nominated by Marty Jacumin, pastor of Bay Leaf Baptist Church in Raleigh.

C.J. Bordeaux, pastor of Gorman Baptist Church in Durham, was re-elected as first vice president. Bobby Blanton, pastor of Lake Norman Baptist Church in Huntersville, nominated Bordeaux.

Scott Faw, pastor of Moon's Chapel Baptist Church in Siler City, re-nominated Timmy D. Blair Sr., pastor of Piney Grove Chapel Baptist in Angier, as second vice president.

Next year's annual meeting will be held Nov. 11-12 at the Joseph S. Koury Convention Center in Greensboro. **BR**

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WEEK OF PRAYER: BE His

IMB, Baptist Press

Nepalese pastors brave threats and bombs to see Christ's name glorified in the Himalayas. Believers in West Africa bury a Christian woman, uniting in a strong witness to the Songhai community that refused her a proper burial.

In Central Asia, an International Mission Board (IMB) doctor's greatest concern isn't for safety but that his ministry will make a difference for the kingdom. In war-torn Somalia of the '90s, an IMB worker knew he'd have to be willing to die for Jesus – an experience that led him to spend years learning how and why believers in persecution grow unimaginably strong in the faith.

This year's Week of Prayer stories remind Southern Baptists that engaging people groups in the hard places comes with risk and sacrifice, not just for missionaries but also for all who obediently choose to be His heart, His hands, His voice.

Most of us aren't threatened because of our faith, but we need to be in prayer for those who are – not that persecution will end, but that believers in persecution will stay courageous and bold.

This December is the 100-year anniversary of the death of Lottie Moon, the namesake of Southern Baptists' offering that supports global missionaries. The emphasis celebrates her life and looks to her as a portrait of obedience – a single woman who went to China despite the risks and persisted through war and famine because the Chinese needed to know her Lord.

Lottie wrote home to the Foreign Mission Board (now IMB): "Please say to the missionaries they are coming to a life of hardship, responsibility and constant self-denial," she warned, yet acknowledging, "If the joy of the Lord be their strength, the blessedness of the work will more than compensate for its hardships."

Giving also is a call to obedience and sacrifice. Gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering enable IMB missionaries – going just as boldly as Lottie – to live and work at the forefront of lostness and to extend a witness through their full-time ministry.

As Lottie said more than 100 years ago, "How many there are ... who imagine that because Jesus paid it all, they need pay nothing, forgetting that the prime object of their salvation was that they should follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ in bringing back a lost world to God."

Each individual and church is called to be His heart, hands and voice and to continually take the next step in obedience so that Christ is glorified, even to the ends of the earth.

The core question is, then, "What am I doing and what is my church doing to be obedient, to BE His heart, hands and voice, no matter the cost?"

Every penny given to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions is used to support nearly 5,000 Southern Baptist missionaries as they share the gospel overseas. Give to the offering through your local Southern Baptist church or online at imb.org/offering, where there are resources for church leaders to promote the offering. Download related videos at imb.org/entirechurchvideo.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Visit BRnow.org for more about the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Also check out videos at youtube.com/biblicalrecorder.) **BR**



Ibrahim, a former follower of folk Islam, remains faithful to Jesus in the face of persecution. Ibrahim's commitment, courage and steadfastness have become an example for the other few believers in his village.

‘Everything Jesus says, that’s what I want to do’

By JACQUELINE GORDON | IMB, Baptist Press

Timbuktu. The name inspires images of far-away lands, mythical realms and immense wealth. Many people are unaware the city actually does exist. Timbuktu was only one of a myriad of splendid cities within the Songhai Empire. For more than two centuries, the Songhai dynasty ruled most of central West Africa, supported by a flourishing trade in gold and salt.

"They were a rare combination of military and mystic might — they had these great warriors, but they also were these sorcerers and magicians who controlled the spirits and could master the spirits of the river," says John Smythe,* an International Mission Board (IMB) missionary who's been working among the Songhai of Niger since 2006.

Ruled by a dynasty of Muslim kings, the empire expanded through a combination of practical politics and holy war. The meteoric rise of the empire was matched by its sudden invasion and downfall in 1591. Modern Songhai are mainly subsistence farmers, coaxing millet and rice out of the clay of the Niger River valley. It's a land of flat-topped hills and wide, washed-out valleys, with deep, rain-cut channels between. Pale red clay and dark brown stone contrast oddly, like a bizarre sand painting.

‘Community is life’

Songhai villages consist of mud-brick houses; walls surround spacious, if bare, yards. Trash litters the streets — there is no other place for it. Animals wander wherever acacia fences do not keep them out. Village life is highlighted by scent. The heat bakes out the odor of moist sand and green growth. The smell of sweat and wood smoke is prevalent.

"Community is life" to the Songhai, explains Smythe. "They understand that tomorrow, 'I might not have enough rice to feed my family, so I'd better rely on the community.'"

While officially Muslim, the Songhai generally practice

The Songhai of West Africa are featured in Week of Prayer for International Missions: Dec. 2-9.

● **Theme:** BE His heart, His hands, His voice

● **Focus Scripture:** Matthew 16:24-25

● **2012 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal:** \$175 million

Every penny given to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions is used to support nearly 5,000 Southern Baptist missionaries as they share the gospel overseas. To learn more about the offering, go to imb.org/offering. Also visit BRnow.org for more coverage of international missions. Download related videos at imb.org/lmcovideo.

animism — alongside daily prayers and reciting the Quran, "there's still spirit-possession ceremonies. ... They are involved in all sorts of witchcraft," says Smythe. Less than 1 percent of the population is Christian. Out of the ruins of vanished empires and ancient superstitions, however, a new kingdom is being built among the Songhai, shares Smythe. "A kingdom not built with human hands, a kingdom that's being built by God made out of living stones."

This kingdom has not been built without struggle. According to Smythe, Songhai conversion is "a traumatic experience." Those who step outside of accepted practices are ostracized, even exiled, by their communities. Many villagers refuse to buy or sell with a convert, and family members often shun believers. Pressure to return to the old ways comes from all directions.

One new believer must now eat outside every time he visits his in-laws, as they regard non-Muslims as unclean. Another told his family of his conversion and returned

home that night to find all his possessions in a bag outside. Believers are often told, "Only white people can be Christians." The harshest confrontation came after Smythe and his family moved away from the small town where they had been ministering for three years, when a believer's wife died suddenly. Ibrahim had been a dedicated Muslim who prayed five times daily, gave charity and donated animals for religious festivals. "I thought in my heart if I [did these things], I was receiving forgiveness," he says. "I

could never know that in my heart ... if I was being forgiven or not."

After repeatedly dreaming of a light "that was Jesus Christ" coming between him and enveloping darkness, Ibrahim became a determined Christian despite rejection by his neighbors and refusal of business. His dedication and encouragement soon led his wife to Christ as well.

A turning point

When his wife died, the village leaders, noting nei-



A Songhai proverb states: to know someone you must be willing to share a box of salt. Just as a box of salt isn't quickly used, relationships require investment and time. Three IMB families are now building these relationships among the Songhai of Niger.

heart, His hands, His voice



The ancient Songhai believed their sorcerers could master the river spirits. Though the empire no longer exists, the descendants of the Songhai still live on and around the Niger River. (BP photos)

Songhai believers are true family of Christ

By ROSE SHEPHARD | Baptist Press

When Ibrahim's wife died, his Songhai community near Niamey, Niger, refused to bury her because she was a Christian. She, like Ibrahim and other believers, faced daily persecution from their Muslim neighbors. Most Songhai believers do.

"We'll treat your wife like we would a dog or a donkey – she's just an animal that should rot," they told Ibrahim.

The Songhai people are primarily Muslim with many beliefs rooted in animism. IMB missionary John Smythe* and his wife spent three years sharing the gospel and discipling Songhai believers in Ibrahim's village. One of Smythe's greatest fears in leaving the village was that the Songhai church might crumble.

Soon after they left, Ibrahim faced the huge challenge of defending his faith while grieving for his wife. Determined to bury his wife, Ibrahim began digging her grave as Muslim villagers yelled insults at him. When his Christian brothers heard what he was doing, they came to help. That day was a turning point for the Songhai believers as they united to be His heart, His hands and His voice.

One of Ibrahim's close friends, Boubacar, commented that he greatly admired Ibrahim's loyalty to Christ that day. The believers showed the inspiring power of a true family of Christ.

Boubacar is a follower of Christ who experienced a radical transformation. Once a gang leader who had demonstrated hostility toward missionaries in his village, he felt an internal struggle to accept or deny God's Truth one night. He decided to become a Christian, and his past life

quickly became history. After hearing God's Word concerning marriage, he broke off an engagement to a woman who would have become his second wife.

He stopped smoking and drinking and started witnessing to other villagers in action and word. He realized that "anytime you go out, people will be watching you. ... Do your best to do good, because sometimes you will even hear the Muslims saying Christians are righteous, that they are faithful."

The Songhai church is small but full of dedicated believers like Ibrahim and Boubacar who cling to the gospel. Thanks to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, the Smythes helped lay a solid foundation for the church to grow in their village before moving on. They also left audio Bible

recordings the church depends on to hear the Word of God as they meet to study and discuss the gospel.

"The church has continued to grow and understand what it means to be the church: loving one another, sharing what they have with one another," says Smythe. "They have their challenges just as every church has its challenges, but they're facing those with prayer and through God's Word. ... Their greatest desire is that all their village will know the name of Christ."

Southern Baptists' gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and through the Cooperative Program help Southern Baptist missionaries around the world share the gospel. Give to the offering through your local Southern Baptist church or online at imb.org/offering.

*Name changed

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Rose Shephard served with IMB in sub-Saharan Africa for five months.) **BR**



ther Ibrahim nor his wife were Muslim, refused to have her buried, claiming she would be treated like an animal and left to rot. Only if Ibrahim confessed Islam would his wife be buried and prayed for as culturally required. He refused, and set out to bury his wife alone, but the other believers rallied around him and came to his aid.

This unity in the face of cruel rejection was a turning point for the local church. It demonstrated the church could endure, even without the Smythes' presence. "It was [a] testimony that, 'We are not going to go back to our old faith, that we're here to stay,'" claims Smythe, who now lives two hours away in Niamey, Niger's capital city.

In the face of opposition, the Smythes and their team "literally got to watch history change," as this small group of believers grew into the first church ever seen in the region. That church "has continued to grow and understand what it means to be the church," says Smythe. "... They are a true community that gives as anyone has need and shares as anyone has need."

The transformation of believers is apparent to their village. Boubacar, once the "number-one bandit" in town and leader of the local fadah, or gang, was so altered that his friends asked him what medication he was on; he claimed, "My medicine is Jesus Christ."

Boubacar stopped smoking, drinking and fighting, and even broke off an engagement.

See Songhai page 16

Hollifield calls messengers to pray for spiritual awakening

By **MELISSA LILLEY** | BSC Communications

As the interest in revival services among church members continues to decline, especially among younger members, so does the interest and awareness of the need for spiritual awakening.

During his address to messengers of the 182nd annual meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) Milton A. Hollifield Jr., BSC executive director-treasurer, shared that the younger generation is not interested because many have never participated in genuine revival or observed a season of awakening in their church.

Genuine revival is desperately needed. In N.C., 5.6 million people do not know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, and 6.1 billion people around the world are spiritually lost.

In order for believers to experience revival and spiritual awakening Hollifield said they must return to God in prayer.

“The saints are spending too little time with the Savior through meaningful Bible study and personal intimate prayer, resulting in disobedience, weak faith and little compassion for fulfilling the Great Commission,” he said. “It is both grand and magnificent to establish goals and plans to reach the lost of our state and this world with the gospel, but Southern Baptists have no hope to see this become a reality unless we experience a return to personal holiness so that God can empower us to accomplish His will.”

Sometimes prosperity keeps people from praying, Hollifield said, as they think they no longer need God. People also get caught up in the busyness of life.

“The devil will keep us busy doing good things in order to keep us from doing the best,” Hollifield said.

Hollifield explained that the prayer life of Jesus is the model for all believers. Jesus was known to pray in certain places and to pray all night and early in the morning.

“If prayer was that important to Jesus, how much more important should it be to us?” Hollifield said. “God expects His children to pray.”

Hollifield said that not only does God expect His children to pray, God glorifies Himself through the prayers of His children as they call on His name and recognize His greatness and holiness. Through prayer God’s children acknowledge all the many different attributes of God, such as Creator, Prince of Peace, Bread of Life and Good Shepherd.

“If God does not seem as majestic to you as He was at earlier times, get alone with Him in the place of prayer. Praise Him for all that He is and reflect on your



blessings,” Hollifield said.

“Ask God to make His presence known to you, and then linger in silence and you will begin to know His manifested presence.”

God blesses His children when they call on Him in prayer through provision of physical needs as well as spiritual needs. Hollifield cautioned N.C. Baptists not to focus their prayers solely on the physical and neglect the spiritual.

Hollifield asked N.C. Baptists to be honest before God and to confess sin, abandon pride and release anything God asks them to lay down before Him.

From Moses and Jacob to Martin Luther, Christianity’s history is marked with

heroes of the faith who accomplished great things for God’s Kingdom because they sought the Father in prayer.

Prayer is so important because it is through prayer that “great spiritual battles are both fought and won,” Hollifield said. “Your time alone with God in prayer is where your love for God matures and your trust in Him grows. No Christian is greater than his or her prayer life.”

Hollifield concluded his message with a call for prayer among messengers. He challenged messengers to lead their congregations in the pursuit of holiness through prayer, and he charged the Convention to make prayer priority in the year to come. **BR**

Above, the North Carolina Baptist Renewing Worship Band and the Bladen Baptist Association Worship Choir join together for the opening session of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) annual meeting Nov. 12. At left, Milton Hollifield, BSC executive director-treasurer, kneels in prayer after his sermon on spiritual awakening. Messengers, below, stayed in their seats or gathered near the stage praying for N.C. Baptists to have a spiritual awakening.



OPPORTUNITY CORNER

Seeking volunteers for Raleigh prison event

Kairos Prison Ministry, an inter-denominational outreach at Central Prison in Raleigh, is seeking mature, godly male volunteers for its “Introduction to Christianity” event Feb. 6-9. Volunteers must attend all four training sessions – Dec. 1, Dec. 15, Jan. 12 and Jan. 26 – at Wake Cross Roads Baptist Church in Raleigh.

Contact Derwin Creech at fcreech@gmail.com if interested or if you need further information.

N.C. Baptist Men expect six months for Sandy response

(EDITOR'S NOTE – This is a shortened version of the story of Baptist work in the Northeast. Read the longer version at BRnow.org.)

By MIKE CRESWELL | BSC Communications

Every day more than 300 NC Baptist Men and women volunteers are deployed across New Jersey and New York in response to Superstorm Sandy's pounding of coastal areas there Oct. 29, which caused some 100 deaths and widespread destruction from high winds, high tides and record-setting floods.

Wrecked houses and fractured lives still abound along the hard-hit coastal area three weeks after Sandy blew through with 80-mph winds; thousands of homes were still without electricity.

"This is their Katrina," one Baptist volunteer said, referring to the hurricane which destroyed much of New Orleans and the Gulf shore in 2005.

N.C. Baptist Men sent three of their field kitchens and within a week they produced well over 300,000 hot meals that were mostly delivered by Red Cross workers to storm victims.

- The Manna One unit was set up on a sports complex that includes a stadium and the Meadowlands horse racing track in Rutherford, N.J., just across the Hudson River from Manhattan.

- The new Unit 2, which includes enclosed work areas, was set up on a parking lot of Rutgers University at Piscataway, N.J., near the hard-hit Jersey coast and just south of battered Staten Island.

- A third unit was set up at First Baptist Church in the coastal town of Toms River, N.J.

Volunteers were forced to stop work and batten down their units Nov. 7 when a nor'easter brought high winds and up to six inches of snow. They resumed operations Nov. 8. Working in snow amid bone-chilling temperatures was new for most volunteers.

- N.C. Baptist volunteers set up shower and laundry units inside the mammoth convention center at Atlantic City, N.J., where hundreds of people left homeless by Sandy's floods were housed.

- Teams were sent to Graffiti Center at Manhattan's Lower East Side to clear mud from flooded homes in the area.

- Volunteers set up a command center at Lumberton, N.J., in Southside Baptist Church, for the highly complex task of coordinating placement of volunteers, equipment and housing. They are coordinating N.C. operations with volunteers from other Baptist state conventions, Red Cross and other helping agencies.

By Nov. 16 replacement teams were relieving volunteers who had been work-



Some of the North Carolina Baptist Men are at the Meadowlands Racetrack, part of a big sports/entertainment complex at East Rutherford, N.J., just across the water from New York City. Washing food trays after meals have been cooked and delivered are, left, Birgit Dilgert, a member of Second Baptist Church, Rutherfordton; Roxanne Terry, also of Second Baptist; and Lawrence Bolin, a member of Chapel Grove Baptist Church in Gastonia. See photo gallery at BRnow.org. (BSC photo by Mike Creswell)

ing over the past week. Fewer meals were needed as areas recovered electrical service. Richard Brunson issued appeals for volunteers for recovery efforts that included clearing trees, removing mud and debris from flooded homes and clearing houses of ruined contents and trim so they can be rebuilt.

"We will be needing clean-up recovery volunteers for some time, at least six months," said Brunson, executive director of N.C. Baptist Men.

Some volunteers were seeing potential beyond 2013. "Working here in the North is helping open the way for Baptists in one of our neediest mission fields," said Terry Barnes, blue hat site commander of the Toms River field kitchen.

"God can take something bad, this storm, and turn it into something that's awesome, because now, if we will be obedient, we can come in and share the gospel with people because we are helping them – people who would normally be closed to us," said Barnes, a member of Crestview Baptist Church in Lenoir.

Clean bodies and clothes

In downtown Atlantic City, a few blocks from the glittering casinos, just beyond the outlet stores, is the Atlantic City Convention Center, a sprawling, cavernous complex the size of eight football fields laid side by side.

During the first week after Sandy, hundreds of area residents left homeless by flooding were housed here. On one side of the hall, hundreds of cots were set up; in the middle, children played soccer. Police officers maintained tight security.

In one corner, N.C. Baptists had set up a shower unit and a field Laundromat to provide showers and clean clothes for the victims.

At one table Jerry Collins and Iris

Carter folded clothes that had been washed and dried; a hand-marked strip of tape tracked the clothes from the washer to the dryer and then to a plastic bag for storage. The bags carried handwritten Bible verses and smiley faces.

Semi-retired from his job with Wal-Mart in Pembroke, Collins said he is really happy he was able to come help in Atlantic City.

It was the first such expedition away from Lumberton for Carter; she was touched by how appreciative the people were to have their clothes washed.

Collins and Carter were part of an eight-member team from Long Branch Baptist Church in Lumberton.

Gail Fields stood by the bank of a dozen or so washers and dryers in the laundry trailer, waiting for the next load – one of the more than 60 laundry loads she has worked on each day. Now a widow, she was making her first missions trip. "I like it!" she declared. "This is something I've always wanted to do. I'll be ready to go next time something comes up," she said firmly.

Site coordinator David Seymour showed off a bank of electric water heaters that assured the shower unit of hot water. Safety concerns did not allow their usual gas heaters to be used inside the convention center, so Seymour worked hours with the maintenance staff to get a bank of electric heaters set up and functioning.

Seymour lives in Waxhaw, and is a member of Mount Harmony Baptist Church in Matthews. Seymour helped launch the idea of providing laundry cleaning as a ministry; he and his wife operated the first one in New York following 9/11.

Chaplaincy worker Myra Kanipe spent hours talking to storm victims from At-

lantic City and nearby communities such as Egg Harbor, Jersey Shore and Margate.

Some victims had taken shelter in the convention center because their houses were destroyed; others said their homes were still standing but cold because they do not have electrical service. Outside, snow and sleet fell.

"Their main concern is not getting answers," she said. "Some have lost everything and they are just wondering how they can replace it. Many have lost hope."

Kanipe, a member of East Belmont Baptist Church in Belmont, said, "We just try to comfort them. We tell them there are channels of help. We tell them to try to trust in the Lord, the One who can help them through it all."

She was able to share the gospel with several victims and prayed with them to receive Christ as Savior. She also talked to some who said they were already Christians who wanted to rededicate their lives to Him.

Racing to help storm victims

It was mid-afternoon in Rutherford, N.J. on Nov. 8 – Woody Tucker and his 35 North Carolina volunteers were delivering the last of 12,000 hot meals in insulated containers to Red Cross workers for delivery to storm victims in the area.

The portable kitchen and related materials were set up beside the stables of Meadowlands Racetrack, a horse racing track that is part of a sports complex that includes a sports stadium and an auditorium.

"It's a great location. We have plenty of room and on a clear night we can look over across the water (Hudson River) and see Manhattan," said Tucker.

The Meadowlands management has provided free meals to the volunteers and allowed them to stay in one of their buildings.

Outside, bundled against a chilling breeze, several volunteers scrubbed trays for the next day's work. Volunteer Lawrence Bolin kept the others entertained with stories about his missions trips to Africa.

Roxanne Terry joined Birgit Dilgert and her daughter, Janice, as they scrubbed trays. They all are from Second Baptist Church in Rutherfordton.

As they scrubbed, Red Cross workers were in the Sandy-ravaged areas, handing out the hot meals prepared by the volunteers: chicken fillets, mashed potatoes and green beans.

The next day would be longer: They have been asked to provide 22,000 meals.

Give to NCBM, Baptist State Convention, P.O. Box 1107, Cary, NC 27512, or baptistsonmission.org. **BR**

Boy surviving HIV with help from World Hunger Fund

By ELIZABETH JAMES | Baptist Press

The boy carefully climbs out of the desk and makes his way to the large chalkboard at the front of the classroom. After eyeing his teacher, the 10-year-old, Clive, picks up the piece of chalk and fills in the subtraction problem. It may seem small, but Clive's headmaster and teacher agree he is making remarkable improvements. Just a few months earlier, Clive was spending more time in the clinic than he was in the classroom.

Like many others in the Zimbabwe village of Zvavahera, Clive is HIV-positive. But Clive's battle with HIV began long before he was diagnosed. Before the disease began to consume his own body – stunting his growth, making him smaller than other boys his age – it already was shaping his life. In 2007, AIDS took the lives of both Clive's mother and father, recasting the roles of his family and forcing his 16-year-old sister Mercy into the role of primary caregiver.

On their own

"When my parents were still alive, everything was better," Mercy says. "They used to assist us and play their role. When they passed away, things became very difficult for us."

While other children their age come home from school to fully prepared meals, Clive and Mercy begin the race to complete chores before sunset. The balancing act of cleaning the dishes, sweeping the home, finding firewood, fetching water, searching for food, preparing the meal, finishing homework and other tasks often kept them out of school.

In 2011, when Clive received the news he was HIV-positive, he had no idea what it meant, Mercy says.

What began as a few missed days of school soon spiraled into months of illness. The decline in health made it impossible for Clive to make the 7-kilometer walk from home to school.

"Clive used to be in the clinic every week or every month," Evans Thonolana, a nurse at the Zvavahera Clinic, recounts.



Clive, age 10, carefully measures out cooking oil for the evening meal. The cooking oil and other foodstuffs supplied by through the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund have dramatically improved Clive's health. (BGR photo)

On the rare occasions Clive could attend school, his teacher noted that the most he could do was sleep at his desk, unable to even copy notes from the chalkboard onto his paper. Clive's headmaster, Shadreck Makanganise, wondered if the boy would ever recover.

"We once went to see him," Makanganise says. "It was terrible, because we never thought he was going to survive."

Though Clive had medicine, he lacked the one simple thing needed to sustain his life – food. As Thonolana explains, many of the symptoms Clive suffered were caused by his not having enough food for his medicine to be effective.

Finding food was nearly impossible for the two children. Extended family could not help, and drought made it difficult to grow crops. The combination forced

Mercy and Clive into a desperate situation.

Mercy often skipped school in order to work a neighbor's gardens, in hopes of providing a little extra food for her brother.

"At times when he got sick, I used to cry because I didn't know what to do," Mercy says, her eyes filling with tears. "When he got sick, he used to lose a lot of weight within a few days or so. ... I felt like I was hopeless. I could not improve the situation of my brother."

Help arrives

After a visit to the village of Zvavahera and seeing many in situations like Clive and Mercy, Aaron Mutingwende, orphan care program director for the Baptist Union of Zimbabwe, decided something had to be done. Mutingwende applied for a grant through Baptist Global Response to fund a feeding program in the area. Through that effort, hundreds of HIV/AIDS families have been provided with food.

The life-saving food was provided by the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund.

Every month, around 350 people come to the faded-blue clinic in Zvavahera to receive their food. After weighing in and recording their progress, they fill their plastic sacks with rice, peanut butter, sugar, oil, soap and various goods handed out by volunteers from the local Baptist church. The recipients leave with more than a full bag of food. At every distribution, Thonolana educates the crowd on HIV care and prevention and Mutingwende encourages them to live the full and abundant life promised by Jesus.

"We have to take care of the needy. We have to take care of the sick," Mutingwende says. "We can't allow people to think just because they are sick we no longer value them. ... They are part of our family, still part of society."

Mutingwende has seen the restoration in both individuals and the community as a result of this food distribution. From bedridden patients now walking to several HIV support groups developing, he says he could have never imagined this type of progress when the first

See Boy page 16

Thankful to serve alongside North Carolina Baptists

Thanksgiving is a special time to celebrate and give thanks for all God has done in our lives and for His Kingdom. I have much to be thankful for, such as my family and friends.

But above all, I am thankful to God for salvation and for calling me His child. There is no greater gift, no greater blessing, in this world than living in the joy of knowing Christ Jesus my Savior.

North Carolina Baptists, during this Thanksgiving season, I want you to know how deeply grateful I am for you. This year I saw God working through you as individuals and as church families, and we truly experienced God's presence, power and abundant grace.

I am thankful that even during difficult financial times North Carolina Baptists continue to give sacrificially. Churches across this state are stepping

up and accepting the 1 Percent Challenge, which means they are committing to increasing their Cooperative Program giving by at least 1 percent next year. We are able to accomplish much more for the Lord's Church by working together through the Cooperative Program.

I am thankful that North Carolina Baptists prayed so faithfully this year for spiritual awakening.

For many months leading up to our annual meeting, churches joined together in praying for God to awaken the hearts of believers to His Kingdom

purposes. You prayed for believers to return to God in personal holiness and to re-commit their lives to sharing the gospel and glorifying God. I have heard so many wonderful testimonies of how God worked during this time of prayer.

I know that many churches have committed to continuing in prayer for spiritual awakening, and I am thankful for this dedication to pursuing God's heart and crying out to Him in prayer.

I am also thankful for how North Carolina Baptists serve others. Our North Carolina Baptist Men volunteers responded to disaster relief efforts in our state and beyond, including assistance to hurting people in New York and New Jersey during the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

You also helped provide for a very important need by building more than 350 wheelchair ramps in N.C. through

Operation Inasmuch and Rampin' Up.

I give thanks that more churches are involved in our Great Commission Partnerships in Boston, metro New York and Toronto, as well as in the Eastern European country of Moldova.

More people are hearing the gospel because of your obedience to helping fulfill the Great Commission.

It is only through the power of God's Spirit that we are able to accomplish anything for our Lord's Kingdom.

I am thankful to God for allowing North Carolina Baptists the blessing and privilege of serving Him this year. I pray that as we look to 2013 we will continue steadfast in our pursuit of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Ephesians 3:20 **BR**



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

Awakened and refreshed

Messengers used a variety of words to describe this year's annual meeting of the Baptist State Convention in Greensboro. The most common descriptor I heard was "refreshing."

The two-day gathering could be labeled as "completely uneventful," if you were looking for conflict or disagreement. But if unity and renewed vision is what N.C. Baptists want, the event was very significant.

No miscellaneous business was introduced from the floor – perhaps a record. There were no challenges to the budget. The Committee on Nominations' report was unchallenged. The only committee report that drew a response from the floor was the Resolution Committee. A motion was presented to amend a resolution on holiness. It was briefly

discussed and defeated. Those who came to the Coliseum Special Events Center were looking for inspiration and encouragement, not conflict. There was both a hunger for something fresh and an expectation of spiritual awakening.



K. ALLAN BLUME
Editor

Testimonies in the halls and from the platform demonstrated that many pastors used the materials provided by the program committee to preach on the theme from Romans 13:11-13 in their churches.

In some churches, preaching led to protracted times of prayer. In other congregations, Baptists incorporated the prayer guides in their personal daily quiet times and Bible studies.

Clearly the annual meeting had been covered by the prayers of many. N.C. Baptists were told that 79 percent of North Carolinians have no active church affiliation.

Approximately 5.6 million people in North Carolina do not know Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.

Preparation materials stated, "Spiritual darkness is everywhere – in our neighborhoods, across the state and throughout the world. It is high time we awaken to this call for a spiritual revival."

If we respond to the call heralded throughout the convention, perhaps we can be a catalyst for something powerful and life-changing in our state. The annual meeting is over. The call to "Awaken" is just beginning.

Generous giving

The seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas are important for two key ministries.

The Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina annually ask us to stand with them in touching the lives of hurting children. They do an outstanding work. They are deserving of our most generous

support. I hope the Thanksgiving season will find all of us giving generously to this annual offering through your home church. Visit their website (bchfamily.org) to meet Travis, Kimani and other children who have experienced the radical transformation only Christ can give.

The second critical offering is obviously the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

A messenger at last week's meeting in Greensboro shared with me about his passion for calling Baptists to radical generosity toward this offering.

He suggested that we should seriously consider giving a gift to the Lottie Moon offering that is either an amount equal to your largest Christmas gift, or an amount equal to the total of all of your Christmas gifts, or an amount equal to one week's salary.

That is the least we can do in obedience to the assignment our Savior left us until the day he concludes history. **BR**

Response to Graham's critics

The Raleigh *News and Observer* reported Oct. 30 that William Barber of the NAACP and a coalition of other ministers allege that Franklin Graham has hijacked his father's ministry for political purposes. They say Graham and other members of the Religious Right like to cherry pick their issues, speaking out against sexual immorality, etc., but neglecting the Bible's messages about the poor. Their fault with Franklin Graham has largely been focused on newspaper ads the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has run

in favor of natural marriage and the need to vote for biblical values during the 2012 election.

Well, I've got something to say about that. Franklin Graham has hijacked nothing. Dr. Billy Graham has always preached forthrightly about the sins of mankind. In fact, any preacher worth his salt will do the same. Interestingly, I have never once heard Rev. Barber speak out against any sin. The only thing he ever seems to speak out against is the possibility of the end of a government check.

He reminds me of those the apostle Paul warned about in Philippians 3:19, describing them as false prophets "whose God is their belly."

Moreover, why is it wrong for Graham to encourage people to vote biblical values? It is well known that Rev. Barber and many other black congregations, though certainly not all of them, have either publicly stated their support for the president's re-election, or at the least have done no differently than Graham in giving 'transparent insinuations' of who they support – the president. So why shouldn't Graham be able to urge people to vote based on their biblical values?

Moreover, Franklin Graham has done more for the poor and the needy than all of those ministers who fault him combined. I remind you that he is the head of Samaritans Purse – a Christian benevolent agency that reaches around the world. He was the founder of Operation Christmas Child, which has provided unprecedented help and blessing to countless children in numerous countries. Even so,

as head of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association he is currently providing aid to people in the storm-ravaged wake of Hurricane Sandy.

Rev. Barber and these ministers are wrong – very wrong!

Contrary to the accusations by Rev. Barber and his ilk, conservative evangelicals are doing much to help the poor and the underprivileged.

We just don't believe addicting the needy to government public assistance is the way to go about it. The government has a God-given mandate to protect the private property of its citizens.

Taking money away from its citizens to give it to someone the government believes it should be given to as an act of charity is not charity at all. It's a violation of the Eighth Commandment – Thou shalt not steal.

Conservative evangelicals of the Religious Right don't believe there is any social justice to socialism.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Mark Creech is executive director of the Christian Action League. Visit christianactionleague.org.) **BR**



MARK CREECH
Guest Column

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December 2

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

December 9

Yahweh Our God

**Focal Passages: Exodus 6:2-8;
15:1-3, 11-13**

Growing up I was taught that a person's name was more than a title given at birth. It represented a particular heritage and an expectation for the future. It was also how people identified me as a person, which included my character.

The idea that a person's name can reveal something about one's character and attributes is not new to us. We find in scripture that God makes Himself known to us by His name. In Exodus 6:2, God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD." The word for LORD in Hebrew is Yahweh, which describes God's sovereign covenantal nature. This was not the first time God revealed His name to Moses. Earlier, in Exodus 3:14, God tells Moses that His name is "I AM WHO I AM," which is the same word, Yahweh in Hebrew. In both passages (3:14; 6:2), God is defining who He is by the revealing of His name.

A member of our church recently retired as a first sergeant from the Marine Corps. Before his retirement, we were

on base and I noticed the other Marines treated him with a great deal of dignity and respect. Because of his rank they identified him as a man with a significant amount of power and authority. In a similar way, God has revealed His "rank" to us by the giving of His name. He tells us that He is Yahweh, the one true God who keeps His promises with His covenant people and that there is no other God besides Him.

What is our appropriate response to Yahweh? The answer is found in Exodus 15:1-21. After safely crossing the Red Sea, the Israelites began to sing praises to Yahweh, the One who had delivered them from death and was true to His promises.

It should not go unnoticed that Jesus also identifies Himself as "I am" in John 8:58. The implication of Jesus' words is staggering. The One who delivers us from our sin is the same One who appeared to Moses and delivered Israel from slavery. He truly is a sovereign all-powerful God.



BARTLEY WOOTEN
Senior pastor, Beulaville Baptist Church, Beulaville

**Focal Passages: Psalm 103:2-6,
8-13, 17-18**

It was a beautiful sunny day that summer. We were on vacation, and I was splashing in the hotel pool when my foot slipped down the slope going to the deep end. Moments earlier I had clear instructions from my dad to stay in the shallow end of the pool since I could not swim. I remember it like it was yesterday.

One minute I was having the time of my life; the next minute I was struggling to stay alive. Panic set in as I floundered underneath the water, and then I saw the most beautiful site. It was my father, fully dressed, wallet and all, swimming toward me with his arms opened wide. He grabbed me and took me to safety.

When I think about the many times my dad has been there for me I'm reminded of my heavenly Father. Throughout my life, the Lord has extended compassion

to me on a regular basis. Like David in Psalm 103, I have been the undeserving recipient of God's unceasing love.

Sometimes our understanding of God's nature can be distorted because we had a poor example of an earthly father.

Scripture can help us correct our view of God as Father. In the previous lesson we saw Yahweh who stands supreme as covenant Lord. In Psalm 103:1-22, we see Yahweh as a loving Father. Although the comparison of God to a father does not occur until later in the Psalm, David speaks of God as One who forgives our sin, redeems our life from the pit, is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and always faithful. All of these characteristics reflect a correct picture of a compassionate and loving Father.

How do we respond to such a Father? If we are wise we will keep His covenant and obey His commands (103:17-18). Our heavenly Father has our best interest in mind. Living life in rebellion is foolish. It's like keeping your foot on the edge of the deep end of the pool when you can't swim. Trust me; it's a risk you do not want to take.

December 2

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

December 9

Exposing A Broken Relationship

Focal Passages: Hosea 1:1-2; 2:2-5; 3:1-5

Hosea is a story of marital brokenness and redeeming love. On one level it is a story about a married couple, Hosea and his unfaithful wife, Gomer. Yet the marriage of Hosea and Gomer is much more; it is a parable of God's relationship with his people.

Often we read these passages in the Old Testament and we are horrified at the despicable morality of people like Gomer. We are even shocked by the continual spiritual adultery of Israel in light of God's persistent grace.

As we are swept into the narrative of the story something begins to swell deep within our souls, a cry for justice. "Shouldn't Hosea abandon Gomer?" "Shouldn't Israel be cast from God's presence?"

But something different happens. Hosea pursues his wife like God allures His people. In 3:1-5 Hosea reflects the relentless love of God by purchasing his estranged and adulterous wife off the slave block and restoring their relationship. What a breath-taking picture of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

According to the Bible all people are sinful, rebellious, and adulterers. We don't deserve God's mercy.

Like Gomer and Israel, it would be just for God to crush us in judgment. But what does God do? God pursues us and makes us "His people" and shows us His mercy.

Like Hosea did for Gomer, God pays the price to redeem us by crushing Christ on the cross. He judges our sin and restores us to Himself through Jesus' death and resurrection. This is the magnificent scope of our redeemer's love. We were all once spiritual prostitutes, but by the grace of God we have been declared His beautiful bride.

May our hearts melt with love in response to the gospel. In light of the gospel may all of our adulterous affairs lose their attractive power.

Our faithlessness is not enough to exhaust God's faithfulness in pursuing us as His bride.

That's good news.



MATT CAPPS
Associate pastor for adult ministries, Calvary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem

Focal Passage: Hosea 4:1-6, 12-14

We have all either engaged in or witnessed destructive behavior. Most of us are pretty logical people, right? If something is destructive to us – why do it? I can think of two reasons.

First, that behavior seems to meet some deeper need or satisfy us in some way. Two, one either doesn't know it's harmful or ignores its harm in pursuit of what it promises.

Behind all destructive behavior is idolatry. And just changing the behavior won't stop the idolatry. While our idolatry may be revealed in our behavior, its root is found in our hearts.

As Tim Keller says, an idol is anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give what only God can give. Consider all the things the Lord accuses Israel of in Hosea 4. Pretty bad huh? But remember that like Israel we also "play the [prostitute]" by turning

Rebuking Destructive Behavior

"False gods are not able to satisfy ... God is able to fill the deepest holes"

to other things besides God to have our needs met.

Sure, we may not sacrifice animals on the tops of mountains. But, we will sacrifice our lives, family, and 10,000 other things to the gods of success, comfort, and power. Yet we are never satisfied.

The folly and emptiness of idol worship points us to the satisfaction found in the one true God.

False gods are not able to satisfy, but God is able to fill the deepest holes of our hearts with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our success is found in Christ's victory. Our comfort is found in His promises.

And, our power comes from His Spirit who gives us perception and understanding. All of these riches were purchased on the cross and sealed in the resurrection of Jesus. He took our shame and exchanged it for His glory.

Though we have sinned, through His blood we are found not guilty. In His love we are not left wanting.

WMU-NC cancels move

The Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina (WMU-NC) will not be moving to Lillington.

The *Biblical Recorder* reported May 12 that WMU's Interim Executive Director Ruby Fulbright announced at the Spring Extravaganza that the WMU-NC Executive Board agreed March 24 to accept a donation of a Lillington office building. Closing on the 16,500-square-foot building was expected in May.

However, a press release from WMU dated Nov. 15 stated, "Fundraising efforts to make possible the 'gift' of purchasing this building have been difficult in the face of a weak economy." Two contract extensions had been granted, but "it has become apparent these funds will not be available" by the Nov. 30 deadline, according to the release.

"The Executive Board has thus voted to rescind the contract agreement for purchase and immediately suspend any

and all fundraising efforts for this purpose," the statement said. A letter to all contributors is being prepared and will provide options for redirecting the use of their donation or of requesting the return of that gift."

The statement said that since March 24 "there has been much enthusiasm and excitement for what appeared to be an opportunity to launch us into the future."

A WMU press release in April stated, "This opportunity has been provided by several missions-minded individuals who firmly believe in the purpose of WMU-NC to 'challenge, prepare and equip Christian believers to be radically involved in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.'"

The move was purported to save the organization more than \$70,000 a year that it currently pays to lease space at 1200 Front Street in Raleigh. **BR**

Arkansas porn shop to fight city ordinance

World News Service

An adult store in Clarksville, Ark., may challenge the constitutionality of a city ordinance regulating sexually oriented businesses, the state Supreme Court ruled recently.

According to the decision, the X-Mart Adult Superstore may fight the city's 2006 ordinance requiring pornography shops to be licensed and regulated. Violations could result in up to a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

Bruce Wilson, Clarksville's city attorney, said the town stands by the ordinance.

"It's been studied and passed in a manner that's proper, and as it comes back to the local court, we'll certainly defend it as vigorously as we can," he said.

The ordinance gave businesses the

opportunity to apply for and receive six-month extensions over a three-year time frame. X-Mart applied for and received one six-month extension, which expired on July 27, 2009. It did not request any others.

In September 2009, the city of Clarksville filed a lawsuit asking the court to close X-Mart. 40 Retail, which operates the store, filed a counterclaim alleging the ordinance violates its freedom of expression.

In January, a Johnson County circuit judge granted a motion for the city, dismissing 40 Retail's counterclaim.

In its ruling in November, the state Supreme Court said Clarksville's ordinance on sexually oriented businesses does not provide any benefits to 40 Retail, allowing the store to move forward with its counterclaim. **BR**

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Denomination

West Chowan Baptist Association in rural northeast NC will accept resumes for **Director of Missions** until Dec. 31, 2012. Send resumes to Search Team, West Chowan Baptist Association, PO Box 215, Ahoskie, NC 27910 or wcbn@net-change.com.

Pastor

Piney Grove Baptist Church is currently seeking a **senior pastor**. We are located in a small, rural community outside Williamston, NC, approximately 35 minutes northeast of Greenville, NC. Currently we have two Sunday morning services, a traditional one at 11 am and a more contemporary one at 8:30. The combined average for both services is 160. In addition we hold weekly services on Wednesday and Sunday nights. Annually we hold an outdoor drama depicting the life, death and resurrection of Jesus (www.messageofeaster.org). Please send resumes to pastorsearch.pgbc@gmail.com.

Rosewood First Baptist Church has begun the prayerful search for a new **pastor**. RFBC is dually aligned with the SBC and CBF and is located in Wayne County adjacent to Goldsboro, North Carolina. We seek a pastor who will lead the congregation in bearing witness to God's work in Jesus Christ and in the world by the power of the Holy Spirit. Work schedule will focus on leading the church in its vision for ministry, the sacred work of preaching and teaching, providing leadership to the staff and programs of the church and caring for the spiritual needs of the congregation. Prospective candidates should hold ministry preparation credentials from an accredited seminary or divinity school. Resumes may be submitted by December 31, 2012, to applyrfbc@gmail.com or Susan Tyner, 182 Community Drive, Goldsboro, NC 27530.

PASTOR. The Oakdale Baptist Church of Statesville, NC, is seeking a full-time pastor to serve our congregation and community. Seminary graduate and 5+ years as senior pastor is preferred. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee, 585 Mocksville Hwy., Statesville, NC 28625, or email to oakdalebaptist@bellsouth.net. Resumes should be postmarked or delivered by December 31, 2012. Limited information about the church is available at www.obcstatesville.com.

Church Staff

Halesford Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist congregation at beautiful Smith Mountain Lake, Virginia, is seeking an **Associate Pastor**. We are an 800+ member church and still growing! The successful candidate will be grounded in his biblical and SBC beliefs. We are looking for a man, called of God, who is solid in his belief of the inerrancy of scripture and the sanctity of life as well as committed to working with people of all ages. A bachelor's degree and/or seminary training strongly preferred with demonstrated experience in preaching and church administration (financial and physical). We offer a competitive salary and benefit package. Interested candidates should visit Halesford.com for further information or send resume directly to HBC, 2485 Lost Mountain Road, Wirtz, VA 24184.

Associate Pastor of Students. Mountain View Baptist Church of Hamptonville, NC, is seeking a full-time Associate Pastor of Students. Our church is theologically conservative and actively involved in missions. E-mail resume to mvbc@yadtel.net.

East Maiden Baptist Church, Maiden, NC, seeks **part-time Student Minister** for the planning, conducting, and evaluating of comprehensive church ministry involving youth/children, grades 1-12. Current seminary students or college/seminary graduates preferred. For more information visit www.eastmaidenbaptist.org. Send resume to East Maiden Baptist Church PO Box 386, Maiden, NC 28650, or nathaniel@eastmaidenbaptist.org.

Wallburg Baptist Church is seeking a **part-time Minister of Music** who would coordinate all church music activities. Send resume to Wallburg Baptist Church, PO Box 595, Wallburg, NC 27373.

First Baptist Church, Forest City, NC, is seeking a **part-time or bi-vocational (20 hr/wk) Minister to Children/Youth** to coordinate teen/child ministries. Send resumes to Brian Day, Personnel Committee Chair, First Baptist Church, 211 West Main Street, Forest City, NC 28043.

First Baptist Church of Thomasville, Ga., is seeking a **full-time Youth Minister/Director**. Seminary degree is preferred. Position would be primarily focused on ministry to 7th-12th grades. If interested or if more information is required, please email Reid Wylie (Associate Pastor of Young Adults and Next Generations) at rwylie@fbcthamasville.com.

Miscellaneous

NCBAM needs to hear from North Carolina Baptist ministers 65 or older. We're planning a special tier of services just for you! Call 877.506.2226 for more information.

BaptistWay Press \$1 Sale. 46 books are \$1 each! Sale ends 12/7/12 or while supplies last. For more information contact: Toll free 1-866-249-1799; www.baptistwaypress.org, baptistway@texasbaptists.org.

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

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BRnow.org

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BAPTIST NEWS



Agencies Continued from page 4

who thanked them for supporting the *Recorder* as its staff have “worked diligently to give the *Biblical Recorder* a fresh identity and to increase its value in Baptist life.”

“We sincerely hope your church, and you personally, are enjoying the inspiring and encouraging stories in the *Biblical Recorder* about how God is at work among North Carolina Baptists,” Blume said.

Through a print edition, website and weekly e-newsletter, the *Recorder* is a resource to help church members broaden their exposure to Kingdom work throughout the world, he said. Blume referred to an “information diet” in his

comments to messengers. While pastors cannot control what information their members digest during the week, Blume said they can encourage them to read the *Recorder* and use the publication as a resource for news, training and to guide prayer time. “The *Biblical Recorder* can be one of the best investments you make in your church flock,” Blume said. “We’re excited to be able to communicate the good stories of people who are standing strong in the faith. Our churches desperately need a powerful movement of God. We want to do our part in encouraging that in every way we can.” **BR**

Songhai Continued from page 9



IMB missionary John Smythe (name changed) and Southern Baptist volunteers from the United States travel to a Songhai village where there are no believers at this time. They share Bible stories with the village chief and other villagers – most of whom practice folk Islam. (BP photo)

Three days after Boubacar’s conversion, Smythe discovered he intended to take a second wife, a practice common and perfectly acceptable to the Songhai. Smythe, with some unease, shared God’s plan for marriage as found in Genesis. Smythe relates: “His eyes just got huge, and I thought, ‘Oh man, he’s gonna hit me!’ And he looked [at] me and he said, ‘I had no idea God’s Word said that.’” Boubacar went that very day to break off the engagement, despite having already paid the bride price. When asked about his decision, he claimed, “Everything Jesus says, that’s what I want to do.”

Boubacar was one of the believers who came alongside Ibrahim to bury his wife. His example has led many of his former gang members to become believers.

Ibrahim and Boubacar are now leaders in the town church. Men meet in Ibrahim’s compound to sing worship songs, pray together and listen to the Proclaimer, an audio Bible in the Songhai language.

Female believers meet separately or listen to the Proclaimer with their husbands at home.

“You can’t see a building,” Smythe says about the blossoming movement among the Songhai. “Instead it’s a group of men, it’s a group of ladies huddled under a tree praying together, it’s a group studying God’s Word under a hanger, and it’s a new kingdom being ushered in. ... It’s that kingdom that’s going to endure.” Southern Baptists’ gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and through the Cooperative Program help Southern Baptist missionaries around the world share the gospel. Give to the offering through your local Southern Baptist church or online at imb.org/offering, where there are resources for church leaders to promote the offering. Download related videos at imb.org/lmcovideo.

*Name changed

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Jacqueline Gordon served for five months as a writer with IMB’s Global Communication Team.) **BR**

Boy Continued from page 12

distribution was made in January 2011.

“We have seen wonders being caused by the program,” Mutingwende says.

For Clive, even the small changes are reminders of God’s mercy. From being able to play outside without getting headaches, to staying awake in class, the simplest signs of progress are monumental victories in the boy’s personal battle against HIV.

“They told us about the program and we got very excited,” Mercy says, “because it was going to make a big change in our lives.”

A life saved

The food Clive received was a catalyst for recovery, soon enabling him to regain strength and re-enter school.

“Now they are attending school every day because some of the problems were solved because of the distribution,” Mutingwende notes.

Though he was able to return to school, Clive’s illness had taken a toll. Because he had missed so much school, Clive had to be placed in a remedial class. When he first came back to school, his teacher noticed he was unable to complete simple math problems or say the alphabet. Within a matter of months, however, Clive was improving, soon lead-

ing his class in completing problems on the board.

Clive’s improvements have expanded outside the classroom as well. Though he once struggled to keep friends, he now has plenty of them and often walks to school with two or three.

Time at the clinic no longer consumes Clive’s days. Instead, he spends his spare time climbing trees to collect fruit, playing outside with his dog, Cheetah, and helping his sister with household chores. Though he will continue to face the effects of HIV, for the moment he has enough strength to lead the life of a normal 10-year-old boy.

“He used to be very weak before we started receiving food, but now he has greatly recovered,” Mercy says. “I am no longer scared when he goes out because I know he has enough strength to come back.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Elizabeth James writes from Johannesburg, South Africa. Learn more about the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund at www.worldhungerfund.com. World AIDS Day is Dec. 1. For information about HIV/AIDS outreach through Baptist Global Response, go to <http://www.baptistglobalresponse.com>. View interactive graphic: <http://www.imbafrika.org/a-life-restored/>; or video: <http://vimeo.com/51683904>.) **BR**



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