



BIBLICAL RECORDER

NEWS JOURNAL OF NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

VOL. 175, NO. 17

AUGUST 15, 2009

WWW.BIBLICALRECORDER.ORG



Photo by Katharine Tucker

MARCHING — On the first day of Vacation Bible School in Ukraine, children march and chant “Jesus Loves Me, Jesus Loves Me” as they make their way to the VBS site. Kathleen Tucker said “it sounded like angel’s wings I’m sure.” Tucker shares photos and first-hand interpretation of a mission trip to Munkacs, Ukraine, on page 10. Go to www.biblicalrecorder.org, click photo gallery on the left-hand side of menu and follow instructions to see more photos from this trip.

Changing Gastonia, one kid at a time

By Mike Creswell
BSC

GASTONIA — On a Monday afternoon Wavey Williams greeted children as they trooped past the “Mission Gaston at Highland Hills” banner and into an apartment.

Inside the kids sat down at work tables; most pulled homework assignment sheets from bags and started to work while some of the younger children practiced their crayon skills.



Wavey began helping the kids figure out questions and work problems. At one point he takes a boy’s small hand in his to show him how to shape the alphabet correctly.

Soon Valarie, Wavey’s wife, arrived and also started helping kids. Caroline Burgess, a volunteer and member of Lowell Church of God, does the same. Caroline’s husband, Jack, often helps as well. Last Christmas the Burgesses gave gifts and Bibles to many children in the complex.

Wavey is grateful for their help, but thousands of North Carolina Baptist churches also are behind him. He is getting financial backing through the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina as he is launching a new church here and ministers in this multi-unit housing area.

Wavey Williams is one of some 170 church-plant-



BSC photo by Mike Creswell

TUTORING — Wavey Williams, a church-planting missionary supported by North Carolina Baptists, helps a boy with his homework. View photo gallery at www.biblicalrecorder.org.

ing missionaries who North Carolina Baptists support through their Cooperative Program and North Carolina Missions Offering. These missionaries started 108 new churches in the state during 2008; that’s an average of a new church every three days.

Inside the classroom, the kids were well-behaved and polite; they worked with focused attention. After school lessons the kids moved into a Vacation Bible School sort of program; they sang songs and listened to Bible stories. This day they read a play adapted

(See Changing Page 6)

Enlarging mix, BCH to restart foster care program

BR Staff

(EDITOR’S NOTE — This story is part of a package of stories about the state of children in North Carolina. Other articles can be found on pages 7-9 of this issue and in future issues.)

Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina (BCH), a foster home pioneer in the 1970s, will again offer the service, in part because residential services have lost favor among county social workers who place at-risk children outside their home.

A \$180,000 grant from the Duke Endowment is helping BCH re-establish its foster homes, which will start first in the west as soon as foster families are identified and trained. BCH President Michael C. Blackwell said foster homes will diversify the BCH service mix and enable BCH to serve more children.

About 300 children on any given day currently live in BCH residential facilities across the state. Typically 8 to 10 children live in cottages with full-time house parents.

BCH was an early advocate of foster care, training and supervising a network of foster parents in the

(See Enlarging Page 7)

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Above, a Karenni woman gets her nails down during a pampering day for refugees. At left, Mary Stuart Waters gets close to the children at Full Circle Kids Camp. Both events were part of Mission: Winston-Salem for Calvary Baptist Church. View photo gallery at www.biblicalrecorder.org.



Calvary takes mission trip to own city

By Steve DeVane
BR Managing Editor

Mission: Winston-Salem was a massive ministry outreach July 13-18 involving hundreds of members of Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem.

But church leaders hope the effort will further a larger initiative to "Love Winston-Salem."

Alexandra Milner, director of community ministry at Calvary, said this was the third year the church held

Mission: Winston-Salem. She estimated nearly 1,000 members participated in the project, which is part of the church's overall emphasis called Love Winston-Salem.

"Really, our hope is it will build a foundation for community partnerships," she said.

Milner said the missions event seeks to involve church members in the community with hands-on experiences, which will lead to their involvement in long-term ministry.

This year, the church launched a community-based approach, focusing

on two areas — Southside and Kimberly Park. Church members held a cookout for the communities, serving 750 hot dogs at each.

The church hopes to connect with families in the two neighborhoods. They plan to help students in elementary schools in each community.

Mission: Winston-Salem also included four Vacation Bible Schools, two sports camps, construction projects and prayer walks. One of the Bible schools was for 70 Karenni refugees.

A couple who worked in Burma for Wycliffe Bible Translators was in Win-

ston-Salem on furlough. They had just completed a New Testament translation in the Karennis' language.

The translation allowed Bible school leaders to share the gospel with the Karenni children in a way they understood. Two were baptized at the end of the week.

In all, the church partnered with several dozen ministries and organizations.

The church also sponsored the largest community blood drive in the state.

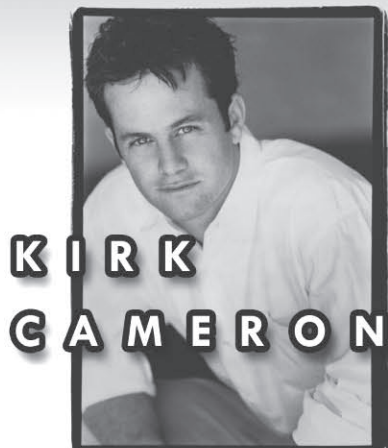
"A lot of people were hearing the gospel and seeing it lived out," Milner said.

"Hearts On Fire" is a life-changing conference designed to reach students with the gospel and to challenge the believer to a more dynamic walk and commitment.

It is an honor and privilege to have as our guest speakers Kirk Cameron and Tony Nolan. Musical guests include Aaron Shust, Charlie Hall and FEE. We are so excited to see how God will work in Gatlinburg this November! Our prayer is that God will use Hearts On Fire to bless you like never before!

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NAMB calls special meeting to consider leader

By Norman Jameson
BR Editor

Two months after passing a resolution unanimously praising the direction of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and affirming president Geoff Hammond for "exemplary, unique leadership and vision," NAMB trustees were to meet Aug. 11 to consider removing him from office.

(Because the meeting was after press day, learn the outcome at www.biblical-recorder.org.)

Ironically, while NAMB trustees met to weigh their president's future, members of the Great Commission Resurgence task force were holding their first meeting in the same city.

A 48-hour flurry of e-mails and phone activity launched July 29 led to a specially called meeting Aug. 11 when an executive committee meeting already was scheduled.

Although either the board chair or NAMB president has the authority to call a special meeting, it takes the appeal of 20 percent of the 57-member board to initiate such a meeting.

North Carolina NAMB trustees Todd Garren of Lincolnton and Bruce Franklin of Henderson were among the first 12 to call for such a meeting, after it became known that some members of the NAMB executive committee were unhappy with Hammond's leadership and his future with the agency was in jeopardy. Franklin told the *Biblical Recorder* that a decision of such magnitude should not be left with the executive committee alone.

Although Franklin, who has been

a trustee one year, said he heard the issue was "leadership," he said in his three meetings and orientation he had not seen anything that would indicate a problem.

Garren said he has heard conflicting reports of the situation at NAMB, but that he has been "under the strong opinion that Hammond was a godsend to NAMB."

He feels "something has happened" to put the board at odds with its executive leadership and he feels "it stems from the chairman of the board."

Garren fears even if Hammond's job is saved, enough "damage may be done from the accusations alone" to limit his future effectiveness.

An undercurrent running for months has surfaced full-blown in reports reaching trustees that staff morale is lower even than during the tumultuous days before previous NAMB president Bob Reccord resigned under pressure in April 2006.

"We need to find out what is going on and deal with it appropriately," said Franklin, a businessman in Henderson. He said all that matters is "what we're doing for Jesus" and that "it requires constant vigilance to stay focused."

NAMB trustee Jason Pettus, pastor of Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green, Ky., sent an email to other trustees July 29 that detailed much of the background prompting the special meeting. In his email, Pettus disclosed his own conversation with NAMB board chair Tim Patterson over rumors of the upcoming executive committee meeting.

Pettus said Patterson stated that the



BP file photos

QUESTIONING — Tim Patterson, inset, chairman of the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) Board of Trustees, has been quoted as saying the executive committee has had "serious issues" with Geoff Hammond, NAMB president, even though a resolution two months ago praised his efforts.

committee "had several 'serious issues' that they needed to talk with Geoff about." He then detailed three most pressing concerns, which included that Hammond has failed to meet with an executive leadership coach hired to help him refine his leadership and management skills; that he had hired a chief operating officer without prior approval and that staff morale was at an "all-time low."

Hammond has been working under a set of constraints not common for the chief executive of a Southern Baptist agency, constraints initiated after trustees found significant fault with their previous administration.

According to a story in Associated Baptist Press in April 2006, a trustee investigation faulted the previous administration of Bob Reccord for poor management, autocratic decision-making, extravagant spending on failed ministry projects, apparent conflicts of interest in no-bid contracts for a friend, and creating a "culture of fear" that prevented staffers from questioning the abuses. They also said Reccord spent time and

money on events and projects on the periphery of the NAMB's mission and was absent so much he couldn't provide consistent, day-to-day oversight "to properly manage the agency."

Consequently, trustees put safeguards in place to avoid a repeat of such behaviors, safeguards under which Hammond chafes.

Trustees affirmed Hammond during their May meeting in Jackson, Miss., about the time Patterson suggested NAMB and the International Mission Board be merged into one mission agency.

Contrary to Patterson's statement, the NAMB board affirmed that NAMB "is crucial to the weaving together of Southern Baptist partners to fulfill the Great Commission."

"As trustees, we are unified in support of our president, Dr. Geoff Hammond, who is providing exemplary, unique leadership and vision as Southern Baptists embrace the challenges of the ever changing and diverse mission field of North America," the statement said.

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Staff changes

BUCKY HENDRIX has been called as pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church, West End.

Eagle Springs Baptist Church, Eagle Springs, has called **TODD MOORE** as pastor.

MATTHEW HARMON has been called as pastor of Spring Hill Baptist Church, Wagram. He has experience from churches in Louisiana, Texas, Ohio, and most recently in Monroe, Ga.

Woodhaven Baptist Church, Apex, has called **LEAH ANDERSON** as youth minister. She was a Baptist Cam-

pus Ministry intern with North Carolina State University and is currently a student at Campbell University Divinity School.



Anniversaries

WEST HENDERSONVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH, Hendersonville, will celebrate 75 years Oct. 18. Celebration begins at 10:30 a.m. service with covered dish meal to follow. Contact (828) 692-6607.

NORTHWEST BAPTIST CHURCH, Winston-Salem, is celebrating 100 years this year. The church has published a cookbook and a print showing all the previous church buildings. Special services have been held but more are planned for the fall. Contact (336) 765-6754.

Around the state

Send news about your church

The *Biblical Recorder* is pleased to print significant news from the churches.

Accuracy and timeliness are enhanced if you send the information to the *Biblical Recorder* as soon as it is available.

For e-mail submissions, send announcements and digital pictures as an attachment to dianna@biblicalrecorder.org. Or, send paper copy to *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 18808, Raleigh, NC 27619.



Opportunity Corner

Crown Financial seminars set for fall

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention will partner with Crown Financial Ministries to host one-day conferences:

- Sept. 11 — New South River Association
- Sept. 12 — Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Oct. 24 — West Chowan Association
- Nov. 14 — Nags Head Church/Chowan Association

These one-day seminars are designed to engage all participants on a personal journey of financial freedom and show pastors, staff and church leaders how their churches can build cultural bridges to the community around them.

Registration is \$20 and includes conference materials and lunch; spouses are encouraged to attend at no additional charge.

Contact Amy Torcasso at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5539, or atorcasso@ncbaptist.org.

Event promises Transformation for students

The Fall Student Convention enters its 80th year with Transformation in Raleigh Sept. 25-27.

The event at Providence Baptist Church, is for college students and high school seniors. The theme verse is Phil. 3:20-21.

Adrian Despres will be the main speaker with Daniel Renstrom leading worship music. InVision, a creative ministry team sponsored by Baptist Campus Ministry Funded Summer Missions will assist in worship.

Convention cost is \$15 per person. Each group should bring an alphabetized list of names of those attending to the opening session and register with

Barbara Gentry of the Baptist Campus Ministry team.

A block of rooms at the Hampton Inn, 6209 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, NC 27612, has been reserved for Friday and Saturday evening. All correspondence about reserving rooms with Hampton Inn should be with Alice Newton — anewton@alliancehospitality.com or (919) 782-1112. The price is \$69 plus tax (\$77.80) per room.

All rooms are two double beds, non-smoking and include breakfast for up to four persons per room.

You may call (800) 395-5102, ext. 5558, or (919) 459-5558 for additional registration or motel information.

Contributed photos



► The **North Carolina Baptist Minister's Wives (NCBMW)** met for their annual retreat at Caraway Conference Center July 20-22. The event had 87 participants. Pictured are 2008-2009 officers: Donna Burnop, president elect; Donna Williams, publicity; Lori James, secretary/treasurer elect; Deedee Whray, central representative No. 1; Gray Frady, president; Lafayette Reaves, central representative No. 2; Debbie Goforth, western representative No. 1; Polly Heafner, western representative No. 2; Kimberly Chavis, 2009 retreat chair; and Sophia Oxendine, 2009 retreat chair. Not pictured: Cheryl Reeves, vice president; Janis Baker, secretary/treasurer; and Marlene Johnson, eastern representative. A retreat for new ministers' wives is scheduled for Oct. 16-17 at Camp Mundo Vista. The NCBMW will also meet Nov. 9 during the pastor's conference held before the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's annual meeting. For more information, contact Donna Williams at donna1105@embarqmail.com or (910) 374-4063.



► **North Carolina Campers On Mission** received the 2009 honor chapter banner at the national Campers on Mission rally June 16-19 in Gillette, Wyo. The banner is awarded to the chapter with the most participation in mission projects for membership under 200. Sixteen members made the trip (seen above) with three guests.

Church News



► Seventeen churches and **Johnston Baptist Association** hosted the 2009 Law Enforcement Appreciation Supper earlier this year, the 14th year the event has been held. Pictured: Lt. Colonel Glover presents a plaque to Michelle Blanton, widow of State Trooper David S. Blanton Jr. The Johnston Correctional Institution in Smithfield also assisted with the supper. More than 200 law enforcement employees were fed; 85 take-outs were provided; and 110 door prizes were given away.



► **Mount Vernon Baptist Church**, Olin, held a groundbreaking ceremony June 28 for a 400-seat sanctuary (expandable to 500 seats). It will be constructed adjacent to the current sanctuary. Pictured from left: Kevin Souther, Wayne Dagenhardt, Doug Holland, Doug Prevette, Trisha Sloan, Barbara Fuchs, Debbie Sloan, and David Annas. The church first organized in 1836. Glenn Dancy III is pastor.

Christmas in August supports NAMB missionaries

By Jessie Gable

Woman's Missionary Union

Thanks to members of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) missions organizations, Christmas continues to come early for North American missionaries.

Since 1927, WMU has partnered with the North American Mission Board (NAMB) to provide Christmas in August for NAMB missionaries by providing them with supplies needed for their ministries.

NAMB supplies the list of Christmas in August missionaries and their identified needs so that Mission Friends, GAs, Children in Action, Acteens, and others can collect and send the requested items.

One of the Christmas in August missionaries is in North Carolina.

Charles Reed of Greater Cleveland Baptist Association is requesting items be donated to help ministries in that area.

"In the current economic climate we are delighted to get the resources we requested," Reed said. With 81 churches "working in concert" to meet the needs of the community, Reed said it "is icing on the cake to get Christmas in August." One church group from Tennessee came on a recent Thursday night and gave the ministry a shower on Friday morning before feeding lunch to street people.

"Mission groups want to know what the needs are and how the resources will be used," Reed said. A recent block party at the association office in Shelby fed hamburgers and hot dogs to people as well as provided grade-appropriate bookbags with supplies to children whose parents had applied earlier.

Once collected, these items are mailed by church groups to the missionaries who use them to expand their ministries in the communities they serve.

A complete list of Christmas in August NAMB missionaries, including names, addresses and needs lists, can be found at www.namb.net.

Reed's requested items: children's socks, children's underwear, school supplies (for all ages); toothpaste and toothbrushes; combs and hairbrushes; washcloths; socks for men and women; toboggan caps; Bibles (adult and children's editions); toiletry items; LifeWay gift cards to purchase Bibles. Contact Reed, Greater Cleveland Baptist Association, 1175 Wyke Rd., Shelby, NC 28150; (704) 482-3472; charles@gccba.org.

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Gable, a student at the University of Alabama, is a summer intern in the WMU communications office.)

IMB welcomes special August offering

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — While additional gifts for missions are welcome, the "Christmas in August" special offering being promoted by enthusiastic missions supporters will not solve the long-term funding needs of the International Mission Board (IMB), that organization's leader says.

"We are grateful for the passionate response we are seeing on the part of so many churches when it is obvious they have other critical needs and many families in their churches are hurting," Jerry Rankin told Baptist Press.

The idea of taking up a special Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in August was proposed by Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, in June during the SBC annual meeting in Louisville, Ky. Akin proposed the special offering to help the IMB make up a shortfall in the 2008 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International missions. The \$141 million collected for that offering fell \$29 million short of the \$170 million goal and more than \$9 million short of receipts for the 2007 offering. As a result, IMB trustees suspended new appointments to two short-term missionary programs and cut back on the overall number of missionaries to be appointed for the remainder of 2009.

Akin told messengers at the annual

meeting: "It breaks my heart that people want to go, but we don't have the funds to send them."

A number of concerns have been expressed about raising money for an extra missions offering in August, among them the impact on state and associational missions offerings, some of which are conducted in September, as well as the still-ongoing Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American missions and even the 2009 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, which will be promoted in December.

Some also have noted that "Christmas in August" is the trademarked name of an established partnership between Woman's Missionary Union and the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Since 1927, Christmas in August has mobilized WMU groups in local churches to provide supplies to missionaries for their ministries.

"We understand and appreciate the intent of some Southern Baptist leaders to encourage giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering this August," national WMU president Kaye Miller told Baptist Press. "However, we are greatly concerned that calling the effort 'Christmas in August' will confuse many in our churches, since there is no offering associated with (WMU's) Christmas in August and it supports North American missionaries rather than international field personnel."

Retreat to the Mountains!

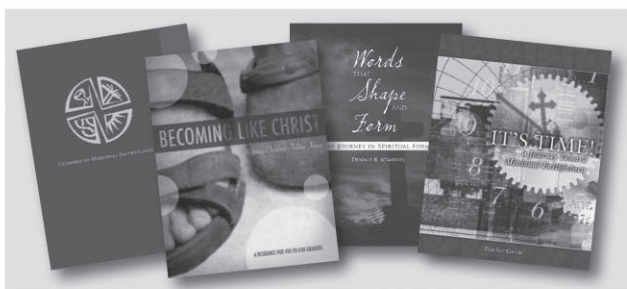
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FELLOWSHIP

Women credit GAs for missions lifestyle

By Claudean Boatman

Woman's Missionary Union

Every girl a GA.

That's the current emphasis of Girls in Action (GAs), the missions organization for girls in first through sixth grade, to encourage missions education in the local church. It's also a message that resonates with four women — former GAs whose lives were greatly influenced through their GA participation as they developed a heart for missions.

The importance of a missional lifestyle was instilled in Mary Lochridge of Kings Mountain, through her participation in Girls Auxiliary (now Girls in Action) as a young girl. Years later, she and her husband, James, were appointed as missionaries with the Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board or IMB) and served in the Philippines for 27 years. Lochridge organized Girls in Action, introducing girls to the concepts of giving, praying and serving God. More than 20 years in retirement, she still speaks to GAs about missions.

Judy Phillips of Madison, Fla., began attending GAs in fourth grade. She came from a broken home with a mother who had to work. Although such circumstances are common now, in 1959 Phillips said she felt alone and dejected. But each Monday after school, she walked to West Highland Baptist Church. There she was accepted despite her family background.

"Those leaders," Phillips said, "took me under their wings. I could feel good about myself." Three years after becoming a GA, Phillips asked Jesus into her life.

Through GA missions activities, Phillips began a life of service that continues 50 years later. Among many



HELPING — Taylor Long, a GA from Walterboro, S.C., enjoys putting together packets for inmates and helping with other projects.

other things, she's taught GAs and Royal Ambassadors, and served as a Missions Service Corps volunteer.

Current Girls in Action members also find relevance and purpose in their GA involvement. Jessica Gullledge first became involved in GAs when she moved to Georgia. She is a GA now at Shirley Hills Baptist Church, she said, because they help other people. "GAs is possibly the best thing that has ever happened to me," she said.

Taylor Long, a GA from Pine Grove Baptist Church in Walterboro, S.C., likes GA parties and activities. More than those, though, she looks forward to doing missions. For example, her group plays handbells at the area nursing home, sends care packages to prison inmates, and provides Christmas presents for people who may not have any otherwise.

Learn about a GA program in your church by calling Cara Lynn Vogel at (866) 210-8602.



Clarification on church benefits story

Several details in the "Body Parts" story with Johnny Ross in the July 18 issue were less than precise. In an effort to paint broad strokes, the story over simplified some details Ross feels are important to clarify.

The minimum "life and disability protections" that come as a benefit to anyone who participates in a GuideStone retirement program are not "insurance."

The Baptist State Convention does not match the first \$240 contribution to the retirement accounts of qualifying church staff.

The formula is more complicated

than that and the maximum is \$210 annually.

Ministers are not just treated as "self-employed for tax purposes," but most have a dual tax status: employees for federal and state taxes but self-employed for Social Security purposes.

Ross reminds churches that ordained ministers must pay self-employment taxes on their housing allowance or on the fair rental value including utilities if they live in a parsonage. These changes have been incorporated in an updated version of this story online at www.biblicalrecorder.org, search "protect."

— The Editor

Young people from 28 churches 'Reach Rowan'



HELPING — Reach Rowan, a mission through Rowan Southern Baptist Association, receives North Carolina Missions Offering funds. In the next issue of the Biblical Recorder, find out more ways NCMO funds are being used to minister to N.C. Baptists and beyond. A photo album of pictures from Reach Rowan is available online.

By Steve DeVane
BR Managing Editor

Brent Barker, associational missionary for Rowan Southern Baptist Association, has plenty of reasons to be excited about Reach Rowan, an outreach effort July 18-22 in Rowan County:

- 48 teams of teenagers going door-to-door.
- More than 7,500 contacts made.
- More than 1,700 surveys completed.
- More than 1,000 times the gospel was shared.
- 134 salvation decisions.
- Seven "Parties in the Park."
- Two basketball camps.
- Three evangelistic rallies at the local civic center.
- 28 churches involved.

• 19 bus and van drivers driving more than 3,000 miles in three days.

But the number that gets Barker the most excited is 15. That's the number of teenagers who led someone to the Lord for the first time.

"That blesses me," he said.

Barker said a 12-year-old boy led a 68-year-old man to Christ.

The excitement from the event is continuing, with young people continuing to visit homes.

"It's neat to see these kids excited about sharing their faith," Barker said. "It's kind of contagious."

The association is already planning for a similar event next year. This year's event took more than a year to plan.

Barker said the association emphasized prayer last year.

"All these fruits of the events are

a direct result of God's people asking Him to do a special work," he said.

Seventeen of the churches were from Rowan County; two from Forsyth; seven from Yadkin; one from Gaston; and one from Davie. Barker said Union Grove Baptist Church in Yadkinville, which has worked on similar efforts in previous years, helped with planning.

Kenny Gooden, pastor at Union Grove, said about 85 people from the church participated.

"It's something our church does every year in a different location," he said.

Union Grove members had some family connections in Rowan County that made it a good fit for this year's effort, he said.

"It was really a great week," he said. "They want to do the same thing in our community."

Changing Gastonia, one kid at a time

(Continued from Page 1)

from the Old Testament story of Joseph and his many-colored coat.

It's clearly an after-school class, and a good one, but that's not what Wavey Williams saw. To him this program is a launching pad to help win these kids a better chance of having solid lives.

He started the work two years ago by showing the "Facing the Giants" movie outdoors and visiting people. The work has grown steadily.

As he works here week by week, he keeps Philippians 4:13 in mind: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." His own life is proof of the verse, he said.

"I was once just like these kids; my background was just like theirs. If I can make it, they can also," he explained.

He says the odds are against his kids.

This apartment complex is better than most in the area and has recently been upgraded by the owners. Many good people live here. But overall the surrounding Highland Hills area on the west side of Gastonia is a battleground for gangs and drug dealers.

This is a place of fractured families, many of whom are unemployed or under-employed. Many here are transient; they will be here a few weeks or a few months before moving on.

Street-smart kids know about the gangs and the drugs. Wavey told of one 13-year-old boy whose father was a drug dealer before he was murdered in another state. This boy is one of many who look to Wavey as a kind father, the first one they have ever seen.

"These kids live in a very negative world and they face struggles of all kinds. We have them for a short time and then we turn them loose. We do the best we can and leave the rest to God," Wavey said.

Mid-afternoon a girl perhaps 13 or 14 comes into the classroom. She is very pregnant. She says little but asks for a coloring book. She sits quietly,

moving the crayons over the picture, hanging onto the last few minutes of childhood. It's an old story here.

"The most basic thing we do is get kids to see Jesus in us and we just love them. We stay prayerful that God's Word and the teaching we impart will stay with them the rest of their lives. We try to give these kids a sense of hope and love, the same things that God has given to us," Wavey said.

Pamela Mungo checks in often to see how the ministry is going. She is a church planting consultant for the Baptist State Convention; her work involves coaching and encouraging church planters the convention supports. She also assures accountability. It is the close partnering that helps assure that 96 percent of all convention-supported church starts will survive to become self-supporting churches.

Mungo has been impressed both with the gentle but firm way Wavey and Valarie work with the kids, investing huge amounts of time in work many would pass by. She admires their persistence.

"Wavey and Valarie are an incredible couple. It has been my pleasure to serve with them and call them friends. They serve sacrificially in order to change lives," she said.

"This is the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. It's also the best thing I've ever done in my life," Wavey said.

They have seen victories. Some of the kids who first came to the after-school program angry and cursing morphed into clean-talking, calm kids after a few months.

Wavey knows he may never see the lasting results of his work here, but once in a while there's a payoff. Recently a U.S. Army veteran, just back from Iraq, came by to see Wavey.

"You saved my life," he told Wavey, who pushed and prodded him to get a high school diploma and do something good with his life. "I spent time with him years before and he turned out OK," Wavey said with a smile. "You

don't know what the seeds you're planting will develop into."

Helping kids in the afternoon is almost like working a second shift for Wavey. He teaches physical education at two local elementary schools. A native of Philadelphia, Pa., he graduated from Winston-Salem State University in 1980 with a bachelor of science degree in health and physical education.

He taught school in Winston-Salem for five years and then worked in state government for nine years before returning to teaching in 2007. His wife, Valarie, is a school social worker. They have two children of their own, Tasha



CHANGING — Wavey Williams uses Cooperative Program dollars to help children like this one.

and Joshua.

But watching Wavey move from one child to the next, calling each by name, it's clear that these multi-housing kids are "his" as well.

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State ranks near bottom for children's welfare

By Norman Jameson
BR Editor

North Carolina ranks only 37th among 50 states for the overall health and welfare of its children, according to the annual "Kids Count" report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Annie E. Casey Foundation, with \$2.3 billion in assets, is the nation's largest foundation devoted to children's welfare.

Every year it releases an exhaustive report measuring 10 primary indicators of overall health and welfare, and dozens of sub-indicators.

The 2009 report does not reveal any major shifts up or down in North Carolina indicators, but the health, education, family income and opportunity for North Carolina's children puts their plight in the bottom quarter of states.

The deep south states of Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama rank at the bottom of the list. New Hampshire, Minnesota and Utah are at the top.

Among the main categories measured are demographics, education, economic well being, health and risk factors. These include number of children abused, those in out-of-home placements and other factors.



NUMBERS — A report said 30 percent of N.C. female headed families receive child support.

Five percent of children live in households where no adults work, but more surprising, fully one-third of children live in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment. So, not surprisingly, 19.5 percent of children live in poverty.

In North Carolina 88,000 female headed families, or 30 percent of all female headed families, receive child support.

In 2007, the latest compiled year of statistics, 122,132 cases of child abuse and neglect were reported, an increase of 3,000 over the previous year. Of those reported, 15,058 were substantiated, a decrease of 5,515.

The number of children in foster care in 2008 was

In North Carolina, "Kids Count" reports that 13.1 percent of children have no health insurance and 9.2 percent of infants are born with low birth weight, which can be a health indicator later in life.

15,773, down from 17,008 in 2007. These numbers may differ from state figures which indicate how many are in foster care at the time.

Annie E. Casey Foundation says in North Carolina 14 of every thousand children in foster care were "maltreated."

That is down from 35 in 2007, but is an indicator of the difficulties in the system. That percentage would mean that 220 children in the foster care system last year were "maltreated."

Twenty-five children died from abuse in North Carolina in 2007, according to the report.

Statistics show that just 53.1 percent of foster care children are reunited with family within 12 months. Of those, 4.8 percent are back in the foster care system within a year.

In North Carolina children in the system who have "no more than two different placements in one year" was 87.9 percent, an increase in the placement churning from 2005, when 91.9 percent stayed in no more than two different placements in a year.

One third of North Carolina's children are in single parent homes and five percent of all children are in the care of grandparents. About six percent of children live with unmarried partners, the same percentage as live with neither parent.

Enlarging mix, BCH to restart foster program

(Continued from Page 1)

1970s, but the work faded as the state began relying more on its own foster care system for children in its custody.

Of the nearly 10,000 children in the custody of county departments of social services in North Carolina, one-third are in foster homes. DSS officials say that when they have to take custody of a child, the first option is for the child

to stay with relatives. If that can't be worked out, social workers try to place the child in a foster home.

Residential care, like that offered by BCH and about 40 other organizations in North Carolina, is only used when other options aren't available.

The foster care system regularly comes under fire when a child in care is injured, dies or commits a crime.

Kevin Kelley, assistant section chief

for family support and child welfare services for the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Social Services, said that while the foster care system is not perfect, he believes it is generally healthy.

"We could always improve, but we think we have a good system," he said.

For a home to be licensed for foster care, all adults living there must pass a background check. DSS officials also must determine if the area is a safe living environment, he said.

Kelley said the larger the pool of available foster parents the better officials can match the needs of children with the ability of foster parents to meet those needs. "We always need more" foster parents, he said.

Keith Henry, BCH executive vice president for programs and services, feels some families will want to serve as foster families through BCH that had no interest in doing so through the state.

Foster parents receive financial compensation to offset the child's room, board, and other living expenses. The amount varies but the state recommendations are \$475 monthly for newborns to five-year-olds; \$581 for children 6 to 12; and \$634 for those more than 13 years old, according to the DSS web site.

Foster parents must be at least 21 years old; have a stable home and

income; maintain a drug free environment; and complete a training regimen, according to the DSS web site.

Kelley said the training, which is called Model Approaches to Partnerships in Parenting — Group Preparation and Selection (MAPP-GPS), teaches foster parents how foster care is similar to raising their child in some ways but different in others. The training also prepares them for the likelihood that the children won't be in their care forever.

If the court determines that the parent is ready to care for the child, he or she returns home.

"As soon as the judge says they're ready to go back, that's when they go back," Kelley said.

A child can also leave foster care if relative who earlier didn't think they could care for the child decides to take him or her. Kelley said the state's goal is to have a permanent plan established for the child within 12 months of coming into DSS custody. If the court terminates parental rights or the parents give them up, the child becomes available for adoption. Sometimes foster parents adopt the child they've had in care. If not DSS seeks other options.

Kelley said the goal is for the child to have a family atmosphere even after he or she turns 18.

"The goal is still to have those adult connections," he said.

These are the faces of Baptist Children's Homes

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BCH President Blackwell: Children's status 'worse and getting worse'

By Norman Jameson
BR Editor

The status of children in North Carolina is "worse and getting worse" than at any time in the 26-year tenure of Baptist Children's Homes of N.C. president Michael C. Blackwell.

"Because the mental health system is in such a disastrous collapse in North Carolina it's caused reassessment for everyone," said Blackwell, who leads North Carolina Baptists' 124-year-old ministry to hurting children and broken families. A recession pushes 2009-10 state budget cuts even deeper.

In the midst of deteriorating conditions for children in dysfunctional families, county departments of social services which are responsible for child welfare consider placing children in the care of residential facilities like BCH only as a last option, after in-home supervision; placement with relatives or foster care (see story below.)

Blackwell was told by child welfare visionary Alan Keith-Lucas when he came to BCH in 1983 that he would have to battle a coming "anti-institutional wave."

That tidal wave has washed over not only BCH, but all of the at least 40 accredited residential child facilities in North Carolina.

In North Carolina "residential" is defined as having a facility in which children stay. Many organizations, including BCH, offer services to children and families that are not residential.

Services such as in-home counseling to help a family stay together through conflict are valid and important, according to Kevin Kelley, assistant section chief for family support and child welfare services in the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Social Services, who affirms such a role for faith based groups. He is not, however, a fan of residential care.

Blackwell laments that government decision makers like Kelley do not see the bread and butter image for children's homes of 8-10 residents living as "family" in a cottage with resident counselors or "house parents" as a "normal" situation for the children.

Consequently, county social workers try first to keep a child who is at risk for abuse or neglect at home by working with the family members to overcome the issues at root of dysfunction.

Failing that, the child or children are placed with family members who will take them. If no suitable family members step forward, foster homes are the next option.

Siblings are often separated in both family placement and foster home placement.

Because children removed from their home — even for their own safety — often are angry and belligerent, they can wear out their welcomes quickly. They learn they can change their circumstance by acting out negatively so the foster family asks that they be moved. It is not unusual for children "in the system" to have been in 12 or more foster homes when they arrive "as a last resort" at a residential home that was well equipped to provide proper care and stability from the beginning.

Living, breathing organism

Residential care is not a dinosaur, Blackwell said, but a "living, breathing organism."

He encourages those in charge of placing children to visit the modern cottages, built and furnished as a home environment with private bedrooms, and family living spaces.

"We are a family environment," he said. "We are 'BCH family.'"

Karen McLeod, president/CEO of the Children and Family Services Association-NC, said North Carolina needs "a continuum of care to protect our children." While everyone's preference would be for each child to live in a highly functioning family, "that is not reality."

Her client agencies, including BCH, want children who cannot remain in the home, "to be placed in the highest quality service possible." Because member organizations, which all are accredited by national standards, "strive to meet children's needs in as

homelike a setting as possible to make the children feel cared for and loved," children "tend to stabilize there."

Blackwell said he would not still be president of the organization he's led since 1983 "to preside over a funeral." He said BCH services are "still leading edge."

"Come see us. Come eat with us," he encourages doubters. "Visit with children in our care or with our alumni. Are the children saying they don't like congregate care? Do you hear them saying, 'I want to go back with my abusive family?'"

Blackwell gets irked when those who make decisions for children's care never set foot on a residential campus to see, hear and absorb the atmosphere.

"That really gets to me," he said. "It always has. People who have no clue and no idea about the productive citizens we turn out in this place can make the statement that we don't provide the care that the government thinks we should be providing."

The needs of families "are absolutely more critical than at any time since I've been here," Blackwell said. "Family dysfunction is greater than at any time I've seen it."

Best trained staff

BCH cottage staff, trained and licensed case managers, social work staff and administrators are able to care for children in safe, secure, loving settings. Belligerence is understood and a child doesn't control his or her own placement by acting out. Staff works with the child and involved family members as the anger dissipates over time.

In 1983 60 percent of the children in BCH care were in the custody of a department of social services, Blackwell said.

Today just 20 percent are in such custody. Other residents are private placements, meaning the family recognizes it needs help and has turned to BCH to care for their child while the dysfunction can be resolved.

Private clients contribute toward the cost of care as they are able. County departments of social services pay a daily board rate determined by the state for the children in their custody, a rate that is high for counties that have no money, but a rate that does not begin to cover the cost of care that BCH provides.

Individual donors and gifts from Baptist churches, the Cooperative Program and Thanksgiving Offering make up the difference in BCH's \$17 million annual budget. "These donors are more important to us now than ever," Blackwell said.

BCH operates 15 facilities across the state, including four major campuses and Cameron Boys Camp, a wilderness facility where boys live outside year round in shelters they build themselves. A girls wilderness camp will open within six months.

With residential care at the bottom of the totem pole for government custodians, BCH has diversified with special services. It is remodeling three cottages and opening them as transitional living homes for post high school students to master independent living skills while they work or attend community college. Moody Home in Franklin has been re-tasked for that purpose.

BCH also is renovating a cottage at Mills Home in Thomasville where volunteers can stay when they come to work on campus.

Diversification is one reason BCH accepted the responsibility for adult developmentally disabled care,



BR photo by Norman Jameson

BATTLE — Baptist Children's Homes of N.C. President Michael C. Blackwell visits with residents of Oak Ranch in Broadway. Blackwell was told when he came in 1983 that he would be fighting an anti-institutional wave.

and for North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministries.

BCH, which was an early advocate of foster care and trained families to provide foster care, is getting back into foster care. It will develop a system to identify and train foster families and is ready for Baptist families that are interested to contact them. To explore the possibilities, call Vicki Buckner at (828) 627-9254.

The family needs "a proven reputation as a family unit" and must be willing to be trained.

"We are getting into it and if we're going to do it, we're going to do it right," Blackwell said.

Faith groups can



BR photo by Steve DeVane

PROTECTING — Kevin Kelley, assistant section chief for family support and child welfare services in the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Social Services, says faith-based groups have a role in protecting children.

Morgan's smile welcomes children for decades

By Norman Jameson
BR Editor

Linda Morgan crystallizes the plight of thousands of children by telling the stories of a few whose pain represents the many she's ministered to in 36 years at Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH).

"We served a little boy who had been locked in the closet all of his life," says Morgan quietly, memory giving her pause even as she shares. "He came to us at age 12 and wore size 3 clothes. We served a young lady who saw her mom pass away and a girl who saw her mother kill her father with an ax..."

Morgan, who started in 1973 as a secretary at the Broyhill Home campus in Clyde while it was still under construction, grew in responsibility until four years ago she was named director of BCH's western area services. Her constant smile and relentless love for children made her the face of that area many years ago.

She is not impressed with herself or her title. A frequent speaker in churches she introduces herself simply as Linda Morgan, child of God, who works for Baptist Children's Homes.

"God allowed me to come at that time to allow me to see His hand being used in that area to help people support BCH and turn that little blackberry patch into a haven of hope for kids and their families," Morgan said of her involvement since the third of the original five cottages was under construction.

She saw people sacrifice for the hope they had and the help they heard was on the way. Haywood Baptist Association churches held penny drives to fund the cottage that bears their name.

"You can see the way He uses (child care workers and staff) ... In a day and age when resident care is not considered the placement of choice, God has places such as Broyhill Home and BCH, and He uses the people He sends there just like home missionaries."
— Linda Morgan

A Haywood County girl herself, Morgan attended groundbreaking in 1969, little knowing a few years later she would start working there and eventually rededicate her life to Christ and Christian service in the parking lot, after watching Christian child care workers demonstrate what it means to live surrendered to Christ.

"From that point on I felt that was where God wanted me. He had a special place for me there and had special plans," she said. "I've never changed my thoughts about that."

Now their supervisor, Morgan says the child care workers and staff at BCH are "God called."

"You can see the way He uses them when you're dealing with troubled children," she said. "In a day and age when resident care is not considered the placement of choice, God has places such as Broyhill Home and BCH, and He uses the people He sends there just like home missionaries."

Children who come into the care of Baptist Children's Homes come from



CARING — Linda Morgan directs western area services for Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina.

dysfunctional families disrupted by abuse, neglect, divorce, poverty and bad decisions. "They come from families who need us as much as the children need us," Morgan said. Parents need parenting skills, to learn how to establish discipline and set boundaries and nurture values.

"Kids need someone and want someone to tell them what to do, to tell them the difference between right and wrong," Morgan said. "If no one is there, they make their own choices."

Children who enter care angry and defiant learn they are safe and can begin to trust and feel good about themselves. At that point they can implement change and begin to see a future

for themselves other than the negative, destructive prospects patterned by their families and friends.

Morgan, 56, is concerned about changes in government funding that straps North Carolina counties for funds to support the 10,000 children in their custody. While residential placement like BCH often is in the best interest of the child, decisions will be made not on quality of care, but on quantity of cash.

Even at when a department of social services places a child in care and pays the state-mandated "board rate," the payment doesn't come close to covering the cost of care. In BCH's 124-year history North Carolina Baptist churches have made the difference with their support.

Morgan has witnessed countless special moments in her nearly four decades of service to children. As a whole the ones she remembers most vividly are "those moments when you see memories being made in a child's life," she said. She lists a child's first sight of the ocean or walk on the beach; a first roller coaster ride or when they realize they have their own room and yes, that they can eat a second meal that day...and even a third.

Morgan, whose only children are those she pours her life into at BCH, sees those moments in children and regrets their parents' missed opportunities. She loves to see sparkle return to the eyes of children who entered care angry, defiant and lost.

"That's what it's all about," she said, "mending a broken heart and seeing a life change."

That work is a partnership, she said, between BCH and North Carolina Baptists who support it day by day with dollars and prayers.

protect children

By Steve DeVane
BR Managing Editor

Faith-based groups can help protect and support children, but their role is changing, a state social services official said.

Kevin Kelley, assistant section chief for family support and child welfare services in the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Social Services (DSS), said DSS has formal contracts with some faith-based groups to help parents overcome issues that might cause problems. These programs, called "intensive family preservation" are designed to keep children in the home.

Informally, churches and other groups help out with clothing banks, food banks and parental support groups. But Kelley prefers other options to residential services provided by faith-based organizations personified for North Carolina Baptists by Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH).

DSS officials would rather place children with relatives or in foster homes than in residential care, which Kelley called more expensive and more restrictive.

"It's only used when it's absolutely necessary," he said. In residential facilities the child doesn't feel like he or she is in a normal environment, Kelley said. The child might have to switch schools and even if they don't word quickly spreads that they are in the facility, which has a stigma. The children in residential facilities might also learn negative behavior from their peers, he said.

"The outcomes are not as positive as we would like," Kelley said.

That opinion is not shared by Michael C. Blackwell, president of BCH since 1983 (see story above left.)

"That really gets to me," Blackwell said. "It always has. People who have no clue and no idea about the productive citizens we turn out in this place can make the statement that we don't provide the care that the

government thinks we should be providing."

Karen McLeod, president/CEO of the statewide Children and Family Services Association-NC, said there are many forms of residential services, including campuses, group homes, therapeutic homes, juvenile justice home and mental health facilities. DSS would be at a loss for serving children without such placement options. But she confirmed that DSS will only place children in residential group homes when other options are exhausted.

"They do a great job, but they just have a very specific, targeted skill to offer," Kelley said of BCH's work.

State records show that in June about 12 percent of children in DSS custody were in residential care or other group homes. About 35 percent were in foster care; about 26 percent were in therapeutic homes that are led by workers with extra training to meet special needs; and about 20.5 percent were staying with a relative.

In all, more than 9,600 children were in DSS custody. That's down from more than 10,800 four years earlier. The DSS web site says that the organization's Child Protective Services program "strives to ensure safe, permanent, nurturing families for children by protecting them from abuse and neglect while attempting to preserve the family unit."

DSS officials prefer that children be in a family setting, Kelley said. The first choice is a relative since they are more likely to know the child and his or her needs. The second choice is a licensed foster home. DSS officials investigate reports of abuse and neglect with law enforcement agencies. "Our job is to make sure kids are safe from abuse and neglect," Kelley said.

Any time a county DSS worker has enough information to believe a child cannot be safely maintained in a home, the worker will file a petition with the court and with law enforcement present can take custody of the child. A series of hearings are held with a judge ultimately deciding if a child fits legal definition of abused.

Kelley said the default position is to reunify the child with the family or show why that should not happen. At least every six months the court reviews the case.

Within 12 months the court will make a permanent decision in the case. Kelley said that timeline can be delayed if the parents are making progress toward making it safe for the child to be returned.

The number of children reported as abused or neglected has decreased in recent years, but the change is likely attributed to a difference in the way DSS workers handle cases. The total number of reports handled by DSS workers has gone up, state records show.

During the 2007-2008 fiscal year, 1,106 children were identified as both abused and neglected, down from 1,334 three years earlier.

The number of children "abused" decreased from 1,827 to 1,030 and those "neglected" dropped from 21,274 to 9,804 in that time.

Meanwhile, the number of cases in which DSS workers investigated to determine whether or not families needed special services has more than doubled. These cases resulted from "family assessments" done by social workers in situations other than wrongdoing by the parent.

Law enforcement is seldom involved, Kelley said.

The assessments were started by the state about five years ago, which likely accounts for the large increase. The program gets parents involved in the attempts to correct a dysfunctional situation, which might be brought about by underemployment or unemployment, Kelley said. In all, the total number of cases reported to DSS officials has increased from 120,454 in 2004-2005 to 126,918 in 2007-2008. Social workers generally handle about 15 foster care cases or about 10 assessment cases, according to Kelley.

Kelley, who has been a social worker in North Carolina since 1995 and in social work for almost 20 years, said he believes the way children are helped is changing for the better in a number of ways. Workers are more family friendly, the methods are a little more sophisticated and there is less a cloak of secrecy, he said.

DSS officials are better at collecting and analyzing data. The involvement of the federal government has helped states learn from each other, Kelley said.

"The profession is maturing with time," he said.

Spirit *moves* in Munkacs, Ukraine

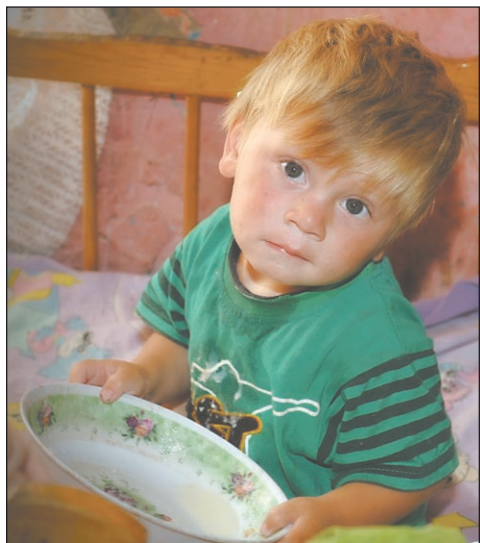
Tennessee housewife, avid photographer and artist Katherine Tucker accompanied North Carolina Baptists to the Ukraine in the ongoing partnership with the Gypsy Baptist churches there because she is related by marriage to participants Greg and Cindy Tucker, members of Piney Grove Baptist Church in Fuquay-Varina. Cindy Tucker for 20 years has been receptionist at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina staff building. For more of Tucker's photos, visit www.biblicalrecorder.org, click on photo gallery and follow instructions to find the Munkacs album.



This young mother, seated, has 10 children.



Tucker said she witnessed "the best and the worst of conditions I could ever imagine. I was scared to death at times that my picture taking would leave a bad impression or make it even more difficult for future photographers."



"I have wondered how people just 'knew' God was directly speaking to them or how they would know just what God wanted them to do. If you begin to feel like the ground may open up and swallow you if you make a certain decision or if you feel like there will be no turning back once you deny God, or even if you know without a shadow of a doubt that your relationship with God will change forever and He may never make His face to shine upon you again then I can feel confident in telling you that you are getting a direct 'hit' from the Holy Spirit!"



"It was baptism day," said Tucker. "Suddenly I was standing knee deep in a cool river in the Carpathian Mountains of the Ukraine, and God Himself was allowing me to shoot a never-before-seen ceremony in the history of this country. I was capturing a Hungarian Gypsy baptism! This man was so overcome with joy, I wish you could also hear his shouts as well as see his expression. These precious people were displaying for all the world to see exactly what it will feel like when we enter into God's glory. They were free unlike anything I had ever witnessed in my life. The look on their faces ... shouts of joy. Glory had come down to these mountains! Here was all the color and drama I could ever hope for in a subject and it was like a banquet. At that moment, I was purely convicted ... you simply cannot out give God."



Scouting leaders outline hopes for church emphasis

From press release

CIMARRON, N.M. — The Association of Baptists for Scouting meeting at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico arrived at several initiatives to encourage Baptist churches to use Scouting more effectively to reach youth and their families for Christ.

Association leadership also wants to increase the number of Baptist Scouting units in the U.S. and to increase the number of Good Shepherd Awards given out each year to adults who work with youth.

Founded in 1954, the Association of Baptists for Scouting exists to bring youth to Christ through a Scouting ministry.

Baptist churches with Scout units use material from Programs of Religious Activities with Youth — called PRAY — that is age appropriate to teach children and youth about God’s love, family, church, and Christian life.

According to the leaders, key aspects of a successful church Scouting ministry include:

- Church ownership of the Scout

unit. The church must be more than merely a host, leaders said. Top tier leaders of the Scout unit should be active members of the church and demonstrate concern for reaching youth.

- Boy Scouts of America’s Religious Emblems program should be encouraged for advancement in rank.
- Every Scout unit should have a chaplain who is a member of the church staff or appointed by the senior pastor to promote the Religious Emblems Program and see that prayer and devotionals are a routine part of the unit’s events.
- Every Scout unit should be expected to have a devotional service on Sunday mornings at campsites.
- All Scout events should begin with prayer.
- Scouts should be actively involved in planning and leading the Scout Sunday service.
- Church staff presence should be encouraged at major Scouting events such as pack meetings and courts of honor.
- Scouts should be included as part of the overall ministry of the church.

Campbell Divinity honored

Campbell University

A national magazine for seminary leaders has highlighted Campbell University Divinity School’s efforts to help its graduates complete their theological education without the burden of student debt.

The spring 2009 issue of In Trust magazine, a journal covering trends and issues in leadership for theological schools in North America, noted Campbell Divinity School’s record of “graduating students with essentially no seminary debt.” By comparison, a 2006 Auburn Seminary study found that 2 out of 3 students in North America require educational loans to finish seminary, and that 21 percent of seminary graduates borrow more than \$30,000.

Excessive educational debt is a major issue for divinity school students since substantial loan payments may prohibit graduates from serving in poor communities.

Kelly Jones, the Divinity School’s director of admissions, cited the generosity of Campbell University donors as a major factor in helping students avoid debt. During the current academic year, the Divinity School awarded aid



COMMISSIONING — From left: Jenny Lee, Holly Raby and Jessica Condrey have benefited from Campbell Divinity’s commitment to affordability.

to students from 225 endowed scholarship funds. In addition, Jones noted key partnerships with churches in the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina, and also the Charles B. Keesee Educational Fund of Martinsville, Va.

“Campbell Divinity School is proud to receive this national recognition of the work we do to assist our students to graduate free of the burden of educational debt,” added Michael Cogdill, dean of the Divinity School. “It is our hope these newly commissioned ministers can serve more faithfully and effectively in first ministry positions without the distraction or the worry of debt.”

Classified Advertisements

Pastor

The First Baptist Church of Galax, Virginia, is seeking a full-time **senior pastor**. Located in southwestern Virginia, First Baptist Church has a long history of being related to the Virginia Baptist General Association. This 350 resident member congregation is nearing the conclusion of an intentional interim process and is looking forward to innovative pastoral leadership that supports gifts-based ministry teams, deacon family ministry (men and women may serve as deacons), world-wide missions, creative Bible study, life-oriented worship, vital children and youth ministries, our Hispanic ministry, and warm Christian fellowship. The prospective pastor should have outstanding preaching abilities, be a skilled administrator, team builder with the staff, and one who relates well to all people. At a minimum, applicants should have an earned master of divinity from an accredited seminary, preferably a doctorate. If you feel that God is leading you to this calling, please send resume to: Pastor Search Team, First Baptist Church, 1024 East Stuart Drive, Galax, VA 24333. For more information about First Baptist Church, you may contact our website: www.fbcgalax.org.

Pastor. First Baptist Church of Hope Mills, North Carolina, is seeking a full time pastor. We are looking for a strong leader who has passion for children’s ministries and missions and will show compassion for our elderly church members. Local residence requested. Please send resumes and references to 4621 Cameron Road, Hope Mills, North Carolina 28348 or e-mail to amclaurin@amerispec.net.

Pastor. Beulah Baptist Church, Bennett, NC, a conservative, traditional, mission minded rural Southern Baptist church, is seeking a full time pastor. We prefer a seasoned pastor with experience in leading a congregation to a closer walk with Jesus Christ, who proclaims the gospel without reservation, who will expand our outreach of evangelism and missions and will provide pastoral care to the congregation. Our average Sunday attendance is 300+. He should have a degree from an accredited seminary. Please send resume to Pastor Search Committee, 8454 Howard Mill Rd., Bennett, NC 27208, no later than August 31, 2009.

Western Branch Baptist Church, constituted in 1779, is a rural community church located 10 miles from the heart of downtown Suffolk, VA. We are currently seeking a candidate for the position of **Senior Pastor**. Please forward resume to Donnie Jones, 708 N. Broad Street, Suffolk, VA 23434 or e-mail to dwjones52@verizon.net by September 15, 2009.

Under God’s guidance, we are seeking a man of God to shepherd the body of believers at Little River Baptist Church, SBC, in Penrose, NC. If you are a **pastor**, preferably with a master’s degree from a seminary or divinity school and some pastoral experience, please mail your resume to Little River Baptist Church, 51 Little River Church Rd., Penrose, NC 28766 or e-mail at lrbcc@citcom.net.

College Avenue Baptist Church, located in the foothills of North Carolina, is seeking a full time **Senior Pastor**. College Avenue is a caring, loving church with active ministries for all ages. We will be celebrating our 100th anniversary in 2010. Please mail your resume and doctrinal statement to College Avenue Baptist Church, c/o Pastor Search Committee, 1201 College Avenue SW, Lenoir, NC 28645. Resumes must be received by September 30, 2009.

Gate City Baptist Church is seeking a **F.T. PASTOR**. We are a conservative church centered on expository preaching. We avg. 300 in attendance with room for great growth. We are looking for a strong leader, a people loving pastor and mentor for our staff. If interested, send your resumé to the church, P.O. Box 7096, Greensboro, NC 27417; attention: Edward Carmichael.

Glasgow Baptist Church, Glasgow VA, is seeking a full-time pastor. We are a conservative Southern Baptist Church located in a small town in historic Rockbridge County, VA. We have an active membership of approximately 150 - 200. Resumes may be sent to: Pastor Search Committee, c/o Bill Dill, Chairman, 34 Boulder Lane, Natural Bridge, VA 24578 (e-mail: bdpastorsearch6@gmail.com).

1000-member Baptist church in Fuquay-Varina seeks godly man as full time **Senior Pastor**. Prefer 10 years experience in supervisory position with accredited S. Baptist Seminary MDiv. or DMin. degree. Average Sunday attendance is 600 with an operating budget of \$1.4 million. Please email resumes to jobs@fwbaptist.org; Re: Pastor Search Committee; or mail to PSC, Attention Jeff Ward, 301 N. Woodrow St., Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526.

Pastor. Hallsboro Baptist Church, Hallsboro, NC, is seeking a full-time pastor. We are a small, rural church with a diverse congregation. We support both CBF and SBC. Applicants should have a masters degree from an accredited seminary or divinity school. Please send resume and references to Search Committee, 3815 Sams Potts Hwy., Hallsboro, NC 28450.

Mount Olivet Baptist, a growing Northern Piedmont church supporting CBF and SBC, is seeking a full-time **Associate Pastor** with previous experience. This position requires a relevant bachelor’s degree with seminary training. Duties include working in several key areas of ministry with a primary focus on children, youth, and young adults. See our website — www.mtolivetchurch-franklinton.com for additional position requirements. Send resumes to Associate Pastor Search Committee, Mount Olivet Church, 1245 Mount Olivet Church Rd., Franklinton, NC 27525.

First Baptist Church of the Islands in Savannah, Georgia, is seeking a full-time **Youth Pastor** to lead their student ministry (grades 6-12) in a growing, contemporary church setting. The ideal candidate has a sense of God’s specific call to reach and minister to middle and high-school age students. Strong personal skills in relating to students and families will be expected. Ability to oversee a variety of facets of student ministry is a must. This position will oversee approximately 80-100 students with potential for incredible growth. Please send resumes with cover letter and references to searchteam@fbcislands.com or to: Search Team, FBC Islands, 6613 Johnny Mercer Blvd., Savannah, GA 31410.

Association

Pee Dee Baptist Association in Rockingham, NC is seeking a **Director of Missions**. If interested, please send resume to DOM Search Committee, PO Box 1565, Rockingham, NC 28380. Deadline for resumes is August 31, 2009.

Church Staff

Full-time director of church music and administration, Ballentine, SC. \$40-50k. Send resume to Dutch Fork Baptist Church, PO Box 345, Ballentine, SC 29002. ATTN: Staff Search Committee; dfbcsc@bellsouth.net.

PART-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR. Mail resume to Wallburg Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, P. O. Box 595, Wallburg NC 27373.

Seeking part-time **Minister of Children & Youth**. Send resume to Caroleen Baptist Church, POB 489, Caroleen, NC 28019.

Miscellaneous

Help for teens! A new book, LIVING STREAMS by Carolyn Ives. 165 sparkling, biblical devotions. lifestreams.org or write Living Streams, PO Box 1343, Brevard, NC 28712. \$15.

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Energize classroom with basic ideas

By Lisa Russell Motley
Guest Columnist

So you've poured enough Kool-Aid to fill up the Red Sea, and you've served enough animal crackers to fill up Noah's Ark — twice. And some Sunday mornings you just don't feel like you are getting through to those precious little angels that have been left in your care for the next 60 minutes. Sixty minutes?!

What is a children's Sunday School teacher to do when you feel like you are just spinning your wheels and getting nowhere?

In the past 20 years as a Sunday School teacher and 14 years in elementary school classrooms, I know children react to the situation around them.

Therefore, if you are not relaxed, in control, and putting forth a positive, energetic attitude, neither will they. If you are losing interest, uptight, unorganized, short-tempered and frustrated, you are setting yourself up for a long, unproductive hour.

My advice is proven sound in many arenas during these tough economic times: Get back to basics.

There is nothing wrong with "fluff" if those boys and girls continue to flood your classroom with eager hearts and smiling faces, and if the word of God is reaching them through you. But if those 60 Sunday minutes feel like a chore and everyone (including you) silently urges the clock to spin, then these suggestions might help you renew your enthusiasm.

- **Greet those little darlings at the door and smile!** Remember — your mood will affect their mood — and don't forget to call each child by name as they enter. We all like to go "where everybody knows our name."

- **Have activities on hand — immediately.** It may be as simple as centers, such as puzzles, coloring sheets, and blocks. If a child is idle too long, they will immediately lose interest — and that can lead them to "explore other opportunities" that will tax your patience.

- **Have a simple lesson planned.** If you already have elaborate curriculum that works — great. If your budget is strapped or if you are overwhelmed by pages and pages of "instructions," go to the resource that is priceless — your Bible. Use the concordance or online

resources for guides to key verses around which to base your main idea. Look for subjects that fit your particular needs. (Such as an approaching holiday or an issue in class that needs to be confronted, like loving one another or truth telling)

- **Use music.** "Music soothes the savage beast." Use soft, relaxing music in the background before class to create a calm, welcoming environment. Music is also an excellent aid in memorization skills. Putting those Bible verse words to simple tunes (such as the ABC song or Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star) makes the verse easier to memorize and it is fun. Children will learn them in a snap.

- **Use movement.** Remember children need "wiggle time." Try not to lose your patience when they get the "ants in the pants" syndrome. Their attention spans are not that of an adult. This can be as simple as playing the "popcorn" game. (Children alternate popping up and down in their seats — and as they "pop" they recite either the main idea of the lesson or even the Bible verse). If weather permits, take a nature walk and have children point out the different treasures of God's creation.

- **All children like to help.** Let them pass out papers or clean up. Have them mix the Kool-aid. Permit each person to take a turn stirring; and as they stir have them repeat the verse for the day.

- **Offer incentives.** It does not have to be weekly "treats." But perhaps post a chart and allow each child a column. They may get a check mark or even a gold star when their verse is memorized; or maybe they've demonstrated Christ-like behavior to a classmate. Some may call this a bribe. I prefer to call it setting goals. And who doesn't like a reward for a job well done?

These methods may be considered "old school." And some may not work for your particular situation. But you'll have no doubt that you are on the right track when you see those little faces light up as they learn God's word and can recite Bible verses.

And through your sense of renewal, you will begin to witness those young souls maturing in their relationship with Christ. And what can be more rewarding than that?

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Motley is a teacher, writer and member of First Baptist Church, Asheville.)



Tar Heel Voices

Kacie's pure love provides pure water through special ministry

Kacie is the middle child of a precious young family who has joined our church in recent months. Her family drives by several others to get to our small, country church.

Last summer Kacie's daddy was critically injured in an auto accident and for days was in a frightful health situation with a broken neck. Even so, the father and mother are leading their children to reach out to others.

So, when Kacie heard about the Woman's Missionary Union initiative Pure Water, Pure Love at Vacation Bible School, she thought about what she could give.

On the third night of VBS, she brought her entire life savings in a shoe box: \$127 and a few cents. Her contribution led the children to contribute \$686 for the week.

Pure Water, Pure Love. Just stating the title of that ministry evokes powerful emotions.

The human body needs both — pure water and pure love — to live and be healthy. Water, in its purest form, is health to the body. When it has impurities, it is life threatening.

Another mother said: "My children truly believe in the Pure Water, Pure Love cause. Even though my daughter did not attend VBS this year, she gave her brother money to give in the offering."

"Two years ago they both emptied out their allowance savings for Pure Water, Pure Love. It does a mama's heart good to see her children caring more about the well-being of others instead of what they can save up their money for."

Pure love brings people to Jesus. Somewhere soon, a missionary and/or a community to which a missionary is ministering, will receive a water purifying system so they can have pure water — because of the pure love offered by Kacie and others like her.

Send donations for Pure Water, Pure Love to: Woman's Missionary Union, P.O. Box 830010, Birmingham, AL 35282-0010.

Delores Thomas
Wingate

Where is priesthood of believer?

My father M.E. Gibson was a minister 57 years. My husband E.J. Hines has been a minister 53 years. I have been a Christian 60 years, always proud to be a Baptist.

I am disturbed by the preaching and attitudes of some ministers today. I refer specifically to the idea promulgated by some that they are the ultimate authority, having received the vision for the church from the Lord, and members should fall in line. "Priesthood of the believer" is a cardinal doctrine for me.

I was taught this, and have always known it to be foundational as a Baptist. My heart rejoiced recently at Brookwood Baptist Church when David Gasperson preached on the doctrine of justification and brought out in a strong manner the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer.

He referred to the book *The Doctrine of the Priesthood of Believers* by Walter Shurden. He mentioned the trend of some ministers to preach that members should submit to the pastor's authority, remarking that he was a Baptist by choice, and one reason was the belief in the priesthood of the believer.

Before I knew it I said, "Amen," unusual for me. Reflecting on the sermon I saw how important this is to me. Gasperson spoke of the responsibilities of the believer, and we indeed need to take the matter seriously. God blessed us with hearts and minds, with abilities to read and discern the written word, and the spirit within to hear God speak to us as individuals. We take our marching orders from Him, and not from any human being.

Yes, ministers are to preach, guide and love; but not to insist that everyone submit to their authority.

Ann Hines
Jacksonville

Tar Heel Voices is your forum

- Letters are limited to 300 words and may be edited for style, length and clarity; include signature, address and phone number.
- **E-mail:** editor@biblicalrecorder.org, or **mail:** Editor, P.O. Box 18808, Raleigh, NC 27619

Caswell 60 years later

By Milton A. Hollifield Jr.

BSC Executive Director-Treasurer

After World War II, Fort Caswell on Oak Island could have been used for any number of things: a historical reservation, an educational center for a farm life school or a state park. But it was North Carolina Baptists, under the leadership of Dr. M.A. Huggins, then general secretary-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), who purchased the property and buildings in 1949 for \$86,733.



In 1983 the BSC received a \$4,125,000 million offer for the property — and North Carolina Baptists let their voice be heard. In a letter to the editor published in the April 16, 1983, issue of the *Biblical Recorder*, one reader writes, "this is hallowed ground, and no price would be enough to pay for it." Another reader writes that the ministry at Caswell can "shape one's faith for a life-time." The year 1983 proved a turning point for Caswell, as North Carolina Baptist Men adopted Caswell as one of their first renovation and construction projects. Messengers to the BSC annual meeting approved a recommendation from the General Board to establish a \$3 million capital fund campaign for Caswell. Throughout the 1980s volunteers poured into Caswell to refurbish and build new facilities.

Looking back, 60 years after the BSC purchased Caswell, the return on this investment is obvious. Consider that in one summer more than 7,000 youth attend youth weeks at Caswell. Consider that during youth weeks in 2008, 355 students made first time professions of faith, 2,634 rededicated their life to Jesus Christ and 61 answered the call to full-time Christian ministry. Consider that Caswell is used year-round for senior adult and marriage retreats and the gospel is boldly proclaimed.

You and I know story after story of lives changed at Caswell. Sixty years ago, Dr. Huggins did not. He had no assurance that the decision to buy Fort Caswell would be an investment for eternity. He did not know if the ministry that would take place at Caswell would be enough to silence his critics. I doubt he had any idea that in 2009 former Caswell staff would gather for a reunion and share precious memories of their days by the sea.

In 1948, during a General Board meeting at Caswell, the Board noted a resolution of appreciation to Dr. Huggins for his "tireless and efficient efforts in the foundation-progress of the Assembly." I consider Dr. Huggins a man of courage and vision; someone who took a risk and was not deterred by change. Even though his decision to buy Caswell met opposition, he did what he thought best for the churches entrusted to his leadership.

May we all be challenged to follow the example of Dr. Huggins and those North Carolina Baptists who fought for the place they held dear. May we be reminded to persist and persevere, knowing that the fruit of our labor could very well be forthcoming 60 years from now. Perhaps by God's grace, evidence of our lives and ministries will still remain 60 years from now.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

— 2 Tim. 4:7

Marrying early may make sense

My parents met my wife for the first time when they came to our wedding. I had just turned 23, Sue Ellen was 20. That's an early age to marry by today's standard practice, but my folks didn't protest. They were 17 and 18 when they married. My wife's parents were 17 and 22.

My sister married at 19, my first son at 21, my daughter at 22.

Such early age at marriage is not the norm anymore, either in society as a whole or in evangelical circles. In an ironic dichotomy of messages, we promote purity pledges and sexual abstinence until marriage, while we discourage marrying until some nebulous ideal of financial and emotional stability is reached.

Mark Regnerus delves at some length into this phenomenon in the August issue of Christianity Today. In his story entitled "The Case for Early Marriage" Regnerus says the practical arguments to delay marriage resemble those of the world: finish your education, launch your career, find your niche and become financially independent.

We recognize and appreciate that God made us sexual beings, and hold aloft appropriate biblical ideals of sex only within the confines of marriage; then we push marriage away from young adults whose hormones are raging in their sexual prime. The median age at first marriage has risen from 21 for women and 23 for men in 1970 to 26 for women and 28 for men today. Yet, puberty is arriving sooner than ever, now typically around age 11 for girls and age 12 boys. So we are asking young people to stay chaste for 15-16 years, on average, while telling them the forbidden fruit will be worth the wait. They are not waiting. "It's battling our Creator's reproductive designs," Regnerus said.

In the church world we tend to see this issue as a sexual crisis, rather than a marital crisis, he said.

Maybe we should be less discouraging of early age marriage and find ways to support equally yoked, responsible young Christian adults so they can begin their lives together while they are yet becoming.

"Most young Americans no longer think of marriage as a formative institution, but rather as the institution they enter once they think they are fully formed," wrote Regnerus, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Texas, and author of *Forbidden Fruit: Sex and Religion in the Lives of American Teenagers*.

He said our "cultural predilection toward punishing marriage must go."

He said parents and congregations act punitively toward young couples by telling them once they marry, there is no more help with car payment, insurance, tuition, etc.

Does that stance tell our young people that we value independence and financial security more than we value the "holy union" of matrimony? One of the arguments I hear against marrying "young" is that the man or the woman has not fully realized his or her individual identity. I would argue that marrying young enables the couple to grow and find their identity together.

Don't hear me advocating teenage marriage. But in our sexually charged culture it may be a stronger tactic to lift and encourage an earlier age at marriage than to keep pushing against "our Creator's reproductive designs."

— NWJ



BCH residential care should be priority in child placement

Listing and jerking down my driveway on a Saturday morning an ancient Oldsmobile rolled to a stop. Behind the wheel a large mountain mama filled the seat, with a skinny, beak nosed man occupying the shadow beside her.

They had come to see their daughter, who was a resident at Mills Home in Thomasville, one of 15 facilities operated by Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH).

I lived on campus and called the director on duty to learn where this couple's daughter lived. I directed them to the cottage and resumed washing my car. A few minutes later they reappeared, and mama was a bit agitated. No one was home at the cottage.

I learned the cottage residents were on a field trip that morning and when I called the director back for more information I was glad they were. When he learned it was her parents who were looking for the girl, he told me they were to go nowhere near her. Their parental rights had been terminated after it was discovered they kept the girl in a cage behind the house.

Baptist Children's Homes is filled with true stories like that. For 124 years BCH has been the light on the porch in a stormy night for thousands of hurting children and broken families.

One little boy came into care at BCH at age 12, wearing size 3 clothes. He had been kept in a closet his entire life. Other children have been beaten, neglected, abused by relatives, wandered town to town one step ahead of the landlord, lived in cars in relatives' driveways, seen their mothers beaten or even killed.

When one little girl was put out of the car during a rainstorm on a muddy road in front of her grandmother's house, only the light on the porch gave her any hope that she might find a safe place to lay her head that night.

Her mother already had chosen the boyfriend over her daughters and the boyfriend had no patience for the girls, feeding them from a bowl on the floor, "like the dogs they were."

Offering primarily residential services since 1885, over the past several decades BCH has expanded services to include help for parents who say, "Please help me. I can't do anything with my child."

In those instances BCH social workers work with the family and child through their difficulties, sometimes without the child having to leave the home.

BCH was born while the South still reeled from the Civil War. The death or disablement of one parent meant the other could no longer care for some or all of the children.

A sad parent would drop children at the orphanage where they would stay until they graduated from whatever level of schooling was considered enough at the time. BCH has not been "the orphanage" for many decades.

With advances in health care and social services and in the absence of large scale war, there is very seldom a child in care who has no living parent. Instead, BCH has been a refuge for hurting children whose homes have been thrown into sometimes dan-

gerous turmoil by a wide variety of circumstances.

Children at BCH live in a home-like environment with residential counselors or "house parents" who establish routines and run the household like a family. Children have chores and responsibilities. They

attend local schools and local churches, and can stay as long as they need to.

It is a stable environment and for many children is the most stable, secure, safe and loving environment they've ever lived in.

County departments of social services in North Carolina have custody of almost 10,000 children.

That is a huge number of children who have been removed for their own safety or benefit from their homes. Social workers try to place the children with other family members, or with a foster family or, barring those options, with a residential care provider like BCH.

It seems BCH would be a better first option than last resort. In the last three decades an anti-institutional wave has washed through the nation and tremendous institutions like BCH are considered by those agencies that need places for these 10,000 children only as a last resort. If a child can be kept safely with his or her family during a difficult time, that should happen. But there were 25 killed in North Carolina in 2007.

There are good foster care homes, families that pour their hearts into troubled children. But the system is not in good shape.

Two hundred twenty children in foster care were "maltreated" in 2008, according to the "Kids Count" national report. It is not unusual for a child who comes to BCH "as a last resort" to have been in a dozen foster home placements. Four or five such placements is common.

And yet, one of the benefits of foster home care cited by the North Carolina Department of Human Services is "stability."

Residential care offers far more stability because staff is trained to deal with the anger and belligerence of children coming out of difficult situations and they won't be shipped away if they act out.

Children in residential care like BCH have opportunities for field trips, beach vacations, athletics, public speaking, special educational enhancements, medical attention and post high school education help that many families and typical foster homes simply do not have.

Expense is always the primary reason given for departments of social services to avoid placing children in residential facilities. As usual, our children who have no votes, no political voice, no power get short shrift.

It is frustrating for BCH administrators to know they have more than a century of expertise, excellent facilities and staff, Christian commitment and professional competence to help thousands of children, and those responsible for the children hold a limited perspective of residential services.


Like the bulb on grandmother's porch, BCH can light the way for others if those responsible will consider BCH services earlier in the process of finding what is best for our children.

EDITORIAL



Norman Jameson

Residential care offers far more stability because staff is trained to deal with the anger and belligerence of children coming out of difficult situations ...


**BIBLICAL
RECORDER**
(ISSN 0279-8182)
*Journal of the Baptist
State Convention
of North Carolina
Founded 1833 by
Thomas Meredith*

Volume 175 No. 17

(919) 847-2127

Fax (919) 847-6939

www.biblicalrecorder.org

Norman Jameson, Editor

jameson@biblicalrecorder.org

Steve DeVane, Managing Editor

steve@biblicalrecorder.org

Dianna L. Cagle, Asst. Managing Editor

dianna@biblicalrecorder.org

Editor Emeritus

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Publication

Published biweekly on Saturdays by *Biblical Recorder Inc.*, 232 W. Millbrook Road, Raleigh, N.C. 27609, as authorized by the Baptist State Convention in annual session at Winston-Salem, Nov. 21-23, 1939. Periodicals postage paid at Raleigh, N.C. 27676.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Biblical Recorder Inc.*, P.O. Box 18808, Raleigh, N.C. 27619-8808.

LifeWay offers discount background checks

By Brooklyn Noel Lowery
LifeWay Christian Resources

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — LifeWay Christian Resources has entered an agreement with *backgroundchecks.com* to provide discounted screenings for churches.

"It is so important in this day and time to run these checks," said Barbara Strong, church secretary at Jubilee Worship Center in Westmoreland, Tenn. Strong runs the checks for Jubilee, which began using *backgroundchecks.com* about a year ago. "We just don't know who is coming into our church. We'd like to think everyone is a good Christian, but we can't know that."

Backgroundchecks.com reported that about 450 churches have requested

more than 5,000 background checks on volunteers and prospective employees since LifeWay began offering the service in 2008. Most of those searches returned clean records or minor traffic-related offenses, but 80 screenings uncovered serious felony offenses, and more than 600 people had some type of criminal history that may have disqualified them from volunteering or working at a church.

First Baptist Church, Estero, Fla., has had to turn away a few volunteers due to the information uncovered by *backgroundchecks.com*. Associate Pastor Wayne Rogers runs the checks for FBC Estero, which he said is a church that welcomes a lot of "snowbirds" who are only present during certain times of the year.

"It's important that we let new folks know we will be running checks (if they volunteer)," Rogers said, adding that the church stresses the confidentiality and necessity of the process. "When we have a negative screening result, we deal with it in a loving way. We know that people make mistakes, and we know we've been made new creations in Christ."

"Children are our precious commodity," Rogers said. "They've been entrusted to us, and we have to protect them at any cost."

Greg Young is a buyer for LifeWay Christian Stores, but he also serves as the minister of education at Cedar Hill Baptist Church, Cedar Hill, Tenn. Cedar Hill began using the screening service about a year ago and has so far screened

50-60 people. Young said all church staff members and all volunteers who will be working with individuals 18 years old and younger are required to submit to the screening.

In spite of church budgets that are shrinking in the current economy, Young said his church did not even consider cutting back by nixing background checks.

"We're trying to make sure we provide the safest environment possible for youth and children," Young said. "*Backgroundchecks.com* helps us with our due diligence, and I think that's being a good steward."

For more information about background screenings, call (866) 300-8524 or visit *LifeWayStores.com/backgroundchecks*.



News Briefs

Families opt for Internet over food, time with family

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Quick question: During the current economic recession, is your family more reluctant to cut back on the grocery bill or the Internet bill?

In a survey of 500 British families, the Internet got priority over food, and it wasn't even close. The survey by the British Internet provider O2 showed that given several options, 67 percent of families were more reluctant to cut back on the Internet bill than they were on school uniforms (59 percent), family vacations (30 percent) and the weekly grocery bill (24 percent).

The survey, O2 said in a release, provides insight into "what is regarded as essential and what is regarded as discretionary" spending by modern British families. But American families might agree, too, according to a recent survey by the Center for the Digital Future at the USC Annenberg School for Communications. That June poll shows that as household Internet usage has increased, family time has decreased.

La. college plans med school

PINEVILLE, La. (BP) — Louisiana College has announced plans to open a medical school in 2012. The new program expects to have an initial class of 60 students and grow to 110 incoming students per year.

The anticipated \$30 million annual operating budget already dwarfs the Baptist school's current \$20 million budget. Louisiana College President Joe Aguillard believes it will meet a significant need in the state, which ranks among the worst in the nation in percent of population lacking access to primary care — due mainly to a critical shortage of primary care doctors.

Louisiana College, which started a School of Allied Health last year, is opening a new, 7,000-square-foot laboratory building for its nursing program and is planning to open a law school in 2011.

Security group forms church violence task force

(RNS) The world's largest security training organization has opened a new church-security division and will instruct churches on how to prevent and respond to violent crimes.

ASIS International's new church-security division will lead a seminar at its convention in Anaheim, Calif., to address threats and vulnerabilities that leave faith-based organizations at risk for violence.

A separate organization, the Christian Security Network (CSN), which tracks violence against churches, recently reported that six of the 17 violent crimes reported by Christian churches in the first half of 2009 resulted in homicides. The report also claims that faith-based organizations suffered \$6.3 million in property loss due to burglary, theft, robbery, arson and vandalism.

ASIS plans to release a free resource guide for



Photo by John Swain

PLANTING — North American Mission Board (NAMB) President Geoff Hammond, right, presents North Carolina Baptist church planting team leader Mark Gray with an award recognizing the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina for excellence in church planting. North Carolina was one of four states honored during NAMB's summer senior leadership meeting in Atlanta, July 26-30. North Carolina went from 99 church plants in 2007 to 143 in 2008, a 44.5 percent increase. The state's church planting team also increased the number of non-Anglo church plants from 52 in 2007 to 93 in 2008, a 79 percent increase.

churches this month that pools resources from other security task forces. The guide will urge faith-based organizations to form safety teams, assess risks of high-profile attendees and outspoken religious leaders, and be honest with members about potential dangers in their congregations.

Russia to offer religious courses in schools, chaplains to military

MOSCOW (RNS/ENI) — Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has given the green light to efforts by religious leaders to introduce religion to schools and to offer chaplains to the military.

"Their implementation will help strengthen the moral and spiritual foundations of our society, as well as strengthen the unity of our multiethnic and multi-religious country," he said at a July 21 meeting with religious leaders outside Moscow.

Medvedev was responding to an appeal by Russia's Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist and Orthodox leaders, whose faiths are officially referred to as the country's "traditional" religions.

Archdiocese extends Boston priests' retirement age to 75

(RNS) Priests in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston will need to wait an extra five years for retirement under new rules aimed at addressing a persistent clergy shortage.

Rules took effect Aug. 1 to raise the retirement age

for Boston-area priests from 70 to 75.

Since the 1960s, Boston has seen its priestly ranks decline 50 percent, from about 1,500 to 756 today. Forty-four percent of those priests are age 70 or older. Among those older priests, 75 percent are retired, including about half of those between the ages of 70 and 75.

New Hope Publishers recognized

DENVER, Colo. — New Hope Publishers was awarded Publisher of the Year by the Advanced Writers and Speakers Association (AWSA) at their Golden Scrolls Banquet held July 12 on the eve of the International Christian Retail Show (ICRS).

This is the first AWSA win for the publishing arm of Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham. New Hope was a finalist last year.

"The New Hope Publishers staff is elated to have this honor bestowed by our authors," said Andrea Mullins, publisher of New Hope. "We treasure the partnership we share with this impressive organization. We will continue to develop our relationship with our authors by seeking to bring Jesus ... to the world."

Christians beheaded in Somalia

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Islamic militants in Somalia have killed eight Christians this year, along with two sons of a Christian leader, according to reports by Reuters Africa and Compass Direct News.

Nine of the 10 victims were beheaded, according to the reports.

The killings stem from the push by extremist al Shabaab insurgents to topple Somalia's West-leaning transitional government and to enforce sharia (Islamic) law in areas they control in the African nation's capital, Mogadishu, and in southern Somalia, according to the reports.

Marketplace Ministries is 25

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Marketplace Ministries, one of the largest workplace chaplaincy organizations in the U.S., is celebrating 25 years of service.

The organization — which works for more than 400 companies — has four subsidiaries: Marketplace Chaplains USA; Marketplace Chaplains International — which is in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Scotland, Wales, England and Canada; Railroad Chaplains of America; and Marketplace Ministries Foundation.

Companies hire the chaplain ministry to send in people to care for their workers, often resulting in higher workplace morale and better productivity.

"Marketplace chaplains are people that go to the workplace to do pastoral care for people that don't have that care through the local congregation or the local church — which is the great majority," Gil Stricklin, founder of Marketplace Ministries, told Baptist Press.

Stricklin said chaplains come alongside workers to help them through life crises, even investing large amounts of time in someone's wellbeing.

During the 25 years, Stricklin said, more than 50,000 people have accepted Christ.

Lesson for August 23

Formations

Lesson for August 30

Embrace Love

Love is . . .

Focal passage: 1 John 4:7-21

There used to be a cute little fad of defining love. “Love is . . .” You fill in the blank. Here, in 1 John 4:7-21, we can fill in that blank, “Love is . . .”

Life-giving. The famous early church leader Augustine prayed, “Lord, you command self-control. Grant what You command and command what You will.”

Here, God tells us to love then that He has granted that love (4:7-12). Love issues out of us like good fruit from a good tree (4:7). God demonstrated His love by sending His Son (4:9, c.f. John 3:16).

He showed us His love by giving us life, “so that we might live through Him,” (4:9b). Once we have that life, we will love.

If we don’t love, then, it is because we don’t know God (4:8). All the religion in the world won’t make up for a refusal to love. And the reason: “God is love.”

Those who don’t love don’t have the life of God.

Many southern churches used to exclude people because of their skin color.

Loving pastors were run off because they tried to reform that sin. Here we see how dreadful that sin it.

As a lack of love, racism shows a lack of the life of God.

As a lack of love, racism shows a lack of the life of God.

God gave us life, by giving “His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10b).

Propitiation means a sacrifice to take away wrath.

In our sins, God is angry with us. Rightly angry.

The Father sent the Son to bear that just anger. And one of the lavish gifts God gives His people is *confidence*.

We no longer *fear* God’s punishment because we know that Christ has taken it for us.

God’s *love is lavish*. God has given us His Son to save all kinds of people (4:10-14) and He’s given us the Spirit (4:13).

God has given all of Himself, in three-Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So we can “abide,” live, in God. He gave us this love first. His love takes the initiative. *We love*, now, because He loved us first (4:19). That’s lavish!

God’s lavish love in us will demonstrate itself. It’s easy to *say*, “I love God” (4:20; c.f. 4:12). After all, how

are we supposed to tell? There is one indisputable evidence: whether we love Christians we can see. Practically: providing a ride, money, food, welcoming all kinds of

people. Seeking to give to others the life God has so lavishly given us.

We love an invisible God by loving visible people.



John Carpenter
Pastor, Covenant Reformed Baptist Church, Yanceyville

Live Victoriously

Three Tests

Focal passages: 1 John 5:1-5, 13-21

How do you know that you know that you know God? Here we have three tests: *love, life and faith*.

The test of love shows in “whoever,” “whatever,” and “whenever.”

Real love loves *whoever* is born of God.

When we are saved we become new creatures who, as part of our spiritual DNA, love. First, we love the Father who gave us new life. And we love, “*whoever* has been born of Him,” other born again Christians.

Then we do *whatever* He commands (5:2f).

If we fail to obey these commands, then we have no basis to be certain about our salvation.

We’re giving disturbing evidence to the contrary.

When He tells us to love someone of another race, we don’t make up an excuse not to.

True love loves if *whenever* your brother or sister is in sin, you pray for them, you intervene (5:14-17).

True prayer meetings are not first concerned for health and wealth but for the will of God (5:15).

Pray not just for sicknesses but for sin, salvation and sanctification.

The test of our life shows in over-

coming and perseverance. We must overcome our enemy, the world and be transformed by God’s word.

In that, we persevere.

The “grand mark” that sets true believers apart from hypocrites, is perseverance.

“**He who was born of God**” — that is, Jesus — protects God’s people (5:18) so we continue to overcome sin.

The test of faith shows in doctrine, fruit and exclusivity.

We must believe that Jesus is the Christ (5:1), born as fully man and fully God, crucified to take away God’s right wrath at our sins; that Jesus is who He claimed to be, equal to the Father, and as such demands of every believer absolute surrender.

Faith is a fruit of life.

That’s plain in the Greek of 5:1.

Everyone who has believed (past action continuing into the present) “has been born of God” (a past completed action).

That is, God made them alive and as a consequence they had faith.

Faith comes not first as a work of human (so-called) “free will,” but as a fruit of the gracious work of God in the human heart.

This is “the faith” that overcomes the world.

Our faith is genuine faith if we understand it is *exclusive*.

There are really only two options: either we serve God or idols (5:20f).

These aren’t tests we have to pass to graduate to eternal life.

These are tests we will pass if we have eternal life. So do you pass the tests?

Lesson for August 23

Bible Studies for Life

Lesson for August 30

Are You Running from God’s Will?

Focal passages: Jonah 1:1-3, 17; 3:1-5, 10; 4:5-11

Growing up, I decided neither to marry a farmer nor a preacher.

How I was reared by one and married the other is beyond me.

When Jack and I met, he was running from God, preparing to teach science.

By the time we married, he had surrendered to God’s call to the ministry.

In those days we attended the Southern Baptist Convention annually.

I was especially inspired by the commissioning service for missionaries. When the speaker appealed to us to surrender for foreign missions, I gazed at Jack for his reaction.

Sensing my stare, he whispered, “I’m called to pastoral ministry in America.”

Years later, I confessed that I didn’t turn complete control of my life over to God for fear He’d say, “Gotcha! Pack your bags; you’re going to Africa as a missionary and eat spinach three times a day.”

“Don’t worry,” Jack said. “I don’t think God would invest in sending you to Africa.”

“If He called you, you’d be so excited that your bags would already be packed.”

Jonah 1:1 says, “The word of the Lord came to Jonah: Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because their wickedness has confronted me.”

Perhaps we run passively, forgetting that we are indeed missionaries, witnessing for Christ daily by what we are, what we say, and all we do.

Not wanting the Ninevites saved because they were enemies of the Jews, Jonah fled to Tarshish, Spain.

Does kinship with Jonah lie dormant within us all?

Of course, we don’t run for the same reasons Jonah ran.

Perhaps we run passively, forgetting that we are indeed missionaries, witnessing for Christ daily by what we are, what we say, and all we do.

The key to obeying God’s will is to walk close enough to Him to hear His voice.

Should He call today, how might we respond?

“Sorry, I’m not available to take your call.”

“May I put you on hold?”

Or simply hang up?

Looking back upon life, we’re certain that at times we acted within God’s will.

At other times, we confess to running alongside Jonah, away from God.

But we’ve sought and followed God’s will enough times to verify what E. Stanley Jones said: “Outside the will of

God we cannot succeed; inside His will we cannot fail.”

You and I have today.

That’s all anyone has. Through ordinary ways of serving God, we can experience extraordinary living. See you in Nineveh!



Catherine Painter
Author, speaker Trinity Baptist Church, Raleigh

Will You Remain Faithful?

Focal passages: Matt. 26:36-46; 1 Pet. 4:12-19

My parents referred to Christians as “the faithful few.” I didn’t understand the term, nor did they explain it.

In time, I defined “the faithful” as the nucleus around whom success for any great cause is achieved.

Faithfulness doesn’t depend upon education or station in life, and its ranks are open to any who are willing to dedicate themselves to the victory of a cause.

Jesus said, “Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and whoever is unrighteous in very little is also unrighteous in much” (Luke 16:10).

How can we know God’s will? E. Stanley Jones’ suggested, “When in doubt, do the most Christlike thing.

If any guidance seems at variance with what you see in Christ, doubt that guidance, for it cannot be of God, however implemented by reason or emotion.”

Peter urged us neither to be surprised nor ashamed when we suffer because of our faith. We’re to continue to do right, entrusting ourselves to God (1 Pet. 4:19).

The closest I’ve come to suffering for my faith occurred when, at a faculty party, those of us who didn’t drink, or laugh at immoral jokes stayed a while, then thanked our host, and left.

The following morning, Brian, a student of mine, reported that a teacher said, “We had a great time last night once ‘the sticks in the mud’ went home.” Brian said, “I knew she was referring to you.”

“I’m honored you could identify me as one she described,” I said.

Peter wrote, “When the fiery ordeal arises to test you, don’t be surprised, as if something unusual were happening to you. Instead . . . rejoice, so that you may also rejoice . . . at the revelation of His glory” (1 Pet. 4:12-13).

We exhibit our willingness to follow God’s will by acting upon it. Jesus cried on the night before He died, “My Father!

“If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will” (Matt. 26:39).

When we question whether we missed God’s perfect will for our lives, let’s agree that God will use and bless whatever we dedicate to His glory. Now, retired from teaching, I’ve become a Christian writer; and Brian, my former student, is a minister.

As George Eliott said, “It’s never too late to be what you might have been.”

Gospel planted on 'The Tail of the Dragon'

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist Press

Each year, thousands of motorcyclists travel to Tennessee to ride "The Tail of the Dragon."

"The Dragon," as it is commonly referred to, is a stretch of U.S. Highway 129 that runs from the intersection of Highway 72 outside Maryville, Tenn., through the Great Smoky Mountains into Deals Gap, N.C.

The 11-mile stretch of road boasts 318 curves — a motorcyclist's dream.

Last year, missions volunteers, working through Chilhowee Baptist Association's Camp Tipton in Maryville, began a ministry on that stretch of highway.

Teams from Tennessee and other states passed out water or lemonade to cyclists at a scenic overlook along the route.

This year, volunteers added another element — taking photos of the motorcyclists from an overlook with a breathtaking mountain view in the background, with the goal of sharing the gospel.

"Our focus is to connect with people and allow the Holy Spirit to show us where we can present the gospel to that person," said Kurt Bradley, a volunteer at Camp Tipton and member of East Maryville Baptist Church.

Andy Jordan, director of Camp Tipton, stresses to



CAPTURING — Kurt Bradley, a volunteer from East Maryville Baptist Church in Maryville, Tenn., prepares to photograph a group of motorcyclists while Dennis Scott, far right, pastor of Sand Hill Baptist Church in Gleason, Tenn., visits with motorcyclists taking a break from riding "The Dragon," a curve-filled 11-mile stretch of road in eastern Tennessee.

volunteer teams that they go to the overlook with "the frame of mind that you are going there to plant seeds."

If the opportunity to present the gospel does not happen, however, all is not lost, thanks to the photography element of the ministry.

The photographs have become a key tool in reaching the motorcyclists.

"A picture goes a long way," Jordan said.

Those who are photographed can go to the Camp Tipton web site and download the photo for free, but in the process each individual hears a full presentation of the gospel via a Billy Graham video clip.

It also includes a clear invitation for the individual to profess faith in Jesus Christ.

"If we don't have the opportunity to present the gospel face to face, they will have another chance to meet the Lord," Bradley said.



RIDING — Andy Jordan, center, director of Chilhowee Baptist Association's Camp Tipton in Maryville, Tenn., talks with Todd Dodge, left, of Davenport, Iowa, and brother, Jan Dodge of Hummlestown, Pa.

Both Bradley and Jordan said motorcyclists have been very receptive to the ministry at the overlook site. Church teams from various places have ministered on "The Dragon." In early July, a team from Sand Hill Baptist Church in Gleason, Tenn., traveled cross-state to minister at several locations in the area, including "The Dragon."

It was the first mission trip for the church and most of the 24 participants, Sand Hill Pastor Dennis Scott said.

"We had been wanting to do something like this," Scott said, noting the church made it a "family mission trip."

Nick Bowers, the church's music leader, has served on other mission teams, and he was excited about his church's participation in the East Tennessee trip.

"It's been a great week," Bowers said. "This has brought our small country church together."

For more information about the ministries provided by Camp Tipton, visit camptipton.com.

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Wilkey is editor of the Baptist and Reflector, *newsjournal of the Tennessee Baptist Convention*.)



www.tailofthedragon.com photo

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