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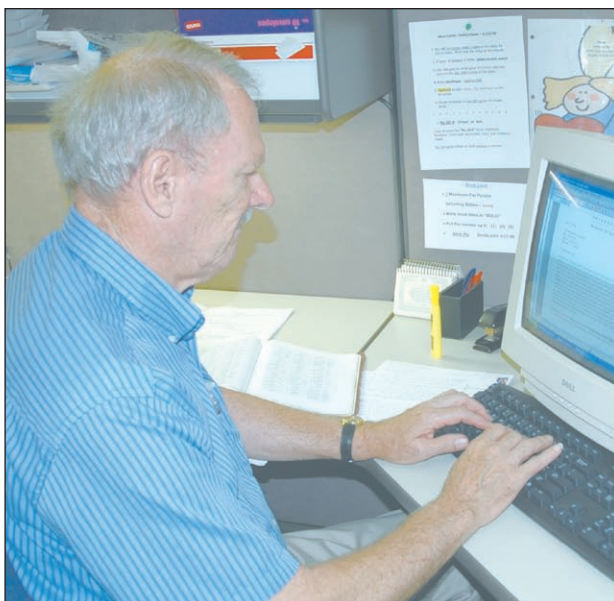
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BR photos by Steve DeVane



**LITERATURE** — Volunteers Dick Alexander, from left, Martha Carpenter and Carol Weathersbee work to respond to inmates with letters and send books from Christian Library International (CLI).



## Ministry reaches inmates with Bibles, books

By Steve DeVane  
BR Managing Editor

**K**athleen Skaar doesn't remember who made the suggestion, but the idea changed the ministry of Christian Library International (CLI).

CLI had been distributing books in various locations — YMCAs, nursing homes and the like. The ministry had some extra books and workers were trying to decide what to do with them when someone suggested that prison chaplains might like them to give to prisoners.

Skaar is director of CLI, which is located in a wing of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Raleigh.

She said prison chaplains told her the

books were “answers to prayer.”

“They were just thrilled,” she said. “Some chaplains said they’d been praying for years and years.”

The ministry had clearly found a need.

“Almost immediately we started getting letters and testimonies from inmates,” Skaar said.

She likened the experience to the admonition in the “Experiencing God” discipleship series to find where God is working and join Him there.

“It was so dramatic where God was working,” Skaar said.

Now CLI is totally focused on prison ministry.

“That’s where we are and that’s where we’ll stay unless God tells us otherwise,” she said.

***We decided not to let anyone fall through the cracks so we do answer every letter.***

**— Kathleen Skaar**

### Faith finds hunger

Skaar said the CLI story begins with her testimony. She grew up in church, but had no personal relationship with Jesus Christ until she attended a retreat in Raleigh in 1995 when she prayed to invite Jesus into her life.

Her life changed. It wasn’t dramatic, she said, but inside she had a thirst and hunger to know God. She read the Bible and Christian books.

“God would just bring the right book to me every time I had a question,” Skaar said.

She thought it would be great if other people had Christian books when they needed them.

“I just wanted to get books in people’s hands,” she said.

In 1996, CLI was born. Skaar’s husband, Anders, joined the ministry full-time in 2002 as mission director.

Now, CLI has sent more than 300,000 books to more than 1,000 prisons and detention centers.

The ministry has sent books to at least one facility in every state and to 88 in North Carolina.

“They go out like missionaries into the prisons,” Skaar said.

Last year, the ministry received more than 2,500 letters from inmates.

“We decided not to let anyone fall through the cracks so we do answer every letter,” she said. Volunteers write letters to the inmates.

“It’s without a doubt the most rewarding volunteer work I’ve ever done,” said Carol Weathersbee, a member at Hillcrest who writes letters.

Norman Beckham, who retired after more than 30 years as an international and North American missionary and

(See Ministry Page 12)

## CP trails by 1.9% at halfway point

By Norman Jameson  
BR Editor

June Cooperative Program (CP) gifts from North Carolina Baptist churches significantly narrowed the gap from last year’s giving and through June they were 1.9 percent behind the same period in 2008.

At the end of April receipts trailed the same period in 2008 by 2.9 percent and at the end of May, by 5.1 percent (see explanation of CP on page 8).

June CP gifts of \$2.87 million were about \$221,000 above the average of the first five months and brought the total to \$16.1 million compared to \$16.4 million at the same juncture in 2008.

A possible factor in the June boost is that the last Sunday of May fell on the last day of the month and

those receipts would be received in June.

Giving Plan A, through which two-thirds of all gifts are received, was up 1.8 percent through June, to \$10.8 million.

Plan B was down 6.4 percent to \$1.3 million.

Plan C, 10 percent of which goes to the national Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, was down 23.6 percent to \$613,541.

Plan D, which had been growing steadily for several years, was down 1.6 percent to \$2.9 million.

Beginning in 2010, the North Carolina Baptist budget will consist of only one giving plan.

The budget committee, chaired by Steve Hardy of Winston-Salem, is working on a potential budget to be

(See CP Page 12)

### Special series

Of the 4,200 churches on the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s (BSC) membership roles, 1,700 have no one on the retirement plan. In the latest installment of Body Parts, a special series by *Biblical Recorder* staff members, Johnny Ross is highlighted.

Through GuideStone Financial Services, Ross works with N.C. Baptist churches to provide and protect staff members.

Find out ways Ross helps churches, and read first-hand stories from North Carolina Baptist churches about what his help means. See stories, page 6-7.



Inside

Deep Impact shown in love from students, p. 2

Camp Caraway back in business, p. 3

Retired SBC leader Ernest Mosley dies, p. 3

NAMB honors state’s Annie gifts, p. 12



# Waiting by the window: Love marks Deep Impact

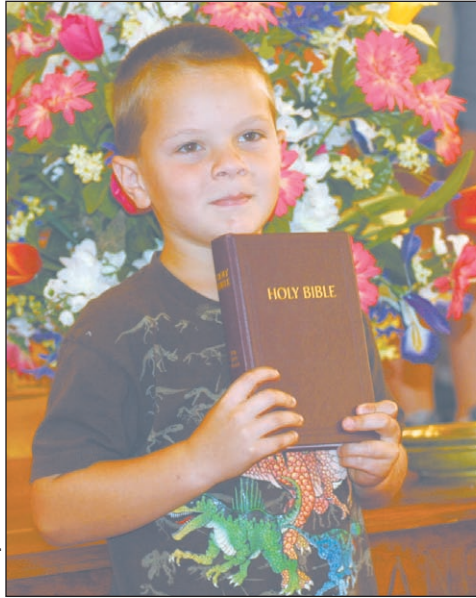
By Melissa Lilley  
BSC Communications

GRIFTON — Andrew's eyes never, not even once, lost contact with the face in front of him. He told the story of how two days earlier God saved him, and he spoke with such intensity and confidence that all one could do was put down the pen and paper and just listen, savoring a moment to be reminded of the gospel's life-changing power.

The Lord changed Andrew Somers' heart the first evening of Deep Impact 2009. During Deep Impact Grifton, Somers and other middle school and high school students served at sites throughout the community helping with construction, Vacation Bible School, prayer walking and service projects.

Every evening youth participate in a worship service and on this particular night as Mike Sowers preached about confessing sin and following Jesus Christ, Somers could not deny that something was different.

"I'm confused. I don't know what's going on. I don't know if I'm ready. I need to clean up my life first," Somers said to his youth leader Brian Gunning-



BSC photo

**LEADING** — A child at Fountain Baptist Church in Fountain holds a Bible for the pledge during a Vacation Bible School held at the church with Deep Impact volunteers.

ham, who replied, "You and the Lord are having an encounter."

"He's telling me to follow Him. But I don't know how," Somers said. Gunningham shared the gospel, read pas-

sages in Romans, the Lord awakened Somers' heart to the truth of the gospel and he responded.

Gunningham's youth from First Baptist Church in Rochelle, Ga., were among 170 other youth participating in Deep Impact Grifton. Deep Impact began 12 years ago at the North Carolina Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell in Brunswick County, and in Tegucigalpa, Honduras (see related story below). This is the second year Deep Impact expanded to include camp weeks at other locations. About 1,650 youth are expected to serve this year.

Sowers, North Carolina Baptist Men youth missions consultant, begins each Deep Impact week with a training session to help equip the youth for their specific area of service that week.

Ashley Matthews, a rising high school senior and member of Highlands Baptist Church in Raleigh, served at an assisted living facility for adults with developmental disabilities.

"You can tell that it means a lot," Matthews said of the youth's outreach. Residents waited by the window and waved as soon as they saw students arrive for the second day.

One week is just long enough to build relationships and love people so much it hurts to leave. "Our whole group was in tears — they did not want to leave," said Terry Strickland, youth leader at Porter Swamp Baptist Church in Cerro Gordo. Porter Swamp served last year in Grifton with Deep Impact, and caring for people around them is one thing they learned that stuck with them. Pastor Tim Moore still remembers the children he served last year during a sports clinic.

Sitting on top a hot roof at a construction site, he thought about those children from last year, wondering where they are and how they are doing. As if reading his mind, a youth sitting with him on that roof said aloud the same thing — and at that moment Moore knew Deep Impact made a deep impact on him, and his youth. "This week impacts the people you're ministering to, and it ministers to you," he said.

**(EDITOR'S NOTE — Lilley is in the communications office of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. A longer version of the story is available at [www.ncbaptist.org](http://www.ncbaptist.org).)**

## Strife in Honduras doesn't interfere with team

By Norman Jameson  
BR Editor

All 89 people representing seven North Carolina Baptist churches arrived safely home from Honduras June 29 after being in the capital city of Tegucigalpa during a military coup that overthrew the Honduran president.

Mike Sowers, who led a Deep Impact mission team for North Carolina Baptist Men, said in his office June 30 that his team never felt danger, although there were some anxious moments. He was in contact constantly with the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa, which he notified of the teams' presence as soon as it arrived in country.

During June 23-29 the Deep Impact Team, one of several large mission events coordinated by N.C. Baptist Men this summer, built a house for a widow and her four children, conducted three Bible clubs at churches and one at a school, held basketball camp at a school and a basketball evangelism team hung out at a public court. Three teams distributed 700 hygiene kits they brought with them from the states.

International Deep Impact youth are high school and college age. They train the first day in country, overcome their anxiety and by day three "they're all over it," said Sowers.

Door to door distribution of hygiene kits resulted in 27 professions of faith, he said. Fifteen others occurred through the other outreaches.

Sowers said the team knew Hondurans were facing a referendum vote during the week they would be in the capital city. When the president fired his military chief June 24 and the other military leaders resigned in protest, Sowers started getting warnings from the embassy to stay alert.

Although the North Carolina team witnessed "heightened presence" of soldiers and an increase in military traffic, they were not forced to abandon any of their plans. In the midst of a showdown between the army and the deposed president's supporters at the airport, the team did leave town early for the camp 20 minutes outside the city.

That was the only anxious moment for Joe Smith, pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Faith, and the seven members of his church. A steady stream of information kept everyone informed and lowered anxiety.

"The trip was incredibly fantastic," said Smith, who has been on about 20 such projects since 1993. "The kids...I don't think they could have handled it any better."

Young people who prayed God would permit them to lead someone to faith in Christ had their prayers answered, leading Smith to ask, "I wonder what my people back home are praying for?"

One woman came to Christ whose husband had been murdered a month earlier. Gang members often watched the young missionaries at work, but did not interfere, Smith said.

On site coordinators Steve and Elaine Stephens, who have been in country three years, were able to secure information not commonly available in the crush of communications to the Embassy.

"Everything the U.S. Embassy told us came to pass," Sowers said, grateful for the connection and insights staff there provided.

N.C. Baptist Men's Director Richard Brunson said experience, wisdom and connections are a big advantage that a larger mission-sending group like Baptist Men provides. "There is a constant

flow of information and people on the ground know what's going on," he said.

On the one night the team left early for their camp, the power went out during worship. The darkness was appropriate as they sang "Amazing Grace."

After they sang, "I once was blind"

lights came back on the instant the singers reached the text, "now I see."

"It was a reassuring sense that God was there," Sowers said. "It allowed us to get up the next morning and go about our business and do what we were called to do."



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### Correction

A story in the July 4 issue of the *Biblical Recorder* incorrectly listed Great Commission Task Force committee member Roger Spradlin as the chairman

of the SBC Executive Committee. He is the newly elected vice chairman. Randal James was re-elected chairman, and Martha Lawley was re-elected secretary.



# Camp Caraway reopens after flu outbreak

By Steve DeVane  
BR Managing Editor

Camp Caraway reopened July 13 after being closed for a week due to an outbreak of swine flu.

"The last three weeks of camp will go on as scheduled," said Jimmy Huffman, director of Caraway Conference Center and Camp.

The camp scheduled for July 6-10 was cancelled after two campers who were at camp June 22-26 were diagnosed with H1N1 flu, commonly called "swine flu."

Huffman said the camp got word on June 29 that a camper had been diagnosed with the virus. Camp leaders found out about the second camper the next day. Staff members who had the most contact with the two and those who had flu-like symptoms were tested for the virus on June 30. Five of the 24 staff members at Camp Caraway tested positive.

Those staff members were quarantined immediately and did not have any further contact with campers at-

tending a mini-camp June 29-July 1. Huffman said he was told the cases appeared to be mild.

"We didn't have any staff that was really sick," he said.

The staff members who did not test positive for H1N1 took preventive medication, he said.

"Everybody's doing fine," he said.

Caraway Conference Center was not involved in the outbreak. Conference center employees who have contact with the camp, including Huffman, were tested and did not have the virus.

The families of all campers who were at camp June 22-26 or June 29 - July 1 were notified about the illnesses, according to Huffman. The campers who were scheduled to attend July 6-10 can reschedule for one of the last three weeks or get a refund, he said.

"It's tough to have to cancel a week of camp, but it was the right thing to do," he said.

Huffman said the Caraway staff had been sent home while the camp is closed for the week. When camp reopened July 13, it had been 13 days since the

staff members tested positive for H1N1. That's almost twice as long as suggested for people with the virus to stay away from other people, he said.

The camp was scheduled to be cleaned three times before it reopened, Huffman said.

Mimi Cooper, the health director of Randolph County, where Caraway is located, said the facility itself is not likely to cause another outbreak, but if someone with the virus comes to camp, it could spread. She said it was the camp's call whether to close or not.

"I don't think they did the wrong thing," she said.

Cooper said that the H1N1 virus is so prevalent now that only patients with a high risk of dying who have flu-like symptoms are normally tested for it. She sent a letter to all the camps in the county before the summer advising them to take precautions, such as encouraging hand-washing.

Huffman said Caraway had installed extra hand-washing stations this year. He said campers will be encouraged to use them frequently.

# Retired SBC leader Ernest Mosley dies at 81

By Art Toalston  
Baptist Press

Ernest Mosley, 81, whose ministry spanned 65 years, stretching from local churches to leadership roles in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), died July 8.

He was diagnosed with cancer last fall and had been under home hospice care. He died at Gaston Memorial Hospital in Gastonia where he was admitted July 3.

Mosley was executive vice president of the SBC Executive Committee from 1987 until his retirement in 1998; executive director of the Illinois Baptist

State Association from 1980-87; and pastoral section supervisor at the former Baptist Sunday School Board (now LifeWay Christian Resources) during 13 years on staff at the SBC entity.

He was president of the Hawaii Baptist Convention in 1966-67 and was a pastor, assistant pastor or minister of education of churches in Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana and Hawaii.

Mosley authored, coauthored or compiled eight books, two of which were translated into other languages. He also wrote numerous articles for denominational periodicals and biblically based solo dramas.

After his retirement, Mosley contin-

ued to minister to churches without pastors through the training of transitional pastors around the United States.

A native of Miller County, Ark., in the Texarkana area, Mosley was a graduate on Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. The seminary named Mosley a distinguished alumnus in 1998.

While on staff at the Sunday School Board, where he led in developing church resources to support pastors and deacons, Mosley also served as chairman of the Nashville public schools' Central Citizens Advisory Committee

from 1978-80.

Mosley and his wife Vivian moved to Gastonia in 2003 and were active members of Parkwood Baptist Church.

In addition to his wife of 57 years, he is survived by daughters Melody Morris of Thompson Station, Tenn., Jan Hill of Greensboro, and Lenora Crabtree of Gastonia; 10 grandchildren; and a brother Paul of Rogers, Ark.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Ernest and Vivian Mosley Youth Mission Fund, c/o Community Foundation of Gaston County, P.O. Box 123, Gastonia, NC 28053.

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Toalston is editor of Baptist Press.)

# Historic Murphy church dedicates building

By Norman Jameson  
BR Editor

Peachtree Memorial Baptist Church in Murphy blossomed from the originating purpose of the Baptist State Convention in 1830: to start a school in which to train preachers, and to evangelize the Indians of western North Carolina.

On June 27 Peachtree Memorial dedicated its new facility and two participants are direct descendants from those original mission efforts. A month after a symbolic march from their old building, landlocked by cemeteries, and 172 years after its founding, members moved into their \$2 million-plus home.

Chester Jones, pastor for the past nine years and former director of missions for the local Truett Association, said the new one-level, steel and stone building will seat 600 for worship and is fully handicapped accessible. A fel-

lowship hall will accommodate 400.

The move is "a giant step for our congregation," he said, and eases them out from a landlocked situation to higher visibility on a more traveled road next to Peachtree Elementary School.

Jones said he is "honored to be a part of this country church" and "so proud I wouldn't trade places" for any other.

Two of Peachtree's 10 founding members were Native American, according to Jones. Current members Michael Mingus and his sister Jennifer Mingus King and her three children are their direct descendants.

Former Baptist State Convention executive director-treasurer Roy Smith, a North Carolina Baptist historian by avocation, told dedication participants how ladies from the Philadelphia Missionary Society employed Humphrey Posey to help them work among the Indians.

Smith said Posey, who had a "passionate concern" for the Cherokee, con-

sulted with Luther Rice on a strategy to start a school. He traveled to Washington, D.C., to talk to President Monroe and Secretary of War John Calhoun, under whom responsibility for Indian Nations fell.

When Posey obtained permission for a school, he carried his case north where members of the Philadelphia Missionary Society helped to fund his efforts. The Society sent three men and their wives, and three other women to help.

The first church that resulted from their efforts is the Valley River Baptist Church. Peachtree Memorial is likely the second, according to Smith.

One of the early converts was John Thimpson who studied at the school and eventually participated as an interpreter in the Trail of Tears that took North Carolina Cherokee to reservations in Oklahoma. The Minguses are direct descendants of Thimpson.

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## Opportunity Corner

### WMU Christmas Child deadline nears

The Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina plans to help Operation Christmas Child Dec. 5 and Dec. 7 at the Charlotte processing center.

The deadline to sign up is Aug. 1.

Contact Operation Christmas Child at (704) 583-1463 or [occcarolinas@samaritan.org](mailto:occcarolinas@samaritan.org).

### Looking for witnesses

The 52nd annual Lay Witnessing Conference, "You Shall Be Witnesses to Me," is Aug. 14-15 at Caraway Conference Center near Asheboro.

The event offers training for all who have a heart for evangelism and includes testimonies, church lay witnessing training, challenging messages and great music. Friday evening includes a time of fellowship and worship with training being offered on Saturday.

Overnight lodging, three meals and usage fee costs \$63 per person (based on double occupancy) and \$76 per person (for single room if available); commuters (one meal per day and usage fee) \$19 per person; child rates are also available.

Contact Lynn Tharrington at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5599, or [ltharrington@ncbaptist.org](mailto:ltharrington@ncbaptist.org).

## Around the state

### Staff changes

**CHAD DILLARD** has been called as youth minister at Adaville Baptist Church, Spindale.

Anderson Creek Community Baptist Church, Spring Lake, has called **CLYDE BABER** as pastor. This is Baber's first pastorate. He was a lay leader and deacon at Linden First Baptist Church, the church where he was ordained.

**PAUL BREWSTER**, former pastor at Barlow Vista Baptist Church, Hampstead, has been called to pastor Rykers Ridge Baptist Church, Madison, Ind.

Corinth Baptist Church, Oxford, has called **NICK BATES** as youth pastor.

**MIKE HAMBY** has been called as pastor at Pilgrim Baptist Church, Wilkesboro.

Bethlehem Baptist Church, Carthage, has called **WILLIAM KILPATRICK** as pastor. A master's student at Southeastern Seminary, Kilpatrick pastored Blockhouse Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Ga., prior to coming to North Carolina.

### Retirement

**WILLIAM LEATHERS III** will retire July 26 after 14 years as pastor of First Baptist Church, Hickory. He also was pastor at First Baptist Church, Rockingham, for almost 19 years. He and his wife, Crystal, will be moving to Winston-Salem, and he will be available at a later date for supply and interim work.

### Seniors invited to beach

The second Conference by the Sea retreat for senior citizens is slated Aug. 24-28 at Fort Caswell on Oak Island.

The week begins with supper on Monday, and concludes with breakfast on Friday. In between will be time for worship and a variety of classes with plenty of time for leisure activities or field trips. Rates are \$236 per person. Downloadable forms are available at [www.ncbaptist.org](http://www.ncbaptist.org); search for "Conferences by the Sea." Mail forms and checks, made payable to North Carolina Baptist Assembly, to: NC Baptist As-

sembly, 100 Caswell Beach Rd, Oak Island, NC, 28465. Call (910) 278-9501.

### Prayer event issues call

Henry Blackaby is the main speaker for "Call to Me," a prayer conference in Pembroke, Aug. 28-29.

The two-day event, which is based on Jeremiah 33:3, will be held at Mount Airy Baptist Church and is sponsored by the Burnt Swamp, Bladen, Robeson and Columbus associations in partnership with the Office of Prayer for Evangelization and Spiritual Awakening, Evangelization Group of the Baptist

State Convention of North Carolina.

Contact Burnt Swamp Association at (910) 521-9850 or the office of prayer at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5513, or e-mail [praync@ncbaptist.org](mailto:praync@ncbaptist.org), or visit [www.praync.org](http://www.praync.org).

### Hispanic youth retreat planned at Caswell

Generation 24:7, a youth retreat for Hispanics, is slated for Sept. 4-7 at Fort Caswell.

Based on Joshua 1:9, the event is

(See Opportunity Page 5)



► **Volunteers from Clemmons First Baptist Church and Green Meadows Baptist Church, Mocksville, helped build one of three homes being constructed by Mountain Outreach volunteers this summer as a part of the University of the Cumberlands' program in Kentucky. On June 24 they dedicated the Miracle home on Little Cane Creek, completed in just a week. Above, Diane Brown presents the Miracle family with a "Bless This Home" doormat.**

## Church News



► **FAITH Sunday School class at First Baptist Church, Clinton, recently collected 300 boxes of cereal for the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina. All the donations went to Odom Home in Pembroke. The entire church participated in a food drive earlier but the FAITH classes wanted to do more. Ronald Cava is pastor.**

### To submit items:

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 staff changes, please include name, title, name of church and city along with the person's most recent position (title, name of church and location). Not all items submitted will be printed.

For e-mail submissions, send announcements and digital pictures as an attachment to [dianna@biblicalrecorder.org](mailto:dianna@biblicalrecorder.org).

Or, send to *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 18808, Raleigh, NC 27619.



► **Garland Baptist Church's SonRock Kids Campers gather around a canoe filled with paper products, canned foods, and other food items they collected during the June VBS in Garland. The items were taken to the Eastern Baptist Association in Warsaw for the food bank.**



► **Smyrna Missionary Baptist Church, Smyrna, had the highest VBS attendance in the 179 year history of the church. Camp E.D.G.E was held June 14-18 with 48 children attending (daily average: 44). Four children made salvation decisions. A teen mission group from Broad Acres Baptist Church, Cayce, S.C., joined with 20 Smyrna volunteers. A special offering for the Baptist Children's Homes' Kennedy Home of Kinston raised \$298. VBS director was Renee Willard and her assistant was Linda Richardson. Mike Willard is pastor.**





BP file photo

**HELPING** — College student Logan Rogers, among 14 volunteers from Mount Zion Baptist Church in Canton, helped restore a ceiling in 2007.

## New Orleans volunteers still needed

By Mickey Noah  
Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — Almost four years after Hurricane Katrina brought New Orleans to its knees on Aug. 29, 2005, Southern Baptists continue to spend a week or so in the Big Easy, volunteering their time and skills to rebuild or refurbish homes devastated by the deadly storm.

But the number of Baptists who are volunteering is no longer enough.

Since May 1, 2006, under “Operation NOAH Rebuild” — a cooperative ministry of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans and the SBC’s North American Mission Board — more than 25,000 Southern Baptist volunteers have assisted in rebuilding 1,801 flood-damaged homes. These volunteers represent some 1,530 SBC churches from every state convention in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii. Operation NOAH also has assisted in the recovery of 32 churches and 15 other ministry centers or schools damaged by Katrina.

And as a direct result of Operation NOAH, more than 400 professions of faith have been recorded, according to the latest available statistics.

While an agreement has been reached to transition the day-to-day management of Operation NOAH to the Baptist association, the North American Mission Board has committed to extend its support of the ministry until year’s end, said Mickey Caison, NAMB’s

team leader for adult volunteer mobilization.

“We will continue to work with (the association) to support and implement their ‘2020 Vision’ strategic plan,” Caison said. “Part of that plan is to address post-Katrina needs of the New Orleans community, and housing is still one of the critical needs there.”

Caison said 70 more homes remain in the Operation NOAH pipeline for reconstruction or renovation, and “we want to complete every one of them.”

“Some of the folks we still want to help have not received any assistance at all from their insurance companies or the federal government, and are the folks who’ve fallen through the cracks,” Caison said, noting that only 60 percent of the residents displaced by Katrina have moved back home.

But as NAMB’s time for involvement ticks down, Operation NOAH is not seeing the number of skilled volunteers the program needs to finish work on the 70 remaining homes, Caison said.

“We desperately need Southern Baptists who are skilled as drywall workers, plumbers, electricians, framing carpenters and finishing carpenters to volunteer to help us,” he said. “We can house up to 145 volunteers a week but we’re not averaging 145 a week. We only had 66 volunteers during May.” Caison said volunteers are housed in a volunteer “village” at Hopeview Baptist Church in a nearby parish.

For volunteer opportunities with Operation NOAH Rebuild, e-mail [noah@namb.net](mailto:noah@namb.net) or call (877) 934-0808 (toll-free) or (504) 362-4604.

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### Fruitland names Kenneth Ridings emeritus

Kenneth Ridings, who retired Dec. 31, 2008, from Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute, will be named president emeritus during a special chapel service at 9:50 a.m. July 16.

Ridings, a teacher at Fruitland 40 years and president the past 11, will preach at the service, to be held in the chapel bearing his name.

New Fruitland president David

Horton said he petitioned the board to honor Ridings and they unanimously agreed.

“We wanted to honor Kenneth Ridings for his years of service and to let him know he is always a part of the Fruitland family,” Horton said.

“He has been an encourager to me in my new role. We want him to know he is always welcome on campus and that we will look to him for continued leadership in the years ahead.”

The school held a special service honoring Ridings in October 2008.

### Four added to GCR team

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Four members have been added to the Great Commission task force appointed by Southern Baptist Convention President Johnny Hunt.

Added were: Larry Grays, senior pastor, Midtown Bridge Church, Atlanta; Ruben Hernandez, associate Spanish pastor, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas; Kathy Ferguson, women’s ministry speaker whose late husband Rick was a pastor in Denver; John Cope, senior pastor, Keystone Community Fellowship, North Wales, Pa.

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### Opportunity Corner

(Continued from Page 4)

open for youth ages 12 to 18 and costs \$140 (meals, lodging and T-shirt). Registrations must be in before Aug. 24. The event begins on a Friday evening and ends Monday morning. Contact Guillermo Soriano at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5564, or [gsoriano@ncbaptist.org](mailto:gsoriano@ncbaptist.org).

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### Retreat planned for new ministers’ wives

New ministers’ wives have an opportunity to help each other during the annual retreat.

The retreat, scheduled Oct. 16-17 at Camp Mundo Vista is open to new ministers’ wives and ministers’ wives new to North Carolina in the last eight years.

The cost is \$30. Participants must register by Sept. 30.

Contact Woman’s Missionary Union of North Carolina at (866) 210-8602 or (919) 882-2344.

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BR photos by Steve DeVane



**MONEY MATTERS** — No matter which way you look at it, Johnny Ross, North Carolina representative for GuideStone Financial Resources, remains available to help North Carolina Baptists with financial questions.

## Ross helps churches protect, provide for staff

By Norman Jameson  
BR Editor

**J**ohnny Ross has seen too many unnecessary tragedies to take lightly his roll in helping church leaders understand the need to care for and protect their staff.

For a retirement contribution of as little as a dollar a month, any staff member who receives W2 income from a church qualifies for two vital protections provided for them by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, through GuideStone Financial Services: life insurance and disability insurance. That includes full-time, part-time or bivocational staff.

Beyond that, for churches that make a minimum contribution to missions through the Cooperative Program, the BSCNC matches the first \$240 contribution to individual's retirement accounts.

Yet 40 percent of North Carolina Baptist churches do not take advantage of those benefits. As the GuideStone representative on the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina staff, that drives Ross nuts.

He said the average North Carolina pastor retires with a retirement portfolio of \$100,000. "Is that not tragic?" he said.

Even combined with Social Security, earnings from that size portfolio will not be enough for a person to live on and many pastors need to find other income, often even beyond the age when they can physically handle the work. He told of one 82-year-old "retired" pastor working at Hardees to make ends meet.

He said of the 4,200 churches shown on the BSCNC membership roles 1,700 of them have no one on the retirement plan, which would also provide them life insurance and disability protection.

"I don't care how small they are, if they can't put in a dollar a month to help their pastor in case something happens to him, they ought to close their doors," Ross said.

Ross, the longest tenured current BSCNC employee at 30 years, has been 10 years in his role of helping churches understand the most tax efficient compensation for staff, and helping staff navigate the tricky rapids of advocating for adequate pay without appearing greedy.

Minister tax status is not easy for everyone to understand. Ordained persons are treated for tax purposes as self-employed. And the amount of their pay designated for housing allowance is tax exempt.

"It is the height of irresponsibility for a church not even to know the insurance and retirement benefits of its staff," Ross said. He is willing to drive anywhere to talk with a single church about its responsibility and about the benefits the BSCNC offers.

### Hates 'packages'

One of his pet peeves is a "salary and benefits package" from which the pastor is expected to divide the money between salary, housing, insurance, retirement, book and car allowances. Too often insurance and

retirement are left out because the "package" simply isn't large enough to cover the family's immediate needs with money "left over" for protection and for the future.

"If you're paying for it, it's not a benefit," Ross said. "That system denies the meaning of the word."

"It's a no brainer," Ross said.

"Don't give your pastor a choice about retirement. Put him in there."

When church leaders argue that they cannot dictate how the church staff allocates the funds, Ross says, "Excuse me. Aren't you the employer?"

"Don't give them a choice," Ross said. "You're saving them from their own ignorance ... especially the younger ones ... they're going to take the money every time."

Pastors too often make the mistake of "spiritualizing" their compensation, saying "God called me, He'll take care of me," Ross said. "I believe if God calls you He'll take care of you, but He gives you a brain and sends me along to remind you to use it."

Ross reminds pastors their second responsibility is to their family. When children grow up in churches their daddy serves, and hear him verbally abused and see the church nearly starve them to death, when they're grown, they're gone.

Ross is a firm believer in the disability protection provided by the Convention. North Carolina actually has the largest number receiving disability benefits, a statistic Ross "hopes means that our people are informed and when something happens they know there is help."

### Clueless on benefits

Still he feels 95 percent of key leaders and decision makers in churches, and 60 percent of pastors "don't have a clue" about the benefits.

One man had been on Social Security disability for two years before learning as a GuideStone retirement participant he qualified for an additional \$500 monthly.

Another stewardship committee chair called Ross recently asking about a retirement plan for staff besides the pastor. Learning about what is available "blew him out of the water," Ross said. The man told him, "We can't afford **not** to have every one of our employees in this plan."

The man volunteered to take the information to every church in his association.

GuideStone sponsors a program to help the most desperate annuitants called Mission Dignity (formerly called Adopt an Annuitant).

More than 200 in North Carolina receive a monthly stipend unrelated to any retirement planning they did or did not do. "You have to be in abject poverty to even qualify for that," Ross said. A married couple would get a maximum \$260 a month in this emergency aid.

This fall GuideStone will begin giving some financial guidance to people trying to plan for retirement. The first question always is "How much should I put

### Contact information

For information on how your church can be a model employer and best provide for and protect your staff, contact Johnny Ross at (919) 459-5594 or [jross@ncbaptist.org](mailto:jross@ncbaptist.org).

in" to which Ross said the answer is, "More than you think you can afford."

Until now, the second question, "How do I invest?" had to be left unanswered. Now the "guided planning service" will allow GuideStone staff to talk with clients about potential plans.

Ross, 65, and working toward his own retirement plan, said if a church budget is under \$75,000 and will make a commitment to put money into retirement for the pastor GuideStone will add \$600 annually to that person's retirement account for five years. This is made possible by a gift from Wyndolyn Royster Holifield, who was a prominent donor to North Carolina Baptist causes.

### Church planters in

Church planters are required to be in the retirement and benefits plan.

Two church planters working with consultant Pam Mungo died closely together in 2006 and didn't have enough money for burial expenses.

One was 39, the other 52. She said she has begged for money to bury Baptist preachers for the last time.

Today, if you're a North Carolina Baptist church planter you are in the retirement plan.

Ross spent 20 years as an adult Sunday School consultant, equipping lay leaders "to teach people scriptural truths that are life changing," he said. He was a school teacher four years, working on a Ph.D. in education when he was called into vocational ministry. He earned a master of divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1975.

When he took a busload of his first church members to a Sunday School conference, he was "absolutely embarrassed" he said because the conference leader read to him.

He promised his church members never to take them to another conference unless he verified the qualifications of its leaders beforehand.

Before long he was the one leading those conferences as Sunday School director Robert Stewart asked him to join the BSC staff in 1979.

Ross and Rhea, his wife of 43 years, are members of Salem Baptist Church in Apex and fans of all things University of North Carolina.

He has taught leadership recruitment and training at Southeastern adjunctively for 13 years and currently teaches a class at Campbell Divinity School on designing church programs and ministries.

(**EDITOR'S NOTE** — Just 10 minutes after Ross gave the interview with the Biblical Recorder, he received a call from the friend of a 42-year-old pastor who had to resign his church because of illness from cancer. The caller had encouraged his friend several years ago to enroll in the retirement plan, especially for the protection benefits. He did not, and now he and his family face a very uncertain financial future.)



Coverage helps church, family during pastor’s illness

By Steve DeVane  
 BR Managing Editor

Melvin Hall came to Riley’s Creek Baptist Church in November 2005 to help an ill friend.  
 Hall preached for Blake Hayes, who had been diagnosed with ALS and was having trouble with his voice. Hall later became interim pastor when Hayes’ condition deteriorated further and, after Hayes’ death, became pastor.  
 While Hayes was ill, some church members had agreed to give extra money so the church could continue to pay his salary.  
 Hall went through the church files to find out what type of medical cov-

erage his friend had. He discovered that the church had set up an account with GuideStone Financial Resources and also had taken out short-term and long-term disability insurance and life insurance for Hayes about three years before he became ill.  
 Between insurance, disability and Social Security payments, Hayes had enough income without the church’s emergency contribution.  
 Hall said when he contacted insur-

ance agents about the coverage, they asked him when the church was going to stop paying Hayes so their company could start paying him.  
 “He and his family were well taken care of,” Hall said. “The burden on the church was lifted.”  
 Hall said Hayes couldn’t speak or move his arms but smiled at him when he told Hayes that his wife and family would be taken care of.  
 “To be able to do that was one of the greatest blessings of my life,” Hall said.

Hall credits Johnny Ross, the North Carolina representative for GuideStone, for helping make the church aware of programs that helped their pastor.  
 “That was a blessing from above,” Hall said. And now the church’s associate pastor and church secretary are clients of GuideStone.  
 “I think we learned a great lesson, this church did,” he said.  
 Hall encourages churches to contact Ross for information about how they can help their ministers.  
 “I really believe if pastors would wake up and churches would wake up, they wouldn’t find a better friend than Johnny Ross or a better agency than GuideStone,” he said.

“I really believe if pastors would wake up and churches would wake up, they wouldn’t find a better friend than Johnny Ross or a better agency than GuideStone.”  
 — Melvin Hall

Church seeks to be ‘model employer’

By Steve DeVane  
 BR Managing Editor

COATS — A seminar in early 2007 convinced Drew Woerner that a church should be a “model employer” in its community.  
 That belief prompted a policy review and changes that have moved Coats Baptist Church closer to being such a model.  
 Woerner, chairman of the finance committee at Coats for six of the past seven years, attended a seminar that Johnny Ross, state representative for GuideStone Financial Resources, led for churches in the Little River Baptist Association.  
 He came away from the meeting so convinced the church should be a “model employer” that he asked to speak to his church deacons.  
 He told them the church should be a model and it should address staff salaries and benefits in light of that.  
 The personnel committee, made up of the chairmen of various committees, studied the issue. Woerner said the group relied heavily on the principles Ross taught.  
 The personnel committee discovered that some staff members needed raises

of 15 to 20 percent, Woerner said and agreed to ask the deacons to raise the salaries to the desired level over the next three years.  
 When presented with the information, the deacons suggested they raise the salaries all the way the next year and the church agreed.  
 The church also adopted salary and compensation benefit policies. The document includes the scriptural basis for salary and fringe benefit policies, citing 1 Cor. 9:14, Gal. 6:6, Luke 10:7 and 1 Timothy 5:7-18. The policy says the church intends “to have competitive salary pay grades for every staff position.”  
 “The Bible says you should take care of those who preach, teach and lead,” Woerner said.  
 The policies also include sections on health insurance, disability, dental insurance, life insurance and retirement.  
 Ministers on staff also get housing allowance and extra pay to offset payments they make to Social Security. Reimbursable expenses are also covered in the policies.  
 Jesse Mooney, pastor at Coats, said the staff is extremely appreciative of the support.  
 “They already loved the church, but



IMPROVEMENT — Drew Woerner, right, chairman of the finance committee at Coats Baptist Church, helped his church move toward becoming a better employer. Jesse Mooney, left, pastor of the church, said the staff is extremely appreciative.

Scripture references (NIV)

- **1 Corinthians 9:14** — In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.
- **Galatians 6:6** — Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.
- **Luke 10:7** — Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.
- **1 Timothy 5:7-18** — v. 18: For the Scripture says, “Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,” and “The worker deserves his wages.”

they have a greater love and appreciation because of that commitment,” he said.  
 Woerner said he called Ross often while the committee was working on the policies. Ross also came and did the

seminar at the church that he’d done earlier for the association.  
 “He was just a tremendous help,” Woerner said. “He was able to keep me from going in some pitfalls because of his experience.”

Meeting helps calm stricken pastor’s fears

By Steve DeVane  
 BR Managing Editor

Mickey Heyward endured surgeries and radiation, but the brain cancer diagnosed in September 2007 kept killing him.

Concerned for his wife Pealey, Heyward decided late last year that he and Pealey needed to examine their financial situation.  
 Keith Dixon, director of missions for Greater Cleveland County Baptist Association in Shelby, asked Johnny Ross, state representative for Guide-

Stone Financial Resources, to help.  
 Pealey Heyward said the meeting helped ease her husband’s fears.  
 “He was worried about what would happen with me at the end,” she said.

Heyward, who was pastor of Christopher Road Baptist Church in Shelby, died March 25.  
 Pealey Heyward said Ross was helpful.  
 “He went over every little thing,” she said. “He told us what to expect and what to do.”  
 Heyward said it meant a lot to her and her husband to know that Ross thought enough about them to go out of his way to come to their house.  
 “We had never met him before or talked to him,” she said.  
 Dixon said many pastors know about GuideStone’s retirement plan, but are not familiar with the other benefits.  
 “That’s where Johnny is so helpful,” he said.  
 Ross is great at explaining the GuideStone resources, Dixon said.  
 When he comes to the associational offices, he asks employees to call up the GuideStone web site ([www.guidestone.org](http://www.guidestone.org)) so they can check their accounts.  
 “I think the educational part of what he does is huge,” Dixon said.

Special series

Did you know you have a large church staff? Your gifts through the Cooperative Program support a staff resource at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina that exists to serve your church.  
 With this issue, the *Biblical Recorder* continues a series — Body Parts — featuring one of your Convention staff members, and churches which have grown through that staff member’s ministry. Body Parts is inspired by 1 Cor. 12:12 — “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ” (NIV). The parts of the Baptist State Convention exist to serve you.  
**This week:** Johnny Ross, consultant with GuideStone Financial Resources.  
**Coming up:** Eddie Thompson, family ministry.





# In 1920s, debt-drowned Baptists created CP

**B**ack in the 1920s Americans were enjoying a boom time, buying lots of new gadgets and investing in stocks with borrowed money.

It all crashed in 1929 and a major depression set in.

But for Southern Baptists the economic meltdown started earlier; it's estimated that in 1925 Southern Baptist Convention agencies and state conventions were \$18 million in debt.

For the times, it was a staggering amount.

The Foreign Mission Board, now the International Mission Board, was \$1 million in debt and had trouble paying missionaries.

Working together, Baptists had organized mission boards, schools, orphanages and other ministries, but they struggled to pay for these many works.

Financial crises were common. Some ministries used professional but expensive fundraisers. Bad weather could spell budgetary doom for a Baptist institution because it could deter fundraisers from speaking in churches to plead for money.

It was fiscal chaos. By 1925 churches were rebelling at the disorderly and ceaseless requests for money.

A \$75 million campaign launched in 1919 succeeded in raising pledges of \$92 million over five years, but only \$58 million in actual gifts. Agencies had budgeted assuming the entire \$75 million would be received and the shortfall sprouted deficit budgets bright with red ink.

This was the situation facing Southern Baptists in May 1925 when they met in annual session in Memphis, Tenn. Amid such monetary turmoil, Southern Baptists adopted what was arguably their best idea ever: the Cooperative Program.

It was not a promising start.

The Cooperative Program concept was part of a mundane-sounding "Future Program Commission" report. It was adopted quietly on May 13, with little discussion and no fanfare; most Baptist state newspapers ignored it. W. E. Grindstaff described this launch

in his 1965 book, "Our Cooperative Program."

Mrs. W.C. James, president of the national Woman's Missionary Union and a member of the commission which recommended the Cooperative Program in 1925 was an early enthusiast.

"We just had to cooperate," she said when asked years later why she supported it.

"We had tried everything else. There was no other way. I believe in it more than ever ... My part in it was the most important thing I ever did. Tell Baptists to keep it going."

Baptists did keep it going.

The Cooperative Program would become the fuel for all Baptists did together and bring profound changes to hundreds of ministries.

It is just an uncomplicated, inexpensive, voluntary way to gather and disburse money for missions while preserving the autonomy of local churches.

**Here is how it works:**

- Baptists bring their tithes and offerings to church and the churches send a part of those gifts on to the state conventions.

- A budget agreed on by Baptists of each state determines how the funds are used in ministry in that state.

- State conventions then send a large portion to the Southern Baptist Convention where combined funds from churches across the country support national and international missions and theological education. As in the states, Baptist messengers meeting in annual session approve a budget to determine how the funds are used.

Overhead costs and bureaucracy often eat up half the budget of some fundraising programs. For the Cooperative Program, such promotional overhead is around 4 percent or less, a figure almost shockingly low by comparison.

## GUEST COLUMN



Mike Creswell



If simple in operation, the Cooperative Program has proven to work amazingly well. For the first time, all Baptists in all the churches together fund all the agreed-upon ministries.

It took Southern Baptists until 1943 to pay off their debts from the 1920s. Convention agencies set up strict budgeting processes and reserve accounts to prevent falling into heavy debt again.

Budget-setting and accountability became integral parts of the Cooperative Program approach to missions funding.

With a workable funding approach in hand, Baptists built one of the largest and most effective missionary sending programs in Christian history.

The Cooperative Program was the financial spark-plug that enabled that growth.

It is certainly not a perfect system, but it is the best system Baptists have found to join hearts, hands and pocketbooks for missions and ministry.

It is not a finished system, as Baptists continue to fine tune it.

For example, over the past four years North Carolina Baptists have steadily increased the share of Cooperative Program dollars going to the Southern Baptist Convention.

North Carolina Baptists should remember their missions support system was created during hard times and helped them move ahead despite financial woes.

Even in hard times, the Cooperative Program enables missions-minded Baptists to work together and accomplish more for God's kingdom than any other approach.

Even in a depression, pulling together pulled us ahead.

Even in a recession, the Great Commission is unrepealed.

*(EDITOR'S NOTE — Creswell, formerly an IMB missionary, leads Cooperative Program promotion for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.)*



## Tar Heel Voices

### Only God turns out lights

I would like to comment about the headline over Marv Knox's article on Broadway Baptist Church in the July 4 issue: "SBC turns out lights on Broadway Baptist Church."

We need to understand that any local church is under the sovereign care of God. Only God can turn out the lights of a local church. The SBC cannot do that.

When I answered God's call to the ministry in 1969 as a teenager, I was taught that the SBC was established to aid local churches in their ministry. Now, it seems that our theology of the church has changed. The church is now there for the Convention. It seems to me that our SBC has taken on the authority that once was in the hands of the local church under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

In reading Kathy Madeja's response and the Broadway's web page [www.broadwaybc.org](http://www.broadwaybc.org) it seems clear that the lights remain on at Broadway. No action by the SBC will change that at Broadway or any other local Baptist church. We need to remember that God will judge His churches as well as His conventions.

John T. Brown  
Yadkinville

### Obama resolution angers

The resolution (passed at the SBC annual meeting) outrages me as a Southern Baptist Christian. This man is quickly becoming the worst president this country has ever seen in its proud history. He's anti-American, anti-Christian, pro-abortion and pro-gay, and yet we are supposed to be proud just because of the color of his skin. Race has nothing to do with being the president of the United States.

Barack H. Obama was never qualified to be elected. It outrages me that a country that has come so far regarding race would ignore the fact that he advocates the murder of innocent babies, ignore the fact that he

supports homosexual rights, and yet put him in office simply to make history. Well he is certainly making history, history I want no part of. And I am ashamed of those who voted for this resolution.

May God have mercy on our country and continue to bless us. May he find a few faithful souls willing to stand up for the truth and spare us from these dark times.

Casey Short  
Roanoke Rapids

### Missionaries available

We are Steve and Paula King, IMB missionaries leading the Inka/Amazon Cluster (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Brazil). We are from Friendly Avenue Baptist Church in Greensboro. We'll be on stateside assignment and are available to share about our work on behalf of Baptists who support the work. We'll be at the church's missionary home through December. Between those dates we can be reached at cell phone (336) 880-9750. Our e-mail is [sking@worlddimail.com](mailto:sking@worlddimail.com).

Steve King  
Greensboro

### Great Commission Resurgence driven by inerrancy's children

In recent editorials, Norman Jameson (June 6) and D. Harold Bennett Jr. (July 4) have both argued the Great Commission Resurgence movement is best understood as a continuation of the Bold Missions Thrust initiative begun in 1976.

While I am glad both men seem to be on board with the Great Commission Resurgence, I would like to suggest a different family tree as a more likely possibility. Jameson and Bennett argue that the conservative resurgence, begun in 1979, diverted attention to less-important, merely political matters. Now that we've had enough of that (arguing about biblical

inerrancy), we can get back to the real business of missions and cooperation. The conservative resurgence was, in effect, a parenthesis between two more important matters.

A more accurate understanding of these events shows that the Great Commission Resurgence is the result and even the culmination of the movement begun in 1979. The young leaders who were so energized to attend this year's SBC annual meeting; who are demanding our Convention structures be more efficient; who are tired of moralism instead of the gospel; who are the energy behind this movement: We are the children of the conservative resurgence. We went to seminaries who had recovered the gospel. We learned from those who fought hard for inerrancy. We reaped the fruit of the fields they planted.

And now, armed with a theological and gospel-driven unity, it is time to unleash the passion and determination of a generation who has taken our fathers' generation call to believe every word of the Bible more seriously than they could have imagined. We are ready to go anywhere and pay any cost to see the name of Jesus exalted among the nations. Far from being a distraction, the last 30 years are exactly what has made this day and this movement possible.

Brent Hobbs  
Severn



### REACT: Tar Heel Voices is your forum

- Letters are limited to 300 words and may be edited for style, length and clarity; letters must be signed and include address and phone number.
- Only one letter from a writer will be published in a 90-day period.
- **E-mail to** [editor@biblicalrecorder.org](mailto:editor@biblicalrecorder.org), or **mail to:** Editor, P.O. Box 18808, Raleigh, NC 27619.



## Talks you must have with daughter

Air brush artists create more beautiful cover girls than all the diets, shampoos, make up, hair coloring and gyms in America. Yet, our daughters are emotionally bombarded, bullied and belittled by bold, bare images that bellow, "This is how you must look."

The women in the pictures don't even look like that.

The unrealistic and even unhealthy standard of feminine beauty presented to our daughters leads many of them into a constant state of dissatisfaction with themselves, which leads to troublesome and dangerous behaviors as they try to mold their body into that image so they can love themselves or find someone who will love them as they are.

Vicki Courtney has written *5 Conversations You Must Have With Your Daughter* to help parents navigate their daughters through the rocky shoals of life. It is published by Broadman & Holman and companion Bible study material is available.

The five conversations begin with statements:

You are more than the sum of your parts;

Don't be in such a hurry to grow up;

Sex is great and worth the wait;

It's OK to dream about marriage;

Girls gone wild are a dime a dozen, dare to be virtuous.

Courtney, founder of Virtuous Reality Ministries ([www.vickicourtney.com](http://www.vickicourtney.com)), says America's obsession with physical appearance began at the end of the 19th century when mirrors became a staple of home furnishings. When most clothes were custom made by mom at home, no one felt bad who did not fit into the standardized sizes of mass-produced clothing.

Self-image is extremely important but our culture establishes an image standard impossible to achieve even by those who supposedly model it. Caught by cameras in a natural state those cover models are unrecognizable. "5 Conversations" gives you information and avenues to address these issues with your daughter.

You'll be putting away the dolls soon enough, so don't push your daughter to grow up. Put the computer she uses in a central place in the house. You have every right and responsibility not only to know your daughter's friends, but her friend's parents.

Courtney says the relationship of your daughter's friend to her own parents is almost as important an indicator of too early sexual activity of your daughter, as is your daughter's relationship with you. So know the parents of your daughter's friends.

The new sexual freedom has created more slaves than liberated women, Courtney says. Her book will help you explain the link between self-restraint before marriage and the increased chances of a long and fruitful marriage. Fully 26 percent of 15 year olds in America say they have had sex, a number that rises to 77 percent of 19 year olds, Courtney says. Shockingly, she says 90 percent of inmates in juvenile detention were born to a teenage mother.

"Reality check," she said. "Church kids are having sex too." And disappointingly, at a rate not dissimilar to the general population. She said evangelical teens lose their virginity at an average age of 16.3 years. And they score low on knowledge of pregnancy and health risks. One-half of all mothers with sexually active teens believe their daughters are virgins, Courtney said.

She wants parents to fight the "anti-marriage" agenda in this nation. The average age to marry in 1950 was 20. Today 73 percent of men and 62 percent of women aged 20-29 have never been married. With earlier onset of puberty and later marriages our young daughters typically are adult women for a dozen years before they marry.

They need their parents to be talking frankly with them about the real issues they face every day, like attraction, sex, disease, fidelity and contraception. Discussion is not permission, but knowledge is power.

"5 Conversations" will give you some entry points into five very important themes that for many of parents are delicate areas we've always considered ourselves too clumsy to approach.



## Church planter hunting budget bull's eye

Church planter Dennis Conner is on a hunting trip in North Carolina.

The quarry is church budgets and he wants to land Crosspointe, the Church at Tartesso, dead center in their bull's eyes.

Conner, formerly a pastor in Charlotte and Bertie County, started Crosspointe in a western Phoenix, Ariz., planned community that will eventually include 49,000 homes.

He got in on the ground floor and the church community he leads is ingrained in the DNA as the planned development grows.

After meeting in member's homes, the church meets now in Tartesso Elementary School. So ingrained is the church in the community that when the high school wanted to hold its prom in the elementary school multipurpose room, several people called Conner to ask permission!

Conner's church is not exactly in a harvest season.

It is planted in the hard packed soil of a culture totally unfamiliar with "church" and Christian life.

Crosspointe leaders must go all the way back to tilling ground, preparing the soil for seed planting.

The church organizes and sponsors a variety of events to which Tartesso residents can come, all free.

There are movie nights, a fall festival that attracts one-fourth of the community and skate events at the sports park. Crosspointe presents every new resident with a welcome bucket, rather than a "basket" because "what man doesn't appreciate another bucket to hold stuff in his garage?" Conner asked. He substitute teaches in Tartesso schools.

Conner is proud of a note from a resident that confirms he is reaching part of his goal. The note said the presence of Crosspointe has made Tartesso "not just a collection of homes, but a genuine community."

When church funds were tight, the school district lowered the rent it was charging Crosspointe to meet in the elementary school because officials said the church was important to the community and they wanted to keep it there.

"I'm going to earn the right and when you're ready to listen we'll talk about the gospel," Conner said over breakfast in Fuqua-Varina July 8.

To fuel his dream, vision, passion and commitment to planting a gospel witness in the bull's eye of a burgeoning population center, Conner was back in North Carolina on his annual partnership-building trip. He receives financial support from the North American Mission Board that decreases 20 percent annually; and help from his local association.

After three years, Crosspointe attendance averages just over 100, and reached 270 last Easter.

The church is not yet self-supporting and with decreasing support from the mission entities that helped start the church, the clock is ticking.

This is a pressure not unique to Conner. While the rare church plant is full the first Sunday it meets, in unchurched communities

where hanging a new church shingle might not even raise a curious eyebrow, it takes longer. Conner is hunting for partners who can help beyond the Cooperative Program money that is under girding his effort.

His ironic quest illustrates the Achilles heel of the Cooperative Program: funding large enough to start the task but insufficient to finish.

If such funding is insufficient, task leaders must find other funds and often the first target of their request is a church that is already helping

through the Cooperative Program.

If the church reduces CP giving to honor the request for additional direct funds, the CP is weakened, fewer dollars are available for the missions it funds and more direct funding requests will be coming down the pike.

Conner also personifies the WOO factor in the church planting philosophy of North Carolina Baptists: the ability to Win Others Over.

The logic is that a successful church planter will have the innate ability to help others see his dream to the extent they are willing to help make it happen. Conner is practicing his WOO in the state of his birth.

"I don't just want your money," he told the churches and directors of missions he visited. "I want your heart. If I have your heart, then I'll have your prayers and your actions and your money."

"If you just plan to send us money and not pray for us, keep your money," he said.

Crosspointe has more opportunity to sponsor events in its community that will till gospel soil than it has members to manage those events.

During last fall's festival, volunteers had to shut down some games so they could open up others. They need volunteers for events this October.

Conner introduced a motion at the Southern Baptist Convention in Louisville in June that would allow churches to designate funds to causes the Convention is funding and count those designated funds as Cooperative Program gifts.

That motion was referred to the SBC Executive Committee for consideration, although the Executive Committee's own CP study committee has already recommended against such a process.

No one can blame a man with a dream for WOOing others.

How that winsome process works with, for or against traditional funding through Cooperative Program giving is yet another issue facing leaders at all strata of Baptist life.

### EDITORIAL



Norman Jameson



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# N.C. presence felt at CBF national meeting

## From wire reports

HOUSTON – More than 1,600 attended the 2009 Cooperative Baptist Fellowship General Assembly July 2-3 in Houston, Texas, including 194 from North Carolina.

More than 130 CBF endorsed chaplains and pastoral counselors and their spouses attended a luncheon featuring speaker Doug Dickens, professor of pastoral studies at Gardner-Webb University. Dickens talked about his journey alongside his wife, Patsy, as she battled and died from ovarian cancer.

"I want to tell you a little of what I've learned because maybe it will be helpful to you," he said.

"As chaplains and pastoral counselors, their stories touch us," Dickens said. "And as we walk from room to room, it is so easy to allow their sadness and hurt and our sadness and hurt to become toxic. It affects not just our ministry but our whole selves. And, we know that burnout is not limited to pastors."

During one session Nancy Campbell of Caldwell Hospice and Palliative Care in Lenoir was among three chaplains who led in worship, after which the audience responded with a standing ovation in recognition of the vital ministries of chaplains and pastoral counselors.

Ralph and Tammy Stocks, who serve among the Romany people in Hungary, and Greg and Sue Smith, who serve among the Latino community in Fredericksburg, Va., shared a story of partnership and friendship.

Last summer, Latino youth from Virginia traveled to Hungary to lead activities and Bible study for Romany children.

"Part of the attraction of these two cultures to one another was the common experience of living as minorities," said Tammy Stocks.

"Through the language of music and a love for God that was extended and received, they shared for a week a neighborhood that welcomed and accepted them unconditionally."

Participants at a July 1 commissioning service in Houston, held in conjunction with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship General Assembly, not only prayed for six field personnel who are assuming new assignments, but also recognized representatives of a ministry network serving in China.

About 800 people at the commissioning service prayed for six newly commissioned field personnel, including four from North Carolina:

- LaCount Anderson will work with churches in Scotland Neck in ministering to homeless people.

- Cecelia Beck will serve in Shelby as an outreach worker with the Northeast Shelby Weed and Seed, a community strategy geared toward crime prevention, literacy programs and community transformation. She served previously with a multicultural apartment ministry in Toronto.

- John and Michele Norman of North Carolina will work to develop a network of individuals and churches in the United States to pray, financially support and actively participate in CBF work in China.

In his executive coordinator's report Daniel Vestal reflected on what holds the Fellowship together – common values, love of freedom, community and participation in God's mission.

As the Fellowship approaches its 20th assembly, Vestal encouraged Fellowship Baptists to embrace the grace and providence "working in and through us."

"This Fellowship is a work of God's grace," Vestal said. "And as we approach a milestone, our very existence is a testimony to providence. Our birth was a miracle.

"Our survival amidst brutal and sustained attacks is amazing. Our growth and influence within the Baptist family and the broader Christian community is humbling. The resources that God's people have entrusted to us is at times overwhelming."

## News Briefs

### Shurden will be interim for historical society

Walter B. Shurden, minister at large at Mercer University, will become the interim executive director at the Baptist History and Heritage Society.

A respected and prolific Baptist historian, Shurden has had a long association with the society. A longtime member, Shurden was also the president 1975-76 and member of its editorial board and executive committee. He received the society's distinguished service award in 2001.

Shurden begins his new role Aug. 1.

Charles Deweese, current executive director, has announced his retirement effective July 31. Also, Pamela R. Durso recently left her associate executive-treasurer role to become executive director of Baptist Women in Ministry.

The society's board also announced the hiring of Kristopher Norris as office manager.

Norris is a recent graduate of Candler School of Theology at Emory University and a 2006 graduate of Duke Divinity School. Durso will serve as interim treasurer.

### Former SBC president Jack Graham diagnosed with cancer

PLANO, Texas (BP) — Jack Graham, pastor of the Dallas-area Prestonwood Baptist Church and a former Southern Baptist Convention president, has announced that he was recently diagnosed with prostate cancer and is taking a two-month sabbatical.

"Today I want to share something of the journey I, along with Deb and our family, have been on in recent months," he shared in a June 20 letter to the 28,000-

member congregation in Plano, Texas.

Graham underwent successful surgery May 14 after consulting with doctors, led by personal physician Kenneth Cooper, founder of the Cooper Aerobics Center in Dallas and a longtime Prestonwood member.

Graham said physicians have assured him that his "prognosis is outstanding."

On June 6-7, Prestonwood celebrated Graham's 20th anniversary. Church membership has more than tripled.

Graham said he will spend the next two months relaxing at home with wife Deb and their family and traveling.



Graham

## Classified Advertisements

### Pastor

Beaver Dam Baptist Church, a strong, mission-minded, conservative, traditional, rural church located in southern Cumberland County is seeking a **full time pastor**. The pastor we seek would 1) preach Bible-centered messages, 2) help us grow in areas of evangelism, missions and discipleship, 3) provide pastoral care to our sick and shut-ins and 4) lead us to Christ-like living through his personal example. He will meet the standard for ministers given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. We prefer a pastor who has at least five years of experience and who has a Southern Baptists education from an accredited seminary. We cooperate with New South River Baptist Association, the BSCNC and the SBC. Our Sunday School attendance averages 100. Compensation package includes parsonage + competitive salary + benefit package + travel expenses. Please send resumes, dvds or tapes to: Pastor Search Committee, 4706 Beaver Dam Church Rd., Roseboro, NC 28382 no later than August 15.

First Baptist Church of Baton Rouge, a traditional, downtown church, is seeking a **pastor**. Please mail resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, 529 Convention St., Baton Rouge LA 70802 or email [JRWLSU@bellsouth.net](mailto:JRWLSU@bellsouth.net).

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@fvbaptist.org](mailto:jobs@fvbaptist.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.

**Pastor.** Shiloh Baptist Church is a family oriented church with an active congregation of approximately 200 people located in rural VA. We are actively searching for a pastor whom God has chosen to lead us as we reach, build and serve our church and community in the 21st century. For more information please see [http://www.kgshiloh.org/about/pastor\\_search.htm](http://www.kgshiloh.org/about/pastor_search.htm) or contact the church office at (540) 469-4646.

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 résumé to the church, P.O. Box 7096, Greensboro, NC 27417; attention: Edward Carmichael.

### Church Staff

**Minister of Youth and Children.** Gateway Baptist Church in Newton, NC, is seeking a minister of youth and children. He will be responsible for planning, promoting, and leading all ministries involving youth and children, and relating to their families. Send resume to Gateway Baptist Church, 3105 Sandy Ford Road, Newton, NC 28658 or fax it to 828-294-3315.

**Staff need announcement.** Morningside Baptist Church, Spartanburg, S.C., is seeking an associate pastor to children. Morningside is a congregation of 1800 + members and has a ministerial team of six other ministers. Appropriate college & seminary degrees are required. Candidates must have the ability to coordinate a comprehensive children's program. Morningside affirms women in ministry and worship in a traditional form. Send resumes to: [mikehensley@bellsouth.net](mailto:mikehensley@bellsouth.net) or mail to Associate Pastor to Children Search Committee, c/o Mike Hensley, Morningside Baptist Church, 897 S. Pine Street, Spartanburg, S.C. 29302.

**Director of Family Ministries and Worship.** Competent musician with heart for youth and families. Full-time. Job description: [www.fbcgraham.org](http://www.fbcgraham.org). Send resume: First Baptist Church of Graham, 224 North Main St., Graham, NC 27253.

### Association

Brushy Mountain Baptist Association is seeking a **Director of Missions**. The association is made up of (38) churches located in Wilkes County, NC. If interested, please send resume to Dr. Jerry C. White, Chairman; PO Box 1375, Wilkesboro, NC 28697 or [brushymountain@wilkes.net](mailto:brushymountain@wilkes.net).

New River Baptist Association seeks a technologically savvy, visionary, and missional **leader** to equip and guide our 36 churches to impact our community for the kingdom. Candidates may submit their resumes to [DOMSearch@ec.rr.com](mailto:DOMSearch@ec.rr.com) or to DOM Search Committee, C/O Enon Chapel Baptist Church, 102 Barbara Avenue, Midway Park, NC 28544. Resumes will be received through Aug. 31.

### Miscellaneous

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Lesson for July 26 Formations Lesson for August 2

Sodom: A City in Need of Intercession

Focal Passage: Genesis 18:16-33

Corporate bodies, like nations, cities, or even churches, have a culture, a character that generally describes the whole, if not every individual.

Kind, righteous Germans living in Berlin in 1945 suffered alongside the cruelest Nazi because even the kind and righteous in Hitler's Germany were part of that depraved nation.

So too, an unbelieving, arrogant city — or church — contaminates the best in their midst. Abraham is told that the notorious Sodom was to be destroyed.

The Lord said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave" (Gen. 18:20). Abraham is no Jonah. He seeks God's mercy, even for that depraved society.

Abraham pleads that God not sweep away the righteous with the wicked.

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" (18:25).

So the Lord says that even if there are only 50 righteous people in the entire city, He will spare it.

But Abraham knows there may not even be 50 righteous left in that filth. Sodom's sin was sexual perversion; it was saturated in "the sensual conduct of the wicked" (2 Peter 2:7), particularly homosexuality.

Many in our day are seeking to justify this and all forms of eroticism — the uninhibited search for fulfilling our sexual passions.

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*Peter tells us that what happened to Sodom was a fore-taste of the judgment to come on the whole world.*

spent on pornography. So we now live in a sex-soaked culture.

Abraham must know the permeating and polluting effect of rampant eroticism. So he carefully, respectfully pleads with God. He gets God down to 10.

If there are 10 righteous, he'll spare the city. Abraham is satisfied that surely in a city that size, there'll at least be 10.

Even he was too optimistic.

The Lord only found one: Lot. His wife looked back, too attached to that depraved society. His daughters molested him, so twisted in their minds by the perversion they saw in Sodom. Sodom may have been in need for intercession but even the best intercessor wasn't good enough.

In this case, the Lord didn't sweep away the righteous with the wicked. But He only found one and rescued that one.

Sodom was finally a city in need of destruction as are all societies that surrender to eroticism.

Peter tells us that what happened to Sodom was a fore-taste of the judgment to come on the whole world.

And yet, no matter how bad things get before the end, the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial (2 Peter 2:6-10).

Meanwhile, like Abraham, we need to be interceding.



John Carpenter  
Pastor, Covenant Reformed Baptist Church, Yanceyville

Sin Wisely

Focal Passage: 1 John 1:5-2:2

**Claims**

In 2005 Pittsburgh Steelers safety Anthony Smith claimed they would definitely beat the New England Patriots.

Not only could he not back up his claim, the Patriots specifically beat him, twice, for two long touchdowns.

People claim all kinds of things they can't back up.

In verses 6, 8, 10, John says, "If we say," and in 2:4, "Whoever says."

These are the claims people make. To be a Christian is to make claims.

First and foremost, we claim truths about Jesus. Our claim is that Jesus is the Word of Life, from the beginning.

Pseudo-Christians claim they do not sin or that sin is not important.

In their day many believed that the real me was the spirit.

The body was just a cage and so what my body does is not really me doing it.

That was their way of excusing sin. We deny we sin by trivializing it.

We'll talk about delicious foods being "sinfully fattening."

Many so-called Christians today claim they are "saved" and yet think they can sin freely.

If we claim that our souls are saved

while we dedicate our mouths to gossip or our eyes to pornography or our minds to greed or our hands to abuse, John has two simple words for us, "We lie."

First (1:6), we lie to the world to claim one thing and live another way.

Second (1:8), we lie to ourselves if we are not aware of our sins.

And then (1:10), we call God a liar. By claiming we're fine, we're saying God is not.

We claim to have sin. If we say the same things ("confess") about sin that God says, then He will forgive us. Here John says that God forgives because He is faithful and just, not lenient and lax.

He is just because, in 2:2, Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, the atoning sacrifice. Notice that it takes blood to cleanse us from sin.

Blood is costly. It takes that blood to cleanse us of sin because our sins are that expensive, that serious.

We claim that He's the one who paid the price for our sins and so we walk in His ways.

Love and obedience go hand-in-hand. If you're not obeying, you're not loving.

Friends, we can't make claims our life doesn't back up. If we are to be one of God's people, in fellowship with Him, then, John concludes in verse 6, we ought to walk the same way He walked. If we're not walking with Him, then we need to confess and be truly saved.

*Blood is costly. It takes that blood to cleanse us of sin because our sins are that expensive, that serious.*

Lesson for July 26 Bible Studies for Life Lesson for August 2

Key Questions about the Triune God

Focal Passages: Matt. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:12-13; Eph. 1:3-14

"I wish I understood the Trinity," I moaned. My husband Jack groaned in return, "I wish I did too." Then he compared the Trinity with the three-in-one egg: shell, white, and yolk; and with water: (liquid), gas (steam), and solid (ice). His illustrations helped, but questions remained.

1. Why is the concept of the Trinity important? (Eph. 1: 3-14). Answer: Without the Father, creation wouldn't exist. Without the Son, we'd have no Savior to redeem us, and without the Holy Spirit, there'd be no Counselor to guide us.

2. How can we know that God is Three? Answer: While the word Trinity is not in the Bible, the doctrine is assumed. Paul's benedictions to churches praise Three Persons. (See 2 Corinthians 13:14.)

The Trinity took part in Mary's Annunciation (Luke 1:30-35), and at Jesus' baptism, the Father spoke from heaven, the Son was baptized, and the Spirit descended in the form of a dove (Matthew 3:16-17). The dove, the only bird sacrificed in the Jewish Temple, symbolized Jesus' earthly mission—to die for our sins.

3. How might we understand God's mysterious nature? (See 1 Cor. 2:12-13.)

*While we needn't explain the Trinity to believe it, it's impossible for the Spirit to render His greatest benefits when His presence goes unrecognized.*

Answer: While we needn't explain the Trinity to believe it, it's impossible for the Spirit to render His greatest benefits when His presence goes unrecognized.

I came to know the Spirit, rather than know about Him, while filling an extensive vacancy for a choral teacher. Until then, I referred to the Spirit as "it." Daily planning periods provided me opportunities to write. As pages accumulated, I needed three paper clips to separate chapters.

When I reached for clips in Joe's desk, the Spirit convicted me that the clips were not mine to take.

I justified, "If Joe were here, he would give me the clips."

The Spirit responded, "The clips are not Joe's; he's only a steward over them. They belong to the school system." Convicted, I withdrew my hand, deciding to buy clips on my way home.

But Satan persisted. There was no harm in taking three clips; that many could disappear on any given day. I opened the drawer and fingered them. Then I recalled that Jesus quoted Scripture when He was tempted. I said, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). I closed the drawer and drove to the store on my way home.



Catherine Painter  
Author, speaker, Trinity Baptist Church, Raleigh

Do You See the Big Picture?

Focal Passages: 2 Peter 3:8-9; 1 Thess. 4:1-5; 1 Thess. 5:15-22

Years ago, a woman out West wrote, "I read your Sunday school lessons and believe you can help me. I became a Christian at eleven and have doubted my salvation ever since. At first, my pain was emotional; now it's physical. At 81, I know I won't live on and on. If I die tonight, however, I have no idea where I'll wake up. I don't share my doubt because everyone assumes I'm saved. I'm a regular worshiper and have served in various leadership roles in the church. Will you help?"

I shared Christ with her, how to accept Christ's assurance, and asked her to write again to say how things are going.

She wrote, "For the first time since childhood, I sleep in peace knowing I'll wake up in heaven when I die."

Perhaps you've prayed for someone for years, yet the person has not accepted Christ.

Peter wrote that Christ delays His coming because He's patient, "not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

Christ's delay provides us time for evangelism.

*Peter wrote that Christ delays His coming because He's patient, "not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).*

No lost person wanders into a church crying, "Find me; I'm lost."

Jesus counts on us to find the lost (see Matt. 28:19-20). He has no other plan.

Next, the big picture includes moral purity.

Our lives must prove what we profess to believe. A Christian friend shares that when opportunity arises for infidelity, his response is ready. He asks himself, "Why would I order hamburger when I have steak at home?"

A safeguarded life, with strategy in place ahead of attack, avoids temptation; and, because God makes His will known through His word, we're wise to make Bible study a priority.

Paul wrote that Christians should live "not with lustful desires, like the Gentiles who don't know God" (1 Thess. 4:3,5).

Finally, the big picture reveals God's desire for us to pursue "what is good for one another and for all" (5:15). An unknown poet said it well:

"Isn't it strange that princes and kings, and clowns that caper in sawdust rings, And common people like you and me are builders for eternity?

Each is given a bag of tools, a shapeless mass, a book of rules; And each will make, before life has flown, a stumbling block or a stepping stone."



# Ministry reaches inmates with Bibles, books

(Continued from Page 1)

was pastor at Hillcrest for six years, also helps at CLI. He said he is impressed by the Skaars and CLI.

"They have a surprisingly small budget but they do so much with it," he said.

Shipping is the ministry's biggest expense. Skaar said it costs about \$15 to \$25 to send a box of books to a chaplain.

Anders Skaar monitors shipping costs to get the best rates. On a recent day, boxes were packed to be shipped to prisons in Washington, Missouri, Texas, Virginia and New York.

"We're always looking for books," he said.

The biggest request CLI gets from inmates is large print study Bibles.

The ministry also needs up-to-date Christian youth books for teenagers in detention centers.

Most of the books the ministry sends are "gently used" Christian books, but CLI also buys new Bibles.

Kathleen Skaar tells the story about

an inmate who called a donated leather Bible he got from CLI the "best Christmas present" he'd ever received. The inmate is now out of prison and attending Bible college. He spoke at a CLI dinner last year and proudly showed that he takes the Bible with him every time he speaks somewhere.

CLI also offers inmates a free Bible study correspondence course.

"That's just something the Lord put on my heart," Skaar

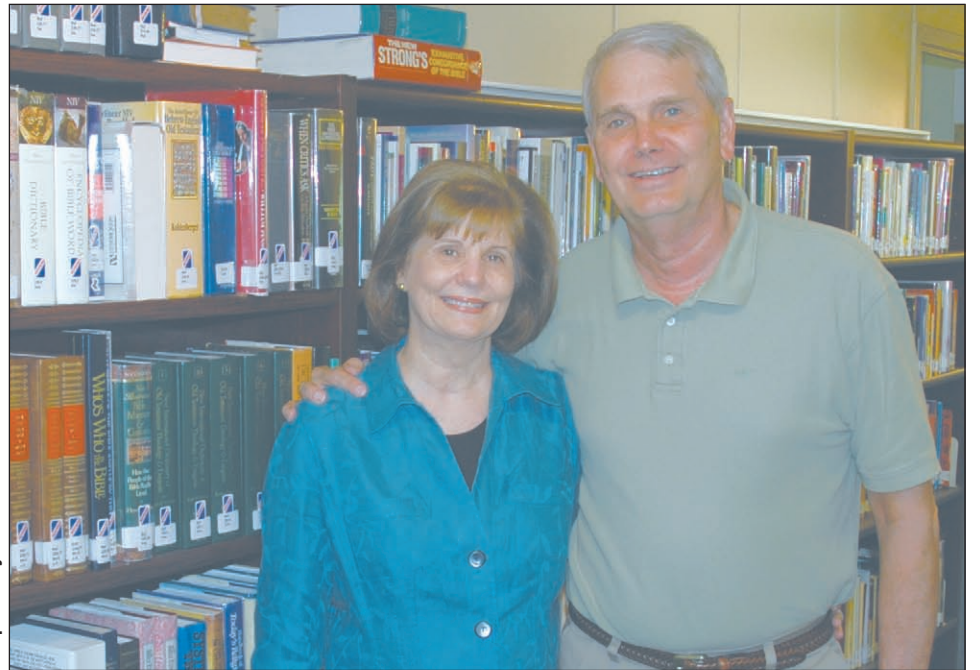
said.

Chaplains have told CLI that they need Bible studies to give to inmates. One day Skaar felt a burden to do something about it, so she sat down at the computer and wrote an application. She told volunteers not to put it in every letter but to pray about it and put it in the ones to which they felt led.

When the applications started returning, Skaar, who is 15 hours shy of completing her master of divinity degree at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, starting writing lessons.

The course now has 15 lessons. When an inmate completes one study,

***"It's without a doubt the most rewarding volunteer work I've ever done."***  
— Carol Weathersbee



BR photo by Steve DeVane

**EASY ACCESS** — Kathleen and Anders Skaar wanted Christian books to be available for inmates.

he or she returns it to CLI.

The workers write positive comments about that lesson and send another one. Inmates who complete the course get a certificate.

Last year, more than 150 inmates enrolled in the CLI Leadership Bible

Study. An inmate in Texas wrote the ministry to say it had blessed him.

"This study made me think and search my heart," he said.

Find more information about CLI at [www.cli-nc.org](http://www.cli-nc.org) or by calling (919) 212-8122.

## NAMB honors North Carolina for Annie gifts

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — More than 350 representatives of small to large Southern Baptist churches were honored for their 2008 gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions during a June 23 luncheon at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in Louisville, Ky.

Recognized as either the top dollar-giving or the highest per capita-giving church in their local association to the Annie Armstrong Offering, the churches — along with associations, state conventions and Woman's Missionary Union — were praised for raising more than \$58.1 million in 2008.

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) honored churches of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina for leading all state conventions in their gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, sending \$6.08 million for North American missions.

NAMB President Geoff Hammond said the 2008 Annie Armstrong offering was just 2.3 percent less than the year before. He reminded luncheon attendees that 2008 will be long remembered for the start of the worst U.S. recession of the last 60 years and for \$4-per-gallon gasoline.

"Being in this room means your

church and your association have influenced people to give to North American missions," Hammond said at the luncheon. "On behalf of our missionaries, thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering."

Noting that North America is a mission field, Hammond said the United States and Canada are two of the few industrial nations continuing to grow. Canada is growing by 250,000 immigrants a year, he said, while the U.S. will have 100 million more people in the next 35 years.

"Thirty years from now, we'll see an American population that is 30 percent Hispanic and 46 percent Anglo," Hammond said. "Folks, we have to reach the peoples of North America and you are NAMB's key partners. It is going to take praying, giving and going."

Richard Harris, NAMB's senior strategist for missions advancement, said NAMB had 5,611 commissioned missionaries and 3,077 chaplains at the end of 2008.

Saying 46 percent of NAMB's budget comes from the Annie Armstrong offering and 36 percent from the Cooperative Program, Harris said, "We're in some troubled times — economically,

politically and spiritually."

NAMB's Harris also released the top 10 states for Annie Armstrong donations in 2008: 1. North Carolina, \$6.08 million; 2. Alabama, \$5.85 million; 3. Georgia, \$5.1 million; 4. Texas

(BGCT), \$4.7 million; 5. Tennessee, \$4.06 million; 6. South Carolina, \$3.9 million; 7. Mississippi, \$3.8 million; 8. Florida, \$2.9 million; 9. Texas (SBTC), \$2.5 million; and 10. Louisiana, \$2.2 million.

## CP trails by 1.9% at halfway point

(Continued from Page 1)

presented to the board for consideration in September.

"We're grateful for the confidence shown by churches in keeping CP income almost level during one of the most difficult economic downturns in decades," said Milton A. Hollifield Jr., Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) executive director-treasurer. "We know their giving represents a sacrifice. One of our pastors recently announced to his congregation that he wanted them to honor their commitment to CP missions support even if it meant he did not get a pay check."

Hollifield said internal adjustments have kept the BSC operating in the

black.

Of the three major special offerings only the Lottie Moon offering for international missions is up, by 7 percent to \$9.1 million.

The Annie Armstrong offering for North American missions is down 6.6 percent, to \$4.9 million.

The North American Mission Board recognized the Baptist State Convention during the national Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting for leading all state conventions in 2008 with gifts to the Annie Armstrong Offering.

The North Carolina Missions Offering trails last year's giving by 11.5 percent, with gifts through June at \$388,113.

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