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Hooked: Church uses fishing to reel in people

By Dianna L. Cagle

BR Assistant Managing Editor

Talk of frying fish spawned the idea for a fishing expo at one church.

"It was a good experience for us to see what kind of outreach is possible," said Bill Walker, a member of First Baptist Church (FBC) in Black Mountain.

Several men in the church enjoy fishing, and the pastor suggested a fish fry for the church. But as they began to discuss the dinner, the idea began to grow.

The "Get Hooked" conference, which was held in November, was a first-time outreach event for FBC.

The expo featured demonstrations on fly tying and fly casting as well as information on where to fish and licensing issues. Pastor David Rayburn also had a brief devotion. A fish dinner with a time for fish tales followed.

While the catch was smaller than they would have liked, Walker said the 24 people who attended "seemed to enjoy it."

Ten of the participants were from outside the church. They heard about it through word-of-mouth as well as posters placed in various stores.

"What I did learn from the experience is that God can use our faithful efforts to reach out to the commu-

nity in the name of Christ," Walker said. "While we were hoping more people would come to the event, we believe God blessed the fellowship, food, and the devotional time."

The presenters were from the local community as well. Kenny Palmer and Susan Faw were from One Fly Outfitters. Another presenter was Chris Champion, a church member and avid fisherman.

**I
can
DO
that!**

Walker said they began planning three months before the event.

The expo was aimed at building fellowship, said Rayburn, who has been FBC's pastor for almost eight years.

"Our motivation was in trying to build from resources internally that we had," said Rayburn, who admits that he is not an avid fisherman but knew that it was an interest of several church members. He said he did learn about certain fishing licensing requirements and seasonal considerations he'd never considered.

Rayburn hopes FBC can build on the outreach idea through tapping into other members' interests. The church is involved in a local gleanings ministry where volunteers harvest crops not being used.

The church, which averages 120 people on Sunday mornings, has just



Contributed photo

FISHING — Kenny Palmer, kneeling, teaches Spencer Davis how to fly cast during a fishing expo at First Baptist Church in Black Mountain. What started as an idea to have a fish fry turned into a ministry reaching to the community.

(See Hooked Page 10)

Quiet board meeting considers Caraway land option

By Norman Jameson

BR Editor

North Carolina Baptists' board of directors will consider a proposal by the Piedmont Land Conservancy that would pay to permanently protect about 200 acres at Caraway Camp and Conference Center from development.

Such a proposal was introduced at the Jan. 27-28 Baptist State Convention (BSC) board meeting held at Caraway, but no action was taken pending development of a master plan for the entire 1,100-acre site, which includes the popular conference center and Camp Caraway, filled each summer with Royal Ambassador campers.

Fund raising for additional hotel space also will be delayed, pending development of the master plan.

In the proposal the conservancy would pay Caraway to set aside the acreage in the flood plain on both sides of Caraway Creek to ensure it is never developed with buildings and non-permeable surfaces. Setting the land aside in that manner would not prohibit its use for outdoor activities.

The board also elected Allan Blume to a third term as chair (see related story, page 3); elected a



BR photo by Norman Jameson

LOOKING — Davis Hooper, left to right, John Baker and Mike Willoughby seek information during the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's board meeting Jan. 27-28.

new Executive Committee; heard how Convention staff is adjusting to income below budget; and heard reports from committees, agencies and institutions.

Filling positions

Eddie and Martha Williams, known for their work coordinating North Carolina Baptists' relief efforts in Gulfport, Miss., have been coordinating the development of Red Springs mission camp, and

will be moving to the new Shelby property, where N.C. Baptist Men is building a mission camp on 33 acres inside the city limits.

It will be ready for Deep Impact experiences this summer, according to Dale Duncan, president of North Carolina Baptist Men.

The board continued the pastoral ministries consultant position, following the retirement of Wayne Oakes, because it is deemed "mission critical."

Oakes led the "sharing system" which helped connect churches and ministers, as well as leading in conflict management and minister's emergency assistance.

A leader for the new women's ministry Embrace also is being sought.

John Butler, executive director for business services, said 10 approved positions remain vacant. The 2009 budget internally has been "pared" to "a little less than 90 percent of the approved budget for 2009," Butler said.

George Cagle, a member of the Executive Committee and of the Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute Board of Trustees, asked permission for Fruitland to submit an offer to buy a house across the street from campus to use as a dormitory for women, of

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Church runs team
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N.C. Baptists join ice storm relief efforts

From staff and wire reports

North Carolina Baptists are helping people in Kentucky recover from a major ice storm that left 700,000 homes and businesses without power.

Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear activated all 4,600 National Guard troops and asked for federal aid in response to what he called the worst natural disaster in the state's history. Repairs to Kentucky's electrical grid and other cleanup costs are expected to exceed \$45 million.

At least 16 storm-related deaths had been confirmed in Kentucky and dozens more were suspected in Arkansas, Texas, Missouri, Virginia, Oklahoma, Indiana, West Virginia and Ohio after the storm system moved through a major portion of the country.

Gaylon Moss, who coordinates disaster relief for N.C. Baptist Men, sent an e-mail asking for volunteers to help people in Stanford, Ky., recover from the storm. Some N.C. Baptists had already inquired about going before the request, he said.

"I think we'll have a good response," he said.

Gary Holland, who served as a rebuilding coordinator for N.C. Baptist disaster relief efforts in Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina, went to Kentucky Feb. 3. Holland lives in Franklin, which is only about four hours from the disaster relief site in Kentucky.

"A lot of things are still developing," Moss said. "We're just getting started."

Moss said 40 early volunteers completed 16 chainsaw cleanup projects by Feb. 6.



BP photo by Matt Ledbetter

HELP — Travel on northwest Arkansas roads remained treacherous days after late January's ice storm.

"Please pray for those devastated by this storm," Moss said. "Pray also for the volunteers and the leadership as they minister to those affected."

Moss said about 170 jobs are open for N.C. volunteers. The majority of the jobs will not require heavy equipment or climbers.

"However, lots of limbs and debris are in the yards," he said.

Emergency officials said 92 of Kentucky's 120 counties had declared emergencies. National Guard troops went door to door in some parts of the state, tagging with green tape those homes where people had sufficient supplies and tagging with red tape those in need of assistance.

The mayor of Mayfield, in western Kentucky, said it could take as long as two months for power to be

restored to the entire county. And in Paducah, a city of about 25,000, a nighttime curfew was imposed.

Chainsaw teams from the Tennessee Baptist Convention have been assigned to Princeton, Cunningham, Madisonville, Siloam and Hancock, Ky., the North American Mission Board (NAMB) reported. A shower unit from Tennessee was activated at a shelter in Hancock.

The Alabama Baptist State Convention, Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, and the Georgia Baptist Convention sent chainsaw teams to assist with cleanup efforts in Kentucky.

The Associated Press (AP) reported that volunteers from New Haven Baptist Church in Albany, La., were passing out free kerosene, batteries,

bottled water and other items to local residents from a staging area at New Horizons Baptist Church in Glendale, Ky. AP said the Louisiana residents were returning a favor from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina when the Kentucky church volunteered to help them.

Arkansas, the second hardest-hit state, requested shower units and chainsaw teams from other states as 350,000 customers were without power and 48 counties were declared federal disaster areas. Five feeding units were activated for Harrison, Mountain Home, Corning, Jonesboro, Paragould and Fayetteville, Ark. More than 300 volunteers served thousands of meals, and several churches had opened as shelters.

About 15 chainsaw teams were deployed in Arkansas, including one from the Kansas/Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists working in Berryville and some from the Louisiana Baptist Convention based at First Baptist Church in Springdale. Louisiana also sent shower trailers to First Baptist Church in Paragould and East Side Baptist Church in Mountain Home, NAMB reported.

Shower units also were set up at the community center in Corning and at First Baptist Paragould. A Kansas/Nebraska shower unit was en route to Freeman Heights Baptist Church in Berryville. Chainsaw teams in Missouri and Oklahoma were helping residents recover within their states, and several Tennessee teams were working in Missouri.

In Illinois, 15 chainsaw teams from the Illinois Baptist State Association were activated, and in Ohio, a feeding unit from the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio was operating in the southern part of the state, NAMB said.

Aging ministry director named

By BR staff

A development director for Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) will head a new ministry to aging adults.

Sandy Gregory, who has served BCH as director of development for the South Central region of the state since 2005, will be director of the North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM), BCH officials announced Jan. 27. Gregory will direct NCBAM's daily operations under the leadership of BCH president Michael C. Blackwell.

BCH will oversee the new ministry, which was formally introduced to N.C. Baptists at the Baptist State Convention (BSC) annual meeting in November.

BSC officials decided to form a ministry to older adults after Baptist Retirement Homes (BRH) decided to appoint its own trustees and give up Cooperative Program funding from the BSC. BSC officials have said NCBAM will not compete with BRH, which provides residential care.

NCBAM is meant to be "an educational and information-based ministry connecting aging adults and their families to the resources they need," according to a statement released by BCH. It will also help

N.C. Baptist churches and associations develop ministries to benefit the aging, the statement said. Blackwell said Gregory has been a "tremendous asset" to BCH's development team.

"I am confident he will bring to NCBAM the same level of commitment and success as we move forward with this new, dynamic resource to the aging and their families,"

Blackwell said.

Gregory is a graduate of Hargrave Military Academy in Chatham, Va. He has a master of divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest and a doctorate in ministry from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Ga.

Prior to joining BCH, Gregory has served as a pastor, associate pastor, and children and youth minister at churches in Virginia and North Carolina. He also served as executive director for the Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry and the Patrick Henry Boys and Girls Plantation in Virginia.

"I am delighted to be appointed as director of NCBAM, and I am looking forward to working with aging adults and their families across the state," Gregory said. "There is a great need to provide quality resources and information to this rapidly growing population."



Gregory

Ex-Wingate president, Tom Corts, dies

By Bob Allen

Associated Baptist Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Former Samford University President Tom Corts died unexpectedly Feb. 4 of an apparent heart attack.

Corts, 67, died after being taken by ambulance to Brookwood Medical Center in Birmingham, Ala., accompanied by his wife of 44 years, Marla.

Corts held the title of president emeritus at Samford, a Baptist-affiliated university in Birmingham, which he led from 1983 until his retirement in 2006. After that he served briefly as executive director of the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities.

He was president of Wingate College (now Wingate University) in North Carolina for nine years before becoming Samford's 18th president. An ordained minister, Corts originally aspired to a career in journalism.

He also served as interim chancellor of the Alabama College System in 2006 and 2007.



Corts

He had recently returned home to Birmingham after serving the Bush administration as coordinator of basic education for all U.S. government assistance to the developing world, an appointment he accepted in 2007.

During his 23-year tenure Samford's endowment grew from \$8 million to \$258 million; 30 new buildings were constructed; more than 17,000 diplomas were presented.

"There is no way to measure the impact of Tom Corts' life and ministry on this university and the thousands of lives whom he touched," said a statement from Samford President Andrew Westmoreland, who succeeded Corts at Samford in June of 2006. "We have lost a great friend."

Corts was born in Terre Haute, Ind., the fifth of seven children in his family. He grew up in Ashtabula, Ohio, and graduated from Georgetown College in Kentucky in 1963. He went on to earn a master's degree and doctorate from Indiana University. He was a former president of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, an accrediting agency for 11 states.

Along with his widow, Corts is survived by two married daughters, a married son and six grandchildren.

He was a member of Brookwood Baptist Church in Birmingham.

Allan Blume elected board chair third time

By Norman Jameson
BR Editor

Allan Blume, pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Boone, was elected to a rare third term as president of the board of the Baptist State Convention during the board meeting Jan. 27 at Caraway Conference Center.

Blume, in his fourth year as a board member, was elected by acclamation, as was Cindy Stevens for a second term as vice president. Stevens is from Raleigh where she is wife of the pastor of Cross Culture Church.

The 100-member Board of Direc-

tors acts for the Convention between annual sessions and meets three times annually.

From the board an Executive Committee is drawn and consists of the chairmen of seven board committees, presidents of three councils, the three Convention officers, president of the North Carolina Baptist Men, a representative of the directors of missions association and four at-large members.



Blume

Committee chairmen are: business services, David Treadway; church planting and missions development, Todd Brady; communica-

tions, James Horton; congregational services, Lee Pigg; and evangeliza-

tions, Aaron Wallace.

Chairmen of the budget and articles and bylaws committees will be named later by Blume.

Council presidents are: Christian Higher Education, Joel Stephens; Christian Social Services, Scott Eanes; and Christian Life and Public Policy, Greg Barefoot.

Kelton Hinton of Johnston Association, represents directors of missions. Dale Duncan represents Baptist Men.

Convention officers are Rick Speas, Ed Yount and Mark Harris.

Four at-large members elected from the board are: Bobby Blanton, Cornelius; Ann Beck, Hendersonville; Eric Cook, Monroe; and Joe Denson, Charlotte.

Blume said after the meeting that he agreed to serve another year as chair to lend "stability" to what has

been significant transition during his tenure. Blume has been board chair for 24 of the 33 months that Milton Hollifield has been executive director-treasurer.

Together they've faced the change in relationship with the Convention of the five colleges, Baptist Retirement Homes and Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina.

The articles and bylaws are half-way through significant revisions and income missed budget by nearly 12 percent last year.

"With the transitional times we've experienced I've had so many leaders, pastors and others encourage me to stay on," Blume said.

"I'd rather be serving more in my church, and I'm willing for others to do it, but I was encouraged by others to help during the changes."

State marriage amendment receives endorsement

By Norman Jameson
BR Editor

Directors of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina joined the battle for a marriage amendment to the state constitution during their meeting at Caraway Conference Center Jan. 27-28.

Directors affirmed efforts of the NC4Marriage coalition to pass an amendment to the North Carolina constitution that defines marriage as between "one man and one woman" exclusively.

North Carolina currently is the only southeastern state without such "defense of marriage" language in its constitution.

Fearing that "activist judges" would render current state statutes unconstitutional that already define marriage as between a man and a woman, and that prohibit same sex marriage, NC4Marriage is lobbying the legislature hard to put such language into the constitution.

That would prevent any judge from declaring such statutes "unconstitutional."

NC4Marriage efforts would also "settle" the definition of marriage and would prohibit legal recognition of civil unions and domestic partnerships.



BR photo by Norman Jameson

GREETING — Tami Fitzgerald, NC-Marriage executive director, talked with the N.C. Baptist Board.

The North Carolina Baptist board affirmed the group's efforts by endorsing a proposal brought by the Council on Christian Life and Public Affairs, following presentations by NC4Marriage Executive Director Tami Fitzgerald first to the council, then to the full board.

Board President Allan Blume told directors that their action "does not say we are speaking on behalf of all the Convention. It is the board's position."

"Yet in spirit it does represent the churches and will be interpreted as such by most media and churches," Blume said.

Fitzgerald appealed to the board for its endorsement, for the "support of your churches," and for contributions.

She also encouraged board mem-

Board President Allan Blume told directors that their action "does not say we are speaking on behalf of all the Convention. ... Yet in spirit it does represent the churches and will be interpreted as such ..."

NC4MARRIAGE.ORG
One Man. One Woman. That's Marriage.

bers to support "marriage Sunday" Feb. 22 and to rally with others in Raleigh in support of the amendment at 11 a.m. March 3.

Wording of the proposed amendment says, "Marriage between a man and a woman is the only domestic legal union that shall be valid or recognized in this State."

By passing such an amendment to the constitution, "the definition of marriage would be settled," Fitzgerald said.

The board's affirmation came by unanimous passage of a statement that said: "The Council on Christian Life and Public Affairs asks the board of directors of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina to join us in a public affirmation of marriage by offering our full public support to the NC4Marriage Coalition in their efforts to pass a constitutional marriage amendment in our state."

Fitzgerald warned of dire consequences if homosexual couples in North Carolina who have been married in a state that recognizes such unions were to challenge the North Carolina statutes in court.

She said "activist judges" have undone "the will of the people" in this matter by declaring statutes such

as North Carolina's to be unconstitutional in other states.

She said already in November opponents to such an amendment organized rallies in seven North Carolina cities, including one in Raleigh that drew 400, to protest the passage of a similar amendment in California, the infamous Proposition 8.

Failure to pass such an amendment, she told board members, could result in homosexuality being taught in schools as normal and acceptable; a redefinition of family; a "shrinking population and a diminished work force;" and rising healthcare costs from AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

She said failure could threaten religious liberty and freedom of speech; eliminate the rights of pastors to preach from God's word about homosexual sin and eliminate the right of churches to marry only heterosexual couples.

Thirty states have passed defense of marriage amendments as of Nov. 4, 2008, Fitzgerald said.

North Carolina is alone in the southeast with no such amendment. Such amendments have passed in states that have them with 74 percent of the vote.

"Churches are the key to getting the marriage amendment passed," Fitzgerald said.

For more, visit NC4MARRIAGE's web site: www.nc4marriage.org.

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Opportunity Corner

Lincolnton church hosts S.S. conference

Salem Baptist Church in Lincolnton is hosting the Josh Hunt "How to Double Your Sunday School Attendance in One Year" conference.

The one-day conference is scheduled April 30 and is designed for pastors and other church staff as well as Sunday School leadership and teachers.

The church is located at 1982 Salem Church Road in Lincolnton. For

more information call (704) 732-1131 or e-mail salembaptist@charterinternet.com.

The cost is \$10 per person up to 10 people. If your church brings more than 10 the cost will not exceed \$100.

Make checks payable to "N.C.C.T./C.C.S.T." Send to: Dr. Andy Royals, 2664 Startown Road, Lincolnton, NC 28092.

Please register by April 24.

BSC plans Great Commission prayer event

"Revive Us Again: A Great Commission Prayer Conference" is scheduled March 13-14 at Biltmore Baptist Church in Arden.

Speakers include Richard Blackaby of Blackaby Ministries International; D.A. Carson of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; R. Logan Carson of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary; Daniel Henderson of Strategic Renewal Forest; Wayne Jenkins of Louisiana Baptist Convention; Chuck Lawless of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; and Stephen Rummage of Hickory Grove Baptist Church.

Worship kicks off the conference Friday, March 13 at 1 p.m. followed by focus groups and special sessions. Dinner is on your own and is fol-



lowed by another worship session until 9 p.m.

Focused prayer begins the second day at 8:15 a.m. followed by a worship session and lunch, which is provided. Another worship session closes out the conference at about 3 p.m.

The cost is \$25 per person. To register, visit www.praync.org.

For more, contact Devon Bagwell at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5513, or e-mail praync@ncbaptist.org.

Staff Changes

Calvary Baptist Church, Gastonia, has called **BRIAN DETRICK** as pastor. He was pastor at Carr's Hill Baptist Church, Brevard.

JOSH BLYTHE has been called as pastor at Margarettsville Baptist Church, Margarettsville. He was at Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Raleigh.

First Baptist Church, Brevard, has called

DANIEL HEDGEPEETH as pastor. He previously was interim pastor at Wrens Baptist Church, Wrens, Ga.

KYLE REESE has been called as pastor at Faith Missionary Baptist Church, Lake Toxaway, his first pastorate.

Clement Baptist Church, Aulander, has called **MICHAEL SMITH** as minister of youth. Smith is a Southeastern Seminary student.

JIM DONALD of Lyons, Ga., has been called as minister of music and youth director at Calvary Baptist Church, Canton.

Allens Creek Baptist Church, Waynesville, has called **MAURICE SHEEHAN** as youth pastor.

JEFF TAYLOR has been called as pastor of East Belmont Baptist Church, Belmont. He was interim pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Gastonia.

Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Aulander, has called **JIMMY JARRELL** as pastor. He retired as pastor from Harrellsville Baptist Church, Harrellsville.

W. WAYNE BENNETT has been called as pastor of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Oakboro. He was pastor of Oakdale Baptist Church, Statesville.

Merry Hill Baptist Church, Merry Hill, has called **MARCUS DALY JR.**

as pastor. He was associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Walton, Ky.

TIM RILEY has been called as youth and children's minister at Fletcher Memorial Baptist Church, Jefferson. He was interim pastor at Liberty Baptist Church, Middleton, Tenn.

Kerr Memorial Baptist Church, Concord, has called **J. BRADFORD "BRAD" JONES** as pastor. He was associate pastor of educational ministries at Nashville Baptist Church, Nashville.

License

JOSEPH HEATH DRAKE received his ministerial license from Kinza Memorial Baptist Church, Stanfield, in January. A graduate of West Stanly High School in Oakboro, Drake is the son of Tim and Marilyn Drake of Stanfield.

Church News



➤ The special education Sunday School class of **First Baptist Church, Whitnel**, donated \$444 to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions. From left: Debbie Lail, group home leader; Nancy Holder; Darlene Duncan; Melvin Perry; Danielle Clanton; Delores Clontz; and Allen Phillips, teacher. The department director Ted Kirby, who also served as teacher from the beginning of the class, died Dec. 28, 2008. Stuart White is pastor.

Send news about your church

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➤ During the national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) board meeting Jan. 10-13 in Talladega, Ala., Sandra James, center, was recognized for her contributions as president of WMU of North Carolina and as a member of national WMU's executive board. Elected in the spring of 2004, James will complete her service in March. From left: Wanda Lee, executive director/treasurer of national WMU, James, and Kaye Miller, national WMU president.

Quiet board meeting considers Caraway land option

(Continued from Page 1)

whom five are now enrolled.

He said "Friends of Fruitland" will be able to contribute about \$75,000 toward the asking price of \$154,000 for the four- or five-bedroom house on .78 acre and he asked for a loan from the Convention for the rest. He was encouraged to investigate a purchase agreement with the implication that if an agreement was reached, funds would be found.

Interim Fruitland President Greg Mathis told the board 175 students were enrolled at Fruitland and that he "wouldn't be surprised if within months we would have a new president."

Reports

Duncan reminded board members that his organization is about more than disaster relief. Its purpose is to "help churches involve their members in missions."

He said churches and individuals in crisis tend to turn inward. Instead of "just tying a knot and hanging on," he said Baptist Men during difficult times will continue their outward focus and, "We're going to make things happen."

He said almost \$3 million in a variety of seeds was donated and will be repackaged by volunteers at the Red Springs mission camp for distribution in worldwide agricultural ministries.

Milton A. Hollifield Jr., BSC executive director-treasurer, said meeting the North Carolina Mission Offering (NCMO) goal was "cause to celebrate," even though the goal was \$500,000 lower than the previous year because Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina (WMU-NC)



BR photo by Norman Jameson

NEW ADDITION — Russell Jones, who will direct the new church financial services arm of the North Carolina Baptist Foundation, was introduced during the recent board meeting.

is no longer a recipient of funds. He said combined gifts to the NCMO and WMU-NC's Heck-Jones Offering demonstrated that "North Carolina Baptist churches gave well to support the ministries that have been included in the NCMO."

Ruby Fulbright, executive director-treasurer of WMU-NC, reported later that gifts to the Heck-Jones Offering, which supports the operations and programs of WMU-NC, totaled \$1,006,000 in 2008. Had that offering been combined with the NCMO, it would have been the largest NCMO offering ever.

Duncan said Baptist Men is planning a rally in each of the 10 regions in August to promote the NCMO and to distribute promotional materials.

"I rejoice our churches are still

looking outward and trusting God to supply their needs and they are not giving up on missions," Hollifield said.

New churches

Hollifield said North Carolina Baptists' church rolls increased by 133 in 2008, including 108 church starts and 25 established churches that affiliated with the Convention. Twenty-six of the church starts were Hispanic churches, a new North Carolina record for Hispanic church starts in a year.

Butler said personnel costs — adjusted for inflation — are the lowest since 2003.

Three at-large members who bring specific expertise were added to the Business Services Special Committee. They are Concord businessman Raiford Troutman; Steve Briggs, associate pastor of administration, for First Baptist Church, Hendersonville and Judson Hollifield, an attorney in Asheville. He is the son of the BSC executive director-treasurer.

At-large committee members are not members of the board, but are enlisted to ensure business services has access to the professional expertise it needs when considering actions that involve the widely diverse legal, financial, land use and construction areas of Convention business.

In his report, Clay Warf, director of the North Carolina Baptist Foundation, took the long view on investing, following what he called a "pretty devastating" year.

"Be patient," he said. "Trust the Lord. He does provide for us. We're going to be continuing to invest with that in mind."

He said the foundation opened 73

"Be patient. Trust the Lord.

He does provide for us.

We're going to be continuing to invest with that in mind."

— Clay Warf

new accounts last year and received \$7.5 million in new money. "The Lord's people have not quit in giving, and they won't quit," he said.

Warf introduced Russell Jones, who will direct the new church financial services arm of the foundation. A Wingate University graduate with 25 years in banking, Jones is the son of longtime Durham pastor Crate Jones.

Jones is "working feverishly" to finish developing the final pieces of a church loan program, he said, and looks forward to the day in late spring or early summer when they can receive the first application.

Richard Brunson, executive director-treasurer of N.C. Baptist Men, said more than 2,400 North Carolina Baptists volunteered in national and international projects in 2008.

"North Carolina Baptists are touching people, with the hands of Christ and eyes of Christ and feet of Christ," he said.

Board members demonstrated the involvement of North Carolina Baptists worldwide when several asked prayer for mission and evangelism trips they are about to leave on to places as distant as Ecuador, Brazil, Nepal, Lebanon, India, El Salvador and Hawaii.

Wayne Key, pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church in Cherryville, asked if the BSC was supporting the annual offering of Baptist Retirement Homes (BRH), since "they are no longer a part of us."

Hollifield said a committee is working to clarify the relationship between the Convention and BRH. "Until that process is completed and the Convention votes in annual session to accept that process, they are officially a part of the BSC," Hollifield said.

The Convention has not promoted the BRH offering, but BRH is an "autonomous organization that can promote in churches, just like any parachurch organization could do," Hollifield said.

Several Convention employees were recognized for tenure, in five-year increments. They are Rhonda Freeman, Larry Jones, Bill Copper and Janice Rores, five years; Betty Pleasant, 10 years; Brian Hemphill and Milton A. Hollifield Jr., 15 years; Wendy Edwards and Marilyn Hill, 20 years; and David Lloyd, 30 years.

Mississippi Baptist Minister to Host

Alaska Cruise

And Pacific Northwest Vacation

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Frank Page picked for council

By Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — President Obama named Joshua DuBois Feb. 5 to head the newly named White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships and established an advisory council that includes former Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page.

Obama signed an executive order bringing changes to what was known as the Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives created under President George W. Bush.

The White House said the newly designed office would be a resource for secular and faith-based organiza-

tions as they serve their communities. The office also will have a role in helping the administration address such social needs as reducing "the need for abortion" and in assisting the National Security Council in fostering interfaith relationships globally.

DuBois, 26, served as director of religious outreach for Obama during the presidential campaign.

Page, SBC president from 2006 to 2008, will serve as one of 25 members of the advisory council for the initiative. The council of religious and secular leaders will include 25 members serving one-year terms. Page is pastor of First Baptist Church in Taylors, S.C.

Historians trace movement back 400 years

By **Ken Camp**
Associated Baptist Press

(Introduction: In 2009 Baptists mark the 400th anniversary since their first arising in Europe. This series of articles by various Baptist writers and historians will help you know, understand and appreciate the price they paid to worship God according to conscience and soul freedom. They will help you to understand the broad and strong foundation from which Baptists of today may stretch toward the future. For complete coverage, visit www.biblicalrecorder.org. — The Editor)

WINSTON-SALEM — Some Christians before 1609 held what many refer to as distinctively Baptist beliefs. Baptists in 1609 practiced believer’s baptism, but they didn’t immerse. Even so, most church historians agree Baptists emerged as a distinct movement 400 years ago.

From their beginning, Baptists have been characterized by a restless pursuit of God’s truth, Bill Leonard said.

“Historically, the Baptist movement began in a time of great political and religious turmoil, when individuals and churches were searching for the ultimate revelation. Many were willing to relinquish once-cherished beliefs and practices when convinced that a greater and more biblical truth had been discovered,” Leonard, dean at Wake Forest University Divinity School, wrote in *Baptist Ways: A History*.

“Such theological inquisitiveness led Baptist founder John Smyth to move from Anglicanism to Puritan

Separatism in his quest for the true church. He then elected to administer believer’s baptism to himself — an act that marked the beginning of the Baptist movement.”

Some Baptists claim John the Baptist as their founder — an idea that gained popularity among the Landmark Baptist movement of the 19th century but was not limited to it. But most historians highlight Smyth’s role in 1608-1609.

Smyth — a former Anglican priest — served as pastor of a Puritan Separatist congregation in Gainesborough, England. To escape persecution during the reign of King James, Smyth and his congregation fled in 1608 to Amsterdam. There they worshiped in a bake house owned by Mennonites, a Dutch Anabaptist group.

Baptism for believers only

After a year or so, Smyth became convinced the New Testament taught baptism for believers only, not infants. He baptized himself, disbanded the congregation and reconstituted the church as a gathered church of baptized believers — generally considered the first Baptist church.

Church historians disagree about how closely Baptists can link their heritage to the earlier Anabaptists.

“Whether Anabaptists were direct forebears of Baptists remains a subject of debate,” historical theologian William Brackney wrote in *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought*. “Historical scholarship in the past half century indicates that influences went both ways between Anabaptists and English Puritan Separatists, at least geographically.”

However, Brackney concluded, the

exact degree of influence Anabaptist ideas had on what became the Baptist movement in England remains uncertain.

Leonard points to three distinct positions regarding the relationship between Baptists and Anabaptists.

“Successionists link Anabaptists and Baptists in direct lineage with little or no distinction between the two traditions. Others point to certain shared ideals joining the two groups in a ‘spiritual affinity,’” Leonard wrote, noting advocates of the spiritual kinship position point to commonly-held beliefs and practices shared by Dutch Mennonites and early English Baptists. “Still others have denied substantial Anabaptist impact on Baptist origins.”

Degrees of separation

Church historian Alan Lefever, director of the Texas Baptist Historical Collection, says: “It’s a question of degrees of separation. Of course, there was some Anabaptist influence. After all, the church was formed in a Dutch Anabaptist bakery. But the fact remains, what emerged from that bakery in 1609 was unlike anything Anabaptists were before or after.”

William Estep, who taught church history for more than four decades at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, stressed the influence of Dutch Mennonites on the English Baptists. He noted the sharp break Smyth made with his Puritan past.

“Smyth ... forsook the Calvinism characteristic of the Puritans and Separatists for a view of the Crucifixion that emphasized that Christ died for all in order that those who would trust him for salvation would be saved,”

Estep wrote in *Why Baptists? A Study of Baptist Faith and Heritage*.

Smyth “adopted other Mennonite teachings as well,” such as advocating separation of church and state and commitment to absolute religious liberty, Estep added. Ultimately, Smyth led his church to unite with the Waterlander Mennonite Church in Amsterdam.

But that move toward formal union with the Mennonites led Thomas Helwys to part company with Smyth. Helwys returned to England with some other members of the Amsterdam church, and he established the first Baptist church in England, in Spitalfields, near London, in 1611 — another key date in Baptist history.

“In clear contrast to the Mennonites, Helwys believed that a Christian could be a magistrate, take oaths and support ‘just war’ rather than pacifism,” Doug Weaver of Baylor University’s religion department wrote in his new book, *In Search of the New Testament Church: The Baptist Story*.

Two distinct groups emerge

By the mid-1600s, two distinct Baptist groups emerged in England. General Baptists, who could trace their origin to the Helwys congregation, believed Christ died for all. Particular Baptists, true to their Calvinist Puritan roots, believed Christ died only for the elect.

(EDITOR’S NOTE — Camp is the managing editor of the Texas Baptist Standard. To get the full story plus other stories about Baptists turning 400, visit www.biblicalrecorder.org and click on Baptists at 400 underneath the left-hand menu.)

What does Baptist mean?

By **Charles W. Deweese**
Baptist History & Heritage Society

In the 1600s, Baptists acquired their name through their practice of believer’s baptism by immersion. That practice directly countered the heart and soul of state churches in England and Colonial America that demanded infant baptism. Thus, those state churches severely persecuted Baptist dissidents. Baptists did not stroll into human history as some innocuous faith alternative; rather, they marched straight into the jails of the 1600s defending religious liberty for all people. Continuing defenses of believer’s baptism and religious liberty make the Baptist name a respectable model of faith for today.

The Baptist name, in its largest and most meaningful sense, depicts a movement, not a denomination. Denominations, with varied structures and theologies, come and go and constantly change.

The Baptist movement, based on biblical values, has surged through four centuries of history, has risen above crises and controversies, and will exert itself as a viable option for expressing the Christian faith in the 21st century.

The Baptist name, at its best, represents a powerful set of values for the Baptist movement:

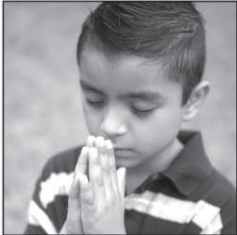


- Baptists stand for solid affirmation of the Lordship of Christ.
- They view the Bible as Baptists’

sole written authority.

- They defend religious liberty and the separation of church and state.
- They insist on the baptism of believers only.
- They stand for regenerate church membership.
- They emphasize the priesthood of every individual believer.
- They support dissent and non-conformity when necessary.
- They ring the bells of liberty for the oppressed.
- They offer democratic possibilities for the tyrannized.
- They sound out justice against violence.
- They offer peace for those weary of war.
- They call for integrity against the invasions of secularism.
- They engage in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.
- They urge voluntary ministry and missions by all.
- They highlight trust as a hallmark of Christian identity.
- They recognize that the church and/or the state can be as wrong as an individual in decision-making and that individuals should never sell their souls to any institution or organization; they are responsible to God alone.

(EDITOR’S NOTE — Deweese is executive director, Baptist History & Heritage Society, Atlanta, Ga. To get the full story, visit www.biblicalrecorder.org and click on Baptists at 400 underneath the left-hand menu.)

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Volunteers impact Glorieta, Ridgecrest

By Chris Turner
Baptist Press

GLORIETA, N.M. — Bob Cassily firmly holds a heat-resistant brick in one hand and uses a hammer to chip away the quarter-inch excess with the kind of precision Michelangelo might have used to chip away marble as he created the classic statue of David.

No one may ever give a second thought to how perfectly the dozens of bricks fit together to form the lining of a fire pit, but that doesn't matter to Cassily. He's pouring decades of experience in undertaking this project for God.

"I feel like this puts my life up to this point in perspective," the New Hampshire native said. "I feel I've been prepared in my background as a mason to come here and serve and meet a real need here, and I really enjoy doing that."

"Here" is LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center near Santa Fe, N.M. Cassily and his wife Gloria are two of nearly 200 people, mostly retirees, who served as volunteers at the 55-year-old retreat center and contributed more than 27,000 hours of labor in 2008.

The effort is duplicated at Ridgecrest Conference Center near Asheville. Both conference centers are operated by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Like many of the volunteers, the Cassilys live in a recreational vehicle and travel the country. But they've called Glorieta home since April because there has been no shortage of opportunities for a master mason with experience in high-end stone work. His rugged hands reveal the story of a man who has spent a lifetime bringing decorative form to granite stones and other common building materials. Here he builds an elaborate pit that features a granite cross on the opposite side of where thousands of young people will sit during the years to come.

"We try to keep the big picture in front of us,"



BP photo by Russ Rankin

GARDENING — Midge and Phil Hyatt, volunteers from Louisiana, have dedicated five months a year for the last six years to keeping the famous prayer gardens lush and green at the LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center in New Mexico.

Cassily said. "Each year 2,000 people either come to the Lord or dedicate their lives to ministry here at Glorieta. It is deeply satisfying to know I can use what God has equipped me to do by being a part of creating an atmosphere where people come and hear from the Lord. It makes it all worth it."

Across the campus at the Glorieta prayer garden, Midge Hyatt cradles shoots of a tender ground ivy plant as she prepares the ground with rich, dark soil she's mixed in a five-gallon bucket. The red clay and rocky soil at Glorieta is hardly conducive to vibrant plant growth, so Hyatt uses a recipe that will ensure healthy plants. She has it memorized after

six years of volunteering alongside her husband Phil. The Lafayette, La., natives offer about five months a year to Glorieta and spend much of their time working in the prayer garden.

"We keep coming back because of all the young people who come out here," Hyatt said. "We will sometimes find little notes about their burdens or prayers they've written on little pieces of paper and stuck in the rocks."

Hal Hill, LifeWay's manager of Glorieta, said the service volunteers render is vital.

"The service we provide at Glorieta could not exist without our volunteers," Hill said. "Our staff provides a structure, but there isn't enough of us to do the type of administration work that needs to be done and have extensive contact with our guests."

The conference centers offer a number of opportunities for volunteer groups as well.

"We can pretty much work with anyone or any group who wants to come," said Fred Laird, Glorieta's volunteer coordinator. "One of the things I love about our volunteers is the diversity of experience they bring."

Cassily is testimony to that. Master masons don't come around often, and it was a meeting at an RV park in Florida that directed him across the country to Glorieta in New Mexico.

"We met some people who'd just come from volunteering here," Cassily said. "The more they talked about it and said it was the best experience of their lives, the more we felt we needed to come. I believe God was speaking to me through them, saying this is where He wanted me."

And now Cassily hopes God will use something as simple as a fire pit as a place to speak to thousands of young people in ways that will eternally impact their lives.

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Turner is media relations manager for LifeWay Christian Resources. Additional information and volunteer opportunities at Glorieta and Ridgecrest can be found at www.lifeway.com/glorietavolunteers and www.lifeway.com/ridgecrestvolunteers.)

North Carolinians join IWC to bring hope to nations

By Melissa Lilley
BSC Communications

After just a few days in Dakar, Senegal, "you feel it," said Thomas Crane. "There's a great sense of oppression, lostness, spiritual warfare and despair."

Crane recently traveled to Dakar, a city where 98 percent of its 3 million population is Muslim, in preparation for a 10-day summer missions trip he will lead with International World Changers (IWC).

IWC is a ministry of the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention. This year it will send hundreds of high school, college and seminary students to serve on nearly 29 summer mission projects as requested by IMB missionaries.

Crane, an intern with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's Office of Public Relations and student at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, will serve as a ministry coordinator alongside project coordinator Cindy Nooe. She has served as a journeyman with the IMB in Zambia and last year led the IWC trip to Barbados.

This year individuals from North Carolina represent a large percentage of IWC coordinators. Crane and Nooe, members of Summit Church in Durham, are two of 11 North Carolinians leading IWC projects.

Nooe's goal is for students to understand that "God's heart is for all people, not people just like them."

The Senegal team will work among the Wolof tribe and the Talibe



Contributed photos

REACHING — This year 11 North Carolinians are coordinating groups for International World Changers. At left, missionaries pray with nationals on the field. At right, worship is part of every group's experience through the International Mission Board.

children. The Talibe children are street children who live under Muslim leaders known as marabouts. They teach them the Koran in the evening and during the day send them out into the streets to beg for money. Some Talibe are severely beaten by the marabout if they do not meet a certain daily quota on the street.

Students who travel to Senegal this summer will distribute medications for ringworm and scabies to these children. They will play soccer with them in the sandy, dirty streets. They will wash their hair with shampoo. They will love them.

The Senegal team will also help refurbish a basketball court and take two hours of language and culture immersion training every day so that they may be better equipped to engage in the Wolof culture.

The team will go through different neighborhoods distributing gospel-re-

lated literature.

Crane hopes the students will see just how lost the world is and have their hearts broken for missions, but more than that, he hopes they will understand there is hope for Africa — a hope found only in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

About 1.8 billion people around the world literally have no access to the gospel. They could leave their house and walk for days, weeks and months and never find a church, a Christian or even a Bible. IWC is helping make the name of Jesus Christ famous among the nations. One of the goals of IWC is "promoting a lifestyle of missions awareness and involvement to students and their leaders in churches, youth groups and campus ministries."

North Carolina Baptists are invited to minister with IWC and "be part of bringing men and women, boys and

girls from every nation, every tribe and every tongue to the knowledge of Jesus Christ."

Crane said he prays that as students are exposed to the "lostness of the world" they would come to see that they can have a part in "God's grand mission to redeem the nations back to himself."

In addition to the Senegal trip other projects being led by North Carolinians include:

- East Asia — June 15-26
- Thessaloniki, Greece — July 4-12
- Tokyo, Japan — July 4-16
- Lima, Peru — June 12-19; 20-27
- Krakow, Poland — July 18-25
- Braila, Romania — July 25-Aug. 10

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Visit www.biblicalrecorder.org for complete story and links to project sites.)





DIFFERENCE — Zysa, a little girl in the Philippines, had a mass removed: left: the scars can be seen on her face; above, she smiled despite the mass; right, seen with her family while still wearing bandages.

Doctor works after mission trip to help girl

By Steve DeVane
BR Managing Editor

RED SPRINGS — A medical mission team to the Philippines two years ago saw hundreds of patients. Dr. Kenneth Locklear remembers two vividly.

One girl had a condition that could not be helped and died about five months later. The other had a mass on her forehead the size of a grapefruit.

“She was the one I could do something about,” Locklear said.

He said the mass between her eyes was so large it kept the little girl named Zysa from seeing in front of her.

“She had to look at you from the side,” he said.

Locklear, who practices family medicine in Red Springs, couldn’t help the girl while he was in the Philippines, but what he did when he returned home changed her life.

Locklear, a member of Island Grove Baptist Church in Pembroke, started making calls to various medical facilities and other organizations. Several people told him they could help, but then told him how much they’d charge.

Finally, Locklear talked to a lady from the Philippines who works at Duke University Medical Center. She told him about an organization that sends surgeons to Manila to perform surgeries. The team might be able to help if Locklear could work out several details.

He did, but after the team arrived, the girl was still among more than 150 children in line for about 40 to 50 surgeries.

“The Lord works things out,” he said. “Things fell into place and she ended up getting her surgery done.”

Return trip

Now Locklear is going back to the



BR photo by Steve DeVane

WORKING — Dr. Kenneth Locklear, seen here in his office in Red Springs, wouldn’t stop until he helped remove mass from girl’s face in Philippines. See these photos and more in the Biblical Recorder Photo Gallery online.

Philippines on another medical mission trip in late April or early May.

“I’m looking forward to seeing her,” he said.

Sandra Locklear, an optometrist who has an office in Pembroke and is no relation to Kenneth Locklear, also went on the trip two years ago. She took about 2,000 pairs of glasses and would match the person’s eyes to the prescription in the glasses. She is also a member at Island

Grove. One man was essentially blind. When he put on glasses he “went to crying,” Kenneth Locklear said.

A 76-year-old lady walked for six hours to be seen and didn’t grumble, he said, adding that some patients in United States are unhappy if they have to sit in a waiting room for an hour.

“It’s a very humbling experience to see how hard the people work and

how thankful they are for the least little thing,” he said.

Some barns in the United States would look like mansions in the Philippines, Locklear said.

“It’s very humbling to see those people who work hard who don’t have a lot,” he said.

Most of those on the mission trip were from Island Grove. “We really had a good time,” Locklear said. “Those people are really on fire for the Lord.”

Christians in the Philippines are starting churches, holding Bible classes and revivals, and baptizing people, Locklear said.

“It’s just a great thing to see,” he said.

Leading others

Manny Mintac, youth pastor at Island Grove Baptist Church and program coordinator for Burnt Swamp Baptist Association, organized the trip. His main responsibility is to oversee the mission work in the Philippines.

He goes and visits at least once a

year and also leads mission teams.

Mintac said the vision for the work started in 1991 when he and his wife went to the Philippines and started a living room Bible study. Mission teams from the association started going a few years later. Now there are 14 churches and a school with 135 students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

“God has been really wonderful,” Mintac said. “The momentum is even faster now.”

Mintac is going back to the Philippines in early April. He’ll stay six weeks and help three different mission teams. A team of six from Parkway Baptist Church in Richmond, Va., is going to do a sports camp.

A medical team, including Dr. Locklear, is coming in late April and early May. A team of college students is going later in May to do VBS and youth camp. Most of the students are from UNC-Pembroke. In August a team of young professionals is going to work with college students and children, Mintac said. The work is in the province of Aurora in the northern part of the Philippines. The effort has spread to five of the eight major towns in the province.

“We are now saturating the whole province and going in the major towns in the province,” Mintac said.

Mintac went to elementary and high school in the Philippines. “That’s where I was raised,” he said.

He said he is always looking for partners who want to help to help with the mission effort.

“It seems like it’s just scratching the surface, but it’s growing,” he said. “We’ll take any group that wants to go, because we have many ministries that will accommodate them.”

Dr. Locklear was so moved by the trip he hopes to one day take back members of his family. His daughter, Andrea Simmons, works with him in family practice. His son, Brandon, and daughter-in-law, Merideth, are in obstetrics and gynecology. His daughter, Charlene, is a resident in Florence, S.C.

“That’s our ultimate goal in the future,” he said.



WORSHIP — Churches in the Burnt Swamp Baptist Association have been going to the Philippines on mission trips for about 15 years.



BAPTISMS — Christians in the Philippines are on fire for the Lord, according to Dr. Kenneth Locklear. Churches hold Bible studies and baptismal services.



PATIENTS — A medical mission team treated about 400 people in the Philippines two years ago. Another trip is set for late April and early May.

Church members team up for marathon

By Dianna L. Cagle

BR Assistant Managing Editor

No hills, no glory. As Christopher Aho tried to pace himself during his nine-mile run, the hills were not a welcome sight. "No hills, no glory," was a tagline on some of the shirts runners were wearing.

"It was the hardest leg," Aho said of the Mayberry Team Marathon he ran with fellow church members from First Baptist Church in Mount Airy.

"There were slight downhills but the hills were rougher each time."

Aho, who is associate minister at FBC, has run other races before on his own or sometimes with other members in the church but never had he participated in a team marathon. In all 10 teams competed; four were from FBC, including a Masters team comprised of runners over age 40. Teams finished third, fourth, fifth and eighth. All of them were ahead of the Mt. Airy Police Department team, which came in ninth.



Contributed photos

RUNNING — Linda Denney, a member of the Masters age team in a marathon in Mount Airy, finishes her leg of her church's marathon. Denney gets a high-five from fellow participant B.E. Coone. She was the oldest participant from First Baptist Church in Mount Airy. She is also the minister of music.

Another FBC staff member and the eldest member of the Masters team also ran the toughest leg consisting of about five miles of hilly roads. A grandmother, she tackled the hills with gusto.

One of the young adults who ran

had a baby five months prior to the November race. There was also a father-daughter duo who ran and a senior in high school.

Amy Bledsoe, a mother and a real estate agent, was on the Masters Team.

"We had so much fun," she said. "It was a good chance for different ages to be involved."

Bledsoe was surprised her church had as many runners as they did.

Even though she had been involved in running groups within the church over the years, she said she had lost touch with some, at least about their running.

"It's the fastest thing you can do to stay in shape," Bledsoe said.

Her appearance in the local paper has been the source of many conversations within the community.

"Personally it's been a good way to put that out there as a witness," she said.

Aho said some church members participated in the half marathon while the teams ran the half marathon route twice.

"It would be kind of cool if a couple of other churches" would join next year, Aho said.

Aho anticipates having at least five teams in next year's race, maybe more. Some more people have said they'd like to tackle the half marathon.

"I think for a long time church recreation ministry has been one of two things — No. 1: based in a building — what can we do with this recreation center? No. 2: Recreation committee making sure we have a softball and basketball team," Aho said.

Aho said it would make a big difference if churches could use "recreation activities to connect people in meaningful ways."

He considers it an untapped area of ministry.

"Oftentimes we're afraid we don't make opportunities to interact with other people," Aho said. "When we do we benefit from it."

In the busy world of today, Aho said it is easy to get disconnected.

"Through Blackberries and e-mail and texting ... we're more connected with people in less meaningful ways," he said.

Aho sees the need for balance between fellowship and relationship ... "not just what trophies we take home."

"I think it's the first step in the recreation of the recreation ministry."



TAGGING — Chris Aho, associate minister of First Baptist Church in Mount Airy, runs the final leg of the marathon for his team.

*For where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also.*
— Luke 12:34

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NAMB missionary leads drive to win bikers

By Mickey Noah

NAMB

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — Call it “Sturgis South.”

Just like the infamous Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in Sturgis, S.D., each August, a similar rally in Myrtle Beach, S.C., also draws a half-million bikers in May. And like Sturgis, some bikers drive to the rally — their tanks physically and spiritually on empty — and depart with a life changed by Jesus Christ.

Some with ZZ Top-sized beards, tattoos and assorted piercings — and most decked out in black leather, straddling shiny, pricey motorcycles — they roar into this beach resort town to spend up to 10 days partying hearty. The last thing these tough men and women expect is to meet Jesus in Myrtle Beach. But almost 200 did during last year’s rally.

While some ministry had been going on during the annual rally for several years, Todd Wood, the North American Mission Board’s resort missionary based in Myrtle Beach, wanted to have a greater impact and touch more lives at the rally.

“It’s amazing to serve as a resort missionary here at Myrtle Beach,” Wood says. “These bikers come here looking for a good time to party, but it gives us the opportunity as Southern Baptists to step up and share with them the real hope in life, and that’s Jesus Christ. The only problem is that the rally is spread 40 miles up and down the coast, from the North Carolina line down to Garden City (South Carolina). It’s a big area to cover.”

Wood — with support from the local Waccamaw Baptist Association, the South Carolina Baptist Convention, the Carolina Faith Riders of North Carolina and the South Carolina Faith Riders — studied Christian ministry at the Sturgis motorcycle rallies.

“We saw that in Sturgis, they were touching a lot of lives with three-minute testimonies,” said Wood. “So we took that and transitioned it into giving away free gasoline to bikers. We felt like if we could give every person that comes through our line \$10 worth of gas, we’d have three minutes to share our faith story with them. And we would ask them if they knew what it means to have a relationship with Christ.”

So with a gasoline budget of \$10,000, Wood and about 100 volunteers — representing 12 different Christian motorcycle ministries — turned a Citgo gas station on nearby U.S. 17 into a filling station for Jesus.

“The first thing bikers would ask is ‘What’s the deal? Why are you doing this?’ Then we told them that the gas had already been paid for, that someone had purchased it on their behalf. Then we translated that into what Christ did — how he paid for our sins committed in the past, present and future,” said Wood.

Wood said many had never heard the gospel message before. But who better to share the gospel with these rough-and-tough bikers than Christian



NAMB photos

OUTREACH — Pastor Tony Wright, left, of The Wright Ministry in Christ, Inc., based in White Plains, Md., prays with a fellow biker to receive Christ during the gas giveaway at the Myrtle Beach, S.C., Bike Rally.



SHARING — Todd Wood, North American Mission Board missionary, Myrtle Beach, S.C., talks to a biker during the free gasoline giveaway during the annual Myrtle Beach Bike Rally.


bikers — some tattooed with crosses and images of Jesus, and who had escaped their own past lives of despair and hopelessness by accepting Christ.

“I came here to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ with my peers,” said one big, middle-aged biker sporting a full, salt-and-pepper beard and bandana. His sleeveless vest identified him as a biker chaplain. “He gave me a testimony because of my past life. Today is the day to glorify Him.”

Although some 200 bikers accepted Christ during those brief three-minute stops for free gasoline, Wood said, “It just breaks my heart that we could only share with 1,500 or so who came through for gas.”

Wood and his volunteers also handed out 2,500 free gift bags, each filled with a Biker’s Bible and a DVD featuring Pastor Joe Covino, a Columbia, S.C., pastor and former biker himself.

“Many of our folks, even within our local association here in Waccamaw, don’t understand who the



The Week of
Prayer for the
Annie Armstrong
Easter Offering is
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Goal: \$65 million

bikers are,” Wood said. “A lot of times we’ll see the big, bushy hair, the beards and we see the rough-cut guys in black leather and we don’t understand who they are.”

“But this is somebody’s dad, somebody’s mom, somebody’s child. And we begin to understand how Christ pictures every one of these people. They all mean the same to Him. It’s a lost soul, another person He desires to have a relationship with,” Wood said. “For us, it’s so desperately important that we get out there and share the message of Christ with as many bikers as possible.”

Todd and his volunteers are already working on the 2009 Myrtle Beach Bike Week set for May 11-16. Instead of free gasoline, this year his Intracoastal Outreach ministry will be giving away a brand new \$12,000 Harley-Davidson motorcycle. They also will serve bikers 1,100 lbs. of free barbecue. The attending bikers, of course, also will get a strong dose of the gospel.

As a NAMB missionary since 2002, Wood, 38, serves as director of intracoastal outreach with the Waccamaw Baptist Association. He and wife Amy are the parents of three daughters: Ellyn Kate, Caroline and Abby.

A native of Greenville, S.C., Wood is a graduate of Carson Newman College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

Hooked: Church uses fishing to reel in people

(Continued from Page 1)

begun to broaden “their awareness of outreach opportunities.”

Rayburn said he is excited to see his flock begin to take more ownership of their walk with God.

“It’s a beginning process as a church embracing outreach,” said Rayburn, who hopes to engage more members “in things they like to do.”

Rayburn said the church has been through some struggles and cultural shifts like most other congregations.

“The church went through a period of wounding (and) is trying to recover and grow and mature,” Rayburn said. “It’s an effort to help them relearn, rethink, reengage in ways they hadn’t done before.”

Rayburn said the youth pastor has gotten the church involved in a Christmas outreach the first weekend of December. Called Holly Jolly,

Black Mountain hosts a time where shops stay open later than usual.

FBC sets up a tent and distributes hot chocolate and cider as well as popcorn for free to the public. One

woman sells goodies to raise money for missions.

Rayburn said he is encouraged to see his members “move forward in a way that serves Christ.”

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Blank sign bears big message at Mardi Gras

By Paul F. South
Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — In the morning's wee hours, the whole world may be sleeping, but not in New Orleans, not during Mardi Gras.

For New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) alumnus Emerson Wiles, nighttime is the right time to share the life-changing message of Jesus Christ with the multitudes who come to the Crescent City.

Wiles, a pastor on the big island of Hawaii at Waikoloa Baptist Church, has taken the gospel message of hope to the streets of carnival New Orleans for more than two decades.

Between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. on the nights leading up to Mardi Gras day (which was Feb. 5 this year), Wiles and his team walk the streets of the French Quarter sharing the gospel. It took him 15 years to figure out how to do it right.

"The first 15 years, we came with crosses, big ol' crosses," he said. "In my mind, there are only two responses to the cross: You either love it or you hate it. So we spent more time arguing than we did witnessing."

Wiles then read a book that transformed his thinking and his tactics: *Out of Their Faces and Into Their Shoes: How to Understand Spiritually Lost People and Give Them Directions to God* by John Kramp.

The book "taught me that lost people do what lost people do because they're lost," Wiles said.

"Not because they hate God, but because they don't know any better."

Now, Wiles' method conveys the power of God's message. Lives are being changed, in part, due to a blank sign he holds up that makes people curious.

"I tell people, 'That was my life before Jesus came in,'" Wiles said.

"We don't jam anything down anybody's throat," Wiles said. "We don't stop anybody. They come and ask us what we're doing. A lot of times they don't like what we're doing, but they like the way we do it. It's just ways to witness without turning people off."

"We don't want to condemn people. We just want to tell people about Christ."

— Emerson Wiles

Wiles, a 1981 NOBTS graduate, was a pastor in Tennessee for 18 years before moving to Hawaii. Even thousands of miles away, Wiles never forgot New Orleans. He began annual visits during the 1985 Mardi Gras season and has missed only one year since.

Some say Mardi Gras is the biggest party in the world, and probably the last place you'd expect to find Jesus. Unlike his past efforts, love is at the center of Wiles' street evangelism.

"We don't want to condemn people," Wiles said. "It's the Holy Spirit that brings condemnation. We just want to tell people about Christ."

"God called me to be a fisher of men," Wiles said. "God called me to go where there's fish. There are plenty of fish in New Orleans during Mardi Gras."

The Mardi Gras experience has sharpened his church's ministry in Hawaii, Wiles added.

"I'm training my church members to (share the



BP photo by Boyd Guy

TALKING — A member of Emerson Wiles' team of 2007 Mardi Gras evangelists speaks with two men in French Quarter's Jackson Square.

gospel)," he said.

"If you can come on the streets of New Orleans and tell ... a total stranger about Christ, then you can go back home and talk to your neighbors, your banker, your doctor, your lawyer. It makes it easier to share the gospel. If you can share at Mardi Gras, doing it at home is a piece of cake."

(EDITOR'S NOTE — South is a writer for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.)

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Due to the retirement of the current pastor, Arlington Baptist Church in Rocky Mount, N.C., is seeking a **senior pastor**. We are a conservative church seeking a pastor that believes in the inerrancy of the Bible and has proven skills in preaching, teaching, visitation, counseling, visioning, soul winning, discipleship and administration. Our 102 year-old church offers blended worship. We are SBC and BSCNC affiliated with a current active membership of about 400 that supports a full-time youth minister, part-time children's minister and part-time music minister. Send resumes and sermon CD/DVD's to Anna Morris, Chairperson Pastor Search Committee, 404 Barrington Drive, Tarboro, NC 27886 or aa_morris@suddenlink.net.

Providence Baptist Church is now accepting resumes for a **full-time pastor**. We are a traditional, conservative Southern Baptist Church located in the beautiful mountains of Northeast Georgia. We have an average of 90 in Sunday School and 140 in the Sunday morning worship service. Please mail resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, Providence Baptist Church, P.O. Box 100, Clarksville, GA 30523 by Monday, March 16, 2009.

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Minister of Worship and Discipleship. Bachelor's degree in music required with additional studies in Christian education. Full-time position. For job description visit our website at www.polkvillebaptist.com. Send resume along with salary requirements by March 15, 2009.

Yates Baptist Church, 2819 Chapel Hill Road, Durham, NC 27707 is looking for a **Minister, Students and Recreation** to lead the development and implementation of ministry programs that reach students in grades 6-12, college students and church-wide program of recreation. Two years of experience working in youth ministry, preferably as a member of a church staff, is preferred. Please mail resume or forward to info@yateschurch.org.

First Baptist Church, New Tazewell, TN, is prayerfully seeking and accepting resumes for a full-time **Worship Leader/Director of Music**. Responsibilities include directing adult and youth choirs, assisting children's choir, planning and leading worship services and special programs. Experience in other areas such as education, member ministries or missions a plus. Mail resumes to FBC, PO Box 248, New Tazewell TN 37824, ATTN: Worship Leader Search Team; or fax to 423-626-4773; or email to newtazewellfbc@centurytel.net by March 1, 2009.

Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, 198 Pleasant Ridge Church Rd, Shelby, NC 28152, is seeking a **part-time minister of music**. Please send resumes, by March 6, 2009, to prbc@carolina.rr.com or fax to 704-434-6438.

Minister of Contemporary Music and Worship Arts. First Baptist Church, Fort Mill, SC, is seeking a full time person to provide leadership for life transforming contemporary worship experiences. This person will coordinate and utilize a variety of individuals' gifts in worship. A job description can be viewed online at www.fbcfm.com under the career opportunities tab. Please send resumes to KMorrow@fbcfm.com by March 2.

Pianist Needed. Forest Hills Baptist Church, Wilson, N.C., is searching for a pianist with a passion for worship and who is a team player. The musical style is traditional and contemporary. The position requires attendance at 3 services, rehearsals. Salary negotiable. Call the worship pastor, Grant Stanley at 252-373-1531.

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Associate Pastor/Youth Minister. Wilkies Grove Baptist Church, a traditional SBC church in rural eastern Burke County with an average attendance of 270 is seeking an experienced full-time associate pastor/youth minister. College degree preferred and seminary a plus. Send resume to: Wilkies Grove Baptist Church, 5780 Wilkies Grove Church Rd., Hickory, NC 28602 Attention: Search Committee.

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God as athletic director

By **Jim Evans**
Associated Baptist Press

We have all seen it. A football player makes a big play, scores the winning touchdown, drops to one knee and points a finger toward heaven.

What does it mean when, in a moment of success, a player acknowledges God in some way? Does the gesture mean that the player is giving God credit for the touchdown? Did God help the player or make the play happen?

I have always wanted to see the other side of this sort of athletic piety. Say for example, what would happen if a kicker, after missing a field goal, raises his arms palms up and stares into the sky as if to say, "Where were you when I needed you?"

I guess, since that kind of piety does not happen, the theology at work here goes something like this. When you win, God is with you — but when you lose, you are on your own.

Of course, it doesn't always work for winners.

Recently a Christian school in Dallas sent their girls' basketball team to play another Christian school. At the end of the game the scoreboard read 100-0. It is not a typo.

As the results were made public, criticism began pouring in at the winning team's school. The deliberate effort to score 100 points was dubbed un-Christian. Apparently Jesus does not trounce his opponents, except maybe that pesky Antichrist.

Anyway, in the face of mounting criticism, the school is offering to forfeit its win. They are seek-

ing forgiveness for running up the score and not allowing their opponent to score any points — behavior they now admit was less than Christ-like.

So the theology at work here seems to be this: If you have success in appropriate portions, God is with you.

But if you flaunt your abilities and run up the score, God is not with you. Or: If you lose, you are on your own — unless you lose in such an egregious fashion as to invoke the oppressed-people syndrome in which case God is with you.

I remember an English professor in college who, after listening to two students argue over which team God loves better — Alabama or Notre Dame — finally said in exasperation, "God does not watch football games."

I am not sure he is right about that. The New Testament says that God watches the birds, takes note when a sparrow falls, numbers the hairs on our head, pays attention when little ones are at risk, seeks to protect rebellious children like a hen gathering her chicks, waits patiently for prodigal children, searches for us like a poor woman who cannot afford to lose a single coin, travels difficult paths to pull us out of the ditch.

So why wouldn't God watch football? The sticking point is that God may watch, but God does not take sides. God doesn't care who wins or loses. Like all things in life, God is mostly concerned about the way we play the game.

(*EDITOR'S NOTE — Evans is pastor of Auburn First Baptist Church in Auburn, Ala. He can be reached at faithmatters@mindspring.com.)*

Good News doesn't have to be long

By **D.E. Parkerson**
Special to the Biblical Recorder

Dr. M. Ray McKay, homiletics professor at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary back in the 1950's offered this wise advice to those in his class who were training to become pastors: "Try always to preach because you have something to say, not because it is 11:00 o'clock on Sunday morning." Very good advice indeed!

Every preacher has heard the time-worn suggestion to "Stand up, speak up, and shut up!" Preachers generally know when to stand up, and when to speak up. The hard part for some preachers is to know when to shut up. One pastor came into the pulpit with a bandage on his chin. Before reading his text, he said: "I had my mind on my sermon this morning when I was shaving and I cut my chin."

When the service was over a member remarked, "You should have kept your mind on your chin and cut your sermon."

Soon after I arrived to serve as pastor of a church several years ago one of my finest deacons said, "Preacher, you can preach as long as you want to on Sunday mornings, but we go home at 12 o'clock." I replied, "I learned early in life that any preacher who has not struck oil by 12 o'clock should stop

boring." The gospel of Jesus Christ is good news. In fact, the word "gospel" means "good news."

It doesn't take all day to tell good news. However, no sermon, whether long or short, will have the power to change laypersons in the pew if it has not changed the preacher before he arrived in the pulpit.

Knowing when to stop is not just a problem for some preachers. Speakers in many fields have difficulty finding a good stopping place. William Henry Harrison, for example, delivered a two-hour, 9,000-word inaugural address in 1841 into the teeth of a freezing wind.

He came down with a cold, and a month later died with pneumonia. George Washington's inaugural was just 135 words.

Will Rogers was presiding on one occasion as toastmaster at a meeting being addressed by a tediously long speaker. At the conclusion of the address, Rogers said, "You have been listening to that famous Chinese orator, On Too Long."

The next time you hear a speech or sermon that goes on and on and on, ask the speaker if he (or she) has a relative who is a Chinese orator.

(*EDITOR'S NOTE — Parkerson writes a weekly column called "The Paper Pulpit," where this column was originally published, and is a retired pastor.*)

Do the right thing

By **Milton A. Hollifield Jr.**
BSC Executive Director-Treasurer

(Excerpts from the address to the Baptist Station Convention of North Carolina Board of Directors on Jan. 28.)



The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina is a creation of local churches who, at a critical time of population growth in this state in the late 1700's, began to pray about the possibility of forming an organized union of Baptists for the purpose of missions and evangelism.

The churches which came together in 1830 later came to understand and approve the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845.

That gathering in Augusta, Ga., was never designed to engineer any sort of program which would cause local churches to lose their rightful leadership role.

To the contrary — both the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the Southern Baptist Convention were established as resources for local churches to utilize and maximize their ministry.

Our strength has resided in the fact that we have no hierarchy, no bishops, no place for a top-down ministry strategy. Instead — we focused on our churches and on the local communities God called us to serve.

Now, our institutions and agencies — even our very model of ministry is now being re-evaluated by a new generation who know little of Baptist history.

They look for efficiency and effectiveness from their personal investments of time and money.

The expertise and "we can-do it" spirit of local churches has grown to the point that denominations are experiencing a sort of confusion as to what they are to do in light of so much change taking place around them.

Our strength as Southern Baptists has been our eagerness to work together through what we have called the Cooperative Program. I do not believe that small networks of churches can independently achieve what more than 40,000 Southern Baptist churches and 42 Baptist State Conventions supporting two major mission boards have done through the years.

We remain grateful for the new churches which have been planted and the work of faithful institutions such as the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina who saw 58 children receive Christ last year.

This has happened because we prayed and joined hands together in a common purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission.

I want to assure every North Carolina Baptist today that we are working to better improve our resources and ministry.

We simply cannot exist any longer in the Baptist bubble.

We must work to bring the gospel to this region, and it is my prayer that we will do so to the glory of God.

Remember the example of good King Josiah which God included in the scripture — he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord.

Josiah chose to do the right thing and his nation enjoyed the benefit of God's blessings upon them during the reign of this righteous king. Recognize that you can rise above your past and make a difference.

Choose well and in the future others will thank God for your legacy.

And Josiah did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. 2 Kings 22:2



Tar Heel Voices

Ignite sparks little fruit

I just received and read the most recent *Biblical Recorder* (Jan. 31 issue) and saw the article asking for comments concerning Ignite. First of all I want to applaud our brothers' desire to share Christ with the younger generation.

I appreciate their zeal and passion for evangelism but am unable to be a voice of support for the movement.

When I heard them in Brevard, I thought the event seemed designed more to entertain than preach the life-saving message of Christ. I did not think the message of the cross was clearly presented.

When an invitation was offered I wondered what or who they were being invited to trust since the biblical gospel hadn't really been mentioned.

The emphasis seemed to be on making an emotional "decision" for Jesus instead of repenting of sins and trusting in Christ. I have seen little lasting fruit in this community even though hundreds sup-

REACT: Tar Heel Voices is your forum



posedly "went forward."

My desire in writing is not to be critical or judgmental of individuals but to plead with our churches to use more biblical methods in evangelism. We can all see that Southern Baptists are declining rapidly, but instead of trying to get the numbers back up by using any means; biblical or not; let's get serious about returning to faithful, expository, Christ-centered preaching of the gospel.

Let's be certain that our preaching, evangelism, and missions contain the gospel.

Bill Pfister
Brevard

Special offerings vital to organizations

I learned early during a stint as a campaign consultant that it was important to set an achievable goal. I also learned that goals are not set according to the need, but on a calculated guess about what is possible to raise.

It is important to set achievable goals because people are discouraged when they fall short. It seems like failure even if a lot of money was raised.

Special offerings often miss their goals, sometimes by millions of dollars as in the relentlessly optimistic Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions.

Organizations in the midst of a campaign keep track of progress, and you've seen various graphic progress markers like thermometers that tell how close you are getting toward a goal. While I don't believe people contribute to meet a specific goal, I do think combined and measureable progress toward a goal can excite others to give, and maybe garner a second gift from an early donor.

When the North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO) met its 2008 goal of \$2 million, Milton Hollifield said that was "cause to celebrate." Hollifield, Baptist State Convention executive director-treasurer, acknowledged at the January board meeting that the goal was a half million dollars less than the previous year because it was adjusted downward after Woman's Missionary Union was removed from the NCMO allocations.

Although the goal was smaller, meeting it was important. Later Ruby Fulbright, executive director-treasurer of Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina (WMU-NC), said the Heck-Jones Offering that WMU-NC restarted after they were removed from the NCMO, raised \$1,006,000 in 2008. That was significantly short of WMU-NC's \$1.2 million goal, but still a tremendous show of support for an organization that went out on a limb, trusting God and donors for the operating funds they lost when they exercised their independence.

Meaningfully, as Hollifield pointed out, had gifts to the Heck-Jones Offering, which supports WMU-NC exclusively, been combined with the NCMO offering, the total would have easily been the largest state missions offering ever.

EDITORIAL



Norman Jameson

Organizations promote hardest for their self-interest. And donors give most when their gifts more exclusively support their special interests.

Unfortunately, the paragraph above supports the concept of societal giving, in which a parade of well-spoken fund raisers comes to your church asking you to support their organization. That's how Baptists supported missions before they invented the Cooperative Program (CP) in 1925. Cooperative Program struggles to maintain a vital identity as personal, direct and immediate missions support. CP giving has slipped and direct appeals are becoming not only more commonplace, but more important for the organizations making them.

Membership has privileges and some special offerings are "sanctioned" by North Carolina Baptists. Moves have been made through the years — most often with disastrous results for the soliciting entities — to eliminate or combine some special offerings. The year the Homes and Hospital Offering was disassembled and individual offerings were returned to Baptist Children's Homes, Baptist Retirement Homes and Baptist Hospital, receipts for Baptist Children's Homes alone exceeded the previous year's total for the combined offering.

People respond to specific appeals when they know their gift is going to be used exclusively and effectively by the organization or individual making the appeal.

Now comes the Baptist Retirement Homes offering for 2009. BRH sent materials to each church, which confused some members of the board of directors who thought the Retirement Homes was no longer a part of the Convention. Officially, the relationship has not changed, although the Retirement Homes is receiving no Cooperative Program funds

and is selecting its own trustees. Messengers to the November annual session will have the opportunity to vote on a new relationship.

Even when a new relationship is defined, Baptist Retirement Homes longs to and intends to remain North Carolina's "Baptist" retirement homes organization. BRH intends to relate to the churches, to provide care for North Carolina Baptist senior adults and to ask North Carolina Baptist churches to continue to support that ministry with a special offering.

Any new relationship actually makes no difference on the ability of Baptist Retirement Homes — or any other entity — to solicit North Carolina Baptist churches. Any organization with a data base and money for mailing materials can solicit churches, or individuals for their cause. There is no protection from solicitors just because they have no relationship to the Convention, no matter what the organization.

Woman's Missionary Union is gearing up for its second Heck-Jones Offering to raise its support. They need it, and if 2008 is any measure, they will find it. With WMU organizations in thousands of North Carolina Baptist churches, and with WMU's mission education, training and involvement more important than ever, they are worthy of your support.

Baptist Retirement Homes is worthy of your support. The ministry they performed last year is the same they perform this year. If it was worthy then, it is worthy now.

The North American Mission Board's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for national missions is also received in the spring.

The fact is many organizations merit your support; so many you sometimes wonder how you can be expected to support them all. Truth is, you are not expected to support them all.

But it is not too much for organizations with historical ties to North Carolina Baptists who continue in their ministries just as they were earlier, but now with a different relationship, to receive a hearing and opportunity to inform your church members so the members, if they are so inclined, can support them.

You can't do it with everyone, but you need not fear Baptist Retirement Homes and Woman's Missionary Union.

Fishing for Stryper

No one is going to establish a nursery yet or serve coffee in sippy cups but some members have started to appear among the Baptist State Convention board of directors who have more dark hair than gray.

Chris Hilliard, pastor of Newell Baptist Church in Charlotte, is one of those on the young side, and he brought a devotional during the January board meeting in which he urged board members to think outside the box for ways to reach young people.

Using his own life as example, he explained why young people — even those who occasionally attend church — often remain untouched by the gospel message. Hilliard came to Christ as an adult after growing up occasionally attending church. To him, the message was water, and he was a duck's back.

He loved MTV and rock music, two communications venues that drove his parents and church people to distraction. While the church was debating the merits of rock music, his buddies longed to be rock stars.

Then one day Hilliard heard the music of a rock band that was different. A subtle message permeated its solid beat, a message older church members missed because their ears were obscured by the band members' blown out hair and leather outfits.

"They spoke my language," Hilliard said of the early Christian rock band Stryper. "They stepped into my world and reached me."

Hilliard's question to the board members was, "What are we will-

ing to do to step into someone else's world to present Christ?"

When Christians do not grant each other freedom to establish relationships with sinners; when Christian outreach grinds to a halt while Christians debate a method, others die lost, he said.

During Hilliard's youth, Christians debated whether "rock music"

was an appropriate tool to use in Christian outreach. "While Stryper was reaching people for Christ, the church was fussing about whether or not they were legit," Hilliard said.

Hilliard appreciates the man who helped him pray to receive Christ, "but Stryper did all the work," he said.

He encouraged the board members to be free in Christ, like the Apostle Paul and to "think outside

the box."

"While we debate, they're dying. While we wrestle, they're dying," he said.

Although it was not planned, Hilliard's devotional set up Milton Hollifield's executive director-treasurer address that followed. Hollifield listed census data to show North Carolina is growing quickly and getting younger in the process.

"North Carolina is growing rapidly, is growing younger and is growing more urban," Hollifield said, "the very opposite of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina."

While one option is to cling to life support to delay death as long as possible, the better option is to plant churches and reach people for Christ, Hollifield said.

Together Hilliard and Hollifield provided illustration and text for a Convention of churches to step outside the box in freedom to win people.




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News Briefs

Campbell Law applications defy national average

With its impending move to Raleigh only months away, the Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law at Campbell University is enjoying a 20 percent increase in applications over the prior year, though across the country the applicant count is down two percent, according to a release from Campbell.

Campbell Law was also featured as one of the nation's most outstanding law schools in the 2009 edition of *The Princeton Review's* Best 174 Law Schools.

With an enrollment of 366 for the 2008-09 academic year, Campbell Law School is one of the smallest legal education programs in the U.S. In fall 2009, the law school will relocate from the main campus in Buies Creek to downtown Raleigh, currently the largest U.S. capital without a law school.

"In the case of Campbell Law specifically, I think the overall increase directly correlates to our planned move to Raleigh," said Assistant Dean for Admissions Lewis Hutchison.

"Today's students want to be in an urban environment where they can gain experience and see the law in action.

"Being within walking distance of the state legislature, appellate courts, state agencies and numerous law firms and corporate offices, means our students will be able to do both."

NEW BAPTIST COVENANT

Speakers tout unity at New Baptist Covenant event

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — More than 1,000 people gathered in Birmingham, Ala., Jan. 31 for the first regional gathering of the New Baptist Covenant.

The event, which was held at the historic 16th Street Baptist Church, St. Paul's United Methodist Church and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, occurred on the one year anniversary of the Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant, which drew more than 15,000 Baptists in Atlanta.

The New Baptist Covenant is an informal alliance of more than 30 racially, geographically and theologically diverse Baptist organizations from throughout North America that claim more than 20 million members.

"There is no way for us to avoid Jesus' emphasis on the poor, the blind, the oppressed. And as Baptists it is hard to ignore the emphasis on religious liberty," said former President Jimmy Carter, in his keynote address.

"(May) our prayers collectively and individually be guided by Jesus Christ. (May) we have no division among Baptists."

Upcoming events include: April 2-4 in Liberty, Mo.; April 24-25 in Winston-Salem; Aug. 6-7 in Norman, Okla.; and Sept. 10-12 in Chicago, Ill.

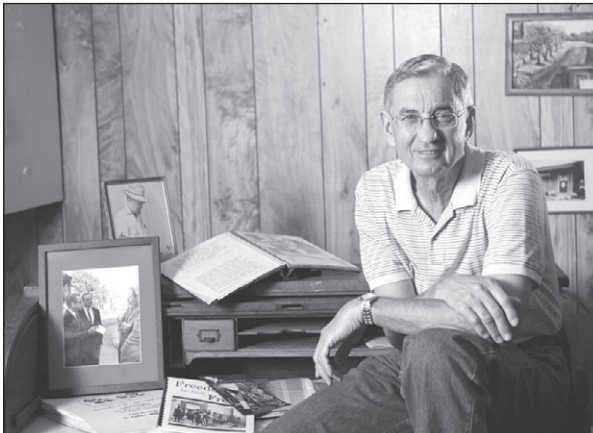
David Tolliver named Missouri executive director

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (ABP) — David Tolliver, who served as interim executive director of the Missouri Baptist Convention (MBC) for the past 22 months, has been named the new executive director.

The MBC Executive Board voted overwhelmingly to call Tolliver during a special called meeting Feb. 3. Tolliver, 58, accepted the position to applause from board members, convention staff and visitors.

The newly elected leader had joined the state convention staff in 2005 as Cooperative Program specialist and an associate executive director to David Clippard, whom the board fired in 2007.

RNS photo courtesy of Fuller Center for Housing



FAITHFUL — Millard Fuller, 74, died Feb. 3. He founded Habitat for Humanity in 1976.

Habitat for Humanity founder, Millard Fuller, dies at 74

WASHINGTON (RNS) — Millard Fuller, the man who founded Habitat for Humanity and whose name was synonymous with volunteer faith-based efforts to build houses for the poor, died suddenly Feb. 3 after a brief illness.

Fuller, 74, had suffered from a chest cold in recent weeks, said Holly Chapman, vice president of communications and development of the Fuller Center for Housing in Americus, Ga.

Fuller founded Habitat for Humanity in 1976 but parted ways with the worldwide organization in 2005 after philosophical differences with Habitat's board and an allegation of inappropriate conduct that Fuller vehemently denied.

After leaving Habitat, Fuller started the Fuller Center for Housing in Americus, Ga., which sought to continue his mission to provide people across the world with decent housing.

Chapman said the center expects to go forward with plans for a summer project to build 10 houses in Fuller's hometown of Lanett, Ala., to mark what would have been the 50th wedding anniversary of Fuller and his wife, Linda.

"Millard would not want people to mourn his death," said Linda Fuller, co-founder of both Habitat for Humanity and the Fuller Center, in a statement. "He would be more interested in having people put on a tool belt and build a house for people in need."

Appeals court sides with Mo. Bapt. conference center

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (ABP) — Windermere Baptist Conference Center acted within its legal rights when it changed its articles of incorporation, a Missouri court ruled Feb. 3.

A three-judge panel of the Missouri Court of Appeals, Western District, unanimously upheld a lower court's March 4, 2008, ruling in a nearly seven-year legal battle the Missouri Baptist Convention (MBC) has waged against five formerly affiliated agencies.

The Nov. 25 appeal hearing was the latest round in legal action the MBC took against Windermere,

The Baptist Home, Missouri Baptist University, *Word & Way* (formerly the convention's official news journal) and the Missouri Baptist Foundation in an effort to force the entities to rescind changes they had made in their corporate charters.

In an opinion filed Feb. 3, the appellate court upheld a ruling that the convention is not a legal member of Windermere's corporation and no contract exists between the two. The MBC has 15 days in which to file a motion for the Court of Appeals to rehear the case. The convention's case against the other four entities has been on hold pending the outcome of the appeal in the Windermere case. No dates have yet been set for those hearings.

Advocates say rise in work discrimination claims good

(RNS) Complaints of religious discrimination in the workplace are on the rise, but civil rights advocates say that may not be such a bad thing.

That's because a likely reason for a steady rise in reported incidents has nothing to do with intolerant corporate cultures but rather religious minorities who are more aware of their rights.

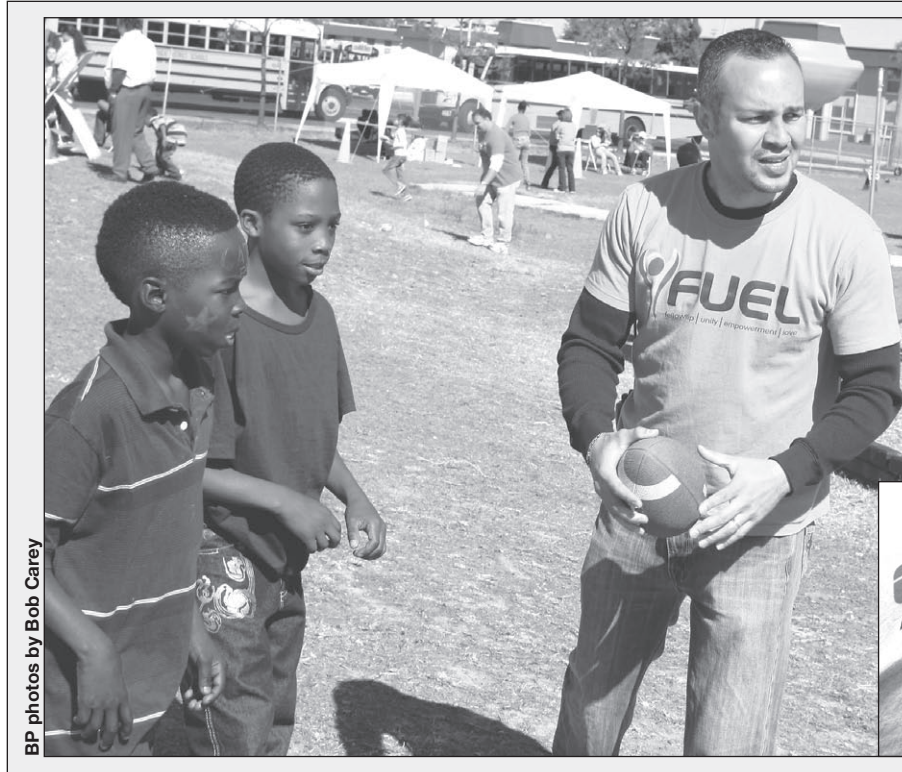
"Before, somebody might have prayed kind of quietly at work and hoped nobody would stop them and didn't really want to ask permission," says Ibrahim Hooper, spokesman for the Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). "Now they state openly: 'Yes, I'd like permission. Is there an open room where I could pray?'"

Between 1992 and 2007, claims of religious discrimination filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) more than doubled, from 1,388 to 2,880. Recent years have also ushered in a new era of assertiveness, especially among members of minority faiths that require specific codes of dress, diet or behavior, according to David Miller, director of Princeton University's Faith & Work Initiative.

Gallup poll: Most oppose Obama abortion order

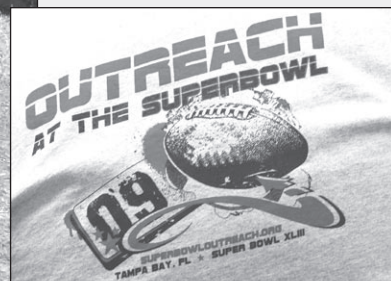
WASHINGTON (BP) — Americans may give President Obama a high job approval rating, but a majority of them nevertheless disagree with his recent reversal of a major pro-life policy, a USA Today/Gallup Poll shows.

According to the poll, by a 58-35 percent margin U.S. adults disapprove of Obama's reversal of the Mexico City Policy, which banned federal funds for organizations that perform or promote abortions overseas. Seven percent had no opinion. The policy first was implemented by President Reagan, but overturned by President Clinton and then reinstated in 2001 by President Bush. Gallup asked adults if they approved Obama "allowing U.S. funding for overseas family planning organizations that provide abortions." The Mexico City reversal, according to the poll, was the least popular decision among seven Obama presidential decisions referenced in the poll.



BP photos by Bob Carey

OUTREACH — Christians from across the nation joined together to do street witnessing in Tampa, Fla., during the week leading up to the Super Bowl. At left, Joel Vicente, pastor of Open Arms Church in Ybor City, plans a pass route for two nine-year-olds at a Tampa-area block party on Jan. 31. Below, some had T-shirts made for the occasion.





Lesson for Feb. 22

Formations

Lesson for March 1

When Disaster Threatens

Focal Passage: 2 Chronicles 20:1-12

I am very aware of the admonition against adding to or taking away from scripture. This is meant to be neither. However, I think the first word in verse 9 of the focal passage really could be changed. If disaster comes? Shouldn't that be when?

Open the paper, turn on the TV, listen to the radio, or log onto any news site on just about any given day and you'll see all the disaster your eyes can handle.

From natural disaster to war and strife brought on by people's actions to each other, it seems to me that in discussing disaster, we are almost always talking "when" and not "if." I have a pastor friend who says if life hasn't rained on your parade yet, you haven't planned enough parades. Disaster happens. It is our response to disaster then that is significant here.

In this passage, the people of Judah sought help from God for the impending disaster. And they believed.

They believed God would cause them to withstand whatever disaster came. Verse 20 reads in part:

Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established, believe in

His prophets, and you shall prosper.

When disaster threatens, believe in God.

Believe in Him and the disaster will not be able to shake you.

Believe in His word and you will flourish. This is easy to say, but it can be harder to do.

Disaster — even the threat of it scares us. We want God to stop disasters, not walk with us through them. We want God to help us avert disaster, not help us pick up the pieces when it happens. But God doesn't always do it the way we think He should. And so we see disaster of all types and kinds. And we know God will be with us when it comes.

Disaster strikes and it is not always a complete loss. Albert Einstein once said that there is some good in disaster, in that all mistakes are wiped out. That is true, and is good news I suppose, but as

Christians we have better news. God is with us when disaster strikes. All we have to do is believe in Him and take Him at His word.

When disaster threatens, believe in God. Believe in Him and the disaster will not be able to shake you. Believe in His word and you will flourish. This is easy to say, but it can be harder to do.

What Would Jesus Say About the Bible?

Focal Passage: Matthew 4:1-11

Shane Nixon
Director of Development/
Church Relations,
Baptist Retirement
Homes of North
Carolina

It cannot escape anyone who does much reading of the New Testament that Jesus found Himself in opposition to the religious leaders of His day consistently. They were the enforcers of law, the bearers of the covenant, and He was the personification of grace, the "new covenant." A distinction must be made however, to clarify where Jesus came down on the law itself, as opposed to those who (unfairly) tried to enforce it. As opposed to the self righteous as

could be, Jesus sought out righteousness. As opposed to legalism as possible, Jesus understood and honored the law.

In this focal passage, on three occasions Jesus answers temptations from the devil by referring to the law. He uses three words to summarily dismiss His tempter. Each time Jesus says "It is written . . ."

Of course much has been made in pop culture about asking the question which has come to be symbolized by four letters, WWJD, or What Would Jesus Do? And we have begun, in church life, to turn that question on

just about every subject. I saw an article not long ago asking WWJD but the "D" was for drive, not do. What would Jesus say about the Bible? Well we are privileged to know some things Jesus actually DID say about the Bible. Of course, He would have been talking about what we know as the Old Testament, He was living out the New Testament or at least portions of it. But nonetheless, Jesus made no excuse and offered no loop hole for the law. Jesus said the law was necessary, but He also said the law was not enough.

The Bible, the one we read, has gone through centuries of scrutiny, decades of debate, and years without yielding. But when we ask the question what Jesus would say about our Bible, we need look no further than His words in our

Bible for our answer. Jesus said "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Jesus was and is the Living Word of God. We have a responsibility to read our Bibles, we know that. We should possess a longing to better understand the word of God as it applies to each of our lives, we are clear on that. And we should want to know what Jesus would say about everything. But we need not make this complicated.

As usual, the best way to hear what He'd say, about the Bible or anything else, is to listen to Him.

As usual, the best way to hear what He'd say, about the Bible or anything else, is to listen to Him.

Lesson for Feb. 22

Bible Studies for Life

Lesson for March 1

Praying for Others

Focal Passage: John 17:9-19

One of the greatest privileges I enjoy as an associational missionary and as a participant in mission projects to Quebec and Jamaica is that of intercessory prayer. At times I am daily visited by fellow believers and congregational leaders burdened with concerns and issues that often fall outside of our accumulated wisdoms and resources.

Usually a soft unspoken prayer begins these precious encounters and a joint prayer ends each session. Rather than be a polite acknowledgement of closure, prayer is that passionate recognition that the redeeming of each situation is possible alone through our Lord.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, "Offering intercessory prayer means nothing other than Christians bringing one another into the presence of God, seeing each other under the cross of Jesus as poor human beings and sinners in need of grace. Then, everything about other people that repels me falls away."

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus warned his disciples that he was going to leave them. Recorded in John 17, we have the true "Lord's Prayer." Here he prays for his disciples and those who would follow in faith (in the future). Here Jesus literally brings them (and us) into the very presence of the Father only moments away from being betrayed, arrested and crucified.

In His conversation with his Father He recognizes that though He will be away from His disciples they must remain and live out His presence

daily and faithfully. He thus prays for their victory over the world rather than an easy escape from the world. He prays that they with all who would follow be united — "May they be all one, just as, Father, you are in me and I am you, so that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me" (17:21, 23 NJB). He prays for their protection — "protect them from the Evil One" (17:15 NJB). And he prays for their consecration (17:17-19): set apart for a special task as his representatives to the world, and set apart to a special equipping to that task — "Consecrate them in the truth, your word is truth."

Whenever my wife, Sharon, leaves the women of Elim Church in Jamaica and the special friendships of merchant women in the Montego Bay market area to return home, she asks them what to pray about for them. Each time she receives a plethora of burdens and blessings.

One asked for prayer for a possible cancerous growth, another for a straying child, and still another for God's visible manifestation for their village or parish. Never is it for financial benefits or economic status — it is for the saving, gracious presence of the Lord.

Jesus prayed, "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they may always see my glory which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world" (17:24).



John Pond
Director of Missions,
West Chowan Baptist
Association

Be Aware

Focal Passage: Nehemiah 1:1-11

In early 1994, we (I and two first-term missionaries) traveled back into the interior of Burundi to visit churches with which I had worked closely and had experienced massive devastation from the coup d'état that had occurred in October 1993.

Our hearts ached and our spirits literally mourned as we drove through formerly populous market towns and

vibrant villages now empty or worse strewn with bodies. Much like Nehemiah (1:4a), we "wept and mourned."

Already, my wife and I (as former missionaries to Rwanda) had mourned the loss of many of our close Rwandan friends who had died in the genocide and dreaded when updates were given about the continuing situation. Words can never accurately describe the anguish and pain that is felt when confronted by such needless suffering.

Nehemiah was cupbearer to the king of Persia. Though information is scanty, news arrives through his brother, Hanani that Jerusalem lies in ruin and the morale of the remnant is low and troubled. According to Josephus, neighboring tribes were continually raiding the vulnerable city. He

writes, "the surrounding nations were inflicting many injuries on the Jews, overrunning the country and plundering it by day and doing mischief by night, so that many had been carried off as captives . . . and every day the roads were found full of corpses."

Rather than despair, Nehemiah turns his heart towards "the God of Heaven" (1:4b) after a season of fasting and prays an incredible prayer of lamentation and confession. Recognizing the gracious fidelity of the Lord is contrasted to the personal and corporate infidelities of Nehemiah and the people of Israel. "We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses" (1:7).

The sole solution is God's covenant response to a repentant people — "O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants . . . give success . . . grant . . . mercy" (1:11).

Both in Rwanda and Burundi, atrocities continue and lives are lost. But even in the hostility and hopelessness, God continues to be present and acting out His will.

As one Rwandan believer has written in light of not only the genocide but the AIDS epidemic, "We meet here every day for mutual support, prayer and care giving . . . we are trying to give hope and assistance in the name of Christ."

Our hearts ached and our spirits literally mourned as we drove through formerly populous market towns and vibrant villages now empty or worse strewn with bodies.

200 years later, Lincoln’s faith remains an enigma

By Daniel Burke
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON — Seven score and four years ago, Abraham Lincoln stood on the steps of the U.S. Capitol and said North and South alike must suffer for the sin of slavery.

“If God wills that (the war) continue until ... every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, so it still must be said ‘the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether,’” Lincoln said in his second inaugural address, quoting the Psalms.

Called “Lincoln’s Sermon on the Mount,” his 1865 address has been deemed the most religiously sophisticated presidential speech in American history. It was delivered by a backwoods lawyer with just one year of formal schooling who never joined a church.

As the 200th anniversary of Lincoln’s birth passed Feb. 12, the 16th president and his unconventional faith continues to inspire and to confound. Churches, community centers and colleges across the country are celebrating the bicentennial by pondering the Great Emancipator’s words and mounting exhibits exploring his dealings with various faiths.

Meanwhile, a raft of recent books attempt to restore religion to historical accounts of Lincoln’s life after a generation of scholars shrugged off his spiritual side.

“I call it ‘the presence of an absence,’” said Ronald C. White Jr., author of *A. Lincoln*, a biography published in January that aims to restore the missing pieces of Lincoln’s “spiritual odyssey.”

“People don’t deal with his religion. It is the great hole in our study,” White said in an interview.

Historians disagree

Lincoln didn’t make things easy for historians. He was reticent and often inscrutable about his personal faith. Moreover, his ideas changed over time, as he dealt with the deaths of two sons and the pressure of the presidency amid the Civil War.

Most historians agree on this much: Lincoln was never baptized, never joined a church, and rarely, if ever, talked about Jesus.

“He was a religious man always,” said Lincoln’s widow, Mary, after his death, “but he was not a technical Christian.”

That hasn’t stopped every stripe of believer — including Christians — from claiming honest Abe as one of their own. Spiritualists, atheists, and even Jews have all tried to cast Lincoln as a member of their tribe as well.

“Sometimes the battles over these things are rather sharp, very sharp as a matter of fact,” Dewey Wallace, a professor of religious history at George Washington University, told a conference of religion reporters last fall. Like the Jesus Seminar, the academic search for the “historical Jesus,” scholars endlessly sift through each chapter of Lincoln lore, Dewey said.

Younger years

Ironically, the man who became one of the most religious American presidents had little use for faith as a young man, according to historians. Mocking the emotional sermons of the evangelical preachers who blazed across



“That I am not a member of any Christian Church, is true. But I have never denied the truth of the Scriptures; and I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or any denomination of Christians in particular.”
— Abraham Lincoln

the frontier, Lincoln often angered his pious Baptist father.

When Lincoln ran for Congress against one of those preachers, Methodist circuit rider Peter Cartwright, in 1846, his early apostasy became a political handicap. To fight a whispering campaign that he was an “infidel,” Lincoln published a handbill denying that he was “an open scoffer at Christianity.”

“That I am not a member of any Christian Church, is true,” Lincoln wrote. “But I have never denied the truth of the Scriptures; and I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or any denomination of Christians in particular.”

Despite his doubts, Lincoln had great respect for the Bible, one of the few books his parents possessed. He memorized large portions of it and consulted the book often in later years as he struggled with the “mere quiet power” of God.

Still, Lincoln never joined a church. Some say he just wasn’t a “joiner.” Others argue that he couldn’t abide by complicated creeds. Many agree Lincoln wasn’t the type to open himself to the spiritual scrutiny often expected of church members.

“He was a very private man,” biographer David Herbert Donald said. “And not likely to get up in front of congregation and say, ‘Let me recite the sins I have committed.’”

Turning to God for answers

Nevertheless, when Lincoln’s son Edward died in 1850, he turned to a Presbyterian pastor for answers. “Why did God take my son?” he asked James Smith of Springfield, Ill., at the beginning of their friendship.

Lincoln had a similar relationship with Phineas Gurley, pastor of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, where the president occasionally attended services. Lincoln wrote that his faith began to crystallize at this time, and White argues that bits of Gurley’s sermons can be found in the president’s speeches, including his famed second inaugural address.

Both Presbyterian churches Lincoln attended preached predestination, a belief that he inherited from his Baptist parents and held in one form or another for most of his life.

Broadly put, it means God, not man, is in charge. It was the source of Lincoln’s humility, historians say



FAITHFUL — The famous Lincoln Window at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., depicts frequent parishioner Abraham Lincoln.

— the force behind his refusal to condemn enemies.
“Lincoln believed God was the author of his life and history,” said Jack Van Ens, a Presbyterian pastor, historian, and actor.
“God drew out the plot and allowed Lincoln to punctuate the sentences.”

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in Love”
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