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BIBLICAL RECORDER

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BSC partners with Alliance Defending Freedom

BSC Communications

As part of a new partnership with the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), churches cooperating with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) can benefit from a variety of resources and services at a reduced cost when they join the ADF Church Alliance.

The ADF is an alliance-building legal organization that advocates for the rights of people to freely live out their faith.

ADF gives special emphasis to advocating for churches in the areas of religious liberty, the sanctity of life, and marriage and family issues.

Churches wishing to access these resources and services are encouraged to become members of the ADF Church Alliance.

Congregations that join the ADF Church Alliance have access to the following:

- Legal review of church bylaws and policies that relate to protecting religious liberty.
- Direct access to attorneys to answer questions regarding the protection of the church's religious liberty.
- Consultation for legal issues regarding religious liberty.
- Legal representation in cases involving religious liberty as they pertain to employment, land use, tax exemption, church member discipline/removal, facility use, volunteer requirements, equal access to government property, clergy confidentiality and more.
- Resources and training focused on protecting

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GO Conference invites students to 'envision' God's call for church



Panelists discuss ways to leverage students' college years for the Great Commission during the GO Conference Feb. 8. (SEBTS photo)

By LIZ TABLAZON | BR Assistant Editor

Speakers at the GO Conference called on high school and college students to see the church not as a place, but as a people during the two-day event Feb. 7-8 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) in Wake Forest, N.C.

The theme, "Envision: God's Dream for His People," explored what it meant for the church to be the body, the temple, the vine and the bride.

James White, pastor of Christ Our King Community Church in Raleigh, N.C., implored students

to look to Jesus as the model for who the church is as a body.

"Our model is Jesus, and we had nothing to do with it," he said.

"We were placed into Christ."

He said being a part of the body means Christians don't lose their distinctiveness as individual people, and they don't take sides when other members of the body suffer.

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SBC Pastors' Conference announces 'Beloved' theme

By DIANA CHANDLER | Baptist Press

Bestselling author Wayne Cordeiro and former International Mission Board (IMB) president David Platt are on a preliminary lineup of 2020 Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference speakers announced Feb. 10 at sbpc.net.

"Beloved," based on 1 John 4:11, is the theme of the conference set for June 7-8 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla., confer-

ence president David Uth has announced.

"The goal is for every pastor and his family to be encouraged and more committed to loving one another because Jesus first loved us," Uth, pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando, told Baptist Press (BP).

"This verse represents both a reminder and a challenge that are desperately needed right now.

"This year's Pastors' Conference will be an

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Why Easter is an ideal day for baptism

One of the great aspects of disciple-making is helping others understand the importance of sharing their faith and helping others come into a relationship with Christ. Another step in the discipleship process is helping them understand the importance of believer's baptism.

While baptism is not essential to salvation, it is very essential in our obedience to Christ.

Many people who attend or join our churches may not have grown up in church, or they may have grown up in a church environment that did not emphasize the importance of believer's baptism. We are robbing these individuals of a unique experience of joy if we do not help them understand the importance of celebrating their profession of faith through believer's baptism.

You may have heard or read about the "fill the tank" challenge from Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)

President J.D. Greear, who is calling SBC churches to observe the ordinance of baptism on Easter Sunday.



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

As we approach Easter this year, I want to encourage all of our North Carolina Baptist churches to include baptism as part of their Easter Sunday worship celebrations on April 12.

Granted, believer's baptism is not something that should be tacked onto a service in an insignificant way.

Start praying and planning now to make a big deal about the importance of believer's baptism and have

one or more candidates ready to be baptized this Easter. Celebrate their new spiritual life in Christ through this outward expression of an inward change in their life.

If you will announce throughout the service on Easter Sunday that you have everything available for baptism candidates to use, emphasize the meaning and importance of believer's baptism, and challenge people to fol-

low the example of Christ in being baptized after they've accepted Christ, you may be surprised at the response to this invitation.

Between now and Easter Sunday, please challenge your congregation to focus on an individual or individuals who need to accept Christ as Savior.

Encourage your people to pray for those individuals, spend time with them, present the gospel in a loving compassionate way and then – most importantly – invite them to trust in Christ as Savior.

Offer to lead them through a prayer of repentance and commitment to Christ.

If they accept Christ as Savior, rejoice with them and let them know that Easter Sunday would be a wonderful day to celebrate their decision for Christ through baptism. Don't forget to invite them to meet you at church on Sunday.

Many activities occupy the church calendar on and around Easter weekend. Enjoy them, but also use

them to help people focus on why we celebrate Easter – the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. We Baptists symbolize our own spiritual resurrection and new life in Christ through our distinctive mode of believer's baptism.

The North American Mission Board has developed a number of resources related to hosting a Baptism Sunday in your church this Easter. They are available at namb.net/baptism-sunday-resources.

So whether it's in a lake, a river or in your church's baptistery, I hope your church will have a baptism service on Easter Sunday.

"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" – Romans 6:4 (NKJV).

IN FOCUS
A WORD FROM OUR LEADER

Chinese American churches react to coronavirus

By CARTER TAN | Grace Chinese Baptist Church

It has felt like a ghost town at church for the last two weeks. The normal hustle and bustle, the loud chattering and warm greetings were noticeably missing from our Friday evening gatherings and Sunday service.

Since the news of the coronavirus broke out in early January, we have seen our church attendance decrease by nearly 40% on Sunday mornings. I expect attendance to continue to decrease as more and more cases are reported worldwide and in America. Fear is one driving factor for the decrease in attendance, while good old

precautionary common sense is the other.

Fear is a powerful emotion indeed. When our elder and deacon board issued an official statement asking church members to self-quarantine if they had been to China recently, it sparked mixed reactions. On one hand, it assured the members that leadership is taking active precautionary steps to avoid contributing to the spread of coronavirus. On the other hand, it created suspicion and irrational fear in others to stay away from the church at all costs.

In comparison, the Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report from Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention estimates that this season alone has seen at least 19 million flu illnesses, 180,000 hospitalizations and 10,000 deaths from flu. That seems to be more of a dire threat to American Chinese churches than the coronavirus.

In addition, we have also seen fear driving a rise in racism and xenophobia against people of Chinese descent. I see more and more news articles on this topic daily. Unfortunately, this hit a little too close to home for my middle school daughter, Eliza Tan. She mentioned a boy in her school teased her by calling her "Coronavirus!"

In spite of fear, I have also seen our church readjusting to the new

normal. Although many small groups are no longer meeting at church, they have started using video conferencing as an alternate way to gather, pray and encourage each other. There are also ongoing conversations regarding the possibility of live streaming small group meetings, church leadership meetings and Sunday services. We desire church members to participate even though they are not physically at church. It is encouraging to me that God's people will always find creative ways to worship despite their circumstances.

I would also like to extend an appreciation to Amos Lee, the executive

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IMB names prevention, response administrator

By ANN LOVELL | IMB

The International Mission Board (IMB) has selected Somer Nowak to fill the newly created position of prevention and response administrator for the 175-year-old entity. In this role, Nowak will oversee and manage prevention and response efforts for child abuse (physical and sexual), sexual harassment (including sexual assault) and domestic violence.

IMB is the first Southern Baptist entity to create a position for this purpose, fulfilling IMB President Paul Chitwood's commitment to lead the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in abuse prevention and response.

"The prevention and response administrator position is evidence that IMB absolutely remains committed to making changes necessary to better prevent instances of child abuse and sexual harassment (including sexual assault) and to better care for victims while holding perpetrators accountable," Chitwood said, announcing the selection of Nowak during the Jan. 30 plenary session of IMB trustee meetings in Riverside, Calif.

Ronnie Floyd, president of the SBC Executive Committee, welcomed the addition of this new role. He stressed the importance of equipping missionaries and staff with the tools necessary to prevent and respond to allegations of abuse in a timely and effective manner.

"With an organization as large as the IMB that has personnel located across the entire globe, we need to do all we can to equip our missionaries and all personnel to prevent abuse in every way and to respond in a timely and effective way to any matters relating to abuse," Floyd said. "I want to thank Dr. Paul Chitwood and the trustees of our IMB for adding this new prevention and response administrator position."

J.D. Greear, SBC president and pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, N.C., added his affirmation of the role as a standard for the convention.

"I am glad to see our SBC agencies continue to take concrete steps to ensure that we care well for those who have been abused and do all that we can to prevent future abuse," Greear said. "The IMB hiring someone to serve in an abuse prevention and response role is an example of the kind of staffing decision our agencies need to consider."

IMB created the position in response to recommendations from Gray Plant Mooty, the external firm tasked with examining IMB's handling of past allegations regarding child abuse and sexual harassment (including sexual assault) as well as a review of IMB's policies and practices. During Nowak's first year, she will focus on implementing all of the recommendations from the external examination in addition to handling new cases as they occur.

"IMB leadership is implementing every recommendation presented by Gray Plant Mooty, diligently moving toward the highest standards in abuse prevention and response, including providing compassionate care," Chitwood said Jan. 30. "The



SOMER NOWAK

prevention and response administrator position is another vital step of implementation."

In July 2018, then-IMB President David Platt called for the external examination. IMB trustee officers interviewed numerous potential outside investigators for the task and selected Gray Plant Mooty, headquartered in Minneapolis, Minn., to conduct the examination. After his election in November 2018, Chitwood affirmed his commitment to the examination.

Nowak previously worked as a counselor with the Cherokee County Board of Education in Centre, Ala. In this role, she worked alongside county officials to identify victims of child abuse and take appropriate steps in reporting. She also educated school staff and parents on child abuse and prevention, including identifying the signs of child abuse and how to report it.

Nowak also worked as a forensic interviewer, forensic counselor and educational consultant for Children's Advocacy of Cherokee County in Centre, Ala. In this role she assisted local schools in reporting child abuse cases and counseling victims of abuse and performed forensic interviews for local law enforcement in suspected child abuse cases.

Nowak holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and psychology, a master's degree in community agency counseling, and an educational specialist degree in school counseling from Jacksonville State University.

Missionaries appointed

Representing Southern Baptist churches throughout the United States, 21 IMB missionaries were publicly celebrated during a service at Magnolia Church in Riverside, Calif., Jan. 29.

Missionary couple John and Grace are returning to London after serving there with the IMB for two years.

"After graduating from the university in December of 2015, we got married in January and started full-time ministry at Apex Baptist Church, helping

plant their first satellite campus a week later, and then started full-time seminary at Southeastern Seminary a week after that. It was a crazy month," said John.

"After two years at Apex Baptist Church, we moved to London to serve with the IMB where God captured our hearts for the city over the past two years," he continued.

John and Grace are sent from Apex Baptist Church in Apex, N.C., and will serve among European peoples in London.

Board meeting

Chitwood announced IMB's five-year plan during meetings with trustees Jan. 29-30 in Riverside, Calif. IMB trustees also elected Charles Clark as vice president of mobilization and Price Jett as vice president of finance, logistics and technology.


Clark most recently served with the IMB as affinity group leader for the Americas. Clark has more than 15 years' experience with IMB.

Growing up as a missionary kid in the Americas, Clark began his career with IMB as a church planter in 2004 after working more than 30 years in the corporate world in progressive leadership roles. Clark completed his corporate career as vice president of e-Business with Occidental Chemical Corporation and vice president of global solutions with HAHT Commerce. He and his wife, Karen, have three grown children and nine grandchildren.

Jett has served as chief information officer for IMB since July 2019. In this role, Jett has managed all aspects of IMB's technology portfolio and established a global governance process for technology initiatives, as well as restructured financial arrangements with vendors to eliminate waste. Prior to work at IMB, Jett founded The Care Group, using technology to help families navigate the complex world of elder care. Jett also previously served as the chief information officer and executive director of The Corporate Executive Board (now Gartner) from 2002 to 2016.

As executive director and chief information officer, Jett led a technology team of 300 and a publishing team of 200 across five continents. He and his wife Diedre have three children, Peter, 13, Price, 18, and Rachel, 20.

In response to a motion made during the 2019 Southern Baptist Convention in Birmingham, Ala., IMB trustees also voted to recommend to the SBC "that the IMB sponsor the addition to the SBC calendar of an annual George Liele Missions and Evangelism Day, to be held on the first Sunday of February of each year," beginning in 2021.

George Liele was a Georgia slave who came to faith in 1773 at age 23, was given his freedom to pursue God's call on his life, became the first ordained African American Baptist preacher in America and planted the gospel in Jamaica as the first missionary from America. "As we seek to educate Southern Baptists on our own history, we are grateful for the prospect of being able to promote an annual George Liele Missions and Evangelism Day," Chitwood said. 

Stetzer to chair 2020 SBC Resolutions Committee

Baptist Press

Missiologist and researcher Ed Stetzer has been named chairman of the 2020 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Resolutions Committee, SBC president J.D. Greear announced Feb. 11.

Greear also announced his appointment of Angela Suh Um of Cambridge, Mass., as vice chair. Um will be only the second woman to serve in a leadership role on the committee, according to Baptist Press' review of SBC records.

"Ed Stetzer has planted, revitalized and pastored churches across the country in a variety of settings," Greear told Baptist Press. "Additional-

ly, his vast experience as a researcher makes him uniquely qualified to understand the questions and concerns that the churches of the SBC face. He is a strong leader who can guide the committee as they help the messengers express their positions on issues that matter to them."

Greear continued, "Ed has planted a church in Buffalo among the urban poor, served as interim pastor of a traditional SBC megachurch in Tennessee, and ministered to pastors in between, including just two weeks ago at the Oklahoma Baptist pastors conference.

He is committed to unity around the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, and seeks the gospel above all."

Stetzer is a professor at Wheaton College, where he also serves as executive director of the Billy Graham Center and dean of the School of Missions, Ministry, and Leadership. Prior to that, he was vice president at LifeWay Christian Resources and served as director of research and missiologist-in-residence for the North American Mission Board.

"Resolutions offer the messengers an opportunity to express their collective opinion on the issues that matter to them," Stetzer said in written comments.

"My hope is that in Orlando, Southern Baptists can pass statements that bring us together, make clear what we believe, and reflect broad consensus.

It is my goal that our committee will work to serve the messengers and honor Christ as we consider the issues that are of utmost importance."

Um, who served on the 2019 Resolutions Committee, is founder and chief consultant at Boston Academic Consulting Group. She also serves as a young adult director at Antioch Baptist Church in Cambridge, where her husband David is senior pastor.

The only other woman appointed to a leadership role on the committee was Nancy Victory of Louisiana, who was appointed by president Jim Henry to chair the committee in 1996.

Greear's other appointments to the Resolutions Committee will be announced later this month. 


Acts 29 removes CEO

Baptist Press

The board of Acts 29 voted to remove CEO Steve Timmis from the global church planting network after investigating accusations about his "abusive leadership" style.

"The board of Acts 29 was made aware of some accusations of abusive leadership against our CEO Steve Timmis," read a statement to Baptist Press. "The board launched an investigation of these claims and found evidence that he should be transitioned out of the CEO role immediately."

Christianity Today published a heavily-sourced article with accounts from former church members, elders and friends of Timmis describing manipulation, intimidation and spiritual abuse. Then the UK-based church which Timmis founded, The Crowded House, also confirmed online his resignation as a church elder.

The stated mission of Acts 29, led by president Matt Chandler, pastor of The Village Church in Flower Mound, Texas, is to be a diverse, global family of church-planting churches characterized by theological clarity, cultural engagement and missional innovation. 

Deadline extended to make recommendations for BSC

BSC Communications

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) Committee on Nominations has voted to extend the deadline to submit recommendations for individuals to serve in various leadership roles with the state convention.

Recommendations will now be accepted until April 16 for terms of service that will begin in 2021.

"There are many opportunities for you to get involved in North Carolina Baptist life through various boards and committees of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and its related entities," said Milton A. Hollifield Jr., BSC executive director-treasurer.

"Serving with the state convention allows you to provide perspective, insight and leadership to the ministries of our convention as we seek to assist churches in their divinely appointed mission."

Recommendations may be made for individuals to serve on the BSC's Board of Directors, other convention committees, and boards of the convention's institutions and agencies, which include the Baptist Children's

Homes of North Carolina, the *Biblical Recorder*, N.C. Baptist Hospital and the N.C. Baptist Foundation.

To learn more or make a recommendation, visit ncbaptist.org/recommend.

Recommendations may be made online or forms may be downloaded and returned by mail.

"Recommendations of North Carolina Baptists for places of service and leadership in denominational work are essential for ongoing missions, ministries and evangelistic endeavors," said Brian Davis, BSC's associate executive director-treasurer.

Convention officials desire to see a broad representation of N.C. Baptists nominated to serve in various capacities.

Recommendations are sought from churches of all sizes and geographic locations.

Convention officials also desire a

diverse pool of nominees, which includes pastors, laity, men, women and individuals from different ethnicities.

Individuals may only occupy one place of service per term, and no more than six members of any one church may collectively serve at any one time on all boards and committees. Only one individual from an N.C. Baptist church may serve on the BSCNC's board of directors.

Questions may be directed to Cynthia King at (800) 395-5102 or cking@ncbaptist.org. 

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NEWS BRIEFS

Arkansas Baptist News merged into convention

(Baptist Press) Amid the headwinds that have beset print journalism outlets nationwide, *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) trustees have voted to dissolve the separate, corporate entity that operated ABN and to transfer coordination of the news service to the executive board of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC).

The move, precipitated by a significant decline in subscriptions and revenue, leaves ABN's future uncertain. But ABSC associate executive director Greg Addison said the decision revolves around structural changes, not ministry changes. "There is no desire to kill the newspaper at all," Addison said. "The ministry of information is vitally important."

ABN trustees made the decision Jan. 16, and the transition was unanimously affirmed by the ABSC executive board of trustees Jan. 28.

West Virginia convention elects Eric Ramsey

(WVSCB) Eric Ramsey was elected executive director-treasurer of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists (WVCSB) by the WVCSB Executive Board during a special called meeting Feb. 1 at the state office in Scott Depot.

"West Virginia Southern Baptists are a gospel-passionate people whom God has utilized for half of a century to declare His glory among our neighbors and the nations," Ramsey said. "[My wife] Gaye and I are humbled and grateful to be joining our hearts and our hands with West Virginia Southern Baptists to run to the darkness with the light of the gospel."

Ramsey assumed his new role immediately and began work in the convention's offices Feb. 10. He had served as the associate pastor of First Baptist Church of Fort Smith, Ark., since 2015 and previously held roles with the North American Mission Board and Tom Cox World Ministries, a global missions organization.

Ramsey has been married to his wife Gaye for nearly 32 years. They have two children, Andrew and Alisha.

MacDonald new Dakota Baptist exec

(DBC) The Dakota Baptist Convention (DBC) Executive Board has hired Fred MacDonald as executive director and treasurer to succeed Garvon Golden who retired. He is scheduled to begin May 1 in the post.

MacDonald has served in several denominational posts, most recently as director of associational missions for Pecos Valley Baptist Association in New Mexico, where he helped establish an international partnership with Hope Baptist Centre in Pretoria, South Africa. The partnership has seen dozens come to faith in Christ and 21 South African pastors and their wives trained in the biblical basics of pastoral ministry, the DBC said.

MacDonald has served as senior pastor to churches in New Mexico and South Dakota and as a missionary appointed by the North American Mission Board to the DBC. He and Denise have been married for almost 39 years, and have six children and five grandchildren.

OPPORTUNITY CORNER

The North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry's 2020 Senior Adult Ministry State Leadership Conference will focus on the challenges and rewards of waiting on the Lord during difficult seasons of life.

- **When:** May 5, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- **Where:** Bay Leaf Baptist Church,

Raleigh

- **Keynote:** Michael Barrett

There will also be 12 breakout options focusing on holistic strategies for gaining peace, wisdom, and renewal during seasons of waiting.

Visit ncbam.org/aaim or call (877) 506-2226.

'Grassroots' network launched to address SBC direction concerns

By DIANA CHANDLER | Baptist Press

A group described as "grassroots" Southern Baptists announced the formation of the Conservative Baptist Network Feb. 14. Group spokesperson Brad Jurkovich, pastor of First Baptist Church of Bossier City, La., told Baptist Press (BP) the group was launched to address concerns about the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Jurkovich is the only person publicly identified as part of the group's leadership. He declined to share names of other leaders, though he said it was "really local pastor-driven."

"There's lots of people involved with the network, and that's really the passion behind it," Jurkovich said. "There's just lots of people around the country and [Southern Baptist] Convention that are involved with this."

"Right now," Jurkovich told BP, "we haven't really shared a lot of those names, etcetera, on a lot of fronts. So, and again, part of that is structurally, we're still putting some things together that when we want to share that, we will certainly be ready to do that."

In a press release, the network said it is not a new denomination or a competitor with other like-minded ministries. In response to potential division the network's founding could cause, SBC Executive Committee president and CEO Ronnie Floyd released a statement Feb. 14.

"Since I arrived at the EC, I have worked diligently on moving us towards a clear, concise, and compelling unified Great Commission vision," said Floyd, who assumed the role in May 2019 after nearly 33 years as pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas. "The Southern Baptist Convention is at her best when churches are partnering together for mission and standing on the inerrant, infallible, sufficient Word of God. Regardless of our secondary affiliations or networks, we must continue to uphold the Baptist Faith and Message, cooperating with one another for the purpose of seeing every person reached for Jesus Christ in every town, every city, every state and every nation."

"Anyone who has questions about our future together, please stay tuned. ... Now is the time for all of us to come together around the heartbeat of missions and evangelism."

During a radio interview Feb. 14

on The Todd Starnes Show, Jurkovich was asked if it is time for a second Conservative Resurgence.

"Absolutely," he told Starnes.


The network has the support of Chuck Kelley, president emeritus of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and various leaders of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Cordova, Tenn.

But when asked by BP, Jurkovich would neither confirm nor deny whether former Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary president Paige Patterson, a prominent leader in the original Southern Baptist Conservative Resurgence that began in the late 1970s, is involved in the network's leadership. About 800 pastors joined the network within three hours of its launch, Jurkovich told BP, but he provided no names nor churches.

The network officially launched Feb. 14 with a website and press release, and announced a formal launch event June 8, the evening before the opening session of the 2020 SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla. In its press release, the network said "a significant number of Southern Baptists are concerned about the apparent emphasis on social justice, Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality, and the redefining of biblical gender roles."

Additionally, the press release referenced Vice President Mike Pence's appearance at the 2018 annual meeting in Dallas, suggesting "when all attempts to keep the vice president from speaking failed, scores of messengers exited the convention in protest as the vice president began his address." The press release accused those who exited the Dallas hall of "insolence and disrespect ... foreign to what the Bible teaches about respecting those in authority in 1 Peter 2:11-17."

According to video of the session reviewed by BP, the meeting hall appeared full, with many messengers standing to their feet and applauding during his speech. A small number could be seen exiting the hall, but it is unclear whether their action was done in protest.

The network has announced no plans to endorse a current candidate nor enter a nominee for elected offices of the SBC. When asked about the network's funding, Jurkovich said grassroots support has been offered, but the group currently has no official funding stream. 

Church revitalization key to convention's strategy

BSC Communications

Last fall, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) announced a new emphasis on strengthening churches. The emphasis included the formation of a newly named Church Health and Revitalization Team headed by BSC staff member Sandy Marks. Marks assumed his new duties at the beginning of the year, and he outlined his vision for church revitalization to the state convention's board of directors at the board's January meeting. We caught up with Marks following his remarks to the board to capture his heart for church revitalization in this interview.

Congratulations on your new position. What's your goal and vision for the new Church Health and Revitalization team?

Our stated goal is to see God glorified through churches returning to their mission of impacting lostness by making disciples. That's the guiding philosophy of our team and is what the team will be about.

Who will make up the team?

We'll be adding a staff member who will serve as a full-time consultant for church revitalization, which is the role I had previously been serving in. We'll also utilize consultants and contract workers in several other areas. These include leadership development, worship and music, pastoral ministry, church administration, chaplaincy and more. Plus, we'll also serve a variety of specific populations that includes African-American ministry, Hispanic ministry, Asian ministry, as well as ministries to those with special needs.

Church revitalization has become a hot topic in recent years. Yet there may be some churches in need of revitalization that don't know it. What does church health really look like today?

Church revitalization is a great need across our state and nation. The North American Mission Board reports that 70-75% of Southern Baptist churches in North America are plateaued or declining.

Thom Rainer says that nine out of 10 churches in America are declining or growing more slowly than their communities. When communities are

growing but churches are not, that's a sign we are not impacting lostness in that community. Rainer also reported in January 2018 that between 6,000 and 10,000 churches close each year.

To bring it home to North Carolina, LifeWay reports that 82.4% of churches have either plateaued or are in decline. That's all based on data submitted by churches from the Annual Church Profile. The numbers are staggering.

So where do we begin?

First, we understand that revitalization is a work of God as the Holy Spirit moves amongst His church. But we also recognize that there are certain skills and abilities that are needed as a pastor and leader to position the church to be receptive to the move of God. This is a process and

not a program. The process we will use focuses on three phases – revitalizing the man, revitalizing the ministry and revitalizing the mission.

What's involved with revitalizing the pastor, and why start there?

Because churches are never going to surpass the health of their pastor. It's only after pastors become

healthy themselves and are growing spiritually that they are able to lead a congregation down this path. Our revitalization process starts with helping pastors connect with other pastors in a cohort where they can find community, fellowship, equipping and prayer. Revitalization is hard work and involves spiritual warfare. Engaging this alone is unwise, so we enter the process with other pastors who are in the same place and going on the same journey.

Where do things go from there?

Next, we focus on revitalizing the ministry and revitalizing the mission. Revitalizing the ministry brings the church into the process by helping them to see where they are as a congregation and get a true picture of their community. In many churches, both the congregation and the community around them have changed, but they don't realize it. This phase helps them see the big picture and moves them toward engaging the community. Churches have spent years trying to do everything they can to get the community into the church, but revitalization works to get the church into our communities. And we




SANDY MARKS



"First, we understand that revitalization is a work of God as the Holy Spirit moves amongst His church," said Sandy Marks, team leader for church health and revitalization for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. (Unsplash photo by John Cafazza)

Any final thoughts?

Remember that revitalization is a work of God and there is no quick fix or silver bullet. But I believe we can position our churches to once again capture a movement of God that He desires to do in our midst. Pray for our team as we seek to assist churches. And if we can help your church in any way, please call our office.

Contact (800) 395-5102, ext. 5651. 

help pastors lead their congregations through this.

Finally, revitalizing the mission involves establishing a disciple-making process that moves a person from an unbeliever to a disciple to a disciple who makes disciples. We offer coaching and resources to support the church's overarching strategy.

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embrace
ROUNDTABLES

GO Continued from page 1

“We suffer with everyone.”

SEBTS President Danny Akin reminded participants that their bodies and actions matter because they are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

He offered six reflections to consider: Will this action build me up? Will it enslave my soul? Will this action exalt the Savior? Will it encourage other saints? Will it help evangelize sinners? Will this exemplify my Savior?

“Love always regulates my liberty,” Akin said.

D.A. Horton, pastor of Reach Fellowship in Long Beach, Calif., spoke on abiding in Christ and the fruit that it bears.

“The meaningfulness of our relationship with God is put on display by the flourishing of relationships with all others who, too, are connected to the vine,” Horton said. “If we are right with God, we should be right with each other.”

“Loving God is demonstrated by obeying Him,” he said. Horton said because God does not stop loving us when we disappoint Him, we don’t need to stop loving others who disappoint us, even if the relationship were to look different.

Artist and author Shai Linne closed the conference elaborating on the qualities of Christ’s love for the church: it is exclusive, sanctifying and tender.

“When Jesus died on the cross, it wasn’t for this faceless, nameless mass of humanity,” he said. “If you’re trusting in Christ, He had you specifically in mind.”

“He accepts us the way we are, but He doesn’t leave us the way we are,” he said.

Students heard from a panel of two pastors and two students, moderated by Eli Byrd, that discussed different and practical ways local churches can serve students and how students can get involved in the church. Panelists suggested inviting students into homes and families’ lives and find-



Above, students attend one of more than 20 breakout sessions offered during the GO Conference Feb. 7-8 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. At left, students hear from four speakers on what it means for the church to be God’s people. (SEBTS photos)



ing ways to tangibly support them through things like meals and tutoring. They encouraged students to be present and “show up” – to join a local church, ready and willing to serve.

Conference participants chose from more than 20 breakout sessions

membership matters, led by Cody Padrnos, assistant director of admissions for The College at Southeastern, explored the unique ways that living in community with fellow believers is sanctifying.

“Any Christian that maybe doesn’t

throughout the second day of the event. The sessions covered a broad range of topics from abuse to dating to anxiety and depression.

A session on why church

see why church membership is so necessary can be OK, can probably do pretty good. But when you put him up against other believers, as we understand Solomon saying – the wisest man – ‘Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.’”

Maurice Wilson, a member of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, N.C., and intern at First Baptist Church of Durham, held a session on the experience of wounds from absent, abusive and/or aloof fathers and how the gospel brings healing to such hurts. Through the gospel, he said, children know their identity and are affirmed by a Father who says, “You are mine.”

Josh Via led worship throughout the conference. **BR**

Send Relief announces Mark Richt as national spokesperson

By **BRANDON ELROD** | NAMB

Mark Richt, a former college football head coach and current college football commentator, will be a national spokesman for Send Relief, the compassion ministry arm of the North Ameri-

can Mission Board (NAMB).

“I’ve been a part of some great teams as both a player and a coach,” Richt said via a video on social media. “I’m so excited to announce my support of another great team – Send Relief. It’s a compassion ministry working to meet needs and change lives

across North America.”

Since launching in 2016, Send Relief has been helping churches and individuals meet needs in their community with five ministry areas: poverty, refugees and internationals, foster care and adoption, human trafficking and crisis response. **BR**

Theme Continued from page 1

opportunity for pastors and their families to experience a different kind of conference; one that not only celebrates our commitment to the Word of God and the ministries He has given us, but also to have fun and celebrate because we are in the entertainment capital of the world, Orlando!" he told BP.

Among speakers already confirmed, Cordeiro is founding pastor of New Hope Christian Fellowship, based in Honolulu, Hawaii, as a chartered church of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. Platt, senior pastor of McLean Bible Church based in Vienna, Va., was IMB president from August 2014 to September 2018.

"From the speakers to the special guests," the conference's press release read, "this year's conference will look at how we must first understand God's love for us, and then we must go out and share that love with the people we lead and the communities we serve."

Also confirmed as speakers are Jim Cymbala, pastor of The Brooklyn Tabernacle in Brooklyn, NY; Vance Pittman, senior pastor of Hope Church in Las Vegas; David Hughes, senior pastor of Church by the Glades in Coral Springs, Fla.; Joby Martin, lead pastor of The Church of Eleven22 in Jacksonville, Fla.; Jimmy Scroggins, lead pastor of the multisite Family Church, based in West Palm Beach, Fla.; Emerson Eggerichs, bestselling author and founder of Love and Respect Ministries; and Erik Cummings Sr., senior pastor of New Life Baptist Church of Carol City, Fla., and comedian and speaker Ken Davis. Additional speakers will be announced. Sessions are scheduled June 7 from 6-9 p.m., and June 8 from 9-11:30 a.m., 1:30-4 p.m., and 6-9 p.m.

Contemporary Christian musician, singer and songwriter Phil Wickham will lead worship, and spoken word artist Hosanna Wong will perform.

"My goal, my prayer was that we could open ourselves up to hear from people that maybe were good friends of ours, but not in our Southern Baptist Convention," Uth said in comments to BP on Feb. 11. "I feel like they have a message for us. I feel like God wants to speak to us through them. So my goal and my hope was that we could hear their message, we could learn from them, and we could embrace it."

Wong, who is a network associate teaching pastor at the Chula Vista location of the multisite East-Lake Church in the San Diego area, is performing a specific selection pertinent to the conference theme of "Beloved," and is not preaching, Uth said.

Wong is active in Celebrate Recovery, Uth said, and has appeared several times at First Baptist Orlando as well as other Southern Baptist churches, including Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., which founded Celebrate Recovery under Pastor Rick Warren.

Only 9% of conference speakers will be non-Southern Baptist, he said, including Wong and two preachers, Jim Cymbala, pastor of the evangelical non-denominational Brooklyn Tabernacle in Brooklyn, NY; and Wayne Cordeiro, founding pastor of New Hope Christian Fellowship, based in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Both preachers have spoken at First

Chinese Continued from page 2

director of the Chinese Baptist Fellowship of Southern Baptist Convention. In the wake of this tragedy, Rev. Amos proactively sent out precautionary guidance to Southern Baptist Convention Chinese churches and forwarded personal prayer requests from our brothers and sisters in Christ from within Wuhan, China. As I read those prayer requests, I could not help but let my tears flow. It broke my heart to read of God's people suf-

Partners Continued from page 1

the religious liberty of the church.

"The BSCNC partnership with ADF opens a myriad of resources to churches at a greatly reduced cost," said Brian Davis, BSC associate executive director-treasurer.

"ADF uses a sliding scale to help congregations with the smallest budgets access the same great legal counsel, resources and services previously only available to churches with larger budgets."

The ADF Church Alliance mem-



Baptist Orlando and are friends of the church, he said.

All preachers and presenters were chosen after prayer with God's guidance, with the intention of edifying and encouraging pastors, Uth said. None of the speakers or performers are intended to cause confusion or create dissension, he said.

"We knew there would be some who objected," he told BP.

"But then, we look back in our past and there have been others that have spoken, both at the Southern Baptist

Convention and at pastors' conferences that have not been a Southern Baptist.

The pastors' conference is one of several related events in advance of the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting.

The SBC Executive Committee (EC) requests the conference to reimburse the EC \$100,000 each year for conference use of the meeting hall and facilities at the SBC annual meeting, the EC told BP.

Visit sbpc.net.

fering in China. May God's light shine its brightest in such dark times.

As this tragedy continues to unfold, we clearly see broken humanity and broken creation. It never ends. A new strain of the virus is always on the verge of breaking out. If it's not coronavirus today, it's Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) or Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) from a decade or two ago. The good news is, most people infected with

coronavirus can expect to recover, but all people plagued by sin have no escape from death. There is no cure, except the gift of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus our Lord and Savior. May this terrible tragedy drive people to the arms of Jesus.

(EDITOR'S NOTE - Carter Tan is the English Ministries pastor at Grace Chinese Baptist Church in Richmond, Va.)

bership fee is based upon a sliding scale using a church's average weekly attendance. For example, the subscription fee for a church with attendance up to 150 is \$25 per month or a \$250 single annual payment.

For more information and to apply for membership in the ADF Church Alliance, visit adfchurchalliance.org/partners/north-carolina-baptists.

Enter the special promo code found on the page for an additional discount as a BSC cooperating

church. In addition, church plants qualify for a special membership rate in the ADF Church Alliance of only \$100 per year for the first year.

For more information and to apply for membership in the ADF Church Alliance as a church plant, visit adfchurchalliance.org/cp and enter the promo code: ChurchPlant. Questions about the BSC partnership with ADF may be directed to Brian Davis at bdavis@ncbaptist.org or 1 (800) 395-5102, ext. 5506.



A group from **Baptists on Mission** gathers to pray for the reach of the new health screening ministry bus (in background). The bus is being prepped for its first assignment Feb. 22 in Spring Hope, N.C. Volunteers will provide screenings for depression, heart disease, cholesterol and diabetes. To find out more about this ministry, visit baptistsonmission.org. (BSC photo by K Brown)

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Baptist state editors talk unity, vision

By GEORGE SCHROEDER | Baptist Press

Saying “Gospel Above All” is “more than a slogan,” Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) president J.D. Greear urged unity in remarks this week at the annual meeting of the Association of State Baptist Publications.

Citing Romans 14, Greear suggested Paul’s exhortation and admonishment to believers not to pass judgment on nonessentials applies to some current issues in the SBC. “Gospel Above All” is the theme chosen by Greear for the upcoming 2020 SBC annual meeting, just as it was for the 2019 annual meeting. He said for the theme to become reality, Southern Baptists must not divide over tertiary issues.

“Paul had a definite perspective on what was right, which is what to me makes his instruction all the more relevant,” said Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, N.C. “Because he’s not talking about issues

that don’t matter. He’s saying, ‘In this issue, I know I’m right, but I just don’t want to let this issue create division in this body, and unity in the body is more important than uniformity on perspective on these things.’”

During his presentations to state Baptist executives and editors, Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee (EC), unveiled “Vision 2025,” and also cited Paul in emphasizing the need for strong relationships in order to achieve unity and to accomplish the collective goal of reaching “every town, every city, every state and every nation” with the gospel.

“We’ve got to rediscover the power of relationships,” said Floyd, who added that Paul’s epistles show clearly, “the gospel traveled on the tracks of relationships.”

Floyd, who assumed the SBC EC role in May 2019 after almost 33 years as senior pastor of Cross Church in Springdale, Ark., said he views his

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Holy

March 1

Focal Passage: Isaiah 40:25-31

Do you remember the “Sesame Street” sketch with that really catchy song?

“One of these things is not like the other. One of these things just doesn’t belong. Can you tell which thing is not like the others by the time I finish my song?”

Is it stuck in your head now like it is mine?

Through the prophet Isaiah, God asks us to make an even weightier observation. In a divine juxtaposition, He holds His character and His power up to every created thing and says, “To whom will you compare me?”

In this same passage, God shows us three ways His holiness is demonstrated. First, it is demonstrated in creation. God is the only one who can create something out of nothing.

He’s the only one so powerful that He can create stars – and name them!

God is the only one who has infinite knowledge.

Even when we feel as if God is uninformed about what is going on in our lives, He actually knows more details about ourselves than we do!

Not only is God different from us as creator and as all-knowing, He differs from us in His strength. There really is no one like Him! Remembering His holiness causes us to be reverent before Him as we realize how different from us He is.

It also gives us confidence in prayer. We know we are coming to God, who has all power. Because God is holy, He can be trusted. He is the One who is like none of the others.



ANTENESHIA SANDERS
member, The Summit
Church, Durham

Focal Passages: Luke 15:11-14, 17-24

I’m pretty sure every kid knows what it’s like to lose their mom in the grocery store. I used to do it all the time. I would get distracted by something on a shelf somewhere and either walk away from where my mom was standing or not realize she had moved on. The panic I felt from being outside of my mother’s gaze and protection could be dizzying. Relief only came when I realized it was better for me to be near her.

Jesus told an audience the story of a son who chose to be lost. He didn’t think the life he was being provided in his father’s household was enough. In an act of complete disrespect for his father, the son took his share of the

Lost

March 8

inheritance and left to find what he thought would be a better life. But when a famine hit, the son had no money left, no food and no shelter.

More than that, he didn’t have his father to protect him. Life wasn’t better for him at all. Without his father’s protection, he was lost and in danger. And then, he didn’t even know if he was even worthy to return.

Jesus was illustrating that just like this young son, we too are lost. Because of our sin, we are separated from God. Naturally, we are predisposed to sin. When we sin, we choose to live apart from God.

Thanks be to God that He made a way for us to come back to Him! When we acknowledge God’s holiness and our sinfulness, we can have forgiveness through Christ. God is willing and waiting with open arms for us to return to Him in repentance and faith.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Compelled

March 1

Focal passages: Romans 1:1-7, 13-17

“EXTRA, EXTRA, read all about it!” a familiar cry heard on the street corners of every major city in the early 20th century. Paperboys – or “newsies,” as they were often known – would shout news to pedestrians as they hawked their papers. They had stories to share, and the more vocal and engaged they were, the more interest they gained.

Paul opens his letter to the Romans declaring the most important news we will ever hear. Paul shares the truth of the gospel noting that it was promised and declared by the prophets (v.2), is found in Christ (v. 3), seen in the resurrection (v. 4) and offered to all (v. 5).

The gospel message that Paul declares is truth without error. The newsies shared their message with urgency and conviction. Paul yearned

to share the gospel message with the Romans. He had an obligation based on his remembrance of who he used to be and an understanding of who he had become because of Jesus in his life. Paul no longer walked in darkness because he had encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) and now knowing the truth, he was obligated to share it with others, that they too may know.

Much like the world we live in today, the message of the gospel was held in contempt by those who did not believe. Those who were bold enough to declare the good news faced ridicule and persecution. Sound familiar? Yet, Paul carried no shame in sharing it. (v. 16).

There is power in the gospel message, and it changes lives.



WOODY WALLS
pastoral intern, Beach Road
Baptist Church, Southport

Focal passages: Romans 1:18-28, 32

Well-known preacher Charles Spurgeon once wrote, “He who looks sinward has his back to God. He who looks Godward has his back to sin.”

In those words, Spurgeon casts great light on the message Paul shares about our guilt, our sinful desires and our depraved nature. Absent an appropriate response to the gospel, our lives are doomed for death and destruction. That’s a pretty bleak picture.

God’s wrath isn’t something we like to talk about, but it is very real and for our own good. His wrath directed at our sin is a reminder that God is holy.

Humanity left to itself and its own natural desires quickly finds a path

to destruction. Despite God’s revelation of Himself through creation (see Genesis 1-2), man chooses to forsake the Creator and worship the created. We are prone to idol worship, building up for ourselves our own kingdoms. We call them names like entertainment, wealth, career and status. In those pursuits we turn away from God and to our sinful nature.

We don’t have to look much further than the news and social media to see a vivid contemporary picture of what Paul warned about. Abortion paraded as a matter of choice, sexual immorality normalized in our society, greed, lust and pride overlooked, all in the name of being a progressive society. The very things we naturally chase are what leave us broken, hurting, destitute and morally bankrupt. Sinward or Godward, one path leads to destruction and the other leads to righteousness.

Guilty

March 8

Editors Continued from page 9


role “through the lens of a pastor,” and said the EC “exists to serve churches.”

“That’s what we do,” he said, adding: “We’re going to champion pastors.”

He told the editors that he was “completely content” to continue as Cross Church’s pastor, but felt a

distinct calling to the new role with the EC. He told the editors he believes in the SBC.

Others who spoke to the ASBP participants included: International Mission Board (IMB) president Paul Chitwood; North American Mission Board president Kevin Ezell; Southwestern

Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) president Adam Greenway; Guidestone Financial Resources president and CEO O.S. Hawkins; Lifeway Christian Resources president and CEO Ben Mandrell; and Woman’s Missionary Union executive director-treasurer Sandy Wisdom-Martin. 

CLASSIFIEDS

Denominational

Part-time Adult Consultant. Do you love missions? Do you want to spread that love of missions to others? Woman’s Missionary Union of North Carolina is seeking a part-time adult consultant to lead NC churches in facilitating missions education, and missions and ministry involvement opportunities for adults. Candidates must be passionate about equipping adults to spread the gospel, skilled in verbal and written communication, innovative in designing and implementing missions programming, and organized in coordinating people and events (such as retreats, conferences, mission projects, etc.). A college degree and five years of relevant experience required. Seminary degree preferred, but not necessary as additional training can be provided. To see a copy of the job description please visit our website at www.wmunc.org/home/employment-opportunities. Please email your résumé and cover letter to Amy Boone at aboone@wmunc.org by February 28, 2020.

Pastor

Riverview Baptist Church of Lincolnton, NC, is prayerfully seeking a **full-time senior pastor**. We are a conservative body of believers who enjoy a traditional to blended style of worship. We are affiliated and support the SBC, BSCNC and the South Fork Association. We adhere to the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message. Applicants should have minimum of five years’ pastoral experience with some degree of Bible college and/or seminary training. Send résumés: c/o Pastor Search Committee: RVBC, 2230 Riverview Rd., Lincolnton, NC 28092; or email office@riverviewbaptist.us.

Church Staff

First Baptist Church in Eden, NC, is seeking a **full-time Children and Youth Minister** to use his or her gifts to nurture children and their families. Emphasis should focus on building young disciples for Christ by developing and implementing a comprehensive approach to ministry (in areas of group building, worship, discipleship, mission, and outreach) while serving as a spiritual leader and role model. We are seeking one who exhibits a personal spiritual life congruent with biblical mandates for leaders called to ministry, one who loves young people and has a passion for evangelism and outreach for both personal and ministerial. Send résumés to pastorraig@firstbaptistchurcheden.com.

First Baptist Church of Mocksville is seeking a **part-time (20-24 hours per week) Financial Secretary/Church Administrator**. Candidate should be proficient in Excel, Quicken and Microsoft Word. Strong organizational, time management skills and confidentiality on the job are a must. Duties to include all aspects of church finances – charitable giving, accounts receivables, accounts payable, payroll, taxes, etc. Send résumés to jobs@fbcmocksville.org.

First Baptist Church of Mocksville is seeking a **part-time Worship Leader** for our 11 am traditional service. This position would include planning music for worship; directing and practicing with our adult choir for special music; as well as directing our children’s choir. Interested applicants should send cover letter and résumés to jobs@fbcmocksville.org.

First Baptist Church of Reidsville, Inc. is seeking a **part-time Minister of Music and Worship**. It is suggested that candidates have a bachelor’s degree in music with three or more years of experience directing church choirs or school music groups. Our church located in Reidsville, NC, conducts one service having approximately 175 in attendance on Sunday mornings with a blended worship style (mix of traditional and contemporary music). The minister of music and worship will develop and maintain a well-rounded music program, supervise music ministry staff and volunteers, and support the ministries and mission of First Baptist Church with relevant music and worship programs. Please submit inquiries/ résumés no later than March 13, 2020, to: Allen Hart, Chairperson, Minister of Music Search Committee, 409 S. Main St., Reidsville, NC 27320; or email hart6235@triad.rr.com.

Associate Pastor. Rock Spring Baptist Church of Louisburg, NC, is prayerfully seeking a full-time associate pastor to help with the disciple making process in a growing rural church. We are a conservative, SBC affiliated congregation with a worship attendance around 250 between two services. Preferred candidates will have completed their theological education, have some previous ministerial experience and must adhere to the BF&M 2000. Please send résumés to the Associate Pastor Search Committee at Rock Spring Baptist Church, 34 Rock Springs Church Rd., Louisburg, NC 27549, or email them to meltonyton@gmail.com.

Bethlehem Baptist Church, in beautiful Kings Mountain, NC, is seeking a **full-time Student Pastor** to lead our children and youth in spiritual growth and biblical discipleship and to connect them and their families with the life and ministries of the church. Duties include displaying a Christ-like approach and lifestyle, praying regularly for young people in the church and community, providing weekly programming for children and youth to develop spiritually, planning and leading mission trips and service projects, building relationships with students and their families by providing spiritual care to foster a vibrant and solid student community, developing our impact in the local community through outreach and communication. Skills include being able to effectively teach and communicate the Bible, to physically engage in activities with students, and to energetically motivate and grow a team of lay volunteers. Qualifications include being in agreement with the church’s doctrines as written in the Articles of Faith, exhibiting a love for students, having a minimum of 3 years’ experience in children/youth ministry, and preferably having a bachelor’s degree or higher from college and seminary. Please submit résumés to bbckmnc@aol.com.

Miscellaneous

Central Singles Ministry. Meets every 4th Friday at Panera Bread Company, 4421 Six Forks Road, Raleigh. Mealtime 7-8:30 pm, games 8:30-9:30 pm. Children are welcome. We respect church membership. Look for the “night on the town” sign. Oldest singles ministry in N.C. Leadership from 4 churches; <https://centralsinglesministry.weebly.com/night-on-the-town.html>; Email: nightonthetown2002@yahoo.com.

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Former IMB exec William R. O'Brien dies

By MARY JANE WELCH | IMB

William R. O'Brien, former missionary to Indonesia and retired executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board, IMB), died Feb. 1 at age 86.

Jerry Rankin, IMB president emeritus who also served in Indonesia, said it was no surprise when O'Brien was tapped to serve as executive vice president alongside Foreign Mission Board (FMB) President R. Keith Parks. "Bill was ahead of everyone in spinning possibilities of alternative futures and innovative marketing," Rankin said.

O'Brien and his first wife, Dellanna West O'Brien, were appointed in 1962 as missionaries to Indonesia, where he taught music, directed radio and TV programming for Indonesian Baptists, and worked with students.

After resigning from missionary service in May 1974, O'Brien was a consultant for the Anvil Foundation, a Christian foundation working

with community development, and was pastor of Lake Country Baptist Church, both in Fort Worth, Texas.

O'Brien joined the FMB staff in Richmond, Va., in 1976 as secretary of the denominational coordination department. He was FMB executive vice president from May 1980 to December 1989, and played a key role in raising funds for the International Learning Center, completed in 1984.

After his wife Dellanna became executive director of the Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham, Ala., O'Brien became FMB executive director of public affairs and served from January 1990 until February 1991. O'Brien retired March 1, 1992.

Following the tsunami that devastated Indonesia and other southern Asia regions in December 2004, the O'Briens served a year and a half in Indonesia, as volunteers.

He is survived by his wife of 10 years, Charmaine; children Denise O'Brien Basden; Erin O'Brien Puryear; and Ross O'Brien; six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. **BR**

James Leo Garrett Jr., leading Baptist theologian, dies at 94

By JULIE OWENS and ALEX SIBLEY | SWBTS

James Leo Garrett Jr., 94, distinguished professor of theology emeritus at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS), died Feb. 5 in Nacogdoches, Texas.

Garrett found widespread acceptance not only in Baptist circles, but also in the wider community of Christian scholars. He had held emeritus status at Southwestern since his retirement in 1997. His career included a combined 28 years at SWBTS over two stints.

"James Leo Garrett Jr. is a distinguished Southwesterner whose teaching ministry on Seminary Hill impacted thousands of students," said Southwestern president Adam W. Greenway. "And through those students, unknown multitudes of believers across the globe. I am fortunate to have been one of those students and count it a unique privilege to have been taught by such a scholar and minister of the gospel. I encourage the entire Southwestern

Seminary family to lift up the Garrett family during this time of grief."

Garrett was born Nov. 25, 1925, in Waco, the only child of James Leo Garrett Sr., an accounting professor at Baylor University, and his wife, Grace Hasseltine Jenkins Garrett, a teacher. In 1935, he was baptized into membership at the Seventh and James Baptist Church in Waco.

During the 1940s, Garrett earned a bachelor of arts in English from Baylor University and a bachelor of divinity degree from Southwestern, married fellow SWBTS graduate Myrta Ann Latimer, and earned a master of theology degree from Princeton Theological Seminary.

He then returned to Fort Worth to teach at Southwestern and study toward a doctor of theology degree, which he completed in 1954. While a SWBTS student, Garrett pastored three Baptist churches.

He is survived by sons, James Leo Garrett III, Robert T. Garrett, and Paul L. Garrett; four grandsons; and three great-grandchildren. **BR**

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9am - 12:30pm in the Charlotte area**



Meet Nelson Searcy:

Nelson is the Founding and Lead Pastor of The Journey Church with locations across New York City and S. Florida. A Charlotte native who served in ministry for over a decade across NC. A coach to over 3,000 pastors and author of 17+ books.

**Nelson Searcy Will Teach You a Step-by-Step
Guide with Practical, Easy-to-Implement,
Inexpensive Ideas to Help You DOUBLE Your
Easter Impact and Grow Your Church!**

When & Where



**Thursday,
March 5
9am - 12:30pm**



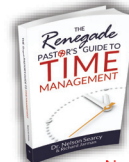
**Charlotte area:
Rocky River Church
887 Pitt School Road SW
Concord, NC 28027**

(just minutes from I-85 & Bruton Smith
Blvd/Charlotte Motor Speedway)

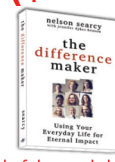
What You Will Learn:

- The first – and most accessible – action you can take to have **your highest attended Easter ever!**
- How you can have the best Easter ever **with just a few minor tweaks** (yes, its possible).
- **How to attract more unchurched people** than ever to your Easter services.
- How to **promote your Easter services with little or no cost** (without getting in trouble with your church treasurer)
- The **essential elements of a successful Easter service.**
- ...and much more!

**First 50 Pastors to RSVP Will Receive Two FREE Books
from Nelson Searcy (\$26.99 value)!**



**The Renegade Pastor's
Guide to Time Management
(\$19.95 value)**



**The Difference Maker:
Using Your Everyday
Life for Eternal Impact**

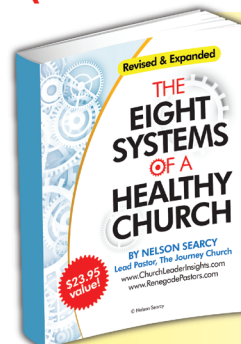
Note: Physical books will be distributed at the end of the workshop to pre-registered pastors.

Discover the Secrets to Doubling on Easter!

**FREE with RSVP for the First 50 Pastors! Learn More:
www.ChurchLeaderInsights.com/Easter77**

Or Sign Up by Phone at 1.800.264.5129

**Plus...A Special Gift from Nelson Searcy
(Whether You Can Attend the Event or Not!)**



**The 8 Systems You Need to Know for
a Healthy Church (FREE - \$23.95 Value!)**

Saving You Stress, Time, Energy and Money!

In this book from pastor and leadership expert Nelson Searcy, you will get an understanding of all eight systems of a healthy church, with practical insights that you can use to start making changes in your church for maximum health and growth in 2020!

**Download your FREE e-book now:
www.ChurchLeaderInsights.com/SystemsBook**