



BIBLICAL RECORDER

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SBC EC plans to overhaul its organization chart

Biblical Recorder

The Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Executive Committee (EC) adopted plans to undergo a complete reorganization of its committees and work groups during its Feb. 17-18 meeting in Nashville, Tenn.

The proposal was first introduced in an officers meeting on Sept. 15, 2019, and will go into effect after the SBC's annual meeting concludes this June in Orlando, Fla.

The EC currently has three committees, each with two to three workgroups: Business and Finance, Cooperative Program and Administrative.

What's changing

The new structure will eliminate workgroups, change committee names and add one new committee:

• Convention Finances and Stewardship Development

Convention Missions and Ministry

• Southern Baptist Relations

• Convention Events and Strategic Planning

EC officers will continue to operate as a group that can bring recommendations to committees or the full board.

Why the change

EC leaders said changes were proposed for the following reasons:

• To increase the number of members engaged in the initial stages of discussion. Deliberation See Chart page 11

WHAT'S INSIDE

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By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Assistant Editor

44 I t would be easy to read the book of Nehemiah and consider (him) the hero of the story," said Jimmy Scroggins. "The hero of every story in the Bible is Jesus. The hero of your church can't be you.

"The hero of my church can't be me. You and I are put here to point people to Jesus."

Scroggins, who describes himself as "a pastor of a local church" despite his church's size and multisite structure, served as the main speaker for the Feb. 25 Disciple-Making Conference at Green Street Baptist Church in High Point, N.C., with 736 registered participants.

He and his wife have eight children and serve at Family Church in West Palm Beach, Fla., where Scroggins is lead pastor.

Scroggins shared out of Nehemiah and John during two main sessions.

"I'm just a beggar trying to share with the other

See Hero page 7

SBC EC names task force to review ERLC

Baptist Press & Biblical Recorder

The Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee (EC) has named a task force to review the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) over allegations the ERLC's "past and present activities" are affecting Cooperative Program giving.

EC chairman Mike Stone told reporters the alleged concerns were "largely anecdotal but

increasing in number." The EC voted to authorize the seven-member task force Feb. 18.

- Stone will lead the group.
- He appointed the remaining six members:
- Ron Hale, retired pastor, Jackson, Tenn.

• Mike Lawson, senior pastor, First Baptist of Sherman, Texas

- Cheryl Samples, retired, Dallas, Ga.
- Hoyt Savage, lead pastor, Foothills Baptist, Las

Would you like to have a mountaintop prayer experience?

In different Old and New Testament passages of scripture, we read accounts of individuals who had

unique experiences with God while they were on a mountain. Jesus often went up on a mountain to pray to His Father.

Can you remember a "mountaintop experience" you had with the Lord? That is, a time when you experienced a sudden, unmistakable manifestation of God's presence with you? That undeniable spiritual experience may have occurred in a church

building, in a room in your home or somewhere else.

You may have known God's presence like this on more than one occasion, but wherever, whenever and how often it has happened, you cannot forget that spiritual blessing as a redeemed child of God.

On Tues., May 5, beginning at 10 a.m., pastors and others from across



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR. BSC executive director-treasurer

North and South Carolina are planning to assemble at Vengeance Creek Baptist Church in Marble, N.C., and

> then walk up to a place where individuals have gone throughout the years to pray on top of a mountain that is located on the property of Fred Lunsford.

Lunsford is a retired pastor, a former director of missions for Truett Baptist Association in Murphy, N.C., and he remains a mountain preacher. Lunsford was raised on a little mountain farm on Ven-

geance Creek. He was saved at age 13 and was baptized in Vengeance Creek that flows off this same mountain.

Today, at 95 years of age, Lunsford is still serving the Lord faithfully and mentoring younger pastors. He strongly believes in the power of prayer and is burdened for a fresh move of God across our land. At numerous times in his life and ministry, Fred and his late wife, Gladys, have gone to his special prayer place on this same mountaintop to pray.

Recently, Pastor Greg Mathis from Mud Creek Baptist in Hendersonville, David Horton, president of Fruitland Baptist Bible College, and some other ministers visited with Lunsford to talk with him about his fervent prayer life. Lunsford shared with those who were there that day that he believes the reason he's still alive is because God has left him here to pray for a spiritual awakening.

"Two years ago, I thought I was going to die at the age of 93," Fred told those who met with him that day. "I was very sick and asked the Lord to let me die. I wanted to go to heaven, but God said, 'Not yet.""

Lunsford said he then asked the Lord, "Why are you leaving me here?" He said that the Lord replied that He was "leaving him here to lead others to pray for spiritual awakening!"

Lunsford has been faithful to do



that these past two years. In fact, he said the upcoming mountaintop prayer gathering on May 5 was born out of God impressing him to call 100 preachers to gather together on the mountain to pray for a spiritual awakening in our state, nation and world.

Will you consider joining this prayer gathering and encourage others to come with you? Anyone who wants to come pray is invited.

You can learn more about the gathering and register for the event by visiting the Mud Creek Baptist Church website at *mudcreekchurch*. *org*.

On the site, click on the "events" tab at the top of the page, and then click on "Praying On The Mountain." There is no cost to attend the prayer gathering, but registration is requested for a head count.

Five ways to share your faith at work

On Mission

T wo-time Super Bowl-winning NFL coach Tony Dungy shares five ways for believers

to share their faith and represent Jesus, even in places some would think are antagonistic to the gospel.

1. Remember Colossians 3:23.

That's the verse that anchored me. "Whatever you do, do it as unto the Lord." Whether playing, coaching, being in my neighborhood or on my job, whatever I do, I'm serving the Lord. I keep that first.

Yes, I have employers and players I serve. But I'm serving the Lord first. If I keep that in mind, no opposition can harm me, and I know I'm going to be OK.

2. Don't forget about grace.



grace. The Bible tel

The Bible tells us to speak the truth in love, but we also have to have the grace to see

people where they are and the ability not to be easily offended if they don't always agree with what we have to say.

In those tough cases, we should remember the grace God had on us and give that to others.

3. Always be ready to demonstrate.

When you demonstrate, it makes your points very clearly.

Once I demonstrated to my players I was in their corner, they listened to what I had to say – not just about football, but life, the Lord and everything else. Sure,

we had our team goals. When we were in Tampa, we wanted to make a Super Bowl and win it.

Dee Dee Vogt

Grace Beacham

Editorial Aide

Administrative

Assistant

But we also wanted to make Tampa a better place to live. But you had to show them that you were real first. And when you did that, they'd listen to you about other things.

4. Keep respect as a staple of all interactions.

You have to understand that, yes, I'm a Christian, but everybody doesn't have my views. I want people to respect me for my beliefs, but it's going to have to be mutual, and I'm going to have to demonstrate that grace as well as tell people what is true. If you do it that way, you let people know it can be done.

You can have and share your beliefs and still demonstrate God's love even in the midst of disagreement.

5. Be ready to be the example.

There's so much hatred and vitriol out there in all of our public discourse.

See Share page 11



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Vision 2025: A call to reach every person for Jesus Christ

Baptist Press

7 ision 2025 is not simply a slogan or rallying cry. It's a path forward to help us reimagine a new future together of reaching the world for Jesus Christ – every person, every town, every city, every state and every nation.

We are in one of the most defining moments in our history. For the future of America, the future around the world, and for the sake of our own future as the Southern Baptist Convention, change is imperative.

We find ourselves chasing after the winds of our preferences, our own opinions, our own issues and our own streams of social media.

These are the side streets that keep us off of Main Street, that always leads us to the final words of our Lord Jesus Christ before His grand ascension: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and

Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). I am speaking about a unified Great Commission vision that unites us. Yes, a vision that calls us to reach every person for Jesus Christ in every town, every city, every state and every nation.

This vision, Vision 2025, is composed of five stra-



Strategic Action 1: Increase our total number of full-time, fully-funded missionaries by a net gain of

> 500, giving us 4,200 full-time, fully-funded missionaries through the International Mission Board (IMB).

We believe one day in the near future there will be a multitude from every language, people, tribe and nation knowing and worshiping our Lord Jesus Christ.

Every day, 155,252 lost people die. When we are able to increase our total number of full-time, fully-funded missionaries by a net gain of 500 by the year 2025, many of our missionaries will be training churches overseas to send their own missionaries, and God will forward

His Good News through His people exponentially. Listen friends, this number of 500 additional missionaries by the end of the year 2025 comes directly from the field to our leadership at the IMB.

Strategic Action 2: Add 6,000 new churches to our Southern Baptist family, giving us more than 50,000 churches.

When we imagine together adding 6,000 churches to our Southern Baptist family by the end of the year 2025, we know this means that we need to add

1,200 churches each year to our family. How will we do this?

Our goal of adding 1,200 churches annually will look something like this:

• 750 new churches planted annually;

• 50 new campuses identified or added by our multi-site churches annually;

• 400 new churches affiliating with us annually. What does all this mean? This means for us to add these new churches annually, we will need more and more church planters who are qualified, identified, and sent out to places where the gospel has never been before.

This means we need our multi-site churches to identify and notify us through our Annual Church Profile of all the campuses that each church has now and will launch in the future.

This means hundreds of evangelical churches across the United States who believe like we believe and appreciate how we do missions together may want to become a part of our family called Southern Baptists. Already, more than 300 new churches affiliate with us annually. We believe the opportunity to expand this footprint is great in your region, in your state and all across our entire nation.

Strategic Action 3: Increase our total number of workers in the field through a new emphasis See Vision page 8





Guest Column





IMB, NAMB to join in Send Relief efforts

IMB, NAMB and Baptist Press

T he International Mission Board (IMB) and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) will work together to combine compassion ministry efforts in North America and abroad under the umbrella of Send Relief. Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee (EC) announced the new working relationship during a plenary session of the EC in Nashville Feb. 18.

"Today I want to announce to you a formal relationship between the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board for the purpose of compassion ministry," Floyd said.

"Southern Baptists are always at their best anytime we can cooperate together for the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Floyd made the announcement alongside IMB President Paul Chit-

wood and NAMB President Kevin Ezell. The group also shared that a new president of Send Relief, who will report to both Chitwood and Ezell, will be named in the coming weeks.

"Southern Baptists are privileged to carry the love and compassion of our Lord to people in need across North America and around the world," Chitwood said before the announcement. "So many who are blessed seek ways to be a blessing to others. Together, under the Send Relief banner, we will help stretch your generous gifts to help more people."

Send Relief's website will soon provide a single point of contact that will give an initial starting point to pastors and churches looking to support or participate in the Southern Baptist compassion ministries that take place in North America or around the world.

"Both entities working together will make it easier for Southern Bap-

Baptist Global Response CEO announces retirement scheduled in June

By TESS SCHOONHOVEN | Baptist Press

B aptist Global Response (BGR) CEO Jeff Palmer announced Feb. 20 he will be retiring from his current position in the coming months, prospectively timed for June 2020.

With prior overseas service experience, Palmer said his desire is to return to a more hands-on approach to ministry.

"When I say hands on, that means go back into primary ministry," Palmer told Baptist Press.

"I don't know exactly what that means and what it will be, but we know God and know that He's good and faithful and He's leading in this, so we'll wind up in a great place wherever we'll be."

Although no specific plans are currently in place for Palmer's future ministry, the transition is being approached with prayer and trust, Palmer said.

"We're trusting the Lord and we don't really have any idea what that will be, we're open to wherever God leads," Palmer said. Paired with the announcement of his retirement, Palmer also confirmed that BGR will become a primary ministry partner of Send Relief, the new cooperative effort between the International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board.



JEFF PALMER

The partnership will streamline ministry surrounding disaster, compassion and crisis response.

"It really is for the first time this kind of coming together and looking at poverty, hunger, disasters and medical healthcare needs, not from an international perspective or just a domestic one," Palmer said.

Southern Baptists are people who deeply care for others, Palmer noted. And the new "onestop shop" cooperative effort has the potential to rally more resources than Southern Baptists have been able to before.

"It's something that we dreamed of for years," Palmer said.

"Now it's coming to fruition under the Send Relief umbrella."

Palmer said he will help guide the BGR team in the transition. B

tists to get involved in meeting needs so that lives can be changed through the power of the gospel," Ezell said prior to the EC meeting.

"I'm excited about how this will multiply Southern Baptist compassion ministry efforts and build a simple on-ramp for pastors and churches who want to be involved in the great work Southern Baptists are doing in North America and around the world."

The effort is effective immediately. Specific resources and more information will be provided soon. Send Relief was chosen as the name for this work between IMB and NAMB because Southern Baptists have developed a familiarity with the compassion ministry and crisis response efforts of Send Relief since it was launched by NAMB in 2016.

The IMB and NAMB joint efforts under the Send Relief banner do not apply to each entity's broader ministry assignments.

Both IMB and NAMB remain independent entities doing the work that Southern Baptists have come to know so well.

In a press conference following the announcement to the EC, Chitwood addressed the effect the move will have on Baptist Global Response, the global relief organization that partners with Southern Baptists.

"Baptist Global Response has been

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a tremendous partner for the IMB," Chitwood said. "What we would see moving forward is that this becomes the one channel, the one avenue for giving.

"We do think that Southern Baptists have been very generous in their work with Baptist Global Response, and they've been a strategic partner to us. But in talking with the leadership of Baptist Global Response, including their board, what we've found is that they were 100% on board with this idea, with this partnership because they understood the opportunity here to see more resources used in Southern Baptist work, and that's what Baptist Global Response has been about."

Send Relief will continue to support the efforts of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) in North America, and international responses will continue to utilize SBDR partners.

"We can do so much more together than we can ever do alone," Chitwood said. "I pray God will use this effort to expand the compassionate reach of Southern Baptists. I pray that unity will pervade our work, and that people will see love acted out in tangible ways that change their lives. Most importantly, I pray we will see the gospel reach even more people who otherwise might never hear how much the Lord loves them."



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Southeastern, Cedarville launch M.Div./MBA partnership

Biblical Recorder

S outheastern Baptist Theological Semi-nary (SEBTS) announced a new master of divinity (M.Div) and business administration (MBA) degree in partnership with Cedarville University Feb. 20.

The 97-hour program seeks to "equip students" to excel in personal standards and discernment, steward their God-given talents and resources, lead with a servant's heart and gain kingdom influence through serving others," according to an SEBTS press release.

"I am excited about how God will prepare a new army of servants for gospel advance through this joint venture between our two excellent schools,"

said Danny Akin, SEBTS president.

'This partnership will equip leaders who bring both outstanding theological training and excellent business skills to their ministry setting," said Thomas White, president of Cedarville University in Cedarville, Ohio.

The M.Div./MBA program is available entirely online. Students will follow SEBTS' M.Div. in Christian ministry track and then enter Cedarville's MBA program. Prospective students must have an undergraduate degree, be in good standing with SEBTS and maintain at least a 2.75 GPA.

SEBTS students and full-time employees receive a 15% discount on published course tuition rates at Cedarville.

The degree can equip students for future careers

as senior or executive/administrative pastors, nonprofit executives, community organization leaders, as well as careers in business administration with a foundation of Christian conviction, SEBTS stated on the program's web page.

SEBTS faculty members teaching courses in the program include Ken D. Keathley, senior professor of theology; Stephen B. Eccher, assistant professor of church history and reformation studies; Jim Shaddix, professor of preaching; and Walter Strickland, assistant professor of systemic and contextual theology.

The partnership begins effective immediately. For more information about the program and to apply, go to sebts.edu/academics/masters/MDiv/ mdiv-mba.aspx. 🐵

Who's Your One marks first anniversary

By BRANDON ELROD | North American Mission Board

s pastors and lay leaders left Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort, Ky., on Feb. 24, another stop on the Who's Your One Tour drew to a close. Feb. 26, 2019, was the day the emphasis launched.

We have seen here in Kentucky, which was evidenced at Buck Run, there has been great momentum around Who's Your One here in our state," said Rob Patterson, the evangelism team leader for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. "Many of our churches have rallied around it saying, 'this is who we are, and this is what we need to be doing."

The tour has been one avenue of the Who's Your One emphasis that is designed to help pastors and their congregations begin praying for and reaching out to at least one person whom they know needs to respond to the gospel.

"It is amazing how this has become a real, genuine movement thanks to Southern Baptists across North America," said Johnny Hunt, senior vice president of evangelism and leadership at the North American Mission Board (NAMB).

"Let's continue to be faithful and remember to keep the main thing, the main thing. Let's focus on reaching our family members, friends and neighbors with the gospel.'

More than 27,000 Who's Your One resource kits have been distributed to pastors and churches across North America. Nearly 23,000 people have sent in commitments to pray for and share with their 'one' through whosyourone.com.

With 13 tour events now completed, there are 16 more tour stops remaining in 2020, and more are scheduled for 2021.

Who's Your One also has thousands of people talking on social media. There have been 10.3 million impressions and 1.1 million engagements on social media.

Who's Your One launched in coordination with J.D. Greear, Southern Baptist Convention president and pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, N.C. Greear has focused his presidency on a "Gospel Above All" theme and has made Who's Your One a key element of that emphasis.

The Who's Your One tour is in Charlotte March 8-9 and in Wake Forest in August. Visit whosyourone.com.

Has your church/association used Who's Your One in North Carolina? Tell the Biblical Recorder about how God has used this resource at editor@BRnow.org.

Kell to be nominated for 2021 Pastors' Conference president

By TESS SCHOONHOVEN | Baptist Press

ave Russell, pastor of Oakhurst **D** Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C., has announced his intention to nominate Garrett Kell, pastor of Del Ray Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va., for president of the 2021 Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference (SBC-PC). The 2021 SBCPC will be held in Nashville, Tenn., in conjunction with the 2021 SBC Annual Meeting. The presi-

dential election will take place at the 2020 SBCPC in June in

Orlando, Fla.

Kell has served as the pastor of Del Ray Baptist Church for more than seven years.

Before his time there he served as the evangelism pastor at Denton Bible Church in Denton, Texas, and previously helped to plant a church in Graham, Texas, where he pastored for more than seven years. Kell also served as a pastoral intern at Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., and was on the pastoral staff there for a year. Kell received a bachelor's degree in marketing from Virginia Tech University and master of theology degree from Dallas Theological Seminary. Russell said Kell's experience in multiple church settings has prepared him to lead the conference.

"Garrett knows the challenges of church planting," Russell said. "He also has led a fruitful effort in church revitalization."

Del Ray Baptist Church (DRBC) was close to shutting its doors before Kell entered as the pastor, Russell said.

The Lord has used Garrett to lead DRBC from being near empty, to near full each Sunday," Russell said. "These experiences as a pastor help Garrett identify with the challenges that many pastors in the SBC are facing."

Kell said he knows the loneliness being a pastor can bring, but he also

knows the life-giving nature fellowship with other pastors can bring.

"I know pastoring can be tiring, it can be discouraging, it can be joyful and sometimes it's all of that at the same time," Kell said.

According to the 2019 Associated Church Profile, the church had undesignated receipts of \$954,000 but no Cooperative Program giving.

The entry lists \$2,000 in Great Commission giving, which is money forwarded to SBC-related causes other than CP. The church also reported membership of 328 and average worship attendance of 350 in 2019.

Kell also serves on the council of The Gospel Coalition, recently served on the leadership council of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and is a member of the Columbia Baptist Ministers Association. He and his wife Carrie have five children.





IMB forms coronavirus task force

IMB

I n light of the global expansion of coronavirus (COVID-19), the International Mission Board (IMB) has convened a task force to specifically address the implications for its personnel and partners, including church volunteer mission teams. The task force aims to provide consistent information to all IMB field personnel and stateside staff regarding medical advice and travel directives.

To provide up-to-date information and recommendations regarding coronavirus to IMB personnel and its partners, the task force has launched a web page at *imb.org/COVID-19*.

"We recognize the concern that coronavirus is causing, and we are grateful for individuals and churches who are praying for IMB personnel and for people around the world directly affected by the virus," said IMB President Paul Chitwood. "We are continually monitoring the global situation and remain in frequent contact with our missionaries to take the best precautions possible related to their health and safety."

As with any issue around the globe, IMB personnel follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations and consult the U.S. State Department travel advisories. IMB leaders consider the ages, health, work and security of the people involved in each unique situation. Fieldbased leaders consult with leaders in the Richmond office to make the wisest decisions for all involved.

"We undergird all our decisions with fervent prayer for the Lord's wisdom and guidance. As we do daily, we trust in God's providence over this situation and will faithfully remain on task to reach the nations," Chitwood said.

The task force recommends that personnel and church partners monitor the CDC guidelines and follow the latest recommendations regarding travel and virus prevention. IMB suggests churches frequently monitor travel advisories in order to make wise and prayerful decisions about mission trips planned in the near future.

At the time of publishing, the CDC recommends that travelers avoid non-essential travel to China and South Korea. They also recommend that older persons and those with chronic medical conditions consider avoiding non-essential travel to Italy, Japan and Iran. IMB also recommends its personnel not travel to or through Hong Kong at this time.

General prevention measures include:

• Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer if soap is not available.

• Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Avoid people who may look sick. If possible, put 1 meter between you and them, and avoid person-to-person contact.

ERLC Continued from page 1

Vegas, Nev.

• Monte Shinkle, senior pastor, Concord Baptist, Jefferson City, Mo.

• Rolland Slade, senior pastor, Meridian Baptist, El Cajon, Calif.

ERLC trustees responded to the initial announcement in an open letter saying the task force was "unwarranted, divisive, and disrespectful." They instructed ERLC President Russell Moore not to comply with the task force's review until SBC messengers "have an opportunity to signal their belief that such a task force is appropriate."

Stone and the EC officers responded in a statement to Baptist Press.

"When we continue to hear a growing number of reports that churches are either planning to decrease or withhold Cooperative Program gifts and are given specific reasons that relate to a Southern Baptist entity, we have a responsibility that we are granted under the bylaws of the SBC to consider those reports."

The task force's work is expected to begin immediately, and while a



Total Cooperative Program Giving

Data compiled from the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Reports. Russell Moore was elected ERLC president in 2013. (BR graphic by Seth Brown)

timetable of their work is still uncertain, the motion passed by the EC calls for a report from the task force at or before the September 2020 EC meeting. That meeting will be held Sept. 21-22 in Nashville.

The ERLC trustee letter said, "At a time where a unified voice is needed for our cooperative gospel work, the Executive Committee is sowing needless division, treating trustees with disrespect, and spreading suspicion with this unnecessary task force."

Find out more at BRnow.org.

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beggars where we can find some bread," he said.

In 2008, God called the Scroggins family to Florida to First Baptist Church, a church Scroggins described as "messed up" – attendance, facilities, debt, scandals and scoundrels.

Even though the church looked like a "wedding cake" and had many "really great people," it had become stagnant and started to decline.

The first event he and his wife hosted was for eight couples on marriage. But, Scroggins was bringing his foundation of Jesus with him. The problem was the couples who signed up had no gospel foundation.

The contact with broken people stirred Scroggins to rethink how he approached people, for marriage events and otherwise.

"God needed me to start thinking what it would be like to be somebody different from me," Scroggins said.

Out of his questioning came his "3 Circles" approach to sharing the gospel, where you explain brokenness.

"I have learned that God has a design for marriage, relationships, sex, parenting, money, communication, forgiveness, releasing bitterness; God has a design for all of this, and it's found in the Bible."

The way to find God's design for these things involves studying His Word. "But the problem is all of us want to go our own way because we think we can get more satisfaction, have more fun, get there faster ... it will be better if we do it our own way," Scroggins said.

That brokenness inspires us to change, he said, "but we don't know how to change it."

What the couples needed was someone to show them the Good News, the debt that Jesus paid for all sinners, and the repentance from sin and acceptance of God as Savior required on the part of the believer.

These people, their lives were so far from God's design, and the brokenness was so big, that the gospel cleans them up, but their journey to recover God's design was still going to be very difficult.

Because even when someone becomes a Christian and Jesus comes into their life, God doesn't erase their past.

When Jesus was talking with the woman caught in adultery, He had been speaking with authority from the scriptures. "Jesus was known for spending time with sinners," Scroggins said. "The Pharisees had no right to condemn anyone, because they were sinners just like her. The Pharisees had no right to push anyone down or push anyone out, because they were sinners."

Jesus knew that in a matter of months, He would be condemned in her place.

"He would make her sins His responsibility," Scroggins said. "He's not glossing over sin. He's taking sin more seriously than any of us do."

Scroggins encouraged the crowd to mess their church up by inviting broken people.

"Let the Holy Spirit disciple people along His timeline," Scroggins said.

Like Nehemiah, church leaders face many challenges, he said.

"Even if you desire to do it, it doesn't make it easier, does it?" he asked. "We need to be in prayer like Nehemiah was ... that God would strengthen our hand to do it. Our job is to lead them forward to the future that God has. But the leader has to see it and name it and develop a path toward something better."

Leaders need to do five things: • See what other people won't

see. Nehemiah saw the wall as an embarrassment, Scroggins said. When facilities are broken down, it's a blight on the reputation of God's people which becomes a blight on God.

"But Nehemiah could see a future," he said. "The future is the issue. Lots of people know the problems in your church. We know all the problems. The question is: where are we going?"

• You have to feel what other people won't feel. "Then you've got to carry it," Scroggins said. "We've got to eradicate any sinful sense of superiority."

• You have to believe what other people won't believe. Nehemiah believed God wasn't finished with his city," he said. "Your church is sitting on acres of diamonds ... see it for what it really is. Nehemiah believed he was doing a great work."

• You have to take what other people won't take. "He had to handle squabbling among his volunteers, government intervention," Scroggins said.

• You have to finish what other people won't finish. "We can't quit on our marriages," he said. "We can't quit on our kids. We can't quit on our



More than 730 pastors, church staff and lay leaders attended the 2020 Disciple-Making Conference Feb. 25 at Green Street Baptist Church in High Point. (BSC photo)

church. We can't quit have to finish." "I appreciate Dr.

Scroggins' focus on Nehemiah 6:3, 'I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down,' said Jonathan Blaylock, pastor of North Albemarle Baptist Church. "It was an encouraging word to any pastor to stay on the wall and do the great work of making disciples in the local church."

Blaylock also praised Danny Franks' breakout session "The Sermon Starts in the Parking Lot" as "very helpful."

Wesley Smith, associational missionary for the Greater Cleveland County Baptist Association in Shelby, said disciple-making is about a lifestyle.

"The 2020 Disciple-Making Conference was great," he said. "I love how applicable everything is. There's something for all churches, large and small, metropolitan, rural, or town and country. The strategies and information can be implemented immediately. It's not a 'program."

Smith said that while it was his first time attending the conference, it will not be his last. He plans to recruit more to come next year.

Will Stoneham, pastor of Mint Hill Baptist Church in Charlotte, brought six people to the conference, especially to attend a variety of breakout sessions. "This is the second year I have attended the conference, and I've found it to be a can't miss event," he said to the *Biblical Recorder*. "It's a great way to learn new skills and sharpen strategies on how to make disciples in our churches, but it's also a real encouragement to me as a pastor."

Stoneham said pastors are often considered the only disciple-maker in the church. "The pressure to reproduce others can be immense," he said. "But we need help to encourage multiplication in others. God will be faithful to honor that prayer and elevate leaders to share that mission!"

David Blackburn, director of missions of Ashe Baptist Association, really liked Steven Wade's breakout "Developing a Discipleship Pathway."

"He has a program that works in the church he attends," Blackburn said. "He uses five practical steps (know the destination, gather the right gear, check your direction often, map out the course and correct course when needed), and he is very knowledgeable."

The event is yearly and sponsored by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Visit *disciplemakingnc.org.* **(B)**

ERLC announces pro-life initiative in Northern Ireland

Biblical Recorder

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) announced Feb. 27 that it has raised funds through its Psalm 139 Project to place an ultrasound machine in Northern Ireland. The pro-life initiative came in response to the country's legalization of abortion late last year.

"The church of Jesus Christ always has and always will stand for life at every age. That's why the ERLC feels called to respond to this urgent international threat to preborn children," ERLC President Russell Moore said in a press release.

"Our hope is that our long and tragic experience with abortion in the United States might give us a unique ability to help equip and serve alongside the church in Northern Ireland in this moment. We are not going there with all the answers. Instead, we hope to communicate to our brothers and sisters in Christ that we will be alongside them for prayer and to help the reborn stand for the preborn."

The ERLC is also developing partnerships with local organizations for ongoing pro-life advocacy. Those organizations include Both Lives Matter, an advocacy group for mothers and preborn children; and Evangelical Alliance, a European coalition of evangelical organizations.

A two-day conference called "Stand for Life" is scheduled for June 19-20 in Belfast, Ireland. The event will provide training and curriculum for prolife ministries.

Brent Leatherwood, who serves as the ERLC's director of strategic partnerships, said Northern Ireland was viewed as "one of the last remaining pro-life countries. Now, Christians there find themselves thrust into a new reality where the state will officially sanction this assault on human dignity for the first time," Leatherwood said. "As an American,



LIBERTY COMMISSION

I can't help but imagine going back in time in our own history when abortion was legalized in the states. In effect, it's now 1973 in Northern Ireland."

The Psalm 139 Project began in 2004 to help pregnancy resource centers secure ultrasound machines and provide training.

Visit standforlife.uk. 🙉

Vision Continued from page 3

on "calling out the called," and then preparing those who are called out by the Lord.

We believe our missional vision is to present the gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations. This compelling call upon our lives to reach every person for Jesus Christ in every town, every city, every state and every nation should give us absolute confidence that God is calling people right now in every church across this globe to surrender their lives to fulltime Christian ministry. This call may be to serve as a local church pastor, or serve as a scholar and teacher in a seminary or college, or perhaps God is calling masses of people to be missionaries across this globe.

We must return to the Bible and the words of our Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in Matthew 9:37-38, "Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." Jesus' instructions are clear: Pray to the Lord of the harvest and ask Him to send out workers into His harvest. Therefore, we are called to pray and we are told to ask God to send out workers into His harvest!

As the church prays, God calls. As God calls, the church calls out those who are being called. Regardless of the size of the crowd and the size of the church, God is calling people into the ministry of the gospel. Pastors, educators, evangelists, leaders and missionaries are right now being called out to take the gospel into places where it has never been before.

Strategic Action 4: Turn around our ongoing decline in reaching, baptizing, and discipling 12- to 17-yearolds in the prime of their teenage years.

Did you know the baptisms of 12to 17-year-old students are down 38% since the year 2000? Did you know these baptisms of 12- to 17-year-old students are down by at least 35,000 baptisms since the year 2000? We cannot look the other way. We cannot designate this to be addressed by anyone else. Reaching, baptizing and discipling 12- to 17-year-old students is imperative for the sake of the gospel. This is our future! It is inexcusable for us to settle with this dismal decline.

Pastors and church leaders: Please look at the last decade of what your church has done in reaching and baptizing and discipling 12- to 17-yearold students. Put these baptisms on a graph to evaluate. Determine that for the next five years, if nothing else in your church grows, this will grow!

Hear me clearly Southern Baptists: If we will focus on this age group and see a turnaround in baptisms for the next five years, we will turn around the entire baptism decline in all the Southern Baptist Convention. We will also see during this same period of time, more teenagers called into the ministry of the gospel, surrendering their lives to the ministry serving here in one of our local churches, and being sent to serve as a missionary globally.

Strategic Action 5: Increase our annual giving in successive years to reach and surpass \$500 million given through the Cooperative Program to achieve these Great Commission goals.

The Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention is the financial fuel for reaching every person for Jesus Christ in every town, every city, every state and every nation. Built upon the integrity of relationships and in the spirit of cooperation, churches give resources voluntarily through the Cooperative Program in order to reach people for Jesus Christ regionally, statewide, nationally and internationally. We are in the midst of our 95th year of giving through the Cooperative Program.

Listen carefully, Southern Baptist leaders: The more monies our 47,500+ churches give through the Cooperative Program, the more we can extend the gospel message across the United States and throughout the entire world. Sending missionaries is the heart of the Southern Baptist Convention. The more missionaries we can send, the more people we can tell about the saving power of Jesus Christ.

If we are going to send more missionaries, plant more churches, revitalize more churches, replant more churches, equip more pastors, equip more evangelists, equip more scholars and equip more missionaries, then we must prioritize our giving through the Cooperative Program, elevate our giving through the Cooperative Program and accelerate our giving through the Cooperative Program. When we do this, we will experience the greatest years in the history of our 175 years as a convention of churches.

In the year of 2025, we will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention.

It is our dream that in the Year 2025, we will see our churches give at least \$500 million through the Cooperative Program.

As a pastor, I saw this time and time again: Dollars follow vision! People give to vision. If the vision is clear, concise and compelling, they will support it financially. While I know this is true as a pastor, I am also believing now that is true denominationally as we collectively call upon our churches to support Vision 2025.

Vision 2025 is a call to return to the heart of who we are and why we exist: missions and evangelism.

Now is the time to pray for and to lead towards this vision of reaching every person for Jesus Christ in every town, every city, every state and every nation.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – This article was adapted from Ronnie Floyd's Feb. 17 Executive Committee address.)



By BRANDON ELROD | North American Mission Board

Sometimes, the benchmark for what counts as success has to be redefined. That's what Dave and Mary Elliff discovered as they planted Roots Community Church in Seattle.

"I have met a lot of people who had never heard of Jesus," Mary recounted. "It's starting from scratch, talking to one person at a time and explaining what we believe and why."

Nearly 40% of the population in the Seattle metro area are identified as religiously unaffiliated – nones. Between 92 and 96% of the population do not attend an evangelical church at all. So, the distance between hearing the gospel and responding to the gospel is much greater than some may experience in the Bible Belt South. Yet, Roots Community Church averages between 95 and 110 people every Sunday, and they have seen God at work in their neighborhood.

The Elliffs, 2020 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering[®] Week of Prayer missionaries, moved to Seattle from Little Rock, Ark., in 2015 because of their heart to reach people with the gospel.

"I came to Seattle during a vision trip and instantly got gripped by the sense of spiritual need that's in the city and the need for more churches," Dave said.

Dave previously served as a missionary in Southeast Asia with the International Mission Board through its two-year, Journeyman program. He has noticed the spiritual condition in Seattle resembles the Asian nation he formerly served overseas.

"We live in a city that celebrates every lifestyle, spiritual or gender choice except Christianity," Dave said. "Despite that, we see many who are searching spiritually for truth and meaning."

The particular neighborhood they have moved

to, Roosevelt, has been described as the "metaphysical belt" of the city. Several shops and buildings are dedicated to a New Age religious mysticism, whether that be crystal healing rooms or a temple dedicated to myriad religious figures and deities.

"For me, coming here from such a Christian saturated part of the United States, it was a mental and emotional and spiritual shift for me," Mary said.

In Little Rock, Mary had successful stints as a broadcast journalist and in marketing. She had to come to grips with losing that identity ahead of their eventual transition to ministry in Seattle, but God would lead her to see how key her role would be in the ministry.

"If you were to ask anybody at our church who has been one of the most effective at building relationships with people who don't know Jesus and bringing people to Roots," Dave said, "the answer would definitely be Mary 10 times over."

As a mother of four young children, she has connected with other moms in the area, whether through social media or simply by starting conversations in the park.

"When we came up here, I didn't feel capable," she recalled, through tears. "I felt like, with Jesus and the fisherman, he told them, 'Come. I'll call you to be fishers of men.' So, that's what I clung to. I prayed, 'Lord, I don't know how to do this. You're going to have to help me.' And He did, leading her to meet and talk with one person at a time. Those interactions led to growth in their church as these women would come with their families. A home group meeting grew into two groups. Then, they started meeting in different, smaller venues in their neighborhood. Now, they have reached a point where they worship in a local gymnasium.

"We talk a lot at Roots about being bold but not brash," Dave explained. "So, we are up front about ing® Week of Prayer missionaries, are parents of four who live in Seattle. Dave is pastor of Roots Community Church in Seattle. (NAMB photo by Daniel Delgado)

Dave and Mary Elliff, 2020 Annie Armstrong Easter Offer-

who we are and what we believe, and yet we do so in a way that really represents the love of Christ well."

And the Elliffs are able to accomplish their work through the power of the Holy Spirit and the partnership with fellow Southern Baptists.

"The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering may seem like this generic donation, but it turns into very significant things that we can utilize to better help us do our ministry here," Mary said.

Along with the financial support comes the prayer and emotional support they receive.

"There's just a lot of different ways that we get these reminders that we're loved and that there are people holding the ropes back on the other side of the U.S. for us," Dave explained, referencing missionary William Carey's statement about those who undergirded his work through prayer and support.

Moving far away from family and leaving the familiarity of home takes its toll, but the Elliffs have a solution for remedying that homesickness.

"We take time to go out, look around and see the need," Dave said. "That reminds us of why we're here. It reminds us of how the cost of what we're doing is far outweighed by the need of why we're here."

The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering provides half of the North American Mission Board's annual budget. Money given to the offering is used on the field for training, support and care for missionaries and for evangelism resources.

Prayer requests

• For strength for the team as they work in a challenging, unreached community.

• For hearts to be prepared for the gospel in Roosevelt.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Salvation

March 15

Focal Passages: Romans 3:20-28

N one of us are strangers to outsourcing. We do it almost without thinking. While sometimes there are things we can tackle on our own, there are some things that take the skill and experience of an expert. We call plumbers and electricians. Doctors and locksmiths. And these days, a quick Google search can lead us to the best of the best to help us solve any of our difficulties.

Well, we all have one common problem that can *only* be outsourced. That problem is sin. We don't have the ability or the power to deliver ourselves from sin or its effects. Jesus did for us what only He had the power to do. We call this salvation.

There are three different terms that Romans 3 uses to help us understand salvation more fully. The first of these terms is righteousness. To be righteous means to be justified before God. We are made righteous because Jesus has given His righteousness to us who believe. The second term to help us

understand salvation is redemption.

That Jesus has redeemed us means that He has purchased us with His own life and brought us back into fellowship with God. Redemption, Romans says, is the gift of grace that allows us to receive Christ's righteousness.

This leads to the third term: atonement. Jesus atoned for our sins by becoming a sacrifice for us. This is actually a demon-

stration of Christ's own righteousness and perfect standing before God. All this is what it means to have salvation.



ANTENESHIA SANDERS member, The Summit Church, Durham

Faith March 22

He says He will do.

This is the kind of faith that pleases God. Scripture tells us that faith is foundational to our relationship with God. In fact, it is impossible to do anything pleasing to God without faith. Cain offered a sacrifice to God that was void of faith. Abel offered to God a sacrifice because of the faith he had in Him. This is why Abel's sacrifice was accepted and Cain's rejected.

> Interested in writing lessons? Contact *editor@ BRnow.org*.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Insufficient

March 15

Focal passages: Romans 2:17-29

In the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, "It's not fair to ask of others what you are not willing to do yourself." Practice what you preach.

We are in an election year, and I often find myself looking and listening to candidates for office speak with great confidence and conviction about what we should be doing in order to be good citizens.

The problem I have is that their own lives and practices are not remotely close to the expectations they have of others.

Their actions are often antithetical to the words they speak. This hypocrisy abounds in election cycles, or perhaps it is just more visible. Either way, the urge to yell, "Practice what you preach!" is ever present.

Paul has a similar feeling in our focal passage, although he says it more like, "It's not fair to expect of others what you cannot do yourself." Paul calls out the Jews, who claim to possess a special status by virtue of the covenant.

Paul takes up two issues that pointed to the Jews' special status: the law and circumcision.

First, he reminds them of their claims to be superior and then he rhetorically asks them about their own adherence to the law.

He also points out to them that keeping the law in one area (circumcision) while failing in others is insufficient. Since no one can keep the law perfectly, everyone needs a Savior.

True followers of God are marked by a heart that is changed by the Holy Spirit and dedicated to Him.



March 22

Focal passages: Romans 3:21-4:3

Focal Passages: Hebrews 11:1-6

ship-building activities is the

"trust fall." In this exercise, one per-

son entrusts all of their body weight

classic method used in relation-

The book of Hebrews

as examples of how faith

works in our relationship with God.

means trusting that God is who He

says He is and that He will do what

Faith, as described in Hebrews 11,

uses our spiritual ancestors

F aith, righteousness, justification. These words permeate our discussions of the Bible and what

> it means to be saved, but I wonder if we have heard them so many times that we fail to stop and ponder what they truly mean to the believer.

> Martin Luther, in referring to Romans 3:21-26, called this section of the letter, "the chief point, and the very central place of the Epistle, and of the whole Bible."

Faith, the righteous shall live by it (Romans 1:17). Paul elaborates on this Good News here, declaring that our righteousness (right standing, literally upright) before God comes through faith, but not just any faith. Our faith lies solely in Jesus. Having established previously that no one can live perfectly, and all need a Savior, Paul dutifully reminds us that God freely gives salvation to all who come to Him by faith. In that alone are we made right with God.

Justification. Through faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus we become righteous through God's free gift. This reality means that God now looks upon us "just as if" we had never sinned.

This faith, Paul points out, is exclusive (v. 28). It excludes boasting (v. 27), provides for the inclusion of the Gentiles (vv. 29-30)- so it is for all people, and compliments rather than nullifies the law (v. 31).

Faith. Righteousness. Justification. If we are to understand the gospel, we must understand these words. May we never lose sight of their centrality to the message.



WOODY WALLS

pastoral intern, Beach Road

Baptist Church, Southport

Chart Continued from page 1

will begin in larger committees, rather than small workgroups.

• To allow more time for deliberation of complex issues.

• To prevent some workgroups from meeting with no agenda items, while other workgroups manage full agendas.

• To allow more cooperation across committees on certain issues.

Significance of the restructure

"Restructuring the internal committees of the SBC Executive Committee allows for improved communication and decision making for the members of the EC," a spokesperson for the EC told the *Biblical Recorder*.

"By enlisting more decision makers earlier in the process, redundancy of discussions is greatly reduced."

"It is also our goal for members to have more

time to discuss and contemplate issues as there will be fewer meetings as a result of the reorganization. Fewer meetings means more time for understanding issues related to the important decisions that are made by the EC.

"Empty agendas - something that plagued the

Share Continued from page 2

But as believers, we can't afford to do that. In fact, the world is watching us, and Jesus says we have to be different.

As more hostility sets in, it's going to cause Christians to make a decision. Are we going to serve the Lord and show people the Christlike example of how to handle disagreements, or are we previous workgroup-based structure – will be eliminated under the new structure as well."

Since 1969, the EC has had up to five committees and as few as three, with as many as 10 workgroups. The names and numbers of committees and workgroups have been changed in the past.

going to give in to the hostility? We can't do that if we're going to be Christ's example.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Tony Dungy is a former professional football player and coach in the NFL. He is now a football analyst and speaker. Reprinted with permission from On Mission magazine, North American Mission Board.)

CLASSIFIEDS

Denominational

The Brunswick Baptist Association seeks a **parttime Administrative Assistant**. Approximately 20 hours per week. Requirements include being bondable, MS Office, QuickBooks, website & Facebook administration; OneNote preferred, financial reporting & analysis skills, professional communication. Please send all résumés and inquiries to *brunsbaptist@atmc.net*.

Pastor

First Baptist Church of China Grove, North Carolina, a Southern Baptist church with conservative values, is seeking a **full-time Senior Pastor**. With the local mission field being the 4,000 residents of China Grove, we are seeking a pastor to help disciple us in preparation for impacting our community. For additional information and to submit a résumé, please visit https://www. chinagrovefbc.com/job-opportunities. Highland Baptist Church of Hickory, NC (member of Southern Baptist Convention), is accepting résumés for a **full-time Senior Pastor** position. HBC has a rich, more than one hundred year history in teaching and preaching God's Word, and taking the Word to the lost of our community. We adhere to the 2000 Southern Baptist Faith and Message. We seek a candidate who is gifted in preaching God's Word, teaching, discipling, with a Shepherd's heart for reaching the lost. Minimum master's degree required. Résumés will be received but not reviewed until April 2020. Our website is *hbchickory.org*. Interested candidates should send résumé and cover letter to *highlandbaptiststaff@gmail.com*.

Church Staff

Full-time Student Pastor for Bethlehem Baptist Church, Kings Mountain, NC. Three years' experience with children/youth required. College and seminary degree preferred. Send résumés to bbckmnc@aol.com. Mt. Ruhama Baptist Church of Maiden, NC, is seeking a **part-time Minister of Music**. Requirements: music degree and/or experience in conducting/leading traditional and contemporary worship. Attend staff meetings to coordinate all worship service including the creation of multimedia worship content and order of service. Email résumé to: *sabernethy19@gmail.com*.

First Baptist Church of Mocksville is seeking a **parttime Worship Leader** for our 11 a.m. 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 Mocksville is seeking a parttime (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 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 inguiries/ 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.

Miscellaneous

Do you have staff changes at your church or association? Or special news you would like to share (significant church or church staff anniversaries or a mission effort to reach your community)? Call (919) 847-2127 or email *editor@BRnow.org*.

Placing a classified ad in the Biblical Recorder

Choose one of three avenues:

- Send e-mail to: advertise@BRnow.org.
- Purchase ads at *BRnow.org/Advertise*.
- Send a Fax to (919) 467-6180.

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

Cost for Baptist churches/organizations is \$1.25 per word, number and stand-alone initial (\$1.45 for commercial and non-Baptist entities) with a minimum charge of \$35. Classifieds also are carried online.

ADVERTISE in the *Recorder* (919) 459-5691



"Are you going to use cream of mushroom soup, Mrs. Shirley?"

Nick spotted the can of soup as he and "Mrs. Shirley," his **Baptist Children's Homes (BCH)** cottage mother, were searching the pantry for ingredients. It would be time to eat soon and Shirley needed to cook enough dinner for the ten hungry boys in her cottage.

"I could use cream of chicken instead," Shirley answered the young boy. "Why do you ask?"

"At home, that's all me and my brother ever ate," he responded. "I never want to see a can of cream of mushroom ever again!"

Bad memories are the only memories Nick and his brother Bo have of home. The boys were severely abused. They were often locked away in their house with little or no food. If they ate at all, cream of mushroom soup was what they regularly received. At BCH, Nick is always amazed when he sees Shirley preparing a big dinner for the cottage! And he can't get over how he is allowed to have a healthy snack any time he asks.

Your church can help children, like Nick, through the Food Roundup.

Stories like this share why your church's participation is so important. By collecting \$400,000 in food, supplies and gift cards, you are the hands and feet of Jesus to children at BCH, many who are hearing the Gospel for the first time. Your efforts provide 700,000 meals and snacks — enough to feed BCH's children for a year!







See the one-minute video. Download at vimeo.com/bchfamily/fr20