



BIBLICAL RECORDER

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NIH director discusses COVID-19 vaccines in ERLC event

By TOM STRODE | Baptist Press

The unprecedented pace of developing vaccines for COVID-19 has not jeopardized their effectiveness or safety for Americans, the director of the National Institutes of Health said Thursday (Dec. 3) in a webinar hosted by the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

Francis Collins, NIH's director since 2009, answered questions from ERLC President Russell Moore about vaccines for the deadly disease while two candidates await potential approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for emergency use.

"I want to assure you as a scientist, as a physician, as a researcher who has been in the middle of all of this since January, we have done nothing to compromise in even the smallest way the safety or the efficacy standards for these vaccines," said Collins, a noted physician-geneticist.

"What we've done is to figure out how to get rid of some of the dead time that normally means it takes 8 years to develop a vaccine" instead of the 10 months the current candidates have required, he said. "But the rigor involved, if anything, has been escalated to an even higher level than has been applied to vaccines before."

Pfizer and Moderna have submitted applications to the FDA following trials that included 43,000 volunteers for the former company and 30,000 for the latter. In the past, 4,000 or 5,000 participants have been involved in vaccine trials,

See Vaccines page 8

Seminary presidents honor BFM, denounce racism, critical theory



By SETH BROWN | BR Executive Editor

The Council of Seminary Presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) adopted a statement in a virtual meeting Nov. 23 that reaffirms the *Baptist Faith & Message* (2000) as the unifying doctrinal statement of all six seminaries, condemns racism and declares that a pair of social science theories called critical race theory and intersectionality are out of step with Southern Baptist beliefs. (Read the full statement on page 5.)

The council is made up of seminary presidents from schools formally affiliated with the SBC. Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., is currently chairman of the council.

"Our goal is to serve the Lord Jesus Christ by equipping students to serve the church and fulfill the Great Commission," Akin told Baptist Press. "We take that task seriously as we serve all Southern Baptists, and we ground our doctrinal fidelity in scripture as expressed through the *Baptist Faith*

and Message.

"While we must continue to speak with clear conviction against any aspects of racism, the sure and certain cure to any evil of this age is the gospel of Jesus Christ. No unbiblical ideology can solve the social issues that confront us. Every faculty member of Southeastern Seminary is fully committed to teaching biblical truth in service to King Jesus, and to standing steadfast in an increasingly secular culture."

The council said it developed the statement to honor the twentieth anniversary of the *Baptist Faith & Message* being revised and adopted by the SBC. The *Baptist Faith & Message* in its current form is celebrated as a crowning achievement of the convention's "Conservative Resurgence."

The council's statement appears to come in response to critics who claim the convention is losing its conservative commitments. Controversy about what Southern Baptists should believe arose in 2019 when the convention passed a resolution

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The BR magazine is just around the corner

This is the last issue of the *Biblical Recorder's* bi-weekly newspaper, but it is the beginning of a new era for our printed news.

Since 1833, the *Recorder* has been a news source for North Carolina Baptists. That legacy continues as we publish on more platforms than ever. The forthcoming monthly magazine in January will be an outstanding addition.

Former editor Josiah Bailey (1895-1907) honored the *Recorder's* 70th anniversary by saying it should be a source of inspiration and a “bond of unity binding an ever-larger number of informed Baptists in faith and in

interest in missions.”

I couldn't agree more. And I hope our new magazine format will be received as an ongoing commitment by our staff to ensure that heritage lives on.

The widespread virus that struck the world this year caught us all off guard. It forced us to reassess our content and business strategies. But it did not shake our commitment to the Great Commission, our love for missions partnerships nor our principled stand for responsible journalism. We did not make decisions on our heels. Our board and staff members leaned in,

planned ahead and acted decisively.

I'm sharing this information to assure you our new magazine is not an afterthought or mere reaction. Altering our print format is a strategic move that better suits our content as we continue to adapt to an ever-changing media landscape.

We embrace a digital-first strategy, which simply means our staff acknowledges that breaking news happens online. That's just a fact of our day. But printed products still retain the ability to engage readers in a unique and meaningful way – not to mention they are accessible beyond the reaches of high-speed internet.

Readers often ask for deeper, more inspirational reporting about how God is working among North Caro-

lina Baptists. With the magazine, we have more effective tools to present those stories to our readers.

The debut issue will feature a cover story about a family that is sacrificially living out pro-life values through adoption and other ministries. We are also planning informative articles and columns about the sanctity of life and how churches can demonstrate to their communities the importance of the *imago Dei*. You don't want to miss these articles.

The *Recorder* is proud to introduce its new magazine in January. We hope you will be excited to read it.

As always, we love to hear from you. Email us at editor@brnow.org.

Have a Merry Christmas! 



SETH BROWN
BR Executive Editor

Light of Christmas shines hope to our troubled world

BSC Communications

An interesting phenomenon took place this past spring as the initial wave of COVID-19 cases spread throughout the United States: Many people across the country began putting their Christmas lights back up. According to news reports at the time, people said the lights were a sign of hope amid those early concerns, fears and stay-at-home orders related to the coronavirus.

Now some eight months later, reports show that cases of COVID-19 are once again increasing, even though there is a promise of a vaccine on the horizon. And similar to the springtime, lights are once again starting to show up in homes, on lawns and in other displays as we approach the Christmas season. Against the backdrop of the ongoing cares and concerns of the day, Christmas lights are indeed a sign of hope for our troubled world because they point us to the true light.

As we put up our own lights this Christmas or gaze in wonder and appreciation of other dazzling displays, let us be reminded that the Christmas

story is a story of light coming into a dark, broken and sinful world in the person of Jesus Christ, and this light gives us true and lasting hope.

In Scripture, we see several references to light in the proclamation of Jesus' birth. The priest Zechariah prophesied in Luke 1:79 that Jesus came “*to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*” When angels announced Christ's birth to the shepherds, “*the glory of the Lord shone around them*” (Luke 2:9), and a star led the wise men to the place of Jesus' birth so they could worship Him (Matthew 2).

The word “light” is used to describe Jesus several times in the opening verses of the Gospel of John. John 1:9 describes Jesus' birth as “*The true light, which gives light to everyone was coming into the world*” (ESV). Later in John's Gospel, Jesus uses “light” to describe Himself and the type of life He came to bring when He declared “*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life*” (John 8:12).

The light of life refers to the salvation that Jesus



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer


IN FOCUS

A WORD FROM OUR LEADER

Christ offers to each and every person. Christ's light exposes our sinfulness and points us to our need of Him. When we trust Christ as our Savior, the Apostle Peter explains that we are called “*out of darkness and into His marvelous light*” (1 Peter 2:9).

Jesus tells his followers in Matthew 5:14 that “*You are the light of the world.*” Have you ever thought of yourself in this way? This passage goes on to instruct us to “*let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven*” (Matthew 5:16).

So as we celebrate Christmas this year, let the lights you see remind us of the light who has come and the light we are called to be by pointing others to Him. Merry Christmas!

“*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” — John 1:14 (NKJV) 



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(919) 847-2127; Fax (919) 467-6180
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Seth Brown, Executive Editor
editor@brnow.org

Liz Tablazon, Assistant Editor
(919) 459-5697 • liz@brnow.org

Alison McKinney, Business Manager
(919) 459-5691 • alison@brnow.org

Carly Conley, Graphic Designer

Dee Dee Vogt, Editorial Aide

Grace Stallings, Administrative Assistant

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News Journal of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina • Founded 1833 by Thomas Meredith

Why we hope to give the largest Lottie Moon gift ever

This November I am re-reading one of my favorite books, *To the Golden Shore: The Life of Adoniram Judson*. Not many books have truly changed my life, but this one has. After reading it in college, I resigned my law studies and went to serve God with the International Mission Board (IMB) as a missionary in Asia. I haven't picked that book up in 30 years until just a few weeks ago. I'm glad that I did.

In 1812, Adoniram Judson and five of his friends felt called by God to take the gospel to the frontier regions of Burma. No American had ever attempted such a thing, and the fledgling American church had no structure to support them. A central theme of the story of Judson's ministry was whether the church in America would support this small team endeavoring to take the gospel to "this numerous and ancient people of Hindoostan." Several times Adoniram was ready to give up on the American church, and even offered himself and his team to the London Missionary Society for their support.

Thankfully, at almost the last hour, God raised up leaders in the American church who declared that they would not shirk their responsibilities to the Great Commission or outsource it to others. As riders on horseback urgently canvassed the countryside, money for the expedition poured in from all over the Northeast – from both the wealthy and the poor. Bags of coins were literally thrown through the windows at the place the Judsons were staying.

The Christians of Judson's day told Adoniram, his wife Ann and their small team that if they would commit to dangling from one end of a Gospel rope in Burma, they would (in the words of William Carey) commit to holding securely to the other end.

Fast forward more than two centuries. Since that initial commitment, billions of dollars have been given by Southern Baptists to get the gospel to the farthest reaches of the planet. But each generation must commit themselves anew to this task. The hour we find ourselves in right now is not that much different than what Adoniram, Ann and the American church faced in 1812. They were a people rocked by war, political turmoil, plague and scandal. And yet, they obeyed. Joyfully. Boldly. With abandon.

Every December, the IMB raises money for the next wave of missionaries through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO). The bulk of our convention's giving toward international church planting comes from this one offering. This year, the IMB has set an ambitious target: \$175 million. That would be the largest LMCO of all time. And we've never needed it more. Candidates following in the footsteps of Adoniram and Ann Judson are preparing

themselves to go. Will the funds to support them be ready when they are?

Can we hit an audacious mark of \$175 million in 2020? I believe we can. And I believe we must. This year, marked by a devastating pandemic and societal chaos, has taken us on a ride few of us expected and none of us wanted. There have been dark days. But dark days are not the time when God's people shrink back in fear. Dark days cause us to charge forward in faith.



J.D. GREEAR

We know everything God does in the world He does for the purposes of the Great Commission. He rearranges geographical boundaries and appoints global pandemics so that "*the nations might seek Him, and perhaps reach out and find Him*" (Acts 17:27).

The coronavirus is simply too big an event for God to waste. We know what His plans are in this moment.

Though the future may feel uncertain to the world, it is not for us. God has told us: "*This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come*" (Matthew 24:14). Now is not the time to shrink back in fear. Now is the time for the people of God to move forward in faith.

IMB President Paul Chitwood has said he wants to send another 500 full-time missionaries to the field. I want us, as a convention, to be ready to send them the moment they step up.


Through #Go2Years, we have already begun to see hundreds of college graduates answering the call to spend two years overseas on a missionary team. I believe we will see thousands more respond to God's call. I want us to be ready to send every one of them.

Believing the gospel puts us under a great debt, a debt to those that have yet to hear the

news that can save their souls. It's simply not fair, Paul reasons in Romans 1:14, that those of us who have heard so much about a God who has done everything would do so little to get the Good News to people who have heard nothing at all. After all, as Carl F. H. Henry said, the gospel is only good news for someone if it gets to them in time.

We owe it to unreached people groups around the world to give our first and our best this Christmas. Let's give in a way that declares we believe the gospel, we value the eternal salvation of others over the accumulation of things and we treasure Jesus most in our hearts. Let not the words that Adoniram Judson used to describe the sleeping church of his day be true of ours also: "Christians today ... let three fourths of the world sleep the sleep of death, ignorant of the simple truth that a Savior had died for them. Content if they can be useful in the little circle of their acquaintances, they quietly sit and see whole nations perish for lack of knowledge."

Instead, let us rise up in faith like that small remnant of believers, giving to support this great cause. The presiding pastor at Judson's commissioning declared: "No enterprise comparable to this has been embraced by the American Church. All others retire before it, like stars before the rising sun."

Amen and Amen. Judson's faithful obedience, and the obedience of the church behind him, changed the world. So will ours. This generation of souls all over the world is our responsibility. We have to be faithful to our task. Eternity will be different if we are. 

(EDITOR'S NOTE – J.D. Greear is pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, N.C., and president of the Southern Baptist Convention.)



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COVID-19 brings Christmas changes to many Americans

By AARON EARLS | LifeWay Research

Almost all Americans celebrate Christmas, but most say COVID-19 will cause some changes to their usual holiday habits.

A new study from Nashville-based LifeWay Research found 93% of American adults say they celebrate Christmas. That number is essentially unchanged from a decade ago when 91% said the same in a 2010 LifeWay Research survey.

While Catholics (98%) and Protestants (95%) are more likely to honor Christmas, even religiously unaffiliated Americans (88%) and those of other religions (81%) say they celebrate on Dec. 25.

“Christmas has significant religious meaning to Christians as it celebrates the birth of Jesus who opens the means of a relationship with God for believers,” said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research. “But those outside the faith don’t ‘become Christians’ for the day when they enjoy many of the cultural traditions attached to Christmas.”

Women are slightly more likely than men to avoid being a Grinch this year and celebrate the holiday (94% to 91%). Americans aged 65 and older are the least likely to say they are in the Christmas spirit this year (87%).

Regionally, those in the Midwest (95%) and West (95%) are more likely than those in the South (90%) to say they celebrate Christmas.

A COVID-19 Christmas

Despite widespread Christmas celebrations, the pandemic is changing the way people celebrate the holidays. Two in 3 (65%) Americans noted at least one change they plan to make this year due to COVID-19.

“Some Americans are reacting to the effects of COVID-19 by doubling down with plans to celebrate more,” said McConnell. “Other Americans will scale back their traditions likely due to safety, finances or their state of mind.”

With health and safety recommendations limiting contact with others in effect across much of the country, 35% of Americans say they expect to spend less time visiting with family at Christmas this year.

Around half (47%) say their plans remain the same, while 13% plan to visit family more due to COVID. Few (5%) say such family visits aren’t typically part of their Christmas celebrations.

Those more likely to be in high-risk health categories are also more likely to say they’ll be spending less time visiting their family. Americans aged 50 to 64 (43%) and those 65 and older (38%) are more likely to avoid such visits than young adults aged 18 to 34 (28%).

Possibly due to the reduction in travel or the economic downturn caused by the pandemic, 1 in 5 Americans (20%) say they expect less gift giving this Christmas. Two-thirds (67%) say it will stay the same, 9% say they’ll give more gifts this year and 4% say they don’t usually give gifts for Christmas.

In addition to the cultural Christmas traditions, many say COVID-19 will have an impact on their spiritual holiday observance in 2020.

A quarter of Americans (25%) say the pandemic makes them less likely to attend a Christmas church service this year. Around 1 in 10 (11%) say COVID-19 makes them more likely, 37% say the same as usual, and 27% say their Christmas celebrations usually don’t involve churchgoing.

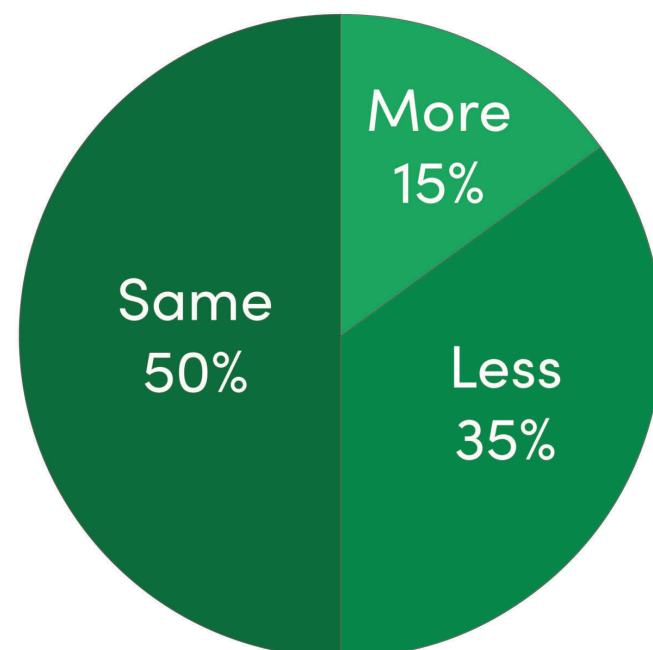
Young adults, those aged 18 to 34, are the most likely to say COVID-19 has made them more likely to attend a Christmas church service (15%).

Among American adults who typically go to church during Christmas, 50% say they are as likely to go as any other year, 15% say they are more likely to attend, and 35% of typical Christmas churchgoers are less likely to go this year.

While churches may be less

How do you expect COVID-19 to impact the likelihood you attend a Christmas church service?

Among American adults who typically celebrate Christmas by attending a church service



Note: 27% of Americans who celebrate Christmas said attending a church service was not typically part of their celebrations.

LifeWay

LifeWayResearch.com

crowded this Christmas, Americans may be more reflective on the spiritual significance of the holiday.

Around 3 in 5 adults (59%) say their spiritual reflections this year will stay the same, but 19% say they expect it to increase. Fewer say such reflections are not part of their typical celebration (12%) or that they’ll have less spiritual reflection this year than normal (9%).

Even among the religiously unaffiliated, 10% say the pandemic has made them more likely to spend time in spiritual reflection during the holidays this year.


African Americans are the most likely to say COVID-19 has led them to be more spiritually reflective this Christmas (31%).

“Almost 9 in 10 Americans typically do some spiritual reflection at Christmas,” McConnell said. “Personal time considering why God would come in the flesh isn’t affected by health or

financial concerns, so it’s not surprising that about twice as many Americans will do more of this than less for Christmas this year.”

Americans with evangelical beliefs are among the groups most likely to say COVID-19 is leading them to do even more this holiday season.

Evangelicals by belief are more likely than Americans without those beliefs to say they are going to visit family more (18% to 12%), give more gifts (15% to 7%), and have spiritual reflections (39% to 14%). Those with evangelical beliefs are also more likely than others to say COVID has made them more likely to attend church services this Christmas (23% to 8%).

For more information, download the complete report at LifeWayResearch.com. 

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Aaron Earls is a writer for LifeWay Christian Resources.)

Young adults are most likely to say COVID-19 has made them more likely to attend a Christmas service (15%)

Presidents

Continued from page 1

saying critical race theory and intersectionality were acceptable “analytical tools” for examining racial dynamics and discrimination but could not be accepted as “transcendent ideological frameworks.”

Some critics claim “Resolution 9” was an effort to usher in leftist beliefs contrary to Southern Baptist faith and practice. The 2019 resolutions committee has denied such allegations and defended their position as being in line with the *Baptist Faith & Message*.

SBC president J.D. Greear told Baptist Press “outlandish claims, out-of-context sermons or teaching clips, along with outright lies, have been used to attack people and undermine the Great Commission work of our convention, its entities, state conventions and churches.

“As this statement demonstrates, our convention leaders affirm without reservation not only our historic Baptist theological confessions, but also a biblical view of justice, which I also affirm and applaud. While we lament the painful legacy that racism and discrimination have left in our country and remain committed to fighting it in every form, we also declare that ideological frameworks like critical race theory are incompatible with the [Baptist Faith & Message]. The gospel gives a better answer.”



Members of the 2019 SBC Resolutions Committee expressed full support for the recent statement by seminary presidents. (BP photo)

Members of the 2019 SBC resolutions committee released a statement Dec. 1 on social media expressing full support for the statement by seminary presidents and comments by Greear. They restated their position that they do not affirm critical race theory nor intersectionality “as a worldview, because as such, we believe that they conflict with core Christian teachings.”

“We pray that we can move forward together in the Great Commission assignment to which Jesus, our Lord and Savior, called us. We acknowledge the calling to be Great Commission Baptists does not lead us to ignore the social, cultural and political issues in our society. It does mean that those issues must be addressed ultimately by the proclamation of the crucified and resurrected Jesus.”

In September, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s

(BSC) Committee on Resolutions expressed support for Steve Scoggins in his intent to submit a resolution on scripture and critical race theory to the SBC for consideration at the 2021 annual meeting. Scoggins was the BSC president at the time. He serves as pastor of First Baptist Church in Hendersonville, N.C.

The resolution was developed in conjunction with Bill Sturm, pastor of Sandy Ridge Baptist Church in Hickory and Micheal Pardue, pastor of First Baptist Icard in Connelly Springs.

Pardue, who now serves as BSC president, said he welcomed the reaffirmation of the Baptist Faith & Message by seminary presidents, saying it “helps bond Southern Baptists together for the mission of proclaiming the Kingdom of God to the ends of the earth.”

He also expressed gratitude for their comments about critical race theory and intersectionality.

“Racism is abhorrent and denies the fundamental truth that each and every person is made in the image of God and precious in His sight,” Pardue told the *Biblical Recorder*. “Racism is sin in need of redemption. Secular ideologies deny the image of God and can never be compatible with our sacred work.

“As I traveled across North Carolina this fall, I heard numerous N.C. Baptists express concern about the perception that these ideologies are gaining ground in our convention. I’m thankful we can be confident that secular dogmas will not have a foothold in our seminaries.”

BSC executive director-treasurer Milton Hollifield said he appreciates and affirms the statement by seminary presidents, along with Greear.

“I am confident that these timely statements reflect the character and integrity of each man,” Hollifield told

the *Recorder*.

“I personally know each of these men and admire them for their conservative theological stands on the Bible and also the way they are leading our seminaries and helping shape the future of our convention by training ministers and missionaries for the advancement of the gospel and fulfilling the Great Commission.”

Full statement by Council of Seminary Presidents

“On this twentieth anniversary year of the *Baptist Faith & Message* (as revised and adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000), the Council of Seminary Presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in its annual session, hereby reaffirms with eagerness the *Baptist Faith & Message* as the doctrinal statement that unites and defines Southern Baptist cooperation and establishes the confessional unity of our Convention.

“Our six seminaries are confessional institutions, standing together in this classic statement of biblical truth. All professors must agree to teach in accordance with and not contrary to the *Baptist Faith & Message*. This is our sacred commitment and privilege, and every individual faculty member and trustee of our institutions shares this commitment. We are thankful for the theological commitments of the Southern Baptist Convention, standing against the tide of theological compromise and in the face of an increasingly hostile secular culture.

“In light of current conversations in the Southern Baptist Convention, we stand together on historic Southern Baptist condemnations of racism in any form and we also declare that affirmation of Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality, and any version of Critical Theory is incompatible with the *Baptist Faith & Message*.”

Council Members

- Danny Akin, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Jason Allen, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Jamie Dew, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
- Adam Greenway, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Jeff Iorg, Gateway Seminary
- Albert Mohler, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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DISCIPLE-MAKING CONFERENCE

REIMAGINE

DISCIPLE-MAKING CONFERENCE TO HELP CHURCHES 'REIMAGINE' MINISTRY

by Chad Austin, BSCNC Communications

A single line in an ancient text chronicling the nation of Israel's history contains an important truth for believers today.

Not much is known about the sons of Issachar who are referenced in 1 Chronicles 12, but they are described in verse 32 as having an "understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (NKJV).

The impact of COVID-19 has underscored the need for church and ministry leaders to be modern-day sons of Issachar — to understand the times and know what to do.

N.C. Baptists will explore those concepts at the 2021 Disciple-making Conference, scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 23, at Friendly Avenue Baptist Church in Greensboro with in-person speakers. A series of virtual breakout sessions related to the event will be released on Wednesday, Feb. 24. The theme for the event is "Reimagine" and will emphasize that while God's mission never changes, the current times require new means of ministry.

"We want to encourage N.C. Baptists to reimagine their ministry based upon a call back to a New Testament understanding of the gospel and their mission," said conference organizer Brian Upshaw, who leads the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSCNC) Disciple-making team. "We want to help people acknowledge the moment we are living in, but not be absorbed by the moment.

"There are relevant means for the day, but the mission hasn't changed."

The conference will serve as an extension of resources released by the state convention this fall to help pastors and church leaders navigate different aspects of ministry amid the lingering effects and impact of the novel coronavirus.

"Reimagine" resources are available at reimaginenc.org, and they are designed to help churches consider and develop innovative practices that uphold core New Testament church principles.

The impact of COVID-19 is also requiring an innovative approach to the annual conference. The 2021 event will feature a hybrid mix of in-person and virtual components. A series of keynote speakers will highlight the in-person component from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the host church, while at least 20 breakout session offerings will be made available virtually.

WANT TO GO?

What: 2021 Disciple-making Conference

When: Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021

Where: Friendly Avenue Baptist Church, Greensboro, N.C. & Virtually

Cost: \$12 per person (includes lunch)

Info: disciplemakingconference.org

In-person attendance will be limited to approximately 300 people, with social distancing and other health and safety protocols in place. Registration will open Monday, Jan. 11, 2021, and cost will be \$12 per person.

In-person attendees will receive a grab-and-go boxed lunch at the conclusion of the session, as well as a bundle of free books and other resources.

Vance Pitman, senior pastor of Hope Church in Las Vegas, Nev., and Jim Shaddix, professor of preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, will be keynote speakers.

Pitman founded Hope Church in the fall of 2001 as a church plant from First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Ga. From a small group of 18 adults, Hope's fellowship has grown to more than 4,000. Hope has also sent hundreds out on mission and commissioned 60 churches in the western United States. Pitman is the author of the book "Unburdened," which was released earlier this year. He also hosts a podcast on leadership.

Shaddix has served as a preaching professor at Southeastern since 2012 and has pastored churches in Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana and Colorado. Before coming to Southeastern, he served as dean of chapel and professor of preaching at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He has authored or co-authored several books on preaching, including "Power in the Pulpit," "Progress in the Pulpit," and "The Passion Driven Sermon." His latest book is "Decisional Preaching."

Breakout sessions will focus on innovative approaches to local church ministry and will address topics in the areas of evangelism, discipleship, children's ministry, youth ministry, family ministry, women's ministry, collegiate ministry, church planting, pastoral ministry, preaching, small groups, worship and more. Special attention will also be given to virtual and hybrid ministry.

All conference registrants (both in-person and virtual) will have access to recordings of all of the content for a period of time after the event.

Given the fluid nature of the ongoing coronavirus response by state and local health officials, all conference details

are subject to change. For the most accurate and up-to-date information and details about the 2021 Disciple-making Conference, visit the event website at disciplemakingconference.org.

CONNECT NOW

VIDEOS

There are a plethora of inspirational and training videos available to you for download through our Vimeo site.

vimeo.com/ncbaptist

PODCAST

We are striving to become a better resource for you. Our N.C. Baptist podcast will host various trainings we offer throughout the year. Find us by searching iTunes for N.C. Baptist or visit ncbaptist.podbean.com.

ncbaptist.podbean.com

RESOURCES

Access tons of FREE resources and information specifically catered to your needs by signing up for our mass emails. Go to ncbaptist.org/signup and fill out the form to tell us what you would like to receive.

ncbaptist.org/signup

ANNUAL MEETING RECORDINGS

WATCH NOW

VIRTUAL BREAKOUTS, ANNUAL MEETING VIDEOS AVAILABLE

by Chad Austin, BSCNC Communications

North Carolina Baptists celebrated God’s faithfulness amid a tumultuous year as they gathered around the theme of “God’s Great Hope” for the 190th annual meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC) on Tuesday, Nov. 10, at First Baptist Church of Charlotte.

The event drew 500 messengers and guests and featured worship, business and a celebration of the ministry of Milton A. Hollifield Jr., who is retiring as the BSCNC’s executive director-treasurer on Feb. 28, 2021.

A collection of video recordings from the annual meeting, as well as a series of breakout sessions addressing a variety of ministry topics, are now available.

Video recordings include messages from state convention President Steve Scoggins and longtime

International Mission Board missionary Sam James, as well as Hollifield’s final address to messengers as executive director-treasurer. A recording of the celebration of Hollifield’s ministry is also available. The videos are available through the N.C. Baptist Vimeo page at vimeo.com/channels/2020annualmeeting.

In addition, 15 prerecorded breakout session videos from state convention staff, church practitioners and other ministry leaders that were released in conjunction with the annual meeting are also available for viewing. The recordings are available until the end of the year and are available at ncannualmeeting.org/breakouts.

Many of the breakout session recordings directly address issues that have surfaced over the past year, including ministering amid a pandemic, the future of ministry, race relations and more.

Vocational Evangelist Retreat

Jan. 14-15: Sophia, N.C.
ncbaptist.org/ver

Resourcing Worship Children’s Worship University

Jan. 30: Virtual Conference
resourcingworship.com

2021 Disciple-making Conference

Feb. 23: Greensboro, N.C.
Disciplemakingconference.org

Embrace Women’s Ministry Roundtables

March 13: Multiple Locations
embracenc.org/roundtables

N.C. Baptist Women’s Retreat

March 26-27: Sophia, N.C.
ncbaptist.org/secret20

BeDoTell Summer Youth Weeks

June 7 to Aug. 6: Fort Caswell, N.C.
bedotell.com

Ministry Safe Church Safety Workshop

Sept. 17-18: Pleasant Garden, N.C.
ncbaptist.org/ministrysafe

Note: Please check event websites for any potential changes to live event schedules.

UPCOMING EVENTS

REIMAGINE

TIMELESS MISSION. TIMELY MEANS.

‘Reimagine’ Project

Church leaders have lots of questions about how to lead and love their congregations well during these days. Amid the countless uncertainties, two things are certain — the church has a timeless mission, and accomplishing this mission today will require timely methods.

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s recently launched “Reimagine” project website seeks to help church leaders apply New Testament principles to present-day modes of church practice. While we must not surrender the core teachings found in a biblical theology of the church, we must learn how to innovate our practices in order to uphold what is timeless in a timely way.

Throughout the ReimagineNC website, you will find resources and tools to assist you in every ministry of your church. For each ministry, timely recommendations are made on how to address today’s reality. In addition, other resources are offered to help churches address tomorrow’s possibilities. Each section also includes an introductory video and contact information for state convention staff. Access all the resources at reimaginenc.org.

Learn more at: reimaginenc.org

PRAY GO

TOGETHER.

TOGETHER.

‘Pray Together. Go Together.’ prayer emphasis

Join other North Carolina Baptists in praying for unreached people and least-reached places across our state during the month of January as part of a prayer emphasis focused on unreached people groups and pockets of lostness in North Carolina.

The prayer emphasis includes a free downloadable 30-day prayer guide that introduces participants to a different people group and pocket of lostness each day. The guide includes descriptions of people groups and pockets of lostness, as well as Scripture readings, prayer points, and suggestions for engaging the people and pockets.

New and expanded resources include a sermon guide, small group guide and prayerwalking guide to lead your church or small group in praying for lostness in your area and across the state.

You may also sign up for daily emails and text message reminders throughout the prayer emphasis. To sign up for text messages, text the phrase “Prayandgo” (without spaces or quotation marks) to 474747.

To sign up for daily emails and download the prayer guide, visit prayandgonc.org.

Learn more at: prayandgonc.org

Recommend SOMEONE

to serve on N.C. Baptist boards and committees

ncbaptist.org/recommend

Recommend individuals to serve in leadership

Each year, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC) seeks recommendations for individuals to serve in a variety of roles with the state convention.

Recommendations of North Carolina Baptists for places of service and leadership are essential for ongoing missions, ministries and evangelistic endeavors.

Places of service include: the BSCNC’s board of directors; various BSCNC committees; and boards of the related entities of the convention, which include the Baptist Children’s Homes of North

Carolina, the Biblical Recorder, the N.C. Baptist Foundation, and N.C. Baptist Hospital.

Recommendations are due by Jan. 31, 2020. Any recommendations received after Jan. 31 will be held and considered for the following year.

More information, including an online recommendation form, is available by visiting ncbaptist.org/recommend.

Learn more at: ncbaptist.org/recommend

Vaccines

Continued from page 1

Collins said.

“So if the FDA in their conclusions in just a couple of weeks say these are safe and effective, that’s because the data say they are safe and effective,” he told webinar participants.

Collins and other public health officials are seeking to help persuade a large portion of the American public that is skeptical about a vaccine. A Gallup poll published Nov. 17 showed 58 percent of adults said they would get the vaccine if it were currently available at no cost.

The webinar occurred on a day when Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore reported the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the United States has reached nearly 14 million and almost 275,000 Americans have died.

Collins said of the Pfizer and Moderna trials, “[W]e were delighted, thrilled, amazed to see that it looked like the effectiveness [of both] was about 95 percent. That is so much better than what you could expect to see with a new illness of this sort.

“And the safety looks really good as well.”

So far, the evidence shows the “side effects seem to be pretty similar to what you get with other vaccines, and there don’t seem to be any unexpected longer-term issues,” Collins said. The trials have lasted for at least two months, a time period in which any problem is normally recognized, he said.

A follower of Christ, Collins said, “Here’s a great opportunity for Christians to say, ‘Let’s really look at the truth of the situation and evaluate what the evidence demonstrates for and against the idea that this is something I want to take advantage of myself.’”

For now, the risk “looks minimal,” and there is “a pretty good balance of benefits and risks that you’d want to engage in and probably take advantage of yourself and roll up your sleeve,” he said.

Collins said a public meeting regarding the Pfizer vaccine will be held Dec. 10, followed a week later by an event about the Moderna vaccine.

He explained that each vaccine requires two doses or injections about a month apart. About 40 million doses have already been manufactured, enabling vaccinations to begin the day after expected approval by the FDA is granted.

The first recipients of the vaccine will be higher-risk Americans, such as health-care workers and the elderly in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, Collins said.

In response to a question from Moore, Collins explained a cell line derived from an elective abortion in 1972 is used often in biotechnology but is



not used in the production of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. The cell line is part of the preparation of the vaccine candidates produced by Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca that are now in Phase 3 trials.

That cell line “is sometimes used just as a lab bench experiment to make sure that everything is working the way it’s supposed to,” he said.

The Charlotte Lozier Institute – a pro-life research organization – released a chart Thursday that showed Pfizer and Moderna have used abortion-derived cells in some lab tests while not using them in developing a vaccine. The chart also showed Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca have used such cells in both lab tests and production of a vaccine.

Rejecting a vaccine and waiting on herd immunity is not an appropriate option, Collins told Moore.

“If we were to adopt that strategy, we potentially would eventually get to herd immunity but there would be millions of us no longer around,” he said. “That is too high a price for us to bear if we don’t have to. That’s not a Christian answer if we love our neighbor.”

While Americans await a vaccine, Collins said, “We need to be just absolutely, rigorously adherent to things that we know work, but they don’t work unless everybody actually sticks to them faithfully without exception.”

A mask is not “a political statement” but “a life-

saving medical device. Think about it that way,” he said. People should remember wearing a mask is primarily to protect others, not themselves, Collins said. “That sounds like a Christian action if I’ve ever heard one.”

Most churches should have virtual services, not in-person ones, Collins recommended. After corporate worship, “you just can’t get a bunch of Christians not to hug each other and not to want to shake hands with the pastor as they go out the door and maybe have a conversation that’s a whole lot closer than six feet away, and that’s where the trouble happens,” he said.

Based on the current pace, Collins predicted every American should have the opportunity to receive the vaccine by early summer, with the possible exception of children, who have not been involved in the trials so far.

“I’m guardedly optimistic that by the summer we may be able to have a Vacation Bible School; we may be able to go to a baseball game and see it in real terms,” he said. “And certainly by next fall I’m hoping we can get back to things like [open schools and businesses], and our economy can get back on its feet.

“But there are a lot of steps between now and then. And, of course, it will go better if we don’t have our healthcare system utterly devastated by the ongoing pandemic that we could have potentially turned around by all of us (following health guidelines).”

President Barack Obama named Collins as NIH director in 2009, and President Donald Trump reappointed him in 2017. He served as director of NIH’s National Human Genome Research Institute for 15 years before becoming NIH director.

Known for his discovery of disease genes, Collins led the International Human Genome Project, which completed a finished sequence of the human DNA instruction book in 2003.

NIH is the world’s largest supporter of biomedical research. 

“I want to assure you as a scientist, as a physician, as a researcher who has been in the middle of all of this since January, we have done nothing to compromise in even the smallest way the safety or the efficacy standards for these vaccines.” – **Francis Collins, NIH Director**

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Embracing Joy

December 20

Focal Passage: Psalm 95:1-3; Luke 2:4-14

Sometimes, joy seems so hard to come by – a scarce resource indeed. Technological advances have given us access to every discouraging thing in any part of the world and at any time. Our access to world news is right in the palm of our hand. This is often in addition to the difficulties in our personal lives. How can we possess joy when there is so much to be sad about? Have we seen and experienced too much to be joyful? Joy was never meant to be found in a particular set of circumstances or an easy life. It isn't found in a good news cycle or in a financial windfall. In fact, true joy can only be found in the God of our salvation. God's salvation transcends any circumstance or emotion we may face. This life can never satisfy us. We live in a broken

world that is aching with the effects of sin. This is why Jesus came. God has chosen to redeem the world through Jesus Christ. He was born into the world as a baby to live among us and die for our sin. This act of God putting on flesh and coming to earth is what we call the incarnation. Though the incarnation happened over 2,000 years ago, it is still cause for boundless joy today. Luke says that the joy of Christ's birth would be to all people. That includes us! God's salvation through Jesus has reached us throughout time and place. God is worthy of our praise because He is the One who gives us joy through His salvation. In Him, we have joy to carry us for the rest of our lives and into an eternity in God's presence.



ANTENESHIA SANDERS
staff member, The Summit Church, Durham

Redirecting Anger

December 27

Focal Passage: Psalm 35:1-3,13-18

As much as we may try to remain undisturbed, we are bound to get angry sooner or later. It is unavoidable. Both making someone angry and becoming angry are in our nature. It can be an indicator of hurt, grief or injustice. What we do with our anger, however, matters very much. God understands our anger. In fact, God gets angry too. But we must recognize that God is the only One who is perfectly just and vengeance belongs to Him. When we are angry, we can make our anger known to God. He cares for us, and He has promised to intervene on our behalf as He sees fit. Our role is to treat others with love and compassion and

not respond to them in anger. Jesus teaches, *"Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you"* (Luke 6:27-28). Throughout scripture, God teaches us how to respond to others when we are angry. *"Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for God's wrath ... But if your enemy is hungry, feed him. ... Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good"* (Romans 12:19-21). These things are often contrary to the way our anger desires us to respond when someone has offended us. When we try to avenge ourselves, we put ourselves in the place of God and make matters much worse for ourselves and others. We can rest assured that when we leave our anger in God's hands, He will grant us peace, and He will understand and care for us.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Proclaimed

December 20

Focal passage: Luke 2:4-19

In October 1864 the Confederate ship CSS Shenandoah was deployed to raid Union commerce ships in the Pacific Ocean. Under the command of Captain James Waddell, the Shenandoah made the months-long journey to the Bering Sea near Alaska. Upon arrival, the Shenandoah spent the entire summer of 1865 harassing whaling fleets. In total, they destroyed 32 ships and captured over 1,000 prisoners. By most accounts the mission seemed to be successful. The only problem was that the Confederacy had surrendered earlier that year. It wasn't until a British ship captain revealed to Waddell and his crew the news of the Confederacy's demise three months before. News of Jesus' birth wasn't slow to spread. Not long after the Messiah

had been tightly swaddled and laid in a manger did the angels appear to frighten shepherds. Does your life look any different than it did before you heard this Good News? Do you still look with awe, as the shepherds did, at the coming of Christ? Or, like the crew of the Shenandoah, do you live as if the Good News of Jesus had never reached your ears? Sometimes our goals and worries look very similar to the world around us. As believers, our lives should look different because Jesus came. In spite of everything going on around us, we can have hope, like the shepherds, *"glorifying and praising God for all the things they had seen and heard"* (Luke 2:20).



GRAYSON FURLOUGH
assistant pastor, Point Church, Cary

Anticipated

December 27

Focal passage: Luke 2:25-38

Between AD 397 and 400, Augustine of Hippo wrote a personal memoir, often referred to as *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, that reflected on his life before and after coming to Christ. Considered the first autobiography, Augustine recounted his desperate search for fulfillment in life. Search as he may, every pleasure left him feeling more empty inside. It wasn't until he found Jesus that his soul discovered genuine fulfillment. As he reflected on this transformation, Augustine wrote, *"You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless, until they can find rest in you."* He finally understood that the

longing of his soul was an anticipation to be reunited with the Soul-maker. Luke recounts two people – Simeon and Anna – who were the living definition of anticipation. Unknowingly, they were waiting at the temple in Jerusalem to meet their Savior. Do you find yourself longing for something more? The Bible tells us that we were made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). If you find yourself feeling empty, ask yourself: What am I trying to satisfy myself with? The answer may be revealing. Seek God with your whole heart and He will draw near to you (James 4:8). Spend time with the Lord in Bible reading, prayer, fasting, community and corporate worship. Perhaps then you will be able to say with Augustine that your once restless soul has now found its rest in Him.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Overcoming worry

January 3

Focal passage: Psalm 23:1-6

In an earlier session, we learned to trust God in times of fear. Closely related to fear is worry. Worry is that constant wondering whether something will go wrong. Like fear, worry can be dominating. But just like when we're afraid, we can also trust Him when we are worried.

When we consider who God is, we see that worry becomes completely unnecessary. As our shepherd, God gives us guidance. When tempted to fret about our next move or decision, we can remember that God is faithful to lead us. He does this for our protection and His glory.

Worry is unnecessary for the Christian because of God's provision. Because God promised to meet our needs, there is no need to occupy our minds with nagging thoughts about where our resources will come

from. Scripture reminds us what to do instead of worrying. *"Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:6-7).

God's presence eliminates worry. What comfort we have knowing God is not distant, but near at all times! Because God is with us, we are safe and we don't have to worry.

Whatever comes, we can rely on His promise to be good to His children. Though circumstances do not always "feel" good, God remains true to his character. Our Shepherd is a constant comfort.



ANTENESHIA SANDERS
staff member, The Summit
Church, Durham

Weathering the blues

January 10

Focal passage: Psalm 31:1-8

Has a memory ever brought about sadness for you? Was there something you hoped to accomplish that hasn't worked out?

Have you ever missed someone so much that you were overcome by depression? We probably all have. There is a difference between moments of depression and clinical depression. The need for medication or other forms of treatment do not signal a lack of trust in God. However, whenever we feel down, God can lift us up.

Feelings of sadness can be sudden and seem difficult to manage. They are inevitable, and there will be times in our lives when we simply feel down. But God wants to hear all

about it. We gain nothing in trying to keep our concerns from Him. He knows our emotions run deep – He created us that way – but He wants us to bring our troubles to Him because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:6-7).

God is strong enough to shoulder our burdens, and He promises to give us rest as we endure sadness. His Word says, *"Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light"* (Matthew 11:28-30).

Though sorrow can be heavy, God will see us through. He does not dismiss our sadness. Rather, He reminds us of His character and promises. God sees our afflictions, yet does not forsake us. Even in misery, we can rejoice in God's steadfast love.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Matured

January 3

Focal passage: Luke 2:41-52

There is a lot competing for our attention. Everything from daily chores to job duties to social obligations fight for dominance on our to-do list. With limited time, we're forced to decide what is most important in our lives.

Luke says something meaningful about Jesus's priorities. A brief snapshot into Jesus' childhood tells the story of Jesus' trip to the temple in Jerusalem with his family. After the Passover festival ended, the family departed for home. The only problem was, Jesus was missing.

Eventually Mary and Joseph found Jesus back at the temple in Jerusalem. With an understandable sense of frustration, Mary said to Jesus, *"Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you"* (v. 48). To which

Jesus replied, *"Didn't you know that it was necessary for me to be in my Father's house?"* (v. 49).

Jesus, holy and perfect, was not disobeying Mary or trying to cause her panic. Far from being disobedient, Jesus was displaying an act of perfect obedience to the will of His heavenly Father. He prioritized the will of God.

Setting priorities is challenging. In a world constantly vying for our attention we can easily be distracted by the next "urgent" situation that comes our way. As followers of Christ, we need a clear understanding of our priorities.

As William Law once said, "If you have not chosen the Kingdom of God first, it will in the end make no difference what you have chosen instead."



GRAYSON FURLOUGH
assistant pastor,
Point Church, Cary

Prepared

January 10

Focal passage: Luke 3:7-18

The news outlet *Reuters* ran a headline a while back that revealed the attitude of many Americans. It read, "After 4.2 million COVID-19 cases in November, U.S. pins hope on vaccine." The message was clear. With all of the turmoil created by the virus, Americans put their hope in a vaccine.

While I do not downplay the seriousness of the pandemic, nor the incredible efforts by medical professionals, it is revealing where people place their hope.

When tragedy strikes, where do you turn?

The crowd to whom John the Baptist preached were stricken with their own tragedy. Not a natural

disaster or viral infection, but one of a spiritual nature. John tells the crowds in verse 7, *"Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"* and later in verse 9, *"The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."* John was referring to the seriousness of their sin.

The crowd was obviously concerned. *"What should we do then?" the crowd asked* (v. 10). John encouraged them to deal rightly with one another. He was teaching what true repentance looked like. He was preparing them for Jesus, the One to whom they would turn.

The challenge is the same for us today. Will we choose repentance or go our own way?

True hope doesn't come from circumstances. It comes through repentance and trust in Jesus Christ.

Georgia Baptists offer early retirement to 50 employees

By DIANA CHANDLER | Baptist Press

The Georgia Baptist Mission Board (GBMB) has offered voluntary early retirement to 50 employees to “right-size” the organization in the midst of dwindling revenue, GBMB Executive Director Thomas Hammond told Baptist Press.

“We’re trying to right-size our organization based upon our revenue, based upon our anticipated revenue and the employee costs,” Hammond said of the offer, which was extended to eligible employees Oct. 21. “Our desire is to push as much money to the field as possible to help our pastors, their families and churches to be healthier.”

Fifty employees are eligible for the retirement package, which retains certain longstanding benefits that will no longer be offered in 2021, according to Hammond. The GBMB’s website lists 97 employees.

“There was a very gracious benefit package in

the retirement package offered to our staff. The (GBMB) executive committee voted to remove that benefit package,” Hammond said. “So what we’re doing is, we’re telling our staff who’ve been working for us for a number of years, ‘If you want this benefit package, you need to take this retirement. Because after January 1, that offer goes away.’ ... We’re being as gracious as we possibly can.”

The decrease in GBMB employee retirement benefits was among various budget cuts approved in September by the executive committee in an attempt to deal with years of declining revenue, *The Christian Index* reported. The 2021 GBMB Cooperative Program budget of \$37,835,000 represents a 6% cut from the current year.


Hammond said he doesn’t anticipate all 50 eligible employees will accept voluntary retirement, but that the GBMB will “continue to do everything necessary to right-size the organization. We’re obligated to do this.” Eligible employees have until Dec.

4 to accept the offer.

Hammond said even if all 50 eligible employees took the early retirement option, the GBMB would “still have the largest number of full time staff of any state convention.”

“While the losses to Georgia are great, we still have a very large workforce that’s extremely talented and hardworking,” he said. “We want to continue to do all that we can to help our pastors and our churches. But to do so, we’ve got ... to be better positioned financially, to be a stronger mission board.”

In previous 2020 personnel decisions, the GBMB furloughed some employees but returned some of them to active work, Hammond said. “There were some folks that were furloughed that we did let go of,” he said.

Hammond was elected GBMB executive director in September 2018. 

CLASSIFIEDS

Pastor

Woodlawn Baptist Church of Conover is receiving resumes for the office of **senior pastor** following the retirement of our pastor of twenty-seven years. We are a conservative church, looking for a pastor who believes the Bible to be the inerrant, infallible, and inspired Word of God. We adhere to the doctrinal guidelines as stated in the Baptist Faith & Message 2000. SBC Seminary degree required. Like-minded candidates may send a resume to Woodlawn Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 609, Conover, N.C. 28613. Resumes will be accepted through December 2020.

Hillcrest Baptist, a conservative Southern Baptist Church is actively seeking the **Pastor** whom God has chosen to lead us into the future. We are located in Raeford, NC. Please send resume to: Craig Stone, 104 Stable Place Road, Raeford, NC 28376

Churchland Baptist Church of Lexington, NC, is seeking a **full-time Pastor** who will be preaching, teaching, pastoral care, discipleship, visitations, and regular office hours. We have traditional Sunday School and worship services with average attendance of 150. Applicants should have at least a bachelor’s and a seminary degree. Salary is negotiable, pending consideration of the use of the parsonage. Please submit a cover letter, resume and references to Churchland Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor Search Committee, 7516 South Hwy 150, Lexington, NC 27295.

Associational

The Cape Fear Network of Baptist Churches is searching for a full time Network Mission Strategist (AMS/DOM). Master’s Degree is Preferred. SBC Ordination. Experience in Associational Missions preferred. An understanding of SBC life. Subscription to the BFM. Send resume to searchteam@cfnoc.org or 610 S. College Rd. Wilmington, NC 28403 c/o Search Team.

Church Staff

Euto Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a **part-time Student Leader**. If interested, please contact the church office at 704-385-8117 or email resume to: kara.ivey@eutobaptist.com

The Mineral Springs Baptist Church, Oakboro, NC is presently searching for a **“part-time” Youth Worker**. If interested please contact the Pastor, Dr. Kinney Wallace, at 704-806-1179

or send resume to P.O. Box 478 Oakboro, NC 28129.

Hopewell Baptist Church, Monroe NC seeks a **full-time minister of college students** and single adults. Seminary degree or experience preferred. Send resume to Kim@whatasavior.com.

First Baptist Church of Morehead City, NC is seeking a **full-time Associate Pastor** – Minister of Education, Discipleship, and Missions that will work in a highly collaborative role with the Senior Pastor, church committees, and ministry directors in providing Spirit-led leadership that engages all generations in our vision and mission. The associate pastor will have responsibility for and provide oversight for various ministry committees/teams, working closely with lay leaders. This role requires strong organizational and mentoring skills for the development of leaders and effective ministry teams.

Preferred Qualifications: A clear sense of calling to vocational ministry, a degree from an accredited seminary and a minimum of 3 years of experience working in the local church. Ministry Responsibilities: Recruit, train, encourage, and support lay leaders in various ministry roles within the church. This includes Sunday school, discipleship groups, missions groups, and other ministry leaders as needed. Ensure literature and all necessary teaching aids are available for teachers and organizations. Actively engage in disciple making through teaching and personal relationships. Participate in worship services, fill the pulpit in the absence of the pastor, and conduct weddings and funeral services as requested. Assist the pastor in hospital visitation, counseling, and crisis ministry. Oversee the outreach program of the church, including evangelism, missions, visitation, assimilation of guests and new members. Serve on the Church Council. Supervise Custodial staff and the Minister to Senior Adults by overseeing work schedule, review the work performed, and assign other duties as needed. Perform other duties as assigned by the Senior Pastor under the realm of church responsibilities To apply, please send a cover letter, résumé, and three reference letters to fbcmh2016@gmail.com

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Texas attorney general intervenes in SWBTS, Baylor lawsuit

By GEORGE SCHROEDER | Baptist Press

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has filed a motion to intervene in a lawsuit filed by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) and Baylor University against a charitable foundation, claiming intervention is “necessary ... to protect the public interest in charity.”

The attorney general’s reasoning closely tracks that of Southwestern and Baylor. In the lawsuit, originally filed Sept. 8 in Tarrant County District Court, the schools allege some members of the board of the Harold E. Riley Foundation, which was set up solely to benefit the schools, led a “secret coup” to “seize control” of the foundation – altering its purpose, stripping the schools of their rights and status as beneficiaries and misappropriating assets worth millions of dollars. Defendants include the Riley Foundation and Mike Hughes, the foundation’s president who is a former SWBTS vice president.

A temporary injunction hearing Dec. 2 was postponed until January after a dispute over documents sought by the plaintiffs in discovery. A hearing on the dispute is set for Dec. 14.

In his filing, Paxton alleges that Hughes and Charles Hott, the Riley Foundation’s chief investment officer, “began to develop a scheme ... to receive substantial salaries and benefits from this charitable Foundation and find a way to change the structure of the Foundation to the detriment of its sole charitable beneficiaries, Baylor and Southwestern.”

SWBTS President Adam W. Greenway said in a statement he is “grateful” for Paxton’s decision. “We remain prayerful for a just outcome that upholds Mr. Riley’s wishes and holds accountable those who have acted contrary to his intent,” Greenway said.

A Baylor spokesman declined to comment on the attorney general’s petition to intervene, citing the upcoming hearing.

The lawsuit stems from an alleged meeting in June 2018 at which the schools claim the foundation’s governing documents were improperly restructured. The lawsuit also claims the Riley Foundation board is attempting to “seize control” of the board of directors of Citizens Inc., a publicly held insurance company whose stock forms the primary asset of the foundation.

Hott is also a member of SWBTS’s

board of trustees. He and Thomas Pulley, another SWBTS trustee who is a former member of the Riley Foundation board, have been suspended by SWBTS’s trustee officers because of “trustee misconduct.”

The attorney general’s petition alleged that Hott testified in a deposition “that his and Hughes’ plan is to ultimately convert the (Riley) Foundation into a stock trading platform.” It further alleges that Hughes, who was a vice president at SWBTS under former president Paige Patterson, “knew he was going to be out of a job at Southwestern Seminary and put himself in position with the Foundation to receive a six figure paycheck, life insurance benefits, and unlimited use of a vehicle ...”

The Riley Foundation filed suit Sept. 2 to force Citizens to seat five directors, including Riley Foundation trustees Augie Boto, Hott and Hughes. Citizens, a Texas-based insurance company founded by Riley, is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange and valued at more than \$300 million.

The attempt to seat directors of Citizens initially included former SWBTS President Paige Patterson; according to the Riley Foundation’s

complaint in its lawsuit against Citizens, Patterson resigned Sept. 1 from the attempt to be seated as a Citizens director.

Boto, a Riley Foundation trustee, is the former executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee (EC). He served as the SBC EC’s interim president from 2018-19. Hughes, Hott and Boto did not respond to text messages requesting comment. Boto told Baptist Press in September the lawsuit’s claims were “absurd,” and that the Riley Foundation board was “committed to supporting the ongoing work of both (SWBTS and Baylor) for as long as possible, as well as possible. That was what Harold Riley wanted. We’ll stay true to that assignment.”

Harold Riley, who died in 2017, was a major donor to both SWBTS and Baylor. He set up the charitable foundation in 2002.

The Riley Foundation was set up with SWBTS and Baylor as sole beneficiaries. 

(EDITOR’S NOTE – George Schroeder is associate vice president for convention news and is enrolled at Southwestern as a distance student and is the father of a Baylor student.)

