



**BIBLICAL
RECORDER**

The information & inspiration you need.

APRIL 2021

FEATURE STORY

MORE THAN MEDICINE

NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS OFFER HOPE

THROUGH VACCINE DISTRIBUTION

What's Inside:

+ VOLUNTEERS SERVE + COVID-19 + GOD PROVIDES COMFORT +

in tornado's wake

one year later

amid transition



BIBLICAL RECORDER

The information & inspiration you need.

APRIL 2021, Volume 188 No. 4
ISSN 0279-8182

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Seth Brown

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Liz Tablazon

EDITORIAL AIDE

Dee Dee Vogt

BUSINESS MANAGER

Alison McKinney

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Grace Stallings

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Carly Conley

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Lokal Design Co.

Biblical Recorder, Inc.
P.O. Box 1185
Cary, NC 27512

(919) 847-2127
editor@brnow.org

News outlet for North Carolina Baptists
Since 1833

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chris Hefner, chair; Leslie Hildreth, vice chair; Cindy Jennings, secretary; Bartley Wooten, treasurer; Aimee Beard; Kelly Bullard; Joan Calhoun; Marty Childers; Chris Clark; Ron Davis; Devin Goins; David Herman; Amy Lunceford; Matthew Jacobs; Frank Norwood; Donna Robinson; Donnie Seagle; Meredith Snoddy; Sonny Sweatman; Larry Whichard

PUBLICATION

Published monthly by the Biblical Recorder, 205 Convention Dr., Cary, NC 27511, as authorized by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina in annual session at Winston-Salem, November 21-23, 1939. Periodicals postage paid at Raleigh, NC 27676.

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to Biblical Recorder, Inc., P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512



08

FEATURE STORY

MORE THAN MEDICINE

NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS OFFER HOPE
THROUGH VACCINE DISTRIBUTION



24

3 REASONS PASTORS AVOID COUNSELING WHEN THEY NEED IT

• OPINION

7 EASY WAYS TO MAKE YOUR CLASSIFIED AD MORE EFFECTIVE

• RESOURCE

What's Inside:

04 GOD'S PRESENCE PROVIDES COMFORT IN TIMES OF TRANSITION

• OPINION

06 LOOKING BACK, MARCHING ONWARD

• FROM THE EDITOR

13 NAMB ANNOUNCES \$5 MILLION INVESTMENT IN STUDENT EVANGELISM

• RECENT NEWS

15 RONNIE FLOYD URGES 'GREAT COMMISSION COOPERATION' IN VISION 2025 RELAUNCH

• RECENT NEWS

17 NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS SERVE BRUNSWICK COUNTY AFTER DEADLY TORNADO

• RECENT NEWS



19 DEADLINE EXTENDED TO RECOMMEND INDIVIDUALS TO SERVE

• RECENT NEWS

26



GOD'S PRESENCE PROVIDES COMFORT IN TIMES OF TRANSITION

It isn't the changes that do you in, it's the transitions!" These words by the late William Bridges, who was a leading authority on organizational leadership, have been ringing in my mind throughout the last year.

When our country went into lockdown due to the pandemic, it was an abrupt change, but every day brought a different transition of adjustment to a new reality. Jobs were affected, bringing transitions to how we worked, where we worked and even if we worked. Schools were affected, bringing transitions to students, teachers and parents. Churches were affected, granting us the opportunity to learn to worship, minister and disciple in different and challenging ways.

Transitions bring a flood of emotions. In February, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) said farewell to our retiring Executive Director-Treasurer (EDT) Milton A. Hollifield Jr. Now we are poised to welcome our new EDT. The change brings sadness for an ending, a level of uncertainty and wonder in the interim, and excitement about a new beginning. Yet as we walk through these transitions, we do not walk alone.

We are not the first generation to experience transitions.

Consider the Exodus account of the Israelites' escape from Egyptian slavery. In the account, we see God leading Israel and God protecting Israel. God's presence was represented by the pillar of cloud that led them by day, and the pillar of fire that led them by night. Later when the Israelites were seemingly trapped between the Red Sea and Egypt's approaching army, God provided deliverance by parting the sea and putting the cloud between Israel and the Egyptians until everyone could safely cross.

In the uncertainty of their transitions, God's presence was certain. When the enemy advanced, God defended. The Lord took the Israelites out of oppression of bondage into the wilderness of uncertainty with the promise of a land of rest.

*IN THE UNCERTAINTY OF THEIR
TRANSITIONS, GOD'S PRESENCE WAS
CERTAIN.*

At the end of Exodus, we read not just of a God who acts to lead and protect His people, but also of a God who desires to dwell with His people. In stunning detail God outlines the instructions for the construction of the tabernacle, the furnishings and the priestly garments. In fact, "tabernacle" is a translation of a Hebrew word that means "dwelling place." Exodus 40:34 says, "Then the

cloud covered the tent of meeting and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.” When the cloud resided over the tabernacle, the Israelites stayed in place and only resumed their journey when the cloud was taken up. The book concludes by stating, “For the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys” (Exodus 40:38).

But the Exodus account is not merely a moral tale of deliverance, as some would apply it today. It is actually a foreshadowing of the gospel of Jesus Christ. John 1:14 helps us understand that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory.” The word “dwelt” in that verse is better translated as “tabernacled.” In Exodus, the glory of the Lord dwelt in the midst of God’s people in a tabernacle of cloth. In Jesus, the glory of the Lord dwelt among His people in a tabernacle of flesh. And when we fast forward again to the New Testament church, we see that we — the family of faith — become His dwelling place. Consider the words of 1 Corinthians 3:16, “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?”

**IN JESUS, THE GLORY OF THE LORD
DWELT AMONG HIS PEOPLE IN A
TABERNACLE OF FLESH.**

Change is constant and certain. It is all around us right now as we witness new beginnings in this season of spring. Pandemic restrictions continue to ease, and we are learning to adjust to a new normal. Our convention is preparing for a new EDT who will bring new energy and vision to our mission to advance the gospel throughout North Carolina to the nations. And most

importantly, we wait for a day when God not only dwells with us by His Spirit, but when we will “tabernacle” with Him for all eternity. Don’t let the transitions do you in, because His presence never changes!

**“WE WAIT FOR A DAY
WHEN GOD NOT ONLY
DWELLS WITH US BY
HIS SPIRIT, BUT WHEN
WE WILL ‘TABERNACLE’
WITH HIM FOR ALL
ETERNITY.”**



BRIAN UPSHAW
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR-
TREASURER

Brian Upshaw was elected as the interim executive director-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina on Feb. 16 by the convention’s board of directors. He stepped into the role on March 1, following the retirement of Milton Hollifield. Stay up to date with the latest news about the search for a permanent executive director-treasurer at BRnow.org.

Looking back, marching onward



eadership is a delicate balance. It requires complementary qualities – character with courage, integrity and innovation, virtue plus vision.

Good leaders know how to look backward with gratitude at God’s faithfulness in their lives and commands in His word, while marching forward into new eras with a creative vision for gospel advance.

Ministries do not usually succeed when leaders forget which direction to look and which direction to march. We cannot march according to past strategies nor look to the future for new morals. The former leads to bitter stagnation, while the latter leads to rootless progressivism.

We must honor the past without living in it, but remember that forward motion isn’t always progress.

As Joshua picks up the mantle of leadership in the wake of Moses’ death, God charges him with a deeply encouraging word to lead His people onward: *“Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go”* (Joshua 1:9).

“There is no such thing as courage apart from mission,” said well-known pastor Crawford Loritts, while reflecting on this text. God is not afraid His mission will fail. He promises to go with us, offering His boldness along the way.

The following verses described the new leader as he turns to God’s people and calls them to look back on God’s faithfulness: *“Remember the word that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, ‘The Lord your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land’”* (Joshua 1:13).

Joshua’s two-directional leadership is a helpful example for ministries today. As we worry about cultural changes, technological advances and the lingering effects of a pandemic, let us learn to walk with biblical balance.

Reflect on God’s grace in your life and the life of your ministry. Find your morals, virtues and principles in the timeless depths of God’s word. Then launch forward boldly into the future where you will find endless opportunities to serve others and share the gospel.

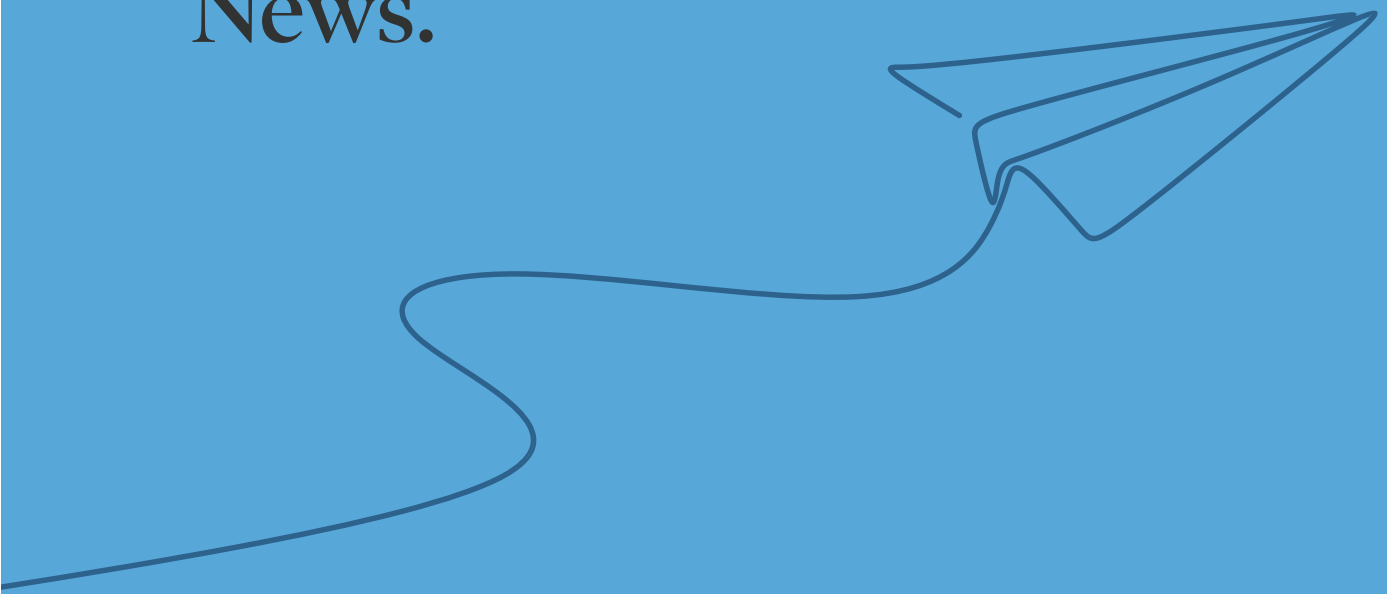
Pastor and author Carey Nieuwhof wrote about this in an article for Lifeway Research last year. “In the church, our message doesn’t change,” Nieuwhof said. “But, as culture changes, you have to figure out how to stay relevant. Your methods must change to preserve the mission.”

Time will move forward. Strategies will shift. New generations will rise. And that’s a good thing, as long as our character is shaped by the word of God and our mission is for His glory among the nations.



SETH BROWN
BR EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Simple.
Relevant.
News.



Subscribe to our free newsletter

Get a personal greeting, the latest news and a bonus video. Arrives Wednesday mornings.

Visit BRnow.org/newsletter



MORE THAN MEDICINE

NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS OFFER HOPE

THROUGH VACCINE DISTRIBUTION



M

ore than one year after the COVID-19 virus reached North Carolina, the need for resources and volunteers across the state aren't going anywhere. They're evolving.

Last year, North Carolina Baptists distributed food to families financially affected by the pandemic, sent care packages to healthcare workers and opened church facilities to facilitate online learning when schools were closed.

Now, as availability for COVID-19 vaccines grows, they're shifting time and energy to helping individuals get vaccinated.

When Alamance County needed more personnel to run two vaccination clinics, North Carolina Emergency Management reached out to Baptists on Mission (BOM). The organization has a good relationship with Emergency Management because of BOM's past and existing disaster relief efforts, said Crystal Horton, health screening coordinator for BOM.

Horton put out a call for volunteers to join the work in Alamance County as vaccinators, screeners and observers. Nurses, physicians, physician assistants and nurse



practitioners served alongside the county's health department staff to administer vaccines, screen patients to make sure they are cleared to receive the vaccination on their appointment day, and monitor them for 15 to 30 minutes after the shot for any immediate side effects.

Non-medical volunteers also served at a convention center vaccination event in Greenville, N.C., facilitating traffic flow and logistics on site.

Horton said BOM will keep the volunteer database open for sign-ups, as she expects more volunteers will be needed across the state as vaccine availability increases in the coming months.

"As Emergency Management – they'll notify us if they see a need, and then as we see needs, we're trying to jump in and resolve them before it even gets to that point, hopefully," Horton said.

One such need exists among under resourced and older populations without easy or sufficient access to the internet or technology to make vaccination appointments, or to even register to be placed on a waitlist for one.

"That seems to be a huge area of frustration," Horton said. "People just don't have either the time or the ability to sit on the phone waiting for hours to get put on a waitlist."



People just don't have either the time or the ability to sit on the phone waiting for hours to get put on a waitlist."

We're doing everything we can to help seniors get the vaccine as soon as possible."

The North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) is working to fill that need.

"The consequences of not getting a vaccine, sooner rather than later, could be dire for many of those who we're called to serve," NCBAM director Sandy Gregory said in a press release. "With the current system favoring online signups, many seniors could be among the very last in the state to get vaccinated. We're doing everything we can to help seniors get the vaccine as soon as possible."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the risk for severe illness with COVID-19 increases with age. Adults aged 85 or older are at highest risk for complications caused by the disease.

Last spring, when shutdowns and social distancing efforts were first initiated to curb the spread of



COVID-19, Beeson created additional resources for NCBAM's Hope Line staff and volunteers to take calls from senior adults experiencing heightened isolation.

Today NCBAM call center specialists assist callers with navigating the state's myspot.nc.gov online tool for the most recent information regarding eligibility and registration. They help explain the process, often making appointments for callers without internet access or signing them up for a waitlist. Specialists also help callers locate vaccine providers and transportation to and from appointments.



When the vaccine becomes more available, we've got the word out, we know some churches who would be willing to do it,"

Melanie Beeson, NCBAM Call Center director, told the *Biblical Recorder* they have received hundreds of calls from seniors, "in their words, 'desperate' for the vaccine." But with only 13 specialists staffing the call center, they are able to assist "only a fraction of those in need."

Gregory has appealed to N.C. Baptist churches for additional help. He recommends churches pair elderly members with a “vaccination buddy” to aid with making appointments and providing transportation; reach out to the elderly who may need assistance in their communities; contact their local health department to host a vaccination clinic; and educate seniors about protecting themselves from vaccine-related scams, including being asked to pay for services related to the vaccine.

NCBAM will host a virtual State Leadership Conference on April 13 to explore other ways churches can minister to older adults in their communities.

A number of N.C. Baptist churches have already contacted BOM about interest in and willingness to host a vaccination clinic. Horton explained that BOM is “waiting for direction” before agreeing to use church facilities because of uncertain and limited vaccine supply.

“When the vaccine becomes more available, we’ve got the word out, we know some churches who would be willing to do it,” Horton said.

In Boone, Mt. Vernon Baptist Church partnered with Samaritan’s Purse to host a vaccination clinic in February.

For more information on vaccination distribution efforts, visit baptistsonmission.org and ncbam.org.



LIZ TABLAZON
BR ASSISTANT EDITOR





NAMB announces \$5 million investment in student evangelism

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee (EC) announced a new investment that will help Southern Baptists boost student evangelism efforts across North America. NAMB will support student-focused evangelism outreach across North America through an additional \$5 million in new and expanded efforts over the next four years.

This new investment is on top of, and separate from, the \$4.5 million in evangelism grant funds to be distributed by NAMB to non-South state conventions starting Oct. 1, 2021, which already reflected a nearly \$1.2 million increase over funds available to the non-South states this year.

"One of the last movements of God in the United States began among students in the late '60s and early

'70s," said NAMB Senior Vice President of Evangelism and Leadership Johnny Hunt about a period commonly referred to as the Jesus Movement.

"In recent years we, as Southern Baptists, have seen a great loss in reaching students," Hunt said. "We at NAMB are focused on doing our part to see this decline turn around by joining with our Executive Committee, state conventions, local associations and local churches to make a major difference over the next four years."

Current trends among students in SBC churches are discouraging. Last year, Southern Baptists baptized 38% fewer teenagers than they did in 2000.

"When I talk about the great need of focusing on reaching, baptizing and discipling teenagers in our churches, people understand this great need," EC President Ronnie Floyd said. "When they hear that our

churches are baptizing fewer teenagers than in the year 2000, they begin to see this great need, and God begins to burden their hearts about their churches.” A similar downward trend of Christianity in younger generations is taking place outside of the Southern Baptist Convention as well. Recent research has made an abundantly clear point: successive generations are less likely to attend church than their parents were.

A 2018 Barna study found that 42% of the Gen Z generation (those born between 1999 and 2015) say they identify with a faith besides Christianity or have no faith at all.

“There are two sobering realities that fuel our passion for reaching the next generation with the gospel of Jesus Christ,” said Shane Pruitt, NAMB’s executive director of next gen evangelism. “First, the vast majority of Christians surrender to Jesus before the age of 18. Second, there are tens of millions of Gen Z’ers who are not connected to the local church or to Jesus through a personal relationship with Him.”

On top of the troubling statistics that point to the steady decline of faith, a 2019 Barna study revealed that nearly half of Christian millennials (those born between 1984 and 1998) declared it wrong to share their faith with the goal of seeing another person come to Christ.

“In the face of these realities, we can’t continue to wait and wish that the downward trend in student evangelism will change,” Pruitt said. “The harvest is plentiful, and now is the time to reach students with the hope of Jesus.”

Student leaders and churches, who are on the front lines of reaching the next generation, and state conventions, will be able to leverage their resources and the additional investment from NAMB to tailor and target what is needed in different regions of North America.

NAMB, in turn, will also provide national messaging, people, events and resources as comprehensive support for the effort to enhance student evangelism.

“Our hope is that this investment sets the tone in locking arms within our SBC family in a unified effort to maintain a laser focus on the gospel,” Pruitt said. “This is what truly matters.”



BRANDON ELROD
NAMB

**More affordable.
More accessible.
More achievable than ever before.**

NOW AVAILABLE FULLY ONLINE
AND OPEN TO MA AND MDIV GRADS

DMin DOCTOR OF
MINISTRY



SCAN HERE OR
LEARN MORE AT [SEBTS.EDU/DMIN](https://sebts.edu/dmin)



Southeastern
Baptist Theological Seminary

Ronnie Floyd urges 'Great Commission cooperation' in Vision 2025 relaunch

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee (EC) President Ronnie Floyd urged Southern Baptists to return to unified Great Commission cooperation as he lamented “a sound of war in the camp” of Southern Baptists and issued an updated Vision 2025 Feb. 22 at the EC meeting in Nashville.

Before laying out the details of Vision 2025, Floyd urged EC members to put aside pride, anger and personal independence and to “lead the way in helping create a Bible-based, Christ-centered and Spirit-controlled culture in the SBC.”

The keys to Vision 2025 are its five strategic action steps, economic support anchored in a level of Cooperative Program (CP) giving not seen since the 2008 recession and cooperation fueled by the fruit of the Spirit among SBC leaders, entities, state conventions, associations, churches and laypersons. Spreading the gospel throughout the world – reaching every person for Jesus Christ in every town, every city, every state and every nation – is Floyd’s goal.

“I appeal to all of us here tonight and those who are with us online, please get behind this vision and let’s do something big for God together,” Floyd told the EC at the Grand Hyatt Nashville downtown hotel, where COVID-19 safety precautions were in place.

“We must begin to take this vision everywhere and listen to pastors, churches, associational mission strategists, state convention leaders and national entities about how

each one of us can own this vision personally and in ministry collectively. We must do this because this is our greater cause. Together, we can do this to the glory of God.”

After Floyd’s address, the EC unanimously adopted Vision 2025 by voice vote in a motion brought by EC Chairman Rolland Slade, who invited leaders to sign a pledge written on a large display board to pray for and promote the Vision 2025 goals. EC members’ spouses and other guests also signed the statement on display.

Vision 2025 would increase from 3,700 to 4,200 the number of full time, fully funded Southern Baptist international missionaries; increase the number of Southern Baptist congregations by 5,000; increase the number of Southern Baptist workers by calling out and preparing those God calls to ministry; reverse the decline in reaching, baptizing and discipling 12- to 17-year-olds; and increase annual CP giving to its pre-2008 recession levels that surpassed \$500 million.

Floyd announced with gratitude that the SBC Fellowship of State Executive Directors of the 41 state conventions adopted a unified statement supporting Vision 2025 at its 2021 annual retreat.

Floyd urged Southern Baptists to consider the truth of the current condition of the SBC, including division and public communication not indicative of the fruit of the Spirit.

“I hope that before next fall, the membership of our SBC Executive Committee will create and abide by a covenant of behavior and practices to follow during your service as members of the SBC Executive Committee,” Floyd said.

Southern Baptists can achieve unity by behaving as Christians, talking to each other and not about each other, operating by biblical principles, behaving with humility and avoiding “condescending words that offend and divide.” We should avoid “undercutting, cowardly and carnal practices demonstrated oftentimes through the blogosphere and social media.”



SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY **VIRTUAL** State Leadership Conference

BRIDGING THE GAP

Mobilizing faith-based groups to help seniors
find their spot and take their shot

APRIL 13, 10:00AM – 1:00PM

With the current vaccination system favoring online signups, many seniors may be among the last in the state to get vaccinated. Join us to learn ways your church can help!

SPEAKERS



Dr. Michael C. Blackwell
President/CEO Baptist Children's Homes
of North Carolina and NCBAM Founder



Rev. Stan Heiser
Chair, Aging Adults
Innovating Ministry



Dr. Sandy C. Gregory
NCBAM
Ministry Director

SESSIONS



**Ancient Blueprints
for Building New
Bridges Across the
Digital Divide**
Brian Davis

Director, Community
& Congregation
Engagement, Wake
Forest Baptist Health



**Vaccine Facts
& Fallacies**
Dr. Sherrie Lee
Education Coordinator,
Hospice & Palliative
Care of Iredell County



**Navigating COVID Vaccination
Availability & Locations for Seniors**

Melanie Beeson
NCBAM Call Center Director
Samantha Allred
NCBAM North Central Regional Director

We are all members of one body.

– Ephesians 4:25

Register at ncbam.org/events. For more info: **877.506.2226**

"Your words or my words are not the final words. God's Word is!" Floyd said. "And, one day He will judge all of our words, motives and actions. For the greater cause, Christians should work through our problems in the right way, in the right spirit and in the right place."

He compared the current divisive discourse among Southern Baptists to the "sound of war in the camp" Joshua heard among the people of God in Exodus 32:17, and urged Southern Baptists to work in unity for the greater cause of the Great Commission.

"For the greater cause in this fever pitch environment, each of us needs to be very careful with the words we write, speak, tweet or post. As SBC leaders and followers of Jesus, our public behavior matters," Floyd said. "Our words matter. Our tone matters."

In explaining Vision 2025, Floyd said the drop in CP giving since the 2008 recession – affected by a drop in the both the percentage of churches that give through CP and the percentage of undesignated gifts that those churches give – reflects that Southern Baptists are not engaging and communicating with churches effectively. Southern Baptists are not "sharing and living a consistent message of who we are with the churches because we keep walking on our own message," and "are not providing the churches with a concise and compelling Great Commission vision that will move them to support it."

Floyd proposed increasing the body of Southern Baptists by annually adding 600 new church plants, 200 church replants, 100 new campuses and 350 new church affiliations.

■ *Diana Chandler, Baptist Press*



RECENT NEWS

NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS **SERVE** BRUNSWICK COUNTY AFTER DEADLY TORNADO

Steve Smith, pastor of Seagate Baptist Church in Wilmington, Humberto Mendoza, pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista, and volunteer Tad Thomas remove fallen trees.

V

olunteers with Baptists on Mission (BOM) served Brunswick County residents affected by a Feb. 15 tornado that killed three people, injured 10 and damaged more than 50 homes in the Ocean Ridge Plantation neighborhood.

An EF3 tornado packing winds of up to 160 mph tore across Brunswick County and into Columbus County shortly before midnight that Monday.

Disaster relief teams cut trees, removed debris, cleaned up yards and prayed with and encouraged families, according to Tom Beam, BOM disaster relief coordinator. Teams came from Wrightsville Beach Baptist Church, First Baptist Church of Cary, First Baptist Church of Shallotte and other churches in Brunswick County.

"We have been able to work with the Brunswick County Emergency Managers office, local churches and Jeff Gibby at the Brunswick Baptist Association," Beam said in a Feb. 22 statement to the *Biblical Recorder*. "We are thankful for the partnerships we have when needs arrive."

WE ARE THANKFUL FOR THE PARTNERSHIPS WE HAVE WHEN NEEDS ARRIVE."

Thirteen people from the Cape Fear Network of Baptist Churches and the Brunswick Baptist Association cleaned up debris and prayed with residents Feb. 17. Another local team was scheduled to continue relief efforts the following week, according to John McIntyre, senior pastor of Wrightsville Beach Baptist Church and network facilitator for the Cape Fear Network.

Volunteers heard stories from members of the community. One man's 87-year-old parents grabbed



Joshua Reilly, pastor of Long Leaf Baptist Church in Wilmington, prays with survivor Fred Thomas.

blankets and rushed into a hallway just as pressure blew windows and doors out of their home.

Fred Thomas told volunteers he received a tornado alert on his phone, but it was about five minutes too late. His friends, Richard and Phyllis O'Connor, died in the storm.

McIntyre said he finds tornados "uniquely painful" among natural disasters. While preparation for other storms can begin weeks in advance, "tornados usually spin up completely unexpected and usually with very little advance warning," he told the *Recorder* in an email.

"I'm reminded in times like these of the frailty and brevity of our lives on this side of eternity and how we absolutely must be ready," McIntyre said. "Through this ministry [disaster response], we have a chance to meet deep physical and emotional needs while opening a door for eternal discussions."

■ Liz Tablazon, BR Assistant Editor

Deadline extended to recommend individuals to serve

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

Recommendations will now be accepted until Monday, April 12, 2021, for terms of service that will begin in 2022. The former deadline was Jan. 31.

Recommendations may be made for individuals to serve on the BSC's board of directors, convention committees, and boards of the convention's institutions and agencies, which include the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, the Biblical Recorder, the N.C. Baptist Foundation, and N.C. Baptist Hospital.

To learn more or make a recommendation, visit [**ncbaptist.org/recommend**](https://ncbaptist.org/recommend).

"The committee is pleased to be able to offer additional time for North Carolina Baptists to recommend qualified individuals to serve in convention leadership," said committee chairman Dustin Mace, who serves as senior pastor of Buffalo Baptist Church of Shelby.

"Because N.C. Baptist churches are diverse, we seek leadership that reflects this diversity."

Mace said the committee desires to see a broad representation of N.C. Baptists nominated to serve in various capacities. Recommendations are sought from churches of all sizes and geographic locations. The committee also desires a diverse pool of recommendations that includes pastors, laity, men, women, and individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

"We are calling on N.C. Baptists to prayerfully and thoughtfully submit recommendations," Mace said. "The committee thanks you in advance, and we commit to seek our Lord's guidance as we review your recommendations and make our nominations."

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

Messengers attending this year's N.C. Baptist annual meeting in November will formally vote on those nominated to serve by the committee.

Questions about making a recommendation or the recommendation process may be directed to Angela Kilby at (919) 459-5504 or akilby@ncbaptist.org.

■ ***Chad Austin, BSC Communications***

COVID-19

ONE YEAR LATER



One year ago this month, COVID-19 altered the way we live, work and worship. Those ramifications are still being felt, even with the arrival of a vaccine and the number of cases trending downward. Yet God was still at work amid the pandemic and the challenges it brought.

March 3 marked the one-year anniversary of the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in North Carolina, which led to subsequent event cancellations, transitions to remote work and school, limits on public gatherings, stay-at-home orders and more. Pastors and churches were not immune to the changes, resulting in new approaches to worship, missions and ministry in what was termed a “new normal.”

To reflect on the events of the past year, we asked several pastors and ministry leaders across the state about how they saw God work, the challenges they faced and what challenges remain from the continuing impact of COVID-19. Following are a sampling of their responses, which have been edited for length and clarity.

“Like most, I have had to adapt to the changing landscape and deal with the barriers caused

by COVID. Having begun a new ministry in April 2020, I have not been able to spend time with my new congregation in ways that I would have preferred. Visitation has largely been done over the phone, with very little personal contact outside of services. Thankfully, my congregation has been very understanding and supportive, not placing impossible expectations on me during these challenging times. The greatest challenges have been navigating how to handle services. Do we meet in person or not? Do we have small groups/youth activities? How to handle yearly ministry opportunities like VBS and AWANA? Do we have times of corporate fellowship outside of services? This pandemic has created an environment that is difficult to make long-range plans. It has taught us to rely on the Lord, evaluate our priorities and return to the fundamentals. While this has been a difficult season, I am convinced we have the greatest opportunity I have known to make an impact in our culture with the gospel.”

— **CHRIS BENFIELD, PASTOR, SHADY GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH, BOONVILLE**

“God has exposed many ministry idols in our church culture that has forced us to grapple with what is necessary and what is not when it comes to being the body of Christ. It has been a struggle, but I would say the Lord has helped me to rely on Him on a level

I never thought possible in this last year. My time with Him has become exponentially more sweet and precious.

I have shifted to an extremely heavy focus on equipping the church members as one-on-one as I can for depth of relationship and accountability.”

— **STEPHEN BRADLEY, CHURCH PLANTER, HARVEST CHURCH, GREENVILLE**

“My gospel relationship with three men in the church has grown. When most stopped attending service these faithful men wanted more of God. We started praying together in the sanctuary every Tuesday, outside of normal services, (and) we now are meeting on Thursdays for Bible reading and discipleship. Doing online ministry without any in-person contact with members not coming is a challenge. Keeping members engaged in gospel relationships with others is an ongoing challenge.”

— **JIMMY BRANTON, PASTOR, MCDONALD BAPTIST CHURCH, ROCKINGHAM**

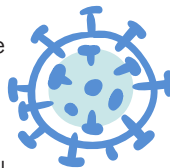
“I have seen spiritual growth as more people are reading their Bible and spending time in prayer. I have (also) seen first-time professions of faith being made. Maintaining connection has definitely changed in the absence of seeing people regularly. The pandemic requires a more concerted effort to maintain relationships by phone, internet or with personal distance than ever before. (An ongoing challenge) is dealing with the constant reality that even with precautions in place, we are at risk when we gather. Emotionally, it is difficult to preach to 50% of the congregation while

worrying about their safety, and wondering about the 50% who aren’t there.”

— **RUSSEL FOX, PASTOR, SOUTHGATE BAPTIST CHURCH, THOMASVILLE**

“In a year with so much change, pressure and turbulence layered with a full range of emotions from anger to grief, I have witnessed God’s people dig in and be more determined to remain faithful. We have retained 75-80% attendance with outdoor services over the past year. We are in a small community on the edge of Alexander County. I was born and raised here, and my heart is broken for these people. We had a great relationship with the local elementary school, but we have lost all that access and those relationships with the children and their families. Our senior ministry has also (been impacted.) This has affected the elderly more than most know. Our biggest challenge is the ability to minister to our lost community. We have made our services available through livestreaming, recording, FM transmitters and outdoor speakers, yet we don’t have the ability to knock on their doors.”

— **WESLEY HAMMER, PASTOR, TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF STONY POINT**



"We had just launched our church in a school six months before the shutdown. Since the schools were also closed and they were limiting who could be in the buildings, we were told that we would not be able to meet there. To this day, we haven't been able to return to the school and as a result of this change in events, it put me on my knees to start praying. During this time, we had church on our front porch, online through our local association, at a local farm, with another church and on a church lawn. In July, God opened up a door for us to potentially lease a space to have worship in. After five months of work on the facility and help from so many people, we were blessed to be able to have our first service in the building the week before Thanksgiving. There is a lot of division around us, but God has shown me during the last year that we really are better together than we are apart. We have seen people trust in Christ in this new year, and we just baptized five new people into the body of Christ, including my youngest daughter."

— **QUINTELL HILL, LEAD PASTOR, MULTIPLY COMMUNITY CHURCH, MONROE**

"Hamilton Baptist Church is in a town of 400 people or less in rural Martin County. Since our church is small, we have been able to meet in person since Memorial Day. Most of the members have practiced wearing masks and social distancing, so we have had few problems and the congregation has remained healthy. I have had to use the phone more to contact members and other people in the community, but I have been able to make in-person visits to shut-ins. During the early part of the pandemic, I recorded two-minute devotional thoughts which I sent out over the church messaging system. I believe they were a blessing to

the congregation.

We have been able to minister to people in our community by building

a wheel-chair ramp for a town resident, helping provide clothes for a newborn of a single mother, providing furniture items for a man and helping pay light bills of residents in the community. For me, the challenge has been not doing outreach activities and not being able to do home visits with new people."

— **EVAN JOHNSON, PASTOR, HAMILTON BAPTIST CHURCH, HAMILTON**



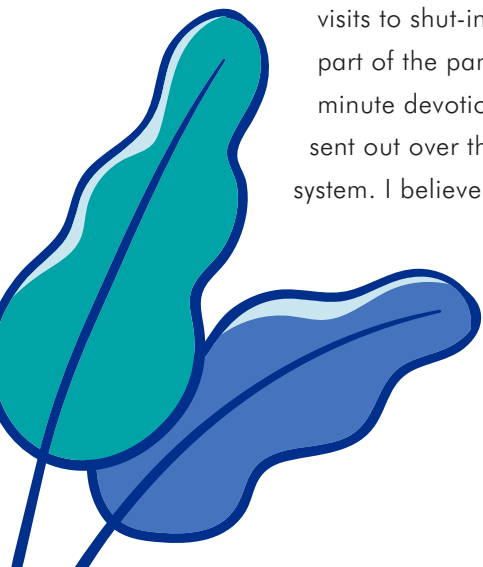
"One of the blessings of COVID is the clarity it has brought within the church. Challenging circumstances tend to reveal where we truly are spiritually. For more than a decade, attendance has been considered the greatest measure of the spiritual health of a church. If it was growing; it was good. But cancer grows too. And the cancer of consumeristic church had begun to metastasize in the church. COVID has proven to be an excellent surgeon to begin the process of removing this unhealthy culture from the church. COVID has proven that it's shortsighted to look out across a full room and assume your church is making spiritually mature disciples well. Across the nation, statistics show church attendance dropping by 25-50%. We can't lose heart, but we can humble ourselves before the Lord and return to the basics of disciple-making that Jesus teaches us in His Word, which is much more Bible, much more prayer, and many more authentic gospel-centered relationships."

— **JASON MILLER, PASTOR, DUTCH COVE BAPTIST CHURCH, CANTON**

"Like most churches, we've put greater emphasis on our online services and understood the importance that social media plays. We were able to institute online giving. We had a drive-thru trunk or treat which was a big hit. We had an outside community Christmas service that was well attended by people outside of the church. We've had three professions of faith."

— **WESLEY MCGARRY, ASSOCIATE PASTOR, WESTFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH, WESTFIELD**

"We have seen students and kids saved because of the time they have spent around God's Word and in



conversations with their family during the quarantine. We have (had) to shepherd in different ways, and it's not a one-size-fits-all ministry. People have different comfort levels because of COVID, and we have to meet them where they are. Shepherding people through the greatest racial turmoil we have experienced in a while as a country during a pandemic in an election year has presented all kinds of challenges. The good news is that it's made people search for truth, and we are still seeing evangelistic fruit."

**— JOHN MULLER, CAMPUS PASTOR, THE SUMMIT CHURCH
CAPITAL HILLS CAMPUS, RALEIGH**

"We have weathered things rather well, but the toll has been and is beginning to take shape. We must not overlook the long-term effects of what has happened and do all we can to keep things upbeat and slowly but surely moving forward. The mental health of our pastors and leaders greatly concerns me. Many have had to do things they never anticipated they would have to do, learn things not in their wheelhouse, experienced difficulty within their families and more. Ministry to our pastors is a greater need than it ever has been."

**— TERRY STOCKMAN, ASSOCIATIONAL MISSION STRATEGIST,
WEST CHOWAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, AHOSKIE**

"I have seen God work in the lives of individual Christians to strengthen their faith as they have overcome the fear and uncertainty of COVID. I have also seen this as a time to reevaluate and revitalize the church. We have had time to reflect because so much of our busyness was suspended and so many events and programs put on hold. It has forced us and allowed us the opportunity to reflect on and return to the biblical purpose, mission and vision of the church. While we were very dependent on the Sunday morning gathering as our main measure of success, COVID has forced us to look at other measures of biblical faithfulness to Jesus and the gospel."

**— CHRISTOPHER TURNER, NEILL'S CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH,
ANGIER**



"I have seen people willing to give up on hard and fast traditions in the church, even though they are hoping that they all come back. People are more open to trying something new to reach people or new ways to actually do church, but still anticipating we go back to the way things were. There has also been an increased knowledge of those hurting financially and a willingness to help, while acknowledging that we can't minister like we used to. The greatest impact is not being able to visit people when you want or need to. The face-to-face contact that has always been there is now missing."

**— LARRY WHICHARD, ASSOCIATE PASTOR, KENNEBEC BAPTIST
CHURCH, ANGIER**

"Our staff is more cohesive and unified than ever. We've had to overcome spiritual, physical and ministry issues together, and it's brought us much closer. We've had more online engagement and opportunities to pray for folks and meet physical needs this past year. Our online audience has grown around the country to places we never imagined, and we're going to see the fruit of those gospel seeds being planted, I know it. Our challenges have come in cleaning up our communication, our online presence and making sure our facility is clean and ready for limited groups. We continue to think through our small groups and how to effectively connect some of our members and guests to small groups for discipleship."

**— BRAD WRIGHT, LEAD PASTOR, GLENN VIEW BAPTIST CHURCH,
WINSTON-SALEM**

■ BSC Communications

3 reasons pastors avoid counseling when they need it

BEN MANDRELL



“
Too fast!” my wife Lynley screamed as I drove down a steep hill caked in snow. The vehicle picked up speed like a roller coaster on first fall.

“I grew up driving in this!” I snapped, more than slightly annoyed that she doubted my driving. Moments later all six Mandrells were sledding sideways, out of control and bracing for impact. By the grace of God, the SUV stopped just short of a concrete embankment. We were safe, but we were stuck. With a frazzled family and spinning tires, I looked for a friendly passerby – someone to pull us out of this mess.

Looking back on that moment makes me think about pastors who are feeling emotionally stuck. Sadness, depression, bitterness, unresolved anger – all these emotions can cause a spiritual leader to fantasize about running fast from ministry and working in a less draining environment.

In a recent Lifeway Research survey among pastors, we heard painful responses such as, “I feel the weight of the ministry of this church lays totally on me” and

“There is a tremendous sense of loneliness.” This is just the tip of the iceberg; there were pages and pages of open-ended answers that echo similar sentiments.

Perhaps you are that pastor, and you need some help getting out of the ditch. Reaching out to a counselor requires courage, but it seems that too many pastors resist taking this important step. I’m so grateful that there are state conventions within the SBC that recognize this need and are able to offer financial support for pastors who seek biblical counseling.

This short list is by no means exhaustive, but in my experience, here are three of the reasons pastors avoid counseling when they need it.

I DON’T HAVE MY SERMON DONE.

The weekly project of drafting an inspirational, biblically solid sermon is pressurized. Sure, there are weeks when the sermon seems to write itself and the church staff works in one accord.

But a consistently harmonious church doesn't exist on this side of heaven. Because someone is always suffering, feuding, drifting, posting their angst on social media or sending scathing emails, the pastor is regularly knocked off course. The sermon prep is pushed to later in the week, and there just isn't time to sit before a counselor and process feelings.

Pastors are notoriously weak at self-care. Like the injured quarterback, a pastor finds it difficult to sit the bench and give the arm a rest. In our bravado, we want to play through the pain, grind out another week and crank out another sermon. Eventually, this short-sighted mindset will lead to burnout. Preaching is important but preaching from the overflow of a healthy soul is more important.

I DON'T WANT PEOPLE TO THINK I'M WEAK.

Jesus was clear that He came to earth to help the sick. Believe it or not, pastors are included in this category. We falsely believe that because showing the church signs of fragility may not be well received, it's best to carry the wounds alone.

During this COVID season, Lynley and I decided to seek out a counselor to help us navigate some pains we've struggled to process. It was the best decision we've made in the pandemic. Our skilled counselor is teaching us how to be honest with ourselves, to pay attention to the emotions we are experiencing, and to be vulnerable with one another in a way all husbands and wives should be.

I am embarrassed to say that fear prevented me from seeking this kind of help while I served as a pastor. I was worried that Lynley and I would open up a painful can of worms and it wouldn't get cleaned up by Sunday morning. Heaven forbid that the church sense negative vibes between the pastor and his wife!

Pride. It's in all of us. If people find out a pastor is seeing a counselor, they may think he's unfit for the role. Or, they may think he's human and relatable, finding a deeper connection with his leadership. Think about that. I wish I had.

I SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND REST IN JESUS.

I've had this thought, and I'm sure most pastors have also: Jesus is sufficient. I need no help from man.

Support for this mindset is easy to find in the Bible. Scripture is overflowing with passages challenging believers to place their trust in Christ, to take on His yoke, to cast all cares upon Him. It's easy to believe the underdeveloped, unspiritual people are in need of counseling, but surely not seminary-trained professionals like me.

While the Word certainly calls us to lean on the Lord in times of trouble, Scripture also reminds us often that we are not an island, that we need to call upon the gifts of others to find healing. This includes counseling.

Pastor, are you exhausted, stuck in a rut or bitter toward others? Are you inexplicably sad, perpetually anxious or dreaming of an escape from your life? If so, seek help and schedule some sessions with a solid biblical counselor. When our tires are spinning, it doesn't help to keep pressing the gas. There are people gifted by God to help us get back on the road to mental, emotional and spiritual health.

NAMB, through a partnership with Focus on the Family, offers a free hotline for Southern Baptist pastors: 1-844-4PASTOR.

A man in a dark suit and brown shoes is walking away from the camera across a zebra crossing. The crossing consists of alternating black and white diagonal stripes. The man is carrying a black briefcase in his right hand. The background is a solid black sky.

seven easy ways

to make your classified ad more effective

Leadership transitions are key moments. The handoff from one leader to another can propel a church forward or handicap the ministry for years.

The search process can be daunting. No one wants to deal with the fallout of a bad hire.

Placing a classified ad with a trusted news source is a reliable way of generating resumes. But many search teams make avoidable errors that push good candidates away.

The *Biblical Recorder* staff has worked with thousands of classified advertisers over the years. We've seen it all, and we can help you avoid the most common mistakes.

Here are seven tips that will help your church or organization develop an effective ad that reels in the perfect hire.

1

Include contact information and respond to inquiries

You might be surprised how many classified advertisers fail to include basic contact information.

Candidates may pass up your position if it's hard to reach you.

Be sure to list a phone number and email address. Designate a search team member who can monitor inquiries and respond quickly.

HELPFUL TIP: Respond to calls within 12 hours and emails in 24 hours.

2

Be clear about the job requirements

Candidates pay close attention to the required duties in a job listing.

We're all a little self-conscious. Your potential hire wants to know if they are up to the task.

List the job requirements as clearly as possible. Don't go overboard, but make certain the important duties are covered.

HELPFUL TIP: Specify any staff or volunteer management duties.

3

Tell them about your church or organization

The culture or "personality" of your workplace is important.

Every team is different. Candidates want to know if they will fit in and enjoy being around other staff, volunteers or church members.



Consider including information about the mission, vision, values or theological distinctives of your church or organization.

HELPFUL TIP: Use at least three words that describe your team's DNA.

Many churches want to show off their facilities, but don't forget to include images of the people they will be serving.

HELPFUL TIP: Use video clips from worship services or record a short greeting.

4

Use photos and videos whenever possible

Take advantage of the ability to include photos or videos with digital classifieds.

Visual resources help candidates envision what life will be like in the position.

5

Describe the ideal candidate

What does your perfect hire look like? Include a brief description in your listing.

Describing the perfect candidate goes one step further in helping potential applicants decide if they are a good fit for the position.

Highlight any preferred “soft skills” that best suit the position.

HELPFUL TIP: This step will benefit the search team and applicants.

6

Make deadlines generous or avoid them altogether

Deadlines are tricky when searching for new personnel.

The search process often takes longer than expected. An expired deadline in a listing can push away good applicants who don’t know the timeline has been extended.

If you must include a deadline, be sure to leave plenty of time.

HELPFUL TIP: Some experts say it takes 12-18 months to find a new pastor that’s a good fit.

7

Help them find you online!

Your organization’s website and social media accounts are the first thing people visit.

Point them toward your website, Facebook, Youtube or Twitter accounts.

Any church or organization with an online presence that’s informative and appealing will greatly increase their chances of attracting the right candidates.

HELPFUL TIP: Make sure your online info is up-to-date before the search process begins.

Find your next hire today.

VISIT BRNOW.ORG/CLASSIFIED TO PLACE AN AD

■ Seth Brown & Alison McKinney

CLASSIFIEDS

+ SULPHUR SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH

Sulphur Springs Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a Senior Pastor. SSBC is in the foothills of North Carolina in the town of Hiddenite. Our church is affiliated with the SBC, BSCNC and the Alexander Baptist Association. To learn more about our church, please go to <http://www.sulphurspringsbc.com/>. Please send resumes and inquiries to sulphurspringspastorsearch@gmail.com.

+ SHARON BAPTIST CHURCH

Sharon Baptist Church, in Reidsville NC, is seeking a Bi-Vocational Worship Pastor/Director who loves the Lord and His people. For more info go to www.sharon-church.net or send a request or resume to worship@sharon-church.net.

+ ABERDEEN FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Aberdeen First Baptist Church is seeking its first full-time Assistant Pastor of Children & Family Ministry. This pastor will be responsible for visionary and strategic leadership regarding ministry to preschool and elementary aged children and their parents, including emphasis in family home discipleship, marriage enrichment, and parenting. He will be expected to possess a pastoral calling and gifting. He will serve and work with other staff members and volunteers to pursue the vision for ministry development for children's ministry as guided by the Senior Pastor and perform the pastoral duties of preaching/teaching and pastoral care on occasion. Candidates should send a cover letter, resume and references to afbcpersonnel@gmail.com

+ EAST SYLVA BAPTIST CHURCH

East Sylva Baptist Church is looking for a Director or Minister of Children and Youth. The ideal

candidate for this role should have a strong foundation in the Christian faith, be a faithful follower of Jesus, educated in the area of his call, and have a passion for children and youth. Send resumes to 61 Faith Ave, Sylva, Nc 28779 or haskett.emily@gmail.com

+ BASIC TRAINING FOR CHAPLAINS

Train to be a chaplain in your community, reaching out to people in crisis with the hope of the gospel. Online training available through Emergency Chaplains. www.EChap.org Contact Ralph Thompson at (919) 280-8908 or Office@EChap.org

Preparing the "God Called" to minister since 1946

FRUITLAND BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

Enroll NOW for New Quarter starting July 6, 2021



- **Graduates serving churches across the S.B.C.**
- **3 Associates Degrees in Religion**
Christian Ministry, Church Planting, and Christian Worldview
- **Associate degree is now fully available online**
- **Spanish courses offered at several N.C. locations**
Call Robert Fernandez at 828-399-0109



VA BENEFITS AVAILABLE
POST-9/11 GI BILL

**For more information call (828) 685-8886,
or write: David Horton, President
Fruitland Baptist Bible College, 1455 Gilliam Road
Hendersonville, N.C. 28792**

Owned and operated by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina



FEATURED RESOURCE: AT THE TABLE PODCAST

The SBC Women's Leadership Network hosts a podcast called "At The Table," featuring guests such as Lesley Hildreth, Susie Hawkins, Lynette Ezell, Kristie Anyabwile, Donna Gaines, Karen Swallow Prior and more. The SBC Women's Leadership Network describes itself as a collaborative community of women from the Southern Baptist Convention family who long to connect, engage and encourage one another as they serve and lead in diverse ways to impact the Kingdom of God.



BIBLICAL RECORDER

The information & inspiration you need.

B R N O W . O R G

P.O. Box 1185 ■ Cary, NC 27512



@biblicalrecorder

@biblicalrecord

@biblicalrecord