

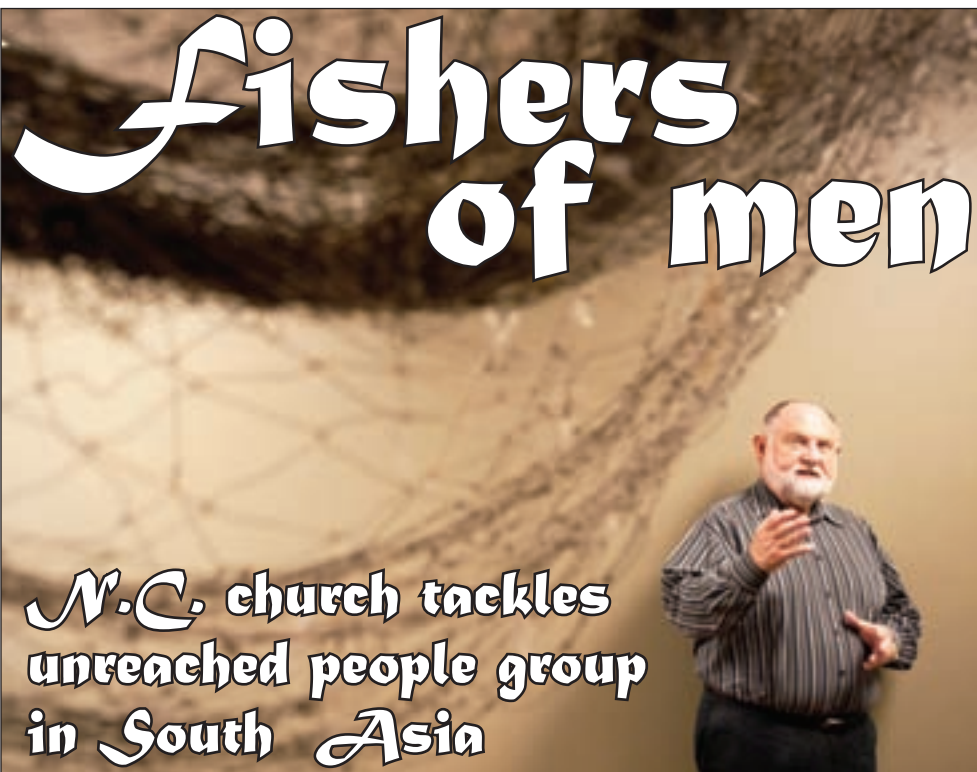


# BIBLICAL RECORDER

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**LEADING** — “God told us to be fishers of men,” said Michael Cloer, pastor of Englewood Baptist Church in Rocky Mount. He stands beside a fishing net given to the church by a Koli fisherman in South Asia. The fisherman is now a follower of Jesus. See related story, page 8, and video at <http://vimeo.com/24848768>. It was shown during the Southern Baptist Convention June 14-15 in Phoenix.

**By Alan James**  
Baptist Press

It hangs from the ceiling near the auditorium of Englewood Baptist Church like an overgrown spider web. It's frayed and tattered in spots, with blue netting where it has been repaired multiple times through the years.

Pastor Michael Cloer runs his fingers along the fishing net, admiring the craftsmanship. As he inspects the net, he voices an impromptu object lesson.

“You look at the individual pieces and they don't look like much, but together they are strong. ... It's a great picture of the church,” said Cloer, who received the net from a fisherman in

South Asia when Englewood Baptist Church in Rocky Mount took its first overseas missions trip to reach the Koli people for Christ.

That Koli fisherman is now a follower of Jesus.

A couple of months after the initial mission trip in February 2011, a second Englewood team returned to the same spot where Cloer had met the fisherman. By the end of 2011, the church will have sent four teams to engage the Koli people with the Good News.

At last year's annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in Orlando, Cloer said he became convicted that the congregation had not done enough to help reach people groups like the Koli — those unreached with less

(See Fishers Page 9)

## N.C. Baptists take part in So. Bapt. Convention

From staff and wire reports

PHOENIX — From nominating candidates for national office to participating as the fifth largest group at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), North Carolina Baptists met with fellow messengers in Phoenix June 14-15 to emphasize ethnic diversity, stand for unity and embrace an unengaged people group.

It was the lowest-attended annual meeting in 67 years, with just over 4,800 in attendance, but the substance of the meeting led plenty who attended to argue it shouldn't be judged on numbers (see related story, page 5).

“I do believe it could prove to be the most spiritually significant convention over the last 50 years,” Southern Baptist Convention President Bryant Wright, who was re-elected to another one-year term, told Baptist Press (BP) after the Phoenix gathering. Wright pointed to the sluggish economy and to the travel time from most SBC churches as possible reasons for the low attendance.

Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, nominated the winning first vice president Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, La. Clint Pressley, pastor of Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte, nominated the sole candidate for second vice president, Eric Thomas, pastor of First Baptist Church in Norfolk, Va. (See election story, page 3.)

From beginning to end, messengers heard biblical pleas for Southern Baptists to join the church planting movement in North America and to adopt an unengaged people group around the world. And messengers responded.



BR photo by K. Allan Blume

**CONVERSATION** — North Carolina Baptists, from left, Chris Griggs, senior pastor of Denver Baptist Church in Denver, Milton A. Hollifield Jr., Baptist State Convention of North Carolina executive director-treasurer, and Jim Henry, former Southern Baptist Convention president and a retired pastor from First Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla., who lives in North Carolina, catch up at the Southern Baptist Convention in Phoenix, Ariz.

More than 1,000 pastors and their wives packed a North American Mission Board (NAMB) luncheon to learn about the entity's new Send North America church planting strategy. On the final night of the convention, hundreds of messengers flooded the front of the convention hall at the end of the International Mission Board (IMB) report, having signed cards pledging to lead their church to embrace an unengaged people group. An IMB representative will contact them later.

Each mission board report also featured a commissioning service, with Southern Baptists meeting their newest missionaries. (See NAMB story, page 6, and IMB story, page 7.)

(See N.C. Baptists Page 10)

## Johnny Hunt challenges pastors to 'Kingdom life'

PHOENIX (BP) — Pastors must take the lead in personal holiness, evangelism and service to others if Southern Baptist churches are to be effective in reaching the world for Christ, speakers said at the 2011 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference June 12-13.

The annual conference preceding the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting was held this year at the Phoenix Convention Center and focused on the theme, “Aspire: Yearning to Join God's Kingdom Activity.”

One of the key speakers was Johnny Hunt, North Carolina native and senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga. Hunt is also the immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Pastors must first get their own lives in order and live “the Kingdom life” before they can hope to influence the lives of their church members, said Hunt June 12. Only when pastors have their lives properly ordered will the Southern Baptist Convention be successful in reaching people for Christ.

“We as the Southern Baptist Convention have had a blessed past,” Hunt said. “But I personally sense that

God desires to be with us in a more mighty way in the present and in the future if we are to touch this nation, which we're not touching as we ought, and the nations of the world.”

To achieve this “Kingdom life,” Hunt pointed to the Apostle Paul's example in 1 Corinthians 16. First and foremost, Hunt said Paul emulated the Kingdom life by being generous with his possessions.

“We need as much, if not more, emulation as we have exhortation,” Hunt said. “We've learned how to say it; we've just got to learn how to do it. And we've got to do it by example and giving the people a way to follow.”

Hunt challenged pastors to give liberally and to be willing to go to the places where God directed them.

He also encouraged pastors to be willing to serve as



Photo by Bill Bangham

**CHALLENGING** — Johnny Hunt speaks during the 2011 SBC Pastors' Conference June 12 in Phoenix, Ariz.

church planting network; Bartholomew Orr, senior pastor of Brown Missionary Baptist Church in Southaven, Miss.; and Greg Matte, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Houston, Texas.

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Complete coverage of the pastor's conference and the SBC is available at [www.biblicallrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx](http://www.biblicallrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx).)

mentors to younger pastors and to glorify Jesus Christ in all they do.

Other speakers included: Peter Ndhlovu, bishop of the Bible Gospel Church in Zambia; Bob Pitman, longtime preacher and evangelist from Muscle Shoals, Ala.; Bob Roberts, senior pastor of NorthWood Church in Keller, Texas; Paul Gotthardt, lead and founding pastor of Life Baptist Church in Las Vegas, Nev.; Darin Patrick, lead pastor of The Journey church in St. Louis, Mo., and vice president of the Acts 29

# Charlotte teens take stage in Phoenix

From staff and wire reports

Two North Carolina teenage ladies took part in this year's Southern Baptist Convention and Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) annual meetings in Phoenix, Ariz.

Kianni Curry and Cassie Taylor, both of University Hills Baptist Church in Charlotte, are two of six teenagers on the 2011 National Acteens Panel. Acteens is the WMU missions organization for girls in grades 7-12.

Curry and Taylor are also preparing to take part in Blume 2011 July 13-16 in Orlando, Fla. Blume, formerly known as the National Acteens Convention, is sponsored every four or five years by WMU.

National panelists, Debby Akerman said to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) messengers June 14, are "an elite group of young women who have demonstrated a strong commitment to Jesus and to missions through their involvement in Acteens, their church, their community and their education. They represent the finest among today's young women."

Akerman was re-elected to her presidency at the WMU annual meeting prior to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Wanda S. Lee, national WMU's executive director, and Akerman of Myrtle Beach, S.C., were joined by five of WMU's six National Acteen Panelists in issuing the invitation to Blume's sessions.

Akerman asked each Acteen panelist to summarize her experience at Blume in 2007 in Kansas City in one word. Their responses were: "impactful," "extraordinary," "exhilarating," "inspiring" and "fulfilling." Blume is open to all teen girls ([www.blumeforgirls.com](http://www.blumeforgirls.com)).

In other WMU business, Rosalie Hunt of Guntersville, Ala., was re-elected to a third term as national recording secretary.

## About Curry, Taylor

Curry and Taylor have been involved in Acteens for more than five years by participating in missions trips, taking part in various ministries such as Vacation Bible School, and leading missions conferences across the state. Since 2009, they both have been on the state's Acteens panel. Curry is also a member of her school's soccer team and book club.

Taylor is involved in Key Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the Charlotte Children's Choir, and other school activities.

"Missions is about showing God's love to everyone," Curry said. "It requires devotion and commitment to God so you can tell others about Him and help others in any way that you can."

Deborah Taylor, Curry's Acteens leader and Cassie's mom, says Curry has a genuine servant's heart. "Kianni believes in missions and seeks to find ways to make a difference in the world as well as individual lives."



BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle

**BREAKING ICE** — Kianni Curry, left, and Cassie Taylor play rock, paper, scissors as part of an icebreaker called "The Progression Game." Curry and Taylor taught the session and participated as part of the North Carolina Baptist Men's Missions Conference for youth April 2. The two are National Acteen Panelists and members of the same church — University Hills Baptist Church in Charlotte.

Cassie said each mission trip has taught her "something new about myself." Whether it is drawing on sidewalks or making balloon animals, Taylor said, "what I love about mission trips is that God gets all the credit."

"Helping others and doing missions is my way of worshipping and serving Christ, and (it) brings me true joy," says Taylor. "There is no set way it has to be done as long as you are helping and loving on others, putting them before yourself and sharing the gospel."

In April, the girls led sessions on icebreakers for groups taking part in a North Carolina Baptist Men's missions conference for youth.

The next weekend they were helping with the WMU-NC Missions Extravaganza at Ridgecrest. Ruby Fulbright, executive director of WMU-NC, interviewed the girls in front of participants.

Curry said before she thought of missions as "planned and predictable fun."

But then, she went to Canada and had to learn to be flexible after a car accident left them stranded.

"For the first time in a while I had to sit quiet and listen," she said.

The girls made it but their time was almost up. Curry said they tried to make the best of it and made balloon animals for four hours straight at an outreach event.

Curry admitted she struggles with finding time for God. Being part of Acteens has helped her stay organized and prioritize.

The Acteens at University Hills only meet once a month.

"We've learned to make those meetings the best they can be," Taylor said.

Curry thanked Cassie's mom for her support over the years.

"Miss Deb has been one of the most influential people I've ever met," said Curry, who met Cassie when they were younger at an ice cream truck. "The Taylors have been my second family."

in youth group. Her passion and love for missions is evident in her church Acteens involvement, but she also helps with associational and community missions projects."

Taylor and Curry began serving as national panelists Feb. 1 and will continue through the end of the year. The WMU Foundation has also awarded each of the young women a \$1,000 scholarship from the Jessica Powell Loftis Endowment for Acteens.

At Blume the panelists will have program responsibilities during all general sessions, and will be featured in other ways as well.

In addition, the panelists will have the opportunity to write for *The Mag*, the missions magazine for Acteens, and for [www.wmu.com/students](http://www.wmu.com/students). Throughout the year, Curry and Taylor will work together with the other panelists to shape the future of Acteens.

WMU also recognizes Hayley Baxley of Galeed Baptist Church in Bladenboro as a National Top Teen.

## Other WMU news

During the WMU's "Proclaim" event June 12-13, WMU leaders heard from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary President Jeff Iorg, International Mission Board President Tom Elliff and North American Mission Board President Kevin Ezell. Ezell gave Lee the "hand off" for Royal Ambassadors with a large cut-out race car and presentation of badges.

(EDITOR'S NOTE — For full stories about the WMU report at the SBC and the WMU annual meeting, visit [www.biblicalrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx](http://www.biblicalrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx).)

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## Wright re-elected; N.C. leaders nominate VPs

PHOENIX (BP) — Bryant Wright, pastor of the Atlanta-area Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, was re-elected June 14 to a second term as president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), leading a slate of officers that included an African American as first vice president.

Messengers elected Louisiana pastor Fred Luter as first vice president and Virginia pastor Eric Thomas as second vice president.

By acclamation, messengers elected John Yeats, director of communications for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, as SBC recording secretary — a position he has held since 1997 — and Jim Wells, director of missions for the Tri-County Baptist Association in Nixa, Mo., as registration secretary for the ninth consecutive year. Wells was elected in absentia, as he recovers at home from complications stemming from cancer treatment.

Wright defeated Wiley Drake, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Buena Park, Calif., who nominated himself, by a vote of 2,274 to 102. Of the 2,384 votes cast, Wright received 95.39 percent; Drake received 4.26 percent.

Wright was nominated to a second term by David Platt, senior pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Ala.

In nominating the SBC president for a second term, Platt said Wright “possesses a deep passion for Christ and a deep love for the local church and a deep respect for this convention of churches that he’s a part of.”

During the past year as SBC president, Platt said Wright “has graciously and faithfully served Southern Baptist churches, encouraging us to work alongside one another in the advancement of (the) Kingdom of Christ and the accomplishment of the Great Commission.”

Platt recounted how he had traveled with Wright to the Middle East two weeks earlier and seen him “come beside pastors and IMB missionaries, caring for them, praying for them, weeping with them, standing beside them.”

“Amidst all of our talk about the Great Commission, this is a brother who is doing it,” Platt said.

“He pastors a church full of people who are passionate about spreading the gospel, both locally and globally. This is not an ‘either-or’ for them; this is a



BR photo by K. Allan Blume

**NOMINATION** — Clint Pressley, pastor of Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte, nominates Eric Thomas as a candidate for second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

‘both-and.’ The people of Johnson Ferry are active in sharing Christ all across Atlanta, baptizing hundreds of new believers this last year, ministering to urgent spiritual and physical needs all across their community. And, then they are directly involved in ministries to more than 30 different countries around the world.”

Wright has served as pastor of the metro Atlanta church since December 1981 when it was a mission with 20 families. Now the congregation encompasses 8,000 members and seven Sunday morning worship services with a weekly attendance of more than 4,100.

Wright has led Johnson Ferry to plant and co-sponsor 13 new churches — seven in the Atlanta area and six in various areas throughout the United States. The congregation sent 1,600 members on short-term mission trips in 2010.

In nominating himself, Drake offered no speech, succinctly placing his own name into the contest.

He was elected as second vice president of the SBC in 2006 in Greensboro, serving a one-year term. Drake’s self-nomination was not unique in SBC history. Alabama evangelist Anis Shorosh once placed his own name in nomination for SBC president.

### Vice presidents

Messengers elected Fred Luter, senior pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, over Rick Ong, a member of First Chinese Baptist Church in Phoenix, for first vice president.

Luter’s election came as messengers considered a set of recommendations to increase the ethnic diversity of the convention’s leadership. They faced the choice between the African Ameri-

can pastor from Louisiana and Ong, a Chinese-American layperson.

Of the 2,012 ballots cast June 14 in Phoenix, Luter received 1,558 (77 percent) of the votes while Ong received 441 (22 percent) of the votes; 13 votes were disallowed.

Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, nominated Luter, calling him “one of Southern Baptists’ most popular and beloved preachers. He’s in constant demand in schools, colleges, seminaries and conferences all across our nation.”

Akin, in his nomination, reminded messengers that Luter, in 2001, was the first African-American to preach the SBC convention sermon. He also has served as an SBC second vice president. In August 2005, Luter lost his home and church building to the floodwaters of Hurricane Katrina. “Because of the love for his church members,” Akin said, the pastor traveled across the nation to minister to his displaced members, while living temporarily in Birmingham, Ala.

The congregation “seized the moment,” Akin said, and started churches in Baton Rouge, La., and Houston, Texas.

In spite of losing half the New Orleans congregation — and receiving numerous invitations to move to a new pastorate — Luter stayed with his people, Akin said, and was asked to serve on the mayor’s Bring Back New Orleans Commission.

Since Katrina, the revived Franklin Avenue congregation has grown to 7,000 members.

Akin said Luter also “set the example” in Cooperative Program giving after Katrina.

The congregation “stepped out on faith,” giving \$44,000 through the Cooperative Program in 2007, increasing their CP giving to \$205,000 in 2008, \$250,000 in 2009 and \$260,000 in 2010.

Virginia pastor Eric Thomas was elected unopposed as second vice president of the convention.

Thomas, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Norfolk, Va., since July 2003, was nominated by Clint Pressley, senior pastor of Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte. In bringing the nomination, Pressley said the Virginia pastor is a family man, scholar and churchman, serving “a historic church” and “leading that great church to reach its community and the nations for Lord Jesus.”

“At every level, Eric believes in the cause of Christ lived out as a Southern Baptist,” Pressley said.

Thomas has served on the SBC resolutions and nominating committees and is active in his state convention.

The recording secretary and registration secretary elections went unopposed. John Yeats, director of communications for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, kept his recording post and Jim Wells, director of missions for the Tri-County Baptist Association in Missouri, kept his registration post.

## Messengers offer 17 motions

PHOENIX (BP) — Messengers offered 17 motions June 14 during the opening day of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Phoenix, Ariz. All but one of the motions, however, were referred to SBC entities or ruled out of order during the subsequent business sessions of the convention. The remaining motion was referred by messengers for a vote at the 2012 annual meeting in New Orleans.

A motion by Keith Rogers from Santan Baptist Church on the Gila River Indian Reservation in Chandler, Ariz., called for the Committee on the Order of Business to reinstitute at least one evening session, preferably on Tuesday evening, for the annual meeting. According to Rogers, “many of our lay leaders, including some from the church that I pastor, and bivocational pastors who could only attend an evening session, were not offered that opportunity this year.”

Rogers, in the same motion, said a missionary appointment service should be a part of that evening session. The Committee on the Order of Business moved that the motion be referred for consideration in connection with the 2012 SBC annual meeting. Messengers approved the motion to refer.

Eleven motions were automatically referred because they dealt with the internal operations or ministries of SBC entities. Several were referred to LifeWay Christian Resources. Those included: creating materials to equip fathers as family leaders, reinstating disclaimers on certain books, publishing criteria it uses in the selection and sale of “biblically-related materials,” addressing needs of senior adults, study issues relating to human sexuality, moving ministry responsibility of college students, to develop a strategy and resources to assist small and struggling churches “to come alive by providing funds to call full-time pastors.”

A motion from Stephen Haffly of Grace Baptist Church in Wake Forest, requested messengers to encourage publishers, including LifeWay, to make electronic editions of academic works available for electronic devices such as Kindle, Nook and iPad.

Haffly noted this would benefit students by making the literature more easily accessible and reduce production costs.

Referred to the Executive Committee (EC): a motion from James Goforth of New Life Baptist Church in Florissant, Mo., that the EC investigate and develop a plan and system for online participation and voting of messengers across the country who cannot participate in the annual meeting in person; and a motion from Wiley Drake, pastor of Buena Park (Calif.) Baptist Church, to recommend that the prayer room remain open 24 hours a day.

(EDITOR’S NOTE — For more about each motion and about motions ruled out of order visit [www.biblicalrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx](http://www.biblicalrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx).)

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# Church News



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► **Baptist Men of Centerview Baptist Church, Albemarle, completed an addition to the Community Table in Norwood. The addition will provide storage room for the facility as it continues to provide meals for those in need. Barry Whitley is the director of the Community Table. The construction team was led by J.R. and Mike Whitley. Todd Galloway is Centerview's pastor.**

► **MissionsCarolina, seen at right, brought together volunteers to work at various ministry sites in Avery Baptist Association. The ministry was a partnership with Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina over the Memorial Day holiday weekend. Projects included: Avery Pregnancy & Resource Center, Avery/Mitchell Correctional Institute, Habitat for Humanity, Heritage Assisted Living, Grandfather Home for Children, and a family festival.**



Contributed photo

► **Balfour Baptist Church, Asheboro, honored Frances Spivey recently. Spivey has begun her 41st year as organist for the church. The church gave her flowers, a plaque and a gift.**



Contributed photo

► **The end of April and most of May have been busy for churches in the Tuckaseegee Baptist Association. Above, people pack boxes of Christian literature for Book-Link in Eubank, Ky., to ship to Zambia. Eleven people ages 9 to 78 from four churches helped April 29-30 with this project. Book-Link shipped 30,000 pounds of literature to Zambia soon after the trip. On May 15, TBA held its spring worship rally at Lovedale Baptist Church, Sylva. Fourteen churches, including both Hispanic churches, were represented with 163 people. The association hosted an area-wide church leadership conference May 21. Three associations brought 42 people from 18 churches for a variety of training. Gerald Morris is associational missionary. See more photos at BRnow.org; click Photo Gallery.**



Contributed photo

► **Williamston Memorial Baptist Church, sent a team in May to do some work at Hebron Baptist Church in Green Bank, W.Va. From left: Alvin Wadsworth, Robbie and Melinda Parker, Steve Wilson, Jim Daniels and Daryl Rodgerson. Parker, Williamston's pastor, preached for the five-day revival, and he and four other men and his wife, Melinda, helped around the church with other jobs, including cleaning the steeple. Hebron's pastor, Paul Murdock, was a member of Williamston Memorial in the '90s.**



Jean Gordon/Daily Courier

► **GAs and RAs from Florence Baptist Church, Forest City, gathered recently following their annual recognition program for a group picture. Girls in Action and Royal Ambassadors teach children about missionaries in the state, nation and world. They meet Wednesday evenings at Florence during the school year.**

► **First Baptist Church, Troy, honored Emily Turnmire in May for her 25 years of service as secretary. The church held a retirement luncheon for Turnmire. Members also presented her flowers, cards and a love offering. Phillips McRae Sr. is pastor.**

## Around the state



### V. MARTIN GROOVER

has retired after 31 years at Antioch Baptist Church, Mamers. He and his wife of 47 years Ruth Ann Naber Groover will live in Buies Creek. Groover also led churches in Florida and South Carolina. He has held offices for the Pastor's Conference and several leadership positions in Little River Baptist Association. He is available for interim and supply work and can be reached through the association: (910) 893-4282.

### Ordination

Oak Grove Baptist Church, Youngsville, ordained **PAUL EITEL** into ministry as chaplain of the Wake Forest Fire Department. Eitel is the vice president of Focus Design Builders, Wake Forest.

### Obituary

**ELIAS COYE STILL JR.** died May 26. A South Carolina native, he graduated from Furman University and Southeastern Seminary. He was stationed on USS Pine Island in the U.S. Navy.

Coye has served as pastor of a number of churches in South and North Carolina, having retired in 1994 from the Sunset Avenue Baptist Church, Rocky Mount. He was interim pastor in Eden at several churches. The most recent interim was Spray Baptist, where he was a member.

He is survived by his wife, Jean; three children: Deborah Sasser of Eden; Rona Harden of Shelby; and Coye Still III of Harrisburg; and 13 grandchildren.

Memorials: Spray Baptist Church, 745 Church Street, Eden, NC 27288. Designations to Lottie Moon International Missions Offering or Baptist Children's Homes. Another option: Hospice of Rockingham County, P.O. Box 281, Wentworth, NC, 27375.

### Staff changes

**ALDRIGE CASTLES** has been called by Poston Deaf Mission, Wallace, as minister. Castles was the minister for Poston Deaf Mission in 1985 as well.

Yadkin Baptist Association has called **JERRY FUGATE** as Director of Missions. He previously was pastor of Arlington First Baptist Church, Jonesville.

Trinity Baptist Church, Whiteville, has called **RANDY SPEIGHT** as pastor. Speight was formerly pastor of Lake Forest Baptist Church, Wilmington.

**RICK WALKER** has been called by Anderson Grove Baptist Church, Albemarle, as pastor. Walker was a missionary evangelist with his own organization, International Helps.

Antioch Baptist Church, Lexington, has called **JOHN MALEK** as pastor. Malek was the pastor intern at Danbury Baptist Church and the former youth pastor at Trinity Baptist Church.

### Retirement

**GWYN PAUL SULLIVAN** retired as director of missions at South Mountain Baptist Association in December. He and his wife, Carolyn, who have been married 60 years, live in Granite Falls. Sullivan led churches in North Carolina and Virginia — including Berea Baptist Church, Connelly Springs; and Kellum Baptist Church, Jacksonville — for 44 years.

**ROY J. QUEEN** has retired after serving Antioch Baptist Church, Lexington, as pastor since 1998. Queen also pastored Holloways Baptist Church, Lexington, and Victory Baptist Church, Thomasville. He and his wife Barbara will remain in Lexington. For supply work, call (336) 798-2376.

# David Platt: 'Millions upon millions' need Jesus

By **Tim Ellsworth**  
*Baptist Press*

**P**astors are responsible to lead their churches to engage the world's unreached people groups with the gospel, David Platt said in the convention sermon at the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) annual meeting June 15.

Platt, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Ala., noted that people groups by the thousands worldwide are unreached for Christ. "This is not a problem for the International Mission Board to address," Platt said. "This is a problem for every local church in this convention to address."

Platt emphasized that he was not advocating the neglect of local ministries and missions but added that "at the same time, global mission is tragically neglected."

He pointed to an example from northern Yemen, which has a population of about 8 million people but only about 20-30 Christians.

"That is a problem," Platt said. "Masses of people groups. Millions upon millions upon millions of people who do not have access to the gospel."

Preaching from Matthew 24:14, Platt said Christians are often confused about their message, their mission and their motive.

Christians' message, Platt said, is that God is King and that He rules over all.

"Our God is sovereign over all nature," Platt said. "The wind blows at His bidding. The sun radiates with heat from His hands. Every single night, our God brings out the stars one by one and He calls them each by name."

In addition to being sovereign over nature, Platt said God is sovereign over nations and holds the rulers of the world in His hands.

The good news, he continued, is not just that God is King but that the King has come in the person of Jesus Christ — and all who believe in Him and trust in His name will be both children of God and heirs of God's Kingdom forever.



**PLEADING** — David Platt, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, calls on every pastor to lead churches to reach unreached people groups with the gospel. Platt brought the sermon June 15 at the Southern Baptist Convention in Phoenix, Ariz.

But the church, Platt said, is guilty of minimizing and maligning that good news.

"We have reduced Jesus the King to a poor, puny savior who is just begging for people to accept him into their heart or invite him into their life, phrases that are never used in the Word of God," he said.

"We have reduced the gospel of the Kingdom to a shrink-wrapped presentation that if we can get people to say and pray the right things back to us, we will pronounce them fit for heaven and free to live their life on earth however they desire.

"Not true," he continued. "Our King is not a savior who is begging for anyone's casual approval. Our King is a sovereign (One) who deserves everyone's eternal praise."

Platt took aim at author/pastor Rob Bell and others who have questioned the reality of hell, warning Southern Baptists to "be very cautious when anyone says, 'Did God really say this? Would God really do that?'"

"This is the question that ushered sin into the world in Genesis 3," Platt said.

"Our ways are subject to His judgment, and He has appointed a day when every man and woman will die and face judgment."

The message of good news, that God offers eternal life to those who trust in Christ regardless of their station in life, works anywhere in the world, Platt said, and Christians' mission is to proclaim that news throughout the whole world, to all of the 11,627 people groups that the IMB has identified, more than half of which remain classified as "unreached."

"When we say 'unreached,' we're not just talking about lostness. We're talking about access," Platt said. "Unreached means that you don't even have access to hear the gospel."

"There's no church, no Christian, no Bible available around you."

If Christians and churches are not intentionally going after those unreached groups with the gospel, Platt said they are disobeying the Great Commission — because God's command was not a general one to make disciples among as many people as possible, but to make disciples among every single people group. The motivation for Christians to pursue such a mission, Platt said, is their desire that God be praised and to complete the task He has given them.

"What drives passion for unreached peoples is not guilt. It's glory," Platt said. "Glory for a King, for a King who deserves the praise of every people group on the planet."

Platt said that pursuing that goal will come with a cost, because Satan is opposed to God's people reaching the world with the gospel. Some people will hate Christians for their message, and some may even kill them. But Platt reminded Southern Baptists that the reward is worth the sacrifice and challenged them to be bold and intentional in their efforts.

"Let's do it all with our eyes fixed on the sky, where one day the Son of Man is going to come in clouds of glory and power, and His angels are going to gather the elect from the four winds, from every tribe, tongue, people and nation," Platt said. "We will see His face, and we will see our King, and we will reign with Him forever and ever and ever."

*(EDITOR'S NOTE — Ellsworth is director of news and media relations at Union University in Jackson, Tenn.)*

## N.C. ranks fifth in SBC attendance; total lowest since '44

By **Brian Koonce**  
*Baptist Press*

Attendance at the 2011 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting June 14-15 slumped below 5,000 for several reasons, registration officials said.

Just before registration closed June 15, there were 4,814 registered messengers from the nation's 45,000 Southern Baptist churches. Official numbers will not be released until later this month.

In 2003, the last time Southern Baptists gathered in Phoenix, there were 7,077 registered.

The count is 43 percent of the 2010 numbers in Orlando, a dip Registration Secretary Jim Wells, who was unable to attend the meeting because of illness, predicted last summer and one that other registration staff confirm.

"First, it wasn't an 'election year,' with Bryant Wright up for a second

term as SBC president," said Kevin Wilson, a registration volunteer from the Georgia Baptist Convention. "Plus, the big issues like the Great Commission Resurgence were voted on last year."

It's the lowest messenger count at an annual meeting in more than six decades, when in the throes of World War II, 4,301 messengers gathered in Atlanta in 1944. North Carolina Baptists came in fifth with 332 messengers behind only Tennessee (390), Arizona (374), Georgia (357) and Texas (347).

The substance of the meeting led plenty who attended to argue it shouldn't be judged on numbers. More than 1,000 pastors and their wives packed a North American Mission Board luncheon to learn about the entity's new Send North America church planting strategy. On the final night of the convention, hundreds of messengers flooded the front of the convention hall

at the end of the International Mission Board report, having signed cards pledging to lead their church to embrace an unengaged people group. The convention's focus on ethnic diversity and unity were also significant.

"I do believe it could prove to be the most spiritually significant convention over the last 50 years," SBC President Bryant Wright, who was re-elected to another one-year term, told Baptist Press after the Phoenix gathering. Wright pointed to the sluggish economy and to the travel time from most SBC churches as possible reasons for the low attendance.

Attendance followed a general geographic trend of higher attendance from states in the West and lower from everywhere else: Utah's attendance more than doubled its 2010 number, while Alabama's was 28 percent of last year's delegation.

The unofficial state-by-state messen-

ger registration numbers are as follows: Alaska, 13; Alabama, 244; Arkansas, 163; Arizona, 374; California, 241; Colorado, 43; Connecticut, 1; Washington, D.C., 12; Delaware, 1; Florida, 242; Georgia, 357; Hawaii, 12; Iowa, 6; Idaho, 17; Illinois, 82; Indiana, 78; Kansas, 53; Kentucky, 233; Louisiana, 182; Massachusetts, 8; Maryland, 57; Maine, 1; Michigan, 27; Minnesota, 27; Missouri, 169; Mississippi, 201; Montana, 9; North Carolina, 332; Nebraska, 1; New Hampshire, 1; New Jersey, 11; New Mexico, 85; Nevada, 69; New York, 13; Ohio, 88; Oklahoma, 148; Oregon, 11; Pennsylvania, 22; Puerto Rico 3; South Carolina, 190; South Dakota, 1; Tennessee, 390; Texas, 347; Utah, 24; Virginia, 191; Vermont, 1; Washington, 20; Wisconsin, 3; West Virginia 22; Wyoming, 13.

*(EDITOR'S NOTE — Koonce is a staff writer for The Pathway, newsjournal of the Missouri Baptist Convention.)*

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# Resolutions: SBC tackles immigration, NIV

PHOENIX (BP) — Messengers addressed the thorny issue of immigration by adopting a resolution that sought to promote the gospel of Jesus while calling for justice and compassion during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), June 14-15 in Phoenix.

The resolution on immigration was one of eight approved either unanimously or overwhelmingly June 15.

In an unusual move, messengers called to the floor and passed a resolution on the “gender-neutral 2011 New International Version” (NIV) that was not reported to the convention by the Resolutions Committee.

Among the other resolutions adopted were ones affirming biblical teaching on the reality of hell, religious liberty throughout the world, corporate repentance, civility in public discourse and marriage as exclusively between a man and a woman.

The immigration resolution — adopted by what appeared to be about 70 to 80 percent of the messengers — urged Southern Baptist churches to proclaim Christ and minister in His spirit to everyone, regardless of their “immigration

status.” It said “any form of nativism, mistreatment, or exploitation is inconsistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

The measure called for the government to make a priority of border security and holding businesses accountable in their hiring.

The resolution’s paragraph on instituting a process for illegal immigrants to gain legal status after the securing of the borders and with restitution elicited an amendment that produced the most floor debate during the resolutions report. Final action on the resolution was delayed from the morning to afternoon session when the vote on the amendment was too close to call and required a ballot vote.

Richard Huff, a messenger from Corona de Tucson Baptist Church in Tucson, Ariz., introduced the amendment, which would have deleted the paragraph in question.

Paul Jimenez, chairman of the Resolutions Committee and pastor of Taylors First Baptist Church in Taylors, S.C., urged messengers to defeat the amendment. He said the committee members think the resolution is “a realistic and biblical approach to immigration” and

removing the language affected by the amendment “would really weaken it in such a way that we would oppose it.”

Messengers barely defeated Huff’s amendment, 766-723 (51.3 percent to 48.4 percent).

In the afternoon session, messengers handily rejected an amendment that would have basically gutted the same paragraph. They backed an amendment offered by the committee, however, that clarified the resolution was “not to be construed as support for amnesty for any undocumented immigrant.”

The NIV resolution overwhelmingly approved by messengers “expressed profound disappointment” with publication of the new translation and “respectfully request(ed) that LifeWay” not sell the version in its stores.

The resolution came to the floor when Indiana pastor Tim Overton persuaded messengers to address the 2011 version of the popular translation that his resolution said had “gone beyond acceptable translation standards” regarding gender.

Southern Baptist messengers expressed their disapproval of the TNIV in a 2002 resolution.

The resolution on hell came as part of an ongoing response to the publication earlier this year of Michigan pastor Rob Bell’s book *Love Wins*. Bell’s controversial book “called into question the church’s historic teaching on the doctrine of eternal punishment of the unregenerate,” as the resolution described it.

In adopting the resolution, messengers affirmed “our belief in the biblical teaching on eternal, conscious punishment of the unregenerate in hell.”

The resolution also urged Southern Baptists “to proclaim faithfully the depth and gravity of sin against a holy God, the reality of hell, and the salvation of sinners by God’s grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone, to the glory of God alone.”

Ten resolutions were submitted for this year’s meeting.

The committee declined to act on some but addressed others for the final resolutions recommended to the messengers.

(EDITOR’S NOTE — More extensive stories about the resolutions can be found at [www.biblicalrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx](http://www.biblicalrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx).)



COMMISSIONING — From left: Megan and Bryan Barley, Angela Sarnie, Andy Metzger, Tanner Turley, and Abbey Cook share with Southern Baptist Convention messengers during the North American Mission Board’s report and special service dedicating its missionaries to the field. The Barleys, Sarnie and Metzger are planting a church in Denver, Colo., sponsored by Summit Church in Durham. Turley, along with his wife Marsha are working with Cook at Redemption Hill Church just north of Boston. Open Door Baptist Church in Raleigh is helping plant that church.

## Kevin Ezell pushes new day for church planting

PHOENIX (BP) — Missionaries and chaplains, a U.S. Army general, a barber, two tornado victims and a redeemed young man mirrored the work of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) during its report to messengers June 14 at the 2011 SBC annual meeting.

“Knowing there are 318 million people in North America who need to know Jesus Christ stirs our passion as trustees,” NAMB trustee chairman Tim Dowdy, senior pastor of Eagles Landing First Baptist Church in McDonough, Ga., told the messengers. “Last year, God led us to the right man, Kevin Ezell. We’re starting down the right road. I can’t wait to see what God does with us, together impacting the world for Jesus Christ.”

Ezell told messengers the months since his election have been very challenging.

“I have learned a lot in the nine months since I accepted this role, and I appreciate your patience and prayers,” Ezell said. “I hope to clearly communicate our direction in the midst of a very complex transition.... I am striving to bring a sense of strategic focus and efficiency to our North American missions.”

Ezell outlined how NAMB’s mission board’s staff has been reduced by 38 percent through retirement and separation incentives, saving \$6 million a year. He said the budget has been cut another \$8 million, including slashing the travel budget by half.

“These savings will go to place more churches and more church planting missionaries where they are needed most in North America,” Ezell said.

### Send North America

The new “big picture strategy” for church planting, called Send North America, will enable Baptists to penetrate lostness through a regional mobilization strategy, Ezell said. “Already, 80 percent of NAMB’s resources are invested through the state conventions to go to underserved areas — even before Send North America. But this strategy will send even more in that direction.”

The GPS — God’s Plan for Sharing — initiative will continue to be one of the entity’s top priorities under NAMB’s new vice president for evangelism, Larry Wynn, Ezell said.

### Unreached Canada

Jeff Christopherson, NAMB’s vice president for Canada, and Jason McGibbon, a church planting missionary in Toronto, told messengers how unreached Canada is.

“Canada is one of the most unreached areas in North America, with only one church for every 121,000 people,” the Canadian-born Christopherson said.

“You drive through Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver, and you see a sea of houses but not one evangelical church. That’s just not right.”

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina has a partnership with Toronto through its Office of Great Commission Partnerships.

Also receiving an extended ovation was Maj. Gen. Douglas Carver, who appeared at the convention for

the final time as chief of chaplains for the U.S. Army. In 2007, Carver was the first Southern Baptist to be named the Army’s chief of chaplains in 50 years.

After a distinguished military career, Carver and wife Sunny will retire later this summer to Charlotte.

“It’s been my honor to wear the nation’s cloth for 38 years, supporting 2,900 chaplains of all faiths to 300,000 soldiers serving in 80 different countries, including during wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and in the Horn of Africa, defending us so we can serve God freely,” the two-star general said.

### Disaster relief

In the wake of this spring’s rash of tornadoes, floods and wildfires around the United States, disaster relief continues to be a vital ministry in partnership with the states, Ezell said.

So far in 2011, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief has responded to 40 separate incidents, including deadly tornadoes in Alabama and Joplin, Mo.

For the first time in several years, NAMB used the annual meeting to introduce and commission 20 new missionaries, chaplains and their spouses who will serve in 11 different locations throughout North America.

Some of the missionaries included representatives from churches in North Carolina and recent Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary graduates.

(EDITOR’S NOTE — More about NAMB and stories relating to the SBC can be found at [www.biblicalrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx](http://www.biblicalrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx).)

# Unreached gain So. Baptists' 'embrace'

PHOENIX (BP) — Hundreds of pastors, church leaders, laymen — young and old — made their way down the aisles. Some carried small children. One limped forward with a cane.

On the final evening of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) annual meeting, they filed to the front of the Phoenix Convention Center hall, following the International Mission Board's (IMB) presentation June 15.

They shared a public commitment for their churches to "embrace" one of the approximately 3,800 people groups currently not engaged by anyone with an intentional church-planting strategy and where less than 2 percent are evangelical Christians. The crowd gathered in front of the stage shortly after IMB President Tom Elliff extended the invitation for Southern Baptists to signify their willingness to embrace these unengaged, unreached people groups.

"To the best of our knowledge ... nobody has them on the radar screen," Elliff said. "It's like having people standing out in the cold around your house while you're enjoying a wonderful warm meal. You know they're out there but you have no plan to go out there and offer them anything. Well, I believe Southern Baptists do."

Forty new IMB missionaries who were commissioned earlier that evening were standing at the front to receive commitment cards from those who responded. "We need to be bearers of the light, whatever the cost," Elliff said. "Do we just want to be Southern Baptists, or do we want to be New Testament people (like Peter and John) who cannot stop speaking?"

IMB is using the word "embrace" to identify this effort.

"It's not a matter of yanking names off (a map) and saying we'll sign up," Elliff said. "No, no ... we want this to be a lifetime marriage between the two of us. We don't just want you on our parking lot or in our store. We want you in the cash register, behind the counter and in the warehouse. Everything we have is yours because it's always been yours."

The evening program was the culmination of a



BP photo

**UNENGAGED** — Delivering his first report to messengers as president of the International Mission Board (IMB), Tom Elliff told the 4,800 messengers God is moving through IMB missionaries, but that it will take a movement of Southern Baptist churches to reach the 3,800 unreached, unengaged people groups.

series of challenges issued by pastors and convention leaders throughout the convention and the Pastors' Conference that preceded it.

### 'Don't drop the cross'

The challenge also was extended through the presentation of a wooden cross during the IMB's report to the SBC. Handcrafted by a missionary who was killed in 2002, the cross — bearing the words "Don't drop the cross" and the verse Rev. 7:9 — served as a visual reminder of the cost for Southern Baptists to take the gospel to the far corners of the earth.

SBC President Bryant Wright, pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., presented the cross to Southern Baptists during the program.

The cross was made by William Koehn, who lost his life Dec. 30, 2002, when a gunman shot and killed him and two others — Kathleen Gariety and Martha Myers — at Jibla Baptist Hospital in Yemen where they served.

Nearly a decade after their deaths, a Christian worker in the Middle East gave the cross to Wright

about two weeks earlier in Cairo, Egypt. "We're reminded of the cost that it is to reach the hardest places still on earth," the worker told Bryant.

"I want to give this cross to you as a challenge to you and Southern Baptists to not drop the cross," the worker said. "Remember the peoples that are yet unreached and unengaged."

Giving up a comfortable life here in the States hasn't been easy for Christy and Ryan Campbell and their five children, who will be serving in sub-Saharan Africa. "Though I had surrendered to missions as a fourth-grade girl, I found my role as a mom and wife living the American dream quite comfortable," Christy told the crowd. "Hesitantly I agreed to pray, and God clearly revealed to me that the time had come to go."

The couple, who are members of Faith Baptist Church in Youngsville, will be joining nearly 5,000 missionaries on the field. In Elliff's report, he shared that IMB workers reported 360,876 baptisms in their work with Baptists overseas, 29,237 churches planted, 920 people groups currently engaged and 114 new people groups engaged. Southern Baptists gave \$7,985,000 that went toward hunger and relief, and \$145,662,925 to the 2010 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. "Although it did not reach our goal, it still is the fourth-highest Lottie Moon offering in the history of that offering," Elliff said. "That, with the economy and everything that went on in this world and in our country (this past year), we're so grateful...."

"We can do better than that. The truth about giving is ... that we cast ourselves totally on the providence of God. That's what turns giving into a faith exercise."

To see the "Don't drop the cross" video, go to [imb.org/main/downloads/flashvideos.asp?filename=/files/127/12794/12794-72509.flv](http://imb.org/main/downloads/flashvideos.asp?filename=/files/127/12794/12794-72509.flv). To learn more about how a church can embrace an unengaged, unreached people group, go to [imb.org/main/lead/embracedefault.asp?StoryID=9651&LanguageID=1709](http://imb.org/main/lead/embracedefault.asp?StoryID=9651&LanguageID=1709).

For more information about this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering theme, go to [iamsbmissions.com](http://iamsbmissions.com).

(EDITOR'S NOTE — For the full IMB report, go to [www.biblicalrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx](http://www.biblicalrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx).)

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# Couple is at peace among unreached

By Alan James  
Baptist Press

**T**aped to the inside of their apartment front door is a list of essentials — “phone, water, keys, money, copy of passport” — that a North Carolina couple doesn’t want to forget when leaving venturing into the streets of a South Asian city of 12 million people.

Claude and Lynne\*, members of Englewood Baptist Church in Rocky Mount, have been living in South Asia since April 2011.

One item that’s not on that list but is crucial to their ministry among the Koli people is prayer.

Answered prayer is why they are there.

The couple plan to live in the South Asian city for at least 10 months to help Englewood with follow-up among the Koli — an unreached people group that did not have a church-planting strategy among them until recent months. Englewood began a partnership among this people after the 2010 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Orlando.

Claude first felt the call to live among the Koli after his pastor, Michael Cloer, returned from the SBC with a conviction that Englewood should do more to spread the gospel among those who haven’t heard about Jesus.

“I wondered if that could be us,” Claude said of Cloer’s passion. “I didn’t know if God was in it or not. I just kind of thought about it, prayed about it. It looked like a tremendous opportunity.”

At the time, Claude and Lynne — like many Americans — had issues with debt, bills and thoughts of missing their children and new grandchildren. Nevertheless, the couple became more compelled to learn about this new opportunity.

Then, their world was rocked when Lynne was injured in a car accident.

A truck struck her vehicle as she was driving through an intersection, leaving her unconscious with two fractured bones in her back, a cracked rib and internal bleeding.

Then, doctors discovered something else.

“The internal bleeding was actually (caused by) a tumor on my right kidney,” Lynne recounted.

“It was fairly large, so we had to process that.”

At that moment, plans of going to share Jesus among the Koli people no longer were “on the radar.”

Yet, Lynne said, “God was with us. We sensed His presence carrying us through this, (but) we were not thinking about the Koli people at this time.”

“This is God’s answer — we’re not going to (South Asia),” Claude added.

“The focus of our life was my wife ... and her health. I kind of just let it go.”

And then as quickly as cancer entered their life, it was gone. Doctors removed the tumor before it could spread to other organs.

“God was so good,” Lynne said. “He had such a perfect plan.”

“That accident was a way for the doctors to find the tumor. Now I’m cancer free.”

Still, even though the cancer was gone, obstacles remained that kept them from being sure God was still calling them.

“Before Lynne’s accident we were thinking about our children, finances, bills, debt and things that would keep us from going,” Claude said.

One by one, however, each barrier began to fall as the couple prayed and let go of their fear.

He quoted Mark 11: “Jesus said, ‘I say to you whoever says to this mountain ‘be removed and cast into the sea’ ... but believes those things he says (it) will be done.’”

“You start understanding that if God’s in us going to South Asia, if it’s His will, He can topple mountains. My future and our future ... we just surrendered that.”

In February 2011, the couple went with a team from Englewood Baptist Church to South Asia, with the plan to return for 10 months. In their return trip a few weeks later, the first three days were a “mountaintop” experience, as Claude described it.

“We were with the Koli; people were coming to Christ; we were being let into homes,” he said. “Wow ... this is so fun.”

“We were welcomed,” Lynne added. “We were



**GOING** — “It’s like home,” said Lynne (name changed), a member of Englewood Baptist Church in Rocky Mount, referring to a South Asian city of 12 million where she and her husband Claude (name changed) have been living since April 2011. After overcoming “mountains” to move to South Asia for at least 10 months, Lynne and Claude are working with IMB personnel and their supporting church among an unreached people group in South Asia.



**COMMITMENT** — Claude (name changed) walks alongside a local translator to follow up with Koli people who have expressed an interest in Jesus Christ.



**MANY GODS** — People who live in Koli villages along the coast are “in total spiritual darkness,” said Claude (name changed).

treated with such respect and honor no matter what home we went in.

“We were given the best food. Whatever they had, they gave it to us. It was just so refreshing ... the love of the people was just overwhelming.” Then reality hit.

“We crashed after the third day,” Claude said. “I believe it was spiritual warfare. I believe the enemy came against us.”

“It’s a very intimidating city, overwhelming,” Lynne said.

“There were things that I saw and smelled. I couldn’t process it and deal with it. It was just so much in your face.”

The peace of God that Lynne once felt vanished as she struggled more and more with doubt. Even simple tasks like walking along the city streets and navigating traffic were a challenge.

“What are you doing here?” she thought. “You don’t speak (the language). You can’t even cross a street.”

Claude also struggled with discouragement. “The adversary really came against us,” he said. “He’s been controlling these people for thousands of years.”

“This is an unengaged, unreached people group. There’s no light (of Christ) among them. So when two people ‘bebop’ over here from the States, thinking they’re gonna go into (Satan’s) territory that he’s had for thou-

sands of years and rescue people with the gospel, he came against us.”

Both now say their “low point” was a combination of fatigue, spiritual warfare, culture shock and the stress of moving from family. Lynne credits the prayers of friends back in the States with helping her cope with the challenges. One friend later told her she specifically prayed that Lynne would feel at home while she was away. Those prayers made all the difference, Lynne said. “I’ve totally adjusted,” she said. “Even though I hear horns ... it’s noisy and loud, I can sleep through the night. It’s like home.”

\*Names changed.

(EDITOR’S NOTE — James is a senior writer for the International Mission Board.)



Englewood Baptist Church member Francois Farge, right, strikes up a conversation with a man in a Koli village, while looking for a chance to share his faith. He learns this man left his people’s fishing heritage to become a fitness trainer. It’s a similar path many young Koli men take to avoid the economic challenges and tough work conditions many Koli fishermen face daily.



# Fishers of men N.C. church tackles unreached in S. Asia

(Continued from Page 1)

than a 2 percent evangelical presence and unengaged with no church-planting strategy among them.

“The Spirit of God just spoke to my heart and said, ‘What are we doing about unreached people?’” Cloer said.

“We had been praying for them, just as a whole, but that’s as far as we were going. I came back and ... began to pray, ‘God, where do you want us to go?’”

The church soon was committed to ministering to the Koli people.

Amidst a backdrop of modern conveniences and technological advances, the Koli people — with their colorful boats and waving flags — represent an old way of life committed to hard work, tradition and idol worship. Fishermen struggle to make a living in polluted waters in a time when modern life seems to have passed them by.

Most of the younger Koli generations hunt for new opportunities to escape the old way of life, while clinging to the worship of more than 300,000 gods.

Of the 283,000-plus Koli people whom Englewood is engaging, fewer than half of 1 percent are evangelical.

“We saw a people group who were mainly fishermen, and the Lord immediately struck in my heart,” Cloer said. “God told us to be fishers of men ... fishers of men among the fishermen.”

In the summer of 2010, the International Mission Board (IMB) challenged Southern Baptists to adopt 6,426 unreached people groups based on that year’s research. At this year’s SBC annual meeting, IMB President Tom Elliff plans to narrow that focus to the approximately 3,800 unengaged, unreached people groups. Englewood Baptist Church’s partnership also will be featured at this year’s SBC meeting.

The Koli are now engaged with a church-planting strategy — and the work has just begun.

Church members venturing among the Koli in South Asia won’t have to look far to find challenges. On the streets they’ll find a variety of idols — ones surrounded in fresh flowers on cab dashboards or those swinging from the rearview mirror. Some will be displayed on posters along shop walls and encased in concrete shrines. In some homes they’ll find a cross, a statue or even a picture of Jesus, but locals view these as mere additions to their idol worship.

“To the Koli, Jesus is just another god,” said Claude\*, an Englewood member of the church is supporting to lead follow-up work among the Koli. Claude and his wife Lynne\* plan to live in South Asia until the end of 2011.

“These people who live in these Koli villages along the coast are in total spiritual darkness,” Claude said.

But there has been some progress.

Since the Englewood

team first set foot in the Koli villages, nearly 20 people have made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

“We had men and women pray out loud in front of other people: ‘I want Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Savior; I renounce all other gods but Jesus,’”

**“We had been praying for them, just as a whole, but that’s as far as we were going. I ... began to pray, ‘God, where do you want us to go?’”**  
— Michael Cloer, Englewood Baptist Church



**LIVELIHOOD** — Koli fishermen prepare their boats along the coast of South Asia. For centuries the Koli have been unengaged by any known Southern Baptist work, and less than half a percent of them are evangelical. Members of Englewood Baptist Church in Rocky Mount have sent teams since February 2011 to share Jesus with them.

Cloer recounted.

“We’d go back the next day; that individual had thrown out all of their idols into the street.”

The response has been an encouragement, but it also has served as a reminder of the follow-up work the church still has to do.

During the first trip, one Koli fisherman made a profession of faith. He agreed to have a Bible study at his home. But when Claude and a team returned a couple months later, the fisherman had changed his mind. He told the team another villager had attacked his wife for her faith and she had been prevented from using the well.

It’s slow work, said Kaleb\*, an IMB representative among the people of South Asia.

“This (people group) has existed for thousands of years, but Satan has had a hold on (them),” Kaleb said. “When we go into these areas and make these big pushes just to get the gospel out, we see Satan’s attack.”

The level of commitment needed to make a dent among people groups like the Koli is high, Kaleb said.

“I know lots of people back home who say they want to reach the nations,” he said, “but they’re not praying for the nations. They’re not going to the nations. They’re not sending others to the nations.”

“Until we become doers of the Word



**WITNESSING** — “As long as I’m out delivering the message, I’m doing what God has called me to do,” said Allan (name changed), a member of Englewood Baptist Church in Rocky Mount. He led a volunteer team to the Koli of South Asia in late April 2011.

of God and take this message to the nations, then nothing is going to change.”

Kaleb admits being pleasantly surprised when he first spoke to Cloer about Englewood Baptist Church working among the Koli. Cloer asked Kaleb how many teams he could handle and what it would take to get the job done.

“When I heard that, I realized they are in it,” Kaleb said. “Their hearts were committed. Knowing that churches like Englewood are out there ... makes me feel like I’m not out here alone.”

## ‘Whatever it takes’

In the coming months Cloer hopes to mentor fellow pastors in the U.S. in how to begin work among other unengaged, unreached people groups.

Though Englewood is larger than the average church, Cloer knows his congregation — and most other churches — can’t do it alone.

“I was led by the Lord, ‘Why don’t you ask other pastors to join you in this?’” he said.

“We hear it from the national platform ... but it’s another thing for a brother to look you face to face and say, ‘Brother, why don’t you get involved?’”

Cloer said after his time on earth is done, he hopes he will have helped reach 1 percent of those people groups unreached with the gospel.

Just like that old net hanging from the church ceiling, together Southern Baptists are stronger than they are separate, Cloer contends.

“I believe there will be someone from every people group standing around the throne of Jesus,” he said.

“To think that we could have (that) opportunity ... it’s going to be worth it all. It’s going to be worth whatever it takes.”

\*Names changed.

# N.C. Baptists take part in So. Bapt. Convention

(Continued from Page 1)

“Coming back to the authority of scripture was a correcting point that had to take place (in the SBC), but the mission is to fulfill the Great Commission,” Wright said. “I think this was the most unified convention around the Great Commission that I have experienced. People came here with anticipation of that unity.”

During the Executive Committee report, the leaders stood on stage together.

“Our convention is fracturing into various groups, some theological, most methodological,” Page told messengers. “Sometimes there is an honest difference of opinion, but often there is self-centeredness that frequently mirrors our own culture.”

“Christ-like selflessness is our only hope,” Page said.

Page also urged Southern Baptists to take the “1 Percent Challenge” — leading their church to increase gifts to the Cooperative Program by 1 percent-of-budget point. Doing so would lead to \$100 million more for Southern Baptist ministries and worldwide missions, including funding for 380 more IMB missionaries, Page said.

The Executive Committee’s landmark report on ethnic diversity was the focus of national media attention, as was the election of New Orleans pastor Fred Luter to first vice president. He is the first African American to hold that post.

The report’s language encourages the SBC president, when he makes his various appointments, to “give special attention to appointing individuals who represent the diversity within the Convention, and particularly ethnic diversity.”

It also encourages the committee in charge of the annual meeting to reflect the ethnic diversity of the convention in the meeting program. A motion that would have struck the ethnic diversity language was defeated by a margin of 3-to-1.

The Executive Committee report, delivered after a two-year study, cites the “need to be proactive and intentional in the inclusion of individuals from all ethnical and racial identities within Southern Baptist life.”

The convention’s resolutions — which express the sentiment on often hot-button theological and cultural issues — once again made news. In a surprising move in the convention’s final session, messengers overruled the Resolutions Committee by at least a 2-to-1 margin and voted to consider a resolution — promoted by messenger Tim Overton — highly critical of the



BR photos by K. Allan Blume

**JOINING** — N.C. Baptists sing during worship at the Southern Baptist Convention in Phoenix, Ariz. From left: Bruce and Brenda Martin and Lee O'Briant (salmon shirt) of Village Baptist Church in Fayetteville.

NIV 2011 Bible translation. The resolution passed nearly unanimously.

The resolution’s text says that because of “inaccurate gender language,” messengers “cannot commend the 2011 NIV to Southern Baptists or the larger Christian community.”

It “respectfully request(s) that LifeWay” not sell the new NIV in its retail chain.

But a resolution on immigration and the gospel, coming at a convention partially focused on ethnic issues, had the most floor debate.

By a 4-to-1 margin, messengers adopted the resolution, which includes

key language asking “our governing authorities to implement, with the borders secured, a just and compassionate path to legal status, with appropriate restitutionary measures, for those undocumented immigrants already living in our country.”

That sentence was nearly struck but survived on a ballot vote, 51-48 percent.

The resolution gained more support when the Resolutions Committee proposed adding a sentence that says the resolution “is not to be construed

as support for amnesty for any undocumented immigrant.”

Mostly overlooked in the controversy was the rest of the 22-paragraph resolution, which calls on churches to take the gospel to all people, “regardless of country of origin or immigration status.” (See resolution story, page 6.)

The main focus of the convention was on fulfilling the Great Commission — both in North America and around the world.

“It’s a new day,” Ezell said. “It really is. Pastor, we’re not going to make it harder for you. “Associations and states, we’re not (going to make it harder on

you either). We’re going to make it easier. We’re going to make it easier for you to engage in missions and to pray and partner. We can do this together.” (See NAMB story, page 6.)

Birmingham, Ala., pastor David Platt preached the convention sermon (see page 5), quoting statistics on the world’s unreached and telling messengers, “This is not a problem for the International Mission Board to address. This is a problem for every pastor and every local church to address.”

**“I think this was the most unified convention around the Great Commission that I have experienced. People came here with anticipation of that unity.”**

— Bryant Wright,  
SBC president



**COMMON MEAL** — N.C. Baptists gathered for a meal in Phoenix, Ariz., during the Southern Baptist Convention. From left: Stan Welch, pastor of West Asheville Baptist Church; Byron Paulus, president of Life Action Ministries Ruffin Snow, pastor at Tri-City Baptist Church in Conover; and Melissa Snow. Life Action Ministries has many ties to churches in North Carolina.



**ASKING** — N.C. Baptists Richard and Joy Odom of Summerfield First Baptist Church talk with Chaplain (CPT) Thomas Watson, a member of First Baptist Church in Indian Trail. Watson and his wife Jackie were part of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s emphasis of peace at its 2009 annual meeting in Greensboro.

Other convention speakers — including several during the Pastors’ Conference and Wright himself during his sermon — made a similar point.

Elliff, in his report (see page 7), spotlighted the need to embrace unengaged people groups, but said, “This convention has been one long sermon.... There is not one thing I could say” that messengers have not already heard.

A lost world, Elliff said, needs churches who consider it unacceptable that there are people groups “who do not have somebody deliberately” trying to engage them with the gospel. “Really, all there (is) left for me to do is to give the invitation,” Elliff said, moments before hundreds of messengers came forward holding cards that said, “I will lead my church to embrace an unengaged, unreached people group.”

The Affirmation of Unity and Cooperation pledge — signed at the Executive Committee meeting June 13 and presented to messengers the next day — includes five key “pledges.” In summary, they are:

- “We pledge to maintain a relationship of mutual trust ...

- “We pledge to attribute the highest motives to those engaged in local church ministries and those engaged in denominational service in any level of Convention life ...

- “We pledge to affirm the value of cooperative ministry as the most effective and efficient means of reaching a lost world ...

- “We pledge to embrace our brothers and sisters of every ethnicity, race, and language as equal partners in our collective ministries to engage all people groups with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- “We pledge to continue to honor and affirm proportional giving through the Cooperative Program as the most effective means of mobilizing our churches and extending our outreach as Southern Baptists ....”

In other matters:

- More than 1,100 Arizonans made professions for Christ during the pre-convention Crossover 2011 evangelistic effort.

- Paul Thompson, one of the 10 Baptists held in a Haiti jail in 2010, appeared before messengers during the Executive Committee report, telling them, “I have never been so proud to be a Southern Baptist as I was in the 19 days in a lonely but yet God-filled prison cell in Haiti.”

Ezell promised that, under his watch, future financial stewardship at NAMB will demand “accuracy, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency — not smoke and mirrors.” He then clarified and put into perspective some oft-quoted NAMB statistics — for instance, that Southern Baptists planted 769 new churches in 2010, not the 1,400 to 1,500 a year usually reported in the past.

“When the old NAMB counted church plants, they didn’t ask for church names or addresses or planter names. The new NAMB is asking and only counting churches for which those details can be obtained.” Ezell generated laughs and applause when he said, “If Walmart can track how much toilet paper it sells every hour, we should be able to track how many churches are planted each year.”

Next year’s meeting will be June 19-20 in New Orleans.

(EDITOR’S NOTE — Full reports from the Southern Baptist Convention can be found at [www.biblicalrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx](http://www.biblicalrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx).)



BR photo by K. Allan Blume

**TELLING** — Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, shares with messengers about Southeastern's enrollment and partners at the Southern Baptist Convention in Phoenix, Ariz.

# SEBTS reports record enrollment

By Lauren Crane  
*SEBTS Communications*

PHOENIX (BP) — The Southern Baptist Convention heard from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary President Daniel Akin about increased enrollment numbers, faithful faculty and intentional partnerships for theological education during the seminary's annual report June 15.

With a record enrollment during the preceding school year, and another expected record enrollment in the coming months, Akin said he is greatly encouraged by God's faithfulness in bringing students to study at Southeastern.

"In 1992, in the height of the Conservative Resurgence, the school was at 585," Akin said.

"There were people that were predicting the school would not survive,

but by God's amazing grace, today more than 2,700 students are at Southeastern."

People are drawn to the seminary because of the caliber of heart for the Great Commission and of the faculty, Akin said.

He pointed out that, as in past years, the number of students coming to study for service with the International Mission Board has continued to increase.

"Southeastern Seminary aspires to be a Great Commission seminary, and we are now training more missionaries and church planters than at any other time in our history," Akin said.

The heart for sharing the gospel among the unreached and unengaged of the world comes directly from the faculty, Akin said, many of whom have served overseas as career missionaries and have come to Southeastern to infuse

the Great Commission into a variety of disciplines.

"God has brought back six former career International Mission Board personnel who teach — not in the area of missions — but in the areas of Old Testament, Hebrew, New Testament, Greek, hermeneutics and also theology," Akin said.

Akin also gave an update on Southeastern's intentional initiative to wed the seminary to the local church for theological education. Questioned from the floor about whether Southeastern is pushing a "Calvinist" agenda, Akin said, "Southeastern has one agenda: It is called the Great Commission."

(EDITOR'S NOTE — For Southeastern's complete report and the other seminary reports, please visit [www.biblicalrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx](http://www.biblicalrecorder.org/resources/SBC2011.aspx).)

## News Briefs

### Baptist journalist dies

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) — Longtime Baptist journalist Bill Junker died June 8 after a long illness.

Junker, 83, retired from the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1992. For most of his 13-year tenure he was director of editorial services, including news services. He was a member of the Baptist Sunday School Board's student ministry staff for 22 years, serving as editorial services director and later as communications specialist. After retirement he served briefly as coordinator of the Tennessee Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Junker is survived by his wife of 60 years, Patsy Hillman Junker, three children and eight grandchildren.

### New Hope Publishers launches web venture

New Hope Publishers announced June 6 the official launch of *NewHopeDigital.com*.

The press release called *NewHopeDigital.com* "a pioneering web venture, providing readers and retailers with fresh content from top authors in multiple digital formats."

*NewHopeDigital.com* will offer regularly updated magazine-style content — articles, columns, feature stories, podcasts, videos — from New Hope authors and other contributors. Each month the site will have a specific theme, such as orphan care, human exploitation, the persecuted church, prayer, and making disciples, in order to foster focused thought and interaction on major issues facing Christians today. New book releases on a variety of topics will be prominently featured as well.

"We have anticipated this day for many months,"

says publisher Andrea Mullins. "We believe *NewHopeDigital.com* is just the beginning of a new era of digital publishing that will touch lives around the world where people need to know who God is, what He is doing, and what He offers in Christ. *NewHopeDigital.com* will enhance the mission of New Hope Publishers, expand the ministries of our authors, and provide resources that speak to a variety of issues that need the active engagement of God's people."

### MHC women's soccer team plans Jamaica mission

In a first for Mars Hill College, an entire athletic team will be taking a mission trip this summer.

From August 15 through 21, the Lady Lion's soccer team and coach Ken Miller will be taking a mission trip to work in a group of orphanages in Kingston, Jamaica. The 25 players who plan to take the trip will engage in humanitarian projects and teach the game of soccer to children who reside in Mustard Seed Ministries orphanages in Kingston. For those players who choose to do so, the relationships built through interacting with the children will also provide an opportunity to share their Christian faith.

The trip is planned through Global Soccer Ministries International (GSM), a non-profit ministry started by Paul Banta, a former NCAA Division 1 Soccer Coach and coaching educator. GSM has ongoing ministries in Guatemala and Jamaica.

According to Miller, soccer — or "football" as it is called in many other countries — is a "world game," that provides a perfect medium for getting to know the children and showing them affection.

In addition to teaching the boys and girls soccer on an informal basis, the team will have two to three exhibition games for the children to enjoy. Coach

Miller has also been invited to hold a soccer clinic for coaches in the Kingston area.

For now, the team is busily raising the \$1,500 per person cost of the trip. Anyone interested in donating funds toward trip costs may do so by contacting Ken Miller at (828) 689-1171 or [kmiller@mhc.edu](mailto:kmiller@mhc.edu).

### Gardner-Webb University hosts Baptist professors

BOILING SPRINGS — Gardner-Webb University (GWU) recently hosted more than 70 Baptist professors and graduate students in religion for the annual meeting of the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion (NABPR). This was GWU's first time hosting the conference, held once a year at universities across the country.

"Gardner-Webb's involvement with NABPR is absolutely essential," said Ron Williams, president of NABPR and professor of religious studies at Gardner-Webb, "because it introduces us to students from universities around the country, students who may become future job candidates."

"It is also crucial for those students to meet one another and build their network."

The conference actually opened with a banquet for doctoral students, designed intentionally for networking purposes.

The NABPR members had three days of conversation, including special presentations by Bill J. Leonard, professor of church history at Wake Forest University School of Divinity, and Stephen Chapman, professor of Old Testament at Duke Divinity School.

Twelve of the presenters at breakout sessions were either current or previous Gardner-Webb students or faculty members, and four were recent graduates of the undergraduate religious studies program.

## Opportunity Corner

### Training Extravaganza

All church members, staff and leadership are welcome to attend Training Extravaganza on August 6 at Trinity Baptist Church in Raleigh. From 8 to 12 p.m., participants can choose to learn about areas in church health, minister's health, missions, and church teaching and discipleship ministries. The event is free. Contact (919) 231-3995.

### TRBA to hold MATCH

Tar River Baptist Association will train August 20 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. for MATCH: Mothers and Their Children. Volunteers for this program help incarcerated mothers to continue to have healthy relationships with their children. For more information, contact [sherri@tarriverbaptist.com](mailto:sherri@tarriverbaptist.com) or (919) 496-7172.

## Classified Advertisements

### Pastor

**Full-Time Pastor.** Small Baptist church in Durham, NC, is seeking full-time pastor. Info about church and position available at <http://visitimmanuel.org/pastorsearch/> via the Internet.

### Church Staff

James Island Baptist ([www.jamesislandbaptist.com](http://www.jamesislandbaptist.com)) is seeking a **Pastor of Worship-Small Groups**. Charleston, SC, is a beautiful place to live and do life. Interested in exploring possibilities? Reply to [jibc@knology.net](mailto:jibc@knology.net).

West End Baptist Church, Henderson, North Carolina, needs **Organist/Parttime Youth/Children Minister**. Salary negotiable. Contact Jerry Parrish (252) 492-6353

**Minister of Music Needed.** A conservative SBC of 3,800 members is seeking God's person for the position of minister of music. This person will be responsible for the planning of a blended worship service at 11:00 as well as overseeing the contemporary 9:30 service. This active ministry has an excellent sanctuary choir of 105 members, an orchestra that plays monthly, youth choir, senior's choir, graded children's choirs and 2 youth/children's handbell choirs. Seminary training preferred. Please send resume to Lou Nelon, Administrator, at Village Baptist Church, 906, S. McPherson Church Road, Fayetteville, NC 28303 or email [lou@villagebc.org](mailto:lou@villagebc.org).

Southside Baptist Church, Suffolk, VA, is praying for God's will for a **Worship Pastor**. This position is full time in a growing church. Job description available, and resumes are currently being accepted. You may email Lead Pastor Stewart McCarter at [smccarter@sbcsoffolk.org](mailto:smccarter@sbcsoffolk.org), or mail your resume to Southside Baptist Church, 917 Carolina Road, Suffolk, VA 23434.

### Miscellaneous

**NCBAM needs funding and labor for roof repair** of the homes of aging adults. Rainy days shouldn't have to get anyone down. Call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

**NCBAM needs window and free-standing fans** for aging adults suffering in summer's heat. We can help you bring them blessed relief. Call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

**Share the Biblical Recorder — FREE.** Order a three-month free subscription for your family and friends. Contact Daphne Woodall at (919) 847-2127 or [daphne@biblicalrecorder.org](mailto:daphne@biblicalrecorder.org) to make arrangements. Encourage others to be more informed about N.C. Baptist life and missions.

### How to place a classified ad in the *Biblical Recorder*

#### Choose one of three avenues:

- Send e-mail to: [alison@biblicalrecorder.org](mailto:alison@biblicalrecorder.org)
- Submit the information via the *Recorder's* web site at [www.BRnow.org](http://www.BRnow.org)
- Send a Fax to (919) 847-6939

For more information, call the office at (919) 847-2127.

Cost for Baptist churches and organizations is \$1.20 per word, number and stand-alone initial (\$1.42 for commercial and non-Baptist entities) with a minimum charge of \$35. Classifieds that run in the paper also are carried online.

# Why adopt?

By Tony Merida  
Baptist Press

Until perhaps recently, most believers, in my experience, have only considered adoption and orphan care in a couple circumstances. One, they were praying for the Smiths because “they can’t have children and are thinking about adopting.” Or, two, they were taking up an offering to help the state or local children’s home.

Of course, these are good things to do. We should pray for those who are struggling to have children and are considering adoption. And, we should help those who are providing homes to the fatherless. But if that’s all orphan care is to us, then we have missed so much. We need an elevated concept of adoption. We need God’s perspective on adoption. We need to meditate on the gospel more deeply.

I turned into an adoption advocate, an adoptive dad, and eventually a writer on the subject not because of infertility, but because of theology.

Believers understand that God is Father. But, what kind of father is He? He is an adoptive Father! Do you realize that there are no natural-born children in the family of God? None of us were born Christians. If you are a believer, it is because God has adopted you into the family. That’s it. All races brought together by God’s adoption of spiritual orphans.

Paul expounds on the gospel of God’s adopting grace to the Ephesians, Galatians, and Romans. He shows us that God the Father administered our adoption, God the Son accomplished our adoption through His redeeming work on the Cross, and God the Spirit applied our adoption, giving us a new nature, a new position, and the indwelling presence of God that enables us to cry “Abba, Father.” (See Galatians 4:6-7.)

Adoption was never plan B for God. It wasn’t an alternative solution. It was plan A. Before the universe existed, God had planned on adopting us into His family through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:5). God did not adopt us because of our attractive merits, but because of His amazing mercy.

Paul tells us to “be imitators of God, as beloved children”

(Ephesians 5:1). His undeserved mercy on us compels us to reflect His adoptive love to a world in need. God’s love is active. Christian love is not based on the idea of just loving people the way we want to be loved. It’s more. It’s loving people the way God has loved us. He acted. He pursued. He showered grace on the undeserving. This is a gospel-centered perspective on adoption and orphan care.

Obviously, not everyone is called to adopt, but every believer is called to act. That means not merely feeling sorry for orphans.

Sentimentalism is no substitute for action. In addition to adoption, other ways we can be actively involved include hosting orphans for a summer, financially supporting adoptive parents, fostering children in our community, and discipling local boys and girls from functionally fatherless families.

When my wife Kimberly and I were in Ukraine adopting four children we were interviewed by a local newspaper. The reporter asked me (through an interpreter), “Why are you adopting all of these kids? No one in our country adopts four kids at one time.” I said, “The short answer is ... Jesus.” It’s really that simple.

Sure, exposure to my sister’s adopted children stirred my affections for adoption. And sure, my awareness to the state of the fatherless worldwide bothered me greatly. But, when I began to see how often God talks about the fatherless in general, and how the gospel is reflected in adoption in particular, then my mindset changed.

So, I laugh, but I also grieve, when people say to a family, “Why are you adopting? You already have natural-born children. You can have your own kids.” They’ve missed it. They don’t see that adoption isn’t about infertility; it’s about responding to God’s grace properly: first with gratitude toward Him, and then with active love toward others. How is He calling you to love the orphan today?

*(EDITOR’S NOTE — Merida is associate pastor of preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, and the co-author of “Orphanology: Awakening to Gospel-Centered Adoption and Orphan Care.” He formerly was pastor of Temple Baptist Church in Hattiesburg, Miss.)*

thing I’ve learned, it’s how this life we lead here in America really isn’t all that real. I don’t say that to sound pretentious or judgmental. I know that people here have real, day-in, day-out struggles.

People here are hurting with real problems. But many Americans have no idea what life is like for people outside these United States. To not always know where your next meal is coming from, to choose between paying school fees for one child and buying life-saving medicine for another, to walk a mile each way just to bring home 5 gallons of water, or to simply sit under a tree with a friend and drink tea—that is real life.

Pray for returning missionaries to be able to share their experiences with others in a way that will mobilize more people to take up the call to go and reach the nations.

\*Names, locations and blog links omitted due to security issues.

*(EDITOR’S NOTE — This entry was found at Missionary Blog Digest at: <http://missionaryblogdigest.wordpress.com/>.)*

## CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp



**“Our family is trying one of those ‘RETRO’ churches... they read out of the Bible and have sermons and stuff.”**

# Where is your treasure?

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

Does the thought of giving an offering to God seem more like a task instead of a privilege?



When you hear your pastor or Bible study leader talk about the importance of giving money to God, do you silently ask the question “why?”

Do you ever wonder what the right motive is for giving to God?

We know we can never repay God for all He has done for us. The wonder, power and beauty of the gospel is that we are not expected to do so. Jesus Christ died once and for all as the sacrifice for sin. For those who trust Jesus as their personal Savior, there is no longer condemnation.

This means that we do not give monetary contributions because we are trying to earn God’s favor. Instead, we should give to God because of our love for the Savior and our desire to obey His commands.

The Barna Group recently released a report indicating a drop in the number of Americans giving to a church or religious center.

The national tithing rate is also down, as Barna reports that four percent of adults in America tithe, a decrease from last year’s seven percent.

When I see numbers like this I can’t help but think about Matthew 6:21 which says, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

If we are not giving back a portion to God of what is already His — is our treasure really in heaven or is it in our checkbooks? We should give our tithe not out of a sense of duty or because it’s just a good thing to do. We give because we love God — and this is one way we demonstrate that.

Under the practices of the Old Testament law, the prophet Malachi (3:8) radically declared that we are guilty of stealing from God if we refuse to give tithes and offerings to Him. If you want to be blessed immensely, then don’t give under the law; instead, give with a heart of grace as you are guided by the Holy Spirit.

Remember the words found in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7: “He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

Our giving to God also takes on other forms such as our time and our talents. Are you investing time in serving Christ in your local church and home community? Are you using the gifts God has endowed you with in order to bless others?

Since you received the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, you have been given much. As an expression of gratitude, will you give of your time, your tithes and your talents to glorify God and to bless others in His name? You will discover immeasurable joy when your treasure is in Christ.

# The five most common questions

## Blog features missionaries and life on the mission field

By Anonymous\*  
First-Person Account

Since I’ve been home, it’s funny how the same questions keep coming up over and over and over again. Most of the time, I don’t mind answering. But, every now and then, I get really frustrated with these questions. And I know a lot of other returning missionaries get frustrated with them, too. So please hear my heart in this ... we aren’t the same as we were when we left, and we don’t see things the same way, either. All that to say, here are the answers to those oh, so common questions.

**1) How was your trip?** This question drives me crazy! It wasn’t a trip — it was a life. I lived there, bought groceries there, paid bills there, had a phone number there, and made friends there. When I moved there, I left behind a life I had built here. When I came back home, I also left a life behind.

**2) Did you learn to speak African?** I know this may be difficult for our English-speaking minds to wrap around, but everyone in Africa doesn’t speak the same language! There are over 50 “local” languages in one country alone. A lot of the time I did speak English, but English there isn’t like English here. “African English” has different phrasing, vocabulary, and even a different cadence. I honestly had to re-learn how to speak English there! (And please don’t be surprised when African English works its way into my American conversations ... it happens!)

**3) What’s next?** I have no idea. I feel like God is calling me into some kind of missions work, but from the US-side of things. My heart is to help believers get involved in both local and international missions. Right now, I’m just looking for someone who wants to pay me a salary to do it ... any takers?

**4) Do you miss being there?** Power outages, dirty water, wandering livestock, and body odor? Absolutely not. Precious friends, piki-piki (motorcycle taxi) rides, hot tea in the shade, ripe mangoes, passionfruit, and pineapple? Every day.

**5) Are you glad to get back to real life?** If there’s any-

# Great Commission leadership

**W**hy did Jesus come to this earth? He did not leave this question unanswered. In Luke 19:10 he said, “for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

His purpose was simple: provide the way of salvation to redeem lost mankind. As Paul disciplined young Timothy, he recognized Jesus’ purpose when he said, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1 Tim. 1:15).

We preach that Jesus is the only way to heaven. Jesus said that about Himself in John 14:6. Baptists believe it to be true. But do our lives demonstrate the urgency of telling the world about Him? At least 3,800 people groups in the world have not yet heard His name. They do not know that the grace of God has come to man in the person of Jesus Christ.

If we are completely convinced of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we will passionately accept our assignment to proclaim His gospel. Did Jesus leave us with a more primary responsibility? Undeniably, the last command Jesus left His followers is still in force. We can read it in Acts 1:8 or Matthew 28:18-20. It is simple and clear.

God has given us an assignment. We call it the Great Commission. It is not a shelf piece to admire and discuss. It is an assignment. We like to make it merely a topic of conversation. We get together every Lord’s Day to talk a little bit about the Great Commission and a whole lot about ourselves.

Are we called to oil the machinery of our local churches just enough to barely keep our doors open so we will have a place to go on Sunday? Is our primary task to maintain the “traditions of our elders” without filling the baptistry? Are we satisfied with merely serving as chaplains to one another? Where are the changed lives? Where are the newly redeemed believers?

Baptists like to talk about being “mission-minded” or “missional.” But, how much of that talk is being translated into planting new churches, increasing our mission dollars or sending more missionaries to the ends of the earth? How much of our talk is fleshed out through volunteers getting out of our comfortable pews to travel overseas?

Southern Baptists should not be satisfied until the God of heaven sees His children passionately proclaiming His Son within our community and to the ends of the earth. We cannot be content to use our resources to improve our standard of living while knowing that billions will spend eternity in hell because they never heard the name of Jesus.

Try this one Sunday in your church. Measure the conversation in your Sunday School/Bible Study group or worship service. How much of it is about “us,” and how much of it is about our real purpose as believers? Do we pray for each other to feel better or are we calling on our merciful God to change the hearts of lost people? Are we discussing how we can live “happily” or are we asking how we can live more sacrificially in order to proclaim the Savior to the world? Is our discussion centered on finding ways to remove uncomfortable roadblocks in our lives or searching for ways to abandon self-satisfaction? Where is the gospel in all of our talk?

Let’s put our assignment in perspective. We don’t exist for the sake of building institutions, whether

they be denominations, seminaries, colleges or newspapers like this one. We exist for the glory of God and for the sake of His Son, Jesus Christ. Our calling is not to prop up organizations or keep machinery oiled. It is to proclaim salvation through Jesus Christ alone to a world who does not know His love and grace.

God gets glory when the people of the world learn of His great love for them. He is glorified when lost mankind discovers that God’s love is not simply a feeling, but a sacrificial act of His mercy and grace toward all rebellious people of the world.

Of the three primary institutional structures within a society, government, business and church, only one of those is equipped to deal with the problem of sin. The world has many problems — war, poverty, hatred, greed, sickness — all of which have their roots in the universal problem of sin.

Governments throw money at problems. It does not work. Governments attempt to control the sin problem through legal enforcement. While we respect the value of law enforcement and recognize its place in social order, it does not deal with the root problem of sin.

Business hopes that producing the right products and creating jobs will lift societies and individuals above the consequences of sin. New inventions have not eliminated poverty. The development of more weapons has not eliminated war. Sickness and disease are still with us in spite of phenomenal medical advancements in the world of research. The wealth accumulated by legitimate, successful businesses has not addressed the problem because business is not equipped to handle the problem of sin.

But, God has given the world the gift of the New Testament church. He has given Jesus to the church as our savior, redeemer and head. Jesus is the answer to the sin problem. His sacrificial death on the cross for the sin of man addresses the problems faced by every society and every individual in the world.

God calls us to abandon the misguided priority of personal comfort. Comfort is a safe place. It is a place of pleasure. But it is not where God is working. Baptists must be alert to the tragic danger of comfort. It is destructively self-perpetuating. It is the place of no progress. Ultimately, it is the place of utter failure. If this is where we are, we need a strategy to climb out of that pit.

We are called to abandon the subjective feelings of comfort, not the objective standards of biblical truth. Are we deceiving ourselves by believing the work of the Great Commission will be done without serious obedience? We may be drowning in a sea of subjectivity, with little objective commitment to obeying Jesus’ command to take the gospel to every living creature.

The Great Commission is never accomplished accidentally. We will never wake up one day and discover that we have unintentionally proclaimed the gospel to the world. As Southern Baptists and North Carolina Baptists develop strategies to reach the nations, every local church needs to do the same. After all, it is the local church’s assignment.

David Platt said, “There is not one verse in the Bible where the gospel moves forward without a person.” God uses us! We are His plan to proclaim His salvation to every living creature. How will they know if we do not tell them?

Whether or not we agree with last year’s Great Commission Resurgence report, we are all confront-

ed with the assignment Jesus left in our trust 2,000 years ago. We have not finished the work He gave us. There is still much to do, and it will not get done by endless discussion.

I challenge fellow Southern Baptists to be fully committed to excellence in the matter of equipping each other to fulfill the Great Commission and in the matter of intentionally doing whatever it takes to get the job done. We hold those around us to high standards. We want our doctors to be well trained and fully knowledgeable on matters of health. We expect the cook at the restaurant to prepare tasty food, while maintaining the highest standards of health and cleanliness. When we fly, we want to be confident that the pilot of the aircraft is trained for every potential scenario. If we hold others to high standards, why not hold ourselves to high standards? After all, the work we are doing has eternal consequences.

As Christians, we are carriers of the light. We are invaders of the darkness. We are proclaimers of the truth. We are liberators of the captive. We are the deliverers of the living water. We are announcers of the Good News. Individually, we can do much. But together we are unstoppable.

The *Biblical Recorder* is here to communicate to N.C. Baptists about the biblical assignment that is ours. Our churches need unity of purpose and a strong partnership in sharing the gospel. The *Biblical Recorder* has this as our goal. Our job is to communicate. The more we communicate, the better Baptists can cooperate and finish the job.

The Cooperative Program (CP), our 86-year-old system of supporting missions and theological education, is the envy of many denominations. But Southern Baptists don’t seem to really appreciate its value. It is our best financial strategy for fulfilling the Great Commission. Maybe we don’t get it.

Quincy Jones, a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and North American Mission Board church planter, spoke to the convention messengers in Phoenix, declaring, “I get it!” He said, “My wife and I grew up in an independent church environment, where we did not understand the CP. Now we understand, and we get it!” North Carolina Baptists, do we get it?

Frank Page, CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, has challenged us to increase our giving to missions through the CP. “Our Cooperative Program ministries have decreased every year for many years. We challenge you; we encourage you to raise your Cooperative Program support,” Page said.

He pointed out that if every church increased our giving 1 percent, there would be \$100 million dollars more each year to spread the gospel through our mission agencies. That would translate into more church plants, more missionaries and more people groups reached with the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. Let’s “get it!”

We can’t afford to just say we get it. Let’s prove by our giving that we are committed to the Great Commission and we get it.

## From the Editor



K. Allan Blume

  
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**Lesson for July 3**

**Formations**

**Lesson for July 10**

**In You All Shall Be Blessed**

**Focal Passage: Genesis 12:1-3**

**H**ave you ever been blessed by someone? Blessings happen in different ways.

The church of which I was a member blessed me and my wife with their prayers when I answered the call to vocational ministry.

The blessing continued as they sent a monthly check to support and encourage us while I attended seminary. At my graduation from seminary, my father gave me the gift of a gold pocket watch, something his father had given to him.

This was his way of giving me his blessing.

In these contexts, blessing means approval.

But it means more than that. In Hebrew, the word is *berakah*, and it has to do with the declaration or the public announcement of blessings.

It is this declared blessing that God bestows upon Abram as He calls him at age 75 away from everything he knows into a new land.

However, the blessing of God on Abram doesn't stop with him. This blessing extends beyond the original declaration.

It has reach. This blessing has purpose. God says, "I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing" (Gen. 12:2).

God's purpose, then, in making a great nation out of Abram's lineage was for him to become a blessing to others. Abram's nation was blessed, and from that nation came a Savior; from that Savior, a Church; and from that Church, people committed to continuing Abram's call.

Have we not been blessed in order to be a blessing?

This week we celebrate July 4.

We will wear our red, white and blue, and there will be signs that declare, "God Bless America!"

When you stop to think about it, it's an odd statement.

The phrase seems to overlook the inescapable truth that God has blessed America in so many ways: prosperity greater than any nation in history, natural beauty, abundant resources, and a wonderful citizenry.

Why has God so richly blessed us?

From Abram we learn that we have been blessed so that we can be a blessing. It is a call not to status and favor, or to amass blessings for ourselves.

Instead, it is a call to be a part of a kingdom where God's master plan unfolds ... the blessing of all his children. Let us be a blessing to one another, to our community, and to our world!



**DuPre Sanders**  
pastor, Roxboro Baptist Church

**A Kingdom of Priests**

**Focal Passage: Exodus 19:1-6**

**“W**ould you please pray for me, pastor? I'm not sure God is listening to me.”

“I'm sure if you pray, Reverend, we will see results. You have a direct line to God!”

As a pastor, I sometimes hear such comments. Certainly some of the comments are made in jest.

Still, I wonder how many people really do believe that the prayers of a minister have a better chance of being heard and answered by God.

One of our Baptist distinctives is the priesthood of all believers.

Simply, the doctrine declares that all of us, whether clergy or lay, share in a calling by God to be priests. So, what constitutes being a priest? In

the Old Testament, the priests regularly made sacrifices on behalf of themselves and the people they served. Once a year the High Priest (and only the High Priest) would enter the temple and go behind a curtain to enter the Holy of Holies. No one else was to enter this sacred space. The High Priest then would make an animal sacrifice to atone for his sins and the sins of all the people. He was the mediator between God and

man. In the New Testament Jesus is referred to as the Great High Priest. Jesus' death on the cross as atonement for all sin caused the temple curtain at the entrance of the Holy of Holies to be miraculously torn in two.

Now, because of Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice, all believers have access to God. We do not need a middle man. Through faith in Jesus, all believers' prayers reach the ears of God.

When Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the door of the Castle Church of Wittenburg on October 31, 1517, he was declaring war against the idea that God's favor was mediated through an ecclesiastical priesthood. Luther insisted that everyone who trusts in Jesus Christ is a priest. God declares to Moses in our text for today, "the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:5b-6a). As God's priests in the world today, we are to be for Him a priestly kingdom.

We are uniquely gifted and called by God for this task. When we know ourselves — our spiritual gifts, talents, resources, experiences and personalities — and surrender those to the lordship of Christ, we become the most effective priests we can be. We are equipped to give ourselves as living sacrifices to God so that others may know His love, grace, and mercy.

**Lesson for July 3**

**Bible Studies for Life**

**Lesson for July 10**

**Personal Rights**

**Focal Passages: Philippians 3:17-21; 2 Peter 2:10b-19**

**A**t my new teaching job, when time for the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag arrived, I was shocked that only two of my 27 students joined me in reciting the pledge.

I questioned aloud whether any other country would allow them such freedom; and if so, would they choose to emigrate there?

A student explained, "The pledge is optional here."

According to Peter, focusing on personal rights can become freedom to do whatever one wants to do, yet self-indulgence did not begin with Peter's generation.

Centuries earlier, Moses warned the Israelites, "You are not to do as we are doing here today; everyone (is doing) whatever seems right in his own eyes" (Deut. 12:8).

His words were echoed recently by a T-shirt I saw in the mall that read, "You're right; it is all about me."

Peter warned that self-indulgence, when left unchecked, can become enslavement to sin.

He defined his generation as "those who follow the polluting desires of the flesh and despise authority" (2 Pet. 2:10b).

Joni Eareckson Tada has observed, "We live today in a world in which the thing that was once unthinkable be-

comes tolerable. And then acceptable. And then legal.

"And then applaudable."

Every generation must guard against the power of Satan.

Jesus beseeched God, "I am not praying that You take them out of the world, but that You protect them from the evil one" (John 17:15).

James urged, "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you."

"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you" (Jam. 4:7-8a).

The work Christ left on His workbench for today's Christians to accomplish is daunting but within our reach.

He challenged all who would follow Him to "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20a).

Accomplishing this, we will grow spiritually, strengthened by Paul's challenge:

"Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

To fulfill this command, let us all pledge allegiance.



**Catherine Painter**  
Author, speaker from Raleigh

**Personal Checklist**

**Focal Passage: Galatians 3:1-3, 10-14, 19-26**

**A** young serviceman suffered through his chaplain's sermon on the Ten Commandments. Later, as he reviewed the list, his face brightened. He murmured, "Well, at least I've never carved a graven image!"

Everyone composes lists — for errands, shopping, appointments, and so forth. Unfortunately, many adults approach their relationship with God the same way. Remember when offering envelopes included a checklist for present, studied lesson, brought Bible, made offering, and attended church? Checking those items suggested that we were winning God's approval.

Now that we're more spiritually mature, we make fewer lists. We've discovered that Christianity is a relationship with Christ, not a checklist.

In conversation with a friend recently, I asked where he planned to spend eternity. He said, "I believe I'll go to heaven; I'm working on it." He then recited an impressive list of his good works. I sensed he had fallen into the trap of legalism alongside some Galatian Christians who believed that Christ's sacrifice alone did not provide sufficient basis for salvation; to become

justified, they must add obedience to the laws of Moses.

In Galatians 3:10-14, Paul explained that justification by the law would require keeping the laws perfectly, and no one has ever done that. We are justified by God's grace through our faith, plus nothing. Grace is a favor freely given without expectation of return. I like this acronym for grace: God's Riches At Christ's Expense.

We might ask, "What then was the purpose of the law?" Paul answered that until Jesus came, the law guarded us like a schoolmaster, showing us right from wrong.

Then Christ came and took our sins upon Himself on the cross. Now we live in the freedom of the Spirit-controlled life (v. 23-26).

We approach the cross by faith alone, and depart to live lives that issue into good works.

Isn't it wonderful that in heaven we won't have to listen as people recite how they worked to get there? We will all have arrived the same way — by the unmerited favor of God.

This lesson inspired me to make a list of my favorite scriptures, beginning with Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift — not from works, so that no one can boast." To Paul's words I add one line from an old hymn: "Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to Thy cross I cling."

**How can I Subscribe?**

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# TIM continues to bring water, spiritual relief

By Norman Jameson

North Carolina Baptist Men

**D**rought is gripping 17 of the 39 districts in the Indian state of Bihar. In many of Bihar's 45,000 villages the only water source is a deep water well bored by Transformation India Movement (TIM), a Christian ministry led by Biju Thomas and supported by many North Carolina Baptist churches.

Thomas, a regular speaker at the North Carolina Baptist Men's annual N.C. Missions Conference, said villagers blessed with TIM wells say, "Yesu Baba" (Lord Jesus) bore wells are working."

Wells dug in Jesus' name and that declare Jesus as the Living Water provide an entry point for church planters trained by TIM. Times of drought demonstrate the perilously thin margin between survival and catastrophe to many millions of villagers.

In one village, Rajput's, or higher caste people, opposed drilling a well to which poor people would have access. Now Rajput's wells are dry and they are glad to use water from TIM bore wells, wherever they are dug.

Thomas reported in his most recent newsletter that 19 wells were dug in April. Well drilling was temporarily suspended when the TIM well drilling truck was confiscated by police to transport police and election personnel.

It was only released after "much request and prayer," Thomas said.

To North Carolina Baptists, Thomas said, "The wells you sponsored are life giving as well as a great relief in high temperatures for villagers in Bihar."

The well drilling success has created demand for more wells, which is the cycle Thomas was anticipating. Each well is a key to open the door to a village or the gospel.

## Other TIM ministries changing lives

More than 150 women are training at seven sewing centers offered by TIM.

Gaining the skill to sew offers these women an economic opportunity they would not normally have. It makes them more attractive as a potential spouse, and they have gained the currency to begin their own business.

Several students have received Christ as savior while they were in training, reported Thomas.

Typically, each graduate receives a sewing machine just like the one on which they trained.

TIM currently does not have the funds to provide the machines to all graduates, which cost \$100 each. They are foot-powered machines so they can operate anywhere.

To buy a machine for a sewing school graduate, send your gift designated "sewing machine" to N.C. Baptist Men, 205 Convention Drive, Cary, NC 27511.

## 50 baptized in April

Fifty new believers were baptized in April, most from a Hindu background, Thomas said.

They could not be baptized in a river as is the custom because drought has dried up area rivers.

Many new believers endure threats and excommunication from their families as a result of a public stance for Jesus.

Ajit Kumar Singh, who is from a high caste, was excommunicated from family for his faith in Christ.

He is staying in a coaching center and his situation is similar to others who are told, "If you go to church or any Christian prayer meetings, we will not attend your marriage or social functions."

## Thousands curious about Easter message

TIM church planters found positive response as they organized Easter meetings in villages and shared about Jesus' death and resurrection.

"Many people were convinced of their sins and received Christ," Thomas said. As many as 2,000 heard the message in one field, many of them for the first time.

TIM church planters are witnessing to villages that have never had a Christian outreach. Church planters peddle their bicycles many miles to share the gospel, Thomas said.

They are getting prayer meetings started among several previously unreached groups.

Some 50 children have gained admission to public



NCBM photo

**CELEBRATION** — A village gets a well as part of the Transformation India Movement (TIM) led by Biju Thomas. North Carolina Baptist Men supports this ministry that helps get clean water as well as church planters to remote villages in Bihar, India.

schools because of training at TIM literacy centers in past months.

Students leave the literacy centers prepared for school and having heard the message of Jesus.

Thomas is planning two-day discipleship training events for new believers — 50 at a time — and would like to conduct 60 such training camps. Cost is about \$150 each.

Training and encouragement is very important for new Christian believers in a hostile environment. It can be discouraging when families and communities disown them.

## Hindu priest converts

One recent convert is Kashinath, formerly a Hindu priest. He used to conduct prayers and rituals for other people but his own life and family was a mess, Thomas said. He had no peace and evil spirits tor-

mented his wife. He found no relief in more intensive Hindu worship. One day a TIM church planter visited his village and shared the gospel with him. He received Christ, as did his entire family.

Today, Kashinath is a Christian priest, traveling to villages and sharing his new life in Christ.

"Praise God for the transformation the gospel can bring in a person's life," Thomas said.

To support the work of Transformation India Movement, send your gift designated TIM to N.C. Baptist Men, 205 Convention Drive, Cary, NC 27511.

TIM currently operates out of 5 rented buildings, including an orphanage and training and sewing centers. Its largest need is to build a facility in which it can consolidate its ministries on land it already owns.

The most efficient design on the precious land calls for five floors, at a cost of \$100,000 per floor. Thomas is praying for donors for that project.

## Podcasts could help churches, families connect

Considering how to best train and equip the next generation in the truths of God may seem a daunting task — and it is, but even more so when churches and parents try to do it alone.

The dilemma is not, as Reggie Joiner writes in *Think Orange*, trying to figure out which is worse: "the church trying to assume a parent's responsibility because parents are not...or parents stop assuming responsibility because the church makes them feel like the church should assume it."

Throughout Scripture, in passages like Deuteronomy 6:1-9 and Psalm 78:5-8, the family is declared to be the primary agent in discipling children. Families in those same Bible passages, though, live out their responsibility in the context of a broader faith community that serves to resource, train and encourage parents.

The fact is, both the church and the family have room for improvement when it comes to taking responsibility for a child's spiritual growth. Although two out of three parents in the United States with children under age 18 attend

religious services at least once a month, the majority of parents spend no time during the week talking with their children about spiritual issues.

Yet, the local church sometimes tries to be the primary discipler instead of helping equip parents to do what God intends for them to do. Joiner writes, "We do what feels like the right thing to do — we implement programs to replace the parents who should be the spiritual leaders. We gradually create a mindset that allows the parents to believe that the church should assume responsibility for the spiritual growth of their kids."

On average, church leaders have about 40 hours a year with the youth at their church, while parents have about 3,000 hours with them at home.

This means parents and church leaders must work together in order to make the greatest impact.

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) is launching a new audio resource to help bring churches and families together. The Church & Family Connect podcast will help church

leaders and parents answer questions about how to make fruitful disciples of the next generation.

"Churches cannot give up on the family and the family cannot give up on the church," said Brian Upshaw, BSC church ministry team leader.

"Many families want to teach and train their children. The church can help equip families, but also serve as a great source of encouragement. We pray that this podcast will motivate churches and families to elevate discipleship among our children and youth."

The first two interviews are with Randy Stinson, dean of the School of Church Ministry at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Steve Wright, pastor of family discipleship at Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh.

"We are serious about creating a disciple-making culture in churches and families where lives are changed by the power of God," Upshaw said.

Listen to the interviews: <http://www.ncbaptist.org/index.php?id=2227>.

# New York team sees fruitful harvest in N.C.

By Melissa Lilley  
BSC Communications

When Barry Lawrence pulled into the apartment complex in Rocky Mount he saw something that would be a rare sight back in New York. He saw members of his mission team from New York City knocking on doors and meeting people. Lawrence had to pull the car over to take it all in. "It was that moving," he said.

Going door-to-door doesn't work as easily in New York as it can in North Carolina. Many apartment buildings do not have easy access for guests, and Lawrence said people just aren't as open to people they do not know.

That didn't matter to the 11 men who came to North Carolina to serve for about a week. They were willing to try whatever strategy might work in the context in which they were serving. They're willingness paid off, as that day five people prayed to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

This was the first time for members of Union Missionary Baptist Church in Rocky Mount to reach out to people living in this apartment complex. Pastor Gene Brooks said the mission team's excitement and eagerness for evangelism motivated the church in their outreach.

The church and mission team served alongside one another in the Saturday outreach event as they hosted a lunch and played games with children, led in music and shared the gospel. The night before the mission team led the congregation in a special time of worship.

Brooks said he realized that night how long it had been since he truly worshipped God, and he is grateful for the team's ministry in leading worship. "It was cold water washing over my soul," he said.

Union Missionary members have been to New York twice this year to serve. On their second trip they met Boto Joseph, pastor of House of Worship Church in Queens. Joseph helped Lawrence coordinate the mission trip to North Carolina.

For the past year Lawrence and his wife have managed the David Dean House in Brooklyn. Later this year they will move back home to North Carolina in order to plant a new church.

The team Lawrence brought from New York represented three different churches: House of Worship;



LAUGHING — Boto Joseph, pastor of House of Worship Church in Queens brought a group to North Carolina for a mission trip.

New Testament in Yonkers (which planted House of Worship about six years ago); and Amazing Grace in Queens. The team helped lead worship services and shared their testimonies in different churches. They also led worship and volunteered at Cameron Boy's Camp.

Joseph said the team spent many hours in prayer before the trip, and then they saw God answer those prayers. "I saw God doing everything. In every service, something was happening. It wasn't us. I saw God work," he said. "I saw Him do what He intends to do. I could see everything unfold in front of my eyes."

What unfolded that week were lives changed by the gospel. The team saw nine people come to faith in Jesus Christ.

One Sunday morning during service a young boy, a middle-aged adult and a woman in her 70s all came to faith in Christ. "It was a great picture of what God can do," Joseph said.

All Joseph could say at first about the baptism later that day was, "oh my goodness," at a loss for how to describe what he experienced in his heart. The team participated in a baptism service for a woman who prayed to receive Christ as her Savior when she went to New York on a mission trip. She met Joseph and other team members while in New York working with ministers' wives. During the baptism service, her son prayed to receive Christ.

It took a visit to New York for a North Carolina



woman to open her heart to the gospel — and it took a trip to North Carolina for a man from New York to open his.

A 22-year-old team member prayed to receive Christ during the Sunday evening service.

"When (Metro New York Baptist Association) and North Carolina Baptists began this partnership, we both wanted to see what took place on this mission trip — the mutual sharing of gifts and ministries that would be mutually beneficial," said George Russ, executive director of the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association (MNYBA).

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina began a partnership with MNYBA last year through the Office of Great Commission Partnerships (GCP).

"Partnerships are what happens when relationships, a mutual concern and a shared commitment come together. This is what is happening through the partnership between North Carolina Baptists and MNYBA," Russ said.

As part of the mission trip the team also went to Southside Baptist Church in Greensboro. Pastor Patrick Fuller went to New York City earlier this year on a vision trip with GCP, and a team from Southside will go this summer to serve. Southside has developed a five-year commitment to adopt House of Worship, New Testament Church and Amazing Grace Church. They are also committed to working with them to help plant between 5-10 new churches.

After the mission team led a Thursday night worship service at Southside, Fuller said the altar was full. "We had people saved and people made rededications. God really moved in that service," he said.

Fuller said hearing testimonies from team members about how God saved them and how much they want others to know Him as Savior was powerful.

"Sometimes we can become complacent and take for granted the church. They (the team) are very much filled with the Holy Spirit and engaged in a relationship with Jesus."

To learn how your church can get involved in New York City, visit [www.ncbaptist.org/gcp](http://www.ncbaptist.org/gcp) or contact Michael Sowers at (800) 395-5012, ext. 5654, or [msowers@ncbaptist.org](mailto:msowers@ncbaptist.org).

## Hopewell Baptist in Monroe gives hours, dollars to missions

By Melissa Lilley  
BSC Communications

Lee Pigg is often asked how it happened, or what he did to make it happen, and he never really knows exactly how to answer.

In the past six years Hopewell Baptist Church in Monroe, where Pigg is pastor, has gone from 165 in Sunday morning worship attendance to nearly 1,000. He went from being the only staff member to now leading a staff of 11. "I remember telling my wife, 'I think we'll have 400 people at Hopewell one day.' Never did I think we'd be where we are today," Pigg said.

The population in Monroe hasn't really increased in recent years. Situated about 20 minutes from Charlotte and Concord, Pigg said Hopewell is in the middle of nowhere, between cotton fields and cornfields. When Pigg came to Hopewell in 2002 his goal was two-fold: preach God's Word and love the people.

"I believe that is what started to become contagious," he said. "They started to take that as their mission."

As people get excited about the ministry of their local church they start inviting others and bringing others with them, and that has made all the difference.

"They have seen others get excited, and that's exciting. The leadership is



PROMOTION — Hopewell Baptist Church used Ecclesiastes 4:12 to tie in different strands — worship, discipleship and ministry — to make a stronger cord for part of Find It Here emphasis.

excited and that has just spilled over. We see people wanting to be part of something bigger than themselves," Pigg said.

This mentality of wanting to do something "big" has perhaps never been so apparent as in recent months, when a three-month focus on worship, discipleship and ministry resulted in 65 baptisms, 6,000 hours of ministry service and a \$40,000 missions offering. About one third of the 65 baptisms represent new believers in Jesus Christ.

Earlier this year, when trying to decide how the church would participate in the Find it Here Easter evangelism emphasis, Pigg decided to do more

than just the Easter focus. In March he began leading the congregation through a focus on worship. In April the focus was discipleship and in May the focus was missions.

Each of the three focuses come from Hopewell's mission statement, based on Ecclesiastes 4:12. When it came time for the May missions focus Pigg challenged every family in the church and every discipleship group to be involved in a missions outreach that month. The goal was 5,000 hours of outreach from the church in one month.

They got more than 6,000. One group hosted a neighborhood carnival. The group was able to share the gospel

that day and five people prayed to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

On the last Sunday in May, Hopewell received a special offering just for missions.

The \$40,000 was distributed among international and local ministries, including N.C. Baptist Men disaster relief. Also benefiting was N.C. Baptist Hospital, Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute and Caraway Conference Center and Camp.

Pigg said the focus this year has helped the congregation be more intentional in thinking about how to reach out to the community. One church member asked to pray for the waitress at a local restaurant, then invited her to church. Before long, she had prayed to receive Jesus Christ and was baptized.

Hopewell is Pigg's first pastorate. He worked 10 years in the business world and was successful, but God was calling him to something different.

A popular quote goes something like this: "Attempt something so big for God that if He doesn't show up, you'll look like a fool." It's one that Pigg takes seriously.

"We need to do something bigger than us so that there's no way we can take credit for it. Don't be afraid to challenge your people," he said. "I honestly believe they are waiting on us to challenge them. I believe that's the kind of challenge God honors."