



# BAPTIST INFORMER

Volume 132, No. 9

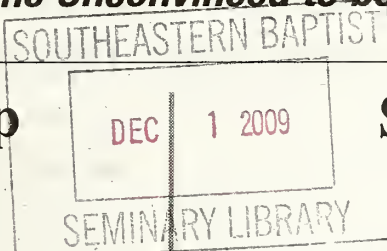
Publication of the General Baptist State Convention of N.C., Inc.

November 2009

## GBSC THEME

**"To Convince the Unconvinced to be Convinced...through Education, Missions and Fellowship,"**

Matthew 28:19-20



## Grants Help Lott Carey Make a Difference Around the World

By Rev. David Emmanuel Goatley, Ph.D.

The Ford Foundation has approved a grant of \$75,000 to Lott Carey to support our family, faith, and community economic development and mental health initiative targeting displaced communities affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This support will enable us to enlarge and refine our workforce recruitment and training model so that we can broaden the numbers of people who can move from being discouraged workers to gainfully employed citizens. We're enrolling prospective workers in programs that will equip people for careers in construction technology and as certified nursing assistants. We'll also provide counseling and coaching that will help students to complete their training and employment searches.

Our partnership in the Gulf Coast began more than four years ago, just days after Hurricane Katrina made landfall, and we have been faithful co-laborers with sisters and brothers in a hurricane response strategy of "helping people rise again." Our network has provided pastoral care ministries, social service support, mental health counseling, and child development programs. We've helped people with clothes, rent, food, water, and other necessities for living.

We conducted a marriage enrichment retreat for pastors and their spouses who needed time for renewal in the midst of helping other families constantly. We've managed The

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## Shaw Professor's Accomplishments Are No Small Potatoes

From Jamaica Gleaner News

It has taken 30 years of hard work for Professor Helen Asemota to get to this stage. However, that work is yet over. Yams and potatoes are foods many people don't think much of in Jamaica. They are always available and their use outside of being a replacement for a staple rice diet has not been thought of much.

Professor Asemota has thought of it.

Hailing from Nigeria, she's the professor of biotechnology and head of the Nanobiology Division at Shaw University, and the professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at the University of the West Indies. She's made the journey across the middle passage and is daily achieving feats that benefit Jamaica in untold ways. Those benefits have earned Professor Asemota the 2009 Gleaner Honour Award in the category science and technology.

Over those 30 years, and more, Professor Asemota has not only worked with a number of universities, but has been integral on a global level, of developing and executing new and improved research in her field. While her work in biochemistry, molecular biology, and biotechnology is renowned, recently she added the fairly new and certainly very exciting area of

nanotechnology to her extensive résumé. So respected is the woman that though she is only with Shaw University part-time, she is also the chairman of the Shaw Institutional Research Board.

Just as interesting as Professor Asemota's professional achievements, are her beliefs and the things that drive her. A quote from her on UWI's website

nothing is considered done until it is done." That mindset comes, not just from her faith, but from personal experiences.

Her daughter was very ill at age 16, going into a coma. According to Professor Asemota, all her organs had shut down. Having her daughter survive that ordeal has meant much to her and has been one of the main drivers in her work today. She doesn't intend to quit.

"I have a commitment to serve and worship God through selfless research and teaching," she said.

Yams doesn't sound like an interesting topic, but her research on the improvement of yam, using biotechnology, has been admittedly beneficial to Jamaica and other countries around the world in no uncertain manner.

The recent economic downturn and the more long-standing issue of food security come to mind immediately. Improving the quality of yam and the efficiency of the processes that bring the tuber to

bear are more important than most realize.

Not only has she broken ground in the area, but Professor Asemota has brought many charges along with her. The work she started will continue, as it includes

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states: "The best thing that has ever happened to me is becoming a mother and entering into a personal relationship with the Almighty Father through Jesus Christ."

Telling of her relationship with her students, the professor said, "My students have come to know that with me

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Fountain Project, which, through the generosity of The Fountain Baptist Church in Summit, New Jersey, helped pastors think afresh about ministry after the ground beneath them had literally and figuratively shifted. The Fountain Project has awarded more than \$300,000 in grants to churches for innovative or essential ministry projects. We've also been nurtured and partnered in community development projects that have produced about 300 housing units, secured new acreage for additional housing, and developed a Christian camping facility that will also serve as a coordination center for future hurricanes in the region.

Our first grant award was in 2002 from the Lilly Endowment. This newest grant from the Ford Foundation that strengthens our Disaster Response Strategy adds to a growing community of partnerships in recent years:

-The Lilly Endowment has enabled us to help 150 pastors to broaden visions, build networks, and deepen impact through our Pastoral Excellence Program.

-USAID funded demonstration projects to advance our work in prevention, care, and support for people infected and affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Ethiopia, India, and Kenya.

-The Fountain Baptist Church funded The Fountain Project that we manage to nurture families, communities, and churches impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

-The Center for Disease Control supported our partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture Graduate School to train church leaders more effectively to "Break the Silence" concerning the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

-The Fund for Theological Education supported our Calling Congregations Project, where we have worked with five congregations toward developing habits and practices that enable us to notice, name, and nurture

adolescents who may be open to consider ministry as a vocational option.

In addition to these awards to Lott Carey, three churches are providing large scale grant support for specific project expansion in our global network:

-Mount Carmel Baptist Church in Washington, DC is expanding the impact of the African Aids Initiative International in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia by funding a skills training project for women to develop job skills in tailoring, culinary arts, and cosmetology to give them opportunities for safe and secure employment to escape commercial sex work.

-Maple Springs Baptist Church in Capitol Heights, Maryland is expanding the impact of Lott Carey Baptist Ministries in Kenya and Sudan through the construction of a clinic and providing its medicines as well as funding agricultural support for widows to grow food.

-Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church in Philadelphia is expanding the impact of the Home of Hope Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa by funding a church related to the residential rehabilitation ministries for young people caught in the cross currents of gang life, drug life, and prostitution. And they're working toward purchasing a farm to have a better facility to carry out the rehabilitation work.

God is trusting the Lott Carey network with additional opportunities for service because we're being faithful. Please continue to pray for grace, guidance, and resources that we need to be faithful to our global commitments in evangelism, education, and health with our partners around the world. November through February are usually lean months for us. We see and feel winter approaching fast! Will you remember us through these months by sharing prayers and gifts for the work of missions?

teaching at both the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. Furthermore, the good-natured professor has also developed state-of-the-art technology courses and programs that are still followed in places she has used them.

Outside of university life she has also provided consultancy services to various international organizations like the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN). In

1994, she was the technical expert in her field with the EU, and in 2001 she served as a consultant for biotechnology to Syria for the UN.

Even with all this, Professor Asemota has still found time to write and is the author of more than 250 publications. More than 80 of those can be found in internationally referenced journals.

## Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Association Celebrates 141 Years

From The Urban News

Members of North Carolina churches in Buncombe, Henderson, McDowell, Polk, and Transylvania counties gathered on September 26 at Tried Stone Missionary Baptist Church in Asheville to celebrate the 141st anniversary of the Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Association.

The Association was formed in 1868 by a group of seven Christian leaders who met at Nazareth First Missionary Baptist Church in Asheville. The name chosen was that of a muddy stream, called Mud Creek to this day, which runs through the Hendersonville and Flat Rock areas. Four brothers, all min-

Roots As We Move Forward to Accomplish Our Goals."

Mayor Bellamy recalled the historic role of the church in society, especially during the past half-century. "It was the church that was instrumental in galvanizing the community in its participation in the cause for human and civil rights," she said. "The church was the place that our children could come to for mentoring, help with homework, safe environments. The church has to go back and reclaim its position in the lives of its people. The mission of the church is to help the homeless, the downtrodden, feed

the hungry, visit the sick and those in prison. When this is done we can truly hear the words of Matthew 25:21: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'

Also during the celebration, Academic Scholarship awards were presented to Victoria M. Blount, a freshman at UNC Greensboro, and Jasmon L. Carpenter, a senior at Catawba College in Salisbury. The 2009 Moderator Awards were



isters, were the principal organizers: Frank Hemphill, then the pastor of Nazareth First Missionary Baptist Church, was joined by his brothers Charlie, Reuben, and Calvin Hemphill and leaders of three other churches to found the Mud Creek Association. Sixty-six years later, in 1934, the association purchased fourteen acres of land where all member churches still come together for fellowship, ministering, meetings, and training.

The 2009 anniversary celebration began with a "Call to Worship" and invocation by Rev. James E. Lyle. The procession of moderators and their guests entered to a musical prelude by Minister Damion McDay. The keynote speaker for the evening was Mayor Terry Bellamy of Asheville, who spoke on the association's theme, "Remembering Our

presented to Rev. Richard Pea (Blue Ridge Missionary Baptist, Edneyville), Moderator-At-Large; Deacon Ben P. Hall (Hill St. Baptist Church, Asheville), First Vice Moderator and the first lay moderator elected to this position; and Rev. Marshall Erwin (Bethel Missionary Baptist, Brevard), Second Vice-Moderator. Also re-elected was Rev. Donald S. McDaniel (Mt. Carmel Baptist, Arden).

This year, the first annual "Layman of the Year Award" was presented to Mrs. Zelma Massey in honor of her late husband, Deacon Arthur Massey of Blue Ridge Missionary Baptist Church in Edneyville, for his dedicated work with the Mud Creek Missionary Baptist Association.

### The Baptist Informer

Publication of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, Inc., Voice of 500,000 Baptists (USPS 042-680)

Rev. Haywood T. Gray, Executive Secretary-Treasurer  
Jarvis Holliday, Interim Managing Editor  
Rev. Anthonette Wright, Advertising Editor

Published the first of each month at Raleigh, N.C.

Postmaster send addresses & all communications

for publications & inquiry to

Baptist Informer, Baptist Headquarters, 603 S. Wilmington St., Raleigh, N.C. 27601

919-821-7466 • 800-639-4272 • Fax: 919-831-1526

THEME: "By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness..."

(II Corinthians 6:7)

# Families Studied and Praised at Conference

By Rev. Dr. Linda W. Bryan  
Executive Secretary-Treasurer,  
Woman's Baptist Home and  
Foreign Missionary Convention of  
North Carolina

In keeping with the convention motto, "Christ in Every Home," the 30th Annual Family Mission Conference was held on September 26 at First Baptist Church-West in Charlotte, where the Rev. Dr. Ricky Woods served as host pastor. Our gratitude to Pastor Woods and the First Baptist Church-West family for extending hospitality and provisions to us.



Dr. Linda Bryan

Many families find themselves

challenged by the current economic and social conditions that rob them of the capacity to maintain a strong family unit. To assist families in keeping Christ first, "The Family Study Guide," produced by the Christian Family Life Enrichment Ministry, was provided at the annual session for study during the month of August.

We're proud of each family that took the time to engage in family discussions around the study guide. Twenty-one families are recognized as having completed the "Family Life Study Guide" during the month of August and they're to be commended for their investment in strengthening the family unit.

Therefore, the Woman's Convention takes great pride in announcing the following families as the recipients of The Family Altar Certificate for recognition of their accomplishment:

- Gloria Bowden
- The Brame Family
- Dr. Priscilla A. Brodie
- Sabrina Charleston-Miles
- Dr. Bronnie Harris Daniels
- Mary Dowd

- Nicole Drake
- Clinette C. Eley
- The W. C. Eley Family
- Martha Hendrick
- Ashkelon and Mia Kirkpatrick
- Mia D. Kirkpatrick

- Rev. and Mrs. C. J. LeMay and Family
- Rev. and Mrs. Carl D. McIntyre
- Vivian Samuel
- LeMart Simpson

Continued on Page 4

## NIH Grants Shaw \$4.1 Million for Health Research

From Press Reports

Shaw University has received a \$4.1 million grant that will significantly increase the school's research capacity and its ability to investigate health issues affecting minorities. It's the largest research grant the historically black college in Raleigh has ever received.

The funding from the National Institutes of Health's National Center on Minority Health and

Health Disparities will support Shaw's Research Infrastructure in Minority Institutions project. The project is working to establish a research infrastructure with the goal of training students and developing clinical, biomedical, and behavioral research scientists with the knowledge and skills to eliminate health disparities in the U.S.

"It will provide a wealth of research infrastructure enhancement activities for Shaw University," said Dr. Daniel L. Howard, the project's director. "This award will contribute to a greater research-intensive atmosphere at Shaw, provide more research opportunities for faculty and students, improve research productivity, and provide expanded research training opportunities for promising students at Shaw."

# The "Neighborhood Church Coalition" is helping Churches obtain loans and open Credit Unions!

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Mr. William B. Thompson  
Financial Strategist

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Credit Union President - [FloranceMcKoy@bellsouth.net](mailto:FloranceMcKoy@bellsouth.net)  
Financial Strategist - [WThompson1004@Yahoo.com](mailto:WThompson1004@Yahoo.com)

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Phillip and Sarah Solomon  
Brenda Williams  
Juanita Williams  
Mario and Jyhonn Williams  
Myron and Tonya Williams

We're grateful for our experienced and qualified workshop leaders who rendered valuable service to the Family Mission Conference workshops. The leaders for the senior session were Mr. Melvin and Mrs. Queen Thompson of Charlotte. They've been married for the past 40 years and have learned to navigate the unpredictable and blessed waters of marriage. The Thompsons reminded us

of the impact of our history on this post-modern age of the black family.

The Young Adult session leaders were Reverends Chad and Toni Woods. Rev. Chad Woods is the pastor of Great Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Conover. His wife, Rev. Toni Woods, is assistant pastor and co-editor of the Young Adult Newsletter. The young adults are still talking about the dynamic delivery of the word from this anointed couple.

The youth session leaders were Evelyn Marlow, Lynne Rozier, Geneva Walker, Teresa Gannaway,

Genette Williams, Carolyn Jordan, and Clara Epps. Each of these leaders currently serves in key roles in their own local church as well on the leadership team for the Youth Department. They've served as supervisors and associate supervisors and have served on the Youth Advisory Council for the Woman's Convention. Minister Genette Williams is also editor for the youth section of The Missionary Helper.

The preacher of the hour was the Rev. Dr. Daniel Lilly, pastor of Mitchell Baptist Church in Louisburg. Pastor Lilly was accompanied by his family, ushers, choir, and a large aggregation of disci-

ples. His challenging word was timely and appropriate for the family. The conference concluded with Pastor Lilly's call for family alter prayer.

The Christian Family Enrichment Ministry, chaired by Mrs. Darlene Esters with the assistance of eleven ministry members, is to be commended for their faithful service to the convention and to this state.

We're grateful for every leader and participant in the 30th Annual Family Mission Conference and invite you to pray with us for the strength of the family—God's gift to us.

## Third Vice President



Rev. Ricky Banks

### Steps into Worship

By Rev. Dr. Ricky L. Banks  
Third Vice President GBSC

Worship is something we do. Studying the theology of worship and debating the forms of worship are all good, but by themselves they are inadequate. In the

final analysis we learn to worship by worshipping. Let me give a few simple steps that I hope will help in the experience of worship.

First, learn to practice the presence of God daily. Punctuate every moment with inward whisperings of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. Have personal times of inner worship, confession, Bible study,

and attentiveness to Christ, your present Teacher.

Second, have many different experiences of worship. Worship God when you are alone. Have home groups not just for Bible study, but for the very experience of worship itself. This will empower and

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The book cover features a portrait of Reverend Herbert G. Bell, Jr. on the right side. The title 'Speaking in Tongues' is written in a large, stylized font, with 'A Biblical Brief' underneath. The author's name, 'Reverend Herbert G. Bell, Jr.', is at the bottom. The cover has a decorative border with small star-like patterns. On the left side of the cover, there is a vertical column of text, likely a synopsis or a quote, which is partially obscured by the image's resolution. At the bottom left of the cover, there is a barcode with the ISBN number 978-1-4401-4664-4 and the publisher's logo, iUniverse.

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Order by name or title.

impact the larger Sunday gatherings.

Third, find ways to really prepare for the gathered experience of worship. Prepare on Saturday night by going to bed early, by having an inward experience of examination and confession, by going over the hymns and scripture passages that will be used on Sunday, by gathering early before the actual worship service and filling the room with the presence of God, by letting go

of inner distractions so that you can really participate.

Fourth, cultivate holy dependency. Holy dependency means that you are utterly and completely dependent upon God for anything significant to happen.

Fifth, learn to offer a sacrifice of worship. Many times you will not "feel" like worshipping. But you need to go anyway. You need to offer a sacrifice of worship. You need to be with the people of God

and say, "These are my people. As stiff-necked and hard-hearted and sinful as we may be, together we come to God." Many times I do not feel like worshipping and I have to kneel down and say, Lord, I don't feel like worshipping, but I desire to give You this time. It belongs to You.

So go, go praying, go expecting, and go looking for God to do a new and living work among you.

Reference: Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth, by Richard J. Foster

Rev. Banks can be reached at 252-335-5003 or pastorrickybanks@yahoo.com.

## Human Trafficking Devastates Lives

By Rev. David Emmanuel Goatley, Ph.D.

Dr. Yvonne Best recently returned from visiting Kenya and South Africa, where she met a family whose daughter may be a victim of human trafficking. The family last saw their then-18-year-old daughter three years ago when she left to attend school in England. A colleague persuaded the family that this would be an opportunity for a future with more possibilities. The parents and their daughter maintained contact during the first few months. They had no reason to worry about her safety or educational progress.

Within a few months, however, the phone calls decreased. Then there was no contact. When the parents tried to contact her at the address they were given, they were initially told that she would be given the message. Over time, however, their phone calls were no longer answered. Worried that something was wrong, the parents notified local authorities who investigated the address in London where she was reportedly living. The family was informed that their daughter's name had been changed, and she was now identified as a Congolese. The youngest daughter, who was nine years old at the time her sister left, has been extremely traumatized by the disap-

pearance of her sister. The family is hurt, afraid, and frustrated.

Dr. Best was able to provide the family with information about human trafficking, share how victims struggle to survive, and identify international agencies that help families to search and recover their loved ones. She connected the family to an agency with offices in South Africa and in England that will be able to assist the family with their search. As she left the family, the mother told Dr. Best that their hope was in God.

Dr. Best's leadership in Lott Carey's Anti-Human Trafficking Initiative equipped her to be a resource to help the family and their pastor through this horrifying journey. Your investment in the ministry of Lott Carey enables us to serve in ways and places unimaginable. We ask you to pray for this South African family that is searching for their daughter. Please pray for victims of human trafficking. Please pray for perpetrators of human trafficking. Please continue to invest in this work so that we can help to rescue and rehabilitate those who are trafficked.

Thank you for your partnership in this ministry.

*Published the first of each month at Raleigh, N.C. Periodicals class postage paid at Raleigh, NC 27601, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster send address and all communications for publication and inquiry to*

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## PASTORAL VACANCY New Release

First Missionary Baptist Church, Smithfield, North Carolina

First Missionary Baptist Church of Smithfield, North Carolina, an African-American church with approximately 200 members, is seeking a pastor who meets the following criteria:

- Is an ordained Baptist minister
- Holds a degree from an accredited seminary or theology school
- Has 5 or more years experience as a pastor

Interested persons should send a resume to:  
**First Missionary Baptist Church**  
Attention: Pastoral Search Committee  
P.O. Box 1422, Smithfield, NC 27577

Resumes may also be sent via email to: Lmcswane@aol.com

The deadline for all submissions is November 30, 2009

# MMBB Pays Out \$2 Billion in Retirement Benefits

From Press Release

The Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board (MMBB) marked a milestone in September as it paid out its two billionth dollar in retirement benefits since 1921. As of the end of September, MMBB has paid out \$2,009,377,240.

MMBB executive director Sumner M. Grant commented that, "Reaching the \$2 billion threshold in retirement benefits paid to our members is a real accomplishment. It speaks to our 100 years of commitment to people dedicating their lives to Christ. It speaks to the life-long relationships we have built with our members. And, it speaks to our financially sophisticated ministry."

MMBB was formed in 1911 to serve "the better maintenance of the ministry." Initially MMBB provided grants to ministers and their families living in poverty or otherwise in need. Deciding that it would be better to provide ministers and their families a secure income based on contributions made during their years of service, MMBB established the Retirement Plan in 1921.

With the establishment of the Retirement Plan, MMBB began paying retirement benefits. In 1922, total benefits paid were \$401.98. In 2008, total benefits paid were \$156,591,000. This includes benefits paid to participants in the Retirement Plan, The Annuity Supplement, and the Tax Deferred Annuity as well as distributions and roll outs.

The Retirement Plan began as a defined benefit plan. Participants received a fixed income based on their contributions. To enable members to keep pace with inflation, MMBB restructured the Retirement

Plan as a variable annuity. MMBB members benefitted mightily from this change. Despite last year's stock market performance, the annuity payout value increased nearly 21 percent over the last ten years.

"As MMBB enters its second century, my goal is to extend the benefits of MMBB membership to ordained and lay employees in all

churches and organizations which share our Baptist beliefs and practices," Grant said. "MMBB will not rest on our history. We are called to promote the better maintenance of the ministry so that future generations of church leaders will have the protections and retirement options that our members enjoy today."

## In Memoriam

The GBSC recognizes the following Baptist family members who recently passed away and funerals were held in October.

**Mrs. Margaret Juanita Parker Page**-Mother of Dr. Margaret Anita Holmes, former Director of the GBSC Health and Human Services Program and former Director of the Center for Health and Healing, a GBSC affiliate. Condolences may be sent to Dr. Holmes at 4102 Livingstone Place, Durham, NC 27707.

**Carolyn Alford**-Sister of Ms. Lula M Gainey, President of GBSC Congress of Christian Education. Condolences may be sent to Ms. Gainey at 513 Rosewood Drive, Stedman, NC 28391.

**Mary Ella Gary**-Mother of Attorney Willie E. Gary, Shaw University Board of Trustees Chairman. Condolences may be sent to Mr. Gary at 221 E. Osceola Street, Stuart, FL 34994.

# Segregation a Concern at Wake County Schools

From MyNC.com

Several hundred people turned out to attend a recent open meeting at Raleigh's Martin Street Baptist Church. They fear the incoming Wake County School Board will create policies that will turn back the clock.

"It is a nightmare for John Tedesco and the rest of his anti-diversity slate to try and hijack the school board to move away from this noble goal," said Rev. William Barber the president of the N.C. NAACP.

The NAACP believes neighborhood schools will mean a return to segregation. But earlier this week, Tedesco said it's not about that. "We're aware of what the opposition groups say, explained Tedesco. "Some see this as a last

attempt to hold on to a failed policy."

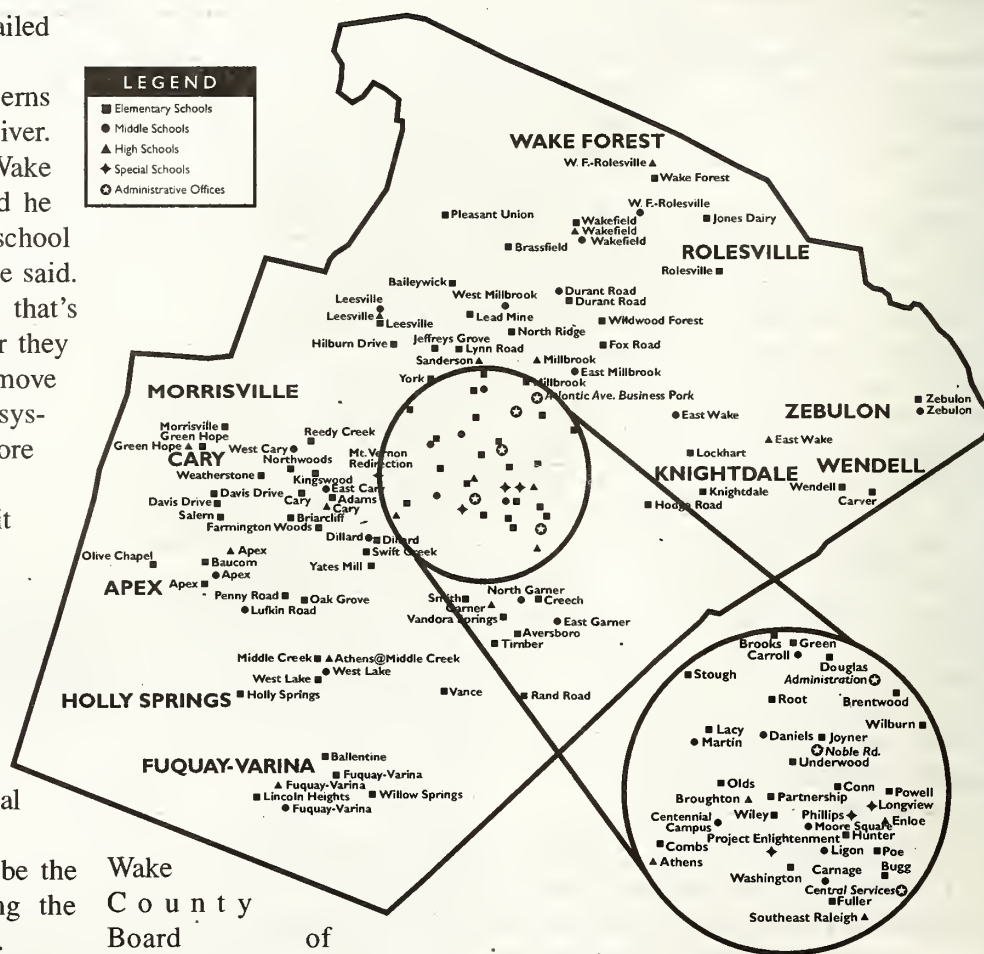
But a policy shift concerns people like Rod Hughes Oliver. He has two children in Wake County magnet schools and he worries about a changed school board. "I'm very fearful," he said. "I think the school board that's now there has made it clear they want change; they want to move toward a community school system, which to us means more segregation."

But the NAACP says it won't allow Wake schools to become segregated again.

"We are prepared to litigate," said Rev. Barber. "The NAACP is ready for a fresh battle to demand a constitutional education."

But the NAACP won't be the only organization watching the Wake County School Board.

"As a county commissioner I want to be flexible and allow the school board to do its job," said Lindy Brown, the vice chair of the



Wake County Board of Commissioners. "I'm not here to micromanage another elective body, however I want them to understand the citizens of Wake

County will hold them accountable for any changes that may dismantle the current school policy," Brown said.

## Senior Pastor Vacancy

First Calvary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, NC

First Calvary Baptist Church (FCBC) of Winston-Salem, NC established in 1918 with a growing membership of approximately 300 is seeking a Senior Pastor.

**Job Description:** The Senior Pastor is the spiritual leader and Chief Executive Officer of FCBC. The missionary duties include visitation to members who are shut in, hospitalized and in correctional facilities.

**Qualifications:** The Senior Pastor must be a licensed, ordained Baptist Minister for 5 years or more with leadership experience.

Upon selection the Senior Pastor is expected to reside in the Triad.

All interested please respond by submitting a resume along with 2 sermon DVD's to: First Calvary Baptist Church 401 N. Woodland Ave. Winston-Salem, NC 27101 Attn: Floyd Plymouth Pulpit Search Committee

The deadline for all submissions is November 30th 2009

## First Baptist Church

302 Moore Street  
Fayetteville, NC 28301

**Position: Assistant Minister for Preaching and Young Adult Outreach**  
**Permanent part-time position**

First Baptist Church is seeking part-time 8 a.m. worship leader/preacher and Young Adult Minister. This person works under the direct supervision of the Senior Pastor and must be able to work at least 20 hours per week (day or evenings and Sundays).

A Master of Divinity degree is preferred.

Application deadline: December 21, 2009.

Contact Mrs. Angela Taylor at 910-483-6505 for application/information or email her at [ataylor@1st-baptist.com](mailto:ataylor@1st-baptist.com)

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# GBSC Announces Million Dollar Mark

From Staff Reports

The General Baptist State Convention of N.C., Inc. has announced that more than \$1 million has been given to support Shaw University during the tenure of Dr. Haywood T. Gray, GBSC Executive Secretary-Treasurer.

As of August 31, 2009, Executive Secretary-Treasurer Gray has been steward over \$777,713.18 sent from the churches for Shaw University and \$232,163.71 for Shaw Divinity School. This accounts for a grand total of \$1,009,876.89 for Shaw University since Gray assumed the position in January 2005. This is a significant accomplishment considering the fact that the GBSC was heavily indebted with fewer than one fourth of its member churches contributing to missions when Gray arrived less than five years ago.

"I was told early on by persons who I greatly respected that I would have to quickly make a choice," Gray says. "That choice would be to either pay off the debt

or give to missions. Some very sincere supporters thought that it had to be one or the other."

But the new Executive Secretary-Treasurer thought it was essential that the Convention do both: support missions and handle its debt. "We had a moral obligation to be true to missions—that's why the

where we had another option."

So starting in his first month, Gray established a policy of sending all money raised for the objectives "off the top." Even when the Convention could not pay its staff, or when vendors were threatening lawsuits for past due bills, the Convention made sure that all money col-

lected for the objectives was delivered to the objectives in a timely manner. During this same time period, the Convention reached into its operational funds to help

in special ways including helping to fund the Shaw Gospel Choir's trip to Europe, making meaningful contributions to the Thomas J. Boyd Chapel, and funding various other special needs on the Shaw campus. "It wasn't just the money that the churches sent for Shaw that went to Shaw. It was also money that the Convention needed to operate that went to help Shaw." When asked how he felt about the milestone, Gray quoted one of his predecessors in office, Dr. C.C. Craig Jr.: "I'm gratified, but I'm not satisfied." He added, "I just think we could do more because what we do in missions is what defines who we are as a Convention. What else really matters?"

Asked what he would do now that this mark has been met, Gray paused for a moment and said, "Get to working on the next million, I guess."



Convention was established. By the same token, we were morally bound as Christians to honor our promises to those who we owed money. I could not see

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## BAPTIST INFORMER

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### Holiday Season By the Numbers



From Press Release

The holiday season is a time for gathering and celebrating with friends and family, gift-giving, reflection, and thanks. To commemorate this time of year, the U.S. Census Bureau presents the following holiday-related facts and figures from its data collection.

#### 19 billion

Number of cards, letters, and packages the U.S. Postal Service expected to deliver between Thanksgiving and Christmas last year. The busiest delivery day was expected to be Dec. 17.

#### \$28.2 billion

Retail sales by the nation's department stores in December 2008.

#### 14 percent

The proportion of total 2008 sales for department stores in December. For jewelry stores, the percentage was 18 percent.

#### \$24 billion

Value of retail sales by electronic shopping and mail-order houses in December 2008, the highest total for any month last year.

#### \$410 million

Sales by U.S. Christmas tree farmers in 2007.

#### \$470.3 million

The value of U.S. imports of Christmas tree ornaments from China between January and August 2009. China was the leading country of origin for such items. Similarly, China was the leading foreign source of artificial Christmas trees shipped to the United States (\$28.6 million worth) during the same period.

#### \$3.2 billion

Total value of shipments for dolls, toys, and games by manufacturers in 2007.

#### \$4.3 billion

The value of U.S. toy imports including stuffed toys (excluding dolls), puzzles and electric trains from China between January and August 2009. China was the leading country of origin for stuffed toys coming into this country, as well as for a number of other popular holiday gifts.

#### Holiday names

Place names associated with the holiday season include North Pole, Alaska (population 2,212 in 2008); Santa Claus, Indiana (2,314); Santa Claus, Georgia (250); Noël, Missouri (1,608); and—if you know about reindeer—the village of Rudolph, Wisconsin (412) and Dasher, Georgia (849). There's Snowflake, Arizona (5,673) and a dozen places named Holly, including Mount Holly, North Carolina.

#### 308 million

The nation's projected population as we ring in the New Year.

10/30/2010  
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