

UISBC eNews

JANUARY FEBRUARY 2019

Focusing on the Landscape... Across Utah and Idaho

Thank you, thank you, thank you for your church's and members' generosity to the Cooperative Program in 2018!

Yes, we start off the new year praising God for His provision through you. We ended 2018 above our Cooperative Program budget for the third year in a row! We ended the year \$36,276.43 above budget with total gifts of \$725,505.43 through the Cooperative Program.

This means several wonderful things: several years ago, our State Convention Executive Board Budget and Finance Committee put forth the challenge if we end the year in Cooperative Program giving above budget, we pass on half of it to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee and the other half for our Pastors-Wives Retreat "ReCharge." It is these overages that allow us to provide ReCharge. So, thank you! In a sense this means we will give an additional month to the Southern Baptist Executive Committee to pass on. That's right we will give an extra month of Cooperative Program gifts!

The Cooperative Program is critical to Southern Baptist missions and seminary education. Along with the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, the Cooperative Program allows all of our churches to participate in Great Commission missions around the world as well as in our state convention by supporting our missionaries around the world as well as all of our missionary church planters.

This highlights the important work your Executive Board does on your behalf each year and our State Missionaries and staff. We work hard to be faithful stewards of God's resources. Our mission budget has been trimmed and we continually evaluate our expenses thanks to Janice Trotter, our part-time Business Director, who also serves Nevada and Wyoming state conventions, and our Budget and Finance Committee. Also, thanks to your state staff and missionaries for their wise stewardship. You are all the best! But most importantly, thank you Southern Baptist churches (members) for your vision to

Praise cont. on page 2

UISBC Cooperative Program Giving Report

December 2018

Cooperative Program giving	\$68,138.89
Cooperative Program budget	\$57,435.75
Over/Under CP budget	\$10,703.14
State Missions Offering given	\$8,553.95

January - December 2018

Cooperative Program giving	\$725,505.43
Cooperative Program budget	\$689,229
Over/Under CP budget	\$36,276.43 (+5.3%)
State Missions Offering given	\$82,134.97
	(-\$845.61 than 2017 gifts)
State Missions Offering 2018 Goal	\$95,000

U & I Praying Together

Pastorless Churches

Priest River Southern

Baptist Church- Athol
Baptist Church filling
pulpit

Sevier Valley Baptist

Church, Richfield,
David Payne, Interim

Bethel Missionary Baptist

Church, Pocatello,
William Beard,
Interim

Pleasant View Baptist

Church, White Bird,
Dr. Russ Daines,
Interim

First Baptist Church, Mt.

Pleasant

First Baptist Church,

Grantsville

Gospel Community

Church, Price

Mountain Shadow Baptist

Church, Grangeville,

Matthew Claridge,

Mount Idaho Baptist

Church leading

Salt Lake Chinese Baptist

Church

*Stites Baptist Church

*New church listed

New Pastor

Bro. Keith Webb at Hope

Baptist Church, Nez
Perce

Prayer & Praises

- Pastor Nathan Simmons, FBC Centerfield- new treatment is working and cancer count lowering, pray for his anxiety and not sleeping well.
- Praise: Installation Service International Mission Board for new president Paul Chitwood, former Executive Director of Kentucky Baptist Convention, Feb 6
- Executive Committee of the SBC and our trustee Pastor James Gregory as they search for new

President of the SBC
Executive Committee

- Pray for our pastorless churches and their interim pastors
- Pray for FBC Vernal as they search for a full time Youth/Families Pastor
- Praise for good report and travel from our Disaster Relief team that returned from California Paradise Fire Ash out
- For our Collegiate ministries CrossOver Conference over Presidents' Day weekend
- Travis Best, Chairman of the Executive Board, is having total shoulder replacement- pray for successful surgery and rehab
- Pastor William Pyron from Hansen serious health problems
- Former Church Planter Derek Jones who started Lakeside Church in Syracuse had heart surgery to clean out pacemaker infections, Jan 31 in Canada. Pray for his recovery, he's experienced some setbacks.
- Pastor Paul Kroeger, Calvary Baptist Church Wendell, recovery from having stent put in
- For Ski & Share preparations and for God to touch students' lives
- Upcoming VBS training clinics across our two states

Praise cont...

reach around the world as well as in your local community by your giving through the Cooperative Program. You give to help your sister churches and our missionaries as they share the good news to all.

And **breaking news** on top of this: Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention will send the most Cooperative Program ever in our history to the Executive Committee of Southern Baptist Convention for national, international, and seminary education: **\$211,122.22 from calendar year 2018. That is \$20,558.22 more than we have ever sent in our history!!!! This beats the next highest year ever, 2007, when we sent \$190,564.** Shout "Praise the Lord"!!!

In Christ,

Rob Lee

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

Philippians 1:3-5

Porter Honored



Utah-Idaho Baptist Disaster Relief volunteer, **Lynda Porter** (right) of First Baptist Church Provo, Utah, received a distinguished service award during the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief awards banquet on Wednesday, January 23. The award was given for her performance as a volunteer during 2018. The banquet was held in Kansas City, Mo., during the annual meeting of disaster relief leaders from around North America. Utah-Idaho Baptist Disaster Relief director, Russel Hohmann (left), presented her with the award. *(Photo by Brandon Elrod)*

Togetherness, unity mark IMB presidential installation and Sending Celebration

By Ann Lovell

RICHMOND, Va.—Unity, fellowship and promises of mutual support characterized the installation of International Mission Board President Paul Chitwood and the Sending Celebration of 19 newly appointed international missionaries at Grove Avenue Baptist Church, in Richmond, Wednesday, Feb. 6. Chitwood is the 13th president of the 173-year-old International Mission Board, the largest denominational missionary-sending body among American evangelicals.

Southern Baptist leaders from across the convention and a number of state conventions attended the event, which included worship led by The Summit Church from Durham, N.C., remarks by Southern Baptist Convention President J.D. Greear, a charge by former IMB President Tom Elliff, and a response by Chitwood. WMU Executive Director Sandy Wisdom-Martin and IMB President Emeritus Jerry Rankin also participated in the service, which featured testimonies from the 19 new missionaries.

Andy and Kesiah Morris were two of the 19 missionaries recognized in the service. The couple, sent from Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, will serve in South Korea.

“As an international couple, it always seemed like we were caught between two different worlds,” Andy Morris said. “While our marriage was strong and our lives filled with reasons to be content, there was something deeper happening inside our relationship. It was pushing us to go out into the world and live in multicultural ‘in-between’ spaces.”

“One day last summer, we finally recognized this and made peace with the idea of uprooting ourselves and moving overseas,” Kesiah Morris said. “A few days later, through a divine appointment, God placed a clear and



Paul Chitwood, center, 13th president of the Southern Baptist's International Mission Board, poses with Tom Elliff, left, 11th IMB president who served from 2011-2014, and Jerry Rankin, 10th IMB president who served from 1993-2010. Southern Baptist leaders from across the convention attended the IMB installation and Sending Celebration Feb. 6 at Grove Avenue Baptist Church in Richmond. (IMB Photo by Roy Burroughs)

Chitwood cont. on page 4

Churches Increasingly Use Background Checks to Ensure Safety

By Aaron Earls

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- As churches become aware of potential safety issues, more are signing up for background check services through LifeWay's OneSource program.

“The numbers have increased dramatically since we began our relationship with backgroundchecks.com,” said LifeWay's Jennie Morris. “On average, we add 160 customers a month.”

Since January 2009, more than 16,000 customers have conducted more than 320,000 screenings with backgroundchecks.com through the LifeWay OneSource program. In 2018, more than 1,800 new churches signed up for the program.

Morris said part of the growth comes from offering a \$10 price point for a search that includes nationwide sex offender registry, various terrorist watch lists, over 600 million felony, misdemeanor and traffic records searches, as well as Social Security number validation.

According to Morris, around half of the searches return some type of offense. Most are only for minor incidents, but historically, close to 2 in 10 discover a misdemeanor or more serious crime.

Churches have begun to recognize how pervasive abuse in churches can be.

A 2018 LifeWay Research survey found 12 percent of Protestant pastors say someone on church staff has sexually harassed a congregation member at some point in the church's life, while 16 percent say a staff member has experienced sexual harassment in a church setting.

Having some peace of mind is part of the reason Rachel Steele, a ministry assistant at Mountain Creek Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee, said their church uses the service. The background checks are the “first level of due diligence,” Steele said.

“We want to have a basic idea of who we are working with,” she said. “For volunteers with kids, we need to make sure there are no offenses of note that would make it unwise to allow individuals to serve in those circumstances.”

Protection for children at church is one of the primary reasons Oak Grove Baptist Church in Covington, Tennessee, decided to use backgroundchecks.com through LifeWay, according to Jim Martin, a retired deacon and Sunday School teacher.

The church added a background check requirement for all teachers of students to their child protection policy. Martin said no one has been disqualified from serving because of a background check, but church members are at peace knowing someone is checking the history of those working with youth and children.

He feels having the background check requirement in place may also have caused some potentially problematic volunteers from ever applying.

A lawyer recommended Oak Grove use background checks for their volunteers to not only provide protection for the children, but also legal protection for the church itself.

Martin said Oak Grove uses it for Sunday School teachers, AWANA leaders, Upwards coaches, children's church volunteers, mission trip leaders, and church staff. “If you love kids, you have to protect them from folks with evil intentions,” he said. “You cannot just leave it up to a volunteer selection committee and hope for the best.”

For more information on background checks, visit [LifeWay.com/backgroundchecks](https://www.lifeway.com/backgroundchecks) or call (800) 464-2799. For additional resources to help churches prevent sexual abuse or other moral failures by staff members or volunteers, visit [SBCLife.net/pdf/ProtectingOurChildren.pdf](https://www.sbclife.net/pdf/ProtectingOurChildren.pdf).

Chitwood cont...

unexpected call upon our lives to go as missionaries.”

The calling to go to the nations is one that Southern Baptists have sought to support since the Southern Baptist Convention’s beginnings. Unity around the Great Commission is core to Southern Baptist identity, Tom Elliff said in his charge to Chitwood and the new missionaries.

“I sat there and cried thinking about how wonderful it is that we have the privilege of joining in this incredible mission of God of sending these people around the world,” Elliff said. “That’s happened thousands and thousands of times (from the IMB’s inception) by the grace of God.”

Preaching from Philippians 2, Elliff reminded those gathered that Southern Baptists share a sacred mission, a solemn mandate which should not be taken lightly, and a specific manner in which we are to live our lives.

Reminding the new appointees that the earliest Southern Baptist missionaries packed their belongings in caskets knowing they would never return, Elliff stressed the importance of the word, “together.”

“From the outset, there were people who realized that we can do better together than we can apart,” Elliff said.

In 1925, Southern Baptists came together again to form the Cooperative Program, Elliff said. “That’s when we realized if we really wanted to exponentially multiply the ability to send people around the globe this would be the best way to do it,” Elliff said. “The best way is to do things together.”

Chitwood, with his wife, Michelle, by his side, responded to

Elliff’s charge by asking the newly appointed missionaries and members of the home office staff to stand. He also acknowledged the more than 3,600 IMB missionaries serving around the world.

Reading from 2 Corinthians 7:2, Chitwood said, “Make room for us in your hearts. That was Paul’s request. Make room for us in your hearts.”

Chitwood acknowledged that new missionaries, IMB home office staff, missionaries serving around the world, Southern Baptist churches, and state and denominational leaders have “made room” for him “in their hearts.”

He encouraged those present to “keep making room for us” in their prayers and in both family and church budgets. He urged individuals and churches to look for ways to partner with the IMB “in this great task of sharing Christ with the nations.”

Chitwood stressed that he was not just asking for support on behalf of himself or the newly appointed missionaries, the home office staff, or those missionaries serving around the world.

Instead, he said he was asking on behalf of lost people around the world “who most of us will never know until and unless we see them around the throne. Thank you for making room for them in your hearts, your prayers, your giving, going and sending.”

“Together,” Chitwood concluded, “we will strive in all business to carry out that work, to lead in a way that honors those who made room for us and (to honor) the Lord whose ambassadors we all are.”

Ann Lovell is a writer in Richmond, Virginia.



Paul and Michelle Chitwood enjoy a moment with newly appointed IMB missionaries at the IMB installation and sending celebration Feb. 6 at Grove Avenue Baptist Church in Richmond. Chitwood was installed as the 13th president of the IMB during the Sending Celebration of 19 new missionaries. (IMB Photo by Roy Burroughs)

GuideStone announces release of its *Ministers’ Tax Guide*

By Holly Taylor

DALLAS - GuideStone® has released its most popular annual publication, the *2019 Ministers’ Tax Guide for 2018 Returns*, available now for GuideStone participants at GuideStone.org/TaxGuide. The tax guide includes tax highlights for 2018 — including changes based on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 — along with step-by-step filing instructions for ministers’ personal taxes and comprehensive examples and sample forms.

Additionally, GuideStone participant churches and church administrators have access to the annual *Federal Reporting Requirements for Churches*. This publication is included in the full tax guide or as a separate electronic copy.

GuideStone participants can receive both free resources by visiting GuideStone.org/TaxGuide or can request a free printed copy of the tax guide by calling **1-888-98-GUIDE**

(1-888-984-8433) (printed copies are limited).

The guide was again written this year by Richard Hammar, a noted CPA, attorney and widely published author who specializes in legal and tax issues for ministers. Additionally, the material is edited by GuideStone to ensure that it addresses, in detail, the tax issues directly affecting Southern Baptist ministers.

“Each year, we hear from so many pastors and other ministers about the help the *Ministers’ Tax Guide* is for them and their families as they navigate tax filing, either on their own or alongside their tax preparer,” said GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins. “It is a joy to hear from so many pastors who tell us how thankful they are for this guide and how much it helps them. This free guide is part of the ministry of GuideStone, and we are pleased to make it available to our participants.”

Most Teenagers Drop Out of Church as Young Adults

By Aaron Earls

Church pews may be full of teenagers, but a new study says college students might be a much rarer sight on Sunday mornings.

Two-thirds (66 percent) of American young adults who attended a Protestant church regularly for at least a year as a teenager say they also dropped out for at least a year between the ages of 18 and 22, according to a new study from Nashville-based LifeWay Research. Thirty-four percent say they continued to attend twice a month or more.

While the 66 percent may be troubling for many church leaders, the numbers may appear more hopeful when compared to a 2007 study from LifeWay Research. Previously, 70 percent of 18- to 22-year-olds left church for at least one year.

“The good news for Christian leaders is that churches don’t seem to be losing more students than they were 10 years ago. However, the difference in the dropout rate now and then is not large enough statistically to say it has actually improved,” said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research.

“The reality is that Protestant churches continue to see the new generation walk away as young adults. Regardless of any external factors, the Protestant church is slowly shrinking from within.”

When They Drop Out

The dropout rate for young adults accelerates with age, the study found.

While 69 percent say they were attending at age 17, that fell to 58 percent at age 18 and 40 percent at age 19. Once they reach their 20s, around 1 in 3 say they were attending church regularly.

“Overall Protestant churches see many teenagers attending regularly only for a season. Many families just don’t attend that often,” said McConnell.

“As those teenagers reach their late teen years, even those with a history of regular church attendance are pulled away as they get increased independence, a driver’s license, or a job. The question becomes:

will they become like older adults who have all those things and still attend or will students choose to stay away longer than a year.”

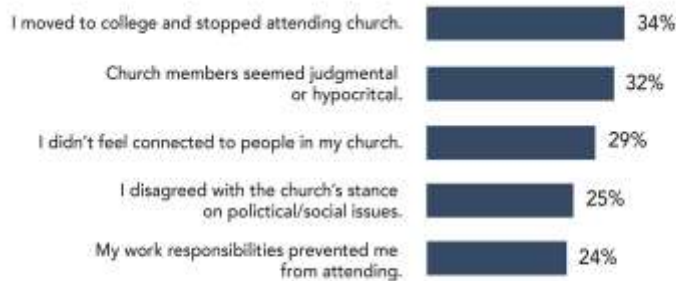
Ben Trueblood, director of student ministry at LifeWay, said those numbers speak to the issue at hand. “We are seeing teenagers drop out of the church as they make the transition out of high school and student ministry,” he said. “This moment of transition is often too late to act for churches.”

habits,” said McConnell. “Even when churches have faithfully communicated their beliefs through words and actions, not every teenager who attends embraces or prioritizes those beliefs.”

Among all those who dropped out, 29 percent say they planned on taking a break from church once they graduated high school. Seven in 10 (71 percent) say their leaving wasn’t an intentional decision.

Top five reasons church dropouts say they stopped attending church

Among young adults (ages 23-30) who attended a Protestant church regularly for at least a year in high school:



Notes: Respondents were asked to select all that apply.

LifeWay

LifeWayResearch.com

“For the most part, people aren’t leaving the church out of bitterness, the influence of college atheists, or a renunciation of their faith,” said Trueblood.

“What the research tells us may be even more concerning for Protestant churches: there was nothing about the church experience or faith foundation of those teenagers that caused them to seek out a connection to a local church once they entered a new phase of life. The time they spent with activity in church was simply replaced by something else.”

Where Are They Now

Not all teenagers leave church as a young adult. A third (34 percent) say they

consistently attended twice a month or more through the age of 22.

Those who stayed saw the church as an important part of their entire life. When asked why they stayed in church, more than half say the church was a vital part of their relationship with God (56 percent) and that they wanted the church to help guide their decisions in everyday life (54 percent).

Around 4 in 10 (43 percent) say they wanted to follow the example of a parent or other family member.

Similar numbers say they continued to attend because church activities were a big part of their life (39 percent), they felt church was helping them become a better person (39 percent), or they were committed to the purpose and work of the church (37 percent).

Among all young adults who attended church regularly at least one year as a teenager, almost half (45 percent) currently attend at least twice a month, including more than a quarter (27

Why They Drop Out

Virtually all of those who dropped out (96 percent) listed a change in their life situation as a reason for their dropping out. Fewer say it was related to the church or pastor (73 percent); religious, ethical or political beliefs (70 percent); or the student ministry (63 percent).

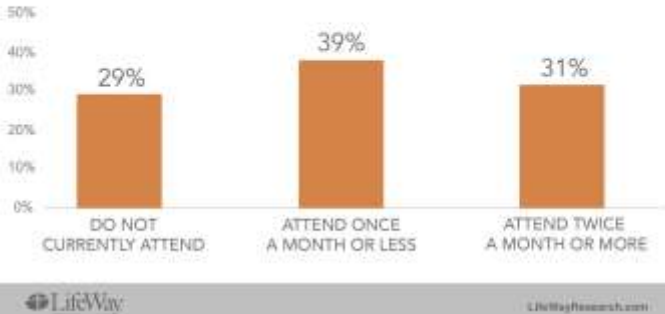
The five most frequently chosen specific reasons for dropping out were: moving to college and no longer attending (34 percent); church members seeming judgmental or hypocritical (32 percent); no longer feeling connected to people in their church (29 percent); disagreeing with the church’s stance on political or social issues (25 percent); and work responsibilities (24 percent).

Almost half (47 percent) of those who dropped out and attended college say moving to college played a role in their no longer attending church for at least a year.

“Most of the reasons young adults leave the church reflect shifting personal priorities and changes in their own

Current church attendance among those who dropped out between ages 18-22

Among young adults (ages 23-30) who attended a Protestant church regularly for at least a year in high school:



percent) who attend once a week or more.

Another 8 percent say they attend once a month, while 25 percent say they attend a few times a year. Twenty-two percent of those who attended regularly at least one year as a teenager now say they do not currently attend at all.

Among those who dropped out for at least a year, 31 percent are currently attending twice a month or more.

"On some level, we can be encouraged that some return," said Trueblood, "while at the same time, we should recognize that when someone drops out in these years there is a 69 percent chance they will stay gone."

He advised churches to begin by working to lower the number who leave in the first place. "There are steps we can begin taking with those currently in student ministry that will keep them connected from the beginning of these years."

Trueblood also asserted churches should have a strategic focus on individuals during those traditional college years. "In many places this is a forgotten, under-resourced ministry area," he said. "Focus is placed on children, students, and then not again until someone enters the 'young family' stage. This needs to change."

Among those who attended a Protestant church as teenager, 7 in 10 say they're Protestant now. Another 10 percent identify as Catholic. Few say they are agnostic (4 percent) or atheist (3 percent).

"While some young adults who leave church are rejecting their childhood faith, most are choosing to keep many of the beliefs they had, but with a smaller dose of church," said McConnell.

Aaron Earls is a writer for *LifeWay Christian Resources*.

For more information on the study, visit LifeWayResearch.com or view the [complete report](#). A graphic video of the information is available at [LifeWay's YouTube page](#).

'Evangelism with Johnny Hunt' NAMB podcast launched

by Brandon Elrod

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) -- Johnny Hunt, the new senior vice president of evangelism and leadership at the North American Mission Board, has launched a podcast -- "Evangelism with Johnny Hunt" -- co-hosted by NAMB President Kevin Ezell.

The podcast is among the new resources from NAMB to boost evangelistic conversation and activity among Southern Baptists.

"This is another hook in the water of lostness to remind us, inspire us, instruct us and convince us that if the evangelistic spirit is to return, it's up to us," said Hunt, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Over the last decade, Southern Baptists have seen a decline in baptism numbers across the convention, reflecting a downturn in churches reaching people and making disciples.

"I believe baptisms are down due to the fact that evangelism is not a front-burner issue in most churches," Hunt said. "In the 1990s Southern Baptist churches discarded their programmatic evangelism resources ... and never replaced them. Many churches have moved away from a set time of outreach, and the bottom line is evangelism is not being done."

While many churches shifted focus from referencing and utilizing tools and strategies, Hunt said, one of the keys to reigniting evangelism in the Southern Baptist Convention is the pastor.

"Pastors are the key to evangelism," he said. "If it's not important to them, it will never be important in their churches. Pastors must lead the way."

Hunt, who began his new role at NAMB on Jan. 1 after 32 years as pastor at First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga., said each episode of the podcast is designed with pastors in mind.

Hunt and Ezell regularly interview current pastors to hear their wisdom and perspective. Jimmy Scroggins, pastor of Family Church in West Palm Beach, Fla., Todd Unzicker, sending pastor at The Summit Church in Durham, N.C., and Steven Kyle of Hilland Park Baptist Church in Panama City, Fla., are among the guests who have already been interviewed for the podcast to discuss strategies in their local churches.

The evangelism decline among Southern Baptists, Hunt said, is not about a lack of resources but a lack of passion.

"We can see a surge once again when we put evangelism back where it belongs, front and center," he said. "I have always prayed that I would never get over being saved. I pray, 'Lord, remind me what it was like to not know You. Help me see others the way You do.'"

The evangelism podcast launched on Jan. 8 with the first three episodes. New episodes release every other week. Each installment lasts roughly 12 to 15 minutes, including encouraging testimonies, explanations on evangelism resources and tested church-wide strategies.

A podcast alone, Ezell said, won't turn baptism numbers around, but it is one more way NAMB is trying to help Southern Baptists focus energy on sharing the Gospel with a world that needs its message.

IMB trustees elect Lafferty as EVP, appoint 19 missionaries

By Julie McGowan

RICHMOND, Va.—International Mission Board trustees unanimously elected Todd Lafferty as the 173-year-old entity's executive vice president during their Feb. 6-7 meeting in Richmond, Virginia. Trustees also appointed 19 new missionaries for service around the globe; affirmed Roger Alford as vice president of communication, and recognized 48 emeriti in memoriam.

Lafferty, 59, most recently has served as pastor of mobilization for Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala. He and his wife, Susan, previously served with the IMB for almost 29 years.

"Seeking input from our IMB personnel on the field and in Richmond, and hearing from several board members and Southern Baptist Convention leaders, I was pointed again and again to Todd Lafferty, a man I've known for over 15 years," IMB President Paul Chitwood said in nominating Lafferty. "Todd's education and diverse background as an IMB missionary and staff member, along with his pastoral experiences in the local church in the U.S. and overseas, have uniquely prepared him for this significant leadership role."

Chitwood described Lafferty as a strong leader, humble servant, and sincere Christ-follower with a burning passion for the lost. "The Lord is kind to bring him back to the IMB," Chitwood said.

Lafferty said he was honored and humbled to be considered as the candidate for EVP.

"Many have not asked, 'Why are you going back to the IMB?' Almost to a person they have said, 'This makes perfect sense. God has been preparing you for this all of your life,'" Lafferty told the trustees.

"It is my desire to work alongside Dr. Paul Chitwood and the other vice presidents to do all that we can to have the most visionary and strategic missionary force on the face of the earth. And we need to make sure they have the resources they need to get the job done."

"I believe that God calls missionaries to the cross-cultural task of reaching the nations, but he also calls others to serve alongside and enhance all that we are doing to reach the nations," Lafferty said. "So we call on our Southern Baptist Churches to partner with us in reaching the nations, and we call on our international partners to lock arms with us in the greatest endeavor on the planet — to take the good news to the ends of the Earth."

Lafferty served as a Journeyman in Scotland from 1983-85. The Laffertys were appointed as career IMB missionaries in 1991, where he served as pastor of an international church and as strategy coordinator. From 2000-03, Lafferty served as a candidate consultant based in Richmond. The Laffertys returned to the field in 2003 and served in a variety of roles including strategy associate in the

Pacific Rim region, interim regional leader of Pacific Rim, and the affinity group leader for South Asian peoples. They finished their last stateside assignment with the IMB and retired in 2018. They have three grown children.

As executive vice president, Lafferty will serve as the entity's chief operating officer, responsible for supervising the day-to-day activities of the IMB under the guidance of the president. He provides administrative leadership to the overall organization and to each of the organization's vice presidents. He also provides consultation on global strategic work in coordination with the vice president for global strategy. He will assume the role March 1. He will succeed Dr. Clyde Meador, interim executive vice president, who has served in the role since November 2018. Meador has agreed, at Chitwood's request, to remain at IMB for an unspecified amount of time in the role of "Special Assistant to the President."

New missionaries, new VP

Trustees approved the appointment of 19 new full-time, fully funded missionaries, who were honored during a Sending Celebration on Wednesday, Feb. 6, at Grove Avenue Baptist Church in Richmond. The service included a formal installation of Paul Chitwood as IMB's 13th president.

Trustees also affirmed Chitwood's selection of Roger Alford as IMB's new vice president for communications. The role is designed to

IMB cont. on page 8

Why Tracking Church Attendance Is Important

Numbers are important, but they aren't ultimate in the church. Today, we discuss why you should be counting and how, but we also discuss how to avoid making numbers your focus. Some highlights from today's episode include:

- There is no reason to have an aversion to numbers as a church leader.
- Tracking numbers is a stewardship and accountability issue.
- You need a consistent method for counting worship attendance in your church.
- The more someone is involved in the ministries of the church, the more they will invest financially in the church.

The seven reasons that we discuss are:

1. We must overcome our aversions to numbers

2. Two most common areas to track: worship and groups
3. Knowledge of attendance leads to better pastoral care
4. Knowledge of attendance leads to better stewardship
5. Those who do the counting in worship service usually provide great insights
6. Attendance is a key indicator of discipleship
7. Avoid the classic pitfalls of attendance counting

Go here to listen to the podcast:

<https://thomrainer.com/2019/01/why-tracking-church-attendance-is-important-rainer-on-leadership-502/>

Podcast cont...

"Everything we do at NAMB is about helping Southern Baptists share the Gospel," Ezell said. "If every pastor makes this a priority, that will be a huge start. Brother Johnny's podcast will share examples of the incredible ways he and many other pastors are leading their churches in evangelism. There are great stories and helpful ideas on every episode."

The podcast can be found on Apple iTunes or accessed through NAMB's website at www.namb.net/evangelism.

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build and maintain an optimum communications approach, operation and staff to best serve the needs of IMB and the SBC.

"I'm thrilled that Dr. Chitwood and trustees have entrusted me with the privilege of telling the stories of IMB missionaries," said Alford, who has been the Kentucky Baptist Convention's communications director for the past five years. "These are truly modern-day heroes of the faith who have committed their lives to working in difficult and often dangerous places around the world."

After more than three decades as a newspaperman and an Associated Press correspondent, Alford joined the Kentucky Baptist Convention in January 2014. In that role, Alford, 56, created the online newspaper Kentucky Today, wholly owned by the KBC. The initiative was intended to expand KBC's ability to communicate with its 2,400 churches and 750,000 members.

Alford has broad experience in managing all aspects of communications, including writing and editing, all aspects of traditional and social media, web development, marketing strategies, media relations, graphic design and mass mailings. He and his wife, Susan, are members of First Baptist Church in Owenton, Ky. They have three grown children.

Celebration of service

Meador recognized the lives of 57 former colleagues — including seven staff, two current missionaries and 48 emeritus missionaries — who died in the past year. The field personnel's lives totaled 1,365 years of service through the IMB, with an average age of 88.5 and an average of 28 years of service. "Thank you, Lord, for your grace to us through the lives of these men and women," Meador prayed at the conclusion of the memorial recognition.

Former staff who were recognized in *memoriam* included Tom Williams, who served 34 years as a missionary to Thailand, regional leader for Western Pacific, regional leader for Western Europe, and as vice president of the Office of Global Personnel; and Jim Slack, who served 51 years as missionary to the Philippines and in Global Research. Meador also recognized Randy and Kathy Arnett, ages 62 and 61, who served 31 years in Togo and Cote D'Ivoire, as regional leader for West Africa, and in theological education leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa. They died in a traffic accident, March 14, 2018.

Emeritus missionaries included, among many others who served around the globe: Faye Taylor, age 100, who served 39 years in Hong Kong, China, and Indonesia; Pauline Moore, age 105, who served 38 years in Yugoslavia, Switzerland, and Germany; Virginia Winters, age 94, who served 40 years in Brazil; Etta Jean Phillips, age 87, who



Susan and Todd Lafferty (left) share a warm greeting with IMB President Emeritus Jerry Rankin and his wife, Bobbye, following the IMB trustees' plenary session Feb. 7 in Richmond, Va. (IMB Photo by Chris Carter)

served 39 years in Botswana, Lesotho, and Zimbabwe; and Charles Whitten, age 96, who served 40 years in Argentina, Equatorial Guinea, and Spain.

Gratitude

In his first presidential report to trustees, Chitwood stated he has a growing gratitude to Southern Baptists for their faithful giving and support of their International Mission Board.

"Just shy of three months since I was elected president by the trustees, I am even more in awe of the place that God has given this remarkable organization in His kingdom work around the world," Chitwood said. "And I am even more appreciative of the commitment that Southern Baptists long ago made, and still keep, to cooperate together that Christ is proclaimed among the nations."

"Cooperating churches with 10 members to those with more than 10,000 members, local associations of a handful of churches to those with hundreds of churches, state conventions with 100 churches and those with thousands of churches, and SBC entities with budgets of a few million to those with budgets of hundreds of millions: this is the beauty and the brilliance of the Southern Baptist system of cooperative missions," he said. "It is a system that today maintains an overseas force of more than 3,600 missionaries serving in more than 100 countries. The gospel will be heard today where it would not have been heard if it

weren't for Southern Baptists making and keeping a commitment to cooperate together."

Chitwood reported a strong commitment by IMB's overseas personnel and staff to see the entity's vision fulfilled.

"As grateful as we are for the financial resources that Southern Baptists and their Lord have provided to support the work of the IMB, by far the greatest resource that Southern Baptists and their Lord have provided is their sons and daughters, their grandchildren, their mothers and fathers and even their grandparents," he said. "Whether on staff in Richmond or overseas in a far and distant land, Southern Baptists have sent us their very best. ... As Michelle and I have now answered the call upon our lives to once again serve and help lead this organization, we stand in awe of the quality of servants whom God has brought to the IMB and sent out through the IMB."

Linda Cooper, president of National Woman's Missionary Union, from Bowling Green, Ky., brought partnership greetings to the trustees during their plenary session. She reported how WMU has partnered with IMB, such as providing missions education materials to local believers in East Asia, working through Southern Baptist personnel, and by continued promotion of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® for international missions.

"This is such an exciting time in the IMB," said Dr. Rick Dunbar, IMB trustee chairman. "Last night we saw the Southern Baptist Convention coming together as represented by many key leaders of the SBC in support of God's new missionaries who are being sent out, and also in celebrating the inauguration of our 13th president, Paul Chitwood."

"We thank the SBC for their support of the IMB and trust that to who much is given, much is expected," Dunbar said. "We take that trust seriously and commit ourselves to being good stewards of that trust. We are optimistic for the future and feel good things are ahead. We feel a tremendous responsibility to our Lord and the SBC and seek to glorify Him through our work through the IMB."

The next IMB board of trustees meeting is scheduled for May 22-23 in Richmond. The next missionary Sending Celebration is scheduled for June 11 during the SBC Annual Meeting in Birmingham.

Julie McGowan is public relations manager for the IMB.

International Mission Study in rural Georgia brings refugee crisis & ministry to life for kids

By *Trennis Henderson, WMU National Correspondent*

APPLING, Ga.—Countless refugees around the world often cope with adverse weather conditions and inadequate shelter as they navigate hostile environments or endure crowded refugee camps. Inclement weather during Kiokee Baptist Church’s recent International Mission Study gave dozens of children an impromptu object lesson as they splashed from tent to tent amid a steady downpour.

The wet, rainy Saturday morning failed to dampen the impact of the refugee mission study attended by almost 100 children and leaders from seven area churches. As they gathered at Pine Knoll Farms in Appling, Ga., the children learned that refugees generally need such basic necessities as food, shelter, blankets, shoes and medicine as well as the gospel of Christ.

Providing area youngsters a hands-on glimpse of missions has been a key focus for event organizer Patty Blanton for years. Blanton, who taught Girls in Action (GA) at Kiokee Baptist Church when her own children were young, has continued to coordinate the church’s annual International Mission Study. In recent years, she has hosted the study at Pine Knoll Farms, her family’s spacious working farm and event venue.

Blanton and other volunteers spend weeks planning and transforming her farm into the featured country or people group being studied each year, including converting the façade of the farm’s event barn into Moscow’s Red Square for the previous year’s study of Russia. The painted onion domes of St. Basil’s Cathedral stood in striking contrast to Magnolia Barn’s more typical use as a setting for wedding receptions. Other studies have helped bring to life mission work in such diverse settings as China, Indonesia and Norway.

“I just really love doing it,” Blanton explained. “I want to make it an experience and not just going to a study and learning about a country. I want them to kind of feel some of it.”

For the refugee study, tents set up to represent a refugee camp included the event’s registration area, a study of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa who make their way to Greece and a crafts tent featuring tie-dyeing T-shirts as a memento of the study. Other activities included painting Grecian bowls, watching a skit and videos about refugee ministry and hearing a mission study about ways to pray for and minister to refugees.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, more than 68 million people worldwide are forcibly displaced from their homes, including more than 25 million who officially are classified as refugees. Among refugees around the globe, more than half are under age 18.

In preparation for each year’s international mission emphasis, National Woman’s Missionary Union produces a variety of teaching guides and related resources to help leaders plan and prepare for the study. Noting that “the current global refugee crisis is a humanitarian disaster,” resources available at wmu.com encourage leaders to “provide children with an understanding of refugees and practical ways they can help.”

Citing the need for participants to grasp the plight of refugees, Blanton emphasized, “I hope that they will understand about refugees and that it is not something that the majority of these people can really help. ... Whether you’re in a foreign country or here, it’s a major issue that people have to welcome strangers into their homes to help them from whatever disaster or situation that’s beyond their control.”

Planned hot air balloon rides for the children were scuttled due to the weather, but the rest of the morning went on as planned.



ABOVE: Sherry Matherly, director of children’s ministry for Kiokee Baptist Church in Appling, Ga., leads a mission study from the gondola of a hot air balloon during the church’s International Mission Study for area children. Rainy weather cancelled the event’s planned hot air balloon rides, but failed to dampen the spirit of the annual mission study. BELOW: Dozens of children from seven area churches attended the recent International Mission Study in Appling, Ga. Activities included tie-dyeing T-shirts, painting Grecian bowls and listening to a study about ways to pray for and minister to refugees. They also received souvenir balloons at the end of the study. (WMU photos by Pam Henderson)



Refugee study cont...

Organizers even moved the rented balloon's gondola into Magnolia Barn for the children to climb into and pose for photos. They also received paper hot air balloons to take home that had adorned the barn for the study.

Susan DeFoor, a member of Damascus Baptist Church in Appling, is among volunteers who work alongside Blanton each year. "Patty and I grew up together and we went to GAs," she reflected. "My mother was the GA leader."

Noting that "we were very into missions at an early age," DeFoor added, "My sister, Jane, and I have carried that on in our church and Patty has carried that on at Kiokee. She's been gracious to include us when she does the international study. ... She has such a beautiful place here and she is so generous to share that with everybody."

Affirming the impact on the children who participate in the mission study, DeFoor said, "I think it's really, really important for them to get it at an early age and to understand about missions and missionaries and not just what they do, but how they themselves can be a missionary. We talk about that. We try to make it personal. We try to talk about it a way that makes it so that they can apply it to their lives."

DeFoor's sister, Jane Wells, a Mission Kids leader at Damascus Baptist Church, also is deeply committed to helping children learn about, pray for and support missions on a personal level.



Patty Blanton (center), coordinator of Kiokee Baptist Church's annual International Mission Study, visits with fellow volunteers Susan DeFoor (left) and Jane Wells prior to the recent study on refugees held at Pine Knoll Farms in Appling, Ga. (WMU photo by Pam Henderson)

"Our ultimate goal as parents, grandparents, leaders, church leaders as we're teaching young children is to develop a desire in their hearts to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ," Wells explained. "I think the kids need to see that Jesus is very real and He comes to different people through different ministries."

"The beauty of these international mission studies is it brings it alive for these children. It makes it very real for them," she added. "They're open to seeing what this big world is all about and how they can play a part in it."

Many of the children who grow up attending the International Mission Study go on to become personally involved as mission volunteers and supporters, Blanton noted. For all of the children who attend, she added, "I would hope that they would just be aware of missions or even just praying for the missionaries. If I do all of this work and I got

everything ready and one child showed up, that's good enough for me."

As the tangle of kids made their way through the rain to waiting cars and church vans with their tie-dyed T-shirts, painted Grecian bowls and souvenir hot air balloons, it was clear that Blanton and her team once again had made a memorable impact for the sake of the gospel and global missions.

Utah-Idaho VBS Training Clinics 2019

All clinics will meet from
9:00 AM—12:00 PM

For more info and to RSVP, visit
www.uisbc.org/vbs

March 16: First Baptist Church, Burley, ID

March 23: Emmanuel Baptist Church, Cottonwood, ID

March 23: TBD, See Website, Salt Lake area, UT

March 30: Roosevelt Baptist Church, Roosevelt, UT

April 6: NorthStar Church, Hayden, ID

April 27: Calvary Baptist Church, Boise, ID



Clinics include overview for Preschool and Children's leaders, VBS Directors, music leaders, missions leaders, demonstration of crafts, and VBS Snacks.

While it will be focused on LifeWay's "In The Wild" VBS, any curriculum or summer sports clinic leadership will benefit from these events.