

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



Jan. 28, 2010
Vol. 175, No. 4

The most widely circulated state Baptist newspaper

Toll free 1-800-803-5201
www.thealabamabaptist.org

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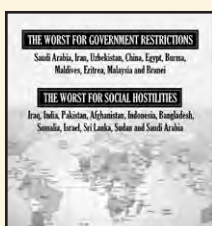
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Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

PUBLIC HEARING ON HB 154 — Rep. Marcel Black (at microphone) addresses the House Tourism and Travel Committee and others Jan. 20 in the House chamber.

‘Odd, odd piece of legislation’

Gambling bill moving in House would protect current operations from taxes, raids

By Sondra Washington
The Alabama Baptist

Gambling supporters repeatedly promise money from regulating and taxing slot machines that are being labeled electronic bingo. But House Bill (HB) 154, passed Jan. 20 by the Tourism and Travel Committee, would deny the state \$72 million in back taxes from Greenetrack in Eutaw.

If passed by the entire legislative body, countless millions would also be denied from “an undetermined number” of illegal Alabama casinos, which could then operate without fear

of criminal prosecution or law enforcement raids. That means the Governor’s Task Force on Illegal Gambling could not conduct any raids on the facilities that fall under the bill’s parameters.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Marcel Black, D-Tusculumbia, seeks to “retro-

actively and prospectively” exempt gambling operations statewide from “liability for state and local sales taxes.” Cruise ships “docking at saltwater ports in the state” would also be protected.

Michael Mason of the Alabama De-

partment of Revenue (ADOR) spoke against HB 154 during the Jan. 20 public hearing on the bill. Warning that it may be unconstitutional, he said it has “unusual exemptions” and is “an odd, odd piece of legislation.”

(See ‘Bill,’ page 4)

Want to go help Haiti? Here’s how

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Ready to go help Haiti? Well, Alabama Baptists — it’s time.

Now that structure is getting in place and lines of transportation are starting to clear, opportunities are opening up for volunteers to go, said Mel Johnson, disaster relief strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

One need will be to assist orphans and evacuees brought to Florida, and another will be to do relief work over the coming months in Haiti, where

people are traumatized by the loss of life and devastated homeland caused by a Jan. 12 earthquake. The quake killed an estimated 200,000 people and decimated untold numbers of buildings.

“We have yet to deploy but it looks like these things are going to develop and we are going to be ready — not just on alert, but ready to roll,” Johnson said.

To do that, Johnson said the state convention is ready to harness the desire Alabama Baptists have to help by training them in disaster relief at four

(See ‘Long-haul,’ page 3)



COMMENT

‘What Got You to the Top ...’

Southern Baptists have taken a not-so-secret sense of pride in being the largest Protestant denomination in the U.S. We have been equally proud of being the largest Baptist group in the world. At times, we have flaunted our size and corresponding power.

Southern Baptists are big. Total membership exceeds 16.25 million baptized believers. Add to that the number of people within the Southern Baptist community (nonbaptized participants and family members), and our size more than doubles. In Alabama, one out of every four residents is a member of a cooperating Baptist church. Southern Baptist churches received more than \$11 billion in tithes and offerings last year, according to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) sources. The value of congregational property nears \$50 billion.

Our seminaries are the largest Christian seminaries in the world. Our missions enterprise is the largest. As Southern Baptists, we seem to take pride in being the largest in most everything.

But there is an old adage that says, “What got you to the top will not keep you at the top.” And when one looks closely at Southern Baptist life, there are signs that indicate danger in the road ahead.

Financially churches are sending a smaller and smaller percentage of undesignated receipts to missions causes through the Cooperative Program (CP). In the 1980s, undesignated receipts for churches went up 5.71 percent on average. Gifts through the CP increased 6.83 percent that decade. But in the 1990s, the pattern changed. Undesignated receipts for churches went up 4.91 percent, while gifts through the CP went up 1.68 percent. This decade, church undesignated receipts went up 5.42 percent, while CP gifts increased by 1.95 percent.

Reinventing ourselves

In the '80s, CP receipts averaged 10.5 percent of undesignated receipts of the churches. In the 1990s, that fell to 8.73 percent. For this decade, the percentage fell to 6.9 percent. For the last year of record, the average was down further to 6.08 percent.

Southern Baptists are known for evangelism. We believe every person must make a personal response to Jesus as Lord and Savior. But baptismal statistics show us flagging. The only time Southern Baptists baptized at least 400,000 people for five consecutive years was 1971–1976. Our largest single figure for baptisms was 1972 with 445,725. For 2008, the last year of record, the number of baptisms was just more than 342,000. That is a drop of more than 25 percent. The actual numbers show a downward trend for the past decade from 415,000 in 2000 to 342,000 in 2008 (SBC Book of Reports, 2009).



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Scholars who study the life cycle of volunteer organizations — including churches and denominations — contend that these organizations are bound together by shared values, goals and hopes. Such a conclusion should not be surprising. It is exactly what the Bible says. Proverbs 28:19 declares, “Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained” (NASV). In other words, without an overarching structure of values and goals, people do what is right in their own eyes.

Interestingly those who study the lives of nations point to the tendency of people to believe they are accountable only to themselves as a sign of internal decline (See “The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers” by Paul Kennedy).

These scholars argue that the only way an organization can stay vibrant and dynamic is by constantly renewing itself. That should sound familiar to Southern Baptists. In 1979, we began a 25-year struggle called the conservative resurgence. In 1995, we reorganized our national convention structure. Five years later, we redrafted our doctrinal statements — the Baptist Faith and Message. All held out great promise, but none resulted in a renewal of the SBC or Southern Baptists.

Today the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force is again examining how Southern Baptists can work together to reach the world for Jesus Christ. While what goes on in the meetings of the task force has not been made public, several leaders of the effort have been vocal about the need to change the way missions funds are divided between state and national conventions. Perhaps such an effort is misdirected. The renewal needed may not be in terms of programs or structures. The renewal needed by Southern Baptists may be in terms of shared values, goals and hopes.

Baptisms, for example, have not declined because Southern Baptist leaders for the past 30 years were less evangelistic than their predecessors. Nor is the decline because of lack of effective programs or denominational structure.

George Barna points in an entirely different direction. In his book “The Seven Faith Tribes,” Barna concludes the best evangelism grows out of people’s respect for the Christian’s character and lifestyle. Unfortunately he says polling data shows

that evangelical Christians in America are not seen as loving. He declares that the public perception of the character and lifestyle of evangelical Christians is one reason evangelism has been ineffective for the past quarter of a century. Evangelical Christians are seen as a people who try to argue others into the kingdom of God rather than love them into God’s presence. We are seen as a people who take pride in our moral supremacy, insist on our own correctness and blame and fight with one another like members of a neurotic, dysfunctional family.

Barna writes plainly. Evangelical Christians — Baptists among them — must stop “competing, complaining and condemning” if we want to make an impact on society for Christ. Instead Christians must start “cooperating, communicating and contributing.” For Baptists who have lived as long as this writer, those qualities sound like values and goals that used to characterize Southern Baptist life. Christians also must hear again the echoes of warning about people accountable only to themselves and see again the efforts of some to do things themselves rather than work cooperatively with fellow Baptists.

What’s really needed

Southern Baptists have long taught that beliefs matter because it is one’s beliefs and values that inform one’s actions. That is why the renewal needed by Southern Baptists is a renewal in the value of cooperation, the importance of communications, the willingness to collaborate with fellow believers for the good of God’s Kingdom and the commitment to contribute to the total missions effort.

What is needed is more attention to relationships, not programs, more attention to values not structures. Without such a renewal, the noble experiment of a Baptist convention of church, association, state and national bodies may degenerate into a competing, comparing, complaining, condemning likeness of those who have thrown stones of criticism at Southern Baptists for more than 150 years.

Letters to the Editor

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“If ye continue in my word, then ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31–32).

(ISSN 0738-7741; USPS 011-080)

© The Alabama Baptist, Inc.

is published weekly except for one week in July and December by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 1-800-803-5201. Fax: 205-870-8957. **Web site:** www.thealabamabaptist.org. **E-mail:** news@thealabamabaptist.org or circulation@thealabamabaptist.org. Periodicals postage paid at Birmingham, Ala., and other locations.

DR. BOBBY S. TERRY, EDITOR

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Alabama Baptist, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. **ADDRESS CHANGE:** Send old and new addresses, and name of church to Circulation Department, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Allow two weeks.

Someone You Should Know

By Amy Grace Robertson, Correspondent, TAB

James Conaway

Golden Springs Baptist Church,
Anniston, Calhoun Association

FAVORITE VERSES: Psalm 23:1; 1 John 4:8
FAVORITE HYMN: "The Old Rugged Cross"
HOBBIES: Horseshoes, slow-pitch softball and basketball
FAMILY STATUS: Married 60 years to Lois, one son and two grandchildren



CONAWAY

For the past 50 years, James Conaway has had perfect Sunday School attendance. In fact, he arrives early enough to sit next to the teacher. Conaway's only two absences were excused because all the churches in his area were closed on those Sundays. The first Sunday he missed was because of the blizzard of 1993. Conaway called all the churches in his community to see if any were open. "I could not have driven but I could have walked," he said. The other excused absence came a few years ago when Christmas fell on a Sunday. None of the churches in Conaway's area held Sunday School that morning, but he found a church that held it Wednesday night.

Q: How did you come to know God?

A: It was a long time ago, but through teaching and preaching, it came to me that I needed to be a Christian.

Q: How have you been involved in church through the years?

A: I grew up in a little community. There was one church. Both of my grandparents were involved in church. I have always gone. Back in those days, the community revolved around two things: your school and your church.

Q: Why has it always been important for you to attend Sunday School?

A: I am not a teacher, I am not a speaker but I can show others that I am an attendee.

Q: How have churches changed over the years?

A: Today you will find more churches that have better teachers. As far as the church service is concerned, when I first started the church, if that old preacher had a good congregation, he didn't know when to quit. Now the sermon is somewhere within 25 minutes. Today you have larger churches.

Q: What difference has being a Christian made in your life?

A: I don't know what would have happened if I had not been.

'Long-haul' endeavor

Four training sessions help prepare Alabamians to serve in Haiti

(continued from page 1)
sessions slated for February at locations around the state.

"You wouldn't believe the phone traffic and e-mails we've been getting from churches and individuals wanting to help. Folks want to go, and we want to get them ready to do that," he said.

Southern Baptist assessment teams in Haiti were set to arrive back in Florida on Jan. 25 to firm up plans and strategy for long-term disaster relief work.

After the strategy is in place, the February training sessions will help Alabama Baptists get credentialed in disaster relief so that they're ready to be deployed. That's something that will not only prepare them for helping Haitians but also have them ready to go when disaster strikes in the future, Johnson said.

Regional Disaster Relief Certification sessions will be held at:

- ▶ Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, Feb. 9, 6-8:30 p.m.
- ▶ Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham, Feb. 11, 6-8:30 p.m.
- ▶ First Baptist Church, Montgomery, Feb. 16, 6-8:30 p.m.
- ▶ First Baptist Church, Bay Minette, Feb. 18, 6-8:30 p.m.

In addition to walking volunteers through the disaster relief credentialing process, the sessions will provide detailed information about dealing with Haitians cross-culturally and what to expect when visiting post-quake Haiti.

Helping in Haiti

"Disaster relief strategists agree that the scale of death and destruction in Haiti is well beyond anything seen by Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers ever," Johnson said. "Participants who are considering deploying to Haiti will need this vital information (provided at the training sessions) as they decide if and when to go."

Help needed in Haiti could range from cleanup and recovery to food distribution to long-term rebuilding efforts.

"It could involve churches, orphanages,

neighborhoods, virtually anything that needs to be done," Johnson said, adding that more specifics would be known in the coming days.

Helping in Florida

As soon as the State Department gives the green light, Florida may be receiving a number of Haitian orphans, as well as many other evacuees, Johnson said. "The trigger hasn't been pulled yet, but when it does, what we are bracing for in Florida is an influx of orphans and families being sent stateside."

This will open up many ministry needs, both for Alabamians to go and help and for churches and individuals to send specific in-kind donations as requested, he explained.

"We are unsure as to how it is all going to take place, but we have made our resources available to the Florida Baptist Convention to help with families that have been fractured by the earthquake and who are coming to Florida," Johnson said. "This could involve feeding units, laundry units, shower units and emergency child care units."

Even though volunteers trained in the four sessions offered in February won't be specialized in one of those avenues of ministry, they may be paired with one of those teams to do ministry in Florida, he explained.

Rick Lance, executive director of the Ala-



Graphic by Lauren A. Chow

bama Baptist State Board of Missions, encouraged Alabamians not to forget how long the need will persist in Haiti.

"Alabama Baptists need to keep in mind that disaster relief work will continue well beyond the time the earthquake will be featured on TV and the Internet as a news item," Lance said. "We are in this endeavor for the long haul."

Getting signed up

The disaster relief training sessions are open only to members of churches affiliated with the Alabama Baptist State Convention. The fee for the session includes the criminal background check required for credentials (for work with evacuees and orphans) as well as workshop materials and a badge. Neither child care nor meals are provided as part of these events.

For more information or to register for the sessions, contact Mondene Coker at 1-800-264-1225, Ext. 273, or mcoker@alsbom.org, or visit <http://levelone.sbdr.org>.

To give to Baptist disaster relief work in Haiti, visit www.alsbom.org/haiti and click on "donate" to donate by credit card, or send a check to State Board of Missions, Attn: Accounting Services, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111-0870. Mark the check "For Disaster Relief."

Congo braces for possible volcanic eruption

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Central Africa is bracing for a possible volcanic eruption.

Mount Nyamuragira in eastern DRC started spewing lava Jan. 2, threatening residents, wildlife, livestock and crops on or near the mountain.

The lava flows are not known to have threatened large populated areas, but there are fears that a more massive eruption is imminent. Wildlife, especially chimpanzees, in the Virunga National Park, where the volcano is located, is especially at risk.

The Union of Baptist Churches in Congo (UEBCO) informed the Baptist World Al-

liance (BWA) that people in the mountains of Masisi, a town and administrative district close to the volcano, have already suffered from the spewing ash and flowing lava. The villages of Kausa, Kalonge, Nyamule, Musongati and Buramo, among others, have been particularly affected.

"Dust from Nyamuragira volcano has damaged plants such as maize, sorghum and beans," the report from the UEBCO said. The upcoming harvest has been destroyed, and the people in the affected areas "will be facing severe hunger," the BWA member body reported.

Chemicals in the ash and rock fragments

pose possible health risks, even in areas that are farther away from the mountain, threatening to contaminate food and water.

Already drinking water sources such as open springs and rainwater catchments in several villages, including Sake, Kingi and Rusayo, contain unacceptably high levels of chemicals.

There has been an increase in the number of reported cases of diarrhea and eye diseases among residents, as well as deaths among domestic animals.

Mount Nyamuragira is one of Africa's most active volcanos and has erupted more than 30 times since 1880. (BWA)

Bill to protect existing 'casinos' would give Indians

(continued from page 1)
Tim Russell, commissioner of ADOR, also believes the bill may be unconstitutional.

"Any amusement opportunity ... (must) pay 4 percent of the gross proceeds," Russell told *The Alabama Baptist*. "If they (gambling operations) truly meet the constitutional definition of charity bingo, they are not taxed. Once the Supreme Court ruled that [the games being operated across the state are] not charitable bingo (visit www.thealabamabaptist.org for the story), they fall under that tax, and that tax goes all the way back to when they started."

Although Greenetrack is the first gambling operation ordered to pay the tax, Russell said it may not be the last.

"We intend to review all of them as we go along," he said. "Our governor has said that he took an oath of office to enforce the laws of the State of Alabama. While in office, I am going to do that as well."

Russell's office is not alone in opposing the bill.

A news release from Gov. Bob Riley's office said, "The bill provides casinos with amnesty from all taxes, criminal prosecution and civil lawsuits and allows casinos to be operated anywhere in Alabama."



During the public hearing on House Bill (HB) 154, Rep. Barry Mask was one of several speakers who had questions for HB 154 sponsor Rep. Marcel Black who said he planned to file another gambling bill. That bill would call for a constitutional amendment to "limit, regulate and tax" gambling in Alabama.

Rep. Mask:

"Would you support an amendment to the (upcoming) bill on not allowing anyone from the gambling industry to serve on the gaming commission (that will be called for in the constitutional amendment)?"

Rep. Black:

"I would look at it."

Birmingham Attorney Eric Johnston, president of Citizens for a Better Alabama, called the bill unconstitutional and said charities would lose if the bill passes.

Speaking during the public hearing, Johnston said, "This act permits gambling outside the bingo amendments to the (state) Constitution."

"If they are not operating under the charity bingo amendment, then they don't have to pay the

charities anymore," he explained.

Johnston said the bill also allows the Indians to have class three gambling without a state-tribal compact as required by federal law.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

'PROTECT THE PEOPLE' — Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program, asks members of the House Tourism and Travel Committee to vote against House Bill 154.

"The basic premise of federal law is that Indians are permitted to only have the level of gambling we have in the state," he said. "This bill seeks to increase, by a statutory definition, that level of gambling. ... It expands it so much that it raises it to electronic games of all sorts, which would make it actually class three gambling, which would then allow the Indians to have unlimited games."

Johnston was one of more than

25 people who spoke for or against HB 154 during the hearing, which was held in the House chamber due to an overflowing crowd in attendance. More than 500 people were present, most of which came by charter bus from Greene and Houston counties.

Residents of the two counties pleaded with the House committee to pass the bill they say will keep their counties alive.

Representatives from the areas also promised to continue fighting for legalized gambling in their areas.

Rep. Pebblin Warren, D-Tuskegee Institute, even asked that legislators and others not in counties with casino gambling options to let the ones "of us who are" handle this legislation. Black, the bill sponsor, happens to be one of the legislators not in an area lobbying for gambling.

Rep. James Thomas, D-Selma, said he was tired of people preach-

ing to him. "I'm not championing either side, but somebody's got to do something," he said. "Don't preach to me. I'll take my chances before the almighty God."

Rep. A.J. McCampbell, D-Linden, said, "It's gambling and it's paying. ... I'll fight you for it."

McCampbell represents Greene County, where Greenetrack is.

John Hill of the Alabama Policy Institute said the effects from this kind of gambling would be detrimental to many Alabamians. It's not about bringing in people from other states as a form of tourism, he said.

"The majority of the people that gamble their money away (in casinos) are from the same state [supplying the games]," he said. "The

gambling interest wants to prey on Alabamians, and not just any Alabamians but those that

Rep. Johnny Mack Morrow chairs the Alabama House Tourism and Travel Committee. Gambling legislation has to pass his committee before having access to the full House of Representatives. He typically votes to allow the legislation to pass out of committee.



Why?

"This issue is too important for 15 people (the committee) to decide."

His thoughts on gambling legislation in general:

"The only reason we have to debate these issues in the Legislature is that there is a demand for it."



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

PACKED HOUSE — More than 500 people crowd in and near the House chamber at the Statehouse in Montgomery to participate in or listen to the public hearing on House Bill 154, a pro-gambling bill.

'unlimited games'

can't afford to travel to other states."

Joe Godfrey, president of Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP), agreed. "Big businesses are already preying upon the people of Alabama. This bill would just expand their predatory practice, and ... there would not be any lawsuits against them."

As he has done for more than 30 years, Dan Ireland, director emeritus of ALCAP, also pleaded for those losing money to gambling.

"This money (promised to counties and cities by gambling operators) is coming out of the pockets of the losers," he said. "We ought not take advantage of our people like this."

'Just not right'

Ken Allen, pastor of East Side Baptist Church, Cullman, described the story of a friend he said died when she spent her money on gambling instead of "vital medication."

"I am someone who sees the devastating effects of gambling on other people's lives," he said. "The gambling industry is the poster child for big business. When you can generate millions upon millions in our state and all of a sudden you give less than 5 percent to a charity, that's just not right."

Although Black repeatedly states he is personally against gambling,

he said at press time he would introduce another pro-gambling bill Jan. 26 that will "limit, regulate and tax" slot machines (being labeled electronic bingo) by a vote of the people. According to Black, HB 154 would expire Nov. 2 immediately before the constitutional amendment could be implemented if approved by a vote of the people. Black has sponsored pro-gambling bills for years, including former Gov. Don Siegelman's lottery legislation in 1999.

Two more gambling-related bills were recently filed in the House: **HB299**, sponsored by Rep. Randy Wood, R-Anniston, seeks to impose "significant civil monetary penalties that will make the costs associated with illegal gambling activity much higher than the potential profits."

HB326, sponsored by Rep. James Gordon, D-Saraland, would give the City of Prichard a constitutional bingo amendment allowing a contractual agreement between charities and firms operating bingo games for them. Unlike the other bingo amendments across the state, this bill would allow nonprofit organizations to pay consulting fees to "any individual or entity for any service performed in relation to the operation or conduct of a bingo game."

(Jennifer Davis Rash contributed)



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

IN THE NEWS — Catherine Snow of Citizens for a Better Alabama reads numerous headlines citing problems in other states that have come from the gambling industry being legal in those states.

Bessemer mayor, council at odds over 'electronic bingo gambling'

By Sondra Washington
The Alabama Baptist

Gambling supporters on Bessemer's City Council refused Jan. 14 to acknowledge Mayor Edward May's veto of their latest resolution — this time essentially transforming the city's paper bingo ordinance into an "electronic bingo" law.

Although Council Members Louise Alexander, Dorothy Davidson, Pro-tem Jesse Matthews and President Earl Cochran did not acknowledge two vetoes of bingo resolutions previously submitted by May, the group has continued to create and pass ordinances in an attempt to override the mayor's authority. In the latest veto, May cited the crime, corruption and havoc caused by gambling. He said the latest resolution, which passed Jan. 5, is invalid since City Council members introduced and voted on it in the same meeting without unanimous consent — a violation of Alabama law.

'Ambush approach'

"I have for some time urged the council to abandon its 'ambush' approach to adopting contested or controversial ordinances or resolutions," he wrote. "The action taken Jan. 5 clearly suggest(s) that the same majority of the council fully intends to continue their practice of adding items to the agenda without providing public notice, without providing this office with

an advance copy or the ability to participate in open discussion or deliberation."

According to the Alabama League of Municipalities' Handbook for Mayors and Councilmembers, a mayor can veto "all ordinances and resolutions intended to be of a permanent nature" within 10 days of passage and "the (city) clerk shall report the objections to the council at its next regular meeting."

Alexander accused Travis Brooks, acting city clerk, of lying about receiving the veto since he did not provide the council's bingo committee with copies of it at a Jan. 15 meeting. But Brooks told *The Alabama Baptist*, "Every veto that I've ever received has been in a timely manner."

To this issue, May said, "There is nothing in that statute that provides that the clerk is to give [or] transmit [the veto] prior to the next regular meeting."

Yet attorney Kim Davidson, who has ties to electronic bingo gambling debates in other areas and is now working with some Bessemer council members, advised the council that this is not her understanding of the city code. "Once [the veto is] filed with the clerk, it's not a private document," she told *The Alabama Baptist*.

The handbook also states a two-thirds vote from members of the council is required to override the mayor's veto. Perceiving that they

did not have the necessary votes, the four gambling supporters on the council instead voted to instruct Davidson to "go across the street" and ask Circuit Judge Eugene Verin for clarification in the matter.

When Councilor James Stephens asked how the council planned to pay Davidson for the work she is doing in Bessemer, Alexander said, "The general fund. We use taxpayers' money for everything else. Why not use it for this?"

Questionable fees

At press time, it was unclear how much Davidson stands to earn from representing the council in its bingo disputes. The City of Bessemer is already represented by one law firm and the council by another, so Davidson is the third attorney being paid to represent the city.

"It (bingo) is already here under (ordinance) 2108, (which allows traditional paper bingo)," Davidson told the council. "We can pretend it's not. The operators in this very room are making a lot of money off of it. ... My job is collecting the fees (for the city). ... The city of Bessemer isn't making money off of it."

Yet Jefferson County District Attorney Brandon Falls has said the county's charity bingo amendment does not allow any person or municipality to receive money from bingo operations.

Governor's Task Force on Illegal Gambling head resigns post after gambling trip to Mississippi

Former Jefferson County District Attorney David Barber recently resigned as commander of the Governor's Task Force on Illegal Gambling.

His resignation becomes effective with the naming of a new commander. No information on when this would happen was available at press time.

Citing a "recent visit" to a "legal casino" in Mississippi, Barber said he does not want to become a "political distraction from the task force's important work."

Barber and his wife were reportedly spotted at a casino in Mississippi on New Year's Eve.

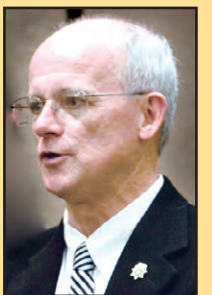
While *The Alabama Baptist* has heard more than one report of eye witnesses, it is VictoryLand Owner Milton McGregor that is taking credit for the discovery. He reportedly told *Mobile Press-Register* his private detective discovered Barber at the Mississippi slot machine, and McGregor gave Gov. Bob Riley until Jan. 15 to announce Barber's resignation.

Riley's office called McGregor a "liar" and said it was Barber who told a member of Riley's legal staff about his trip. That staff member immediately told the governor.

Barber said in his resignation letter to Riley Jan. 13: "While my actions were in full compliance with the law, I am convinced that the forces that operate illegal casinos in Alabama will focus on my actions as part of their continuing effort to smear you and your task force."

"While my actions were in full compliance with the law ... the work of the task force is too important to allow it to be impeded by such distractions."

David Barber
Governor's Task Force on Illegal Gambling



"The work of the task force is too important to allow it to be impeded by such distractions. ... Like you, I believe that the law should be applied as written, no matter how much money or power is brought to bear in furtherance of illegal conduct."

Riley accepted Barber's resignation and commended him for serving the state.

"Despite a steady stream of personal attacks from the forces that want to perpetuate and expand illegal gambling in Alabama, you have never wavered from your determination to see that the laws of Alabama are enforced uniformly across the state of Alabama," Riley wrote in a letter accepting Barber's resignation. "As a result of your leadership, the task force has succeeded in stopping illegal activity in numerous counties in Alabama." (TAB)

Across Alabama's Associations

BESSEMER

► **Canaan Church, Bessemer**, will host This Hope in concert Feb. 14, 6 p.m. Morgan Bailey is pastor. ► **Southcrest Church, Bessemer**, will hold a gospel singing Feb. 6, 7 p.m., with RhonPaul Ministries. The kitchen will open at 6 p.m. Scott Bush is pastor.

BULLOCK-CENTENNIAL

► **First Church, Union Springs**, recently purchased new hymnals and dedicated them Jan. 24 in memory of Bertha Thomas Hall, a faithful member of the church's worship choir for more than 50 years. She died Jan. 5. A luncheon followed the service. Dale Huff is interim pastor.

CHEROKEE

► **Slackland Church, Leesburg**, will host Nick and Jessica Trammell in concert Jan. 31, 6 p.m. A reception honoring Music Director Mickey Helms for his 9th anniversary will follow. The church also will host George Fridlender Feb. 7, 6 p.m. Fridlender, who was born and raised in the old Soviet Union, will share his testimony. Danny Flora is pastor.

CHILTON

► **David Reed** is the new pastor of **Refuge Church, Clanton**. He comes from Underwood Church,

Montevallo, where he served as pastor for 11 years. Reed also serves as a juvenile detention officer for Shelby County. A graduate of the University of Montevallo, he and his wife, Cindy, have one child.

CLEBURNE

► **Heflin Church** will host Southern gospel artists Josh and Ashley (Easley) Franks in concert Jan. 31, 5:30 p.m. Ashley grew up in Heflin and graduated from Cleburne County High School. A nursery will be provided. For information call 256-463-2576 or visit www.heflinbaptist.org. Philip R. Morris is pastor.

COFFEE

► **County Line Church, Enterprise**, will hold revival Feb. 7-10 with Messianic rabbi and author Derek Leman. Services will be Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Danny Wiggins is pastor.

ETOWAH

► **Etowah Association** will hold its annual senior adult breakfast Feb. 18, 8 a.m., at Gadsden Convention Hall with Christian humorist Brother Billy Bob Bohannon. For reservations call 256-547-1691. Gary Caldwell is director of missions.

ST. CLAIR

► **Cedar Grove Church, Leeds**, will hold an event called Help Stop Human Trafficking Jan. 30, 5:30-9 p.m. There will be live music and food. All proceeds will go to Make Way Partners. For information call 205-699-8446. Billy Abrams is pastor. ► **Mount Moriah Church, Pell City**, will hold a fifth Sunday night singing Jan. 31, 7 p.m., with New Mercy Trio, of Northport. Supper will be at 5:30 p.m. Bring covered dishes and drinks. For information call Steve Latta at 205-640-7743. Zane Smith is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **Chewacla Church, Opelika**, will host guest speaker Bill King, director of missions for Tuskegee Lee Association, Feb. 21, 11 a.m. King also will perform as Brother Billy Bob Bohannon during a 5 p.m. service. Aaron Pruitt is pastor.

WASHINGTON

► **James "Jim" Blair** is the new pastor of **Wagarville Church**. He comes from Emmanuel Chapel, Hazel Green, where he served as associate pastor. A native of Weaverville, Calif., Blair is a graduate of Fresno Missionary Baptist Institute in California. He and his wife, Tria, have four children.

Widow of former Baptist leader Bagley dies

Helen Bagley McGough, the widow of George E. Bagley Sr., executive secretary-treasurer of the Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions from 1963 until 1983, died Jan. 19. She was 88.

A native of Atlanta, McGough attended the Woman's Missionary

Training School in Louisville, Ky. While there, she met Bagley, who was attending Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. They married in 1944 and moved the next year to Montgomery, where they joined Cloverdale Baptist Church.

Before becoming executive secretary-treasurer of the state board,

Bagley was assistant to Executive Secretary-Treasurer A. Hamilton Reid and manager of Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega. Helping him in his role at Shocco Springs, McGough led conferences, taught classes and directed meetings and activities there as well as at other Baptist conference centers like Ridgecrest in North Carolina, Glorieta in New Mexico and Cedarmore in Kentucky.

She graduated from Huntingdon College in Montgomery and Auburn University and received a doctor of humane letters from Judson College in Marion in honor of her many years of leadership in education and church and denominational service across Alabama and the Southern Baptist Convention.

In the community, McGough taught English and served as a guidance counselor at Sidney Lanier High School in Montgomery and helped develop the first honors English program in the Montgomery Public Schools.

After Bagley died in 1998, she married Homer E. McGough and joined him in membership at First Baptist Church, Montgomery.

She is survived by McGough, three children, two stepchildren, eight grandchildren and several step grandchildren and step great-grandchildren. (TAB)

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

Lineville Church pastor Colquett celebrates 25 years

Pastor Jerry Colquett never dreamed he would be at Lineville Baptist Church for 25 years, but now he cannot imagine having been anywhere else. "I've always felt so blessed to be associated with the quality of leadership at this church," Colquett said. "(I'm) grateful to the church for the opportunity to serve this community and church for these years."

The Opp native accepted the call of the Carey Baptist Association church in 1984, nine years after graduating from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

In Colquett's time at the church, he has overseen two major building projects — the renovation of the auditorium and church property in 1989 and the addition of a family ministry building, which was completed in 2004.

Colquett also has seen his methods of ministry change. To begin with, he emphasized door-to-door evangelism and outreach. Today the church focuses on ministries like the Judgment House and Upward basketball.

Through it all, Colquett's wife, Carolyn, has served faithfully at his side, teaching Sunday School, working in Vacation Bible School and most recently, cooking for Wednesday night supper, among other things.

E.Z. Benefield, who has been a member of Lineville Baptist for 35 years, praised the leadership of Colquett and his wife. "Brother Jerry is as good a pastor as you could ask for, and his wife, Carolyn, is right by his side," he said. "I don't want to do without him."

Four Alabama choirs sing at Carnegie Hall

For Adam Traylor, music minister at First Baptist Church, Eufaula, one of his dreams was realized Jan. 22 — to take his choir to sing at Carnegie Hall in New York City. "I've sung at Carnegie Hall before, but it's been a dream come true to sing the songs we've sung at church in Carnegie Hall with the people we minister with every day," Traylor said.

To sing at Carnegie Hall was not only a dream come true for Traylor but also for the more than 100 Alabama Baptists from First, Eufaula, and three other Alabama Baptist churches who joined in an approximately 240-voice choir in True North Presents' American Gospel Music Celebration. The choir, which was made up of choirs from across the nation, accompanied featured gospel music artists Babbie Mason, Triumphant Quartet and Vocal Union.

"[True North Present's] desire is to use local church music ministries and to give them a special week together to better themselves musically. But also (their desire is) to bring gospel music into New York City," Traylor explained. "This whole trip has a greater purpose, which excites us all. We're not doing it just for the fun of it but for the cause of Christ as well."

In addition to First, Eufaula, in Barbour Baptist Association, other choirs participating in the concert were from First Baptist Church, Prattville, in Autauga Baptist Association, and Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery, and Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery, both in Montgomery Baptist Association.

Rich retires from Bullock-Centennial DOM role

Although Curtis Rich, director of missions (DOM) of Bullock-Centennial Baptist Association, has "retired" from that role, his half-century of time in the Lord's service is still gaining speed.

Just one week after stepping down as DOM, Rich picked up another pastorate at Evergreen Baptist Church, Clayton, in Barbour Baptist Association. "I'm not retiring; I'm just refocusing," he said. "It's a joy to serve the Lord. When one door closes, He always opens another door. I'm amazed at what He's done in my life. I'm just a country boy who God saved by His grace, and I see all the blessings He's brought."

A graduate of Norman Park Junior College in Georgia and Baptist Bible Institute (now Baptist College of Florida) in Graceville, Fla., Rich served as pastor of Basin Baptist Church, Elba, in Coffee Association; Eastside Baptist Church, Union Springs, Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Union Springs, Inverness Baptist Church, Union Springs, all in Bullock-Centennial Association; Mount Zion Baptist Church, Louisville, and Clío Baptist Church both in Barbour Association; Napier Baptist Church, Dothan, and Cedar Springs Baptist Church, Ashford, both in Columbia Association. He also has served as pastor of churches in Georgia and Mississippi.



COLQUETT



Photo courtesy of FBC Andalusia

FBC ANDALUSIA CELEBRATES DEBT PAID IN FULL

First Baptist Church, Andalusia, recently celebrated the retirement of its debt with a note burning ceremony. The debt was incurred when the church purchased property and a new student ministry building. Fred Karthaus (left) is pastor.

God and the gridiron

Why are U.S. sports so Christianity friendly?

When Colt McCoy of the University of Texas expressed his faith in an interview following the Longhorns' BCS championship game loss to the University of Alabama on Jan. 7, the quarterback placed himself in a growing cadre of Christian athletes becoming increasingly vocal about their commitment to Jesus Christ.

"I always give God the glory," said McCoy, who was knocked out of the game — the last of his college career — by a shoulder injury, probably contributing to his team's defeat. "I never question why things happen the way they do. God is in control of my life. And I know that if nothing else, I'm standing on the Rock."

Like McCoy, sophomore Alabama running back Mark Ingram recently vocalized his faith in God. With tears running from his eyes, Ingram praised God for his achievements during his December 2009 acceptance speech for the Heisman Trophy.

"First and foremost I'd like to thank God," Ingram said. "I am so blessed, and without Him I wouldn't have been able to accomplish this."

Highly publicized expressions of faith have become standard fare in college and professional sports at least since 1977, the year running back Herb Lusk dropped to one knee after scoring a touchdown for his Philadelphia Eagles. The end-zone prayer often is cited as the first to be televised across the nation.

Many Christians find those high-profile testimonies encouraging, prominently featuring evangelical sports figures in worship services and evangelistic conferences. The trend prompted writer Tom Krattenmaker to call big-time sports "one of the most outwardly religious sectors of American culture."

In part, the prominence given

Christian athletes can be attributed to American Christianity's addiction to celebrity culture. But some observers believe sports figures offer a more distinctive appeal than mere fame.

Christian athletes appear more demonstrative and outspoken in testifying about their faith than celebrities in entertainment or business in large part because they understand what it means to be on a team and share credit, said Grant Teaff, executive director of the American Football Coaches Association.

"The simple answer is that as committed Christians, they know from where their strength comes and recognize the source of their talents and gifts," he said. "As team players, they know they didn't get this far alone, and they want to give credit."

That same attitude extends to athletes who compete in individual events, he added.

"They understand they have been trained and developed, and they have

been blessed with somebody who helped shape that raw talent," Teaff said. "Unless the person is unusually self-centered, athletes know they don't win alone. And Christians, especially, should have that tendency not to be self-centered but to want to share credit."

That not only means thanking coaches, trainers and teammates, but also giving glory to God, he explained. But most Christian athletes understand the distinction between praising God for allowing them to perform to the best of their ability and believing God plays favorites in athletic competitions and determines their outcome, Teaff insisted. "God loves the players and coaches on the other side. God loves the officials. He loves — period," he said.

Some sporting fans find such public expressions of faith dis-

comforting. In his book, "Onward Christian Athletes," published last year, Krattenmaker warned that vocal expressions of faith in stadiums risks alienating an increasingly pluralistic society.

"There are many secular fans who really feel annoyed by that kind of religious expression," Krattenmaker, a Portland, Ore., specialist on religion in public life, told The Associated Press. "Even people who are religious themselves often resent this situation where athletes talk about God in this big moment of victory, sometimes seeming to imply God gave them the victory."

But others, like University of Florida quarterback Tim Tebow, who famously puts Scripture references in his game-day eye black, say it's simply a part of who they are. And focusing on one's faith keeps athletes' priorities in order, Tebow says.

Tebow, who grew up the son of missionaries in the Philippines and has seen desperate poverty at close quarters, told *The Washington Post* he couldn't imagine getting stressed out over something as inconsequential as a BCS National Championship Game.

"Pressure is not having to win a football game; pressure is having to find your next meal," he told the *Post* last year before the Gators' win over the University of Oklahoma.

Nevertheless outspoken Christian athletes like Tebow — whom *Sports Illustrated* writer Austin Murphy called "the most effective ambassador-warrior for his faith I've come across in 25 years" at the magazine — continue to feature prominently in evangelistic outreach.

Open about faith

For more than a year, billboards across the Dallas-Fort Worth area and spots on local broadcast media have presented sports and other celebrities — and a few regular folks with a story to tell — proclaiming the message, "I am Second," and directing people to the iamsecond.com Web site. Recently a com-

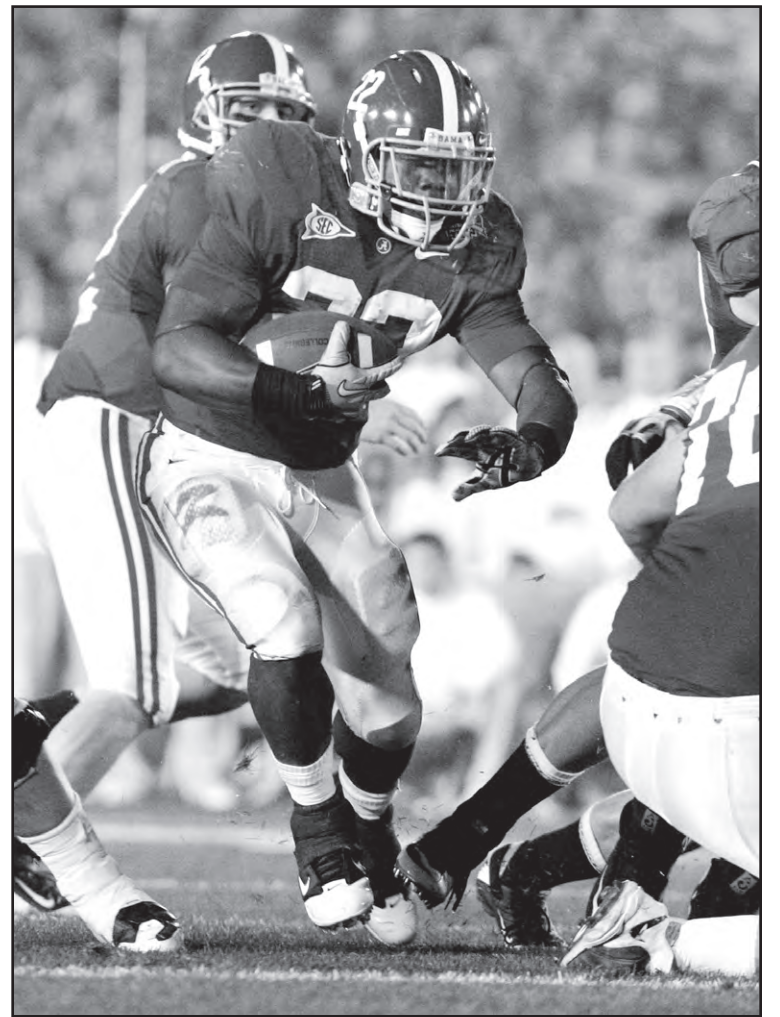


Photo courtesy of the University of Alabama

VOCAL — Sophomore Alabama running back Mark Ingram praised God for his achievements after winning the Heisman Trophy.

mercial featuring Texas' McCoy launched nationally prior to the BCS National Championship.

Athletic figures such as Jason Witten of the Dallas Cowboys and former NFL coaches Joe Gibbs and Tony Dungy figure prominently in the campaign, which also features Jason Castro of American Idol, Michelle Aguilar of TV's "The Biggest Loser" and other celebrities.

A Texas-based church-planting ministry, e3 Partners, developed the media campaign, and Norm Miller, chief executive of Dallas-based Interstate Batteries, provided key support.

On its best day soon after the campaign was launched in December 2008, about 15,000 people visited the ministry's Web site — many to view the testimony of Brian Welch, formerly of the heavy metal rock band Korn, said Nathan Sheets, vice president of e3 Partners and team leader for the "I am Second" campaign.

But when the campaign featured quarterbacks McCoy and Sam Bradford of the Oklahoma Sooners prior to the two teams' big rivalry football game in Dallas, their videos attracted 33,000 visitors in one day to the Web site and prompted "a tremendous amount of forwarding," said Sheets, a member of Prestonwood Baptist Church in suburban Dallas.

Athletes draw attention, and they often are more open about sharing their faith than some other public figures, he noted.

"Athletes in general are not reliant on continuing relational development for their success," Sheets

said. Actors or recording stars might put future contracts in jeopardy by being outspoken about their faith, but athletes tend to be judged almost exclusively by performance in competition, he explained.

Of course, any public figure invites scrutiny. And sometimes athletes who have cultivated a straight-and-narrow image may find themselves losing lucrative endorsements if personal frailties come to light, as golfer Tiger Woods discovered when his marital infidelity became known.

Athletes at every level — and to some degree, any celebrity who makes his or her faith public — find themselves subject to close scrutiny, Teaff observed. "There's a segment of society that has negative feelings about people who achieve success. They love to see them tumble and to fall short of what they proclaim themselves to be," he said.

Facing temptations

Teaff, who coached football at Baylor University from 1972 to 1992 and led the Bears to a Southwest Conference championship, noted he always spent three days with freshmen athletes at the beginning of each year to provide them a solid foundation to help them deal with the temptations they would face. As the coach at a Christian university with a strong Baptist heritage, Teaff noted he required participation in team devotionals prior to each game.

"We talked about the importance of reading the Bible, about their prayer life and about attending church," he recalled. (ABP, TAB)

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BP photo

MEMORABLE MOMENT — (From left) Ron Herrod, current president of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists (COSBE); Brian Fossett, past COSBE president; Richard Harris, interim NAMB president; and Frank Page, NAMB's vice president for evangelism, cut the ribbon for the new Hall of Faith.

'For generations to come'

Room dedicated to house Evangelists Hall of Faith

A year and a half after two Alabamians were among the first to be inducted into the Evangelists Hall of Faith, they saw themselves immortalized for that honor in a room dedicated to the group.

Alabama evangelists Junior Hill, of Hartselle, and Leon Westerhouse, of Birmingham, were present for the dedication Jan. 14 at the North American Mission Board (NAMB), as was legendary music evangelist Cliff Barrows.

With brass plaques, the Hall of Faith — permanently located at NAMB's offices in Alpharetta, Ga. — will perpetually honor the 30 living and deceased evangelists tapped at the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists' (COSBE) inaugural induction in Indianapolis in June 2008 as well as future inductees.

In introducing Barrows, Hill reminded the audience

that "it's often said when Billy Graham is introduced, he has spoken to more people than any other person in history. Well, if that's true — and most agree it is — that also means that Cliff Barrows has sung and led the music before more people than anybody in history."

Barrows' silvery voice — so familiar to those who watched him lead mass choirs at Billy Graham Crusades around the world — instantly conjures up memories of his 65-year partnership with Graham, George Beverly Shea and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

"I bring greetings from Bill and Bev," Barrows said, noting that "it is a great privilege for me to represent them as co-laborers together with Christ in recognizing this calling and the attention that has been given by our celebration today."

Following his remarks and a standing ovation, Barrows generated more applause and teary eyes as he stepped up to lead the audience of COSBE members, their families and NAMB staff in a refrain of "How Great Thou Art."

That song "was just a high moment, a wonderful experience," Westerhouse said. "It's something I will remember the rest of my life."

COSBE's current president, Ron Herrod, of Sevierville, Tenn., called the evangelists named to the Hall of Faith "incredible men of God, and for many generations to come, people will come here and see these plaques, read about these men and the incredible influence they had on evangelism in Southern Baptist life."

Every other year, two more evangelists will be inducted into the Hall of Faith during COSBE's summer conference, held in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) annual meeting. The next Hall of Faith inductees will be announced at a dinner in June in Orlando, Fla., site of this year's SBC annual meeting.

Inducted in the inaugural Hall of Faith class in 2008 were Hyman Appelman, Walter K. Ayers, Barrows, Manley Beasley, Wayne Bristow, Sam Cathey, Clyde Chiles, E.J. Daniels, Ron Dunn, Freddie Gage, Mike Gilchrist, Graham, Vance Havner, Jesse Hendley, Rudy Hernandez, Hill, Eddie Martin, Angel Martinez, Homer Martinez, Shea, Bailey Smith, J. Harold Smith, Jerry Spencer, Bill Stafford, Bette Stainecker, Jay Strack, Westerhouse, Gene Williams, T.W. Wilson and Don Womack. (BP, TAB)



BP photo

'HOW GREAT THOU ART' — Cliff Barrows, music evangelist with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association since 1945, leads a refrain after his remarks at the ribbon cutting.

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

B&H Academic asks students 'Is God good?'

NASHVILLE — If God is good, then why does evil exist? Philosophers, theologians and leading intellectuals have struggled with the question for centuries.

Now, collegians can speak to what seems to be an irresolvable question that yet demands an answer.

B&H Academic, a division of B&H Publishing Group of LifeWay Christian Resources, has launched www.GodorNot.com, a social networking site for college students to upload original videos answering the question, "Why do you believe God is good?"

All videos should be no longer than two minutes and must be uploaded by April 5. A \$5,000 prize will be awarded to the video receiving the most votes among those submitted by college students attending an accredited institution in the United States. Eligible undergraduate collegians or seminarians must be carrying 12 or more semester hours and graduate students must be enrolled in at least six semester hours.

"When students are challenged to defend their faith, they had better be ready to give a strong answer," said Jim Baird, publisher for B&H Academic. "One of the greatest challenges students will face is their belief in the goodness of God."

Noting "a very zealous generation of students" for the cause of Christ, Baird said, "We want to make sure the students know why they are zealous. We want to help equip them to articulate a solid apologetic. We are called to defend our faith when skeptics challenge us."

Texas churches apparently attacked by arsonists

TYLER, Texas — The number of suspicious fires at churches in east Texas has climbed to seven as federal investigators join state and local authorities in seeking clues to two blazes in Tyler, Texas.

The latest fires were at Tyland Baptist Church and First Church of Christ, Scientist, both in Tyler. Tyland is the third Southern Baptist church to burn in what investigators believe is a string of arsons. Both fires took place the weekend of Jan. 16-17.

On Jan. 12, Lake Athens Baptist Church, Athens, about 65 miles southeast of Dallas, was one of two churches in that town heavily damaged by what investigators believe were arson fires set in the early morning hours. The week before that, another church near Athens was apparently torched.

In Van Zandt County, located between Athens and Tyler, arson also is suspected in two fires set in early January, one at Little Hope Baptist Church, Canton, on New Year's Day.

Authorities in the three affected counties are being aided in their investigation by the Texas state fire marshal's office and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Authorities first suspected burglary as a motive at the Athens churches, said Athens Assistant Police Chief Rodney Williams, but the investigation is ongoing.

British Baptist aid worker dies in Afghanistan

DIDCOT, England — Officials have confirmed the death of a 24-year-old aid worker affiliated with the British Baptist missions agency BMS World Mission in Afghanistan. Foul play is not suspected in the death.

Fay Martin, who hailed from Surrey, England, was found dead Jan. 17 on a partner agency's property in Kabul, according to a BMS press release. She had worked in the country since October 2008 and just returned to Afghanistan earlier that day to renew her work after a routine furlough in the United Kingdom.

"At this stage, we believe no third party was involved in Fay's death," the press release said. "However, the appropriate authorities in Afghanistan are aware of Fay's death, are carrying out normal investigations and will advise us in due course."

Martin's work was concentrated in northwestern Pakistan, where she assessed agricultural needs as part of development work with a BMS partner agency.

Want to see your news in *The Alabama Baptist*?

E-mail your information to news@thealabamabaptist.org, fax it to 205-870-8957 or call 1-800-803-5201. Church announcements should arrive three weeks prior to the event.

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ONE PROGRAM:
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MANY MINISTRIES:
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ALABAMA BAPTIST CONVENTION STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

HELPING THE HAITIANS

Breaking news out of Haiti breaks our hearts. The images of unimaginable suffering continue to be seen on television and via the Internet.

The earthquake of 7.0 on the Richter scale has shaken the emotional foundation of the world.



sister state convention in Florida has been working and ministering in Haiti through a vital and strong missions partnership effort. In addition, the connection of Haiti to Florida is a natural one, due

to the number of Haitians living in the Sunshine State.

On behalf of Alabama

Baptists, your State Board of Missions has already sent an initial check of \$50,000 to the Florida Baptist Convention. More, much more, is needed and Alabama Baptists will respond to this devastating situation as we have during the aftermath of the storms and other tragedies of the past.

Contributions designated for disaster relief may be made by check or by credit card. To donate online go to www.alsbom.org/haiti. As donations are received, we will forward them on behalf of Alabama Baptists to the Florida Baptist Convention for use on the ground in Haiti. The partnership with Florida Baptists and the North American Mission Board ensures your donations will be used both effectively and efficiently.

The long-term strategy is much more involved. When

the green light is given to us, Alabama Baptists will respond with trained disaster relief personnel to be sent to Haiti. Long after the news spotlight has shifted elsewhere and many relief agencies have departed, the yellow shirts of Alabama Baptists and other Southern Baptists will be on the ground working in recovery, restoration and rebuilding.

More than four years after Hurricane Katrina, Alabama Baptists are still working in the hard hit areas of New

By Rick Lance
State Missionary
Executive Director-Treasurer

Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The same will most likely be true in Haiti. Some of the hardest work comes after the days, weeks and months following such a traumatic disaster.

Our disaster relief strategist, State Missionary Mel Johnson, will be working alongside many other similar leaders in the days to come. Their efforts will be to maximize every dollar and human resource possible in helping the Haitians through this difficult time.

As we view the riveting images of human suffering, we grow impatient, wanting to do something for hurting people affected by the

devastation. Short-term and long-term strategies involve intercessory praying, intentional giving, and in some instances, individuals going to Haiti. The short-term strategy is now unfolding. In the near future, it will blend into the long-term strategy.

Thanks, Alabama Baptists, for your praying, giving and going. Remember, disaster relief is a vital part of our one mission, the Great

Commission. These efforts are financially undergirded by our one program, the Cooperative Program. Together we make a difference for

Christ in a world of hurting people including our Haitian friends.

Zechariah 4:6b



Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions

For Alabama Baptists and other concerned Christians, the question is, what we can do to help the Haitians? Perhaps the best way to begin to answer that thoughtful question is to consider both short-term and long-term strategies.

At present, we need to bathe the situation in prayer. The hurting people of Haiti need our prayers. As Oswald Chambers once said, "Do not pray for a greater work. Prayer is the greater work." Indeed, there is no greater work for Christian believers than the ministry of praying.

Obviously, we desire to do something in addition to praying for the people. Giving through constructive and proven channels is another way to aid the masses of people in this nation ravaged by earth-shaking destruction. For more than 15 years, our

collegiate evangelism conference 2010

February 5 – 6

Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery

(in)gauge. Culture...
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Worship

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Cost: \$15 per person
(includes conference
registration and Saturday
Chick-fil-A® lunch).

Speaker

Mike Satterfield



For schedule, hotel and
registration info go to:
www.thestudenthub.org
or call 1.800.264.1225,
ext. 262. **Registration
deadline is February 1.**

Speaker

Ed Litton



This conference is sponsored by the Office of Collegiate & Student Ministries
and made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.



Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions

State Evangelism Conference

Imagine What If...

Every person in
Alabama was prayed for
by name.

Every person in
Alabama received a
Gospel witness.

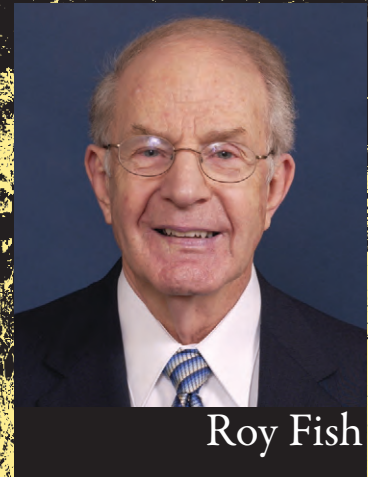
Every church planned an
evangelistic service for Easter
morning, April 4, 2010.

**Monday and Tuesday,
February 22–23, 2010**

**Vaughn Forest Baptist
Church, Montgomery**



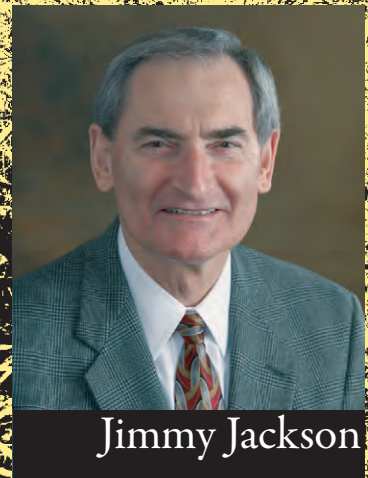
Ed Young Sr.



Roy Fish



Ed Young Jr.



Jimmy Jackson

Great preaching, featuring:

- Ed Young Jr. • Ed Young Sr.
- Roy Fish • Jimmy Jackson

Great music, featuring:

- Kevin Derryberry • The Specks

Great Commission Ministries Track, featuring:

- Local church helps by staff of Second Baptist,
Houston

For more information, please contact Stephanie McClelland at smcclelland@alsbom.org or 1.800.264.1225, ext. 245.



This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

Marriage Celebration

Commitment **A**ffirmation **F**aith **E**xhilaration

Friday and Saturday, March 12-13, 2010
Shocco Springs

Leaders: Mike & Lyn Jackson, Millbrook

Focus for this event will be the importance of prayer in marriage.

Registration: www.shocco.org/reser or
1-800-280-1105

Registration cost: \$142 per couple (*includes lodging, meals and the program*).

For more information, please contact State Missionary Eileen Mitchell at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 221, emitchell@alsbom.org



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RA Congress

**Friday and Saturday,
March 12-13, 2010**
Camp Grandview (Prattville)

REGISTRATION: Begins at 5 p.m. Friday

CONCLUSION: 1:30 p.m. Saturday

CONGRESS EVENTS:

- Campouts
- Missionaries
- Conferences
- More than 20 Field Events
- Pinewood Derby
- Missions Fair
- Soapbox Derby
- Outstanding Royal Ambassadors
- Climbing Wall



COST:

- \$5 — admission/use fee
- \$4 — per meal
- \$3 — camping fee
- \$5 — floor space in gym and cabins (*presently no beds in cabins*)

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

Want to know God?

By Bobby E. Hopper
Director of Missions
Bethel Baptist Association

J.M.'s eldest son asked, "Dad, why don't you give your heart and life to Christ?" J.M. answered, "Son, you don't know what all I have done."

J.M. had an intriguing past. As a 5-year-old, he, along with his eight siblings, felt the impact of the Great Depression. Six years later, he witnessed his dad's suicide. At 18, he left for World War II.

While serving in North Africa and Italy, J.M. had a machine gun and a grenade wound. He was left for dead in a foxhole, was taken prisoner, eventually escaped and was missing in action for a short time. His mom received word that he was dead — killed in action. She responded, "No, he is not because I am praying for him." Yes, J.M. had a praying mother. Her last plea before her death was that all her children be saved.

Somewhere in J.M.'s past, he learned his sins were so bad that he could not be saved. He attended church on Christmas and Easter and for funerals without any persuasion but had to be begged on other occasions. He wanted his children to be Christians, but he knew there was no hope for him. He always made sure that someone offered the blessing before a meal. He acknowledged that God was in control but could not accept the fact that God could forgive him.

J.M.'s eldest son could not bear the thought of eternal separation from his dad. He would say, "Dad, if you ask God to forgive you, Psalm 103:12 says, 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.'"

J.M. was confident that his sin was too great. He understood Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," but did not understand Ephesians 3:20, "Now unto Him (Jesus) that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." The Holy Spirit was working in J.M.

Finally he could not resist the prayers and pleas of those who loved him. At 58, J.M. asked Jesus to forgive him. Dying two years later, he had lived an abundant life as promised in John 10:10b, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

'Horrible, systematic' persecution

North Korea named worst oppressor; other nations listed

An organization that serves the persecuted church again has rated North Korea as the worst oppressor of Christians.

It was the eighth consecutive year that Open Doors USA gave the Asian regime the top ranking, this time 25 points ahead of Iran, the No. 2-rated country.

Meanwhile, more than two-thirds of the world's population live in countries with high restrictions on religion, according to a report by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life, titled "Global Restrictions on Religion."

The study covered 198 countries or territories, constituting 99.5 percent of the world population.

Nearly 70 percent of the 6.8 billion people in the world reside in countries with high or very high restrictions on religion, the Pew Forum reported. Although only 64 countries or territories studied (or 32 percent) have those levels of restrictions, they contain the large majority of the world's population.

The Pew Forum divided its study into two categories, one assessing government restrictions and the other social hostilities.

The first encompasses actions, policies and laws by the government.

The second consists of actions by social groups or private organizations and individuals.

In the government restrictions ratings, the countries that scored "very high," or in the top 5 percent of the scores, were, in descending order, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Uzbekistan, China, Egypt, Burma, Maldives, Eritrea, Malaysia and Brunei.

The countries that ranked "very high" in social hostilities were, in descending order, Iraq, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Ban-

THE WORST FOR GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS

Saudi Arabia, Iran, Uzbekistan, China, Egypt, Burma, Maldives, Eritrea, Malaysia and Brunei

THE WORST FOR SOCIAL HOSTILITIES

Iraq, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Somalia, Israel, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Saudi Arabia



TAB graphic

ladesh, Somalia, Israel, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Saudi Arabia.

In rankings by region, the Middle East-North Africa had the highest scores in both government restrictions on and social hostilities toward religion, while the Americas were the least restrictive in both indexes.

Iran, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan and India were the most restrictive among the world's 25 most populous countries when both categories are considered. Meanwhile, the least restrictive of the 25 most populous countries were Brazil, Ja-

pan, the United States, Italy, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

North Korea was not included in the report because of a lack of access to the information required, according to the Pew Forum.

Pew acknowledged that the North Korean regime is reportedly "among the most repressive" in the world. It also is likely the most closed society in the world to outsiders.

North Korea's No. 1 ranking on the Open Doors list of the world's worst persecutors of Christians was no surprise, the organization's president said.

"There is no other country in the world where Christians are persecuted in such a horrible and systematic manner," Carl Moeller said in a Jan. 6 news release from Open Doors USA. "Three generations of a family are often thrown into prison when one member is incarcerated."

The regime of dictator Kim Jong-Il has an estimated 200,000 political prisoners, including 40,000 to 60,000 Christians, according to Open Doors.

A longtime North Korean observer, who was not identified by Open Doors for safety reasons, said, "Christians are the target of fierce government action, and once caught, are not regarded as human. Last year we had evidence that some were used as guinea pigs to test chemical and biological weapons."

Despite the repression, "the number of Christians in North Korea has grown in the last 10 years," Moeller said.

According to Open Doors, the 10 countries where persecution of Christians is worst, with scores in parentheses, are North Korea (90.5), Iran (65.5), Saudi Arabia (63.5), Somalia (62.5), Maldives (62.0), Afghanistan (61.5), Yemen (60.5), Mauritania (59.5), Laos (56.0) and Uzbekistan (56.0).

North Korea and Laos have communist governments, while the other eight countries are Islamic states.

The U.S. State Department maintains a list of "countries of particular concern," a designation reserved for the world's most severe violators of religious freedom.

The eight countries now on that list are Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Uzbekistan. (BP)

Longtime missionary doctor to Nigeria dies

Longtime Alabama Baptist missionary to Nigeria Dr. Martha Jordan Gilliland Stewart died Dec. 27, leaving behind a legacy of faithfulness and commitment to missions.

She was 92.

After graduating from the University of Louisville School of Medicine in Kentucky in 1941, Stewart and her first husband, William Gilliland, were appointed missionaries to Nigeria in 1942 by the Foreign Mission Board (now the International Mission Board).

Unable to move to Nigeria until 1946 because of World War II, Stewart, also a graduate of Howard College in Birmingham (now Samford University), taught chemistry at Judson College in Marion and served as the school's physician during the interim period.

She served the people of Nigeria from 1946 to 1981, even after the death of her husband in 1964.

Born in Ozark, Stewart grew up in Birmingham. During her time at Howard, she taught Sunday School at Ruhama Baptist Church, Birmingham.

Stewart was preceded in death by her second husband, David Stewart.

She is survived by two children, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at Mountain Brook Baptist Church on Jan. 30 at 11 a.m.

For more information, call 205-871-0331. (TAB)



With my whole heart I seek You ... I have stored up Your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

Psalm 119:10-11

Want to see your news in *The Alabama Baptist*?

E-mail your information to news@thealabamabaptist.org; fax it to 205-870-8957 or call 1-800-803-5201. Church announcements should arrive three weeks prior to the event.



Historical Highlights

from previous issues of *The Alabama Baptist*

Compiled by Kathleen Prude

50 Years Ago January 1960

13th Annual Conference Held: The Alabama Baptist Evangelism Conference, which traditionally draws the largest Baptist crowd of any meeting during the year, met in Tuscaloosa at First Baptist Church. Among the speakers were W.A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, the largest church in the Southern Baptist Convention, and A.V. Washburn, secretary of the Sunday School Board (now LifeWay Christian Resources). Ralph E. Longshore is state evangelism secretary.

40 Years Ago January 1970

Heaven Came Down: The overwhelming consensus of those present at the evangelism conference at Central Park Baptist Church, Birmingham, was that a little bit of heaven fell during the meetings. Singing at the conference was excellent, thanks to the leadership of Claude Rhea, dean of the school of music at Samford University in Birmingham. Some of the best sermons were preached by Alabama pas-

tors: W.C. Garland of First Baptist Church, Florence; Charles Carter of Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville; and Troy Morrison of Twelfth Street Baptist Church, Gadsden.

30 Years Ago January 1980

Simple Revival Formula Given: A simple formula for revival was given to a gathering of Baptist preachers by a Methodist seminary professor during the annual meeting of the State Evangelism Conference at Samford University in Birmingham. Robert Coleman, professor of evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Ky., said, "Revival comes when we stop confessing other people's sins and confess our own." Other speakers were Alabamians Rick Lance, pastor of First Baptist Church, Cullman, and Dotson M. Nelson Jr., pastor of Mountain Brook Baptist Church, and a Texan, James L. Pleitz, pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas.

20 Years Ago January 1990

43rd State Evangelism Confer-

ence Held: With the theme "So the Lost May Know," the evangelism conference was held Jan. 29-30 at Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills. Those attending were welcomed by Charles Carter, president of the convention and pastor of the host church. Southern Baptist Convention President Jerry Vines was among the speakers.

10 Years Ago January 2000

Students Celebrate Y2K: While the world watched the clock and wondered what Y2K would bring, 46,000 students gathered at seven sites around the United States for YouthLink 2000. Despite the fact that concerns of anticipated Y2K glitches and possible terrorism acts kept thousands of people away from the event entirely or caused some to leave early, more than 1,200 Alabama students were among the 10,000 gathered at the Atlanta site to celebrate the year 2000. To ring in the new year, the students shouted a message of commitment to the Lord, and nearly 1,500 received Christ as Savior as the clock neared midnight.

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CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR PASTOR: Central Baptist Church, Bearden (www.cbcbeardean.org), a large suburban Knoxville, Tenn., church with ties to both the SBC and the CBF, is seeking a senior pastor. Selection will be led by the Holy Spirit; however, professional degrees, maturity and experience in related positions will be expected of any candidate. For more information about this position, to apply or to recommend a candidate, please see the church Web site at www.cbcbeardean.org/pastorsearch.shtml.

PASTOR: Corinth Heights Baptist Church is currently accepting resumés for a full-time pastor. Mail to: CHBC, Pastor Search Committee, 4070 Dime Road, Haleyville, AL 35556.

FULL-TIME PASTOR: Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, Easley, S.C., a traditional Southern Baptist church, seeking a pastor with a seminary degree, 10+ years experience, evangelistic and a heart for people. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 101 Pisgah Road, Easley, SC 29642, or e-mail: mtpisgaheasley@yahoo.com.

SENIOR PASTOR: First Baptist Church of Florence, Ala., is seeking a senior pastor. Master's level seminary (SBC) degree or above and five years experience as a pastor preferred. Send resumé to: fbcfpastorsearch@gmail.com or mail to: 209 N. Walnut Street, Florence, AL 35630.

PASTOR: Rural church seeking full-time pastor. Resumés should be sent to: Larry Enfinger, P.O. Box 732, Blakely, GA 39823. Resumés will be accepted through Feb. 26.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Center Hill Baptist Church in Jemison, Ala., is accepting resumés for pastor. At this time we are looking at a bivocational position. Please send your resumés or if you have any questions to: Larry Cobb, 2240 Co.

Rd. 25, Jemison AL 35085, or e-mail to: blarrycobb@yahoo.com.

MINISTER OF MUSIC: Seeking full-time minister of music. Seminary degree and prior experience required. Red House Baptist Church, Richmond, Ky. E-mail Alex Poulter at wapbear@insightbb.com. Web site: www.redhousebaptistchurch.org.

MINISTER OF MUSIC: The Pintala Baptist Church is engaged in a search process for a minister of music. Interested persons should contact Gary Burton, garyburton1@charter.net. Resumés may also be sent to him. Pintala Baptist Church, 73 Federal Road, Hope Hull, AL 36043. www.pintalabaptist.com.

PART-TIME/BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER: Please send resumé to: New Hope Baptist Church, ATTN: Search Committee, 13110 Mooresville Road, Athens, AL 35613.

TWO POSITIONS: Cottage Hill Baptist Church is seeking part-time worship leader and part-time pianist for blended worship services. With prayerful consideration, please reply with resumé: pastor@cottagehillbaptist.org or mail: Pastor, CHBC, 1120 Pleasant Grove Road, Pleasant Grove, AL 35127. Rev. Jerry Sherrell is pastor.

STUDENT PASTOR: Smokerise (SBC) is a progressive, growing church looking for a dynamic, full-time student pastor. Submit a resumé and DVD including a testimony/introduction and a sermon/lesson. E-mail resumés to: dallen@smokerisechurch.org. Send DVDs to: 1550 Scenic Trail, Warrior, AL 35180. Due Feb. 17.

FULL-TIME YOUTH MINISTER: Meadowbrook Baptist Church in Oxford, Ala. Send resumés to: 1125 Meadowbrook Court Oxford, AL 36203 or e-mail to: mbcabp@bellsouth.net.

MINISTER OF STUDENTS: Calvary Baptist Church in Scottsboro, Ala., is now searching for a full-time minister of students. Minimum requirement: currently pursuing or have completed a seminary degree and have 3-5 years of experience working with youth. Mail resumés to: Minister of Students Search Committee, Calvary Baptist Church, 305 County Park Road, Scottsboro, AL 35768, or e-mail to: pdstout@centurytel.net.

ASSOCIATE STUDENT MINISTER: Mount Zion Baptist Church (www.mzbc.net), located in Huntsville, Ala., is seeking a full-time associate student minister to work with the existing student minister. Please send resumés postmarked no later than Jan. 30 to: Mount Zion Baptist Church located at 228 Mt. Zion Road, c/o Dean Polk, Huntsville, AL 35806.

PART-TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR: First Baptist Church, Leeds, Ala., is searching for a part-time children's ministry director. Please send resumés no later than Feb. 22 to: Children's Director Search Committee at FBC Leeds, 7481 Parkway Drive, Leeds, AL 35094, or e-mail to: rmckenzie@fbcleeds.org.

OTHER POSITIONS

PRESIDENT-TREASURER: The search committee of the Tennessee Baptist Foundation in Brentwood, Tenn., is soliciting resumés for the position of president-treasurer. College degree and five years experience in finance-related work required. Supervisory experience. Must be a committed Christian active in a church affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. Energetic, self starter a must. Interested persons contact: George Gibson, 100 Coventry Wynde, Kingsport, TN 37664, 423-288-8982 or gandsigs@charter.net.

RECEPTIONIST: Receptionist needed for an over the mountain church. Hours

needed are 8:30-1:30. Salary: \$12-14 per hour. Publisher a plus. Send resumés to: daphnes@brookwood.org.

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More than 1,200 crimes involved U.S. churches in '09

More than 1,200 crimes were committed against Christian churches and ministries in 2009, according to an unofficial tally by a firm that specializes in church security.

The Christian Security Network (CSN) report found 1,237 total incidents targeting churches in all 50 states, including 12 homicides, 38 other violent incidents and \$24 million in estimated property loss.

"It is disheartening to see all these incidents and loss of life in churches in 2009 and even sadder because we know 2010 isn't going to be any different unless the status quo changes," said Jeff Hawkins, executive director of CSN. The Cincinnati-based company provides services to make Christian churches and organizations more secure.

The most common crime committed against churches is burglary. Sixty-two percent of the incidents in the CSN report — 779 in all — were burglaries. The most expensive, however, is embezzling — internal theft committed over a period of time, usually years. Such incidents, according to the report, cost churches nearly \$14 million in 2009.

Other 2009 incidents included three sexual assaults, three kidnappings and 98 arsons.

Many others unreported

The report said counting the number of crimes against churches is difficult for several reasons. There is no mandatory reporting of such crimes to any government agency. The FBI tracks hate crimes against religious organizations, but many

of the crimes involving churches are not included in hate-crimes statistics because bias against Christians is not a motive in the crimes.

Many crimes against churches also go unreported, because the congregation forgives the offender or wants to avoid embarrassment or bad publicity.

Besides the 12 murders, violent crimes in churches in 2009 included five attempted homicides, one rape and two attempted rapes. The 12 murder victims ranged in age from 14 months to 67 years old. Seven were male and five were female.

Many of the organizations cited in the report experienced multiple incidents. One particular church in Cincinnati, for example, was burglarized 20 times during a six-month period.

A veteran security specialist with nearly 30 years experience, Hawkins said criminals nowadays are less likely than in the past to avoid churches simply because they are sacred spaces. Today, he said, criminals are more inclined to view houses of worship simply as "soft" targets. Despite that, he added, 75 percent of churches polled in 2008 said they did not have any security or emergency plan.

Hawkins said with a few precautions and training, many crimes included in the report could have been averted. "The church has to start taking responsibility for the safety of their staff, volunteers, and congregation and [become] good stewards of the gifts God has provided," he said.

Hawkins said every church should have plans in place to re-

spond at minimum to situations in which the church must be evacuated, people inside the facility must shelter in place due to natural or man-made disasters, for medical emergencies involving people inside the building, for children who go missing and for situations requiring lockdown of the facility.

While smaller churches automatically think of expense when it comes to security, Hawkins said a big part of any security plan is awareness. He suggested churches use free resources, such as talking to local law-enforcement officials, fire departments and EMS personnel as well as meeting with the church's insurance provider.

CSN offers a free weekly newsletter and conducts seminars around the country and over the Internet to help churches and ministry organizations develop a plan.

A first step is a process of risk as-

essment, which typically includes interviews with staff and volunteers, analysis of local crime trends and review of any past threats or present perceived threats.

Hawkins said sometimes pastors tell him they don't need a security plan in place because they trust God to protect their congregation. He responds that we live in a fallen world and that the Bible says Christians are to resist evil.

Other church leaders fear that by adopting security measures they make their congregation seem less open and inviting to visitors, but Hawkins said everyone should have a right to worship without having to worry about whether a child in the nursery or a car in the parking lot is safe.

Hawkins said it is unknown whether the economic downturn in the United States has contributed to increased property crimes against churches. (ABP)

"It is ... even sadder because we know 2010 isn't going to be any different unless the status quo changes."

Jeff Hawkins
Christian Security Network

Retired missionary Gaines dies

Jane Ellen Gaines, a retired missionary to Nigeria, died Dec. 31. She was 81.

A native of Talladega, Gaines was appointed by the Foreign Mission Board (now the International Mission Board) in 1967 to Jos, Nigeria. She served in the West African country for 26 years, retiring in 1993. Post-retirement, Gaines was active in the choir and Woman's Missionary Union at First Baptist Church, Talladega, in Coosa River Baptist Association. She also took short-term missions trips to China, South Korea and Siberia.

Gaines compiled her memoirs into a book titled "Every Day With Jesus: A Missionary's Daily Life in West Africa," which the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission published in 2008.

Gaines, a graduate of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, served as the educational secretary and youth director at First, Talladega, from 1952 to 1967.

She is survived by her brother and several nieces and nephews. (TAB)

Letters to the Editor

THE CP AND BEESON

I read with interest your story in the Jan. 7 edition of *The Alabama Baptist* titled "Suggestions from Readers About GCR." Could I please make one correction to your story?

In points No. 4 and 5, readers suggested that Cooperative Program (CP) monies be given to Samford University's Beeson Divinity School (BDS). Mr. Beeson gave Samford the money for the divinity school with at least one condition, that being the school must be an ecumenical seminary.

BDS has professors of other denominations ... teaching there; we don't at Southern Baptist Convention seminaries. Samford's BDS is not distinctively Baptist and so would not qualify for CP funds. Many Alabama Baptists don't know this.

Timothy N. Davis
Gallion, Ala.

CHRISTIAN GAMBLER?

There is a strange business relationship that has emerged involving gambling and bingo in Alabama.

I am sure it surprises no one in Alabama that those entities and individuals who continue to push gambling in Alabama, specifically electronic bingo, seem to have a limitless supply of cash and are being somewhat successful in using their clout to force their interest on the rest of us.

The news media has for months

touched on possible conflicts of interest involving Attorney General Troy King and possibly Gov. Bob Riley, due to alleged contributions by gambling interests to their respective campaigns.

The most disappointing and troubling story, however, is the involvement as a spokesman and actual investment by Alabama singing group leader Randy Owen. We have all seen the TV ads by Owen, and now he is opening an entertainment facility bearing his name at the bingo development Country Crossing near Dothan.

For many years, we have witnessed Owen's phenomenal singing success. Often he publicly lends credit for his talent to his Christian upbringing. Just this week I saw him appearing on the Bill Gaither Homecoming series on PBS giving his Christian testimony and performing Christian hymns. His last CD was all Christian music.

What image should we accept of one of our most famous sons? Should Owen be accepted to give witness of his Christian faith and at the same time publicly promote and invest in gambling in Alabama?

Is it not reasonable that the good Christian people should now reject Owen and his newest venture — gambling in Alabama?

This Sunday, will you join me in praying for Owen?

James W. Anderson
Talladega, Ala.


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January 2010

Family Matters

ALABAMA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S
HOMES & FAMILY MINISTRIES

Movie Inspires Lifetime of Giving

Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets... When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Matthew 6:1-4

We recently learned of a generous woman who was inspired to give, in part, by the movie "Magnificent Obsession." Based on Lloyd C. Douglas's book of the same name, it details the journey of a man who, in his search for success in the field of neurosurgery, receives the secret journal of his mentor, who believed that practicing the art of helping others in secret will lead to personal and professional success. The man does so, and along the way, is redeemed personally and professionally. Douglas was inspired by a real-life neurosurgeon and the passage in Matthew 6.

It was this story, portrayed so compellingly in the movie that inspired an Alexander City Junior High school teacher to do the same in her own life, according to Randy Driggers, vice president for development with The Baptist Foundation of Alabama. She invested her time and

resources in others. She also tried to invest wisely for the future. Both philosophies led her to include the Children's Homes, as well as other Baptist entities and charitable organizations, in her will.

"She wanted to hopefully inspire others to give through estate gifts," said Driggers, who walked with her through the process of creating scholarships for students and bequests for charities.

Which is why, although her name is anonymous, her gift is not. She wanted to encourage others to give of their resources not only in the present life, but through means that would allow for giving through the generations.

"This kind lady is a fine example of a wise steward," said Bob Dewhurst, Children's Homes Vice-President of Ministry Development. "When I met her over a decade ago, it was obvious that her desire was to help others while honoring God. Her concern was how she could be the best steward of her life and all that God had entrusted to her."



Dewhurst said the first question he asked her was, "If death occurred tonight, what do you want to happen to your material possessions?"

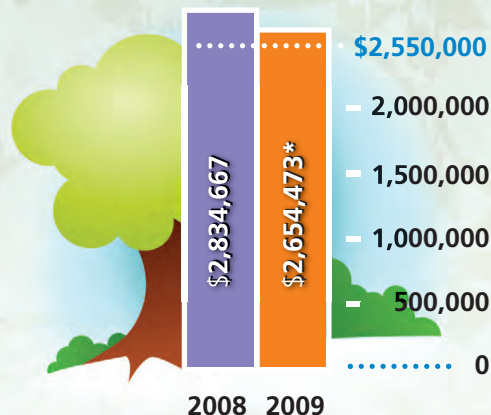
"She had a good idea about what she wanted to do," he said. "She just needed help doing it."

Here's what Dewhurst recommends for all good financial stewards.

- **Study and Pray** – Hundreds of Biblical passages address the topic of our stewardship of the time, talent, treasures and truths God has entrusted to us. Specifically pray about who depends on you. Family, friends, the church, church-related organizations and charities are among these.
- **Seek and Plan** – Seek the counsel of Christians you trust. Specifically seek guidance from professionals with a strong background and understanding of Biblical stewardship.
- **Prepare and Implement** – The legal and other documents associated with your plans must be written and formally endorsed to help ensure that your stewardship responsibilities are fulfilled.
- **Review and Revise** – Every few years and anytime that a significant life event occurs, your plan should be reviewed and, if necessary, updated. These events include births, deaths, marriages and major changes in your material assets such as the sale or purchase of real estate.

To help you in carrying out your financial stewardship responsibilities, you can email or call Bob Dewhurst to receive a Guide to Planning Your Estate. He may be contacted at 1-888-720-8805 or Dewhurst@abchome.org.

Final Total of 2009 ANNUAL OFFERING



Thank you for your gifts in 2009. Although the overall total given in 2009 was less than in 2008, you still surpassed the goal. This year's goal is still **\$2.55 million**.

Place your order by **March 19** for materials to participate in the 2010 Annual Children's Homes Offering by calling 1-888-720-8805 or emailing ktaylor@abchome.org.

* Graphic represents giving totals as of press time.



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January 2010

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Myrtha Farrior: Wilma F. Revel
Mr. & Mrs. W.C. Farrior: Wilma F. Revel
Dr. Donald W. Fendlason, Talladega: Dorothy W. Noel
Jean Fleming, Jackson: Forest Avenue BC of Jackson,
 Mr. & Mrs. Bill Howell

Jim Gable: Martha Cox
Frances Sewell Gann, Gadsden: Dorothy W. Butler
Betty Geddie, Tuscaloosa: Mr. & Mrs. J.B. Davis
Joe & Beth Gibson, Butler: Sarah A. Gibson
Jeanette Monday Giffin, Carrollton, GA:
 Mr. & Mrs. J. Wray Pearce
Billy Gray, Rising Fawn, GA: Jim & Etta Griffin
Polly Clinton Green, Marion: Providence BC of Gallion
Mary Nell Griffin, Tyler: Ken & Betty Schroeder
Larry Grissom: Mr. & Mrs. Curtis Grissom
Carol Gulsby, Uriah: Velma House, FBC Uriah
Ed Gunter, Pinson: Mr. & Mrs. D.E. Lollar
Marietta Satterfield Gustin, Winchester, TN:
 Dorothy W. Butler
M.E. Guy, Jemison: Mr. & Mrs. Erskine R. Grimes
Ora Mae Haddox, Frisco: Margaret Ginwright
Catherine Harper, Pine Hill: Maynita Weatherly
Iris Harrison, Senior Adult SS of Elam BC of Thomasville
Katie Smith Harvell, Alexander City:
 Pine Hill BC of Pine Hill
Susie Dunn Burnett Harvey, Demopolis: Eric & Gerry Hurt,
 Mary Martha SS Class of Bethlehem BC of Linden
Gerald Herring, Milton, FL: Irelle H. Elliott & Family
Marie Nears Hodges, Gadsden: Dorothy W. Butler
Aline Hulgan, Geneva: The Blackwell Family
Calvin Jay, Uriah: Doris Jay
Dale Jay, Frisco City: Doris Jay
Bill Johnson, Phenix City: J.W. & Evelyn Gullatte
Reba Jones, Jackson: Lloyd & Catherine Gaddy
Patricia "T.I." Jones, Tuscaloosa: Jane Averette
Neita Breeden Keeling, Gadsden: Dorothy W. Butler
Patricia Johnson King, Rainbow City: Dorothy W. Butler
Earl Elmore Knight, Thomasville:
 Senior Adult SS Elam BC of Thomasville
Herman Lathan, Jackson: Philip & Lora English
Edwina Martin LeCroy, Camden: Maynita Weatherly
Thomas Lemons, Monroeville:
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph McCollough
Ruth Bedsole Lins: Mary Boozer, Providence BC of Gallion
Roy Long, Minter: Ken & Betty Schroeder
Audrey Mae Lynam, Monroeville:
 Dottie & Joseph McCollough
Virginia Lyon, Collirene: Col. & Mrs. Thomas B. Blake
Bill McDonald, Alabaster: Mae McDonald
Marvin McMillan, Bay Minette:
 Durant Chapel BC of Bay Minette
Charlie Madison, Fresno, CA: Providence BC
Rev. Jimmy Mitchell, Fayette: Mr. & Mrs. D.E. Lollar
Edith Satterfield Morris, Sylacauga: Dorothy W. Butler
Kathy Mullinax, Citronelle: Patricia Mitchem
Bruce Myers: Center Point BC of Scottsboro
(T) Terrell Nelson, Center Point: Mr. & Mrs. D.E. Lollar,
 Debbie Baird Buie
Frances P. Nichols, Thomasville: Katherine P. Barfield
Viola Osborne, Tallassee: Frances C. Ryles
Joe Pinkerton, Vernon: Tom & Peggy Sanders
Nona Porterfield, Uriah: FBC of Uriah
Wiley Powell, Mobile: Durant Chapel BC of Bay Minette
Alice Quinley, Bay Minette:
 Durant Chapel BC of Bay Minette
James E. Rabon II, Uriah: FBC Uriah
Dallas Ramsey, Gallion: Mary Boozer,
 Providence BC of Gallion
Linda Rawls: Macedonia BC of Maplesville
Siegel M. Revel: Wilma F. Revel
Lewis Self, Oxford: Don & Jean Reynolds
Mrs. Pat Self, Leeds: Don & Iris Shipp
Ethel Clarie Rattray Sharp, Birmingham: Dorothy W. Butler

Mary B. Sharpe, Phenix City:
 Pleasant Grove BC of Salem
Martha Shipp: Don & Iris Shipp
Harold Singleton, Cullman: Mr. & Mrs. T.E. Osborne
Jimmy Smith, Opelika: J.W. & Evelyn Gullatte
Joseph Allen Smith, Gadsden: Dorothy W. Butler
Ruth Smith, Peterman: Forest Avenue BC of Jackson
Willie Baggett Stacey, Mineola: FBC Uriah
Otis & Christina Steeley: Don & Iris Shipp
Rev. W.K. Stephenson, Hartselle: Inez C. Akers;
 Rudy, Ann & Julie Jarrett
Grace Stokes, Tuscaloosa: Gilbert & Marguerite Butler
Rhodes Taylor, York: Amogene Battle
Ruth Thomas: Lloyd & Catherine Gaddy
Ella McCrory Turner: Providence BC of Gallion
Thomas Bennett Waldrop, Prattville: Ginny Waldrop
J.C. Weaver, Jackson: Forest Avenue BC of Jackson
Ruby "Jo" Weeks, Jemison: Richard & Euleta Guy,
 Imogene Maddox
Jan White, Bessemer: Concord BC of Bessemer
Grace Whitt, Gadsden: Marjorie Kay Nix
Geraldine Mitchell Williams, Atlanta, GA:
 Dorothy Warren Butler
Clyde Womack, Scottsboro:
 Center Point BC of Scottsboro
Ruth Woodall, Jacksonville: Mr. & Mrs. Drennon Traylor

HONORS:

(Honored Person's Name is Bolded)

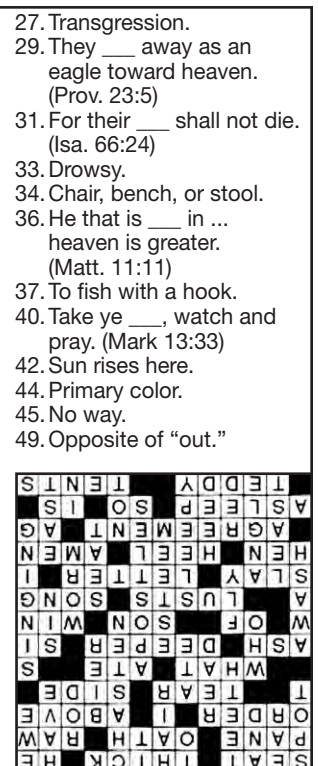
Albert Ard, Chatom: Lloyd & Catherine Gaddy
Matthew & Leigh Anne Fancher, pastor of
 Springhill BC of Millport: Albert & Linda Broadbent
Miss Blakeney Farr: Mr. & Mrs. Robert O. Breed
Lisa G. Franklin, M.D., Cullman:
 Staff of Cullman OB/Gyn, P.C.
Edna Knowles, Brewton: Brewton FBC
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Loftin, Sweet Water, AL:
 Jack & Lena Carol Bishop
Charles & Lisa Miller, music minister of
 Springhill BC of Millport: Albert & Linda Broadbent
Lee Pitts Ministries: Mr. & Mrs. Robert M. Boler
Dr. & Mrs. Bobby Moore, Muscle Shoals:
 Mr. & Mrs. David Lasater
Maggie Quinney, Gallion: Eric & Gerry Hurt
Shane L. Sheffield, M.D., Cullman:
 Staff of Cullman OB/Gyn, P.C.
Glori Short, M.D., Cullman:
 Staff of Cullman OB/Gyn, P.C.
Howard F. Williamson Jr., M.D., Cullman:
 Staff of Cullman OB/Gyn, P.C.
Randy Yarbrough, M.D., Cullman:
 Staff of Cullman OB/Gyn, P.C.
Lewis Self, Oxford: Don & Jean Reynolds



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World Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Jordan files complaint over Dead Sea Scrolls

TORONTO — Officials in Jordan have complained to a United Nations agency after Canada refused to seize the Dead Sea Scrolls at a recent exhibit in Toronto.

Jordan says the ancient manuscripts, which had been on loan from the Israel Antiquities Authority, were stolen from a museum in East Jerusalem, which Israel seized from Jordan during the Six-Day War of 1967.

Some of the earliest biblical and religious writings ever found, the 2,000-year-old scrolls were discovered by a Bedouin shepherd in 1947 in caves overlooking the Dead Sea.

Seventeen of the approximately 900 scrolls had been on display in Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum since June for the hugely popular "Words that Changed the World" exhibition that closed Jan. 3.

On Jan. 11, after Canada declined to seize the scrolls, Jordan announced that it had complained to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

"The government has legal documents that prove Jordan owns the scrolls," Rafea Harahsheh of Jordan's antiquities department said in a statement.

Toronto's *Globe and Mail* newspaper quoted a representative for Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade as saying that it would be inappropriate for Canada to intervene.

"Differences regarding ownership of the Dead Sea Scrolls should be addressed by Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority," the spokesperson stated.

Palestinians also claim the scrolls as part of their heritage; in 2009 they had asked Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper to cancel the exhibition, stating that the documents had been stolen from Palestinian territory.

Christians in Jos, Nigeria, fear further attacks

JOS, Nigeria — Gunshots and smoke continue to alarm residents of Jos in central Nigeria, with the Christian community fearing further violence from Muslim youths who Jan. 17 attacked a Catholic church and burned down several other church buildings.

A 24-hour curfew imposed Jan. 18 in Jos and the suburb of Bukuru by the Plateau state government was extended.

Police said continuing violence was initially triggered by unprovoked attacks by Muslim youth on worshipers at the St. Michael's Catholic Church in Nasarawa Gwong, in the Jos North Local Government Area.

Also attacked were buildings of the Christ Apostolic Church, Assemblies of God Church, three branches of the Church of Christ in Nigeria and two buildings of the Evangelical Church of West Africa, Christian leaders said.

The number of casualties continued to grow, reportedly reaching more than 100 as security forces tried to rein in rioters, with both Christian and Muslim groups still counting their losses. Hundreds have reportedly been wounded.

"We have been witnessing sporadic shootings in the last two days," said Chuwang Avou, secretary of the state chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria.

"We see some residents shooting sporadically into the air. We have also seen individuals with machine guns on parade in the state."

Algerian church continues in spite of burnt building

TIZI OUZOU, Algeria — Members of a church in Algeria's Kabylie region gathered to worship Jan. 16 in their new building despite a protest, vandalism and a fire that damaged the building the previous weekend.

Local Muslims bent on running the congregation out of the neighborhood set fires inside and outside the building Jan. 9. Before setting it on fire, the assailants ransacked the Tafat Church building in Tizi Ouzou, a city 62 miles east of Algiers.

The perpetrators damaged everything within the new building, including electrical appliances.

"[T]he church held a service even though not everyone was present," said Mustapha Krim, president of the Protestant Church of Algeria. "But they continue."

Campus News



Samford University

► **Musical Theatre Ensemble Presents Blame It on the Movies:** Samford

University's Musical Theatre Ensemble will present *Blame It on the Movies* Feb. 4-7 in Bolding Studio at Swearingen Hall. The show will begin at 6 p.m. Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m. Feb. 5 and 6 and 2:30 p.m. Feb. 7.

The show will feature unforgettable songs and themes from favorite films.

For more information about tickets, visit www.samford.edu/arts/tickets or call 205-726-2853.

► **Samford Acknowledges Longtime Employees:** Samford University recognized 1,295 years of combined service spanning five decades during the annual employee service awards luncheon Jan. 12.

William A. Nunnelley, director of media and public relations, was honored for 45 years of service, and Lowell Vann, professor of art, was honored for 40 years of service.

Recognized for 35 years of service were Marione Nance, biology; Don Sanders, music; and Mary Wimberley, media and public relations. Dollie Brice and Donna Dunaway, exercise science and sports

medicine, both were honored for 30 years of service.

The following also were recognized at the luncheon:

25 years — Jim Angel, Chris Gillespie, Mark Fuller, Ron Hunsinger, Glenda Martin and Jack Nelson.

20 years — Jeanie Box, Lee Carmon, Linda Conner, Tracy Luke, Lisa Dodd, Cat Evans, Beth Gilbert, Bob Gray, Dennis Self, Connie Maccon, Ken Mathews, Frank Thielman, Morgan Ponder and Pam Sims.

15 years — Jim Barnette, Sandy Brinson, Amy Broeseker, Iris Jackson, Valerie Prince, Robert Riggs, Paula Thompson, Lamar Burton, Janet Carr, Jackie Davis, Jill Evans, Sharon Lawhon, Tabitha Moore, Mike Morris and Linda Sneed.

10 years — David Bains, Janica Carter, Abby Casey, Eric Knight, Jennifer Coleman, Betsy Dobbins, David Glenn, David Hartley, Jann Hammel, Mary Johnson, Bryan Johnson, Beanie Ketcham, Betty McCullough, Debbie McGrady, Nena Sanders, Lynette Sandley, Chuck Sands and Jennifer Taylor.

Five years — Becky Ard, Josh Thomas, Elizabeth Baker, Paul House, Mark Bateman, Bill Belski, Chad Carson, Jeremy Thornton, Nancy Biggio, Charlotte Brammer, Tony David, Casey Dunn, Mick Fieldbinder, Michelle Durban, Ja-

net England, Woodie Eubanks, Angela Ferguson, Ashley Floyd, Lisa Garrett, Nancy Piazza, Tan Hall, Libby Hamby, Mandy Hilsmer, Michael Hogue, Jarret Melick, Angela Thomason, Cindy Kennington, Ken Kirby, Nick Madsen, Tanya Martin, Nicki McWilliams, Andy Montgomery, Elaine Moody, Andy Parrish, Chris Roper, Zac Schrieber, Jennifer Sims, Jeff Whitcomb, Debbie Strickland, Connie Walker, Jason Wallace and Jay Yelton.



Judson College

► **Judson Students Named to USCAA Academic Team:** The United States Col-

legiate Athletic Association (USCAA) on Dec. 17 announced 2009 members of the Non-USCAA Sport All-Academic Team.

Team members are current sophomores, juniors and seniors with at least a 3.5 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale), and who have shown ability to excel both on the playing field and in the academic arena.

Two Judson College students were named: Andrea Luckie, of Alexander City, and Corey Finlay, of Oxford. Both are members of the Judson College Equestrian Team.



University of Mobile

► **UM Selling Tickets for Upcoming Theatre Shows:** The University of Mobile

(UM) Center for Performing Arts is now selling tickets for the final two shows of the season, "Lend Me a Tenor" and "Oklahoma!"

"Lend Me a Tenor," a story of an operatic tenor, his wife and an overworked theatre director who are plagued by a case of mistaken identity, will be performed in the Upper Room Theatre on UM's campus Feb. 4-6 and 12-13.

"Oklahoma!," a poignant and inspirational story of love, simpler times, and a coming of age, will be presented April 16-18 at the New Saraland High School Auditorium.

Tickets may be purchased by calling the Upper Room Theatre Box Office at 251-442-2383.

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IMB photo

OPPORTUNITIES — Chinese men play cards on the banks of the Yangtze in the shadows of the city of Chongqing. Many rural Chinese are moving to large metropolitan areas.

‘God changed me’

Chinese man’s life of self-sufficiency meets God’s love

Thomas is struggling with his future. He teaches English to businessmen in a northern provincial capital in China. He followed his parents’ dream for him to get an education and move to a place with opportunities for a good life.

But that was before he became a Christian. “When we attend college and get the certificate, we can get a good job and make money,” Thomas explains. “We seldom think of going back. In big cities we can have many opportunities. We can live well. We can enjoy life much better than in small cities.”

When Thomas was growing up, his father worked in a government print shop and his mother was a farmer. After Thomas’ father retired, his mother developed asthma and could not walk.

“A woman came to our house and shared Jesus with [my mother],

but she didn’t believe,” Thomas said. Eighteen months — and much prayer — passed before she believed in Jesus. But when she did, she found she could walk again. Now “she can cook and can go to church by bicycle.”

‘That’s my future’

Thomas admits he was curious about the miracles he witnessed, but he did not share his mother’s belief in Christ. There is little Christian influence in his hometown.

“I did not have any spiritual life,” he said. “I just believed in myself — like any unbeliever.”

When Thomas was 25, his mother introduced him to a church that changed his life.

“I saw so many miracles. In my house church, many believers were healed of illnesses, including cancer. The most important thing is I

was touched by Jesus’ love. When we get together and my pastor prays, Jesus is with us. We can feel the love. Only God can change us, so that is what happened with me. God changed me. I’m going to go where He leads me. That’s my future.”

But Thomas is not sure where God is leading him, and he struggles with his parents’ expectations for his life. Should he continue work as an English teacher in the city or should he work in ministry at his house church? He is praying for God’s guidance.

“Before I knew Jesus, I didn’t care what I would do,” Thomas said. “I worked for myself, for only what concerned me. I am changed, so now I’m waiting to see what God wants me to do. In my future, my prayer is what about others, not about me.”

EDITOR’S NOTE — Name changed for security reasons. (IMB)

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

President Obama says ‘faith keeps me calm’

WASHINGTON — President Obama addressed how his faith guides him and the importance of hard work as he marked the birthday of the late Martin Luther King Jr. at a Washington church Jan. 17. “Folks ask me sometimes why I look so calm,” he said at Vermont Avenue Baptist Church, a historic congregation that was visited by King. “I have a confession to make here. ... There are times when it feels like all these efforts are for naught, and change is so painfully slow in coming, and I have to confront my own doubts. But let me tell you during those times, it’s faith that keeps me calm. It’s faith that gives me peace.”

He spoke of holding the kind of “faith that breaks the silence of an earthquake’s wake with the sound of prayer and hymns sung by the Haitian community,” as the congregation applauded in agreement.

In the last year, Obama has visited three other Washington churches: the Washington National Cathedral for his inaugural prayer service; St. John’s Episcopal Church across Lafayette Square from the White House on the day of his inauguration and on Easter; and Nineteenth Street Baptist Church the Sunday before his inauguration. Last July he said he may attend “a number of different churches” and enjoys “powerful” sermons from the chaplain who leads services at the chapel at Camp David, the presidential retreat.

Charges of religion-related job bias hit record high

WASHINGTON — Incidents of alleged religion-based workplace discrimination hit record highs in fiscal year 2009, along with complaints of bias based on disability and national origin, according to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Charges of religion-related bias in private-sector jobs have increased steadily from fiscal year 1997, when they amounted to 2.1 percent of workplace discrimination complaints, to fiscal year 2009, when they were 3.6 percent.

The overall number of charges filed during the most recent fiscal year — 93,277 — was the second-highest ever. Victims received monetary relief of more than \$376 million during the time period studied, which ended Sept. 30, 2009. Of the 3,386 religion-based charges received by the EEOC, 2,958 were resolved.

About 60 percent of resolved cases — both overall and specifically religious ones — were found to have “no reasonable cause” based on evidence obtained during an investigation. Those bringing charges could still challenge their employers through private court action.

University allowed to reject Christian courses

LOS ANGELES — The University of California (UC) has the right to reject courses taught at Christian high schools, a federal appeals court ruled Jan. 12. Calvary Chapel Christian School in Murrieta, Calif., and the Association of Christian Schools International claimed the university’s review policy was unconstitutional because it refused to certify courses that taught creationism and other beliefs.

“The district court correctly determined that UC’s rejections of the Calvary courses were reasonable and did not constitute viewpoint discrimination,” the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled.

Students from private schools must meet certain high school requirements before they are eligible to apply to an undergraduate campus of the UC. The court ruled that evidence in the case failed to show that the university was discriminating on the basis of religion. “UC’s policy and its individual course decisions are not based on religion, but on whether a high school course is college preparatory,” the three-judge panel ruled.

Kentucky courthouse can keep Ten Commandments

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A federal appeals court ruled Jan. 14 that a Kentucky county courthouse can keep its Ten Commandments display, overturning a lower court ruling. The Foundations of American Law and Government display at a Grayson County courthouse included the biblical laws along with eight other historical documents. It was challenged by two men who thought its placement violated the Constitution’s prohibition against the government establishing a religion. In a 2-1 decision, the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals disagreed, saying the display presented an educational, not religious message. “There is nothing about the setting of the display that would be viewed as encouraging or lending itself to prayer, meditation or other religious activity,” wrote Circuit Judge David W. McKeague for the majority.

Mathew Staver, founder of Liberty Counsel, who represented the county, hailed the decision. “It defies common sense to remove a recognized symbol of law from a court of law,” he said.