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SNOW DAY

Feb. 12, 2010



Judson College



Samford University



University of Mobile



Heath Baptist Church, Glencoe

After heartbreak, 'life goes on'

Team from Alabama returns from helping put lives back together in Haiti

By Brittany N. Howerton
The Alabama Baptist

His church-planting trip to the Dominican Republic (DR) had been planned for a quite a while.

But the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti changed his plans. It changed nearly everything.

"But it was a no-brainer that we should still go," said team leader John Gunter, who serves in Hispanic ministry in south Alabama after nearly a decade of service in the DR.

It just meant the team's mission was now twofold: to evangelize and plant churches in the DR and to deliver food, medical supplies and relief to devastated areas of Haiti.

So Gunter and his team of 22 divided into two groups — one to stay in the DR during the entire Feb. 1-8 trip and one to take a four-day side trip to Haiti Feb. 2-5 — and headed overseas.

While devastation in Haiti is still expansive and the aftermath of the quake has left many without homes, forcing them into tents, Gunter said the hopes of the people are a little higher than he anticipated.

(See 'Alabama,' page 7)



'CARING FOR ORPHANS, WIDOWS' — Grady Maddox (standing, center) was one of 11 team members who traveled to Haiti Feb. 2-5 to set up medical clinics to help with relief efforts from the Jan. 12 earthquake.

Pro-gambling advocates claim denial of civil rights over 'bingo'

By Jennifer Davis Rash and Sondra Washington
The Alabama Baptist

Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech may be one of the best known moments in American history, but if current rhetoric in Alabama politics take hold, then some may think he dreamed of slot machines and gambling halls.

After all, it is that historic dramatic shift toward absolute equal rights for all that is being used to delve up emotional memories and relate them to the current slot machine gambling debate in the state.

Sen. Bobby Singleton, D-Greensboro, sponsor of Senate Bill 380 (see page 6), said, "There is a race issue.

... The majority of the people losing their jobs are African-Americans."

The same thing happened in the civil rights era, he said. "People were fighting for their jobs (then)."

"I'm declaring war on the governor to protect my people from the ills of unemployment," Singleton said. "If they have a better alternative, bring me a company, and we will help them set it up."

Singleton's district includes one of the four race tracks in the state, Greentrack.

On the east side of the state sits another race track, VictoryLand, in Macon County. Both counties are considered among the poorer counties in the state, and both happen to be predominantly black.

Macon County Commission Chair Louis Maxwell said without a doubt the recent attempted raid on VictoryLand by the Governor's Task Force on Illegal Gambling is similar to

"I doubt this is what Dr. Martin Luther King had on his mind when putting his life on the line for equal rights in America."

John Tyson
Governor's Task Force on Illegal Gambling



law is more important than the single issue of gambling.

"The very reason that black citizens are included in our society is the rule of law.

"The history of Alabama and a huge part of this country and the deep South is that black folks were excluded from participating in things

like our government or sitting at the counter at a drug store, for instance," he said.

"What happened during the '60s is that this country was able to change the law. The rule of law, after all, keeps us all equal. We are equal in the eyes of the law.

"Without the rule of law, what does the Civil Rights Act mean? What does the Voting Rights Act mean? What do the criminal laws of Alabama mean?"

"What does it mean if in our rush to casino money, we sacrifice the rule of law in the process?" Tyson asked.

(See 'Casino,' page 6)

what took place during the 1960s. Johnny Ford, former mayor of Tuskegee, said, "It reminds us of the storm-trooping days of the civil rights era. ... Their strategy is to keep us from voting."

But John Tyson, commander of the task force, disagreed.

'Rule of law'

"This is not the '60s. This is far from it," he said. "I doubt this is what Dr. Martin Luther King had on his mind when putting his life on the line for equal rights in America."

Pointing out that this is about the rule of law, Tyson said, "The rule of

COMMENT

‘Gray Hair, Blue Hair or No Hair’

It reads like a description of many associational meetings I have attended. The writer lamented that most of those present had “gray hair, blue hair or no hair.” The writer’s wit is unmistakable. In a catchy phrase, he memorably described his observation that most people attending the annual meeting of his association were older adults.

Some expand that observation beyond associational meetings. Many speak about annual meetings of Baptist state conventions and even the national Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) being gatherings of older adults. Judging from the demographic information available, that seems to be the case. Older adults make up a growing percentage of those attending annual meetings of Baptist organizations.

The wit who wrote about “gray hair, blue hair or no hair” went on to predict that unless drastic changes were made by the association where he served as pastor, the cooperative effort of Baptists in that rural county would cease to exist with his generation.

Again the words sound familiar. Among Southern Baptists, some leaders wring their hands in worry about the lack of participation by young adults. A LifeWay Research study found that 70 percent of young adults drop out of church, at least for a time. Some worry about the future of the SBC. They point to the declining percentage of young pastors attending the annual meeting and the falling commitment of pastors to participate in cooperative missions. If these trends continue, they say, then the future of Baptists is bleak.

These prognosticators would have gotten along splendidly with the wit mentioned above.

Something to celebrate, not lament

But I forgot to tell you when the line about “gray hair, blue hair or no hair” was written. It was 1938. I read it in the annual of the association in which I served my first pastorate. The occasion was preparation to celebrate an anniversary of the association. Thirty-plus years before I read it, Baptists worried about the absence of young people and the implication of that fact for the future. And 30-plus years after reading those words, we still worry about the same issues.

That 70 percent of Baptist youth drop out of church for a time as young adults is tragic. At the same time, the study also found that 65 percent of those who drop out return to the church by age 30.



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

That is a hopeful sign. Among born-again students who attend evangelical colleges, the drop out rate is between only 6 percent and 7 percent, according to an article by Gary Railsback in the *Journal of Christian Education*.

That more older adults attend religious gatherings — annual meetings of associations and state and national conventions — should surprise no one. There are more older adults today than ever before. In 1980, for example, the U.S. census reported 25.5 million Americans age 65 and above. The 2000 census showed 35 million adults age 65 or above. That is a 37 percent increase in the raw numbers of older adults. It says nothing about the increased health of this group, which allows participation in ways the wit of 1938 could not have imagined.

America is aging. In 1980, census data said the median age was 30 years. The median age of the U.S. population in the 2000 census was 35.3 years. Not only are there more older adults now than in 1980 but also the percentage of the population over age 65 has grown.

The prevalence of older adults is not something to lament. It is something to celebrate. Older adults make up a potential missions force unequalled at any other time in history. They are experienced. They are knowledgeable. They are physically able. They have the resources that allow them to participate.

But God’s service is not a battle between age groups. Young adults are needed as much as older adults, and older adults are needed as much as younger adults.

It used to be that Baptists incorporated young leaders into leadership through service. In a church, young leaders were added to committees. They learned by doing. Their gifts were refined, their leadership honed. Faithful service brought more and more leadership opportunities.

The denomination followed a similar pattern. Faithful service in an association identified one for service through the state convention. Faithful service through the state convention identified one for service on a national level.

That pattern broke down over the past few years for a variety of reasons. The result was that Baptists ended up with no way for young adults to earn their way into service, sometimes in a local church and

often through the denomination. It is an unfortunate reality that in disappointment to the closed doors, some young leaders simply quit trying and found other avenues for serving the Lord.

Efforts to remedy that wrong are under way in lots of places. But it must be remembered that neither age nor the lack of age is a criterion for leadership. The Bible says clearly that no one is to look down on one simply because of that individual’s youth (1 Tim. 4:12). The Bible also warns that young leaders can be mistaken. First Kings 12 describes Rehoboam’s ascension to the throne of Israel following Solomon’s death. The Israelites asked for relief from the heavy demands placed on them by Solomon. When Rehoboam consulted the elders, they advised he grant the request saying the “people will serve you forever” (v. 7). When Rehoboam asked of the young men, they urged him not only to deny the request but also to demand more of the people (vv. 10–11).

It’s ‘both and’

Rehoboam followed the counsel of the young men, and it resulted in the northern 10 tribes breaking away from the house of David.

The new king needed the wisdom of the elders and the enthusiasm of the young men. Baptists, in local churches and denominational structures, need the same, leaders of all ages working together to serve the Lord.

As long as leadership among Baptists is earned through faithful service and shared among the entire congregation, the color and amount of one’s hair will never be an issue.

Voice your opinion

SPEAK UP on issues in the Baptist world by writing a letter to the editor of *The Alabama Baptist*.

Remember to:

- Include your name and address
- Focus on issues, not people
- Be as concise as possible



THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

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

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Someone You Should Know

By Kristen Lindsey, The Alabama Baptist

Ralph Beckenbach

Mountain View Baptist Church,
Phil Campbell, Franklin Association

FAVORITE BIBLE PASSAGE: Psalm 23

HOBBIES: Playing the guitar and keyboard

FAMILY STATUS: Widowed, one child and one granddaughter



BECKENBACH

Ever since accepting Christ at the age of 70, Ralph Beckenbach has given his life to witnessing, ministering and serving. Beckenbach, who is the custodian at Mountain View Baptist Church,

Phil Campbell, directs the homebound ministry, assists Pastor Sammy Taylor with hospital visits and carries video and cassette tapes of the morning services to nursing homes and assisted-living facilities and old church literature to the county jail. He also sings in the choir and teaches a discipleship class.

Q: What was your childhood like?

A: I was born in Providence, R.I., in 1921, the same year that Mountain View Baptist was incorporated. Sixty-eight years later, the Lord brought me to Alabama and put me in this church.

Q: When did you come to know the Lord?

A: It all began in 1992 when I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior at the age of 70. It was a day that will always remain in my heart.

Q: How did you first get started with the homebound ministry?

A: (After accepting Christ), I started coming to church each Sunday. I felt that there was something missing but I didn't know what. I just felt that the Lord had other plans for me. Then, one Sunday morning while in the choir loft, our pastor, Sammy Taylor, was reading the prayer list. He came to the name Rose. ... The pastor was saying how difficult it was getting for Rose to deliver the tapes of Sunday services to the shut-ins because of her health problem. When the church service was over, I approached Rose and volunteered to help her. After a few weeks of visiting the homebound with Rose, I began making all the visits without her. After the first month, I realized that this ministry was what the Lord had planned for me.

Q: What motivates you to serve?

A: My faith in the Lord — that He will lead and guide me each day as I serve Him.

Getting 'in-gaged'

Collegiate Evangelism Conference urges students to be intentional witnesses

By Grace Thornton and Chris Mills
The Alabama Baptist

When Will, a college student, stood at the microphone Feb. 5, he had two main things to say.

One was that he'd been a believer in Christ for one year and one month.

The second was that he wouldn't be one now if it wasn't for his friend Jordan, standing there at the podium beside him.

"Jordan asked me what my testimony was, and if it wasn't for that, I wouldn't have known what the void was in my life that needed filling," Will said.

The two were a picture of what Mike Nuss said this year's Collegiate Evangelism Conference (CEC) theme of 'in-gaged' was all about.

"This year's event called us to be completely 'in-gaged' in our personal relationship with Christ and 'in-gaged' with His world," said Nuss, director of the office of collegiate and student ministries at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

"At a time when students are usually focused on themselves, school, work and relationships, we're praying that the message of the weekend helped them focus on the 'lostness' of their world and what they can do to make an impact," he said.

During the conference — held Feb. 5-6 at Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, in Montgomery Baptist Association — hundreds of students made commitments to pursue holiness, pray for and share with their lost friends and intentionally develop relationships with non-Christians.

Students also heard from Ed Litton, pastor of First Baptist Church, North Mobile, in Saraland, and Mike Satterfield of Field of Grace Ministries, based in Alabaster.

Acoustic band Shane & Shane led wor-

ship, and breakout sessions were offered on topics ranging from America's cults to beach evangelism.

"CEC was a great time to think about how intentional you are with sharing the gospel," said Zach Pratt, a student at Troy University. "From the speakers to the breakout sessions, there was somebody there to remind us that there needs to be a burden on our hearts for the lost people around us."

Hear the call, engage culture

Litton told the students that while his generation is failing to see God's purpose for their lives, "your generation gives me hope — you can have God's vision just like Isaiah did."

Preaching Friday night from Isaiah 6, Litton challenged students to see God's glory and hear God's call on their lives.

"More than anything, what we need is to see God's glory," he said. "The problem is

that He shows up all the time and we say, 'so what?'"

On Saturday, Litton continued the challenge from Luke 5, encouraging students to bring God glory by sharing His love with others.

"Our culture has separated 'missionary' from 'everyday person,' making it about going to other people and other cultures. But you do that every day, especially on your campuses," he said.

Satterfield urged students on Saturday to be engaged with Christ so then they can engage others. Preaching from the story of the paralytic in John 5, he said, "If you've been paralyzed for too long, get up!"

"Get up to engage culture," he said, challenging them to determine their connection, commitment, confidence and cause in order to engage the culture.

For more information and photos, visit www.thestudenthub.org.



Photo by Doug Rogers

WORSHIP — College students from around the state fill the worship center of Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, during the Friday night session of the Collegiate Evangelism Conference.



Photo by Chris Mills

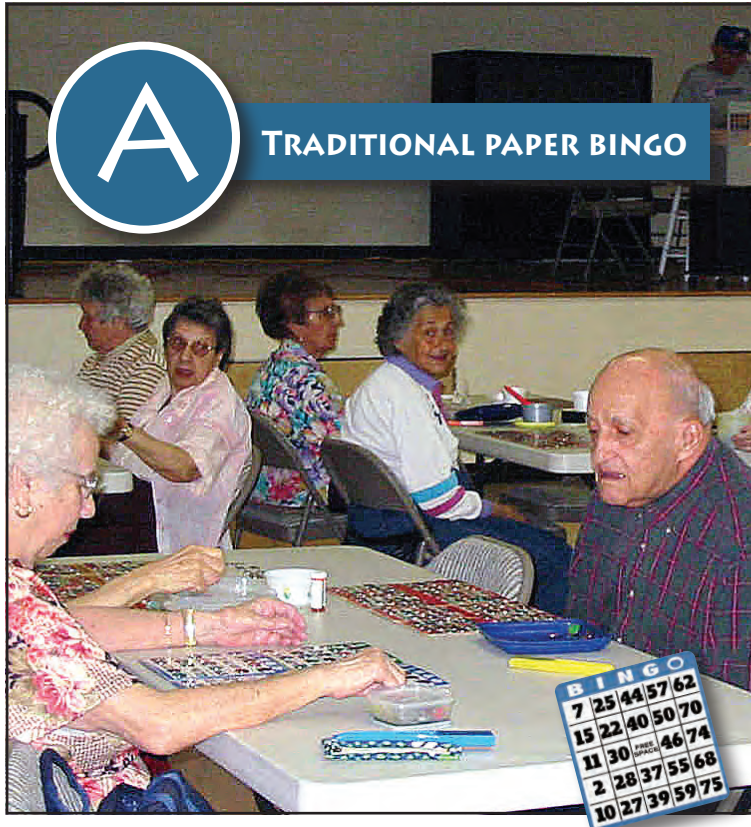
CHALLENGES — Above, students commit to share with and pray for non-Christian friends. Right, Ed Litton urges students to have God's vision.



Photo by Grace Thornton



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TRADITIONAL PAPER BINGO



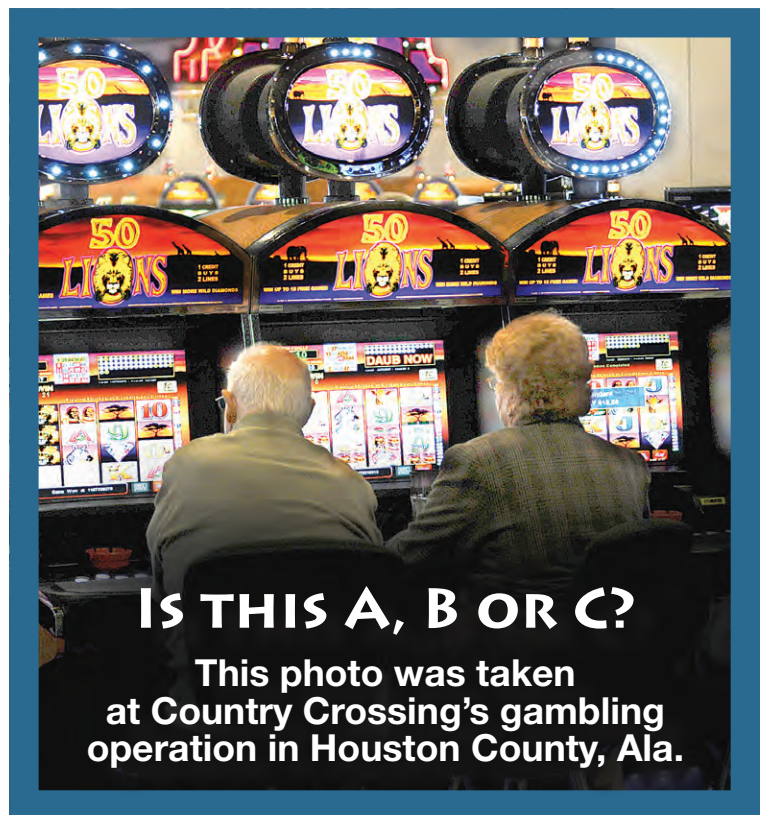
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ELECTRONIC BINGO



C

LAS VEGAS SLOT MACHINES



IS THIS A, B OR C?

This photo was taken at Country Crossing's gambling operation in Houston County, Ala.

OR SLOTS?

Chaos over 'bingo' clouds basic legality issue

Jobs, money, tourism and now civil rights — all these issues have clouded the air as Alabama's epic gambling battle becomes more complicated.

Now more and more Alabama citizens and high-level officials are calling for a vote of the people for resolution.

But many of the voices chanting, "let the people vote," may not be as interested in the democratic process as they are in maintaining the gambling operations that fill their coffers.

Sen. Hank Erwin, R-Montevallo, said gambling operators want people to vote with a "stacked deck."

"If the gamblers want to vote, it means that's their last ditch attempt to stay in business," Erwin said. "This is their only way because the courts have already ruled that they can't use slot machines, and that's their main pipeline of business."

"The only way they can go now is to get the law changed at the legislative level through a constitutional amendment to win this thing and ensure they won't ever have to go through this again."

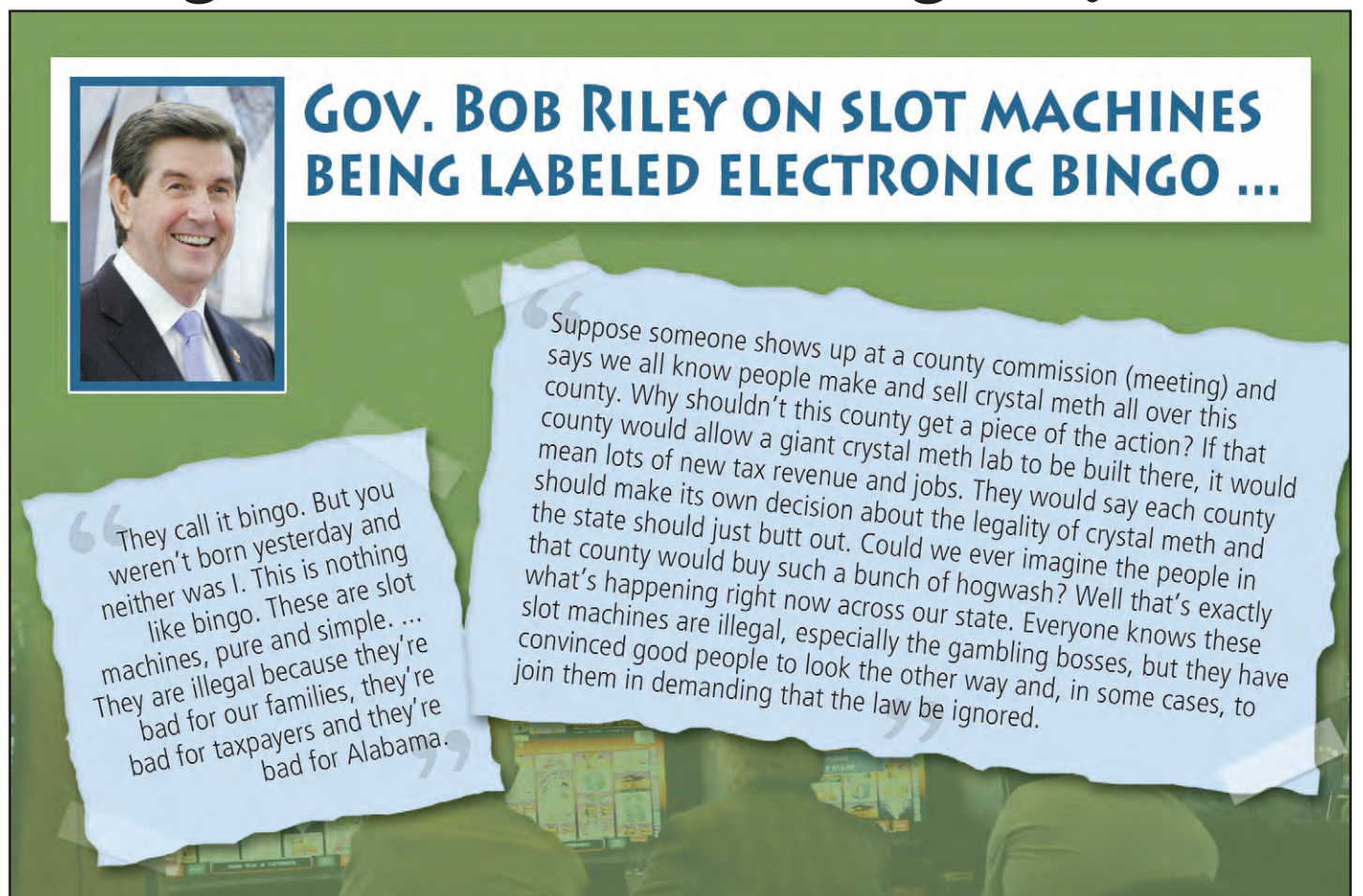
John Tyson, commander of Governor Riley's Task Force on Illegal Gambling, said if Alabamians want to change their Constitution, "they should proceed in an orderly, lawful action."

"These illegal gamblers have lost the gambling fight," he said. "They have lost the legal fight, and now they are trying to win with an illegal approach to changing the law. I'm going to stand and fight, and I hope [readers of *The Alabama Baptist*] would stand and fight."

Eric Johnston, president of Citizens for a Better Alabama, said the idea of letting the people vote is a "public relations scam" sponsored by the gamblers.

"When they say, 'let the people vote,' they are not letting them do a straight up and down vote," he said. "They are asking them to legalize expanded monopolistic gambling. They are asking them to make it legal."

"It's all a subversive way to try to get



people to vote on something when they really don't need to vote on it at all," Johnston said.

Sen. Scott Beason, R-Gardendale, has sponsored Senate Bill 333, which would allow Alabamians to simply decide whether they want gambling or not.

Not really a people's vote

Although the Tourism and Marketing Committee, headed by Sen. Bobby Singleton, D-Greensboro, routinely passes pro-gambling

legislation out of committee, Beason's bill has not even been brought up for consideration.

"They want the people to vote on what they want them to vote on," Beason said. "My bill is designed to let the people vote on whether they want to be a gambling state or not. [The gambling bosses] want their version that will be extremely profitable to a handful of people to make them multimillionaires. They are not really for letting the people vote."

Erwin wants Alabama residents to look beyond the commercials and media hype.

"Most of the people are going to get pounded with this 'let the people vote' ... because the gamblers are running the marketing," he said. "The people have not presented

any petitions to the government wanting to do this. ... The gamblers have been driving this whole thing. They are trying to make it look like the hundreds of thousands of people of Alabama are asking for this."

'Clear and present danger'

Tyson encouraged readers of *The Alabama Baptist* to "call their senators and communicate with their representatives. They need to send e-mails, send letters to the editor all over this state. Your leaders need to respond to the call. There is a clear and present danger to this state, and we need them to stand up."

To contact your senator, call 334-242-7800. To contact your representative, call 334-242-7600. (TAB)

Bingo battles bring media blitz

Gambling battles at the Alabama Statehouse are heating up, and for several weeks now, TV stations around the state have been running commercials asking Alabamians to support and oppose slot machines being labeled electronic bingo.

Before the legislative session began, Greene County entities launched commercials seeking support for Greentrack's slot machine gambling operation. Greentrack currently owes the state \$72 million in back taxes, and House Bill (HB) 154 proposes tax exemption for gambling facilities like Greentrack.

The Enterprise-based Sweet Home Alabama Coalition chimed in running TV commercials questioning Gov. Bob Riley's motives in shutting down illegal slot machine operations across the state.

Last year, Country Crossing developer Ronnie Gilley confirmed he is a part of the coalition, which staged a statewide media and marketing campaign to promote a "big bingo" bill expanding and legalizing gambling in Alabama.

The big bill being promoted this year

would call for a constitutional amendment to be voted on by Alabamians in November. The amendment would legalize slot machines in 10 locations across the state with the guidelines set by bill sponsors Sen. Roger Bedford (Senate Bill 380) and Reps. Marcel Black and John Knight (HB 507) (see story, page 6).

Now an anti-gambling group is facing off against the pro-gambling forces and defending Riley.

Citizens for a Better Alabama (CBA) began airing TV and radio ads across the state "in response to the blatant misinformation that casino bosses have put out over the airwaves in previous weeks."

"The ads that began running [Jan. 28] show that casino bosses cannot hide behind attacks and misinformation while they try to pass one of the most corrupt pieces of legislation in Alabama history," said CBA President Eric Johnston in a press release.

"We are proud to stand with our governor to refute the malicious propaganda that keeps originating from casino interests across Alabama." (TAB)

Etowah County judge calls for inspection of prospective developer's slot machines

During a Feb. 1 hearing, Etowah County Circuit Judge Allen Millican gave prospective developer CBS Supply until Feb. 22 to deliver its slot machines, being labeled electronic bingo, to the district attorney's office for inspection.

The ruling came after CBS Supply attorney Christie Knowles withdrew her motion for a summary judgment that there was no issue of fact based on an expert testimony that the machines complied with the law.

The hearing was held one week after attorneys representing Etowah Baptist Association (EBA) filed a motion to become a "friend of the court" in the case between District Attorney Jimmie Harp and CBS Supply. Harp is seeking a declaratory judgment from the court on whether or not the machines CBS Supply is attempting to bring into Etowah County comply with the law.

After the Alabama Supreme Court ruled Jan. 29 that Ashville's electronic bingo or-

dinance was illegal, Etowah County Sheriff Todd Entekin recommended to the County Commission that it review and modify its "charitable machine bingo" resolution to ensure it complies with the Supreme Court's standards. The commission heeded Entekin's advice, and after a unanimous vote Feb. 8, it modified its standards.

There are currently no slot machine operations in Etowah County; however, CBS Supply and the County Commission have entered into an agreement to develop a piece of property close to Interstate 59, said Joshua Sullivan, one of EBA's attorneys. "The court has made it clear, along with the district attorney, that this should be an open, public hearing and that the machines must be present," he said.

A hearing to rule on the legality of the machines is scheduled for March 3. However, if CBS Supply fails to deliver the machines by the Feb. 22 deadline, then Millican said he will dismiss the case. (TAB)

Casino raids in state compared to racial divide of 1960s

(continued from page 1)

Ford said he is prepared to do whatever it takes to make sure “my people have the opportunity to vote.”

That may mean marching or leading rallies or taking legal action, he said, noting he plans to file a lawsuit over the matter with the U.S. Supreme Court.

He explained he sponsored the original legislation in 2003 that allowed for a constitutional amendment to be voted on by the people to legalize “bingo.”

“I am the representative who wrote and originated House Bill (HB) 660, the bill that actually brought electronic bingo to Alabama,” said Ford, who served as a state representative from 1999 to 2004.

‘Violation of our rights’

His intentions at the time were to legalize bingo, no matter how it was played, he said. He was introduced to a machine that would “play bingo” and could be brought into Macon County with the passage of the constitutional amendment.

The senior citizens wanted traditional paper bingo and VictoryLand was failing financially, so Ford found a way to take care of both.

“This is a county that is majority

African-American,” he said. “Civil rights gave us the right to vote, and we voted for VictoryLand. ... This (recent action by the task force) is a violation of our civil rights.”

But the task force is shutting down all slot machine operations across the state, no matter where they exist.

When asked how the civil rights argument plays out in the predominantly white Houston County, where the state’s newest slot machine operation Country Crossing is located, Ford said he could only comment on Macon County.

But Singleton said, “Just like the civil rights movement, there were people of Caucasian descent who helped us out.”

And then there is an entirely different level to the argument of “the right to vote.” What about the areas of the state that also want gambling but are excluded from the current legislation calling for a constitutional amendment legalizing slot machines in 10 areas in the state?

The legislation (Senate Bill 380 and HB 507 — see story, this page) would exclude the majority of counties that also have constitutional amendments legalizing traditional paper bingo. These amendments are being used as the launching pad for legalizing slot machines, being



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

‘I’M PREPARED TO DIE’ — Johnny Ford, former mayor of Tuskegee, tells reporters Feb. 11 that the recent raids by the Governor’s Task Force on Illegal Gambling are similar to “the storm-trooping days of the civil rights era.”

labeled electronic bingo gambling.

Rep. Thad McClammy, D-Montgomery, said he had no problem with legislation legalizing slot machines in the state, but “there is one issue I have a problem with — we (Montgomery County) have an amendment similar to Houston County.”

“This directly contradicts the opportunity and rights of my own county,” he said during the public hearing of HB 154, a bill that would

legalize and protect existing casinos in Alabama until the constitutional amendment legalizing them could be voted on in November.

“Why compromise Montgomery County’s rights?”

‘It offends me’

Bessemer Mayor Edward May said, “For those of us who really participated in the civil rights activities, we should be offended. ... It offends me that these folks who

operate out of greed would invoke anything that has to do with the civil rights era.

“This is about greed and money,” he said. “This is not something to cause harm to someone because they are African-American.

“This is the most divisive issue since the civil rights movement. But is it an issue of race? No, it’s not,” May said.

“It has nothing to do with race. It has to do with dollars.”

Chickasaw ‘bingo’ plans not swayed by task force, high court

After the Chickasaw City Council meeting Feb. 9, it does not seem the recent Jan. 29 Supreme Court ruling against slot machines in Asheville has fazed the city leaders. Neither have the recent raids by the Governor’s Task Force on Illegal Gambling or the closing of casinos like VictoryLand in Macon County.

The council and mayor passed an amended “bingo” ordinance, which would allow a new version of electronic bingo. They also approved a lease with electronic gambling developer M.S. Land Inc. after a vote of 4-2.

M.S. Land, which is owned by Gulf Shores attorney James “Pete” Bridges, is reportedly planning to operate 500 gambling machines soon. M.S. Land was begun specifically for “bingo” halls in Mobile County, Mobile’s *Press-Register* reported.

Are they legal?

While City Councilman Adam Bourne and city attorney Jay Minus have yet to actually see one of the new machines, they both confirmed that Bridges’ machines comply with the Supreme Court’s six-point test (released as part of a November 2009 ruling).

Mobile County District Attorney John Tyson, who is also head

of the task force, is not convinced the machines are legal. “We’ll have to see what Chickasaw has in mind, but all these years, I have never seen an electronic machine that was really nothing other than a slot machine disguised by a decal and clever name,” he said.

M.S. Land’s Chickasaw Bingo Pavilion reportedly has 15 charities that will oversee the operation, according to Bourne. However, no one has been able to provide a list of these charities to *The Alabama Baptist*.

City Councilman Mickey Day, who voted against the new ordinance and lease agreement, said the amount of rent collected from M.S. Land will depend on the number of machines being played per hour.

“There are a lot of people in Chickasaw who don’t want gambling,” said Day, noting about half of the approximately 100 people who came to the Feb. 9 council meeting opposed electronic gambling. “So I represented both them and me by voting no.

“I just don’t feel comfortable with what it may do to the environment of the city,” he said.

Mayor Byron Pittman and Bridges have been contacted numerous times. At press time, neither had returned calls. (TAB)

Big ‘bingo’ bill on fast track in Senate

Pro-gambling senators wasted no time Feb. 9 moving Senate Bill 380 out of committee and past its second reading in order to have it positioned and ready for immediate debate.

At press time, the legislation — which calls for a constitutional amendment to be voted on in November — was at the top of the calendar for Feb. 16. The constitutional amendment would legalize slot-machine gambling in 10 locations in the state.

It’s companion bill, House Bill 507, sponsored by Rep. Marcel Black, D-Tuscumbia, was expected to be voted out of the House Tourism and Travel Committee soon.

Sen. Bobby Singleton, D-Greensboro, chairman of the Tourism and Marketing Committee, said he wants this bill passed quickly. He and others were even willing to pass it out of committee without seeing the final version, noting they would hammer out the details in debate.

The bill would legalize slot ma-



“If the people want to vote it out, I support that. But it still won’t get rid of the machines run by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.”

Sen. Roger Bedford
D-Russellville

those with gambling facilities, he said. Of the 25 percent tax on the facilities, 20 percent would go to the state — 65 percent of that to education and 35 percent to Medicaid.

Noting he has been in intense negotiations with representatives from each of the existing facilities and others from the gambling industry, Bedford said the final version of the bill was close at press time.

But senators opposed to gambling are ready to take on the bill. First line of attack — filibuster.

This bill is not about letting the people vote (see story, page 5), Sen. Hank Erwin, R-Montevallo, said.

“If the gamblers want to vote, it means that’s their last ditch attempt to stay in business,” he said.

Sen. Jabo Waggoner, R-Birmingham, said, “If these (gambling) bills pass, it will change the culture of Alabama and we will be known as a gambling state. ... I don’t want that for my kids or grandkids.” (TAB)

Negotiations continue

Sen. Roger Bedford, D-Russellville, sponsor of the bill said the bill also has “the toughest gaming regulations in the nation.”

The legislation calls for a five-member gaming commission and tax benefits for all counties, not just

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

Baptist arrests in Haiti could set back adoptions

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A Southern Baptist seminary professor says the arrests of a group of Baptists from the United States accused of trying to remove children from earthquake-stricken Haiti without proper documentation could give a black eye to a budding movement of evangelicals who view adoption as a means of spreading the gospel.

Russell Moore, senior vice president for academic administration and dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., recounted his reaction to hearing the news that 10 Americans accused of human trafficking were members of Baptist churches Feb. 1 on seminary President Al Mohler's radio program.

"I thought, 'Oh no, this is going to cause all kinds of derision to the orphan-care movement and to what the Holy Spirit is doing in churches all across America and all over the world in having a heart for orphans,'" Moore said, sitting in as guest host for Mohler.

Last year, Moore published a book titled "Adopted for Life" calling on Christians to adopt children as a "Great Commission priority." On Feb. 26-27, the seminary is sponsoring an Adopting for Life conference aimed at creating "a culture of adoption" in families and churches. Particularly following tragedy, Moore said couples seeking international adoption can feel frustrated by the seemingly endless process of filing and processing papers. But he said a certain amount of red tape is necessary to ensure that children have no surviving relatives able to care for them before they are removed from a home and that they receive proper care from their new parents.

"I'm worried that this news is going to give a black eye to the orphan-care movement in the same way that some of the really ram-bunctious, lawbreaking aspects of the right-to-life protester movement did to the pro-life movement," Moore said.

ERLC's Land says don't repeal 'don't ask, don't tell'

WASHINGTON — Southern Baptist public policy specialist Richard Land called on congressional members Feb. 2 to oppose legislation that would overturn the ban on open homosexuals serving in the U.S. military.

Writing to 79 selected members of the House of Representatives, Land told them The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) strongly opposes the Military Readiness Enhancement Act. Land is the ERLC's president.

Land's letter was sent the same day the Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Mike Mullen told a Senate committee they support President Obama's intention to repeal what is known as the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Enactment of the bill would harm troop morale and potentially result in a significant loss of service members, Land told the House members.

Obama declared during the Jan. 27 State of the Union address he would work this year "with Congress and our military to finally repeal the law that denies gay Americans the right to serve the country they love because of who they are."

Gates told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Pentagon is working toward implementation of such a repeal but acknowledged reversal of the ban is up to Congress. The 1993 law enacted by a Democrat-controlled Congress and signed by President Clinton prevents homosexuals from serving openly. The policy also prohibits the military from asking recruits on the front end if they are homosexual.

January CP receipts surpass monthly budget

NASHVILLE — Year-to-date contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Cooperative Program (CP) are 0.63 percent below the same time frame last year, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Morris H. Chapman.

As of Jan. 31, the year-to-date total of \$67,816,336.05 for CP missions is \$433,263.87 behind the \$68,249,599.92 received at the end of January 2009.

However, monthly CP receipts, which totaled \$20,857,880.43, were 0.82 percent above the monthly budget of \$17,032,132.72.

Month-to-month swings reflect a number of factors but largely result from the timing of receipts from state conventions. The end-of-month total represents money received by close of business on the last business day of each month.

For the SBC CP Allocation Budget, the year-to-date total of \$67,816,336.05 is 99.54 percent of the \$68,128,530.88 budgeted to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. The SBC operates on an Oct. 1-Sept. 30 fiscal year. ■

Alabama Baptists, other groups 'huge encouragement' to Haitians

(continued from page 1)

"I didn't see a lot of hopelessness. I saw a lot of people striving to take care of themselves and those around them," he said. "They were gathering food, cleaning up debris and trying to get their homes back together. ... It's almost like even though they lost a lot of people, life goes on."

Gunter recalled his team walking through the streets and seeing a group of people gathered under a tarp amid ruins.

"People were holding up their hands and we thought, 'this is another distribution area,'" Gunter said. "But it was actually a church. Their church (building) next door was totally flattened so they were having worship and praising God right there in the middle of disaster and destruction."

And a lot of that hope could be from the outpouring of support Haitians are receiving from believers around the world.

"On the airplane there were a lot of ... other teams coming or going — other Christian groups, Southern Baptists, nondenominational groups, doctors and medical care (personnel)," Gunter said. "I think



Photo courtesy of John Gunter

HOPE — Despite the destruction around them, Haitians gather for worship at the former site of Eglise Union Baptiste (Union Baptist Church).

it's a huge encouragement for [Haitians] to see people from all over the world coming to help them out."

In addition to setting up medical clinics for Bethel Mission Outreach orphanage and its surrounding community just outside of Haiti, the team delivered a truckload of food to another orphanage and four Baptist churches that have been designated as feeding sites.

When the team departed from Haiti Feb. 5, Gunter's brother, David Gunter, a member of Mountain View Church, Anniston, stayed behind to continue caring for children at Bethel Mission Outreach, helping with medical relief and doing construction work around the area.

He has plans to return to the United States the beginning of March. ■

Structural engineers, others needed in Haiti

Are you a structural engineer? Haiti needs you, according to Mel Johnson, disaster relief strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Alabama Baptists have been called upon to provide teams of four — two structural engineers and two chaplains — to inspect buildings in Haiti.

"Folks there are afraid to go back into buildings, so it would be a great help and comfort to them to know if the structure is sound," Johnson said.

If you have a background in structural engineering and are interested in volunteering in Haiti, then contact Johnson at 1-800-264-1225, Ext. 273.

The first two Alabama Baptist disaster relief teams — one doing medical work and another doing water purification — left in early

February and at press time, were already seeing great success, Johnson said.

"There were 163 patients treated yesterday (Feb. 11) by our medical team on the ground and 22 professions of faith. That was their first day to work in and around the tent city," he said.

Call for workers, buckets

The water purification team also was hard at work drilling wells for Haitians in need of clean drinking water.

And scores of other Alabama Baptists have gathered for disaster relief certification sessions offered at various locations around the state this month, preparing to be sent to Haiti with future relief teams.

"There has been a tremendous amount of interest from the churches — I can't say enough about the

churches' support for this Great Commission ministry," Johnson said.

Churches also are rallying to collect Buckets of Hope, containers filled with specific provisions to meet immediate needs in Haiti. Buckets will be collected at various points around the state March 4-5.

"One change from the original instructions is that it is no longer necessary for the bucket to be white," Johnson said. "There has been a nationwide run on white buckets, and the supply has just been overrun by the demand."

As long as the bucket is free of imprints or logos, any color should work.

For more information about how to pack a Bucket of Hope or where buckets are being collected, visit www.alsbom.org/haiti. (TAB)

Baptist volunteers arrested in Haiti may be released

Ten U.S. Baptist volunteers accused of kidnapping 33 children in Haiti may be released from jail but kept in Haiti until a final ruling is made in their case, according to major news outlets.

The Associated Press (AP) and *The New York Times* both reported Feb. 11 that Judge Bernard Saint-Vil will recommend to the prosecutor that the 10 volunteers be released but be required to remain in the country while the investigation continues and until a final decision is made in their case.

The prosecutor can then agree

or object to the recommendation, although in Haiti's judicial system the same judge still makes the final ruling.

"After listening to the families, I see the possibility that they can all be released," Saint-Vil told the AP. "I am recommending that all 10 Americans be released."

It is not known when a ruling on the actual charges will be made.

The five men and five women were arrested Jan. 29 and accused of trying to kidnap the children across the border, although the volunteers said they were simply

taking the kids to safety in the Dominican Republic and that the children, ages 2 to 12, either were orphans or the parents had granted permission. The volunteers denied there was any wrongdoing, and, in fact, some parents told the judge that they indeed had agreed to allow their children be taken to the Dominican Republic.

The controversy surrounded whether the volunteers had the proper paperwork to cross the border with the children.

Nine of the 10 are members of Southern Baptist churches. (BP)

Across Alabama's Associations

BALDWIN

► The ladies' ministry of **Josephine Church, Elberta**, will hold an event Feb. 27, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., with Sharon Thomas, of Newport News, Va. Thomas will show how to turn "Trash to Treasure." Lunch by Katy's Catering will be served. Bring one like-new fashion accessory. For registration information call 251-987-1973 by Feb. 23. Ted Mashburn is pastor.

BESSEMER

► **Canaan Church, Bessemer**, will hold BCM Night (Baptist Campus Ministries) Feb. 28, 6 p.m. Gary Brittain, BCM director for Jacksonville State University, will speak. The University of Montevallo worship team will lead the music. There will be a BCM fair in the family chapel from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. For information call 205-425-4381. Morgan Bailey is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **First Church, Pleasant Grove**, will hold a ladies weekend March 6 with Sherri Burgess and Margaret Feinberg. The theme will be "Hearing God's Voice in Your Everyday Life." There will be a light breakfast at 8 a.m. The sessions will begin at 9 a.m. A tablescapes lunch will be at noon. For information call 205-744-7061. Daven Watkins is pastor.

COVINGTON

► **Victory Church, Andalusia**, will celebrate homecoming March 7, 10:30 a.m., with Rick Freeman as guest speaker. Judd Holderfield will lead the music. For information call 334-222-8323.

LAMAR

► **Keith Martin** is the new pastor of **Kennedy Church**. He comes

from El Bethel Church, Chancellor, where he served as pastor. He has also served several other Alabama churches. Martin holds a bachelor's degree from Troy University, associate of religious education from Florida Baptist Theological College (now The Baptist College of Florida) in Graceville and master of arts in Christian education from New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Andrea, have two children.

LIMESTONE

► **Capshaw Church** surpassed its Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal of \$20,000 by giving \$26,102.44. Zach Terry is pastor.

MONTGOMERY

► **Bridgeview Church, Montgomery**, will host Christian humorist Brother Billy Bob Bohannon Feb. 28, 11 a.m. Josh Cook is pastor.

SHELBY

► **Bethel Church, Columbiana**, will host Michael English in concert with Wes Hampton Feb. 25, 7 p.m. Doors will open at 5 p.m. All proceeds will go to Cornerstone Christian School in Columbiana. For tickets call 205-669-7777. Jeff Fortenberry is pastor.

SIPSEY

► **Sipsey Association** will hold an evangelism conference March 6, 6:30 p.m., at Crossroads Church, Gordo. Max Stripling, director of missions for Sipsey Association, and Steve Freeman, pastor of Grace Church, Springfield, Tenn.,

will speak. Donna Weaver of Englewood Church, Tuscaloosa, will provide special music. There will be a covered-dish dinner at 5:45 p.m. Ted Sessoms is associational director of evangelism for Sipsey Association.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Valley View Church, Tuscaloosa**, will host the Watoto children's choir, of Kampala, Uganda, March 3, 6 p.m. For information visit www.watoto.com. Billy Joy is pastor.

WEST CULLMAN

► **Central Church, Cullman**, will hold revival March 7–10 with Terry Blakenship. Services will be Sunday at 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Elton Rutherford is pastor.

WINSTON

► **Winston Association** will hold a Vacation Bible School directors training March 1, 6:30 p.m., at the associational office. The training is for those using LifeWay's Saddle Ridge Ranch theme. Duronda Hood is the associational Vacation Bible School director. The association also will hold Priority 101: A Personal Look at What Drugs Are Doing to Our Youth March 11, 6:30 p.m., at the associational office. This event is for youth workers, pastors and anyone concerned about drug problems with youth. There will be a testimony by a young person who hid his problem. Dinner will be served. For reservations call 205-489-5137 by March 8. Al Hood is director of missions.

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Alabama Ministries

Bethlehem and Pine Barren Bible Institute

► Bethlehem and Pine Barren Baptist associations will partner with Samford University's Beeson Divinity School extension division to sponsor a Bible institute this spring.

Sessions will be held at the Bethlehem Association office in Frisco City on Tuesdays, 6–8 p.m., March 2–May 18. The class offered will follow "Know the Truth: A Handbook of Christian Belief," written by Bruce Milne. The course will be taught by Scott Tharp, pastor of Little River Baptist Church, Uriah.

For more information, call 251-267-3875 or e-mail

amy@bethlehempinebarren.com.

Sing & Shout

► **M-POWER Ministries** will hold its fifth annual Sing & Shout on March 7 at 5 p.m. at the Alys Stephens Center in Birmingham.

The event supports M-POWER in its mission to create opportunities for those in need through education and health programs. Alabama Baptist congregations have supported Sing & Shout through the years. This year's event will showcase three choirs: Colla Voce, the University of Alabama at Birmingham Gospel Choir and the Riverchase United Methodist Church choir. For more information, call 205-595-5959 or visit www.singandshout.org.

Sav-A-Life Vestavia

► **Sav-A-Life Vestavia** will hold its 30th anniversary banquet March 23 at 7 p.m. at the Cahaba Grand Conference Center in Birmingham. Pam Tebow, mother of Heisman trophy winner Tim Tebow of the University of Florida Gators, will be the guest speaker.

The banquet is being held in support of Sav-A-Life Vestavia, which strives to help those in need make life-affirming decisions concerning pregnancy. Since its establishment in 1980, it has served more than 54,000 clients in Jefferson County and its surrounding counties. For more information, call Lisa Hogan at 205-979-0302.

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

Meek Church meeting needs with clothes closet

For Clara "Cookie" Woodruff, member of Meek Baptist Church, Arley, starting a clothes closet ministry was simply an act of obedience to God's call to meet physical and spiritual needs.

"We just want to do what God wants us to do. We want to be servants to the community," she said.

It all began in August of 2009 when the Winston Baptist Association church decided to give away clothes before the start of school. With a positive response from the community and a large amount of clothes leftover, Woodruff, the clothes closet director, saw an opportunity for the church to meet the clothing needs of its community year-round. Opening its doors for the first time Jan. 14, the Meek Baptist clothes closet offers clothing for infants to adults, both males and females, as well as shoes and clothing accessories. Those who come to the clothes closet will be asked to fill out a form that includes spiritual questions, and a church member will go over the form with them.

"Our main goal for this whole thing is to see souls won for Christ," Pastor Richard D. Welch said. "Meeting the needs of the community opens the door to share Jesus. People will come to a clothes closet that would never come to church."

"I hope that a year from now we are talking about how many hundreds of people have come to know Jesus Christ through this clothes closet," he added.

The clothes closet will be open every second Thursday of the month from 6:30–8:30 p.m. and as needs come available.

"I know that [the clothes closet] is bringing the church family a little more together," Woodruff said. "I'm hoping it will start a mission-mindedness in the church, too."

St. Clair's Men's Weekend 2010 impacts hundreds

Learning the "disciplines of a godly man" is not an easy task. But it was the one taken up by the more than 450 men who attended the St. Clair Baptist Association Men's Weekend 2010 Jan. 29–30.

"We sensed that the men of CrossPoint and the men of ... this general area ... were just yearning for more," said Chris Howell, minister of adults at CrossPoint Baptist Church, Trussville. "They were desiring to grow and develop as Christ followers and we wanted to provide them with a resource for that goal."

So in order to meet this need, CrossPoint Baptist, under the leadership of Pastor Ryan Whitley, hosted its first Men's Weekend in January 2009. After receiving a positive response from last year's participants, Whitley invited other churches in the St. Clair Association to help sponsor the event this year so that they could reach more men.

The result was that approximately 460 men attended the weekend event held on CrossPoint's campus, doubling last year's number. Featured speaker R. Kent Hughes, of Spokane, Washington, used his book "Disciplines of a Godly Man" as the text for the weekend. Everyone who attended received a copy of this book. The churches who helped sponsor the event in addition to CrossPoint were: Bethel Baptist Church, Moody; Cedar Grove Baptist Church, Leeds; Cropwell Baptist Church; First Baptist Church, Ashville; First Baptist Church, Moody; and First Baptist Church, Pell City.

"As a church staff member, I was excited to see all these churches working together," said Howell who helped organize the weekend. "It laid the groundwork of doing events similar in the future."

FBC Pelham pastor honored for work with Scouts

Mike Shaw, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pelham, was honored Feb. 7 at the Shelby Baptist Association church with the Boy Scouts of America's (BSA) Good Shepherd Emblem for outstanding service and dedication to youth programs.

Under Shaw's leadership, First, Pelham, invests in two Scout troops: Boy Scout Troop 404 and Cub Scout Pack 404. The award presentation was made in conjunction with this year's Scout Sunday, honoring BSA's 100 years.

Shaw said he remembers camping with BSA when it marked 50 years. "While much has changed in 50 years, I appreciate the fact that Scouting has not changed its character," he said. "I admire the values of Scouting such as integrity, moral character and reverence toward God."

The Good Shepherd Emblem, awarded through Association of Baptists for Scouting and the BSA's Greater Alabama Council, recognizes men and women who have intentionally invested in Baptist youth through their churches and national Scout agencies.



SHAW

World Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Moroccan officials raid Bible study, arrest Christians

AMIZMIZ, Morocco — A large, military-led team of Moroccan authorities raided a Bible study in a small city southeast of Marrakech on Feb. 4, arresting 18 Moroccans and deporting a U.S. citizen, area Christian leaders said.

Approximately 60 officers from the Moroccan security services raided the home of a Christian in Amizmiz, a picturesque city of 10,000 mainly Berber people 35 miles southeast of Marrakech. A church Bible study was in progress at the home with visitors from western and southern Morocco, the leaders said.

Five of the 18 people held for 14 hours were small children, two of them infants no more than 6 months old. The other small children ranged from 20 months to 4 years old.

The Christian leaders said authorities interrogated participants in the Bible study for 14 hours. The leader of the Christian group, who requested anonymity for security reasons, said the raiding party was unusually large and included an accompaniment of 15 vehicles led by a colonel and two captains. "It's the first time in our current Moroccan church history that the Moroccan government used this size of a legion to attack a small Christian meeting," he said. "All the time they kept repeating that this was ordered personally by the new Moroccan Justice Minister [Mohamed Naciri] and by the highest level General of the Gendarmerie [Housni Benslimane]."

Lao officials force Christians from worship, homes

KATIN, Laos — About 100 local officials, police and villagers put guns to the heads of Christians during their Sunday morning service in a village in Laos in January, forcing them from their worship and homes, according to an advocacy organization.

Human Rights Watch for Lao Religious Freedom (HRWRLF) reported that in Katin village of Ta-Oyl district, Saravan Province, Lao authorities including the village chief, a religious affairs' official, three district police and a 15-man volunteer unit joined 15 village police officers to force all 48 Christian adults and children of the church to an open field.

Afterward the officials confiscated all personal belongings from 11 homes of Christians and destroyed six of the 11 homes. They also confiscated a pig — equal to six weeks' salary to the villagers — that belonged to one of the members of the congregation, according to HRWRLF. Unable to cajole the Christians into renouncing Christ with the illegal use of arms, the officials forced them to walk nearly four miles and then left them on the side of a road.

Tanzanian Christians charged with illegal preaching

DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania — Two Christian evangelists in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, were arrested after Muslims invited them to debate religion but instead called in security agents who charged the evangelists with illegal preaching.

Anglicans Eleutery Kobelo and Cecil Simboulanga, released on bail and facing a hearing Feb. 11, said Christian and Muslim groups organized the interfaith debate that was planned for a neutral venue in October 2009 in the Kariakoo area of Dar es Salaam. Kobelo said no Muslims showed up at the debate until Islamists arrived with government security agents who charged them with "using religious sermons to incite Muslims and Christians into viewing each other with suspicion."

At press time, charges of unlawful assembly had been brought against the two evangelists and seven other Christians, but it was not clear if the original charges of inciting religious suspicions were still in place.

European court rules against Turkey's religion ID

STRASBOURG, France — A European court Feb. 2 ordered Turkey to remove the religious affiliation section from citizens' identification cards, calling the practice a violation of human rights.

Religious minorities and Christian converts in particular in Turkey have faced discrimination because of the mandatory religion declaration on their identification cards, which was enforced until 2006. Since then, citizens are allowed to leave the religion section of their IDs blank.

The ruling by the European Court of Human Rights "is a good thing," said Zekai Tanyar, president of the Turkish Protestant Alliance, citing prejudices against Christian converts. "[Religion on the ID] can cost people their jobs," he said. "It has been known to affect whether they get a job or not, how people look at them, whether they are accepted for a post or an application of some sort. Therefore I think [the ruling] is a good and appropriate thing." ■



NAMB photo

'COULDN'T RESIST WHAT GOD WANTED' — A fiery preacher, NAMB Week of Prayer missionary Luis Rodríguez Molina is pastor of a church plant, Raham Baptist Church, in Coamo, Puerto Rico.

Following the call

Baptists spread God's work in Puerto Rico amid apathy

At the onset of his missionary career, Pastor Luis Rodríguez Molina and his wife, Lourdes Santiago, were dismayed at the lack of commitment from church members at the church they'd planted in Coamo, Puerto Rico. However, this apathy did not hamper the efforts of these Southern Baptists. Besides, from God's divine perspective, this was only the beginning.

Rodríguez remembers the challenges faced during those uncertain days after being sent by Raham Baptist Church, Santa Isabel, Puerto Rico, to plant a church in Coamo.

'Worth it'

When they arrived in the region, Rodríguez said he and his wife quickly noticed believers' lack of commitment to attending the services. "When we were on our way to a prayer service, they started calling to excuse themselves from coming to the service. In that moment, I turned and looked at my wife and wondered if our efforts were really worth it. We began doubting if God was really involved."

When Rodríguez and his wife arrived at the small church for the prayer service, only one other couple had come to intercede for God's work there — but it was a couple with a very special need.

"With great sorrow in our hearts, we found brother Carlos Santiago and his wife, Andrea, who was kneeling in prayer," Rodríguez recalled. Andrea's hair had fallen out because of the chemotherapy she was undergoing to fight her cancer. "I looked at my wife, she looked at

me and the Lord spoke to my heart, saying, 'For the love of that solitary life I'm sending you to Coamo. It's one life, one soul. Don't worry about the ones who made excuses and didn't come.'"

Because of Andrea's commitment, Rodríguez and his wife were motivated to press on with God's challenge of planting a church in Coamo. The result was the creation of Raham Baptist Church, Coamo.

The Rodríguezes are missionaries for the North American Mission Board, responsible for planting churches in Puerto Rico. They are two of the 5,300 missionaries in the United States, Canada and their territories who receive a percentage of their support from the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

Rodríguez, 46, was ordained as a Southern Baptist pastor in 2001 by his local church at the time, Raham Baptist Church of Santa Isabel. He came from a background in business, with a concentration in accounting — working up to a vice president's job at the company where he worked for more than 20 years.

Since becoming a missionary three years ago, he has completed coursework at Luther Rice Seminary in Puerto Rico and is planning to continue his studies at the Baptist Seminary of Puerto

Rico, through Liberty University.

"My decision to become a missionary wasn't an easy decision. I faced all sorts of difficulties," Rodríguez said. "I quit a job with great benefits. Temptations came, uncertainty, good advice and bad advice. But God, who is rich in mercy, sustained me. My wife's support was unconditional and awesome. I simply couldn't resist what God wanted to do with me."

While 85 percent of the population in Puerto Rico is Roman Catholics, the remaining 15 percent is made up various groups like Southern Baptists, who impact the culture through outlets like universities and schools, including the bilingual, Christian school — Coamo Christian Academy — Rodríguez and his church-planting team started three years ago.

The academy has met with great approval in the community. Beginning with only four students in 2006, the school now has more than 40 enrolled.

Adalberto Muñoz, a member of Rodríguez's ministry team, said, "Pastor Luis and members of Raham Baptist Church in Coamo have a genuine calling from God to the ministry ... You feel you are in a wholesome environment full of love for God and for people." (NAMB)

Week of Prayer for
NORTH AMERICAN
MISSIONS
March 7-14, 2010



National goal:
\$70,000,000
Alabama goal:
\$6,000,000

U.N. resolution may hinder religious freedom

By Erich Bridges
Columnist, Baptist Press

Sitting in a coffee shop the other day, I watched a young couple helping their toddler daughter learn how to walk. The child's tiny fists gripped her mother's fingers tightly as she staggered forward. Her face shone with utter joy.

But what sort of world is she stepping into in 2010? A hurting one, where thousands of children her age die each day from malnutrition and preventable diseases. Where half the

people of Haiti existed on a dollar a day even before the killer earthquake struck Jan. 12. And where nearly seven of every 10 people live in countries that significantly restrict religious faith and practice — either through laws, social pressure or both.

That shameful statistic comes from a report released in December by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. Of 198 nations studied, 75 put official limits on religious evangelization. Nearly 180 require houses of worship to register with the government; in 117 of those, the requirement causes problems for religious believers.

Christians are by no means the only targets of such restrictions, but they are the most widespread on a global scale. In many places — primarily but not exclusively communist and Muslim-majority lands — Christians continue to pay in blood for their faith. In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 18 of that document states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

'Freedom of opinion'

Article 19 is inseparably related, just as the freedoms of speech and religion are inseparable in our own Bill of Rights: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

For the fifth year in a row, however, the U.N. General Assembly has violated the letter and the spirit of its own declaration. At the urging of the 56 member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference — including some of the most notorious abus-

ers of religious rights in their own countries — the assembly endorsed a resolution in December against the so-called "defamation of religion."

The controversial, nonbinding resolution passed with less support than in previous years. But it passed, providing continuing philosophical aid and comfort to those who seek to silence free religious expression.

"Essentially the resolution [seeks] to criminalize words or actions that are deemed to be against a particular religion, namely, Islam," said Lindsay Vessey, director of advocacy for Open Doors, an international ministry that supports persecuted Christians.

Wherever the resolution gains the force of law, Vessey warned, citizens won't be "free to preach the gospel [or] to say what they believe, even if they're not trying to evangelize."

In November, the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) joined more than 100 other organizations in opposing the "defamation" resolutions then being debated in the U.N. The statement endorsed by the ERLC and others — ranging from the Baptist World Alliance and American Jewish Congress to the American Islamic Forum for Democracy and the American Humanist Association — said the resolution undermines "the fundamental freedoms of individuals to freely exercise and peacefully exercise their thoughts, ideas and beliefs."

The "defamation" resolution also provides an international sanction for national laws that prohibit so-called "blasphemy." It's no secret that accusations of "blasphemy" amount to a potential death sentence against both Muslims and non-Muslims in some Islamic nations.

"Blasphemy" can be defined "by the laws which seek to outlaw it," writes Jeremy Havardi in *The Guardian*, a leading British newspaper. "In countries across the world, these laws clamp down on those ... whose words and deeds insult the prevailing religious culture. Looked at in this way, blasphemy laws are a dangerous anachronism — a blight on any society that values freedom of speech."

When expressing the United States' opposition to such measures, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said, "The protection of speech about religion is ... important since persons of different faiths will inevitably hold

divergent views on religious questions. These differences should be met with tolerance, not with the suppression of discourse." The "international community," as represented by the U.N. General Assembly, apparently doesn't see it that way.

Enduring persecution

Religious believers — particularly Christians who spread the gospel — will continue to endure persecution with or without "defamation of religion" laws, of course. They always have. For the church universal, suffering is historical, normal and biblical, as an expert on global Christian persecution stated recently.

The real victims of those who attempt to silence the good news, he asserted, are the multitudes who have yet to hear it.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Visit the blog related to this column, at worldviewconversation.blogspot.com. (BP)

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion."

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18

Alabama Cooperative Program Gifts

Alabama Baptist Giving

Year to Date through Jan. 31, 2010

JANUARY

CP Challenge Budget Goal	\$3,875,000
CP Challenge Budget Gifts	\$3,812,669
Under Goal for Month	\$62,331

YEAR TO DATE

CP Challenge Budget Goal	\$3,875,000
CP Challenge Budget Gifts	\$3,812,669
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Want to know God?

By Bruce Willis
Director of Missions
Carey Baptist Association

Do you really want to know God? If you have never had a personal experience with the cross, then you are alienated from your Creator, almighty God. You have two major problems that separate you from Him.

First, because you were "in Adam" at the time of your conception (1 Cor. 15:22a), you are without the life of God. Because you were born without the life of God, this deadness has permeated your whole being and experience.

Second, as a sinner, you have committed sins. Since you did not know that God alone could meet your needs, you began to live your life out of your deadness to God. You tried to get your needs met apart from God, which involved sinning.

Both of these problems were taken care of, in love, by God through the finished work of the cross. Your dead unrighteous identity as a sinner in Adam can be exchanged at the cross for a new identity. Your old man can be crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6). Death can die at the cross.

At the same time, you can be united with Christ in His resurrection (Rom. 6:4b-5), and your new spirit will be birthed by the Holy Spirit (John 3:6). Your new spirit — the new man — will be filled with the life of Christ. So it will be said rightly that He is your life and is living His life in you (Phil. 1:21).

To know God in this real, personal way, simply admit you were born "in Adam," are dead to God, are separated from Him and do not have Him in your life. Say that to God. Acknowledge you are a sinner and have sinned against your Creator, Holy God.

Ask God to forgive you of your sins because Jesus Christ died in your place and for your sins. Ask Jesus to come into your heart to give you His eternal life. Say that to God. When you do, the Holy Spirit will unite your spirit with Christ and you will forever be in union with Jesus.

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HEART OF MISSIONS

Evan Clinkscales of **First Baptist Church, Vincent**, in Shelby Baptist Association, along with five other Alabama college students, traveled to Jinja, Uganda, on a missions trip Dec. 11-Jan. 4.

The students worked at Answering for the Children, an orphanage in Jinja, and did minor construction work for the orphanage, including putting up a fence and painting the

inside of the building. They also taught and preached mostly to widows and orphans in several villages in Kenya and Uganda, resulting in approximately 100 salvations.

Clinkscales, who has been to Africa twice before, said ministering among the widows was special for him. "They are so poor (yet) they are so giving," he said. "They know their need for

God and they are very receptive."

Extreme Ministries, which was started by Jeff and Tammy Huey, members of **First Baptist Church, Pell City**, in St. Clair Baptist Association, helped raise money and collect supplies for the trip.

Kacey Cole, a member of **Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills**, in Birmingham Baptist Association, and an employee of Samford University in Birmingham, led 10 Samford students to Huehuetenango, Guatemala, on a missions trip Jan. 5-18.

The team traveled with Buckner International to work at Fundación Salvación orphanage in Huehuetenango. Half of each day was spent playing with the children and the other half teaching Bible stories and making crafts to explain the stories. The main objective was to invest in the children and share the gospel, Cole said.

"The overwhelming agreement was that we were going to share with them Christ's love, and it all came back to us tenfold," she said.

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CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR PASTOR: Central Baptist Church, Bearden (www.cbcbearden.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.cbcbearden.org/pastorsearch.shtml.

PASTOR: Brindlee Mountain Baptist Church of Morgan City, Ala., is currently accepting resumés for a full-time pastor. Please mail resumé to: Brindlee Mountain Baptist Church, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, 3422 Hwy 231, Lacey's Spring, AL 35754, or e-mail: bmbchurch@otelco.net.

PASTOR: Corinth Baptist is seeking a bivocational music minister for blended worship. E-mail resumé to: Manda0818@windstream.net, or CBC, ATTN: Amanda Tinney, 909 Argo Margaret Road, Trussville, AL 35173.

PASTOR: Full-time pastor needed at Harmony Grove Baptist Church located in Winfield. Interested candidates may e-mail their resumé to: hgpastor2010@hotmail.com, or mail it to: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 1736, Winfield, AL 35594.

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.

BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER: Corinth Baptist Church, Argo, is seeking a bivocational music minister to lead a blended worship. E-mail replies to: Man-

da0818@windstream.net, or mail your resumé to: Corinth Baptist Church, ATTN: Amanda Tinney, 909 Argo Margaret Road, Trussville, AL 35173.

WORSHIP LEADER AND/OR YOUTH MINISTER: First Baptist Church, Crossville, in search of both worship leader and youth minister. Seeking individual to serve dual role, or individuals to serve separate capacities. Needs defined sense of calling to these ministries. Resumés to: P.O. Box 69, Crossville, AL 35962, or e-mail: pastorchris@charter.net.

STUDENT PASTOR: Crosshaven Church, Cullman, is seeking a full-time student pastor. Crosshaven, a dynamic 6-year-old church plant, has grown quickly. Resumés to: pastor@crosshavenchurch.org. Requesting a DVD of applicants to include personal testimony and delivering a message/lesson to students. Mail to: 9131 US Hwy 31 S, Hanceville, AL 35077.

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER: Please send resumés to: Spring Valley Baptist Church, P.O. Box 978, Springville, AL 35146.

CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTER: Southside Baptist Church, Decatur, Ala., seeking a full-time children and family minister. Ideal candidate will be a Christian, Southern Baptist and have at least 3 years of work and/or seminary experience. Send resumés to: ben@southsidebaptist.net or SBC, 709 Ninth Street SE, Decatur, AL 35601.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES: First Baptist Church, Piedmont, accepting resumés for the position of part-time director of children's ministries. Resumés e-mailed to: info@piedmontfbc.org, or send to: 105 North Main Street, Piedmont, AL 36272.

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

PIANIST: East Gardendale Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pianist for Sunday morning and Wednesday night services (with choir practice following service). Applicants should be able to play traditional and praise and worship music. Resumés may be mailed to: East Gardendale Baptist Church, Music Director, 360 Tarrant Road, Gardendale, AL 35071, or e-mail: pj3toogo@aol.com.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR: Alabama Baptist entity seeks financial administrator. Accounting degree preferred, extensive experience may be substituted. Minimum of five years experience required. Position oversees all accounting and bookkeeping functions for entity, provides human resources services and oversees property management. Send resumé to: 3310 Independence Drive, Homewood, AL 35209.

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2 COR. 12:9

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For more information, please contact State
Missionary Daniel Wilson at 1-800-264-1225,
ext. 368, dwilson@alsbom.org.

Updates:
www.alsbom.org/saec





Campers on Mission Spring Rally

Thursday through Saturday,
April 8-10, 2010

Swindall's Campground, Troy, Ala.
one mile south of Troy Wal-Mart on U.S. Hwy. 231, turn northeast
on Swindall Rd. (County Road 14).

Visitors are welcome!
Attend all of rally or the "Mission Reports AND Fellowship," at
6:30 p.m. Friday.

For more information, go online to www.alabamacom.org
or call Ministry Assistant Gayle Burlingame at 1-800-264-1225, ext.
271, gburlingame@alsbom.org.



ONE VOICE ALABAMA BAPTIST ALL-STATE YOUTH CHOIR

OneVoice is a group of auditioned singers and instrumentalists who are in grades 9-12 who actively participate in their local church youth music ministry. This year's tour will be in the Talladega (Saturday) and Birmingham (Sunday) areas. Lodging will be at Shocco Springs. Cost of the tour includes lodging, meals, local transportation, music and shirt. Students must provide their own transportation to Shocco (Friday) and from Birmingham (Sunday).

Audition Requirements:

1. Submit a CD of an unaccompanied vocal or instrumental selection (a hymn or praise song) of your choice that will demonstrate your ability in the following areas: pitch memory, vocal or instrumental range, vocal or tonal quality, musical interpretation
2. A letter of recommendation from your minister of music or pastor.
3. A brief statement concerning your walk with Christ.
4. A completed application.

Deadline for returning the application information and CD is Monday, March 15, 2010. You will be notified of selection by March 26. Those who were members of the Alabama Baptist Children's Honor Choir, NewSong or OneVoice are automatically selected. No audition CD is necessary, but application is still required.

Updates:
www.alsbom.org/onevoice

For an application form, tentative schedule and other details, please call 1-800-264-1225: State Missionary Keith Hibbs, ext. 217, khibbs@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Susan Corley, ext. 266, scorley@alsbom.org.

S P R I N G R I N G Friday - Saturday, April 16-17, 2010
Shocco Springs

Registration:
You must register with both Shocco Springs and the State Board of Missions. Deposit is due at time of registration.

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

State Board of Missions:
www.alsbom.org/springring or contact Ministry Assistant Susan Corley at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 279, scorley@alsbom.org.

Clinician:
Michael Bedford, choirmaster, St. John's Episcopal Church, Tulsa, Okla.

STATE HANDBELL FESTIVAL SCHEDULE AND GUIDELINES:

Music:

- "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing," arr. Cathy Moglebust (Choristers Guild CGB205)
- "Ding, Dong, Merrily on High," arr. Fred Gramann (Choristers Guild CGB508)
- "Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore," arr. William Rose (GIA Publications, Inc. G-7036)

• "Easter Joy," John A. Behnke (AGEHR AG35260)
• "Broken for You," Kathleen Wissinger (AGEHR AG35179)
• "Come Into God's Presence With Ringing," Michael Bedford (Choristers Guild CGB183)
• "To God Be the Glory," Linda Lamb (Handbell Magazine; Spring 2010 ed. 005075189.2010-SPR)

For other information, please call 1-800-264-1225: Music Specialist Karen Gosselin, ext. 318, kgosselin@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Susan Corley, ext. 279, scorley@alsbom.org.



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Shocco 5K Run Benefits Staff Mission

When athletes of all ages positioned their toes on the starting line for the inaugural Dashing Through the Springs 5K Run/Walk Dec. 12, it was the start of something special at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center.

It marked the beginning of an annual event that will raise funds for mission work at home and around the world by Shocco staff.

This spring, members of the staff are heading to Guatemala to Camp Eden, the Shocco Springs of that country, to extend a helping hand. The camp is in need of a block wall built around it for security. The wall will serve as a protection for the good works being done inside.

The Shocco group, led by Recreation Team Coordinator and Staff Pastor Cory Horton, plans to fill Camp Eden's need this March with a team of 8 people who have volunteered for the mission trip from Shocco.

To help offset the costs of what will be an expensive trip, Shocco staff organized the 5K run that attracted runners from all across Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee. The event raised more than \$1,500 and awareness about the mission of Shocco.

Sponsors and vendors joined the venture, making the event a successful team effort. Shocco Executive Director Buster Taylor thanked vendors and sponsors, telling them it "exceeded expectations."

On race day, 105 runners braved a blustery

Saturday morning on the course that wound its way through the 725-acre tract of Shocco Springs. Nestled in the foothills of the Appalachians, the setting and the hillsides made Shocco an ideal and challenging venue for a 5K run.

Dashing Through the Springs is getting rave reviews from participants in blogs and sports columns, and plans are already under way for the second annual event on Dec. 11, 2010.

Proceeds raised from the run each year will go to the Shocco Springs Mission Fund to support mission projects in which the staff is involved in places inside and outside Alabama as well as along the Gulf Coast and in Guatemala.

Shocco Springs, long known for its distinctly Christian environment in a natural setting for spiritual transformation and renewal, hosted more than 44,000 guests in 2009 for conferences, retreats and meetings.

Due to the success of Dashing Through the Springs, add runners to that growing list.



Need to plan a retreat for spring or summer?

There is still room for your group, but hurry ... space is limited! You can plan your own retreat for your Shocco experience. Just for your group. Just the way you want it! Ask for sample schedules of retreats and camps. E-mail us at sales@shocco.org for more details.



SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For February 21

Explore the Bible By Cecil Taylor Dean, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

WHEN YOU HAVE DIFFICULT DECISIONS Mark 14:32-52

Prayer (32-42)

“Gethsemane” means “oil press.” According to John 18:1-2, there was a garden Jesus and His group entered. Nothing says they prayed “neath the old olive trees.” In that garden was a cave (today called The Grotto of Gethsemane) rigged as an olive press. When the first Christian pilgrims went to Jerusalem after the Roman emperor Constantine legalized Christianity, local believers took them to this cave and identified it as Gethsemane. Jesus left most of His disciples near the entrance but took Peter, James and John into the cave. The Lord went deeper still to pray.

In prayer, Jesus addressed His Father with the tender term “Abba” (“Daddy”). He confessed the omnipotence of the Father and asked that the coming hour of suffering and death might pass from Him, i.e., never come to Him at all. But then He humbly submitted to the Father’s will. What Jesus shied away from was not simple suffering but the “cup” of God’s wrath against sin He must drain to save sinners (Isa. 51:22; cf Mark 10:38). There is no need to be embarrassed about His request. The words show the real humanity of Jesus, who was tempted to avoid the cross both at the beginning of His ministry (cf Matt. 4:1-11) and here again at its end.

Had Peter and the rest kept vigil with Jesus in Gethsemane, they might have stood firm instead of forsaking Him. “Enter not into temptation” probably had the idea of not failing the test. A disciple should watch and pray so that he can stand when his hour of trial strikes.

Arrest (43-52)

Judas came leading a crowd. These verses serve several purposes in the context of the trial and death of Jesus. 1. They emphasize the despicable character of the traitor Judas, who would betray a friend with a kiss. 2. They make plain that despite the warlike preparations for His capture, Jesus was neither bandit nor revolutionary but a peaceable teacher who had nothing to hide. 3. They show, on Jesus’ own authority, that what happened was in ac-

cord with Old Testament prophecy. 4. They record the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy in Mark 14:27, thus confirming its supernatural character. 5. They hint that the record rests on eyewitness testimony. The somewhat trivial details in Mark 14:51-52 do not fit such a serious account. Probably they reflect the personal memories of the author of this Gospel, John Mark, who witnessed the events of the late evening. It was hardly necessary to identify Judas as “one of the Twelve,” but the reference underscores the horror of his dastardly deed. The officers with him included both temple guards with clubs and Roman soldiers with swords. They had agreed on a sign by which Judas could distinguish for the officers which of the men before them was Jesus. Judas’ “kiss” may have been the “cheek-to-cheek kiss the air” still used by men in the East, but the common way of showing respect to a rabbi was to kiss his hand.

When the officers laid hold of Jesus, one of the disciples slashed at the throat of the high priest’s servant (John says it was Peter and names the servant Malchus) but succeeded only in cutting off the servant’s ear when the fellow ducked to avoid the deathblow.

Jesus protested the manner of His arrest. They could have taken Him while He taught in the temple instead of apprehending Him here like a common criminal. Of course, His protest did no good. When the remaining disciples saw He would not resist arrest, their faith in Him collapsed and to a man they fled.

An unnamed man did not run immediately. He was following Jesus. Some think this was John Mark (whose mother had a house in Jerusalem, Acts 12:12, where the early church met and maybe the location of the “upper room”), the author of this Gospel. Perhaps Jesus and His band woke him when they left the upper room and he threw a sheet around himself and followed. That the cloth was “linen” marked him as upper class. Some officers tried to arrest this man, but when they grabbed his covering, he left it in their hands and fled naked into the night. Jesus faced His accusers alone. The aloneness of the Lord is the real point of the episode.

Bible Studies for Life By Kenneth B.E. Roxburgh Chair and Armstrong Professor of Religion, Department of Religion, Samford University

WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? Colossians 3:1-14

Every user of the social-networking Web site Facebook is confronted with the question “What’s on your mind?” It’s a means of communicating between “friends” across the world, discussing all sorts of themes from the sublime to the ridiculous.

New Ways of Thinking (1-4)

Paul was convinced that the “mind matters” and we need to “set our mind/affections on things that are above ... where Christ is.” It seems what Paul was talking about is a preoccupation with Christ Himself, who is “at the right hand of God.” It is when Christ is central and supreme in our thinking that the things of eternity take precedence over the fleeting issues of life in the world and influence how we live. The future hope we possess in our hearts motivates us to live differently. Paul reminded us that one day, “we will be revealed with Him in glory.” We will share in His eternal kingdom, enjoying all the benefits of His grace. Our destiny is bound up with His destiny, and His future glorification is one we will share. If this is so, then our thinking about how we live here and now must be radically transformed.

New Ways of Behaving (5-11)

Paul was aware of the daily realities of life. He spoke with absolute conviction that our future hope is secure. He urged us to deal with attitudes and actions that hinder the development of holiness in our lives. Paul began by listing two groups of five vices that hinder spiritual maturity. He began with sexual sins such as fornication, a broad term for sexual immorality. “Impurity” usually is associated with “porneia” as relevant in a society in which pornography is rampant. The next vice, “passion” or “lust,” has the idea of uncontrolled sexual appetite and is linked with “covetousness,” which is greed to satisfy a wrong desire for people or things that do not belong to us. Paul linked this with “idolatry,” or elevating someone or something to the place in our lives that Christ alone should have.

The second list in verses 8-11 emphasizes sins of speech such as slander, abuse and ly-

ing. At the heart of all these actions, there is “anger, wrath and malice.” There is such a thing as righteous anger. Justice requires that we be angry when we see sin oppressing the poor and spoiling God’s world. However, anger and uncontrolled rage can often stimulate sin rather than holiness. The vices listed here are all destructive of relationships and are particularly relevant in the life of the Church, where we are called to love one another and forgive one another as God in Christ has forgiven us. Lying not only hinders relationships but also when lies are discovered, they undermine trust and poison friendships and the family of God. That’s why Paul ended this section by reminding the Colossian church it had been united in Christ and the barriers of society had been torn down — racial, ethnic, social — so that “Christ may be all and in all!”

New Ways of Relating (12-14)

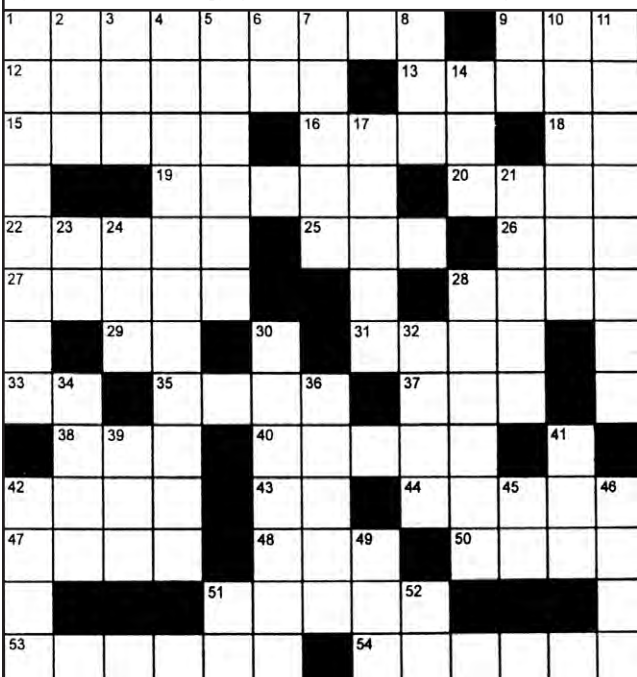
Paul used the metaphor of putting on a new set of clothes and spoke about clothing ourselves with “compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience.” Again Paul had a series of five words to describe the positive life of love that ought to characterize the family of God. He began by speaking about the need for a heartfelt attitude of sympathy for the needs of others in compassion and kindness. Humility is the same word that is used in Philippians 2 for the attitude of our Lord who humbled Himself and became obedient to death, a disposition Paul saw as selfless commitment to the needs of others. Closely associated with humility is meekness or gentleness, which is always considerate of the thoughts and feelings of other people and manifests itself in patience, making allowances for the faults and failings of fellow members of the church, being willing to tolerate people’s mistakes.

At the heart of such a life of love is the grace of forgiveness and allowing love to bind together the body of Christ in perfect harmony.

Love ever gives, forgives, outlives
And ever stands with open hands
And while it lives, it gives
For this is love’s prerogative
To give, and give and give. (John Oxenham)

Christian Crossword

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- Across**
- Jesus Christ is the same _____. (Heb. 13:8)
 - The beginning and the _____. (Rev. 22:13)
 - _____ this day. (Ex. 12:17)
 - Seek to _____ in. (Luke 13:24)
 - To take away weapons.
 - The _____ which he promised. (Deut. 9:28)
 - Electrical engineer. (abbr.)
 - At the _____ hand of God. (Rom. 8:34)
 - The people _____ mind to work. (Neh. 4:6)
 - The _____ of the sea. (Gen. 49:13)
 - They departed from _____. (Num. 33:45)
 - Money or goods given to poor, in love. (singular)
 - _____ prophet. (Rev. 16:13)
 - A fig _____. (Mark 11:13)
 - Foot. (abbr.)
 - Any three.
 - _____, I am with you. (Matt. 28:20)
 - Thunder and _____. (1 Sam. 12:17)

- No room for them in the _____. (Luke 2:7)
- The children of _____. (Ezra 2:57)
- Unto the _____ down. (Ps. 50:1)
- _____ Lord. (Ps. 120:2)
- Let him be Anathema Maran-_____. (1 Cor. 16:22)
- Hemoglobin. (abbr.)
- The _____ of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3:18)
- “And sun” in Spanish.
- Tailor. (abbr.)
- Prefix indicating “inside” or “within.”
- I will _____ thee. (Gen. 22:17)
- _____, thou shalt love. (Rom. 13:9)
- Glory and _____. (2 Pet. 1:3)
- Revised Version. (abbr.)
- A territory of India.
- Basic monetary unit of Japan.
- Eastern time. (abbr.)
- The eye of a _____. (Matt. 19:24)
- Nor to your _____. (Jer. 27:9)
- Airport code for New Delhi, India.
- Inclined upward.
- Moses and _____. (Lev. 13:1)
- Associate in Arts. (abbr.)
- Very low frequency. (abbr.)
- His ears shall _____. (Jer. 19:3)
- Teachest _____. (Luke 20:21)
- With a gold _____. (James 2:2)
- Grasses.
- Not many _____ are called. (1 Cor. 1:26)
- A unit of conductance, reciprocal to the ohm.
- Airport code for O’Hare Field, Chicago.
- Sixteenth letter of Hebrew alphabet.
- Multiply _____ the face of the earth. (Gen. 6:1)
- My _____ is easy. (Matt. 11:30)
- Revised Standard Version. (abbr.)
- _____ ood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:14)
- “Yes” in Spanish.



RESOURCES:

Your Guide to Today's New Music and Literature



Sound Bites Courtesy of Singing News magazine

KAREN PECK & NEW RIVER

No Worries

Daywind Records

"No Worries" is a mostly acoustic recording produced by Mark Fain for Karen Peck & New River. It's not a bluegrass CD though.

And while there are some bluegrass roots oriented on certain songs, a few brass instruments, electric keyboards, electric guitar and studio vocal effects are thrown in to broaden the overall stylistic scope.



"Bend in the River" borrows the descending musical motif from "These Boots Were Made for Walking" and punctuates the choruses with brass. It's a fun opening number featuring Karen Peck Gooch.

"Why Can't All God's Children Get Along" is the sort of lyric that sticks in your brain. Stephen Hill wrote the song and sings backup along with Jeff and Sheri Easter and the YMCA Intercity Choir: "We can't all be right. We can't all be wrong. We're just different singers in the same old song."

"While I Still Can" features Devin McGlamery and speaks of the importance of being there for your children. This song was particularly

meaningful for McGlamery because his baby boy was born just a few days after it was recorded.

Everyone should smile when they hear "I Can See Clearly."

Yes it's the old Johnny Nash song set to an island rhythm. In characteristic style, Peck Gooch pours all her emotion into "Why Should I Worry."

"Ready for the Ride" features unusual vocal effects processing and is the result of the combined songwriting efforts of Tony Wood, Jim Brady, Belinda Smith and Barry Weeks.

"In the Meantime" is a midtempo track featuring the clear alto voice of Susan Peck Jackson.

Other song titles from "No Worries" include "This Is Living," "Special Love" and "The Hour I First Believed." The emphasis on acoustic instruments should help distinguish "No Worries" from other titles in the Karen Peck & New River library. It's well-crafted, memorable and engaging on several levels.

(David Bruce Murray)

LEGACY FIVE

Just Stand

Daywind Records

Legacy Five (L5) enlisted the producing, arranging and orchestrating talents of Lari Goss for "Just Stand."

This CD includes two of the more creative arrangements L5 has ever recorded along with

some of their more typical fare.

"New Born Feeling" is a remake of the classic song with the added twist of every chorus being arranged differently. Most arrangers structure songs so a group can record vocals for a chorus once (twice if there's a key change) and copy the best take to the other choruses. It's a quicker way to complete a recording, but less interesting.

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness" also takes you on a musical journey that is always going forward rather than retracing the same territory. Frank



Seamans has a strong solo midway through the song.

Another prominent song on "Just Stand" is "Above All Circumstances." It's a relatively simple lyric written by Stephanie McKenna and Debbie Ponceti that's perfectly suited for Scott Howard's rich baritone voice.

Big ballads besides "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" include "Faithful to the Cross," "When They Found Nothing" and an extended "Statement of Faith." The latter runs more than seven minutes, featuring a narration by Gerald Wolfe with guest vocals by the Booth Brothers, The Hoppers and Greater Vision.

"Just Stand," "My Soul Is Firmly Anchored," "Thankful for the

Change" and "New Born Feeling" fall into the upbeat, lighter category. "One Thing God Can't Do" and "Til We Meet Again" are meditative. "Til We Meet Again" will be particularly effective at the close of a concert.

"Just Stand" features strong song-

writing and a somewhat different sound for L5 courtesy of Goss. From a vocal performance standpoint, this CD is in the same vein as 2008's "God's Been Good." Scott Howard is L5's best singer, but isn't featured nearly enough.

(David Bruce Murray)

Christian Marketplace

Top Ten Best Sellers

Young Adults

1. **God Girl**, Hayley DiMarco (Revell)
2. **Do Hard Things**, Alex and Brett Harris (Multnomah)
3. **God Guy**, Michael DiMarco (Revell)
4. **Lies Young Women Believe**, Nancy DeMoss and Dannah Gresh (Moody)
5. **Redefining Beautiful**, Jenna Lucado and Max Lucado (Thomas Nelson)
6. **The One Year Book of Josh McDowell's Youth Devotions**, Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler (Tyndale)
7. **Chaos**, Ted Dekker (Thomas Nelson)
8. **The One Year Book of Devotions for Teens**, Susie Shellenberger (Tyndale)
9. **Guys Are Waffles, Girls Are Spaghetti**, Chad Eastham and Bill Farrel (Thomas Nelson)
10. **Chosen**, Ted Dekker (Thomas Nelson)

Fiction

1. **The Shack**, William P. Young (Windblown Media)
2. **Shades of Blue**, Karen Kingsbury (Zondervan)
3. **Green**, Ted Dekker (Thomas Nelson)
4. **A Lineage of Grace**, Francine Rivers (Tyndale)
5. **Redeeming Love**, Francine Rivers (Multnomah)
6. **The Missing**, Beverly Lewis (Bethany House)
7. **An Amish Christmas**, Beth Wiseman and Kathleen Fuller (Thomas Nelson)
8. **Intervention**, Terry Blackstock (Zondervan)
9. **Take Two**, Karen Kingsbury (Zondervan)
10. **The Secret**, Beverly Lewis (Bethany House)

Study Bibles

1. **Every Day With Jesus Bible, CSB** (B&H Publishing)
2. **Chronological Study Bible, NKJ** (Thomas Nelson)
3. **ESV Study Bible** (Crossway)
4. **Life Application Study Bible Revised, NIV** (Zondervan)
5. **God Sightings: The One Year Bible, NLT** (Tyndale)
6. **Daily Bible in Chronological Order: 365 Daily Readings, NIV** (Harvest House)
7. **God Sightings: The One Year Bible, NIV** (Tyndale)
8. **KJV Study Bible** (Thomas Nelson)
9. **Life Application Study Bible, NLT** (Tyndale)
10. **Personal Size Giant Print Reference Bible, KJV** (Thomas Nelson)

Book Reviews By Walter G. Nunn

The Power of Desperation: Breakthroughs in Our Brokenness

Michael Catt. Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2009. 320 pp. (Paperback).

This book provides truths and principles that give strength and inspiration instead of failure and heartache.

Fortunately for readers, this author demonstrates appropriate candor when he writes, "Most of us never see the Lord until we are forced to."

This author has served as pastor of Sherwood Baptist Church, Albany, Ga., since 1989.

The Love Dare Day by Day: A Year of Devotions for Couples

Alex Kendrick and Stephen Kendrick. Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2009. 400 pp. (Hardback).

Inspired by the movie "Fire-

proof," this devotional book encourages and challenges married couples to move toward deeper love and faith with 365 marital reminders and action points worthy of yearly repetition.

This reviewer strongly believes that a marriage that is strong and healthy or even one "hanging by a thread" will be greatly strengthened by this tome.

Having made *The New York Times'* best seller list, this work will be of tremendous assistance to couples who are either strong in their mutual commitment or experiencing serious problems.

This reviewer is confident that readers will not be disappointed.

The Vision of His Glory (New Edition)

Anne Graham Lotz. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2009. 365 pp. (Paperback).

This superb offering should be read for at least two reasons: It's be-

lievable and the author is Billy Graham's daughter. No question about it, this work is quite authoritative in that it helps us with our Bible study. Needless to say, all of us need help at some point.

God Sightings: The One Year Bible NIV

Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2009. 1,360 pp. (Paperback).

God Sightings: The One Year Bible NLT

Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2009. 1,424 pp. (Paperback).

Quite simply, these offerings will help readers experience the Lord in a refreshing and nontraditional way.

Here are tools that make the pages of Scripture come alive and reveal God in a unique and moving manner.

This reviewer is quite certain that these tools will not be a disappointment.

A life transformed

Former FSU coach Bowden shares journey with Christ

Former Florida State University (FSU) head coach and Alabama-native Bobby Bowden unashamedly professed his faith in Jesus Christ to nearly 10,000 people attending morning services at Idlewild Baptist Church, Lutz, Fla., on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 7.

Bowden, whose 377 Division I wins rank second all-time, gave the Tampa-area Idlewild congregation the same advice he gave his assistant coaches at FSU upon his retirement after the Gator Bowl in January: Never be afraid to speak out for Christ.

Coming to Christ

While Bowden “walked the aisle” and joined the church as a young boy, it wasn’t until he held his first assistant coaching position at his alma mater, Howard University (now Samford University) in Birmingham, that he understood salvation is by God’s grace alone.

He remembered a ministry student at Samford explaining to him that heaven is a place for sinners who have been saved.

Before then, Bowden mistakenly thought good people went to heaven and bad people went to hell.

But at that point he understood that individuals are saved by grace, through faith and trust in Christ alone.

He said he realized what Jesus meant in Matthew 9:12 when He said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”

‘All have sinned’

“Darn right, I’m a sinner! I haven’t shot anybody lately. I haven’t stolen anything lately. But you think things you shouldn’t think and you say things you shouldn’t say,” Bowden said.

Citing Psalm 8:5 and Hebrews 2:7, he said God created everyone with a purpose, and their job on earth is to find that purpose and live it out.

“God says, ‘I made you a little lower than the angels.’ Evolution says, ‘You are a little higher than an ape.’ I’ll take the angel part,” Bowden chuckled.

He believes influencing young men for Christ through coaching has been God’s purpose for his life, and he wants to be remembered most as a man who served that purpose well.

At the age of 13, Bowden suffered from rheumatic fever and was bedridden for nearly a year. Doctors told him his life as an athlete was over.

He asked God to heal him and allow him to grow up to coach



BP photo

‘AVAILABLE TO GOD’ — Retired Florida State coach and Alabama-native Bobby Bowden, speaking on Super Bowl Sunday at the Tampa, Fla.-area Idlewild Baptist Church, says he’s reading his Bible and is ready for heaven.

other athletes, promising he would share Jesus with others through his coaching opportunities.

Bowden said his career — which spanned six different coaching positions over 57 years including more than three years as head coach at Samford — was orchestrated by God.

Noting he did not plan out his career and never applied for any of the coaching positions he held, Bowden said, “I have to think it was God’s will. It was God leading me.”

“All I have tried to do is to make myself available to God,” he said.

Daily Bible study is an important part of Bowden’s life.

He and Ann, his wife of 60 years, meet together each morning to study God’s Word.

Bowden enjoys reading the

Bible through like a novel, from the front cover to the back, noting that it wouldn’t make much sense to pick up “War and Peace,” flip it open randomly and read a few paragraphs here and there.

Likewise, Bowden said it’s important to read the Bible from start to finish.

Currently reading the Bible through for the third time, he said he learns new things each time he reads it.

Jesus is the answer

And as far as his thoughts on heaven, he said a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is the answer to the question of why anyone will get to heaven.

“That’s the answer to the exam. When we stand before the pearly gates, I done gave you the answer,” he said.

Bowden, 81, said the idea of death does not intimidate him.

“One day, I will die. I ain’t scared, by the way. When I die, I will live again,” Bowden said. (BP)

“One day, I will die. I ain’t scared, by the way. When I die, I will live again.”

**Bobby Bowden
Former FSU head coach**

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Birmingham abortion clinic put on probation

BIRMINGHAM — The Alabama Department of Health has put a Planned Parenthood abortion clinic in Birmingham on probation for violating multiple state laws, including performing illegal abortions on minors.

A report by state health officials indicates Planned Parenthood staff at the Birmingham abortion clinic, “failed to obtain parental consent for 9 of 9 minor patients in a manner that complies with state legal requirements.”

The health department began its investigation after an undercover video was released by Live Action, a youth-led pro-life organization. The video shows an actress posing as a 14-year-old girl who is seeking an abortion. Workers at the Birmingham clinic tell the alleged 14-year-old that she can skirt parental consent laws by getting someone “with the same last name” to sign off on the abortion in place of her parents. When the clinic workers hear that the girl’s “boyfriend” is 31, they refer her to the clinic director, Dr. Desiree Bates, telling her that Bates “does sometimes bend the rules a little bit.”

The video was the sixth in Live Action’s “Mona Lisa Project,” a multistate undercover audit of Planned Parenthood’s compliance with state laws regarding minor abortion and mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse.

Hawaii civil unions defeat helped by Christians

HONOLULU — A same-sex civil unions bill in Hawaii likely is dead for the year after the Democratic-controlled House bowed to pressure from Christian conservatives and voted to table the measure.

It’s the second year in a row that opposition from religious conservatives has helped defeat the bill.

House members, via voice vote, voted Jan. 29 to table the bill (HB 444), postponing the issue indefinitely unless a two-thirds majority votes to bring it back up, which is highly unlikely. The vote came nearly two weeks after approximately 15,000 religious conservatives descended on the state capital Jan. 17 in opposition to the bill, most wearing white shirts and sporting “iVote” buttons and stickers. Many of them also contacted their representatives and senators in the ensuing days.

The bill would have granted homosexual partners all the legal benefits of marriage, except the name itself, and would have made Hawaii the sixth state with a similar law.

Rick Lazor, pastor of OlaNui Church, a Southern Baptist congregation in Honolulu, told Baptist Press (BP) the outcome was pleasantly surprising.

“We can come up with some good procedural reasons [for why it failed], but I don’t have a doubt in my mind that it was prayer,” Lazor told BP. “We can’t figure out how seven or eight representatives switched [in the last year], and some of these who became ‘no’ votes or didn’t want to vote were folks who were extremely passionate about passing it last year. It was pretty amazing.”

Obama advisers take vote on faith-based issues

WASHINGTON — The 25-member council advising the White House on faith-based issues has voted on two contentious issues for religious charities that receive government funds.

By a vote of 13–12, the council members said the government should require houses of worship to form separate corporations in order to receive direct federal funding for social services.

Separately, when asked whether the government should permit charities to offer social services in rooms containing religious art, symbols, messages or scripture, 16 said yes, two said no and seven said they should be permitted if no other space is available.

Melissa Rogers, chair of the President’s Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, said the votes will be included in a forthcoming report for President Obama.

“There are also a few issues that we address in the report that were ... nonconsensus issues,” said Rogers. “That’s what those votes represent.”

Rogers said the votes and the report reflect recommendations the council will be making to Obama. “The council advises,” she said. “The administration decides.”

Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, has questioned the appropriateness of including members who work for charities that receive government funds to vote on the council.

“Wouldn’t this be a conflict of interest by any ethical standard?” he wrote in an online column.

Church Resource Guide

LIFESTIC PORTABLE MEDICAL STORAGE DEVICE PERFECT SOLUTION FOR CHURCH MISSION TRIP TEAMS

Total Identification Systems, Inc.
Paid advertising

The amazing number of Baptist churches venturing out on mission trips, both in the U.S. and abroad, continues to grow by leaps and bounds each year.

And with the increasing number of individuals participating — including teens, college students, adults and senior adults — there is an equal number of ongoing challenges involved in the health, safety and security of participants. But try as organizers may, having medical information on each participant readily available at a moments notice in the event of an emergency is not always going to happen.

That's where LifeStic comes into play.

LifeStic is the perfect solution for churches and organizations that have to keep track of required medical information for their participants in the event of an emergency.

Eric and Melanie Kercher, of Fairhope, have patented a device that can literally be a lifesaver in a medical emergency.

LifeStic is a portable, custom, two-inch USB flash drive (Microsoft compatible) that has a simple-to-use program designed specifically for critical medical information to be readily avail-

able at a moment's notice. A U.S. general at the pentagon already has begun the process of acquiring them for his troops actively fighting overseas.

LifeStic was designed to be attached to a key ring or worn around the neck on a red lanyard or even carried in a purse or pocket.

Each LifeStic comes with a bright red key tag, with the acronym I.C.E. (in case of emergency) boldly printed on it.

The vital information stored on LifeStic can be printed out for organizers to have on hand for their records.

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any computer — be it a portable laptop or a computer in a hospital emergency room.

This device is not only ideal for overseas trips but it should be carried by everyone, especially those with life-threatening health conditions that need to be identified immediately.

So be it a preteen going off to summer camp, a Boy Scout experiencing his first wilderness hike, a college student spending the summer overseas or a group of senior adults traveling to the Holy Land, LifeStic should go along, too. It could save a Life!

For more information, call 251-990-3500 or visit www.lifestic.com. Be sure to ask about discounted rates for bulk orders.



ALABAMA-OPERATED TURNED TREASURES CREATES ONE-OF-A-KIND PERSONALIZED GIFTS

Turned Treasures
Paid advertising

If you're looking for unique, one-of-a-kind gift ideas, then you need to know about Turned Treasures, an Alabama-based business run by an Alabama Baptist pastor with a desire to create quality products that will be treasured for a lifetime.

Eric Jackson, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Fort Deposit, has turned what started out as a stress-relieving hobby into a thriving business that turns a piece of wood, granite, acrylic or glass into a tailored-made gift for any occasion.

From trophies that need engraving for Upward basketball awards to a beautiful hand-crafted wooden wedding album with a personalized message for a bride and groom, Jackson points out that the sky is just about the limit when it comes to what can be laser-engraved for gifts, plaques, recognitions, etc.

One popular gift item requested on a regular basis is the hand-turned pens. Each pen is hand-turned from a wide variety of mediums, including local and exotic woods, deer



Pens

Plaques & Awards

Trophies

antlers, acrylics and corn cobs. Jackson said he can make a pen from a sentimental piece of wood that a customer provides, mentioning several pens he crafted from olive wood from the Holy Land and a piece of wood from a homestead that was torn down.

Donnie Ryals, of Ryals Auto Parts, has utilized Turned Treasures on several different occasions.

"Eric created two beautiful pen and pencil sets for us, including personalized wooden boxes for them. We've also had him engrave some recognition plaques and he did a wonderful job. He is very gifted in this craft and I would recommend his work to anyone," Ryals said.

Jackson points out that his business has two goals: To provide a quality, one of a kind product that will be cherished for a lifetime and to help fund a ministry that he is actively involved with — the River Region Chaplain Service.

He gives 10 percent of his business profits to this much-needed volunteer group. The organization provides chaplaincy service to first responders (firemen, paramedics, policemen, etc., who encounter a traumatic experience while on the job).

To view the wide variety of samples that Turned Treasures can offer, visit www.turnedtrea-suresinc.com or call 334-799-3825.

TRY RELIABLE SIGNS: SATISFACTION GUARANTEED!

Reliable Sign Services
Paid advertising

The old adage, "the proof is in the pudding" certainly holds true, especially when it comes to checking out a company's work and reputation. And businessman, Danny Williams, owner of Reliable Signs and Services, knows that churches check out his work. And that's exactly what he wants them to do.

Take for instance The Rev. David Lee, of Lester Memorial United Methodist Church in Oneonta. His congregation was interested in purchasing a new outdoor sign for its church, so the first thing he did was visit surrounding area churches in the Palmedale and Huffman areas and inquired about their sign purchases. He even checked out the city hall sign in Pinson because he was impressed with its look. And amazingly enough every one he spoke with gave him the same rave reviews.

"They all told me they had hired Reliable Signs and Services out of Pelham and they all said they were



more than pleased with the product and service. Those endorsements were enough for me," Lee said, explaining that he didn't even consult with any other sign companies. "I called Danny and told him that I had checked him out, I liked his work and to come see us about a church sign," he said. Lee said that the purchase — from starting with the design to installation to training — was exactly as he had expected.

"We didn't run into any problems. The installation went smoothly and Danny sent out people to train us in how to operate it," he said,

adding "our new sign has been a very positive addition to the community. We had a small sign before that was unnoticeable, but our new one is seen by all of the community, including visitors who are passing through town," he proudly said. "I was very impressed with Danny Williams and his caliber as an honest and straightforward businessman. He even calls us from time-to-time just to check in and make sure everything is running smoothly ... and it always is," Lee concluded.

According to Williams, Reliable Signs specializes in lighted building signs, lighted pole signs, electronic message centers, monuments and neon and non-lighted signs. "We are a Christian-run, 16-year-old business," Williams said.

"We guarantee our work in writing with a 12-month warranty on parts and labor." Call 1-800-729-6844 or visit www.reliablesigns.com for more information or to view a variety of church-sign options.



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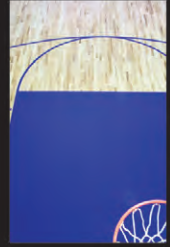



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The 17th annual festival will be the largest outdoor flower show in the Southeast.

The festival takes place during what is perhaps Mobile's prettiest month, with trees leafing out all over and bloomers displaying their splendor.

It is arrayed under tent and sky with over 300,000 square feet of exhibits that will enchant, entertain and educate visitors at this feast for all the senses. "Stand by Me," is the harmonious theme guiding the spectacular displays of this year's festival. Mankind's love of music and flowers will blend to create a global tapestry of gardens.

Guests will be taken from England to Holland as well as Asia and points in between on a sensational and horticultural tour. For ticket information and to find out about church group discounts, call 251-639-2050, 1-877-777-0529 or visit www.festivalofflowers.com.



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