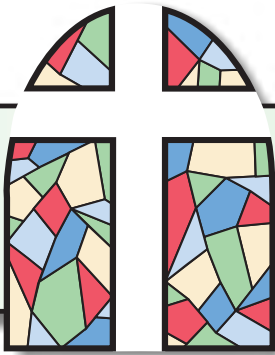


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'It would devastate us'

If adopted, GCR proposal could 'change face of evangelism in Alabama'

By Bob Terry
The Alabama Baptist

Sammy Gilbreath didn't mince words. "It would devastate us," he declared. Gilbreath, director of the office of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), was referring to the proposal for the North American Mission Board (NAMB) to withdraw all of its funding for work with Alabama's convention and other state conventions.

"That would change the face of evangelism in Alabama because we could not relate to our churches and associations as we do now," he said.

Gary Swafford, director of the SBOM's associational missions and church planting office, echoed that judgment. "Alabama is a missions field, too. This will change the way we do church planting and eliminate major ministries across the state."

The Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) Task Force of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) recently released a report recommending that NAMB withdraw all of its cooperative efforts with state conventions and redirect those funds to church-planting efforts in major cities and "underserved" areas of the nation (for the full story, visit www.thealabamabaptist.org/promo.php).

Historically NAMB has worked with state conventions through cooperative agreements. Each year, officials from NAMB and the respective state conventions negotiate funding of missionaries and ministries that support mutual goals and strategies of both organizations.

Alabama Baptists provide 52 percent of the funding of the agreed-upon items and NAMB provides 48 percent. In 2010, NAMB is expected to invest \$644,256 in Alabama ministries and missionaries through the cooperative agreement.

In addition, NAMB provides benefits for all the appointed missionaries serving in Alabama. According to NAMB, that cost is \$290,580, meaning it invests about \$935,000 in Alabama Baptist work annually.



Photo by Jeremy Henderson

OUTREACH — John Gunter (center), who serves in Hispanic ministry with Columbia Association, visits with workers. Hispanic ministries in Columbia — along with Marshall, Marion and Shelby associations — could lose funding.

But the cooperative agreement does not cover all funds received. For example, this year, NAMB made a contribution of more than \$40,000 to Alabama Baptists to help with media buys and material distribution for the God's Plan for Sharing: Across Ala-

bama evangelistic campaign. Officials said NAMB usually invests more than \$1 million annually in ministry partnerships with the state.

Eliminating Alabama's cooperative agreement with NAMB would impact ministries and missionaries in every

part of the state, noted Bobby DuBois, SBOM associate executive director.

▶ Alabama School for the Deaf in Talladega would lose its state missionary to the deaf.

▶ Hispanic ministries in Marshall, (See 'Cuts,' page 8)

Baptists pack thousands of buckets for Haiti

Alabama Baptists responded to the call to provide Buckets of Hope for Haiti with "a flood of buckets," according to Mel Johnson, disaster relief strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

At press time, Johnson estimated that between 4,000 and 5,000 buckets had been collected at four drop off points around the state, including Birmingham Baptist Association (see photo at right).

The total number of buckets, which provide needed food supplies for Haitian families, was expected to top 150,000 across the Southern Baptist Convention.

Watch upcoming issues of the Alabama Baptist for official totals, or follow us on Twitter (@AlabamaBaptist) or Facebook. (TAB)



Photo by Grace Thornton

COMMENT

Is the Pastor the Leader of Your Church?

From a spiritual standpoint no one would say the pastor is head of the church. After all, Jesus Christ is head of the church. Jesus Christ is the beginning, the first born from the dead. Colossians 1:15–20 makes it clear. In everything Christ has preeminence, especially in the church.

But what about the earthly head? Is the pastor the earthly leader of your church?

First Peter 5:1–4 describes Jesus Christ as the “Chief Shepherd” and pastors as under shepherds of God’s flock. Most Christians understand this passage to teach that the pastor is to be the earthly leader of the church.

While as Baptists we proclaim our belief that the Bible is the sole authority for our faith and practice, our actions do not always support our words. In more than one local church the pastor is called to be a chaplain to the congregation. He celebrates the births of babies, marries the young and buries the dead. The pastor is expected to officiate at all the religious ceremonies but in some churches he is not considered the leader of the church.

Leadership may belong to an individual or a hand full of individuals. Sometimes it is even a family in the church. Once these key individuals pass judgment on an issue the matter is settled. Pastors are often viewed as “temporary” in such situations while laypeople are in the church forever. Some even remind the pastor that “I will be here after you are gone.”

It is an unfortunate phenomenon that the temporary view of the pastor often turns into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

What it means to be pastor-leader

Still Scripture teaches the pastor is to be the earthly leader of the church. That leads to the question about how one becomes a pastor-leader of a local congregation.

In Baptist life the role of pastor-leader is not inherited. We do not have the equivalent of Old Testament Levites. One cannot demand or seize a pastorate although stories occasionally surface about elaborate campaigns by some to be called as pastor of a particular congregation.

The Baptist emphasis on the doctrinal belief of priesthood of all believers means a Baptist church operates in a democratic method. Pastors are chosen by a congregation. The role is a gift, a responsibility and a calling bestowed by the congregation.

Hopefully the decision is the result of God’s Holy Spirit at work in the pastor as well as the con-



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

gregation. Unfortunately too many examples exist of pastor-church relationships quickly turning sour to blame God for all the decisions pastors and churches make about each other.

Incumbent on both parties is the responsibility to learn about the other. Not every pastor fits every church and not every church fits every pastor. Churches have personalities and histories just like pastors. Each must carefully choose the other. The choice can be the difference between a relationship of fulfillment and satisfaction and a prolonged season of pain and disappointment.

Sometimes churches get caught up by the charisma of a would-be pastor, by his humor, charm and glibness of tongue. But after living with him for a while the congregation finds him domineering, insincere and self-serving.

Sometimes a pastor equates building a personal following with building a church. It is not until the pastor leaves that the difference is clear. When the pastor leaves so do those caught up in what was little more than a cult of personality.

Pastors sometimes learn too late that circumstances in their new churches do not match the descriptions presented by pastor search committees. Some pastors have been trapped when commitments made by pastor search committees were never approved by the church. And how many new pastors have walked into buzz-saw disagreements for which they were totally unprepared?

A few years ago a popular political saying was “character matters.” It certainly does in the relationship between pastor-leader and church.

A pastor’s clever phrases and creative concepts are not nearly as important as honesty, compassion, trustworthiness, diligence, holiness and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23).

What is expected of the pastor must also be expected of church members. While pastors and lay members have different roles in the church, both serve the same Chief Shepherd. Both live under the same demands of Jesus Christ.

If you will, pastor and people become accountability partners encouraging each other in the Christian walk.

Pastor and people must share other things for the relationship to be blessed. There must be a common vision based on shared values. That is more than saying “preach the Bible” or “we want meaningful worship.” No church can do everything but every church can do something. Where there is clear understanding of the particular mission agreed upon by the church, people who embrace the vision will give themselves to fulfilling the mission or vision.

A pastor-leader cannot accomplish the church’s mission by himself. No individual, no matter how blessed, possesses all the skills and talents necessary for success. Gifts of others — staff and lay alike — complement and supplement the pastor. Just as in sports where a team always outperforms an individual, so it is in a church. A church where the pastor-leader and congregation work together always outperforms what either could do alone.

But no team, no matter how talented, can be successful unless all the members have a common commitment to a common goal. That is why a shared vision and common values are essential to the life of any dynamic congregation. Yet it remains a topic seldom explored in the process of calling a pastor.

A catalyst for all that happens

So yes, the pastor is the earthly leader of the church. He is not a dictator. He is a team member. He is more than a chaplain. He is the catalyst that helps the church live out the calling to be the body of Christ in its local community and around the world. And the relationship between pastor and people begins when the gift of leadership is given by a congregation to its under shepherd. That process is a holy time. It is a serious decision for both parties.

May God help all making such decisions to make them carefully and prayerfully to the glory of God.



Letters to the Editor

See page 10



“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

C.W. Box

First Baptist Church, Winfield
Marion Baptist Association

FAVORITE BIBLE VERSE: John 3:16

FAVORITE HYMN:
"How Great Thou Art"

HOBBIES: Quail hunting and golfing

FAMILY STATUS: Married to Sarah for 56 years, seven children, 19 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren



BOX For more than 50 years, C.W. Box served as a pastor of Alabama churches. His longest pastorate was at Harmony Grove Baptist Church, Winfield, where he served for 28 years. Though recently retired, Box, who loves young people, hopes to continue to give guidance and encouragement to the younger generations. He said one of his greatest blessings in ministry has been the opportunity to baptize all his children and eight of his grandchildren.

Q: How did you become a Christian?

A: When my wife and I married, she was already a Christian and a member of Harmony Grove in Winfield. I went to church with her and was exposed to the gospel. It wasn't a year or two later that I was saved. Three years after that, the Lord called me to preach.

Q: When and how were you led into the ministry?

A: I was working at the Winfield Cotton Mill, and the Lord began to deal with me, but I couldn't see myself being a preacher. One day while I was at the mill, I couldn't go any further and I surrendered to the Lord.

Q: What did you get from being in the ministry?

A: You learn a lot about people. I learned a lot in patience and in loving people. It can be trying at times, but as I look back on my ministry, the good far outweighs the bad. It's been a wonderful journey for me.

Q: How do you see yourself involved in ministry in the future?

A: I'll do what God leads me to. I enjoy supply work and revivals, and I'll be involved in church one way or another.

Q: What difference has Christ made in your life?

A: He has made all the difference in the world. I couldn't begin to do what He has called me to do without His help. ❧

'Night of terror'

IMB representatives safe, working to meet needs after quake rocks Chile

Fourteen-year-old Caitlynn Tomlinson said it felt as if someone had sealed her up in a jar and was tossing her around.

"I woke up at 3:45 to a strange swaying. I felt dizzy and thought I was getting sick," she said.

Then she realized it was an earthquake.

"I helped my sister off the top bunk. Leaning against one another, we stumbled toward the stairs."

Caitlynn, her sister and two brothers got to the top of the stairs right about the time their mom got to the bottom of them.

"I told them to sit on the steps and bounce to the bottom," said Angel Tomlinson, who serves, along with her husband, Trent, as an International Mission Board (IMB) representative in Temuco, Chile. "The swaying seemed to last forever, but later we learned that it was only about three minutes."

But her own shaking lasted much longer, she said.

The Tomlinsons — originally from Alabama — made it safely through Chile's "night of terror" Feb. 27, but others in the South American country weren't so fortunate.

The death toll climbed over 700 in the hours after the quake, which had 500 times more energy than the one that rocked Haiti just weeks before. The Chile quake was so strong that one NASA scientist said it shifted the Earth's axis enough to shorten the day.

"It was a terrifying experience," said Phil Brown, an Alabama native and IMB representative who lives in Chile's capital city, Santiago. "We were awakened by our bed shaking so hard it almost threw us out. We live in a second-floor apartment but ran to our outdoor terrace, ready to jump if the building started coming apart, which we feared it would."

"After the longest 90 seconds of my life, the shaking stopped. We got outside as quickly as we could to huddle in the street with the other people in our building," Brown added. "God was gracious in protecting all of our missionary family here. Hours have passed now but we are still jumpy. Each tremor now gets our full attention."

Southern Baptist personnel stationed in Chile began assessing the situation almost immediately after the quake, said Terry Lassiter, the IMB's strategist for the American peoples affinity group.

"An initial assessment team made up of [personnel] already in Chile has begun evaluating conditions and needs," Lassiter said.

Roads and bridges in the country were destroyed or badly damaged, which will complicate transportation of relief supplies and workers.

Baptist Global Response (BGR) has dispatched a four-member assessment team to Chile that is compiling information to help determine the short-term and long-term response needed from Southern Baptists, said Jim Brown, director of BGR's U.S. office.



IMB photo

DEVASTATION — Residents walk through debris after a magnitude-8.8 earthquake struck central Chile early Feb. 27. The quake hit 200 miles (325 kilometers) southwest of the capital, Santiago.

The assessment effort is being led by Charles Clark, the IMB's cluster strategy leader for the area. Also serving on the team are representatives of the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief Network from Texas and South Carolina.

The \$50,000 released from the Southern Baptist disaster relief fund will be used to help local Baptist churches meet crisis needs like food, water, blankets and shelter, Brown said.

No back to normal

Southern Baptist personnel who were in the quake zone are struggling emotionally and physically, just like the Chileans around them, Lassiter said.

"Many of our people are physically and emotionally exhausted. Those who live in high-rise apartment buildings told me they didn't think they were going to survive," Lassiter said. "The 90 or so aftershocks that have occurred are continual reminders of the horror everyone felt during the event itself."

There's no back to normal for the IMB representatives there who "have never been through anything so terrifying," Brown said.

Another IMB family is staying at the

Browns' second-floor apartment currently, too anxious to be able to sleep in its own seventh-floor apartment.

"Many of us jump with every vibration and aftershock. We feel dizzy and nervous. When we lie down to sleep, we wonder if we will be awakened again," Brown said.

But he noted IMB personnel there are back about the task.

"Some are ministering to needy Chileans; others of us in support roles are doing what has to be done for our colleagues that we serve," he said. "Members of my team are traveling south into the hardest hit areas with an assessment team that will direct massive help from U.S. churches and volunteers. At some point, we will have to take time to process all we have been through, but responsibilities compel us to be up and about the work we are called to do."

Brown said they can sense the prayers and appreciate them greatly.

"Please continue to pray for all the hurting Chileans who are homeless, who have lost loved ones and who have lost their livelihood," he said. (BP, TAB)

Want to do disaster relief work overseas?

Two more disaster relief volunteer training sessions for international response opened for this month:

March 25, 6-8:30 p.m.
Government Street Baptist Church, Mobile

March 30, 6-8:30 p.m.
Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham

Preregistration required.
To register, visit www.levelone.sbdr.org.



2010 census to impact state; church leaders asked to help

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The U.S. Census Bureau calls the 2010 census a “snapshot of America,” but this snapshot is worth much, much more than 1,000 words.

According to the 2010 census Web site, www.2010.census.gov, the census results will be used to determine how \$400 billion in federal tax money is spent annually in states and communities. Multiply the annual spending by 10, and the census impacts the spending of \$4 trillion.

“Holistically speaking, the 2010 census affects everybody directly,” said Darryl Lee, senior partnership specialist for Alabama for the U.S. Census Bureau. “Census data will help planners and decision makers determine what neighborhoods need and help them decide where to invest as well.”

According to Lee, 61 percent of Alabamians participated in the 2000 census. Overall U.S. participation in the census was 67 percent. Those numbers are too low considering all that is at stake, Lee said.

The Web site states that information gathered from the census will determine the need for services such as transportation, economic development, public works, public health, education and senior services, as well as congressional representation.

“The census impacts the state’s representation in Congress and funding as well,” he said. “More funding for Alabama means more funding for our counties, cities and communities.”

The goal of the census is to count all people living in the state, but there are many areas and populations that are hard to count: foreign-born immigrants, minority groups, households headed by a female and areas of high crime and/or high poverty rates.

Combating myths, increasing response

Individuals and groups who are considered hard to count often have a general fear and mistrust of the government, Lee said. To combat these fears, a large part of the U.S. Census Bureau’s efforts so far have been to educate residents about how the 2010 census will and will not be used.

The 10 questions on the census form seek answers to specific questions related to age, race, gender and housing status. According to the Web site, information gathered from census forms is used only to produce statistics — no individual information is reported to outside agencies. That statistical data can be used to evaluate existing programs, such as those promoting equal employment opportunities for minorities and women, and forecast future needs, such as the number of people eligible for Social Security or Medicare benefits.

IMB committee seeks prayer for presidential search

The International Mission Board’s (IMB) presidential search committee continues to narrow down its field of candidates to select the organization’s 11th president. The committee has requested that Southern Baptists set aside March 13 as a day of prayer and fasting to ask God to direct their path.

Though search committee chairman Jimmy Pritchard preferred not to specify the number of remaining candidates the committee is considering, he said they have

come to the “most crucial aspect in our search for the next leader of IMB.”

“The choices will be very difficult from this point on,” said Pritchard, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Forney, Texas.

‘Getting God’s choice’

“As God continues to narrow our focus, we remain dependent upon the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the prayers of God’s people in this process.”

The committee received recom-

Title 13 of the U.S. Constitution prevents disclosure of private information collected through the census, Lee said. So no information is disclosed to the Internal Revenue Service, child support agencies or immigration officials, for example.

To combat the myths and increase participation for this year’s census, religious leaders are being asked to encourage parishioners to participate.

Mount Mariah Baptist Church, Birmingham, in Birmingham Baptist Association, where Lee serves as pastor, has provided space for training and testing of census workers, as has Sixth Avenue Baptist Church, Birmingham, in Birmingham Association. Many parishioners are taking jobs with the census as well.

In these turbulent economic times, the census jobs have provided relief for many families, Lee said.

“With layoffs the way they are, the census is providing employment opportunities,” he said. “These are temporary jobs but they are good-paying jobs.”

Lee said there are plenty of jobs still available in communities throughout Alabama. He added that having community members actively educating

others about the importance of the census improves the accuracy of the “snapshot.”

For now, education is the key focus in preparation for the count. In early March, letters will go out to all U.S. households to let them know about the census form. The actual census questionnaire will be mailed in mid-March, and completed forms should be returned by April 1.

Lee said he encourages individuals to take a few minutes to complete the form and mail it back immediately in the postage-paid return envelope that comes with the form.

The theme for this year is “It’s in Our Hands,” Lee said, noting the census can only be accurate if everyone participates.

Those who need help completing the form can contact questionnaire assistance centers that will be set up throughout the state, Lee said. Information is available on the Web site as well.

Those who do not return forms by the April 1 deadline will receive follow-up visits from census takers.

The importance of an accurate count and the potential impact for the state should motivate everyone to participate, Lee said.

As a local pastor, he knows his community and the needs, and he believes the census is a vital part of the future of his community and other Alabama communities.

“We want better schools and better streets, and we want to give all citizens an opportunity for a better life,” he said. “An accurate census is a step in that direction.”

“Holistically speaking, the 2010 census affects everybody directly.”

Darryl Lee
U.S. Census Bureau

PREPARING — for a GPS harvest at — EASTER

You’ve inundated your town with prayer and printed invitations to worship at your church on Easter. The nationwide GPS (God’s Plan for Sharing) media blitz has reinforced those efforts. You have a sudden terrifying thought — “What if they all show up?!”

Need fresh ideas for getting ready?

PREPARE FOR THE MASSES

▶ **Update** Web site, guest packets, directional signage and first-time-guest parking spaces.

▶ **Make** the church facilities sparkle; they reflect your love for God.

▶ **Prepare** extra bulletins, chairs, ushers, greeters and decision counselors.

▶ **Avoid** acronyms in printed and spoken announcements; guests won’t have a clue what HSM means.

▶ **Offer** your best, wholehearted worship to God.

▶ **Make** a plan for guests to receive e-mails, regular mail and a personal contact within 72 hours.

THE THREE-WEEK CHALLENGE

▶ As you welcome guests, **ask** them to take the “three-week challenge,” committing to attend your church three times so they can get a true feel for your church and God’s guidance for their lives.

▶ **Incorporate** the three-week challenge into your regular communication card or guest registration, with a check box for first time, second time, completed three-week challenge and “I lost count.”

▶ **Offer** a three-week punch card for a free drink if you have a church coffee shop.

CONNECT TWO

Urge every church member to personally connect with two guests at church each Sunday. Provide helpful hints:

▶ **Pray** silently as you approach a guest.

▶ **Write** down the guest’s name.

▶ **Walk** with the guest to his or her destination.

▶ **Hot** your personal phone number or e-mail address on a card for the guest.

▶ **Tell** the guest what you love about your church.

▶ **Introduce** the guest to church members with similar interests.

▶ **Invite** the guest to small group Bible study.

▶ **Leave** your pew and sit near a guest in worship.

▶ **Circle** items on the bulletin that might interest the guest.

▶ Personally **invite** the guest for coffee, lunch or an upcoming church event.

▶ **Escort** the guest to meet the pastor or another staff member after worship.

If they all show up to hear about Jesus this Easter, will you be ready?

For more information about GPS, visit www.gps2020.net.



Source: BP

Renew ... One Day

Alabama WMU conference encourages women to know who they are, live their call

By **Brittany N. Howerton**
The Alabama Baptist

Today give yourself completely to the Lord. For a while, leave the cares of this world behind and be present spiritually, mentally and physically in every moment."

This was the challenge given to the 416 women of all ages who gathered for the Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) fourth annual Renew ... One Day conference at First Baptist Church, Pelham, on Feb. 27.

And according to the evaluation cards, more than 220 women said they took up that challenge and God spoke to them.

Follow Him

One of those was Tina Sumpter, a member of First Baptist Church, Springville.

"God's been talking to me since the minute this conference started about getting myself out of the way and following Him," she said.

And throughout each session, that message continued to resonate with her. "It's about a new level of selfless living, to be willing to do anything He asks of me," Sumpter said. "It's really going to change a lot of me to follow what He's said to me today."

The conference was characterized by 17 breakout sessions, music by Shelley Jennings and large group sessions led by Tollie Meggs, founder of Out of the Boat Ministries in Tuscaloosa.

Take action

"Love Him with all you have and all you are, and whatever that looks like as it spills out of you will glorify God in a way you can't even imagine," Meggs told the women in the closing session. "And can I say this — let it start today."



Photo by Brittany N. Howerton

'LEAVE THE CARES OF THIS WORLD' — More than 400 women from 86 churches across the state gathered at First Baptist Church, Pelham, for the fourth annual Alabama WMU Renew ... One Day conference Feb. 27, with sessions led by Tollie Meggs and worship led by Shelley Jennings.

Because it's about more than just being a "pew-sitter," she added.

"The truth of the matter is unless the Lord returns immediately ... we've got work to do. If He continues to tarry, there's a big ole world, and the vast majority of people in it don't know about Him. It's time we, in the body of Christ, begin to live with a sense of urgency."

For Lauri Williams, a member of First, Pelham, that was just the reminder she needed.

"We get so caught up in our daily lives with our families or kids or things that come, and so it's important to just have that reminder that Christ should be first in our lives," she said. "No matter what happens or what activity may come, He is our light and is to remain our focus throughout that day and every day."

Sumpter said the event provided just the break she needed to be able to readjust her focus back to God.

"It feels like a retreat even though

it's only been one day," she said. "It's a break from all the responsibility I have at home — to focus on seeing God's will and hearing His voice."

See change

And that was just the point, said Lucretia Mobbs, missions and ministry consultant for Alabama WMU.

"All believers need to have a time of spiritual renewal and women in

particular because we are so many things to so many people," she said. "Women have a harder time saying, 'no,' and our plates get full so easily that we can get spiritually dry real quick. ... Our prayer was that this would be a day they could come back to that the Lord had changed them forever, and I'm hoping and praying that's the case."

For more information about Alabama WMU events, visit www.alabama-woman.com.

UM alum named National Chaplain of Year, prays at Congress

University of Mobile (UM) alumnus Endel Lee has led prayer from the back of a combat vehicle with U.S. Marines gathered around, always aware of the threat of enemy attack.

On Feb. 9, the newly named National Chaplain of the Year delivered a prayer to open the day's session of Congress in the Capitol building in Washington. He had one goal: to represent the glory of God and try to connect people to that.

"I don't consider myself a hero. I'm just a hero helper trying to provide spiritual care in trying and sometimes traumatic circumstances," Lee said.

The opportunity to serve as chaplain of the day for the U.S. House of Representatives is part of the recognition Lee received when the Reserve Officers Association of the United States named him the Chaplain Vincent Robert Capodanno National Chaplain of the Year for 2009 during its annual conference Feb. 8.

The award is a recognition of Lee's service to his country and to God.

Lee enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve in 1982, accepting a direct commission after graduating from UM in 1985 with a bachelor of arts in theology. He married fellow UM graduate Kathy Perkins, whom he met in music class. Today they have two sons, Hunter, 19, a current UM student, and Cody, 17. After obtaining a master of divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, Lee transferred to the Navy Reserve as a chaplain in 1993.

'Significant' time of active duty

"Chaplain Lee has seen significant periods of active duty over the past nine years," according to a press release from the Reserve Officers Association. Such duty began with Operation Guarding Liberty and service with the U.S. Coast Guard in New York City immediately after Sept. 11, 2001. He then deployed in 2005 for Operation Iraqi Freedom as the

Camp Fallujah Protestant coordinator and battalion chaplain, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force. Upon returning from that deployment, he participated in Hurricane Katrina response with the U.S. Coast Guard's District 8 on the gulf coast.

In 2008 he served with the Naval Special Warfare Development Group and then transitioned to his current assignment, the release stated.

Currently Lee is mobilized and serves in New Orleans as Deputy Force Chaplain with the Marine Forces Reserve and Marine Forces North, commuting home to Mobile on the weekends. He counsels Marines and sailors, provides pastoral care in times of crisis, conducts funerals, and coordinates a variety of spiritual and physical support for families in crisis.

In his civilian career, he serves as the national coordinator with the Disaster Relief

Chaplaincy for the North American Mission Board. He facilitates the recruitment, training, mobilization and management of Southern Baptist chaplains serving in disaster — and is a lead responder — during times of personal, community, regional and national crisis.

He also holds a master of religious education and a doctor of philosophy, both from Southwestern Seminary.

"I have a deep passion to care for service members and their families," Lee said. "I was exposed to the military culture young in life, and you really need to know that military mindset to relate to people and their demands in that setting."

The recognition is nice, but it's not why Lee does what he does.

He added, "I'm just a country boy from lower Alabama, just trying to be obedient to God." (UM)



LEE

Across Alabama's Associations

AUTAUGA

► The women's ministry of **First Church, Prattville**, will hold an event called Catch a Vision March 25, 6:30 p.m., with author and leadership consultant Lori Salierno, of Atlanta, in the worship center. For information call 334-365-0606. Travis Coleman is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **First Church, Trussville**, will hold a Ladies' Night Out With Sherri Burgess March 30. Leslie Everhart and the women's praise team of First Church, Gardendale, will lead in worship at 6:30 p.m. Doors will open at 6 p.m. For information call Karen Jackson at 205-655-4319. Buddy Champion is pastor. ► **Valleydale Church, Birmingham**, will hold a night of renewal for women called Gracefull Renaissance March 29, 6 p.m. There will be a silent auction and a fashion extravaganza highlighting styles of Renaissance Consignment Boutique in Pelham. Jerra Dooley, founder of Gracefull Ministries, will speak. Bring a new or gently used clothing item to benefit women in need. For information call 205-613-5967, e-mail info@gracefull.org or visit www.gracefull.org. Calvin Kelly is pastor.

CALHOUN

► **Meadowbrook Church, Oxford**, will celebrate its 50th anniversary April 18, 10:30 a.m. There will be a lunch and afternoon of remembrance. To RSVP for lunch call 256-831-1811 or e-mail mbcabap@bellsouth.net by April 1. Gary Rivers is pastor. ► **West Side Church, Jacksonville**, will hold an open house for its new facility March 14, 2-3 p.m. Bill Caudle is pastor.

CLEBURNE

► **Heflin Church** will host southern gospel artists Josh and Ashley Easley Franks in concert March 14, 5:30 p.m. Ashley grew up in Heflin and graduated from Cleburne County High School. A nursery will be provided. For information call 256-463-2576 or visit www.heflinbaptist.org. Philip R. Morris is pastor.

COFFEE

► **Coffee Association** held its annual Royal Ambassador Racer Derby Feb. 20 at Hillcrest Church, Enterprise. Winners were Mikey Jorenski (first place Lads), Collin Cole (second place Lads), Dylan Dalrymple (third place Lads), Hunter Mercer (first place Crusaders), Lakeley Moss (second place Crusaders), William Pickett (third place Crusaders), Timothy Smith (craftsmanship) and Eli Russell (most original). Brad Marsh is Royal Ambassador director, and John Granger is director of missions for Coffee Association. Michael Mynatt is pastor of

Hillcrest. ► **Goodman Church, Enterprise**, will hold revival March 14-17 with Sammy Gilbreath, director of the office of evangelism for the State Board of Missions. Gunter Akridge of Bethany Church, New Brockton, will lead the music. Services will be Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. For information call Pastor Bruce Williams at 334-347-7714. ► **Victoria Church, Elba**, is holding revival March 7-12. Services are weeknights at 7. Speakers are Kenneth Hagler, Donnie Marler (pastor of Victoria), Don Ash, Larry Grimm, Cary Maulden and Mark Cooper. For information call 334-897-5471. ► **Zion Chapel Church, Elba**, will hold movie night March 20, 6 p.m. "Fireproof" and a children's movie will be shown. There will be popcorn. Cary Maulden is pastor.

COLUMBIA

► **Bo Newberry** is the new pastor of **Center Church, Webb**. He comes from West Bonifay Church in Florida. He is a graduate of Lurleen B. Wallace Community College in Andalusia and Andersonville Baptist Seminary (now Andersonville Theological Seminary) in Camilla, Ga. Newberry and his wife, Susan, have one child. ► **Andy Johnston** is the new minister of music for **Center Church, Webb**. He is currently attending The Baptist College of Florida in Graceville. Bo Newberry is pastor. ► **Center Church, Webb**, will hold revival March 21-24. Services will be Sunday at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. and weeknights at 6:30. Raymond Williams will speak Sunday morning and Monday, Larry Sweat Sunday night and Garry Winstead Tuesday and Wednesday. There will be special music each night. Bo Newberry is pastor.

COVINGTON

► **Josh Wilson** is the new pastor of **Bethany Church, Andalusia**. He comes from First Church, Geyer Springs, in Little Rock, Ark. He holds a bachelor's degree in secondary education language arts 6th-12th from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa and a master of divinity from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Wilson and his wife, Tamara, have two children and are expecting their third child in May.

MADISON

► **Jeremy Wilkerson** is the new contemporary worship leader for **First Church, Huntsville**. He has served churches in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas and Tennessee and as worship pastor for Centrifuge summer camps. Wilkerson holds a bachelor's degree in Christian ministry/biblical studies from New Orleans Seminary. He is married to Kristin. David Hull is pastor. ► **Mable Hill Church, Ardmore**, will hold a gospel concert

with Brian Free and Assurance March 11, 7 p.m. For information call 256-420-8172 or e-mail mhbc@ardmore.net. Mike Clark is pastor.

MOBILE

► **Shalom Church, Citronelle**, will hold revival March 21-24 with Evangelist Terry Chupp of Team Jesus Ministries. Services will be Sunday at 11 a.m. and nightly at 6:30. Lunch will follow the Sunday morning service. There will be special music each service. For information call 251-649-4838. Bobby Morton is pastor.

MUD CREEK

► **Crossroad Church, Hueytown**, will present "Jerusalem Marketplace — A Journey Through the Last Days of Jesus' Life" March 27-28, 6-9 p.m. The walk through of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' death and resurrection will include the Last Supper with the disciples, a bakery preparing bread for Passover, a carpenter's shop, a spice shop and the Garden of Gethsemane. Handicap accessible. Walk-ins are welcome but reservations are preferred. Reservations are recommended by calling 205-425-5811. For information visit www.crossroadbaptistchurch.com. Jimmy Bradford is pastor.

RUSSELL

► **Cedar Hill Church, Phenix City**, will hold revival March 14-18, nightly at 6, with Aaron McCollough. There will be special music each night. The church also will celebrate homecoming March 21, 11 a.m., with Lu Cadenhead. Perfect Peach will provide special music. Lunch will follow. Dewayne Dean is pastor. ► **Smiths Station Church** licensed **Will Chambliss**, the church's minister to students, to the gospel ministry. Skip Myers is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Bellview Church, McCalla**, will host Igor Barbanel of Jews for Jesus as he presents "Christ in the Passover" March 14, 11 a.m. For information call 205-477-6258. Darrell Pace is pastor. ► **Vance Church** will hold a deacon ordination service March 14, 6 p.m., for Michael Reach, Larry Simmons and Bobby Taylor. Gary Youngblood is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **Josh Tanner** is the new pastor of **Farmville Church, Auburn**. He comes from McGehee Road Church, Montgomery, where he served as minister of students and education. A native of Hokes Bluff, Tanner is a graduate of Covington Theological Seminary in Rossville, Ga., and is currently enrolled at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. He and his wife, Kim, have two children.

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

Hueytown churches unite for citywide revival

Hueytown churches are in the business of working together, not against each other, said Doug O'Brien, pastor of North Highlands Baptist Church, Hueytown.

"Our goal is to pull ourselves together and show our community camaraderie — that we aren't in competition with one another, that we love being able to do things together and that our pastors care about each other," he said.

And that is why more than 10 Hueytown churches held a citywide revival for the fourth consecutive year Feb. 14-18.

"Great things happen when God's people come together," Rick Patrick, senior pastor of Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Hueytown, said of the revival.

"It's a little bit like heaven on earth when we gather without regard for our individual churches and celebrate the great news of Jesus and the privilege we have to claim our city for Jesus," he added.

The revival, held for the first time at North Highlands Baptist, featured evangelists Phil Waldrep and David Nasser and Calvin Kelly, senior pastor of Valleydale Baptist Church, Birmingham; Kevin Hamm, senior pastor of Gardendale's First Baptist Church; and Charles T. Carter, pastor emeritus of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills. Popular worship leaders Shane Barnard and Shane Everett, better known as Shane & Shane, held a concert the night of Feb. 16, which O'Brien believes may have brought in one of the largest crowds ever — 845 people.

"The primary impact (of working together) is a sense of cooperation and unity in sharing the gospel," Patrick said. "We're on the same team. Our only opponent is Satan."

Montgomery Baptists mark Samaritan Inn's 25th

Serving out-of-town families of patients hospitalized in Montgomery — that's the purpose of Montgomery Baptist Association's Samaritan Inn ministry. And that's what it's been doing for the past 25 years.

Volunteers, contributors, local Baptists and guests gathered March 2 at McGehee Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, to honor the ministry, which serves an average of 450 individuals each year.

The program for the evening — The Life of Samaritan Inn — featured presentations of the past, present and future made by Mary Louise Dabbs, former director of the ministry; Elaine Morgan, director for the past eight years; and Lisa Rose, director of church and community ministries for Montgomery Association. Music was provided by Dalraida Baptist Church, Montgomery, member Tim Jewell, Associate Pastor Jim Peters and Minister of Music James Bell.

"This is just such a wonderful outlet to serve the Lord, and I just would love to see this continue," Morgan said, noting that the 15 active volunteers are the heartbeat of the ministry. "It's a wonderful ministry and hopefully we represent the heart of God, who was the Father of compassion. ... As long as there is a hospital, there will be a need for this."

Alabama Ministries

North Alabama Center of New Orleans Seminary

► The North Alabama Center of New Orleans Seminary that meets at First Baptist Church, Athens, announces classes for Term IV, held on Thursdays March 25-May 13. Classes offered are Psalms from 6-8 p.m. and Baptist Doctrine from 8-10

p.m., both of which are taught by Paul Murphy.

For complete class info, go to www.fbcathens.org; click under Ministry and then NOBTS. No prior registration or acceptance is required. Contact director David Cofield at 256-247-6336 or nac@fbcathens.org for more information. There is a fee for the classes and textbooks.

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Attempt to legalize slot machines takes hit

Failure of this year's big 'bingo' bill in Senate sends gambling proponents back to drawing board

By Sondra Washington
The Alabama Baptist

It was back to the drawing board for pro-gambling legislators March 3 after Sen. Roger Bedford, D-Russellville, could not raise enough votes to bring Senate Bill (SB) 380 up for debate. But gambling opponents do not expect the fight to end there.

While several legislators continue talks of introducing new bills to legalize and expand the slot machine gambling referred to as electronic bingo, gambling supporters across the state hope to find a victory through the Alabama court system (see story, this page).

Bedford introduced his bill last month proposing a statewide vote to legalize slot machine casinos at 10 Alabama locations. Some of the bill's opponents said it would create a monopoly, make casino owners "a law unto themselves" and create a gaming commission with "no real power." Some gambling supporters even opposed the bill since it would not allow casinos in their municipalities.

'Crooked' bill

After a series of private meetings and negotiations to tweak the bill and make it more palatable to his opponents, Bedford said he changed the tax rate from 25 percent to 27 percent and made stricter requirements for the gaming commission. Still he could not find the 21 votes necessary to bring the bill up for debate.

Gov. Bob Riley called the 18-16 vote "a victory for fairness in law and honesty in government." A press release from Riley's office discounted gambling supporters' claims that the bill would limit, tax and regulate gambling.

"The plan loosens limits on gambling and expands casinos in Ala-

bama, sets a ridiculously low tax rate of 25 percent when other states are in the 45-75 percent range and strips the would-be gaming commission of any true regulatory authority," the press release stated.

Riley said, "Clearly a lot of senators understand just how crooked this bill is now that they've had a chance to review it. This bill isn't about gambling. It isn't about letting the people vote. It's about pure, unadulterated corruption and legalizing a no-bid casino monopoly for a few politically connected gambling bosses. Senators who voted to stop this corrupt bill should be commended for their vote."

Sen. Hank Erwin, R-Montevallo, who has fought against the proliferation of gambling for years, had asked Christians to pray for the bill's defeat. After the vote, he announced, "To God be the glory. Thank you my faithful prayer warriors. We defeated electronic bingo today."

At press time, Bedford told several news organizations he did not plan to bring the bill back up. He referred to "back room deals" struck by Riley and lobbyists to keep his bill from passing.

Yet Todd Stacy, Riley's press secretary, said the bill failed because people began to realize its corrupt and deceptive nature.

"The fact that they were trying to give away a no-bid casino monopoly for nickels in return was just shameful," he said. "Everyone who voted to move that bill forward should be ashamed because of how bad it was. ... I'm sure the gambling interests are not going to give up because they are desperate."

Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program, also believes the fight is not over.

"I expect that they are going to

How the senators voted

On March 3, Alabama senators voted not to bring Senate Bill (SB) 380, sponsored by Sen. Roger Bedford, D-Russellville, up for debate.

This bill calls for a constitutional amendment to be voted on by Alabamians that would legal-

ize slot machines in 10 casino-type facilities across the state.

In order to debate and vote on any bill before the two state budgets — General Fund and education — are approved, a three-fifths majority of the senators must vote yes to allow debate.

This procedural vote is referred to as the Budget Isolation Resolution (BIR) vote. In the Senate, that means 21 yes votes are needed. SB 380 received 18 yes votes and 16 no votes. Below is a list of how each senator voted on the BIR for SB 380. (TAB)

Senator	BIR Vote	Senator	BIR Vote
Barron, Lowell	Yes	Little, Zeb	Yes
Beason, Scott	No	Marsh, Del	No
Bedford, Roger	Yes	Means, Larry	Didn't vote
Benefield, Kim	Yes	Mitchell, Wendell	Yes
Bishop, Charles	No	Mitchem, Hinton	Yes
Brooks, Ben	No	Orr, Arthur	No
Butler, Tom	No	Penn, Myron	Yes
Coleman, Linda	Yes	Pittman, Trip	No
Denton, Bobby	No	Poole, Phil	No
Dixon, Larry	No	Preuitt, Jim	No
Dunn, Priscilla	Yes	Ross, Quinton	Yes
Erwin, Hank	No	Sanders, Hank	Yes
Figures, Vivian Davis	Yes	Sanford, Paul	No
French, Steve	No	Singleton, Bobby	Yes
Glover, Rusty	No	Smith, Harri Anne	Yes
Holley, Jimmy	Yes	Smitherman, Rodger	Yes
Keahey, Marc	Yes	Waggoner, Jabo	No
Little, Ted	Yes		

try to bring this bill back up and work on some senators to try to convince them to come over to their side," he said.

Referring to recent reports of gambling bosses giving \$2.2 million to various political action committees, Godfrey added, "There are 12 legislative days left, and there is way too much money involved."

'Desperate' to pass

Eric Johnston, president of Citizens for a Better Alabama, said the gamblers are "desperate" to pass legislation this session.

"They have everything to lose this year," he said. "Everybody has

all their chips on the table. Their hope hinges on getting a bill passed this session because they are not going to win in the courts."

According to The Associated Press, Ronnie Gilley, developer of Dothan's Country Crossing gambling facility, said, "My hope is we can get a simplified version and get it back in front of them (the legislators)."

Sen. Paul Sanford, R-Huntsville, did not vote for Bedford's bill but told reporters he planned to introduce new "bingo" legislation, which would refer to the machines currently used around the state as slot machines, place casino licens-

es up for bid and establish a minimum tax rate of 50 percent. It was not filed at press time.

Sen. Hank Sanders, D-Selma, filed SB 507 March 4 proposing a constitutional amendment allowing legislators to determine what kind of bingo will be played and where it will be allowed.

"They could then turn around and do a bill like the Sweet Home Alabama bill," Johnston said. "I think people should be even more wary (now) because they don't know exactly what's coming. ... They've got their strategy, and I think something is definitely coming." ❧

Lawsuits flood court system seeking gambling legality, prosecution

By Sondra Washington
The Alabama Baptist

So many gambling lawsuits are facing Alabama judges that it's difficult for many of the most involved opponents to keep up with details in each case.

Almost weekly, new cases are filed across the state. Several deal with the legality of slot machines being called electronic bingo. Others seek to protect casinos from criminal prosecution. Some pertain to disputes over money between the involved parties.

Looking at one main issue

But experts say they all boil down to one issue — casino operators fighting to hold on to an industry that "takes money from a lot of poor people and [gives] it to a few rich people."

The most recent gambling cases filed with Alabama courts concern gambling operations in Chickasaw, Bessemer and Etowah counties.

When Gov. Bob Riley's Task Force on Illegal Gambling recently raided a slot machine operation in Chickasaw, lawyers for the facility filed a civil lawsuit for a declaratory judgment on the legality of the business.

Task force Commander John Tyson said he plans to file criminal charges against the facility for operating illegal slot machines.

In Bessemer, Birmingham attorney Kim Davidson filed a lawsuit on behalf of the City Council's bingo committee.

The group hopes Jefferson County Circuit Judge Eugene Verin will validate an "electronic bingo" ordinance vetoed by Mayor Ed May and prevent May from denying bingo permits to businesses seeking them from the city.

Most recently, Etowah County District Attorney Jimmie Harp announced he filed a declaratory lawsuit to determine whether machines planned for a \$200 million casino in his county are legal.

Harp said he planned to inspect the machines to make sure they meet the six characteristics of legal bingo issued by the Alabama Supreme Court. But Todd Stacy, Riley's press secretary, said the court's ruling is clear.

"The Supreme Court didn't lay down six guidelines for converting a slot machine to a bingo machine," he said. "They said, 'This is what constitutes bingo, and if it doesn't meet these guidelines, it's not bingo.' ... The fact that casino bosses are trying to take this test and use the Supreme Court's rules to justify illegal machines is ridiculous."

Eric Johnston, a Birmingham-based attorney and president of Citizens for a Better Alabama, believes the proliferation of lawsuits across the state is nothing more than

gamblers' attempts to complicate the issues and delay the inevitable.

"All these lawsuits are not going to do anything but make it last a little longer, but in the end, they are going to lose," he said. "These are criminal issues. In essence, the Supreme Court said you can't do these things in civil courts. ... The bingo they are playing is unlawful."

Stacy added, "What's getting lost in all this is these are illegal casinos that for years have been preying on the poor in Alabama and destroying communities.

Finally the law is catching up to them, and now they are desperate. ... It's been a sham but that's the nature of casinos and the gambling industry: to deceive." ❧

"All these lawsuits are not going to do anything but make it last a little longer."

Eric Johnston
Citizens for a Better Alabama

Cuts could affect work from hospital chaplains to race-specific ministries

(continued from page 1)
Columbia, Marion and Shelby associations would lose funding.

▶ Christian community ministries in Calhoun, Madison, Russell, Birmingham, Mobile, Shelby, Randolph, North Jefferson and Etowah associations would be cut.

▶ Baldwin, Calhoun and Mobile associations would lose positions related to other ministries.

▶ Baldwin Association would lose the state's resort missionary.

▶ Montgomery Association would lose its state consultant for work with Asians.

▶ Birmingham Association would lose a hospital chaplain at UAB Hospital and a black church-planter strategist.

Church planting would be especially hard hit. Currently NAMB participates in 35 church starts in 16 associations across Alabama. These new church starts receive an amount of funds for pastoral support that decreases each year over a three- to five-year period. The funds come from NAMB, the state convention and the sponsor of the church start.

Church starts range from language work in Franklin Association to black work in Pickens Association to Anglo work in Bessemer Association.

Also affected by the GCR Task Force recommendation are six state missionary positions with the SBOM. Two of the positions are in the evangelism office. Three are in the associational missions and church planting office, and one is a campus ministry position at a historically black university.

The evangelism office would lose funds for its Intentional Evangelism leader and the position that



Photo by Bethany Rogers

RESORT MINISTRY IN JEOPARDY — Students distribute Scripture-imprinted water bottles to vacationers in Gulf Shores as part of Baldwin Association's resort ministry. The state will lose its resort missionary if the GCR proposal passes.

works primarily in consultation with churches and associations to formulate local evangelism strategies.

The associational missions and church planting office would lose funding for its statewide black church-planting strategist, the language and ethnic coordinator and the position that oversees church planting and ministry evangelism.

Impact on youth work

Swafford noted that blacks make up 26 percent of Alabama's population. Losing the three positions focused on blacks — statewide strategist, regional strategist and campus minister — would be detrimental to Alabama Baptists' work in that area, he said.

Mike Nuss, director of the SBOM's collegiate and student ministries office, said, "Not having NAMB funds would have a serious and profound impact on Alabama Baptist efforts to reach today's students (middle, high school and college) with the gospel. This move

will jeopardize our ability to continue providing assistance to associations, district training and statewide events that ultimately help us reach students for Christ."

He noted that NAMB cooperative agreement funds are primarily used to help churches and associations with youth evangelism training events as well as harvest- or youth rally-type events.

Gilbreath added that the Senior Adult Evangelism Conference "would have to go" and the State Evangelism Conference would be curtailed.

And then there's the potential impact on local churches and associations.

"Eighty percent of the evangelism budget, outside the State Evangelism Conference, goes back to working with local churches and associations," Gilbreath said. He explained that churches receive consultation, training and materials for evangelism free of charge.

"We do not charge churches for our services because they are provided through the Cooperative Program via the cooperative agreement with NAMB. Now all of that could change, and that is not good for Alabama Baptists," he said.

SBOM Executive Director Rick Lance said he was "disturbed" by the GCR Task Force recommendation to sever NAMB's relationship with state conventions. He said he doubted the ability of Alabama Baptists to pick up another \$1 million in statewide ministry expense and continue the state convention's position as the largest supporter of SBC causes.

"We will have to do a ministry audit of everything we do through the State Board of Missions," he shared. "But there is no way Alabama Baptists can pay for all the ministries and missions now supported jointly with NAMB."



Photo by Brittany N. Howerton

DEAF MINISTRY — If the GCR recommendation passes, then the Alabama School for Deaf in Talladega would lose its state missionary.

About Alabama

Encouraging Smart Budgeting in Alabama's Governments

By Jim Williams
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Spring is budget time for Alabama's state and local governments. The state budget has been under development since last fall and should be completed by April 26, when the Legislature's regular session ends. Cities, counties and local school systems are in earlier stages of developing their budgets.

All are creating spending plans for the fiscal year beginning later in 2010, which will be the toughest year for public sector budgets in recent memory. The governor and Legislature are hoping for more than \$500 million in one-time federal stimulus money to balance the state budget and waiting to see what Congress will do.

Plan for long term

This may do no more than push the problem off until next year. Very soon, the state will have to live within the limits of its own resources. The smart way to budget is to build a plan for the long term, rather than simply budget each year to make ends meet.

In governments, the budget creates a bottom line. Done right, the budget is a plan for investing taxpayer dollars to accomplish public purposes. The connection between dollars and expected results should be clear, and spending should be itemized to create limits and accountability. Bud-

gets built on these principles focus on plans and performance, not simply on how much money is available. Officials are then able to communicate with taxpayers about what is to be accomplished with their tax dollars.

The state of Alabama now requires its departments to develop plans with goals, but in other states, governors and legislatures are far ahead in using these to create performance-driven budgets. To see this, compare the online budget data from Virginia and Alabama (dpb.virginia.gov/budget/budget.cfm and budget.alabama.gov/pages/buddoc.aspx).

We are seeing great interest in smart budgeting techniques from Alabama's local governments, which are closer to the people. In recent work with the city of Montgomery, we found a hands-on mayor setting high goals and working hard on budget issues and department heads willing to initiate changes that improve services and save money. The current city budget contains innovations even while cutting spending. All of our governments should adopt smart budgeting practices that encourage such results.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jim Williams is executive director for the nonprofit, nonpartisan Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama.

Cooperative Program giving 1.64% behind 2009 pace

Year-to-date contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Cooperative Program (CP) are 1.64 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 Feb. 28, the year-to-date total of \$83,896,187.33 for CP missions is \$1,396,902.07 behind the \$85,293,089.40 received at the end of February 2009.

Monthly CP receipts totaled \$16,079,851.28 for February.

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 Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the year-to-date total of \$83,896,187.33 is 98.52 percent of the \$85,160,663.60 budgeted to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. The SBC operates on an Oct. 1-Sept. 30 fiscal year.

The CP is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. (BP)

Women's Hall of Fame inducts environmentalist, midwife

A legendary rural-area midwife and an environmentalist whose work led to Alabama having the first national wilderness area were this year's inductees into the Alabama Women's Hall of Fame (AWHF).

AWHF board chair Cathy Randall called Mary Louise Ivy Burks and Margaret Charles Smith "extraordinary Alabamians." Burks and Smith

were inducted into the AWHF on March 4.

Burks, of Birmingham, who died in 2007, worked to establish the Sipsey Wilderness area in the Bankhead National Forest. This work was considered her crowning achievement. She tried, but failed, to have the Cahaba River designated a wild and scenic river.

However, her leadership was

crucial in passing the U.S. Eastern Wilderness Areas Act in 1975 that designated 12,700 acres along the west fork of the Sipsey River as Alabama's first national wilderness area.

Smith, of Eutaw, who died in 2004, was a medical pioneer who practiced midwifery in rural settings for those who could not afford hospitalization. She became a legend

for delivering 3,500 babies and her compassion since the women she served were most often overworked and malnourished.

Smith was honored by the city of Eutaw,

becoming the first black to receive keys to the city in 1983. Her story is told in her book, "Listen to Me Good: The Life Story of an Alabama Midwife," published in 1996.

The AWHF, founded in 1970, is



BURKS



SMITH

housed in A. Howard Bean Hall on the campus of Judson College in Marion. The board of directors normally selects two women each year who have influenced the lives of others.

Inductees are native to or closely associated with the state of Alabama and must have been deceased for two years or longer.

For more information, visit www.awhf.org. (JC)



Grace Gifts

ALABAMA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES & FAMILY MINISTRIES

MEMORIALS:
(Memorialized Person's Name is Bolded)

Bob Alday, Leroy: Forest Avenue BC of Jackson
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William & Myrtle Baker: Springhill BC of Clio
Elizabeth Beddingfield: Center Point BC of Scottsboro
Mrs. Brooksie Berry, Dothan: Leo Brown
Mary Archer Booth: Centreville BC
Willie Butler, Decatur: Helen Chenault & Family
Milton Eugene Cawley, Greenville: Antioch West BC of Georgiana
Herman Chancey, Satsuma: Mr. & Mrs. Bill Howell
Darwin Clanton, Jackson: Carolyn & Karen Mims, Steve & Alicia Mims
Jean Coleman, Selma: Marjorie Kay Nix
Julieta Cuaresma, Philippines: Antioch West BC of Greenville
Patsy Ford Dixon: Providence BC of Gallion
Jill Foshee, Marietta, GA: Billy & Sarah Thompson
Ruby Frith, Selma: Northside BC of Selma
Earle Gandy, Coatopa: Mr. & Mrs. Tony Chambless
Helen Gray, Scottsboro: Center Point BC of Scottsboro
Zelma Gullatte, Salem: Pleasant Grove BC of Salem
Lola Gwin, Wetumpka: Harold & Sondra Baker
Ora Mae Haddox, Frisco City: Margaret Ginwright
John Robert Hall, Hayden: Mr. & Mrs. Luttrell Wright
Rodney Handley, Hueytown: Concord BC of Bessemer
Essie Herron, Thomasville: Benny Ray & Helen Stephens
Truman Ingram: Providence BC of Gallion
Joe Edward Jackson, Thomasville: Benny Ray & Helen Stephens
Mildred Jackson, Selma: Northside BC of Selma
Willie Hill Jaynes, Reform: Liberty BC of Reform
Carl Jones, Selma: Northside BC of Selma
Mable Brooks Labbe, Selma: Class of '48
Herman Lathan, Jackson: Philip & Lora English
Edwina Martin LeCroy, Camden: Beryl Isenhower, Maynita Weatherly
Chirstin Lightsey, West Blocton: Margie Stephens
Thelma McLeod, Hazelhurst, GA: Phil & Sarah Reedy
Carolyn McWaters, Enterprise: Mr. & Mrs. Roy Barron
Ciegel Miley, Selma: Northside BC of Selma
Flora Lee Morgan, Pine Hill: Pine Hill BC, Maynita Weatherly
Frank O. Page Sr., Amory, MS: Marjorie Kay Nix, Mr. & Mrs. J. Wray Pearce
Robert Grey Patrick, Thomasville: County Line BC of Arlington, Benny Ray & Helen Stephens
Willie Perdue: Centreville BC
Linda Phillips, Seale: John & Evelyn Gullatte, Pleasant Grove BC of Salem
Bertha Pierson: Centreville BC

Peggy Raybon, Selma: Northside BC of Selma
Estelle Reynolds, Huxford: Ruby F. Cruik
Barry Ryland, Pensacola, FL: Faye Salter Parker, John T. Salter, Elaine Salter Roley
Kayla B. Salter, Lexington, S.C.: Faye Salter Parker, John T. Salter, Elaine Salter Roley
Milton Shipp: Don & Iris Shipp
Bonnie Jean Sisty, Gadsden: Sarah A. Gibson
A.C. Smith, Selma: Northside BC of Selma
Denny Sprayberry, Hueytown: Concord BC of Bessemer
Lou Ella Stacey, Mobile: Ken & Betty Schroeder
L.D. Stapp Jr., Siloam: Joan Larkin & Michael
Jewell Stoudenmire, Selma: Northside BC of Selma
Roy Surrett, Selma: Northside BC of Selma
Robert Thornton, Demopolis: Union Grove BC of Sweet Water
Ralph Tucker, Selma: Northside BC of Selma
Gaines Vick, Gallion: Bobby Joe & Laura Glass, Providence BC of Gallion
Elizabeth Walker, Dothan: Springhill BC of Clio
Luther & Maudie Walker: Springhill BC of Clio
Charles "Stephen" Wood: Mr. & Mrs. Luttrell Wright
Burl Woods, Atmore: Ual & Ann Murph
Frances "Cissy" Hubbard Wyatt, Sylacauga: Brett & Layne Ryan

HONORS:
(Honored Person's Name is Bolded)

Amy Bain, Selma: Youth Department of Shady Grove BC of Selma
Joe & Beth Gibson, Butler: Sarah Gibson
Mike McAlpine, Demopolis: Mrs. A.A. Knight



Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries
 Central Administration
 P.O. Box 361767
 Birmingham, AL 35236-1767
 Telephone: (205) 982-1112
 Toll Free: (888) 720-8805

www.alabamachild.com

Black Baptist groups pledge \$50 million for Haiti relief

America's five largest historically black Baptist organizations are cooperating to raise \$50 million to help rebuild Haiti and provide aid to earthquake victims there.


Called the African-American Baptist Mission Collaboration, the joint effort marks the first time the groups representing 40,000 congregations and 10 million Christians nationwide have worked together on such a large scale.

The Progressive National Baptist Convention, the Lott Carey


Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, the National Baptist Convention USA, the National Missionary Baptist Convention of America and the National Baptist Convention of America plan to provide assistance for plans including five health care clinics, 50 schools, 500 reconstructed churches and 5,000 homes. Other components include providing water, supplies, cash grants and groceries to people in need.

Most of the funds will come from local churches in the conventions. (ABP)


Senior Adult Evangelism Conference



Hill



Blackaby



Parsons

Monday, May 3, 2010
 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Deerfoot Baptist Church
 5450 Mount Olive Church Road
 Trussville, AL 35173

FREE ADMISSION
NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED


MORNING SESSION, 9-11 AM
 Featuring music by Squire Parsons and message by Richard Blackaby

LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

AFTERNOON SESSION, 1-3 PM
 Featuring music by Squire Parsons and message by Junior Hill

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

Updates: www.alsbom.org/saec



Letters to the Editor

THANKS, GOVERNOR

In our state, there are those who think gambling can help cure our economical woes. I appreciate our governor for his stand and fight against this evil. Our prayers are for him. It is foolish to think that the vice of gambling can solve economical problems when it creates financial problems for people who can least afford it. We have those in the Legislature who are trying to push to legalize gambling when they should look for things that are right and productive for the good of all people. They talk about letting the people vote. As I understand, it will take a constitutional amendment. I pray this will never happen.

Eugene R. Thomason
Pell City, Ala.

WISH FOR POLITICIANS

Much has been said concerning the lottery and gambling issues in Alabama. Rarely have I seen or heard Scripture-based prophecy illustrated in these discussions. Think about it for a minute. The former governor who pushed for a state-run lottery was eventually sent to prison (and is awaiting an appeal). Since the good citizens of this state soundly rejected the lottery movement by popular vote, Alabama has landed international automobile-manufacturing facilities and some of the largest steel-processing plants in the world and is one of two finalists for landing the largest defense contract ever issued by the U.S. government. I wish politicians would stop thumping their chests and acknowledge God's pres-

ence. Second Chronicles 7:14 says, "If my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

Don Cotton
Andalusia, Ala.

BIBLE INTERPRETATION

I feel somewhat humbled to comment on the Feb. 11 Sunday School lesson by Cecil Taylor, one so much more educated than I. However, I am a firm believer in 2 Peter 1:20, which says Scripture is not of one interpretation. It seems from reading the comments of Mr. Taylor he is convinced that his interpretation of the passage in Mark 13 is positive confirmation that pre-tribulation rapture believers are totally off base.

I have been a Christian and attempted to be a Bible student for 61 years, and I have come to realize, after sitting under teaching of some respected Bible scholars, that Scripture must not be taken out of context and interpreted without comparison with and aligned with all other Scriptures which relate to it. I certainly realize there's more than one way various Scriptures can be interpreted, and I admit Mark 13 could possibly indicate as he intimates. However, I feel there are many other Scriptures that indicate otherwise.

I only want to make one point: Please ensure that anyone you enlist to write in the Sunday School portion of the paper does not make dogmatic statements in matters where

there's more than one viewpoint but insist that it is identified as the writer's opinion, not a proven fact.

Don Scott
Cullman, Ala.

THE SBC AND THE CP

I just want to say thank you to Bob Terry (editor of *The Alabama Baptist*) and Rick Lance (executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions), who have faithfully defended Southern Baptists' stand on the Cooperative Program issue over the last few months. We appreciate people who will take a stand in defense of something that has worked all these years.

In my opinion, no one should accept the role of president of the Southern Baptist Convention if he or she does not support the program. No one should come in and cause dissension trying to change what is working. I pray that in the future when electing a president, this will be taken into consideration.

The church my family and I attend gives 18 percent to the Cooperative Program. We are not trying to be well known as an individual church but believe the entire convention should be behind these efforts.

Wanda Woodruff
Hartselle, Ala.

www.smallsmallacts.com



Photo courtesy of Steve Stephens

RA/CHALLENGER BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Gateway Baptist Church, Montgomery, and First Baptist Church, Tillman's Corner, were among 21 church teams that participated in the RA/Challenger State Basketball Tournament, held Feb. 5-6 at CrossPoint Baptist Church, Trussville. First place winners were CrossPoint Baptist, Crusader division and Sr. High Challengers division, and Gateway Baptist, Jr. High Challengers division. Steve Stephens of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions said the tournament garnered what was likely the largest fan support in 20 years.

MARKET PLACE

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT PLACING A CLASSIFIED AD, CALL THE ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST, 205-870-4720, EXT. 102, OR E-MAIL ADS@THEALABAMABAPTIST.ORG. COPY DEADLINE IS TWO WEEKS BEFORE PUBLICATION.

CHURCH POSITIONS

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

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

ADULT EDUCATION MINISTER: Seeking full-time minister of adult education. Seminary degree and prior experience required. CrossPointe Church, Madison, Ala. E-mail Dawn Buscemi at dbuscemi@crosspointefamily.org. Web site: www.cpcfam.org.

MINISTER OF WORSHIP & EDUCATION: First Baptist Church of Blountville, Tenn., seeks a minister of worship and education. Blountville is the county seat of Kingsport and Bristol. First Baptist currently has both blended and contemporary services with a variety of choirs and ensembles. Education will involve working with teams to coordinate Bible study, VBS, camps and adult education opportunities. Candidate should be team player who is ready to serve as needed. Please submit resumés and any DVD or CDs to: Minister Search Team, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 587 Blountville, TN 37617 or e-mail:

fbcbtn@embarqmail.com. Resumés will be received through April 15.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR MUSIC & WORSHIP: Moulton Baptist Church is seeking a full-time associate pastor for music and worship. Seminary degree is preferred. Resumés should be sent to: mwakefield@moultonbaptist.org or mailed to: P.O. Box 430, Moulton, AL 35650. Resumés must be received by the close of business on March 19. Moulton is located in northwest Alabama twenty miles west of Decatur.

BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER: Creek Path Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational worship leader who has a heart for worship to coordinate our music program. Please send resumés to: CPBC, P.O. Box 667, Guntersville, AL 35976, or e-mail to: cpbc71@charterinternet.com.

PART-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR: Fairhope Avenue Baptist Church (www.fairhopeabc.com) is seeking a part-time youth director. Salary will be based on maturity, experience in related positions and/or professional degrees. With prayerful consideration please mail resumés with references to: Pastor James W. Hill, P.O. Box 1086, Fairhope, AL 36533 or fax 251-928-1328.

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

PART-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR: New Hope Baptist Church outside Tuscaloosa, Ala. Send resumés to: New Hope Baptist Church Search Committee, 18920 Homestead Road, Ralph, AL 35480.

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.

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Want to know God?

By Bruce Willis
Director of missions
Carey Baptist Association

Do you really know God? Many people think they do when actually they only know "about" Him. There is far more to knowing God than merely having an intellectual knowledge of Him.

The first step to knowing God is to admit your need. Your faults, failures, bad habits and human conflicts all indicate that your need is critical. God calls these shortcomings sin. These are proof you are a sinner (Rom. 3:23).

Second acknowledge God's solution. God loves you very much, and He proved it by what He did for you. His solution was to send His Son, Jesus Christ, to live the perfect life and then die the perfect death on the cross for your sins (Rom. 5:8).

Third accept God's provision. God made sufficient provision for all your needs through Jesus Christ. As a sinner, you do not deserve this and there is nothing you can do to earn it. However, Jesus paid the price for you on the cross.

Therefore God offers this great salvation to you as a free gift (Eph. 2:8). Your part is to accept by faith what He has done for you and receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior (John 1:12).

To do so, act on the truth. "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9). If you have never done this, then now is the time to come to know God through a personal relationship with Jesus.

A simple faith transaction is all that is necessary. Just direct your confession to the one and only, invisible yet ever present, God. He is eagerly waiting for you.



Photo courtesy of *The (Scottsboro) Daily Sentinel*

'USEFUL MISSION' — Members of the Sewing Circle of Calvary Baptist Church, Scottsboro, make quilts for children in the care of the Jackson County Department of Human Resources. They also make quilts for homeless shelters and crisis pregnancy centers.

Wrapped in love

Scottsboro group's 'comfort quilts' provide warmth, security for those in crisis

By Kristen Lindsey
The Alabama Baptist

The Sewing Circle began very innocently.

Made up of mostly elderly women from Calvary Baptist Church, Scottsboro, the group began meeting weekly in the late 1980s to share a common interest — sewing and quilting — and a time of fellowship, including a short testimony and prayer time.

But God had a greater mission for the group who has touched hundreds of lives locally, nationally and internationally.

It was about five years ago when the Sewing Circle made its first "comfort quilt."

Kids from meth homes

"The drug meth became so prevalent in north Alabama, and many children had to be taken out of homes because of it. So we got together with the (Jackson County) Department of Human Resources (DHR) and started making comfort quilts for the children," said Betty Hamrick, coordinator of the Sewing Circle.

To date, 76 children have received a quilt and not just those from methamphetamine homes but every infant, toddler and young child who has come through the doors of DHR, said Sheenia Little, director of the Jackson County DHR. In fact, a quilt is one of the first things a child receives.

"These quilts are something they can keep and take with them when they leave our care," Little said, noting the children come into DHR's care with very little.

Each quilt says, "Jesus loves _____," followed by "Calvary Baptist Church, Scottsboro." Once a quilt is given to a child, someone from DHR or a foster parent writes his or her name in the blank.

"It's a way of extending our love and letting them know that Jesus loves them," Hamrick said. "We pray over the quilts and talk about the children who will receive [them]."

Little, who has seen the impact the quilts have had on children, said they are a good resource for DHR.

"I believe these quilts provide a sense of comfort and security to these children," she said. "I think the quilts make them feel special knowing that someone made the quilt especially for them."

But the comfort quilts were just the launching pad for a full-out ministry.

Since June 2005, the Sewing Circle has made quilts for a New Orleans' homeless shelter day care and a missions trip to Maine, blankets for the local hospital nursery and crisis pregnancy center and cross bookmarks to send to an International Mission Board representative in East Asia. All of these items were made from donated materials.

Just this past year, the group began making lap bibs for hospice patients and those in assisted-living facilities.

In December, it completed 50 quilts to send to the Tohono O'odham reservation in Arizona with Tennessee River Baptist Association this summer.

The group's next project is to make 50 quilts to send to the Copper Basin Crisis Center, a ministry of the Southern Baptist Convention's Appalachian Regional Ministry in Tennessee.

Robert Gamble, pastor of Calvary Baptist, pointed out that these women have a gift and a talent and are using it for the Lord.

"There is something very per-

sonal about a quilt. Each stitch is done by hand," Gamble said. "It's one of those expressions of love for Christ that should be expressed in everything we do as Christians. [These women] are not only doing it but (they are also) teaching others how to use their skills and abilities to help share the gospel and love of Christ with others."

In January, the Sewing Circle started a satellite group at a local assisted-living facility. Currently there are two to three women involved, and in just a month's time, they finished three quilts.

"[This is] a means of doing something for someone else and also a means of helping these ladies find a useful mission," Hamrick said.

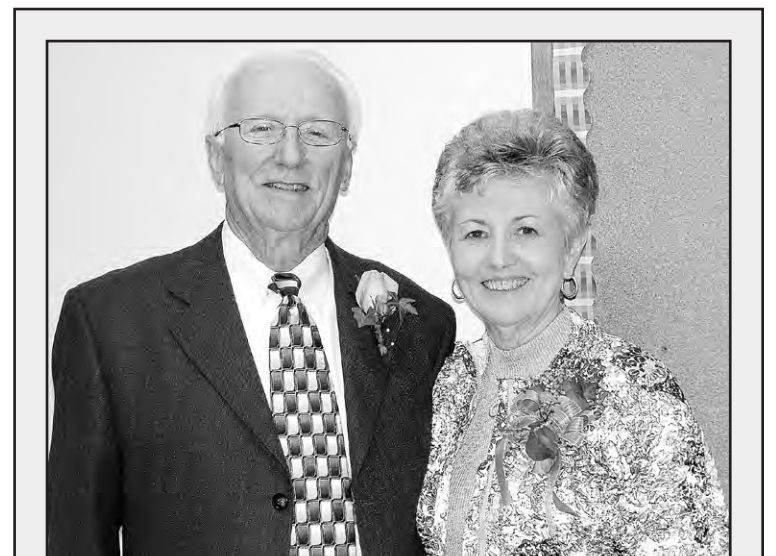


Photo courtesy of Glennwood Baptist Church

GLENNWOOD CHURCH HONORS PASTOR

Glennwood Baptist Church, Morris, recently celebrated Pastor David Bays' 18 years of service alongside his wife, Dot, at the church. The church honored them on the occasion of their resignation to move closer to family.

Want to see your news in
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Church announcements should arrive three weeks prior to the event.

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Montgomery congregation diversifies to reach area

By **Jeremy Henderson**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Red and yellow, black and white. They are precious in His sight."

And more and more of them — little children and their parents — are being reached by Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Montgomery, in Montgomery Baptist Association as the ethnic diversity of the congregation's surrounding community grows.

"Ridgecrest is transitioning, as are a number of churches in our community," said Pastor Michael Cassity. "We have African-American members now, and there are Hispanic kids in the halls."

Which is one reason why the church has placed renewed emphasis on local outreach through its Awana and Royal Ambassador basketball programs.

"We're not reinventing the wheel or anything," Cassity said. "We're just taking what we've already got going and opening up our basketball team to the community."

Basketball outreach

In the past, Cassity said the basketball team had been primarily comprised of church members. Now the church is using the basketball team to help make believers.

"[The basketball program] was never closed off to anyone," he said. "Now we're just making it a point to make it more intentional ... something we can use evangelistically."

Adam Cochran, minister of student education, counts the first year of the new approach as a success.

"We had 17 high school kids on our high school basketball team, and we had 12 on our fourth-through sixth-grade team," Cochran said. "It was the first time for us as

a church in a while to actually offer something to the community. It has been able to bring in the kids out of the community that aren't involved in church at all."

Likewise the church's Awana program is venturing into new territory in response to Montgomery's small, but growing, population of Mezticos, a group indigenous to Mexico who does not speak Spanish.

From Meztico to Korean

"Our Awana ministry is by far the strongest thing we have, and we, of course, reach out to the neighborhood kids and our own kids, but we have a ministry with Meztico people, and we pick up about 30 kids in a housing project and bring them to Awana," Cochran said. "It's their first time to be involved in a church and learn God's Word."

The church is trying to reach Meztico parents as well.

"The kids learn English as soon as they hit school," Cassity said. "But we're trying to develop through our association a means to minister to the adults."

To those ends, Ridgecrest has partnered with nearby and fellow Montgomery Association congregation Hope Community Church, which provides support services — everything from food to tutoring — to people in the surrounding community.

In September, a Korean language congregation, All Nations Baptist Church, began meeting at Ridgecrest.

It's the new way of things, Cassity said. And Ridgecrest has embraced it.

"We're celebrating our 60th anniversary, and as we approach that, we're learning from the past, leading in the present and looking to the future."

LEADERconnect FORUM

Tuesday, April 13, 2010 • 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery



Topic for the Day: "Coaching on the Run," with Bob Bumgarner, director of Church Development Division, Florida Baptist Convention

Cost: \$20 (covers all material and lunch)

Followers of Christ have been given significant roles to fulfill in the advance of His Kingdom. Success for believers is discovering who God has called them to be and what He has called them to do.

So, what is your process? As a ministry leader, how will you help others discover and become who God has called them to be? How can you help them become more intentional about their role in the Kingdom?

"Coaching on the Run" can help you discover the power of coaching to transform your life and those you coach. Your heart will feel the excitement as God allows you to become a vital part of their ministry journey through coaching.

As a result of this workshop you will be able to:

- understand and practice a basic coaching model.
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- begin a personal coaching development plan.
- outline what coaching might look like in your ministry setting.

For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Jamie Allen at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 256, jallen@alsbom.org.



Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions

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Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions

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South, April 17,
Mt. Gilead Baptist Church, Dothan

North, May 1,
First Baptist Church, Decatur

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FOR MORE INFO PLEASE CALL 1-800-264-1225, EXT. 415, OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE WWW.THESTUDENTHUB.ORG

Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions

Mission Belles say five prayers for Muslim women

By **Jeremy Henderson**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The members of the Mission Belles — an organization of wives of directors of missions (DOM) of Baptist associations across Alabama — weren't bowing toward Mecca on the last day of their February meeting, they were bowing in prayer for the women who do.

The exercise — five prayers corresponding to Islam's daily calls to prayer — was part of the International Mission Board's "Beyond the Wall" Muslim outreach program and concluded the two day Mission Belles event held Feb. 4-5 at Shocco Springs in conjunction with their husbands' Partnership Planning retreat.

"It went very well," said Mission

Belles President Patricia Chandler, who organized the event. "Pat Ingram from the Alabama Woman's Missionary Union helped facilitate our prayer time and helped us understand more about Muslim women and how they pray to Allah. We used the same format — five displays of prayer — to pray for Muslim women to come to know Christ."

Chandler said the event — one of the group's two annual meetings — was mostly intended as "a relaxing time away from our busy schedules." Chandler's husband, Ben, is DOM for St. Clair Baptist Association.

But despite craft workshops, presentations on healthy eating and even sessions with a massage therapist, Chandler said the highlight was the devotional tea focusing on outreach to Muslim women.

Renay Carroll, wife of Friendship Baptist Association DOM Ernie Carroll, agreed.

"We listened to information about Muslim women and their culture and how to form witnessing relationships with them," said Carroll, who is set to serve as the Mission Belles next president. "It was a concerted time of prayer

over Muslim women and we assumed a lot of the physical positions they take."

According to Chandler, the idea was to empathize with the rigors of Islam specific to Muslim women.

"We did the five displays of prayer so we could understand a part of their world," she said. "But we prayed for them to our Heavenly Father that they could know and understand true Christianity."

The 19 women in attendance even wore headscarves; Carroll brought hers with her.

"My son was just over in India in January and he brought me back a black scarf that the Hindu and Muslim women who live there wear," she said. "It was a very meaningful time for me and, I think, a lot of ladies, especially those who know Muslim women." ❧

ALABAMA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES & FAMILY MINISTRIES

Dear Alabama Baptists,

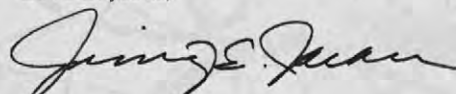
We are all very much aware of the financial climate in which we live. Such times as these tend to create a fear of what may lie ahead. To deal with the uncertainty, many people cut back on their giving. Others do not have as much to give because of a reduction in income or the loss of a job.

In spite of these concerns, God's work must go on. In fact, the financial problems cause an even greater need for sacrificial, generous giving. A case in point is our Alabama Baptist Children's Home ministry. With the increased financial pressure has come an increase in the number of homes being disrupted. Counseling needs are more pressing.

While the resources may be less than needed, the ministry responsibilities are multiplied. **What is the answer? You and me.** Can we trust God to take care of us as we give to take care of those whose needs are even greater than ours?

We have answered that question over and over again. Yes, Alabama Baptists can trust our Lord. Every extra gift means so much. **Let us join together to meet the growing demands of the life-altering work of our Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries.**

Love in Jesus,



Dr. Jimmy E. Jackson

"Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy." Psalm 82:3

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Retired missionary Davis dies

Glenda Agee Davis, a retired Baptist missionary, died Jan. 24. She was 77.

Along with her husband, J. Homer Davis Jr., a retired Baptist pastor, Davis was appointed by the Home Mission Board (now the North American Mission Board) to serve in south Georgia.

The couple served from 1983 to 1993.

Before their missionary appointment, they ministered in churches in Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and Mississippi.

Born in Atmore, Davis was the daughter of Charles Marvin Agee, who, along with his wife, served as a houseparent for the Alabama

Baptist Children's Home in Troy and the first director of missions for Judson Baptist Association.

Davis attended the University of Montevallo and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and served on staff for two summers at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega during the late 1940s.

At the time of her death, she was a member of Bluff Springs Baptist Church, Ashford, in Columbia Baptist Association and had actively served in its Woman's Missionary Union.

Davis is survived by her husband of 57 years, four children and 10 grandchildren. (TAB)



Photo courtesy of Samford University

BEESON'S HODGES CHAPEL RECONSECRATED

The chapel that has served as Beeson Divinity School's place of worship for 15 years was reconsecrated as a 'sacred space' Jan. 26. The divinity school, established in 1988 at Samford University, first dedicated the chapel in 1995.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For March 14

Explore the Bible By Jeffrey S. Quiett

Associate professor of marriage and family counseling, University of Mobile

DIVINE PURPOSE

Exodus 5:1-3; 6:6-8; 7:1-5

Courage and Confrontation (5:1-3)

Moses and Aaron finally came face to face with what God intended for them to do. The scene must have been intimidating. Moses and Aaron were granted an audience with the most powerful man of the ancient world. The Egyptian pharaohs were considered by their people to be gods. Yet Moses and Aaron had the audacity to confront a king in his own palace and demand God's desire be fulfilled. The word "feast" or "festival" does not merely signify a meal or temporary leave but comes from a word meaning "to make a pilgrimage." It is clear that Pharaoh interpreted their request as not simply a demand for a weekend off.

Pharaoh's response was one of contempt. He knew who Moses was, but he questioned the Lord of Moses. Pharaoh had no knowledge of the one true God and flatly denied Moses' request. Pharaoh's sense of "godhood" left no room for a competing claim of divinity. It is impossible to hear God when one is busy making himself a god. His denial of Moses' demand reflected Pharaoh's own pride and refusal to see the truth. Rejection of the truth often leads to a dramatic downfall. God may call those who follow Him to confrontation. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Christians are called to use wisdom and sound defense in the face of a world that does not know God. God calls us to have courage in the face of intimidating circumstances. The good news is that we do not stand alone. Jesus promised He will always be with us (Matt. 28:20).

Reassurance in Adversity (6:6-8)

Pharaoh's denial of Moses' request led to increased trouble for the Israelites. The Hebrew slaves were given more work out of Pharaoh's retaliation for Moses' abrupt and bold demand. In the preceding verses, Moses expressed dismay for the unexpected turn of events. God responded by giving assurance that His plans would ultimately be fulfilled. Setbacks and hardships will not thwart God's design. Negative, immediate circumstances may lead to mistaken belief that God is absent,

but His purposes will always come to pass.

When Christians stand for God's truth, they are often met with resistance and persecution. Jesus promised that His followers would experience such persecution (John 16:33). Yet God will not withdraw His promises. Although Moses' initial encounter with Pharaoh was unsuccessful, God assured him that His will would be carried out. We cannot escape adversity but we can experience joy and peace when we realize that God is with us and He will always have the last word.

Adversity an Opportunity for Growth (7:1-5)

This passage is part of a break or interlude from the rest of the story. The call of Moses is retold before the story resumes with the first of many mighty miracles performed by God through him. One discourse that stands out in the passage is God's assurance that Pharaoh would not let the people of Israel go even though the signs and wonders would be great. The "hardening" of Pharaoh's heart looked like an obstacle for God and His people but would only give reason to glorify and follow Him even more. Once again, the unbelief and pride of man would not hinder God from fulfilling His purposes. Another lesson of the passage is the opportunities that adversity brings. Although Pharaoh was stubborn and the Israelites endured pain, these events were chances to see the true power and majesty of God. God is beyond human ability and achievement. Throughout Scripture, we see that human weakness is an opportunity for God to be glorified and His purposes to be completed (2 Cor. 12:9). Human weakness and suffering give opportunity to experience and know God in a more intimate way.

A final lesson from this passage is noteworthy. God made it clear to Moses that the Egyptians would know that He is the true Lord (5). God's mighty acts that freed the Hebrews from bondage were also a testimony to a people who did not believe in Him. God always desires to bring all people to Himself. The Egyptians would soon learn that the various gods they worshiped were no match for the one true God.

Bible Studies for Life By Mark DeVine

Associate professor of divinity, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

WHEN IMMORALITY COMES TO CHURCH

1 Corinthians 5:1-2, 9-13; 6:15-20

Have you ever had occasion to observe a person otherwise disinterested in the Bible and seemingly devoid of deep Bible knowledge suddenly quote a verse of Scripture with energy and conviction? Try to lovingly point out a sin in the life of another person, and presto, "Judge not, lest you be judged," comes whipping out like a gun from a holster. We should all be thankful for Jesus' admonition for those would-be "splinter-removers" who do not seem to notice the telephone pole jutting out from their faces (Matt. 7:1-5). Yet our passage for this week makes it clear that love between believers in the church must involve the admittedly treacherous responsibility to call one another to repentance from sin and, if necessary, to employ church discipline.

Does Sin Still Shock Us?

A member of the church at Corinth was living with his father's wife, and not only were other members not appalled but they also thought of themselves as "the spiritual ones." Spiritual pride co-mingled with moral laxity is not a pretty sight. The apostle Paul was more upset with the church than with the one living openly in fornication. Why? Because of the duty of love. Love for this brother living in blatant public sin without remorse should have compelled his brothers and sisters to warn him and it is hoped by warning him, save him (1 Cor. 5:5). Failure to warn a brother or sister in Christ who lives in obvious, habitual sin displays either ignorance of God's law or stunning indifference to the offender's exposure to divine wrath.

How Should We Respond to Immoral Members?

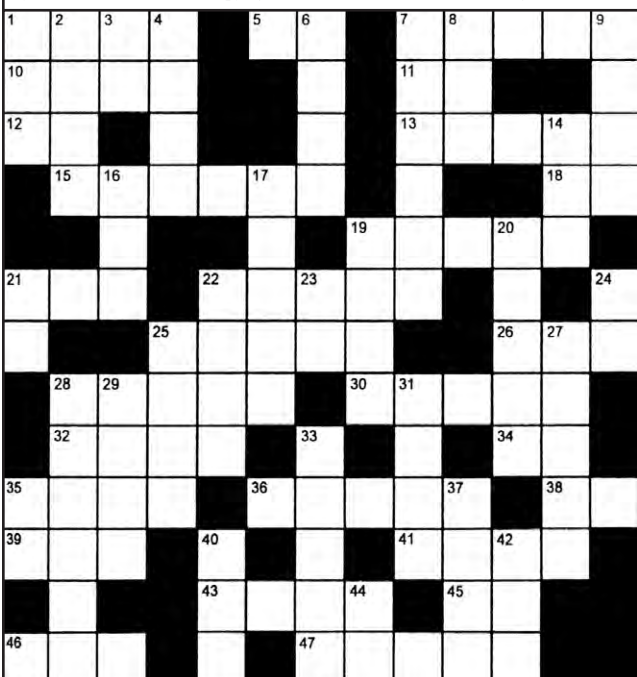
Such habitual sin calls into question the genuineness of this man's spiritual standing as a true member of the body of Christ at Corinth. 1 Corinthians 5:7 reveals a second duty of love when known public sin confronts the church — love not only for the habitual public sinner but also for the other church members. Not only does love act in

an attempt to rescue the sinner from destruction but also to protect the credibility of the witness and the moral character of the other church members. The Bible teaches forgiveness of sin, not toleration of sin. When confession and repentance take place, no thought of removing someone from the fellowship of the believing community need arise. That's forgiveness. That's the gospel of Jesus Christ. But forgiveness of sin has nothing in common with toleration of sin. Toleration of sin makes a mockery of the cross of Jesus and treats our Savior's suffering on Calvary as little significance. If the church perceives with seriousness that Jesus suffered and died on the cross for sin, then toleration of sin within our lives or the lives of others will be recognized as a betrayal of the love God demonstrated on Golgotha.

What this passage and the Bible as a whole promote and envision is not a congregation in which legalistic and censorious witch hunters roam about in pursuit of some unbiblical notion of perfection. The same Paul who insisted that this particular sinner be barred from fellowship would write the greatest statement on love ever produced just a few chapters later to the Corinthian believers. Where God's people gather for prayer, worship, service and fellowship, all members are sinners and longsuffering, patience and mercy must mark their treatment of each other. Paul even made the point that he was not suggesting that followers of Jesus Christ avoid contact with "this world's immoral people." If that were required, then they "would have to leave the world." The problem arises when one who names the name of Jesus Christ lives habitually and unrepentantly in ways obviously and blatantly incompatible with that name. The sooner we learn and practice biblical church discipline within our churches the better. Ironically refusal to practice biblical church discipline tends to defend itself with appeals to the biblical notions of love and forgiveness. But a sober reading of our focal passage makes clear that it is precisely love that compels the practice of church discipline.

Christian Crossword

By Susan F. Weimer Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- To go away.
- Citizens Band. (abbr.)
- ____, an apostle of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 1:1)
- Blessed are the ____ in spirit. (Matt. 5:3)
- Lakers home town.
- Before noon.
- A book of maps.
- Breathed into his nostrils the ____ of life. (Gen. 2:7)
- Prefix meaning "to do again."
- I stand at the door, and _____. (Rev. 3:20)
- Club used to strike a ball.
- Because he ____ for you. (1 Pet. 5:7 NIV)
- I will ____, and will deliver. (Isa. 46:4)
- By the hearing of the _____. (Job 42:5)
- Endured the ____, despising the shame. (Heb. 12:2)
- He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the ____ in sunder. (Ps. 46:9)
- My people hath been ____ sheep. (Jer. 50:6)
- Near. (abbr.)

- Then he got into the _____. (Matt. 8:23 NIV)
- Gather his ____ into the garner. (Matt. 3:12)
- Not off.
- Cheweth the ____, among the beasts. (Lev. 11:3)
- An exclamation often used in cartoons.
- An object used to stop up a hole.
- A negative.
- Fine, volcanic particles.
- Escaped with the skin of my _____. (Job 19:20)

Down

- A health resort.
- Sweeter also than honey and the honey _____. (Ps. 19:10)
- Account of. (abbr.)
- Every ____ which bringeth not forth good fruit. (Matt. 3:10)
- A person who has had a _____. (John 13:10 NIV)
- That were in the low ____ was Baalhanan. (1 Chron. 27:28)
- We may ____ of the fruit. (Gen. 3:2)
- A Sceptre shall ____ out of Israel. (Num. 24:17)
- In the ____ thou shalt put the testimony. (Ex. 25:21)
- A long-tailed rodent.
- They that sow in _____. (Ps. 126:5)
- Have the ____ of hell and of death. (Rev. 1:18)
- Now ye are ____ through the word. (John 15:3)
- That holy thing which shall ____ born. (Luke 1:35)
- ____ lots upon my vesture. (Ps. 22:18)
- Rural route. (abbr.)
- Having done any good ____ evil. (Rom. 9:11)
- Sitteth not down first, and counteth the _____. (Luke 14:28)
- Nor for the ____ that flieth by day. (Ps. 91:5)
- Behold, he cometh with _____. (Rev. 1:7)
- Wide is the gate and broad is the _____. (Matt. 7:13 NIV)
- ____ that ye enter not into temptation. (Luke 22:40)
- ____ unto God with the

- voice of triumph. (Ps. 47:1)
- Before Christ.
- The tabernacle of the ____ of the congregation (Ex. 40:2)
- Primate.
- An exclamation of surprise.
- General Electric. (abbr.)



World Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Three more Christians killed in northern Iraq

MOSUL, Iraq — Violence against Christians in northern Iraq continues to intensify as the country's March 7 parliamentary elections draw closer. A Christian man and his two sons were murdered Feb. 23 in Mosul when armed gunmen stormed their home, news services reported. Eight Christians have been killed in the city in the past two weeks.

The violence is worsening the flight of Iraqi Christians from the country, said Emil Shimoun Nona, the Chaldean archbishop of Mosul, according to news reports. "It is very difficult to live in this kind of situation," Nona said. "It is panic, panic always. The Christians don't know what will happen to them. It is the same everywhere — in the office, at school or even at home. They don't know if somebody is going to kill them."

Nona succeeded Paulos Faraj Rahho, who was kidnapped and murdered in March 2008.

While Iraq in general has grown more peaceful over the past two years, violence is an almost daily occurrence in Mosul, where Arabs, Kurds and al-Qaeda extremists are fighting for control. The country's minority Christian community often is targeted by the factions, perhaps by Kurds or Arabs who want to intimidate them from voting or by al-Qaeda militants who want to derail the March 7 election. Iraqi law reserves a small quota of seats in parliament for Christians.

More than 40 percent of all Iraqi refugees are Christians, even though they made up less than 4 percent of the population, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Iraq's Chaldean Assyrians, who are the country's indigenous people, numbered about 1 million when Saddam Hussein was deposed in 2003, according to the U.S. Department of State. An estimated 400,000 Christians have been forced to flee the country since then and many of the approximately 600,000 Christians remaining in Iraq are internally displaced.

Christians arrested after Muslim attack in Pakistan

KARACHI, Pakistan — In the wake of an attack in February by 150 armed Muslims on a Christian colony in Karachi in Sindh province, police have filed a false First Information Report (FIR) against 40 unnamed Christians and arrested five, Christian leaders said. They said the 40 unnamed Christians in the FIR are accused without basis with beating Muslim men, abusing Muslim women and girls, ransacking Muslim homes and looting expensive items from Muslim homes. The false FIR is designed only to harass the Christian community, they said, adding that the five arrested Christians were visitors to the area — the only ones on the street available for police to summarily round up since the visitors were unaware of the FIR.

Some 150 armed Muslims assaulted the Christian colony of Pahar Ganj in North Nazimabad, Karachi, on Feb. 21, damaging two churches, shooting at houses, beating Christians and burning shops and vehicles after a fruit stand vendor attacked a Christian boy for touching his merchandise. Christian leaders said Muslim extremists helped gather and inflame the assailants, but they said the fruit stand vendor upset with the 14-year-old boy initially instigated the attack. Pastor Edward Joseph of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Karachi said the furious Muslim mob attacked homes, St. Mary's Church of Pakistan and the Interdenominational Calvary Church. Sources said local politicians and clergymen from both sides were trying to broker a truce.

Believers fined, threatened, beaten in Uzbekistan

SAMARKAND, Uzbekistan — Three members of the unregistered Greater Grace Protestant Church have been given heavy fines in Samarkand in central Uzbekistan. The fines followed a police raid on a private home, after which children and teenagers were illegally interrogated without their parents being present.

A church member was also threatened with jail unless he confessed that he taught the Bible, which would have rendered him liable to prosecution for teaching religious doctrines without the permission of the state and a registered religious organization. The church has been unsuccessfully seeking state registration since 2000.

Church members also complained that the National Security Service secret police have been closely watching them recently.

In a separate case, two Protestant women in eastern Uzbekistan are facing charges after a raid, and one of the women was beaten up when she refused to confess to missionary activity, which is a criminal offense in Uzbekistan.

'Ground-breaking' abstinence study could change federal policy, some say

Conservative groups are urging the Obama administration and Democratic leaders to take a second look at abstinence education after a federally funded landmark study showed that such programs were more successful than comprehensive sex education in stopping teen sex.

The study, published in the February journal of the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, should be a game-changer in the debate over teens and sex, the groups say.

It followed 662 black sixth- and seventh-graders in urban middle schools over two years and found that 33.5 percent of those in programs promoting only abstinence had had sex by the end of the 24 months, compared to 48.5 percent of teens in a control group. The other two programs studied — one focusing only on safer sex and the other mixing an abstinence message with a safer sex message — did about as well as the control group.

President Obama axed Bush-era abstinence programs from his budget submitted last year, and conservatives now are encouraging him to place such funding back in the budget this year.

"If we are serious about reach-

ing teens with the skills they need to resist sexual activity, the findings supporting the effectiveness of abstinence education should not be ignored," said Valerie Huber, executive director of the National Abstinence Education Association.

The fact that the study received federal funding and wasn't backed by any conservative-leaning groups is significant. In fact, the authors — John B. Jemmott III and Loretta S. Jemmott of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and Geoffrey T. Fong of the University of Waterloo in Canada — plainly state that other sex-education approaches should not be abandoned and that studies should be conducted to see if abstinence education would have the same positive impact on older teens.

But the authors also argue that, contrary to what many liberals have argued, abstinence education deserves a place at the table.

"The results of this randomized

controlled trial are promising," the authors wrote.

"They suggest that theory-based abstinence-only interventions can have positive effects on adolescents' sexual involvement. This is important because abstinence is the only approach that is acceptable in some communities and settings in both the United States and other countries."

The study found that teens who go through abstinence education and do have sex are no less likely to use condoms than those in the other programs. That finding counters an often-made objection by liberals who argue that abstinence education reduces condom use.

Richard Ross, co-founder of the True Love Waits Christian abstinence movement, said the study "demonstrates that the invitation to abstinence works best when it is not diluted by other messages."

"But in the Church, our approach must be different," said Ross, a professor of student ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

"Helping teenagers consider pros and cons is fine. But their commitment to total life purity is exponentially greater when their primary motivation is the person of Christ," he said. "Those who adore Him and welcome the power of His Spirit stand the best chance of coming to their wedding day in innocence." (BP)

The study suggests "abstinence-only interventions can have positive effects on adolescents' sexual involvement."

Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine



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Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction.
Hebrews 1:27a



BP photo

LIFE TO THE FULL — For U.S. snowboarder Kelly Clark, a poor first run in the halfpipe finals ‘put the pressure on for the second run,’ which she turned into a bronze medal performance.

‘A lot more free’

Olympic snowboarder finds joy in Christ, not success

Kelly Clark wasn't about to sit back and let her life fall to pieces. The Olympic athlete should have been excited with the direction her life was taking, but she wasn't. So one night, she walked up to a fellow snowboarder's hotel room and knocked on the door.

“My name's Kelly,” Clark announced. “I think you might be a Christian, and I think you need to tell me about God.”

That was the start of a five-month journey in 2004 that led Clark, a 2002 Olympic gold medal winner and member of the 2010 U.S. Olympic snowboarding team in Vancouver, from despair and hopelessness to faith and freedom.

“I thought being a Christian was going to church and following rules and all sorts of religious things,” she said. “But it's about having a relationship with Jesus.”

‘God still loves you’

Clark, who competed in the women's halfpipe Feb. 18, came out with a bronze medal at the Vancouver Winter games.

Growing up in the mountain town of Mt. Snow, Vt., snowboarding became Clark's passion early in life. At age 18, she was competing

in her first Olympics in Salt Lake City in the women's halfpipe, garnering the gold medal.

In addition to the Olympics, she won championships in the U.S. Open and X Games as well.

“I had every successful thing going for me,” Clark said. “I'd won every major snowboard event you

could ever dream about winning. I thought that when you are successful, you're happy. From an outside perspective I was living the dream. I had all the success and all the things you could ever dream about. But I found that it wasn't very fulfilling.”

During a competition in 2004, Clark sat in her hotel room writing in her journal. If this is what life is, she wrote, if this was everything it had to offer, she didn't want to do it anymore. She didn't care if she woke up the next day and didn't think anyone else cared.

That's when an encounter at the competition changed her life. Clark qualified for the finals as she typically did. But when a fellow competitor failed to qualify, Clark overheard a conversation when a friend reassuringly, almost in a joking manner, said, “Hey, it's all right. God still loves you.”

That statement, made innocu-

ously, had an impact on Clark and began stirring something in her that she couldn't deny.

She went back to her hotel room and opened up the Bible placed there by the Gideons. She started reading but didn't know where to start and wasn't sure what she was reading.

That's when she walked down the hall and knocked on her competitor's door.

Enjoying it again

After that encounter, Clark spent the next several weeks thinking about the Lord and investigating the claims of Jesus Christ. She eventually concluded that God was indeed there, that He loved her and that He was already active in her life, and she became a follower of Christ, leaving behind the drudgery she had felt in recent years.

“I was getting my self-worth from what I did, and my identity was really wrapped up in snowboarding and the success that it brought me,” Clark said.

But after becoming a Christian, she began learning that she didn't have to do anything for God to love her or for her life to have purpose.

“It ended up freeing up my snowboarding more so than ever,” Clark said. “I was no longer going from event to event to feel good about myself. I had that apart from what I did. And so my snowboarding has been dramatically impacted. My snowboarding got a lot more free.”

“Now I'm able to really enjoy it again.” (BP)

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

White House faith-based council adopts recommendations

WASHINGTON — After a year's work, a White House advisory council on faith-based programs adopted dozens of recommendations Feb. 26 on everything from church-state separation to fighting poverty and promoting fatherhood.

The 25-member advisory council also called for reforms to the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships to help protect “religious liberty rights.”

“The recommendations call ... for greater clarity in the church-state guidance given to social service providers so that tax funds are used appropriately and providers are not confused or sued,” the panel's report said. “The recommendations also insist that beneficiaries must be notified of their religious liberty rights, including their rights to alternative providers.”

The advisory panel, which submitted its final report March 9, also urged the Obama administration to ensure that “decisions about government grants are made on the merits of proposals, not on political or religious considerations.”

Among the panel's 64 recommendations, advisers voiced support for

- ▶ developing interfaith service projects on 500 U.S. college campuses and in 40 U.S. cities;

- ▶ working to correct the “deeply flawed” ways the federal government measures poverty to better respond to the needy who aren't currently eligible for social services;

- ▶ increased federal funding for programs to promote fatherhood, including among fathers in the military and in prison;

- ▶ limiting the Pentagon's role in development work; and

- ▶ providing guidance to state and local governments to help nonprofit groups “retrofit and green” their buildings.

The advisers reached consensus on most recommendations but were divided over two contentious issues: whether houses of worship that receive direct federal funding for social service programs should form separate nonprofit corporations; and whether federally funded religious charities should remove religious art, symbols or messages in facilities used to provide social services.

Md. attorney general OKs out-of-state gay ‘marriages’

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — In a decision that likely will lead to a lawsuit, Maryland Attorney General Douglas F. Gansler issued a 53-page opinion Feb. 24 saying the state could recognize out-of-state gay “marriages” despite a state law that explicitly says marriage is only between a man and a woman.

Gansler's opinion does not mean the state will begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. The state's highest court, the Court of Appeals, in 2005 upheld current law and refused to legalize such relationships. But Gansler's opinion — unless challenged — does mean the state may begin recognizing gay “marriages” from the five states that have legalized it, such as Massachusetts.

His opinion is not a complete surprise to conservatives. In 2008 he publicly backed a bill that would have legalized gay “marriage.” David Lee, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, said he was “deeply saddened” by Gansler's opinion.

Televangelist Benny Hinn's wife wants a divorce

IRVING, Texas — Famed television evangelist Benny Hinn has written a letter to his supporters saying his wife has “no biblical grounds” for filing for divorce. Hinn wrote that his wife, Suzanne, filed for divorce Feb. 1, and said he didn't learn of the filing until 16 days later, from her lawyer.

Hinn is a fixture on the Trinity Broadcasting Network with his “This Is Your Day” program and has long been known for his controversial “miracle crusades” in which he claims to heal people suffering from various infirmities. His ministry was one of six that was investigated by the Senate Finance Committee for questionable finances.

Hinn vowed that his troubled family life would not keep him from his ministry. “I am going to continue preaching the gospel and praying for the sick as I have for 36 years,” he said. “I will not allow anything to slow me down or stop me.”



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Eufaula's April Pilgrimage named one of the top 10 events in Alabama

Eufaula Heritage Association
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The Eufaula Heritage Association will host the 45th Eufaula Pilgrimage on April 9-11. The Pilgrimage, which is an annual event, was first held in 1965 and attracts thousands of visitors each year.

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with dogwoods, azaleas, magnolias and live oaks.

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Starting March 22 Mobile will host Chicago's Field Museum's traveling exhibition: George Washington Carver: An Extraordinary Man With a Mighty Vision

Museum of Mobile
Paid Advertising

Attention Alabama Baptists ... mark your calendars for one of the most interesting, multi-faceted exhibits to come to Alabama in many years. Chicago's world-renown Field Museum is bringing a traveling exhibition to the Museum of Mobile featuring one of America's best known names and least-studied men —George Washington Carver. Best known for his work with the peanut plant, George Washington Carver became a legend in his own time. Discover the life and work of an extraordinary man, born into slavery, who used his gifts to become a groundbreaking scientist, educator, and humanitarian with a lifelong mission: to bring practical knowledge to those in need.

The truth about Carver is much more interesting than the myths. He was a man with a fascinating life story and an unquenchable thirst for knowl-

edge, who overcame tremendous odds to become one of America's most versatile scientists. He was a trail-blazing proponent of sustainability, who believed that "nature produces no waste" and neither should man. He was a humanitarian whose primary goal was, as he put it, "to help the farmer and fill the poor man's empty dinner pail."

This complex and intimate portrait follows Carver's entire life and career, revealing both his struggles and his remarkable achievements as scientist, conservationist, educator, and humanitarian. It brings together more than 100 artifacts from Carver's personal life and work, along with animated and live videos, interactive displays, a diorama of Carver's childhood farm, and a re-creation of the Jesup wagon, his mobile classroom. With a rich collection of artifacts, the exhibition traces Carver's path and passions as he worked his

way through elementary and high school, through rejection and welcome, to Simpson College in Iowa, then to Iowa State University, and finally to a research and teaching position at Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University).

The exhibition is organized by The Field Museum in collaboration with Tuskegee University and the National Park Service. In Mobile, it is sponsored in part by Alabama Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils and Alpha Insurance.

The Museum of Mobile, located at 111 South Royal Street, is open Monday-Saturday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday from 1-5 p.m. Discounts for group tours are available. For more information, call the Museum at 251-208-7569 or visit www.museumofmobile.com.



Photo © Tuskegee University Archives/Museum

The Southern Museum of Flight: Experience history through the Korean War Jets Exhibit



Southern Museum of Flight
Paid Advertising

On the morning of 9-21-53 at exactly 9:21 a.m., Alabama native Sgt. Tom Feltman was sitting in his Air Police jeep close to the main runway at Kimpo Air Force Base, South Korea. He noticed a rather unusual aircraft about to land on the wrong end of the runway.

The aircraft appeared to ignore the traffic pattern, as an American F-86 Sabre was about to land, on the opposite end of the runway, at the same time. As the strange aircraft touched

down and streaked by at a high rate of speed, Sgt. Feltman noticed a communist red star on the aircraft's fuselage. It was a Soviet-built MiG-15 flown by the North Korean Air Force, and the events that would soon unfold that September morning revealed one of the most significant stories in American aviation. For the first time, a rare and illusive MiG-15 fighter jet was in the hands of the United States Military following the defection of a North Korean pilot.

The Korean War Jets Exhibit at the Southern Museum of Flight highlights the defection of Lt. No Kum Sok (Kenneth Rowe), a 21-year old elite North Korean Air Force pilot, as well as the historic events that transpired following the defection. The unique diora-

ma display of Kimpo Air Force Base in South Korea features two of the primary fighter jets that became adversaries during the Korean War era — the F-86 Sabre and the MiG-15.

Museum hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors and students and children 3 and under are admitted for free. Teachers and active military families admitted also are admitted for free. Group rates are available. The museum also is disability accessible.

For more information visit www.southernmuseumofflight.org or call 205-833-8226. The museum is located at 4343 73rd Street North, Birmingham, AL 35206.



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April 9-11 • Birmingham, Ala.







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Amelia DeRamus of Kennesaw, Ga.

Shocco Springs has been a destination point for students for decades for retreats, meetings and conferences.

Now is their opportunity to experience Shocco from the inside as one of our summer staff. Thirty five to 40 positions are available in recreation, laundry, housekeeping, food and guest services.

Shocco is taking applications now through the end of March for the Summer Staff Mission Team of high school and college-aged students. Students must be 16 or older.

The experience as summer staff offers 10 weeks of free room and board, weekly Bible study, worship and recreation times, and it offers off campus mission trip opportunities to serve God's people.

For an application and reference forms, go to www.shocco.org/resources or contact Tara Stracener at 256-299-0312.

"Joining the summer staff at Shocco was one of the best decisions I have ever made," said Amelia DeRamus of Kennesaw, Ga., who served as a staffer in 2009. "Every day I learned something new. Not only did I learn how to connect with others better, I also learned how to live a constant life of worship."

"Summer staff taught me how to grow into the woman of faith that God has intended me to be. I realize more how to react in a Godly way in certain difficult situations. Last summer really matured me before starting my freshman year of college."

She is now a student at North Georgia College and credits her Shocco experience as helping her prepare for life after high school. "Shocco summer staff helped me to become that person I have been praying to be like."

Come join us this summer, and experience Shocco from the inside.

Need to plan a last-minute retreat for spring or summer?

There is still space available from April through July, but hurry ... space is limited! E-mail us at sales@shocco.org to make reservations or for more details.

Make Shocco Springs Part of Your Estate Plan

Shocco Springs' ministry has an impact on thousands of people throughout each year. During children's camps, youth retreats and adult enrichment events, the vision and functionality of Shocco has facilitated literally thousands of life-changing decisions for Christ. You can play a vital part in our important ministry for years to come by gifting a portion of your estate to Shocco Springs. Some gifts actually increase current income and provide immediate tax relief, but all are essential investments in the future of Shocco Springs. For more information, contact either of the following:

Randy Driggers | The Baptist Foundation of Alabama | 334.394.2001 | rdriggers@tbfa.org
Wendy Westerhouse | Shocco Springs | 256.299.0305 | wwesterhouse@shocco.org

