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Photo courtesy of Riddles Bend Baptist Church

'GREAT DAY' — Members of Riddles Bend Baptist Church, Rainbow City, take a trail ride with local horsemen and women in an effort to show them Christ's love and make them feel welcome at the church. The ride, held April 10, was also a promotion for the church's 'Saddle Ridge Ranch' VBS.

'Thinking outside church walls'

Riddles Bend Church saddles up to reach people in local cowboy culture

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

The skies were not cloudy all day April 10, which meant the view of the Coosa River from atop the mountain behind Riddles Bend Baptist Church, Rainbow City, was as perfect as ever.

And the discouraging words were so few that Pastor Gary Walker is thinking about leading his Etowah Baptist Association congregation to organize another trail ride. "It was just a great day in the Lord," he said. "Kids came and rode the wagons, and we were able to go on the trail there behind the church and preach a message there on top of the mountain."

In addition to serving as a lead-in to this year's Vacation Bible School — the main LifeWay Christian Resources theme is "Saddle Ridge Ranch" — the event was an outreach to the more rural population of Rainbow City and

Etowah County, including those people who identify with what Walker called "bovine/equine culture."

Cowboys, in other words. "I've been involved with that culture over the years, not to the extent that I'm ready for cowboy church or anything ... but I do know that a lot of folks in that culture feel disenfranchised with the local churches," Walker said. "This was just a way for us to reach out and invite those in that culture to come and be connected with our church."

He said it was also a way to introduce church members "to a culture they might not be privy to."

"It was great seeing the smiles on the faces of the kids that came that have never seen a mule-drawn wagon and were able to see some real cowboys, guys that train horses," Walker said. "It was a good time."


Making them welcome

Riddles Bend Baptist members served the approximately 50 attendees a pancake breakfast before embarking on the two and half hour ride up and back down the mountain.

Kenneth Payne helped lead the way. "We took them up to the cell phone tower up there and had a devotion and

then came back down," said Payne, deacon chairman at Riddles Bend. "I think it reached some of the people that might not ordinarily come to church. We've started thinking outside the church walls, which is what you need to be doing anyway."

Walker agreed and he's ready to start making the most rural members of the surrounding community feel as at home in the pews as they do on the range.

"They don't feel like they're welcome for whatever reason," Walker said. "We want to reach out to make sure they know that Jesus loves them and we do, too." 

Baptists assessing needs after China earthquake

Southern Baptist disaster relief specialists are mobilizing to assess needs in western China's Qinghai province after a magnitude 6.9 earthquake and several strong aftershocks flattened houses made of mud and wood April 14.

At press time, more than 1,000 people were reported dead and 417 were missing, according to The Associated Press (AP). The AP also reported hospitals were overwhelmed and doctors were in short supply.

Southern Baptists' disaster relief co-

ordinator for the region is working to get an assessment team into the area, said Jeff Palmer, executive director of Baptist Global Response. "Initial reports are that the quake was pretty bad, but it did occur in a fairly sparsely populated area."

Qinghai province is in western China, near the border with Tibet, and foreigners usually are not permitted to travel there by the government. Response also would be hampered by the difficulty of reaching the remote area.

"News reports indicate the Chinese

government and military are responding," Palmer said.

The quake struck along the same fault line that caused the magnitude 7.9 Sichuan quake two years ago. About 90,000 people were dead or missing after that disaster.

Even if Southern Baptist specialists from the United States are unable to travel to the site of this new quake, "we'll keep monitoring the situation and see if we can send some resources that can be utilized through on-ground contacts in Qinghai," Palmer said. (BGR)

COMMENT

Cooperative Program Support for IMB

Have you ever heard of a Southern Baptist capital needs budget? One only has to go back about a decade to recall the days when Southern Baptists regularly adopted an allocation budget and a capital needs budget.

Remembering that practice could be informative for today's discussion about what percentage of Southern Baptist Cooperative Program (CP) funds should be directed to the International Mission Board (IMB) because in those days, the IMB got less than half the total Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) CP receipts.

Southern Baptists have prided themselves on the fact that half of all SBC CP dollars are used for international missions. After all, that is in keeping with the original vision for the CP adopted in 1925. Cooperating churches were expected to forward 50 percent of their undesignated receipts to missions causes outside their local area through the CP. State conventions, which received the gifts from the churches, were asked to forward 50 percent of their receipts to the SBC for its work. The SBC was asked to forward 50 percent of its receipts to the IMB for work outside the United States.

Few churches, if any, were ever able to function on 50 percent of undesignated receipts, so few, if any, ever forwarded 50 percent of undesignated receipts for missions causes through the CP.

Today the average SBC-related church contributes less than 6 percent of its undesignated receipts to missions causes through the CP. Among Alabama Baptist churches, it is slightly more than 8 percent.

Largest CP recipient

Still the Alabama Baptist State Convention forwards 42.5 percent of CP receipts to support SBC missions efforts and the SBC channels 50 percent of its CP receipts to the IMB. That makes the IMB the largest recipient of CP receipts, getting more than \$100 million of their \$300 million budget from CP. This year, the figure is \$102,192,796. By contrast, the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions receives \$13.7 million. Southern Baptists' two largest seminaries — Southwestern in Fort Worth, Texas, and Southern in Louisville, Ky. — each receive about \$9.7 million.

But during the era when Southern Baptists used two budgets, the IMB got a smaller percentage of the total receipts. In 1972, for example, the IMB got 45.3 percent of the combined allocation and capital needs budget goal (1972 SBC Annual). The percentage of the Allocation Budget was 54.26 percent, but the percentage of the combined budget goal was 45.3 percent.

In 1998–99, the IMB received 50 percent of the Allocation Budget but only 25 percent of the capi-



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

tal needs budget, dropping its percentage of total CP receipts below 50 percent (1998 SBC Annual).

The SBC no longer uses a capital needs budget, and 50 percent of all SBC CP receipts go to the IMB. Now the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) Task Force is recommending the goal for IMB CP support be increased from 50 percent to 51 percent. IMB President Jerry Rankin said the \$2 million the change will produce is not as important as breaking the symbolic 50 percent allocations barrier faced by international missions.

Rankin points out that Southern Baptists have had three opportunities during his presidency to raise the percentage of CP funds going to international missions but have backed away from doing so each time. The first opportunity Rankin mentioned was the Covenant for a New Century, adopted in 1995. That led to the Home Mission Board, the Brotherhood Commission and the Radio and Television Commission being combined into the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Baptists were told the goal was to get more money to missions, but the budget figures question that claim.

In 1994, the year before the convention reorganization, the IMB and the three combined agencies received 74.24 percent of the SBC CP Allocation Budget. Under the reorganization, the IMB and NAMB received 72.79 percent, or a drop of 1.49 percent. The big winners in the percentage shifts were the SBC seminaries. Their percentage increased more than 1 percent after the reorganization — from 20.27 percent in the 1994–95 SBC budget to 21.40 percent in the 1998–99 budget. Despite the rhetoric, a smaller percentage of CP receipts went to the two mission boards than had gone to the combined boards, and Southern Baptists missed an opportunity to direct more CP funds to international missions.

When Southern Baptists withdrew from the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) in 2004, a second opportunity was missed. The nearly \$500,000 earmarked for BWA was redirected to the SBC Executive Committee for a new program of international relations rather than being allocated to the IMB. In fairness, it must be acknowledged that the funds channeled to BWA went through the Executive Committee so the funds were already in that budget.

More recently, in 2007, GuideStone Financial Resources announced it would forego its allocation

of about \$1.5 million annually from the CP budget (0.76 percent). But instead of increasing the percentage given to the IMB, the funds were reallocated to other SBC entities. Again the big winners in the percentage shifts were the seminaries, which received a 0.52 percent increase. That amounted to more than \$1 million annually. The remainder was divided between The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (0.16 percent, or \$320,962) and the Executive Committee earmarked for stewardship development (0.08 percent, or \$160,480). For the third time in 12 years, Southern Baptists adjusted the CP distribution formula but did not increase the percentage of CP dollars going to international missions. That is why Rankin calls the GCR Task Force recommendation of 51 percent a “symbolic victory.”

Percentages can change

What is sometimes forgotten in discussions about budget allocations is that every time Southern Baptists make a budget, percentages can change. None are set in stone. The fact that the 1972–73 Allocation Budget forwarded 54.26 percent to international missions demonstrates the Executive Committee has the ability to recommend percentage changes above the 50 percent mark for consideration by SBC messengers. Of course, drastic changes make leadership of vital work difficult. Whenever changes are made, they must be done carefully with consideration to their impact for good and harm.

Moving from 50 percent to 51 percent does not sound like much of a move to most of us. Rankin called the \$2 million difference more symbolic than substantive. But when the recommendation takes away 30 percent of one entity's budget — in this case, the Executive Committee — then one must ask about the potential negative consequences.

The 50 percent barrier for international missions can be broken any year a budget is made. The IMB deserves support. But adopting the recommendation to break the barrier by gutting the Executive Committee is not a wise move in this writer's judgment.



“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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Letters to the Editor

See page 11

Someone You Should Know

By Kristen Padilla, The Alabama Baptist

Helen Concord

Kansas Baptist Church
Walker Baptist Association

FAVORITE BIBLE VERSES: Psalm 139:7–10

FAVORITE HYMN: "It Is Well With My Soul"

HOBBIES: Quilting and gardening

FAMILY STATUS: Married to Alton for 47 years; three daughters, Kathy, Carol Ann and Elizabeth; four grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren



CONCORD

Helen Concord has faithfully served in church ministry for a number of years. Concord, who has taught Sunday School for more than 30 years, currently teaches an adult ladies

Sunday School class. She also serves on several committees at Kansas Baptist Church and as the assistant song director.

Q: What was your childhood like?

A: We were just country people. [It was] a good life.

Q: How did you come to know the Lord?

A: When I was 15 years old, I was saved and wasn't baptized until I was 23 years old. I always believed in God and Jesus Christ.

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

A: I started out in the nursery for three to four years. Then I taught [Sunday School to] fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders for 25 years and have been teaching adult ladies for about 12 years. I've sung in the choir and have helped out with VBS (Vacation Bible School) for many summers.

Q: What did you get from those ministries?

A: I got to be around the people and really learn how they felt about God. I enjoyed it and hoped that it may have helped someone in some way.

Q: How have churches changed over the years?

A: The young people spend more time in their classes and away from the adult groups.

Q: What difference has Christ made in your life?

A: He makes every day special. I have a peace in my heart that no matter what happens that He loves me, that I'm a Christian and that I will go home to be with Him one day.

'Urgent need'

Pastor sets out on quest to see lostness penetrated in eastern Canada

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

People in eastern Canada may drink the same Starbucks coffee as people in Alabama, but that doesn't mean they're the same as us.

At all. Like the coffee, the lostness of the people of eastern Canada is as black as black can be, said Rick Lamothe, president of the Canadian National Baptist Convention (CNBC), a Southern Baptist-affiliated group.

And the resources being used to reach them are miniscule by comparison to those in the Bible Belt, he said.

"I compare it to football. In Alabama, there are hundreds of thousands of people who invest their time and money into the game. There are generations of fans with a long-standing infrastructure and incredible resources. In eastern Canada, a football game would only draw a few thousand people."

It's the same way with Baptist work in Lamothe's part of Canada — there simply isn't the long history of ministry and investment of people and resources, he said.

The strip of eastern Canada stretching from Windsor (near Michigan) to Quebec City (near Maine) is home to roughly 50 percent of Canada's population. It's an area about the size of California that Lamothe refers to as "the corridor."

But despite the fact that the entirety of eastern Canada holds the majority of the nation's people — 70 percent, it only contains 30 percent of the CNBC's resources and members, Lamothe said. "There's something missing out east."

In Canada's capital city of Ottawa, located in the corridor in the east, there are 101 evangelical churches serving more than 800,000 people, Lamothe said, noting that Montgomery by comparison has more than twice as many evangelical churches serving about 333,000 people.

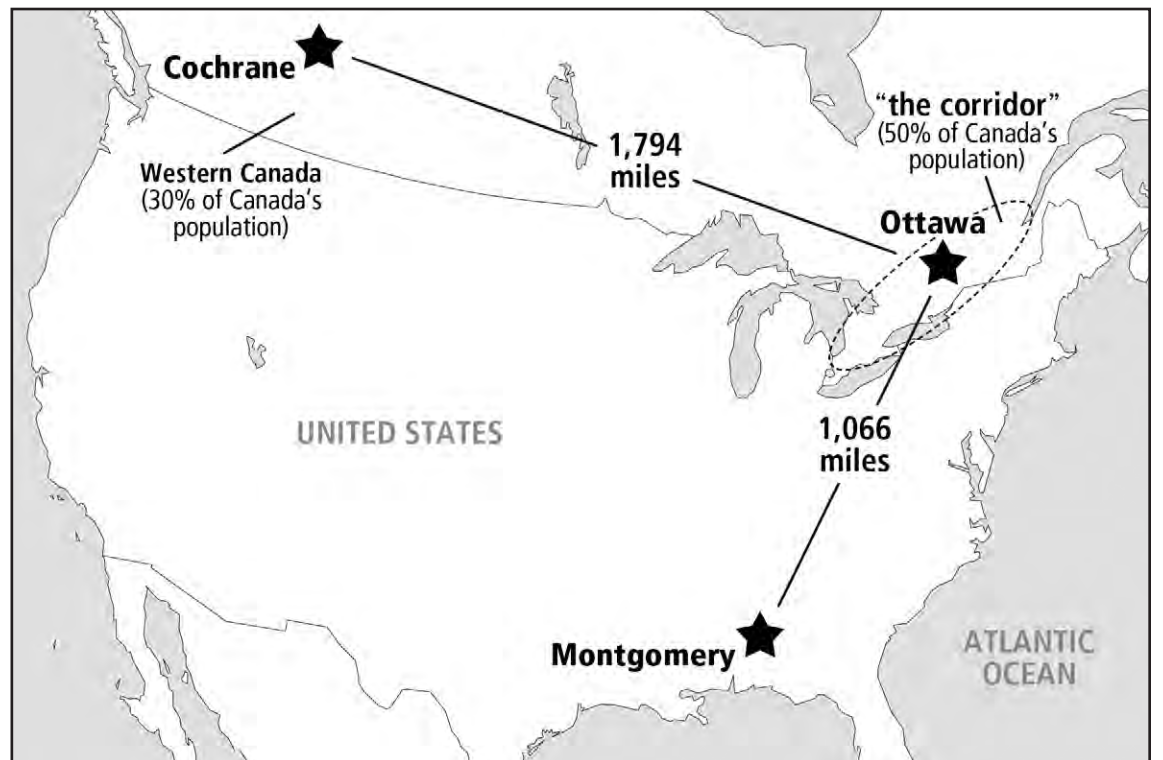
Some of those evangelical churches in Ottawa and the rest of eastern Canada are affiliated with other Baptist conventions, such as the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec.

Montgomery is closer

That said, national support from the CNBC is available but far away, Lamothe said. It's difficult for CNBC leaders to travel as often as needed back and forth to the east from Cochrane, the western city that's home to the convention's headquarters.

To put it in perspective, it would be geographically easier for Alabama Baptists to support the work in Ottawa than it is for Baptists in Cochrane to do so — Montgomery is hundreds of miles closer to Ottawa than Cochrane is.

"They would burn out flying back and forth all the time," Lamothe said.



Graphic by Lauren A. Chow

NEARER SUPPORT NEEDED — Baptists in eastern Canada (around the capital of Ottawa) are farther removed from convention support in Cochrane than they are from Alabama.

So in the face of great need, he decided it was time for the east to make some major changes.

"Something radical has to happen," Lamothe said.

Radical is not anything new to him.

He was saved during military college and served as an officer in the Canadian Forces, all the while working on a seminary degree in western Canada.

When Lamothe was just a few years away from getting his pension, he felt God calling him to sell everything, leave the military, take his pregnant wife and 1-year-old and move back to his home of Ottawa to plant a church.

So Lamothe did and in 1999, he started Sequoia Community Church. Serving as lead pastor, he recruited and mentored other leaders, reached out to the community and watched as the congregation grew to its current attendance of 275. In the last decade, it has planted two churches and started planting two others.

The church is one of the strongest congregations in the CNBC.

But Lamothe, once again, has committed to leave everything behind — including his salary — to pursue another vision from the Lord.

Lamothe's vision? To have a thriving missions support center in eastern Canada. It's a vision backed by the CNBC.

"There's not a whole lot of (CNBC) support around us. We're on the ground alone," he said.

So under the umbrella of Sequoia, Lamothe founded the Eastern Canada Mission Centre, a convention satellite he hopes can meet the "urgent need" for support in the east.

The church built a temporary facility for the mission centre, but Lamothe said he's looking for partners to help build a permanent facility that would help establish

Southern Baptist work in eastern Canada.

"We need a satellite office to concentrate the resources of eastern Canada in this corridor," Lamothe said.

The centre provides training for pastors and other church leaders as well as a variety of other support services and community outreach opportunities.

Once a permanent building is possible, a youth center will also be a part of its ongoing ministry.

Looking for partners

"We are in need of Kingdom partners," Lamothe explained — partners who will provide financial resources as well as manpower.

First Baptist Church, Montgomery, is one such partner that poured into the mission of Sequoia and has had an ongoing presence in its work over the past few years.

The help was wonderful, Lamothe said, adding that even more help is needed now.

"There's not a history of believers here, and there are no resources at our fingertips," he said. "In the U.S., there are a lot of Kingdom people with Kingdom resources who could help give legs to our project."

Lamothe was so burdened about this that after prayer and fasting, he felt called to visit all his contacts in the United States — including those in Alabama — during the month of April, driving down from Ottawa in a RV. He's trying to raise \$1 for every person in Canada — \$16 million total.

"The church in Uganda is doing better than the church in Canada," Lamothe said. "The needs are huge and we need help to reach our nation for Christ."

For more information, visit www.easterncanadamission.org or e-mail Lamothe at rick@easterncanadamission.org.



LAMOTHE

Internet porn a big problem, even in church

Long before the surgeon general issued his 1964 report showing the devastating harm of smoking, much of the nation viewed cigarettes as fun and harmless, even cool.

A new report says much of America today has a similar naive attitude toward Internet pornography and that it needs to wake up and see porn's destructive impact not only on individuals but also on marriages, children and society in general — before it's too late.

The 53-page report, called simply "The Social Costs of Pornography," was released by The Witherspoon Institute in Princeton, N.J., on March 16, and was signed by more than 50 scholars from a wide variety of backgrounds: conservatives and liberals, Democrats and Republicans, atheists and Christians.

Gone are the days, the report notes, when porn was the sole domain of shady nightclubs, dark alleys and adult theaters. Today, porn is easily accessible and affordable, and — with most Americans having a computer — its users can remain largely anonymous.

"[A]lthough pornography has existed for millennia, never has it been as widely available or used as it has been in recent years," the report says. "... There is evidence that more people — children, adolescents, and adults — are consuming pornography — sporadically, inadvertently, or chronically — than ever before."

'Compulsive' addiction

Internet porn, the scholars say, can be psychologically addictive and can even reach levels of what psychologists call a "compulsive" addiction — meaning that it continues "despite negative consequences" to a person.

Similar to what is required of cigarettes, the report says all porn — print and digital — "should carry a warning" about porn's addictive potential and possible psychological harm.

How wide is the problem? The report cites one 2008 study of undergraduate and graduate students ages 18–26 that showed 69 percent of the men and 10 percent of the women viewed pornography more than once a month. But it's not just adults. In 2009, the

fourth-most searched word on the Internet for kids ages 7 and under was "porn," according to data by OnlineFamily.Norton.com. For all kids — those up to age 18 — sex was No. 4, porn No. 5.

Hollywood makes 400 films a year to the porn industry's 11,000.

The report did not cite any data specifically about Christians' use of Internet porn — reputable data is largely nonexistent — but Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), said the problem is very real among believers. He called Internet porn "perhaps the greatest challenge Christians face today."

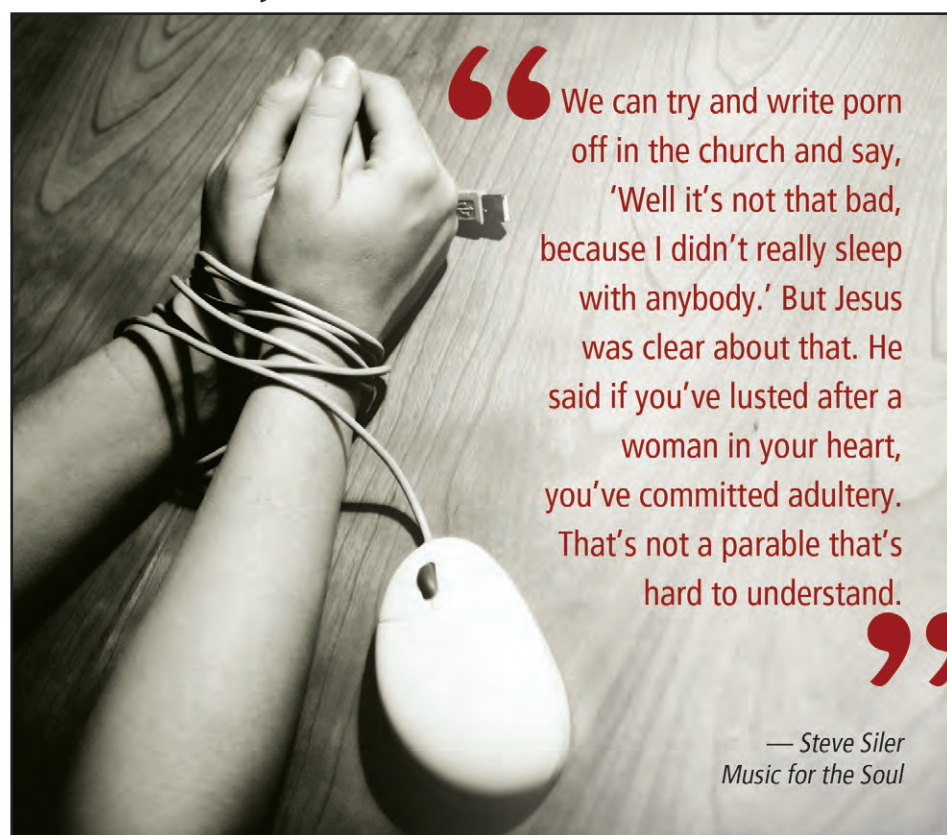
"I am convinced that millions of men and boys are being destroyed by pornography, and statistics show that women and girls are joining their numbers," Land said. "Their abilities to be godly marriage partners are being warped by it, and it is one of the major causes of divorce. Pornography is an evil that thrives in silence and proliferates in the dark. And the sad truth is that believers are not in any way, shape or form impervious to its lure."

Focus on the Family's Daniel Weiss agrees.

"The church needs to be concerned about this," said Weiss, senior analyst for media and sexuality. "I'm concerned the church is not taking this seriously enough. The number of people coming to this ministry looking for help is pretty high.

"The test of character is what you'll do when no one's looking. That's true on the Internet as well, and a lot of people are failing that test when it comes to this material. Part of the reason is that it's highly addictive stuff. It's kind of like putting a really desirable drug on the table and then just saying, 'I'm not going to touch that.' A lot of people are going to try it if it's sitting there long enough. It draws a lot of people in, and it draws Christians in as well."

Porn's usage among Christians is significant enough that a growing number of ministries and Christian publishers are releasing materials designed to encourage mental purity and to help those with addictions. The book "Every Man's Battle," by Stephen



“We can try and write porn off in the church and say, ‘Well it’s not that bad, because I didn’t really sleep with anybody.’ But Jesus was clear about that. He said if you’ve lusted after a woman in your heart, you’ve committed adultery. That’s not a parable that’s hard to understand.”

— Steve Siler
Music for the Soul

istockphoto.com

Arterburn, Fred Stoeker and Mike Yorkey, remains a popular resource and has seen spinoffs aimed at young, single men, women and even small groups.

Christian singer Clay Crosse wrote a book with his wife, Renee — "I Surrender All: Rebuilding a Marriage Broken by Pornography" — detailing his victory over porn addiction. The ministry Freedom Begins Here — FreedomBeginsHere.org — has a "personal toolkit" for individuals as well as resources for small groups featuring Gary Smalley, Ted Cunningham and Mark and Deb Laaser. And the group Music for the Soul has made a DVD named "Somebody's Daughter" — www.somebodysdaughter.org — featuring gripping testimonies from four Christian men who were addicted to porn.

The DVD also includes the testimony from a wife. Music for the Soul also sells a discussion guide, and a CD with songs accompanies the DVD.

The ERLC and Focus on the Family have online resources — ERLC.com/pornography and PureIntimacy.org.

Every home computer, the ministries say, should have an anti-porn filter. Two of the more popular ones can be downloaded at InternetSafety.com and BSecure.com.

"We can try and write porn off in the church and say, 'Well it's not that bad, because I didn't really sleep with anybody.' But Jesus was clear about that," Music for the Soul's Steve Siler said. "He said if you've lusted after a woman in your heart, you've committed adultery. That's not a parable that's hard to understand."

Porn's negative impact on marriages cannot be overstated, the report argues. It cites a *Time* magazine story about a 2003 meeting of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, where of the 350 attendees, 62 percent said the "Internet played a significant role in divorces in the past year, with excessive interest in online porn contributing to more than half of such cases."

And, for those marriages that survive, porn causes the men to lose the desire to have a physical relationship with their wives, the report says.

As Pamela Paul, one of the report's signers, wrote, Internet pornography touches "all aspects" of an addict's life. She penned a 2005 book about Internet porn addiction, "Pornified."

"Their work days became interrupted, their hobbies were tossed aside, their family lives were disrupted," Paul wrote. "Some men even lost their jobs, their wives and their children."

The report quotes one scientist who says frequent pornography users develop "new maps" in their brains based on the pictures and videos they see. Those news maps develop a "hunger to be stimulated," so much so that the men at their computers are like rats in a lab cage, "pressing the bar to get a shot of dopamine or its equivalent."

Exacerbating the problem, pornography by its very nature de-sensitizes men so much that images they once would have thought disgusting they now find appealing; to reach the same "high," they must try something new, the report says. This slippery slope can even lead to the viewing of child porn, the report says.

'Under-recognized' problem

The report also quotes a 2009 Princeton University study that used MRI scans to study brain activity. The study showed that "after viewing pornographic images, men looked at women more as objects than as humans."

Pornography is, the report says, "one of the great social diseases."

"The triad of pornography consumption, dependency, and addiction is clearly not the only problem facing our society. However, it is a serious problem as well as an under-recognized one, which is why the signatories urge readers of all beliefs and political persuasions to attend to the empirical record of its harms," the report says.

"Those who would ignore that record do so to the detriment of the society it is shaping, not only for the adults among us, but for those others who surely deserve to become adults in a world less glutted by pornographic imagery." (BP)



Photo courtesy of FBC Mobile

FBC MOBILE CELEBRATES SANCTUARY'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

The congregation of First Baptist Church, Mobile, celebrated the 100th anniversary of its sanctuary April 18 with a special worship service and lunch and by opening the cornerstone. Chris George is pastor.

Cell phones make porn more accessible to youth

Raising children and teens in a sexually charged culture was difficult long before cell phones and the Internet came along, but when technology combined the two into one handheld device — and added a camera — it became, some would say, nearly impossible.

Add to that the mix of social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter, all of which allow instant and far-reaching communication, and the task gets even tougher. Consider the fact that the fourth-most searched word on the Internet for kids ages 7 and under in 2009 was “porn,” according to data by OnlineFamily.Norton.com. For all kids up to age 18, sex was No. 4, porn No. 5.

And, Web-enabled cell phones — which are growing in popularity and are by their very nature tough to monitor — will become the nation’s primary connection tool to the Internet by 2020, experts in a Pew Internet & American Life Project predict.

Still, it’s not impossible to protect kids, said Rick Schatz, president of the National Coalition for the Protection of Children & Families, a Christian organization that assists parents and families in living sexually pure lives. It simply requires following some common sense steps and teaching biblical values, he said.

“Technology has changed the world ... in ways that were unimaginable even five years ago, much less 15 or 20 years ago,” Schatz said at a recent gathering of Southern Baptist state ethics leaders hosted by the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. “This is only going to get more problematic unless we understand how to deal with it. The issue is not going away.”

Ways to protect

Schatz’s organization urges parents to monitor their kids’ computer usage closely. He recommends that parents take a series of steps to help protect their children.

“It’s irresponsible to hide behind the statement that ‘I’m not tech-savvy,’ because our kids and our grandkids are tech-savvy,” he said.

Following are steps that the National Coalition says

can be taken immediately:

- ▶ Install a filter and monitoring system on all computers in the home. Some of the more popular filters are by InternetSafety.com, CovenantEyes.com and BSecure.com. InternetSafety and BSecure also offer filters for the iPhone and iPod Touch.

- ▶ Activate parental controls on any wireless router.

- ▶ Place all computers in a public place and avoid putting computers in bedrooms.

- ▶ Install/activate the parental control program on all cell phones.

- ▶ Ask your children if they have sent or received “sext”

messages. Sexting is the act of sending sexually explicit messages, photos or videos, generally via cell phones. A Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project survey released in December showed that 15 percent of 12–17-year-olds who own cell phones had received a “sext” message.

- ▶ Become familiar with your kids’ gaming systems and online capabilities. The Wii gaming system, for instance, can go online through a wireless router.

- ▶ Join the social media sites — such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter — that your children belong to, and know their passwords.

- ▶ Collect all cell phones at night for recharging to ensure there is no late-night talking, texting or Internet surfing.

Additionally, the National Coalition recommends that parents follow five ongoing steps to help build a relationship with their children: 1) develop a dialogue about sexuality and purity; 2) equip kids to make wise choices when you are not around; 3) model purity and watch on television only what you’d want them to watch; 4) take advantage of teachable moments; 5) educate yourself about today’s technology.

“The only hope we have with our kids is to help them develop an inner moral compass,” Schatz said. “You cannot build the impregnable bubble, folks. It doesn’t work. You may think it’s an impregnable bubble, but no matter what you’ve done in your home, you can’t do it for your whole neighborhood. You can’t do it for your kid’s schools.” (BP)

“The only hope we have with our kids is to help them develop an inner moral compass.”

*Rick Schatz
National Coalition for the
Protection of Children & Families*



Photo courtesy of Shocco

WORKING — Carrie Beth Littleton (back, right) and Chelsea Flowers (front, center) from FBC Pelham helped staff members of Shocco Springs build a protective wall around a Baptist camp in Guatemala.

‘God can use us’

Shocco team shares food, Christ in Guatemala

Five kernels of corn spilled upon the Guatemalan ground, tiny morsels from a basketful of food meant as a gift from Americans on a mission for Christ.

As the Americans looked back, seeing women on their knees digging in the dirt to rescue those five kernels of corn, they knew they had not come in vain.

Theirs was a special mission, travel that took them into the heartland of abject poverty to spread the hope of Jesus Christ.

During the week-long trip to Camp Eden in Guatemala, staff members of Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega labored in the heat to build a wall around the camp, a means of keeping it safer in this poverty-stricken country. They visited families and schools and shared an uplifting message of salvation.

Fresh from the March mission, Cory Horton, Shocco Executive Director Buster Taylor and others were visibly moved by what they had encountered on the trip. They had traveled to San Pablo — a 30-minute boat ride from where they were staying — as the first American team to go into the village and hold activities for the children in the school there and share the gospel.

“It is the poorest of the poor,” said Horton, who was serving as recreation coordinator at Shocco Springs at the time of the trip.

“It is a place to go back to be-

cause it needs a lot of attention.”

The team also visited 30 homes, bringing them staples like corn, coffee, sugar, salt, soap, cooking oil and beans.

“That is a month’s worth of food to them,” Horton said. “It’s poverty you can’t imagine. They’re homeless in their own home.”

And despite the villagers’ circumstances of need and poverty, they prayed “for us and our ministry,” said Tara Stracener, Shocco’s recreation assistant coordinator.

Barbara Miller, sales and marketing representative for Shocco, added, “We went into the homes to see how they lived, and yet they prayed for me.”

And the impact on her twin teenage sons, who also participated in the trip, was evident.

They now realize just how much they do have and how they can help others. Upon their return, they gave testimony in their church, sharing what they had learned and seen.

The Shocco representatives were joined by a youth group from First Baptist Church, Pelham, and a group from Florida. The “cooperation of the three groups made [the trip] 10 times more successful,” Taylor said.

The youth went into the schools, teaching the gospel through an Evangecube.

“They shared Christ through the cube and bracelets they gave the children and gave them a chance to pray. Teach-

ers had tears in their eyes.”

In the schools, teachers are not allowed to talk about religion but one of the teachers acknowledged that “these kids need Jesus.”

From the First, Pelham, group, 15-year-old Mallory Sisk, talked of what Americans take for granted. “These kids didn’t have anything. They were grateful for the corn and beans we gave them. It will sit with me forever.”

Her sister, Maegan Sisk, 17, added, “Seeing them and their faces, knowing I made an impact on their lives is going to stay with me forever. I have so much and they have so little.”

‘So grateful’

The trip taught Kelsey Culbreth, 16, “how God can use us through a basket of food or a piece of candy. They were so grateful for just a bag of beans or one prayer from someone they didn’t even know.”

The week gave Stephanie Bunch, 18, the opportunity to help people, she said. “Seeing how grateful the kids were, responding to us being there. I’m glad I came.”

Josh Wheeler, 17, reaped rewards in seeing the wall at the end of the week — “to see what we had done together.”

And their youth minister, Donnie Sisk, said it truly was the Great Commission — going to all parts of the world and making disciples.

It was the first time in 28 years that his entire family traveled on a missions trip together.

“I have been a big fan of Shocco for years, and it was so refreshing working hand in hand, side by side. You couldn’t tell one group from the other. It was a great opportunity for my family, my church family and for my Shocco family.” (Shocco)

“We went into the homes to see how they lived, and yet they prayed for me.”

*Barbara Miller
Shocco Springs*

Across Alabama's Associations

BESSEMER

► **Bethel Church, Pleasant Grove**, will host its fourth annual car show May 1, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. There will be food and drinks. Dash plates will be given to the first 50 entrants. If the event is canceled because of rain, it will be rescheduled for May 8. For information call 205-744-6711. Rick Cato is pastor.

BIBB

► **Six Mile Church** will celebrate its 150th anniversary during May, culminating with homecoming June 6. Pastor Bob Hope will speak May 2, Bruce Payton May 9, Stan Hughley May 16, Marcell Burchfield May 23, Ralph Thomas May 30 and Billy Wallace June 6. All services will be at 11 a.m.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Central Park Church, Birmingham**, will celebrate its 100th anniversary May 22–23. Saturday will feature worship at 1 p.m. with former choir members, leaders and current musicians. There will be reunion gatherings centered around areas of church life at 2 p.m., and a general reunion fellowship will be at 3 p.m. in the gymnasium/cafeteria with additional music. The Sunday service will be at 10:30 a.m. with guest speaker Bob Terry, president and publisher of *The Alabama Baptist*. A covered-dish lunch will follow. Photos, documents and records of the church history are featured at www.centralparkbaptistchurch.blogspot.com. If you would like to add photos to the blog mail them along with your name and address to Cynthia Fuqua, 1332 8th Place, Pleasant Grove, AL 35127 or e-mail rfuqua1332@charter.net. Mel Deason is pastor. ► **Deerfoot Church, Trussville**, will host Richard Blackaby, author and president of Blackaby Ministries International, as guest speaker May 2, 6 p.m. The church also will host a senior adult evangelism conference sponsored by the State Board of Missions May 3, 9 a.m.–3 p.m., with Blackaby and Evangelist Junior Hill. Squire Parsons will provide special music. For information call 205-655-0798 or visit www.deerfootbaptist.org. Roger Willmore is pastor. ► **Ridgecrest Church, Trussville**, will hold a senior adult-led revival May 2–5, nightly at 6:30, with Evangelist Wayne Hamrick, of Cartersville, Ga. Guy Anderson, minister of music and senior adults for Elkdale Church, Selma, will lead the music. For information call 205-661-3722. Brian Branam is pastor.

CALHOUN

► **New Haven Church, Anniston**, exceeded its Annie Armstrong Easter Offering goal of \$5,000 by giving \$5,848.62. Roy Cordle is pastor.

COFFEE

► **Basin Church, Elba**, will hold

revival April 25–28. Services will be Sunday at 11 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Travis Johnson will speak Sunday and Wednesday, Tony Dye Monday and Dennis Tew Tuesday. Danny Bynum is pastor.

COLUMBIA

► **Bay Springs Church, Dothan**, and area churches will host a youth summer celebration service May 1, 6:30–9 p.m., at the Wicksburg High School band field. There will be a special speaker and music. Bring lawn chairs or blankets. Each church is encouraged to provide counselors and chaperones. For information call Jacob Hatcher at 334-618-9658. Scott E. Wyatt is pastor.

COVINGTON

► **Mount Pisgah Church, Andalusia**, will hold revival April 25–28 with Herbert Brown, pastor of Southside Church, Greenville. Services will be Sunday at 11 a.m. (lunch will follow) and 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. There will be special music each night. Dale Norris is pastor.

ELMORE

► **Tallaweka Church, Tallassee**, will hold its fifth annual observance of the National Day of Prayer May 6, noon. There will be a salad lunch and prayer service. Local pastors and lay leaders will participate. Isaac Kervin is pastor.

MADISON

► **Madison Association** will hold a Mission Friends leader appreciation tea April 24, 10 a.m.–noon, at Westlawn Church, Huntsville. Cynthia White will speak. To RSVP contact Sharon Horvath at 256-653-2452 or shorvath02@yahoo.com by April 23 at noon. Joey Aderholt is pastor of Westlawn. Harold Sellers is director of missions for Madison Association.

MARSHALL

► **Second Church, Boaz**, will hold a singing April 24, 6 p.m. There will be a Red Book singing with the church hymnal, and the southern gospel choir Back to Basics will sing. Jimmy Harrison is pastor.

MOBILE

► **Sonrise Church, Mobile**, will hold revival April 25, 9–10:30 a.m., with former University of Alabama running back Siran Stacy. For information call 251-776-7473. Rickey Edward Camp is pastor.

MONTGOMERY

► **Chisholm Church, Montgomery**, will celebrate its 100th anniversary April 25, 10:30 a.m., with Andrew Smith as guest speaker. Kenny Hoomes will lead the music. Lunch will follow. There will be an afternoon service with testimonies and singing by former members at 1 p.m. Robert A. Bradley is pastor. ► **Hunter Station Church,**

Montgomery, will hold a southern gospel singing May 8, 6 p.m., with One Accord, of Columbus, Ga., and The Larch Family, of Wetumpka. Food and fellowship will follow. Donald W. Goble is pastor.

NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Cedar Mount Church, Pinson**, will hold revival April 25–28, nightly at 7, with Jim Brock, who currently serves as a missionary to South Africa. Gary Lang is pastor.

SELMA

► **Cory Horton** is the new pastor of **Elkdale Church, Selma**, effective May 2. He comes from Shocco Springs Baptist Conference



HORTON

Center in Talladega, where he served as recreation coordinator. Horton is a graduate of Jacksonville State University and will receive a master of divinity from New Orleans Seminary in May. He and his wife, Wendy, have two children.

SIPSEY

► **Cross Roads Church, Gordo**, will hold revival April 25–28 with Trinity Gospel Trio. Services will be Sunday at 11 a.m. and weeknights at 7. Tommy Clements is pastor. ► **Sipsey Association** will hold a Vacation Bible School clinic April 24, 5–7 p.m., at Dunn's Creek Church, Echola. Henry Trull is pastor of Dunn's Creek. Bama Farr is associational VBS director, and Max Stripling is director of missions for Sipsey Association.

ST. CLAIR

► **CrossPoint Church, Trussville**, will hold a women's weekend called Fan the Flame April 30, 6–9 p.m., and May 1, 7:30 a.m.–noon, for sixth grade and older. There will be an elegant catered dinner, breakfast, door prizes, praise and worship and spiritual growth. Child care will be provided with registration. For tickets call 205-655-0364 by April 25. Ryan Whitley is pastor.

SULPHUR SPRINGS

► **Bethel Church, Dora**, will hold revival April 25–28 with Evangelist Lynn Rodrigue, of Port Sulphur, La. Services will be Sunday at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Child care will be provided for 4 year olds and under. John Foles is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **East View Church, Opelika**, will host Christian humorist Brother Billy Bob Bohannon May 2, 5 p.m.

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

Church softball teams needed for prison ministry

After watching men's softball teams from Sevier Heights Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tenn., successfully minister to men at four Alabama correctional facilities March 25–28, Steve Stephens knew it was something Alabama Baptist church softball players should know about.

The Sevier Heights Baptist prison ministry softball team has been ministering in Alabama for nearly 15 years and at this year's event, more than 100 decisions were made for Christ.

That's why Stephens, an associate in the office of men's ministries & disaster relief for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said this is a ministry "with a welcome sign and a welcome mat."

"This ministry gives the inmates opportunities for additional recreation and relationship building with men of good influence," he said. "If we can get enough Baptist church softball teams involved in this ministry, we can minister to a very receptive group of people almost weekly."

Stephens said there will be a special display about the ministry set up at the Baptist Men's Softball Tournament Aug. 6–7 in Montgomery.

For more information, e-mail him at sstephens@alsbom.org.

East Huntsville Church reflects on past 50 years

Members of East Huntsville Baptist Church gathered April 11 just like they would any other Sunday.

But on any other Sunday, original members wouldn't have honored a "Past, Present and Future" theme or shared stories about the establishment of the Madison Baptist Association church and what it has meant to them throughout the years. That's because on April 11, the church turned 50 years old, and that made it a special occasion.

"We had a very good turn out for our small church ... and a fairly good number of former members," said Jim Booker, chairman of deacons and church clerk for East Huntsville Baptist. "People shared stories about establishment of the church, what's going on now and what they hope for the future of the church."

There was even a special nearly 20-member choir filled with present and former church members, he added.

Allen Jeffreys of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented the church with a plaque to honor its years and the church hosted a special lunch following its 11 a.m. service.

William Carter is pastor of East Huntsville.

Pine Ridge Church celebrates 50th anniversary

Turning 50 years old is a momentous occasion.

On April 11, Pine Ridge Baptist Church, Bessemer, in Mud Creek Baptist Association celebrated that milestone with a special singing service with the Lost and Found Trio and good eating all around.

"We had a wonderful service. ... Since it was our homecoming, we kind of reflected on the years and the things that have taken place, and it was a reminder of the fellowship we'll have one day with Jesus," said Interim Pastor Allen Scott.

Pine Ridge Baptist was organized in 1960 as Riverside Baptist Church. After a brief closing in 1974, the church reopened and later was constituted as Pine Ridge Baptist.

In the coming years, Scott said he hopes to see the church continue to grow and reach out to the surrounding communities with the love of Jesus.

"I pray our little church on a hill near the river can continue to be a lighthouse for its community," Scott said.

Whites Chapel pastor's wife dies

Karol C. Edgil, wife of Pastor Bill Edgil of Whites Chapel Baptist Church, Moody, in St. Clair Baptist Association, died April 5. She was 62.

At Whites Chapel, she served as a Sunday School teacher and in other volunteer roles, including on the church council and on the stewardship committee.

A native of Odenville, Edgil previously served alongside her husband at Del Rio Baptist Church, Birmingham, in Birmingham Baptist Association, before being called to Whites Chapel.

She is survived by her husband of 45 years, three daughters and three grandchildren. (TAB)

The necessity of believer's baptism

Baptism an important part of Christian faithfulness, scriptural obedience

By Karen O'Dell Bullock
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Across our 400 years of witness, one of the distinguishing marks of the people of God called Baptists has been our strong affirmation of believer's baptism, which is rooted in our high view of Christ's authority in Scripture.

When Jesus commanded His followers to go and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19), the earliest believers clearly understood baptism to be an important expression of faithfulness to Him. Baptists stand on this heritage.

Across the years, Baptists have published more about believer's baptism, the church and mission than perhaps any other topic.

Historically and theologically, Baptists have followed the apostolic practice of emphasizing the obligation to be baptized in obedience to the command of Jesus. We understand believer's baptism to be connected with the foundational biblical teachings about who God is, how salvation happens, the person and work of Christ, maturation in Christian faith and the nature, composition and governance of the believer's church.

For Baptists, believer's baptism is the distinctive act that both encapsulates the deepest meanings of and relates to all of these essential doctrines.

Background

In 17th-century England, our earliest Baptist views were forged within a specific context.

The English church, like the Roman Catholic Church in this regard, still understood communion and baptism as sacramental rites (vehicles of salvation-grace). Infant baptism, for example, was an initiatory, regenerative act that assured salvation to the babe through the vows of the godparents on the child's behalf. After hearing these vows, the priest would give thanks that the child was now "regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church" and pray that almighty God would "incorporate him into thy holy Church."

The law of the land required all citizens to believe in this method of salvation and families to have their babes duly baptized. To refuse either to believe this notion or to have one's newborn baptized was cause for arrest, fines or imprisonment as early Baptists knew well.

Infant baptism

Early Baptists did not believe in baptismal regeneration for many reasons. Infants were still incapable of vowing to follow Christ, and their "sureties," or godparents, equally incapable of vowing such an eternally binding spiritual com-

mitment for them.

Baptists also resisted the stress placed upon the outward act to the extent that the act itself was made necessary for salvation. Neither did Baptists agree that both faith and baptism were necessary for salvation to occur.

Baptists held that both faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ were required for true discipleship.

At the same time, Baptists did not believe that the act of baptism was a symbol stripped of meaning as did the early Quakers, who discarded both water baptism and the Lord's Supper as external rites having no "efficacy." Instead Baptists offered a carefully considered baptismal theology based upon their study of the New Testament.

Believer's baptism

Baptists believe that the act of believer's baptism is richly symbolic. The symbol itself portrays its most significant theological meaning, a sign of what has happened in a spiritual sense to the new believer, a vivid picture of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Believer's baptism by immersion portrays that the individual has spiritually participated in the death and burial of Christ and been raised to new life in Christ (Rom. 6:3-4).

Moreover, since salvation is a gift of God, not through any human contrivance (Eph. 2:5, 8-9), and faith itself is a gift, believer's baptism is the expression by which the believer affirms publicly what God alone has done. The believer identifies with Christ and commits to walk in obedience and unity with other believers in the ways of Christ. This vow is not taken lightly, for believer's baptism is a picture both of individuals and the community of faith joined together, corporately and spiritually, in Christ (Gal. 3:26-29).

Step by step, the Holy Spirit transforms the life of the believer from the inside out (speaking, guiding, convicting of sin and righteousness,

interceding, gifting, fruit-bearing, empowering, unifying and linking believers generationally and geographically for Kingdom causes). The believer joins with others of the believer's church around the globe to introduce men and women to the Kingdom of Christ.

Since the church has a spiritual mission and is guided by Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit, there is an essential connection between baptism and believers who are members of each local congregation.

The true church is comprised of Christ-apprentices who worship, fellowship and walk together in the Spirit to accomplish the purposes of God. Believer's baptism identifies individuals and communities of faith both who are in Christ and in whom He abides.

Current application

Why is this reminder important now? In the past 200 years, millions of Christians have come to practice believer's baptism by immersion as part of their understanding of salvation, discipleship and the church. Particularly in missions contexts, believer's baptismal practices have become widely accepted and declared to be the most consistent practice with the ancient churches.

Yet younger believers, Baptists among them, are asking fresh

questions about whether "symbolic church acts" or "ordinances" are important at all. Some suggest removing believer's baptism as a prerequisite for church membership or wish to abandon the practice altogether.

Consider the sacraments

In British Baptist life, several theologians across the past half-century have advocated that Baptists reconsider both the terms and meaning of "sacramental" acts.

Ecumenical explorations of how faith develops have led some scholars to question old beliefs about baptism. Some propose that baptism is either the initiatory rite to inaugurate or the signal of one's return to the journey of faith. Still others emphasize the communal aspects of salvation and baptism, preferring to describe people as being "in God" rather than emphasizing that Christ, at the moment of faith, has come to "indwell" the life of a believer.

Some of this thinking re-engages the sacramental notions of churchly acts and ordinances as "gateways to salvation." Wherever these newer questions and theologies probe the issues of salvation or Christ's work or church life, implications for the meaning of baptism emerge.

Baptism by sprinkling, for example, weakens or abolishes the symbolic death, burial and resurrection reference. Another implication devolves from the notion that the act of baptism itself is able to convey salvation (without reference to either conscious faith in or obedience to Jesus Christ).

This practice fills churches with

members who believe they are in Christ by virtue of their baptism when they, in fact, may never have been truly converted. When the baptismal act itself is necessary for regeneration, then no hope of assurance of salvation-grace exists apart from the act. This reduces the grand work of Christ to a mechanical process performed by a human agent and calls into question the nature of saving faith.

Global Baptists today wrestle to explain the meaning, even necessity, of baptism in our pluralistic cultures.

Explore the truths

Baptists today must be careful to explore biblically, understand fully, articulate clearly and hold closely the precious truths contained in the rich symbolic ordinance of baptism. Baptists' historical and theological understanding of believer's baptism has encapsulated our deepest and most profound spiritual truths and demonstrated them to the world.

At its core, believer's baptism richly symbolizes both the unchanging gospel message of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the believer's relationships in Christ — both individually and within His believing church.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Karen O'Dell Bullock is former professor of church history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. She currently serves as professor of Christian Heritage and director of the Ph.D. program at B.H. Carroll Theological Institute in Arlington, Texas. ☞



Photo courtesy of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

'BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST' — A crowd gathers on a river bank in Asheville, N.C., in 1913 to watch a baptism.

BAPTISM
in
Baptist Life

Part 1 of 2

NEXT WEEK: Baptism and church membership

HEART OF MISSIONS ...

Three men from **Covington Baptist Association** went to Rivne, Ukraine, on a missions trip March 22–30.

Wendell Ray, church development director for Covington Association; Judson Blackstock, associate pastor of education for First Baptist Church, Andalusia; and Jeff Baxley, student minister for First Baptist Church, Opp, trained pastors on the evangelism strategy Share Jesus Without Fear, preached in churches, taught in a Bible college and assisted with outreach services in a village.

“The trip went well,” Blackstock said. “One thing that particularly stood out to me ... is that [the believers’] commitment level was very high.”

First Baptist Church, Jasper, member W. Frank Banks led a team to India March 23–31.

Banks, along with Lucky Teague, director of missions for **Walker Baptist Association**; Gene Carver, pastor of **First Baptist Church, Cordova**; and Don McLaughlin, a

Florida Baptist, taught and trained Indian pastors for five days at Tentmakers School, a seminary in the Bangalore area. They conducted training in three areas: the role of the pastor, the role of the deacon and doctrine.

“Everyone had a great experience in getting to know the Indian pastors and to pray with them and love on them ... and give a word of encouragement to them as well,” said Banks, who is a deacon at First, Jasper. “We hope to have a continuing impact in the operation of Tentmakers School.”

A veryt Walker, director of missions for **Salem-Troy Baptist Association**, was part of a planned missions trip to the Dominican Republic (DR) Feb. 1–8.

But once Haiti was struck by a 7.0 earthquake Jan. 12, the team of 22 divided into two groups — one to do missions work in Haiti and one to do missions work in Santo Domingo, the capital city of the DR.

The DR team of 11 people, which

Walker oversaw, worked closely with Dominican Baptists by encouraging existing churches and helping with the planting of future churches.

The team led Bible studies for children, women and men; prayer walked; did door-to-door evangelism in neighborhoods; delivered Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes; and showed Christian-based movies in the evenings.

A team of 11 from **Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham**, in Birmingham Baptist Association did missions work in Akot, Sudan, March 24–April 2.

Led by Executive Pastor Don Steen, the team continued the ongoing ministry of International Mission Board representatives at the Baptist compound by assisting with the women’s ministry, doing construction work on the site, leading Bible studies and pastoral training, among several other things.

“The people are so gracious, hospitable and enthusiastic,” Steen said. “It lifts our spirits to see them.” ☞

Pastors value seminary training, survey says

Protestant pastors value their seminary education and integrate their learning into the way they serve their congregations, according to LifeWay Research survey information released in March of this year.

A telephone survey of more than 1,000 Protestant pastors in late December 2008 showed that two-thirds of the respondents had obtained at least a master’s degree, and 71 per-

cent strongly agreed that they regularly use things they learned in their seminary classes.

Among the surveyed pastors, 85 percent said they have taken seminary classes, and 96 percent of that group said they would repeat those seminary classes if “they had it to do over again.”

The survey also examined the ongoing usefulness of seminary training. Seventy-one percent of

seminary-educated pastors strongly agreed with the statement, “I regularly use things that I learned in my seminary classes,” and 24 percent somewhat agreed. Just 3 percent somewhat disagreed, and only 1 percent strongly disagreed with the statement.

Doctoral-level training

Pastors with a doctoral-level education were more likely to agree that they regularly use the things they learned in their seminary classes, with 82 percent of those pastors strongly agreeing with the above statement.

A smaller percentage of pastors of small churches have been to seminary, the survey showed. Only 74 percent of those at churches with an average worship attendance less than 50 have attended seminary classes compared to 88 percent of pastors in churches with attendance of more than 50.

Of pastors who attended seminary, 83 percent strongly agreed that the training and experience was worth the time and money. Among pastors with a doctoral-level education, the percentage increased — 94 percent strongly agreed that the seminary training was worth their investment.

LifeWay Research conducted the telephone survey from Dec. 1–6, 2008, with 1,004 randomly selected Protestant pastors. Responses were weighted to reflect the geographic distribution of Protestant churches. The sample provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed 3.2 percent. (BP)



Photo courtesy of Belleville Baptist Church

DENTON HONORED FOR 50 YEARS OF MINISTRY

Belleville Baptist Church honored Interim Pastor Hughie Denton on March 14 for 50 years of ministry. Pictured with his wife, Geraldine, Denton has served six Alabama churches as pastor and three others as interim pastor since 1960.

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

Alabama Acteens receive national honors

BIRMINGHAM — Two Alabama Baptist teens recently were recognized by national Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) for their dedicated service in Acteens.

Amy Smith, a member of First Baptist Church, Prattville, was one of six teens from around the country who was selected as a 2010 National Acteens Panelist for her missions commitment and leadership and involvement in her school, community and church.

Rebecca Wells, a member of White Springs Baptist Church, Attalla, was also recognized as a National Top Teen for her involvement in missions.

One of WMU’s core values is to “accept responsibility for developing and equipping missional leaders,” thus Acteens is one of the ways in which WMU engages teenage girls in grades 7–12 to become leaders by teaching them about missions and how to live a missional lifestyle.

U.S. youth minister to lead Canadian Baptist group

ETOBICOKE, Ontario — Baptists in Canada’s two most populous provinces will be led by a former youth minister and non-profit officer.

Tim McCoy, who has served for the last four years as director of youth ministries for the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (CBOQ), became the group’s executive minister, effective April 1. The suburban-Toronto-based organization said it expects the decision to be ratified by voters at the CBOQ assembly in June.

CBOQ, which is comprised of about 360 churches, cooperates with other regional and language-based Baptist conventions across Canada to form Canadian Baptist Ministries. The 1,000-church national denomination is separate from the Canadian National Baptist Convention, which is affiliated with the United States-based Southern Baptist Convention.

In addition to his work with Canadian Baptists, McCoy has been involved ecumenically and internationally with projects through the Baptist World Alliance and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Prior to joining CBOQ’s staff, he was a youth minister in North Carolina. He has also worked as director of volunteer resources for the American Red Cross.

McCoy is a graduate of Mars Hill College and Pfeiffer University, both in North Carolina.

Missions volunteer dies in motorcycle accident

RICHMOND, Va. — A 21-year-old Southern Baptist representative with the International Mission Board (IMB) was killed April 12 in a motorcycle accident in the southeastern African country of Mozambique.

Jeremiah Johnson, a member of Royal Palms Baptist Church in Phoenix, and driver of the motorcycle, was riding with an interpreter (name withheld for security reasons) when the accident happened. Reports from overseas personnel say Johnson was killed instantly in the accident and his passenger was injured. Details on the interpreter’s condition and how the crash happened were not available at press time.

Johnson was working with the IMB’s Hands On initiative among an unreached people group. The program enables college students to work on the missions field for a semester. Johnson was a student at Glendale (Ariz.) Community College.

Johnson is the son of Diana and David Johnson. David is director of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary’s Arizona campus. Jeremiah also is survived by sisters Rachel and Talitha and brother Merritt.

Black Baptist leaders attend Obama’s Easter breakfast

WASHINGTON — Black Baptist leaders were among 90 clergy and other Christian leaders who gathered at the White House on April 6 for an Easter prayer breakfast at which President Obama extolled the redemptive nature of Christ’s death and resurrection.

“We are awed by the grace He showed even to those who would have killed Him. We are thankful for the sacrifice He gave for the sins of humanity. And we glory in the promise of redemption in the resurrection,” Obama said in remarks before the event in the White House’s East Room.

The Easter lunch followed a meeting with a smaller group of black Christian leaders, including Julius Scruggs, pastor of First Missionary Baptist Church, Huntsville, and president of the National Baptist Convention U.S.A. Inc.; and Progressive National Baptist Convention President T. DeWitt Smith Jr. ☞

Want to know God?

By Pastor Bobby Earls
First Baptist Church, Center Point

If there is a God, He must be a good God." I recall so very clearly having this thought about God as a young boy. I grew up in the Carolinas, the buckle of the Bible Belt. Yet even in my early teens, I had a very limited understanding of God.

My family never attended church. We were not Christians. My father was an agnostic. My mother said she believed in God but didn't live like it. I was confused. Maybe you find yourself where I once was when it comes to really understanding just who God is.

Because I thought God was good, I also thought I must be good, too, if He was to accept me. I believed I could earn God's approval by being a good person. So I was, good that is. Good son, good student — I was the consummate Boy Scout who helped little old ladies across the street.

But then I came to a real turning point. At 16, I attended a "church event," an area-wide tent revival of all things. I heard the gospel for the first time in my life. Christians say the gospel is good news. It's the good news of God's love for man and His offer of forgiveness and eternal life.

At that moment, my understanding of God was challenged and corrected. For the first time, I heard what the Bible says about my goodness and my effort to do good things in order to go to heaven. I heard Romans 3:10 (NLT), "As the Scriptures say, 'No one is righteous — not even one.'" And Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT), "God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done."

It became very clear to me that it wasn't up to me. I could not nor did I need to earn my salvation. God had provided for me. I heard how God had given His only Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for me so I might have everlasting life (John 3:16). That indeed was good news. I prayed a simple prayer asking Jesus to forgive me and give me His gift of eternal life. Maybe it's time for you to stop trusting your own goodness and accept God's good news. He loves you and He'll forgive you. Just ask Him. I did.

Examining the percentages

Chapman responds to task force's suggested cuts to Executive Committee

Bob Terry, president and publisher of *The Alabama Baptist*, talked with Morris Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee (EC), about the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force's (GCRTF) recommendation on the EC budget. The following are some of the questions and answers from that discussion.

Q: What is your reaction to the recommendation to transfer the responsibility of Cooperative Program (CP) promotion to state conventions without EC input?

A: The task force invited me to meet with its members on condition of confidentiality a few weeks before they delivered their report, so I already had a sense of what the report contained. I made an appeal to them at that time to consider a number of changes ... including the continuation of the equal partnership in Cooperative Program promotion that has existed always between the SBC Executive Committee and the state conventions. I had hoped they would give these remarks and others consideration. I was disappointed that they chose not to do so.

Q: How much is now spent on the staff and the work related to the CP promotion assignment? How much of these funds would be available to be marked for the International Mission Board (IMB) if this recommendation is adopted?

A: This year's Executive Committee budget for Cooperative Program promotion is \$1,135,516, the amount for stewardship education is \$260,169, for a total of \$1,395,685 in the current year. This amount assigned for the national CP promotion and biblical stewardship is less than 1 percent (0.683 percent) of the total SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget.

By most assessments, for a nonprofit organization to spend less than 1 percent in promotional costs to raise \$200 million would be considered quite efficient. This provides funding for eight full-time employees in CP and stewardship, travel, conference costs for It's A New Day and production of print and video materials.

The removal of CP promotion from the Executive Committee assignments as a result of a GCRTF recommendation to reduce our budget by \$2 million means that only the state conventions will be left to fund production materials, the first time since 1927 that the convention will fail to spend its own money to promote its own ministries. Inexplicably and arbitrarily, the GCRTF made it very clear to Augie Boto, EC executive vice president, and

me that its goal is to excise funding for CP/stewardship promotion from the Executive Committee. What it has not made clear is why.

Q: The GCRTF recommends that about \$2 million come out of the EC budget in order to increase the IMB to 51 percent of the total CP budget. How much other money will have to be taken from the EC budget to comply with this recommendation if it is adopted?

A: As I stated, if this report is adopted and these funds are transferred to IMB, we will lose almost \$1.4 million in CP promotion and stewardship education. We will have to pare more than \$600,000 from other budget categories to meet this amount.

Q: From what EC assignments will the money have to come? What will be the impact of these cuts? Please elaborate.

A: If the EC budget is reduced by \$600,000 in addition to the \$1.4 million now allocated for the promotion of the Cooperative Program/stewardship, we will have to take a hard look at the two mission initiatives of the Executive Committee that were approved by the SBC: Empowering Kingdom Growth and Global Evangelical Relations.

In addition to the potential gutting of these mission initiatives, we will have to re-evaluate every other area of work the SBC Executive Committee is charged to do in order to make additional cuts. The recommendation for such a drastic cut would make one wonder if the task force is trying to disrupt and diminish the effectiveness of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee is the right arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, serving as a "standing" committee to do the research, deliberations and recommendations for which Southern Baptists founded the organization. Obviously a convention with thousands in attendance for a two-day period cannot do the adequate research necessary for informed and well-reasoned decisions. In a sense, the Executive Committee is the "checks and balances" of the convention. If the Executive Committee someday were to be rendered ineffective for carrying out its assignments, the convention will lean toward an unfocused assortment of independent churches rather than a network of cooperative, autonomous churches.

Q: The 1 percent redirected from the EC to the IMB is about 30 percent of the EC budget. In your judgment, why did the

GCRTF recommend such a deep cut in the EC budget rather than asking all entities to share in reduced funds in order to create more funds for the IMB?

A: I leave it to others to speculate what motivations may have led the members of the task force to target the Executive Committee. It may be that being an administrative body, we are considered a soft target.

I think the GCRTF learned the hard way that the SBC has no control over the state conventions, the originally intended targets in the 10 axioms and the GCR Declaration last spring. The seminaries have large numbers of alumni who would rise up in defense of their alma maters. NAMB (North American Mission Board) did receive quite a bit of attention, but under

this current proposal, NAMB will actually gain access to an additional \$50 million or more from the states as the cooperative agreements are phased out.

I guess they saw the Executive Committee as a soft target since our only constituents are grass roots Southern Baptists. Nevertheless I praise the Lord that the constituents of the SBC Executive Committee are rank-and-file Southern Baptists. They are the backbone of this convention.

If stouthearted Southern Baptists who strongly believe in the Cooperative Program and the cooperative nature of work among all the churches and who are preaching in the pulpits and sitting in the pews of our churches across the United States do not attend the 2010 convention in Orlando, the "vision" of the GCRTF will be approved. Should this happen, although the task force will no longer exist, members of the task force and the SBC president, if inclined, will have the green light to insist that the SBC Executive Committee and other entities are mandated to approve the GCRTF recommendations.

While this is not true, it does demonstrate the kind of pressure that likely is to be exerted by task force members and others. It is imperative that each and every Southern Baptist takes time to evaluate the potential consequences, whether intended or unintended, of the task force's recommendation to rename Total Gifts with the new name Great Commission Giving.

Q: What have GCRTF members communicated to you about the proposed cuts in the EC budget since unveiling their progress report in February?

A: Of course, I have had several phone conversations with Ronnie

Floyd (GCRTF chairman). I also received an e-mail from three members of the task force stating it was not their intention to remove Cooperative Program promotion from the Executive Committee. This leaves me a little perplexed about how this all fits together given what their public report stated. I have not received any communication about the proposed cuts.

Q: What would you like to say to readers of *The Alabama Baptist* about the GCRTF report recommendation related to the EC? To the GCRTF report as a whole?

A: Three things. First, I would be grieved if any of us did not agree with Ronnie's passionate call to repentance. His sermon from Joel was right on. Ever since the GCR Declaration was released in April 2009, I have made the plea for the Great Commission Resurgence to be about this very thing. I still hold out hope that the final report will singularly call our hearts to renewal, repentance, recovery of our evangelistic priorities and a return to passionate prayer.

Second, clearly, I am disappointed that at such a critical juncture in our history, the task force has diluted its energy by trying to micromanage the work of the convention entities through budgetary and internal structural changes. It is properly the work of the trustees of NAMB to direct the work of the North American Mission Board.

Further moving \$2 million from the SBC Executive Committee is tantamount to eating the seed corn just before the spring planting. Without CP promotion and stewardship education, I do not see the whole convention being able to sustain an abundant harvest in future years.

Third, if Alabama and the other states receive this unfunded mandate to promote CP funds for their own ministries and the SBC ministries, they'll have to pay for it from some source. If they also lose money for state ministries through the elimination of NAMB's cooperative agreements, they, in my opinion, will be tempted to offset those costs by reducing the amount they forward to the SBC. How else could they continue present ministries? It would be a tragedy for the Southern Baptist Convention, its Executive Committee and entities. For every \$1 million a state reduces its forwarded CP funds, IMB will lose \$500,000. If the states offset the full \$50 million called for in the GCRTF report, IMB would lose \$25 million, the seminaries more than \$12 million and NAMB another \$12 million annually. If this were to happen, I fear the SBC will revert very rapidly back to the failed societal model of giving of the early 20th century. (TAB)



CHAPMAN

An opportunity to make a difference

EDITOR'S NOTE — The Alabama Baptist staff is happy to introduce a new women's column to the state Baptist paper. This new column will focus on resources women can use in their lives of faith, whether lived out at home, in the workplace or in the church. The columnist is Jean Roberson, MSW, LCSW — a ministry consultant for national Woman's Missionary Union. She serves as team leader for the adult team and as director of Christian Women's Job Corps/Christian Men's Job Corps and International Initiatives. The column will run the first issue of each month beginning with the June 3 issue. Until then, we will run the column each week as a way of introduction to this new segment of the paper.

A Thought for Women

By Jean Roberson



Eventually we begin to suffer compassion fatigue.

Our willingness to respond to the overwhelming needs begins to wane.

We know our Christian responsibility is to respond to the needs in the world, yet even we grow tired of all the needs and brokenness in the world.

Let's consider Hurricane Katrina. Initially it seemed as though the entire country responded with supplies, volunteers and prayers. The needs of people were featured on television and radio. Communities readied to accept evacuees.

Then slowly the number of volunteers dropped and the donations slowed.

People began to move back into their own lives.

The homelessness, hunger, lack of resources and environmental hazards all continued. We just grew tired of hearing about them.

In fact, when stories of continued needs in the affected areas were aired, some even responded with frustration that we would continue to focus attention on those areas — compassion fatigue.

Consider instead the ministry that addresses a need in this way: "Here is a community that lacks school supplies. Your gift of \$25 will buy school textbooks for one child."

The need was shared but it was linked directly to a way that someone could make a specific difference.

I can walk away knowing that I bought textbooks for one child.

I made a difference.

While church groups rarely get involved with such fund-raising campaigns, the principle holds true for all volunteer activities.

Rather than educating people about a need in the community or church, describe specifically how one person's involvement and time could make a difference.

You see, the speaker was right. People don't respond to needs. They respond to an opportunity to make a difference.

A Takeaway Value . . .

When trying to mobilize people to do something, present it in terms of how their effort alleviates the problem in some way.

People don't respond to needs. They respond to an opportunity to make a difference."

I was sitting in a workshop one day when I heard the speaker say those words.

I was stunned.

What do you mean people don't respond to needs?

Of course, they respond to needs. After all, isn't that what Christians are supposed to do — respond to needs?

Then I began thinking about it. We are surrounded by needs. There are needs in our families. Our friends have needs. In church, we hear prayer requests for people in devastating circumstances.

On the news, we hear of the needs in our country. We even have programs that highlight starving children on the other side of the world.

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GuideStone health plans in sync with parts of new law

While many questions remain about the impact of the health care legislation signed into law by President Barack Obama, GuideStone Financial Resources' plans already meet several elements of the new law. Participants in GuideStone's health plans can already have these benefits:

▶ All but one of GuideStone's health plans provide unlimited annual and lifetime benefits. A provision of the law, officially known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), will prohibit lifetime and annual limits on benefits. This feature has been a benefit from GuideStone for more than a decade, officials of the Southern Baptist entity noted.

▶ While the new law prohibits health plans from cancelling a participant's coverage for excessive claims, GuideStone has never cancelled coverage for a participant due to the participant's

claims, according to officials at the Dallas-based entity.

▶ GuideStone health plans will be expanded to include eligible dependents up to age 26. This change is effective immediately, and families affected by this change should contact GuideStone.

▶ PPACA requires that group health plans provide coverage for dependent children up to age 26 regardless of student status. In 2005, GuideStone removed student status as a requirement for eligibility in its health plans.

"GuideStone has been providing health plans for Southern Baptist churches and ministries for more than a half-century," GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins said. "During that time, we have seen many changes in how health care plans are designed and how they are administered. We anticipate the nature and scope of this legislation will be a key area of focus for years to come." (BP)



The Lord is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life — of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm 27:1

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CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR: Faith Baptist Church is currently accepting resumés for a full-time pastor. Mail to: Faith Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, 3979 Co. Road 434, Moulton, AL 35650.

MINISTER OF ADMINISTRATION & EDUCATION: First Baptist Church of Mount Olive is now accepting resumés for a full-time minister of administration and education. Please submit resumés or questions by e-mail to: sheila@fbcmo.org.

MUSIC PASTOR: Hunter First Baptist Church, Elizabethton, Tenn., is accepting resumés for a music pastor position. We are a conservative Southern Baptist church (Baptist Faith & Message 2000), 350-400 average attendance, with a blended worship style. Bachelor's degree required, master's degree and experience strongly preferred. Mail resumés to: Hunter First Baptist Church, 693 Highway 91, Elizabethton, TN 37643.

MINISTER OF MUSIC/SENIOR ADULTS: Blended worship. 40- to 50-voice choir. Orchestra. Minimum five years experience and ability to direct major pageants required. E-mail resumés to: office@fbcfoley.com or mail to: First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 307, Foley, AL 36536.

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.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS: The Duck River Baptist Association is seeking a director of missions. Located about 75 miles south of Nashville, Tenn., the association is comprised of 44 churches and 2 missions ministering in Coffee, Franklin and Grundy Counties. Send resumés to: Search Team, Duck River Baptist Association, P.O. Box 820, Tullahoma, TN 37388, or e-mail to: drba@cafes.net.

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS: Accepting applications for director of missions for Lamar Baptist Association. Mail resumés to: Lamar Baptist Association, P.O. Box 550, Vernon, AL 35592. 205-695-9625.

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS: Holston Baptist Association, serving the Northeast Tennessee ministry area, is accepting resumés for director of missions. All applicants should mail resumés to: DOM Search Committee, 207 University Park-

way, Johnson City, TN 37604-7339. Resumés must be received by May 31.

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Letters to the Editor

Reactions to Glenn Beck editorial

REASON FOR POVERTY

I read the editorial "Glenn Beck Is Wrong" in the April 8 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*.

In all due respect, while the Bible does say a lot about poverty, some of it indicates that poverty comes from sloth and lack of diligence. And when that is the reason, people must bear the consequences of their own choices.

Please do not misunderstand. Yes, the Bible teaches love, charity, kindness, righteousness, uprightness and goodness in the life of the believer. But it does not teach that those who work should support those who do not.

Ginger Wade
Bay Minette, Ala.

SHOOTING AT A FRIEND

Your editorial in the April 8 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* should have been titled "Glenn Beck Was Wrong," not is wrong. He has made clear many times since this very poor choice of words that he believes in social and economic justice at the individual and local church level.

When I hear him talk, I picture what Alabama Baptists are doing. He has a concern that people in need will become wards of the state, which will lead to communism or Nazism.

You were shooting at a friend, not the enemy. Please reload and try again.

William Billingsley
Hoover, Ala.

REFERRING TO POLITICS

I am writing in response to your commentary on Glenn Beck dated April 8. I am a Glenn Beck fan and ardent Southern Baptist Christian. Glenn Beck did say the things concerning social and economic justice as you said.

In my opinion, Glenn was referring to governmental and political actions that inhibit taxpayers' ability to be charitable on their own. The government's redistribution of wealth hurts Americans' natural desire to help others and to be generous and cheerful in giving as stated in the Bible.

Lola Taylor
Tallassee, Ala.

ALL ABOUT PERSPECTIVE

I read Bob Terry's editorial in the April 8 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* with interest. Glenn Beck puts a lot of research into the development of his opinions.

He certainly goes further into it

than I do. I do not always accept his pronouncements and did not agree with what he said on the face of it.

However, we must remember that there have been some churches that have put the emphasis on our government's role in meeting the needs of the poor, the homeless, the unemployed, etc.

I wish you had read a little more of your Bible before stating your position. Two passages, Mark 7:11-13 (the words of Jesus) and 1 Timothy 5:3-16, speak clearly to this issue.

"Social justice" begins with the responsibilities of individual grandparents, grandchildren, etc. Next the responsibilities are placed upon the church for the care of its members and their families. Only if none of these measures reach everyone is it made the responsibility of the government to meet the needs of the poor, the homeless, the unemployed, etc.

There is a new perspective on social justice that has appeared. That new perspective places the first responsibility for social justice on government. If a church is adopting this new perspective, Glenn Beck is absolutely right.

Robert Jackson
Wetumpka, Ala.

NOT TOTALLY WRONG

In response to the editorial titled "Glenn Beck Is Wrong" on April 8, Glenn Beck was not comparing the work of Bible-believing missionaries, whether they are Southern Baptist or not, to communism or Nazism.

He was pointing out that there are many out there using the terms "social justice" and "economic justice" for their own purposes — that they don't truly care for the poor but care for their own power and ideology. Beck needed to clarify himself, but he is not totally wrong.

I am writing this letter to the editor not in defense of Glenn Beck but in defense of the freedom we all hold dear and of the truth of the gospel. I implore everyone to do further research into what anyone defines as "social justice" or "economic justice."

I don't think anyone attending church for the right reason will blindly leave church just because someone exhorts him to do so. Our allegiance is to the Lamb and the divine Word of God.

Susan Grondin
Childersburg, Ala.

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'Cloud of corruption'

'Bingo' bill still a 'contentious issue' in Legislature; pro-gambling lawmakers keep pushing

By Sondra Washington
The Alabama Baptist

Not even an FBI investigation could stop pro-gambling lawmakers in Alabama from attempting to legalize and expand slot machine gambling called electronic bingo.

As the legislative session neared its end April 22, gambling forces continued seeking support for Senate Bill (SB) 380, which Gov. Bob Riley calls the most corrupt piece of legislation he has ever seen. At press time, House members were expected to vote on the bill April 21.

Initially gambling opponents thought the bill's progress would be stalled after FBI agents told several Statehouse leaders they were investigating corruption involved in the bill's passage from the Senate on March 30.

Meeting with feds

Senate Majority Leader Zeb Little, D-Cullman; Senate Minority Leader Jabo Waggoner, R-Birmingham; House Speaker Seth Hammett, D-Andalusia; House Majority Leader Ken Guin, D-Carbon Hill; House Minority Leader Mike Hubbard, R-Auburn; and Lt. Gov. Jim Folsom Jr., D-Cullman, attended the April 1 meeting with FBI agents and two U.S. attorneys in Montgomery.

"They said they had substantial evidence that there was public corruption surrounding this bingo issue and it was an ongoing investigation," Waggoner told *The Alabama Baptist*. "They didn't tell us what they were looking at or who they were looking at. ... I believe when the FBI says there is substantial evidence of public corruption, you have to put a lot of stock in what they say."

Waggoner thought the bingo issue was "dead for this session," but

at press time gambling forces were not ready to throw in the towel.

SB 380 came out of the House Tourism and Travel Committee on April 13 and was ready for debate by the full House. But the bill's House sponsor, Rep. Marcel Black, D-Tuscumbia, did not push for it to be debated by the House right away.

At press time, Black continued working to gather the 63 votes necessary to pass the bill.

Call for 'supermajority'

"I think we will (have enough votes). We are still working on that," he said at press time. "There is a lot of pulling and tugging by both sides. Any time you have a constitutional amendment requiring a supermajority, it is always a contentious issue."

But Riley said the bill itself is the problem because it will "open the floodgates to corruption in this state."

"What I want people to know is this is not an 'up' or 'down' vote on gambling," Riley said.

"This is not a 'yes' or 'no' vote on gambling. If it was, I'm not too sure too many people would oppose it. But that's not what it is. This is about a bill that is corrupt to the core."

Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program, said Alabama residents will lose if SB 380 passes.

"If the amendment fails in November, we will be right back where we are today with illegal gambling facilities operating and tying up the courts with cases while they continue to siphon money from the pockets of unsuspecting citizens who do not know that these machines are designed to take their hard-earned money," he said. "It is a 'heads I win, tails

you lose' scenario for the gambling bosses."

Since the beginning of the session, Riley, Godfrey and other gambling opponents warned Alabamians that gambling bosses would make a "strong push" to legalize their operations. Now at least one senator has reportedly said he was offered \$250,000 for a 'yes' vote.

"I got a phone call from (Country Crossing lobbyist) Jarrod Massey asking me about the race and my views on bingo," Sen. Paul Sanford, R-Huntsville, told *The Birmingham News*. "Massey told me he

had two clients who were deeply interested in seeing an electronic bingo bill pass the Senate and if I could see my way clear to support it, they were each prepared to give me a \$125,000 campaign contribution. ... Massey made it clear that if I committed to giving a yes vote for bingo, the checks would be in the mail. I'll let the offer speak for itself."

Recurring bill

Riley said it's "amazing" that some lawmakers would still bring this bill up.

"It's not just the governor now that's saying this bill is a corrupt bill," he said. "Everyone that has anything to do with it seems to think it's a corrupt bill. Yet they are still going to bring it up and vote on it."

As it stands, SB 380 calls for a constitutional amendment and vote of the people to redefine bingo to include machines that perform the game without player interaction

and allows an unlimited number of gambling operations around the state.

The bill requires at least a 25 percent tax on bingo revenue (the amount after payouts are given) but leaves it to legislators to decide whether to add license fees to bingo operations.

"It is a 'heads I win, tails you lose' scenario for the gambling bosses."

Joe Godfrey
ALCAP

Introduced by Sen. Roger Bedford, D-Russellville, in the Senate, the bill also establishes a five-member gaming commission appointed under the heavy influence of the Senate. Unlike Bedford's initial legislation, the bill does not repeal or

affect any of the local constitutional amendments but does not require "bingo" operators to follow the amendments if their businesses are approved by the proposed gaming commission.

Rep. Jay Love, R-Montgomery, said no one has approached him about any changes to the bill. "It's all been in the backroom," he said.

Rep. Greg Canfield, R-Vestavia Hills, said, "The bill is surrounded by a cloud of corruption, and I think that this is a clear indicator that having the spread of gaming

in the state of Alabama presents some very strong ethical challenges surrounding the establishment of the industry and how that industry spreads throughout the state."

Godfrey said it's more important than ever for Christians to contact their representatives and respectfully ask them to oppose SB 380.

'Sick of ... bingo'

"I know you are sick of hearing about 'bingo' and may want to 'just let the people vote' so you can settle this once and for all," he said. "However that is exactly what the gambling bosses are wanting to happen.

"They want to make you weary concerning this issue. The citizens of Alabama who care about keeping our state a family-friendly place to live and raise a family need to understand that this issue will never go away.

"The states where casinos currently operate are struggling financially and all of them are now considering legislation to expand gambling in order to raise more revenues. However in those states, the gambling bosses completely control the legislative process. If we don't stand up to the gambling bosses now, they will take control of our state to an even greater extent than they do today and we will never overcome their influence."

Retired missionary, pastor Milligan dies at 103

David George Milligan, retired pastor and missionary and member of First Baptist Church, Pell City, died April 15. He was 103.

Born in Pennsylvania and raised

in Canada, Milligan was a pastor for 67 years before later serving as a missionary. He served as pastor of churches in Canada, Oklahoma and California and as interim pastor of First Baptist Church, Ragland;

Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, Cropwell; New Hope Baptist Church, Pell City; and First, Pell City, all in St. Clair Baptist Association.

After retiring, Milligan and his first wife, Neva, were sent as missionaries by the Foreign Mission Board (now the International Mission Board) to Guam and the Bahamas and by the Home Mission Board (now the North American Mission Board) to the Luther Rice Center in Northborough, Mass., where they served as curators.

Two years after Neva died in 1995, Milligan married Eunice Perryman, a former missionary. Milligan is also the author of "Prayers of the Heart."

Along with his first wife, Neva, Milligan is preceded in death by his daughter, Moyra. He is survived by his wife, Eunice; four children; 12 grandchildren; and 23 great-grandchildren. (TAB)

Ex-Muslim teen doing well in foster care

Rifqa Bary, a 17-year-old girl from Ohio who fled her family's home after converting from Islam to Christianity, is doing well in foster care, attending weekly counseling sessions and will graduate from high school in June, Bary's attorney told an Ohio judge April 5.

The attorney also asked Franklin County Domestic Relations Judge Elizabeth Gill to rule that Bary would not be reunited with her parents by Aug. 10 — her 18th birthday — so she can file for special immigration status while she

is still a minor, the *Columbus Dispatch* reported. That would allow Bary to petition to remain in the United States without her parents' consent.

The girl ran away to Florida in July 2009, saying that her Muslim father, Mohamed Bary, threatened to kill her for becoming a Christian. Florida's Department of Children and Families took emergency protective custody of her in August 2009 and placed her with foster parents. Her parents denied the accusations. (BP)

Alabama Cooperative Program Gifts

Alabama Baptist Giving

Year to Date through March 31, 2010

MARCH

CP Challenge Budget Goal	\$3,875,000
CP Challenge Budget Gifts	\$3,570,212
Under Goal for Month	\$304,788

YEAR TO DATE

CP Challenge Budget Goal	\$11,625,000
CP Challenge Budget Gifts	\$10,965,757
Under Goal for Year	\$659,243

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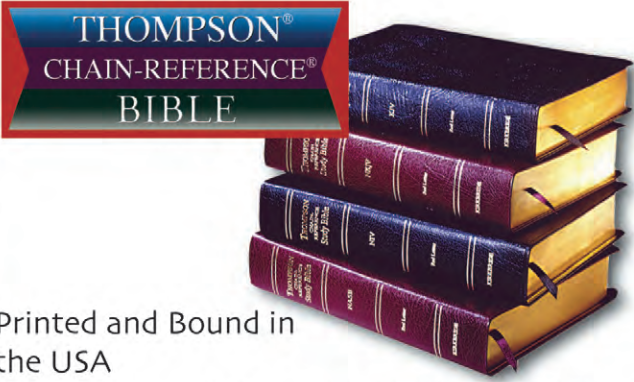
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Explore the Bible By Jeffrey S. Quiett Associate professor of marriage and family counseling, University of Mobile

WHY DO YOU WORSHIP?

Exodus 25:8-9, 17-22; 29:38-46

Building the Tabernacle (25:8-9)

No other single aspect of Israel's faith was given quite as much attention in the Old Testament as the tabernacle. Exodus devotes seven chapters (25-31) to a description of its specifications and then six more (35-40) that repeat almost word for word the instructions from Chapters 25-31. The tabernacle served as a visible symbol of God's presence in the midst of His people. The "sanctuary" (literally "holy place") was made according to exact dimensions that God gave directly. These instructions were a reminder that God alone determines acceptable worship. The building of the tabernacle served as further evidence of the obedience of the Israelites.

Much is made concerning the construction and maintenance of worship buildings today. Churches have split concerning the color, arrangement and structure of new buildings. Yet God makes it clear that He alone is the object of praise and determines the manner of worship. Churches would do well to remember that buildings are built to serve God and not merely to serve His people.

Building the Ark of the Covenant (25:17-22)

The most important piece of furniture in the tabernacle was the Ark of the Covenant. The ark represented the presence of God in a special way and was kept in "the most holy place" within the tabernacle. The high priest entered the most holy place once a year and sprinkled blood to atone for the sins of the people (Lev. 16). Jesus' sacrifice, however, provided a once and for all atonement represented by the tearing of the temple veil after His death (Matt. 27:51). God's people no longer needed a priest to gain access to Him but now have access through Christ (Heb. 4:14-16).

"Mercy seat," or "atonement cover," comes from a word that means "to cover," hence "to provide reconciliation, atonement." The mercy seat, made of solid gold, was placed on top of the ark as a cover. The mercy seat

also represented the "throne of God" and was sometimes referred to as His footstool (Ps. 99:5). "Cherub" (plural, cherubim) is from a word meaning "intercessor." Although no one knows exactly what they looked like, the cherubim were in the shape of winged animals with human faces and served as guardians of a sacred spot (Gen. 3:24) and transporters of the deity (Ps. 18:10; Ezek. 1:15-28). They always were associated with the nearness of God in the Old Testament.

Movies and television specials have made much over "the lost ark." People's tendency to associate God with physical objects is not new. Although these objects may serve as reminders of God's presence, they can never "contain" God or become the actual presence of God. Preoccupation with material objects in worship distracts us from God who is the true subject of worship.

Sacrifice in the Presence of God (29:38-46)

These verses describe sacrifices that were to be presented at the entrance of the tabernacle morning and evening throughout all generations. God promised Moses that He would meet him at the tent of meeting to speak with him. He also would meet the Israelites there. The phrase "they will know that I am the Lord their God" is found 46 times in the book of Ezekiel alone. The phrase is found usually in the context of a warning that as a result of God's coming judgment, Israel would know that He is the Lord.

This passage is filled with the expectation of God's presence. Worship involves interaction with God and not merely going through ritualistic motions. The tabernacle, ark and sacrifices were to remind the Israelites of God's presence, grace and provision and not to be ends in themselves.

The sacrificial system of the Israelites was complex. This points to the seriousness of sin and man's propensity to rebel against God. Worship is not about us. God does not need our worship, but we need God to make us right with Him. The death of Jesus ultimately fulfills God's requirement of sacrifice for sin.

Bible Studies for Life By Mark DeVine Associate professor of divinity, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

THE RIGHT SUPPORT

2 Corinthians 8:8-15; 9:6-11

"God told me not to give money to any church until He first told me which church He would have me join." "Oh, is that so?" I thought to myself upon receiving this information from a man who had been visiting our church for about six months. Fascinating is it not, the sort of things God chooses to "tell" folks these days. Pardon my facetiousness. I asked the young man how long it had been since he had belonged to a church and felt free to offer financial support for the ministry of the gospel. He pondered the question a moment before responding, "Oh, maybe five years or so if memory serves." I told him I was grateful for the members of my church who faced no such obstacles since the ongoing work of ministry was costly and urgent.

I then asked the man if he did not find it strange that God would deliver such instruction given that the divine encouragement to His people to tithe and give generously and cheerfully features so prominently in the pages of Scripture. "All I know is what God told me" was his response. John Calvin provided the whole church with sound advice when he insisted upon the inseparable relationship between the content of God's Holy Word and the working of God the Holy Spirit, especially where guidance by the Spirit is claimed. "The Word and the Spirit agree with one another," Calvin said. When claims of the Spirit's guidance conflict with the teaching of the Bible, let us test the "spirits" by the Word.

Playing the Guilt Card

Our focal passage, along with many other Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments, should have given pause to the "spiritually-led" nontither I encountered. The apostle Paul pulled no punches when he wrote to the believers at Corinth — "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: Although He was rich, for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich."

Wow! I do not think that I have ever encountered a sermon on tithing that employed

a more powerful and potentially guilt-producing premise than these words of Paul. Have you? According to Paul, the bottom line is that when material blessing increases for some believers, their abundance ought to become available to address the need or deficit experienced by others (2 Cor. 8:14). According to Paul, the threat of possible public embarrassment at not giving generously provided appropriate motivation for the Corinthians' generosity toward their poor spiritual siblings in Macedonia.

Sowing and Reaping

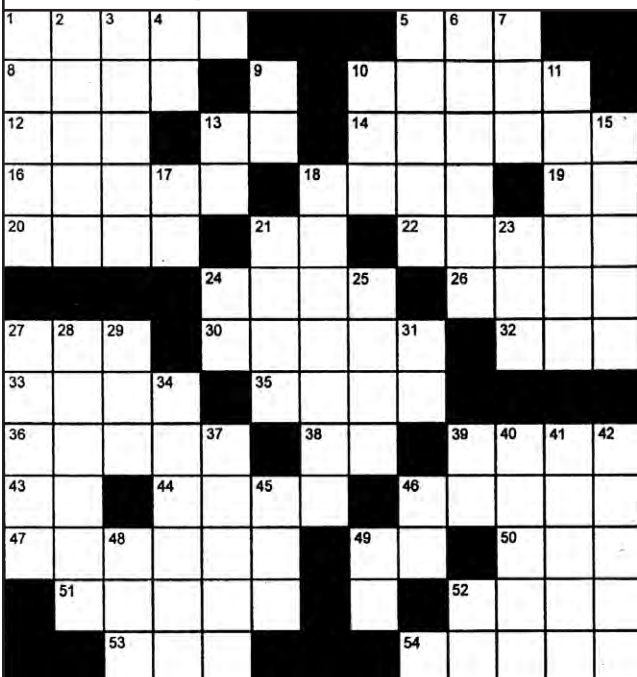
Fear of embarrassment though was not the only motivation cited by the apostle. In his book "Future Grace," John Piper challenged the widespread view that "gratitude" is the quintessential and highest motivation to obedience in Scripture. Without denying the appropriateness of gratitude as a spur to right living, Piper noted that a more prevalent encouragement to sacrificial obedience in the Bible is God's promise to help and bless those who embrace the divine call to action. Thus we read in our passage, "Remember this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously."

Such promise of divine blessing was meant to draw from the Corinthians the kind of cheerful giving that flows not only from gratitude for what God has already done but also from confidence that God is not through blessing His children and trust that no act of sacrificial giving within the context of the local church will fail to result in future blessing.

Nevertheless the rich and diverse biblical encouragement to generous giving in the context of the church does not establish a law for believers (2 Cor. 9:7). But the biblical message regarding giving does cast great doubt upon such notions as that voiced by the "spiritually-guided" nontither who had convinced himself that his stinginess was divinely inspired. The biblical tithe would seem to establish a benchmark of minimum expectation for those for whom Christ "became poor" in order to "make rich."

Christian Crossword

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Across

- And next unto them repaired ... the Meronothite. (Neh. 3:7)
- And in the 20th year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned ... over Judah. (1 Kings 15:9)
- Israeli leader Abba ...
- Dropped the first atomic bomb.
- Pale.
- Digraph.
- My spirit shall not always ... with man. (Gen. 6:3)
- Rejoice not when thine ... falleth. (Prov. 24:17)
- Arabian prince.
- Plural suffix.
- Girl.
- Place. (abbr.)
- Flies high.
- He that is now called a Prophet was before time called a ... (1 Sam. 9:9)
- He that winneth souls is ... (Prov. 11:30)
- Bone. (comb. form)
- Every wise ... buildeth her house. (Prov. 14:1)
- ... virgins, or lepers.

- Norse god of thunder.
- Captain of the Nautilus.
- Moses ... came to the mountain of God, even to ... (Ex. 3:1)
- Continent. (abbr.)
- But there was none like unto ... to work wickedness. (1 Kings 21:25)
- Electron volt. (abbr.)
- Abstain from eating.
- A swelling.
- ... a wise man, and he will love thee. (Prov. 9:8)
- 365 days. (abbr.)
- The sun and the ... were darkened. (Rev. 9:2)
- The heathen ..., the kingdoms were moved. (Ps. 46:6)
- Trieste liquid measure.
- German article.
- And ... the priest ... before the tabernacle ... at Gibeon. (1 Chron. 16:39)
- rivers of Damascus, better? (2 Kings 5:12)
- People of Denmark.
- Poti-pherah priest of ... (Gen. 41:45)
- Those opposed.
- No more death, neither ..., nor crying. (Rev. 21:4)
- Mohammad ...
- Interjection.
- Samantha Stevens' Aunt ... erelda.
- Reluctant.
- ... Cobb of baseball fame.
- German city.
- Woman's title of address.
- A fundamental part.
- A drudge, menial.
- Island.
- Compass point.
- Incarnation of Vishnu.
- He will hate the one and love the ... (Matt. 6:24)
- Pusher.
- Craggy hill.
- I will punish the multitude of ... (Jer. 46:25)
- Thou hast been my defence and ... (Ps. 59:16)
- His ... had offended the ...
- king of Egypt. (Gen. 40:1)
- Commercial.
- Thy prayer is ... (Luke 1:13)
- Acid component of protein.
- So ... went down from mount Tabor. (Judg. 4:14)
- Sediment. (abbr.)
- And she ... bare a son; and he called his name ... (Gen. 38:3)
- They were so ... (Jer. 24:2)
- Hear this, all ... people. (Ps. 49:1)
- Digraph.



World Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Christians in Ethiopia hit by unexpected attack

OLENKOMI, Ethiopia — Evangelical Christians in an area of Ethiopia unaccustomed to anti-Christian hostility have come under attack from Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) members threatened by their existence, Christian leaders said.

In Olenkomi, about 40 miles west of the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, two church buildings were attacked by an EOC mob Jan. 27 — leaving one evangelist unconscious and other Christians fearful of Orthodox hostility. Area Christians fear the assailants will not face justice due to the EOC's powerful presence and officials' desire for calm ahead of May 23 elections.

A Mekane Yesus church building was destroyed in the assault, while a Brethren church structure suffered damages.

The attacks came after an accidental fire from liturgical candles burned an EOC building. EOC members blamed evangelicals, and in the ensuing attacks visiting evangelist Abera Ongeremu was so badly beaten the mob left him for dead. Another three Christians also sustained minor injuries. After the mob stoned the Brethren church, they next targeted the Mekane Yesus church, where Ongeremu was staying in guest quarters.

A member of the mob took a Bible from his guest room and told him to burn it. He refused, and they bound his hands and legs and threw him back into the room, sprinkling diesel on the walls and roof and locking him in before setting it on fire, he said. But some of the assailants argued that Ongeremu should not die by burning but by beating, and two of them dragged him out of the room and continuously beat him.

"After repeated beatings I lost consciousness," he said. "I didn't know how and when they left me. I only recall they argued about how to kill me."

Vietnamese Christians abused by villagers, police

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam — Suffering severe abuse from villagers and local Vietnamese officials, Hmong Christian Sung Cua Po fled into the forest with his family March 19. An expulsion order had been issued to his family, an area Christian leader said. Po, who embraced Christianity in November, was badly beaten after local officials in northwest Vietnam's Dien Bien province arrested him Dec. 1, 2009. He then suffered physical attacks by police of Nam Son Commune on Feb. 10. The Christian leader said police have threatened that if he did not recant they would beat him till only his tongue was intact.

Around the Lunar New Year in mid-February, Po had an altercation with his father over offerings to family ancestors; Po held fast to his allegiance to Christ, refusing to sacrifice to his ancestors. On Feb. 20, Nam Son district police were authorized by Dien Bien Dong district authorities to demolish Po's house if deemed necessary. On Feb. 21, community members backed by police confiscated 40 sacks of paddy rice, the family's one-year supply.

In Phu Yen province in the south of Vietnam, religious intolerance was also on display as local police dragged a pastor behind a motorbike, Christian leaders reported. Village police summoned Y Du, a 55-year-old pastor from the Ede ethnic group, to a police station for questioning Jan. 27. While driving his motorbike to the station, Du was stopped by village police who chained his hands together and then attached the chain by rope to his motorbike. Christian sources said they forced Du to run behind the motorbike that they had commandeered, and he fell over many times, dragged along the ground. He was beaten and forced to keep running. He was later jailed without charges.



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SBC Representatives Around the World

Since returning from furlough in January 2009, we have made (we think) nine more trips to [Lomweland in Mozambique] to conduct hut-to-hut evangelical and development surveys, prayer walk/drive, meet chiefs and other community leaders and show this area to Lomwe church leaders from other areas where the gospel is well-established. Everyone who has seen the area is in agreement — much of Pebane District has little access to the gospel, and a missionary needs to move there. Numerous surveys have not found a single born-again believer.

In addition, the area is rapidly being lost to Islam. The Lomwe church leaders from our current ministry area who have accom-

panied us on multiple vision trips have unselfishly urged us to move to this new area where the people are spiritually hungry but have nobody to share "words from God's book" with them.

We have spent the last year and a half studying Portuguese (as a springboard to learning eLomwe later) while we continued ministering in Chichewa, and we have met the minimal language requirements needed in order to move. Now we just need to find a rental house, then build a bush house. Please pray

▶ that we will all see exactly what the Lord desires to show us.

▶ that we will have favor with community leaders.

▶ that our communication will be clear.

▶ that our trucks will be mechanically and structurally sound.

▶ that we will develop a clear understanding of what God wants us to do first in this new area.

▶ that we find a rental house in Pebane town, so that we can at least begin work in the area while searching for funding and a team capable of building a solar-powered house in the deep bush.

Many of you have met "The Beast" (our assigned mission truck, a 1999 Nissan Patrol). After driving the Malawi-licensed Patrol these

past 11 years, we'll be assigned a different mission vehicle because we'll be working full time in Mozambique. We thank you again for your faithful giving through the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Your giving purchased "The Beast" back in 1999 and will also provide our next assigned mission vehicle.

Some of you will notice that the timing of this big shift in our ministry coincides with Daniel (our last born) leaving for college in the U.S. Daniel plans to leave from Blantyre airport in Malawi on June 19, arriving in Atlanta and then on to Auburn June 20. His Camp War Eagle orientation session begins June 27. He did not identify a roommate to request by name, so please join us in prayer for his assigned roommate for fall.

Bob and Pam Brownfield
Thyolo, Malawi

I have some exciting news regarding radio ministry. About a month ago, I talked with a representative from a major Christian broadcasting organization (TWR, formerly known as Trans World Radio). He asked me to record one-minute segments on moral purity. If I understand things correctly, these segments will be playing on over 100 radio stations here in the Philippines starting in May. Praise God for opening new doors to bless others.

Kevin Sanders
Manila, Philippines

Confessing crimes to clergy protected from court trials

Ruling in the case of a man who spoke with a pastor about allegations he sexually abused his daughters, the New Jersey Supreme Court said conversations with clergy are protected from disclosure if an "objectively reasonable penitent" would believe the discussions were privileged.

The decision, delivered April 7, will guide judges on how to apply the cleric-penitent privilege.

"It is the first case that sets forth a specific set of rules for the lower courts to determine whether communications between a defendant and a clergyman are admissible at trial," said Alan Zegas, a prominent criminal defense attorney with offices in Chatham, N.J.

The court said the discussions must remain private "when, under the totality of the circumstances, an objectively reasonable penitent would believe that a communication was secret, that is, made in confidence to a cleric in the cleric's professional character or role as a spiritual advisor." (RNS)

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NAMB photo

TAKING THEM IN — NAMB missionary Michael Allen greets Chicago's homeless men and women who've come to Uptown Baptist Church for Bible study and a free meal.

'Seize that opportunity'

Missionary reaches out with 'word, deed' in uptown Chicago

Two blocks east of the "El" Train Red Line in uptown Chicago, a lady named Susan limps over from under a covered bus stop.

"That's my spot. I was here. I just had to sit down."

She marks her spot by hanging two canvas bags on the fence where a dozen men and women are lined up outside Uptown Baptist Church.

"I was here. This weather is killing my arthritis."

Her voice is husky but kind. She limps toward the bus stop, sits and takes a sip from something tightly wrapped in brown paper, looks over her shoulder again, then settles back against the glass enclosure.

As the line builds, she comes back.

Next Monday, she says, they're giving out shoes.

"Could you help me with this?" asks Susan, holding up a kids' Revenge of the Sith wristwatch six hours fast. "It's a cheap watch. I don't know how to fix it. It's not a very nice watch."

Every Monday around 4:30 p.m. the iron gate separating Uptown Baptist from the sidewalk creaks open and a couple of dozen or more homeless men and women file into pews for a word from Scripture then to the basement for a hot meal.

Shouldering computer bags and backpacks, a flock of Chicagoans scatter from the train and the buses toward home or an evening job in one of the

city's most diverse communities. This is North American Mission Board missionary Michael Allen's missions field.

"Uptown is one of the most diverse places in the Chicago area," Allen said. "It's diverse in almost every way you can imagine — ethnically, socio-economically, in gender and in age. It's home to retirees, young couples, newborns, the brilliant and the mentally ill."

Nearly 100 languages are represented in uptown's public schools. The neighborhood's population includes government officials, college professors, business professionals and a sub-culture of "down-and-outs."

Allen has worked with social ministries for years, beginning with his tenure at Moody Bible Church in Chicago and continuing with leadership at homeless and recovery ministries throughout the city.

"One day I could be at a press conference with the mayor of Chicago and all the movers and shakers and be in a suit and tie, then later that day on the street talking to somebody who's drunk and just gave his girlfriend AIDS," Allen said. "It's a powerful thing. It's an amazing thing. It's God at work changing people's lives, and I get to be used by Him to accomplish it."

Tonight Allen is hosting an hour-long Q & A session with a top Chicago attorney who'll help attendees

understand and navigate the legal system. Then those who've come will hear the gospel and gather for a meal of hot chicken and pasta. Later on in the evening, a dozen or more women will make them a pallet for the night in one of the church's rooms.

Outside the walls of the church, Uptown Baptist also is impacting local schools with a launch of Child Evangelism Fellowship, a door opened when the church provided backpacks and school supplies at the request of Chicago's mayor. Allen joined other church leaders, challenging them to show up at schools nearby to welcome children, interact with teachers and administration and provide students with backpacks full of paper, pencils and notebooks.

Man's 'deepest need'

"The deepest need of humankind is always to know God and to reconnect with God," Allen said. "Whatever surface problems are going on around us, if we stop long enough and look carefully enough, we would see that it's a spiritual problem. It's a heart problem. We need to seize that opportunity before us and to continue to be real with people."

Allen's resume credentials mount up, from education to inner-city experience, but his job as father is of primary importance to him.

"In a survey of hundreds of homeless people, the recurring theme we saw was an inability to respect authority and a lack of strong male leadership in the home," Allen said. "I'm passionate about seeing the church change some bleak statistics." (NAMB)

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Mother upset school aided daughter's abortion

SEATTLE — The mother of a Seattle high school student reacted angrily after she learned that an on-campus health clinic helped her daughter obtain an abortion during academic hours. The Ballard (High School) Teen Health Center provided the 15-year-old girl with a pass and a taxi cab ride to have the abortion, according to a report by KOMO-TV, Seattle's ABC affiliate. The clinic did not disclose the girl's pregnancy or the abortion to her mother.

The mother, identified as "Jill" in the TV station's March 23 report, said she had signed a consent form for health care at the campus clinic but did not realize that meant the clinic could help her daughter get an abortion without her knowledge. "Jill" said her daughter is pro-life. "She took a pregnancy test at school at the teen health center," the mother said, KOMO reported. "Nowhere in this paperwork does it mention abortion or facilitating abortion.

"We had no idea this was being facilitated on campus. They just told her that if she concealed it from her family, that it would be free of charge and no financial responsibility. Makes me feel like my rights were completely stripped away," the mother said.

The consent form signed by parents whose children use such school health centers says students "may independently access reproductive health care at any age," but it does not specify abortion as part of such care, according to *The Seattle Times*. The phrase "reproductive health care" is often understood by abortion-rights advocates and pro-life supporters to include abortion services, however.

Washington does not have a state law requiring parental notification or consent before a minor undergoes an abortion.

Judge says Million Dollar Bill tracts aren't illegal

DENTON, Texas — A federal judge has ruled that Secret Service agents violated the constitutional rights of a Texas-based evangelical ministry when they seized thousands of Million Dollar Bill gospel tracts without a warrant.

Judge Jorge Solis also ruled that the ministry, the Great News Network, did not violate federal law by distributing the dollar-sized tracts that the U.S. Treasury Department viewed as counterfeit currency.

"The Million Dollar Bill, taken as a whole, poses no reasonable risk of deceiving an honest, sensible and unsuspecting person," Solis wrote in his decision March 30. Secret Service agents arrived unannounced at the ministry's headquarters in Denton, Texas, on June 1, 2006, and demanded that officials hand over the tracts, which are printed to look like a \$1 million dollar bill, with an image of President Grover Cleveland on the front. The U.S. government does not print a million-dollar bill; notes are no longer printed in any amount larger than \$1,000. The reverse side of the tract features "The million-dollar question: Will you go to heaven?"

Despite protests from ministry officials, the agents seized 8,300 copies of the tract with no warrant. The ministry later filed suit, alleging violations of the constitutional protection against unreasonable searches and seizures. The judge ruled that the tract "is designed to look like U.S. currency at first glance, but not designed to fool anyone into believing that it is real U.S. currency," and was never used by "an individual trying to pass it as legal tender."

Foot washing lands La. official in hot water

NEW ORLEANS — The ritual of washing feet has a deep-seated tie to Holy Week, a symbol of the humility Jesus showed in performing the act for His disciples the day before His death.

Craig Taffaro, president of St. Bernard Parish, La., took that custom into the workplace April 1, going around the government complex throughout the day to wash the feet of willing employees.

"As the chief executive officer of St. Bernard Parish Government, I thought it was an appropriate gesture to show that I am as humbled as any other sinner in the world, so much so that I would offer to wash the feet of the employees," Taffaro said.

Taffaro did not publicize his actions. A reporter was alerted to the matter by several phone calls from people who had heard from government employees whose feet were washed. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) responded April 5 with a letter from Executive Director Marjorie R. Esman reminding Taffaro that the Constitution prohibits government officials from imposing religious practices on employees at the workplace. Esman said the ACLU trusts he will refrain from further religious practices in the workplace. The foot washing ritual is often incorporated into Catholic and other Christian ceremonies the Thursday of Holy Week, known as Maundy Thursday or Holy Thursday. The Gospel of John describes Jesus washing the feet of His disciples at the time of the Last Supper.

A monthly advertising supplement — April 2010

Church Resource Guide

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