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Alabama's Liberty Baptist, Painter, highlighted in NAMB report

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BP photo

ALL IN FAVOR — Members of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force hold their ballots up in favor of passing the task force's recommendations June 15 during the afternoon session of the annual meeting of the SBC at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla.

GCR Task Force report adopted

SBC messengers amend report to stress Cooperative Program

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), meeting at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla., embraced a future uncertain but focused on the Great Commission when a solid majority of messengers adopted the report of the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) Task Force on June 15.

"We are a Great Commission people," task force chairman Ronnie Floyd thundered when the final hand vote showed a 60 percent to 70 percent majority favoring the seven recommendations of the report, which messengers considered as a whole.

A year after SBC President Johnny Hunt appointed the task force to bring recommendations about how Southern

Baptists could work together more efficiently, nearly 11,000 messengers ended months of debate with two and a quarter hours of discussion that remained cordial throughout.

Just as in the earlier months of debate, deliberation focused mostly on the recommendation that would change giving terminology to make the Cooperative Program (CP) the primary element of a new category of "Great Commission Giving" rather than the sole recognized avenue of general missions support.

In the only amendment to pass muster, messengers affirmed a motion by Pastor John Waters of First Baptist Church, Statesboro, Ga., to add language that says Southern Baptists will "continue to honor and affirm the Cooperative Program as the most effective means of mobilizing our churches and extending our outreach. We affirm that designated giving to special causes is to be given as a supplement to the Cooperative Program and not as a substitute for Cooperative Program giving."

Later task force member Al

Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said the amended language was a welcome addition that expressed the task force's heart.

Reaction to a preliminary report the task force released in February was so vociferous members made themselves available across the nation

to speak to groups, answer questions and listen. Input from various groups of Baptist state convention employees, missionaries, associational leaders and pastors found its way into the final report.

Floyd, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Springdale, Ark., and The (See 'GCR,' page 4)

Wright elected SBC president

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

In a surprise move, Southern Baptists said no to two well-known presidential candidates and elected a church planter from Marietta, Ga., to lead them in the coming year.

Bryant Wright, senior pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga., beat Ted Traylor, pastor of Olive Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla., 4,225 to 3,371 in a run-off. Wright's votes represented 55.11 percent of the 7,667 votes cast, while

Traylor's represented 43.97 percent. Seventy-one votes, or 0.93 percent, were disallowed.

Traylor and Jimmy Jackson, senior pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, entered the race as the front-runners, particularly in what many labeled a pro/con Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) presidential race. Traylor served on the GCR Task Force. Jackson was outspoken against the task force's report, which was approved by convention (See 'Wright,' page 7)



WRIGHT

COMMENT

Passion or Division at the SBC?

Tension built Tuesday afternoon as messengers lined up at microphones across the convention hall to debate the report of the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) Task Force. The moment had been anticipated by the more than 10,000 messengers who assembled that day in Orlando, Fla., for the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). Only a handful of messengers wandered through the exhibit area. Most congregated to hear the debate and cast ballots for or against the task force's report.

As emotions built, a messenger from Texas expressed his concern about the division he felt in the room and asked SBC President Johnny Hunt to lead the group in prayer. Without asking messengers to approve the request, Hunt complied. During the prayer, Hunt said he did not feel division in the room but only passion for the Great Commission.

Hunt's words came less than an hour after SBC Executive Committee (EC) President Morris Chapman urged messengers to vote against the report (see story, page 4). Chapman devoted the final address of his 18 years at the helm of the EC to pointing out shortcomings and dangers of the report. Leading up to the meeting, he had been an outspoken critic of the report. And during the debate, an early effort to kill the report "because of the division [it] has created among Southern Baptists" was successfully pared by the GCR Task Force.

Passion or division, which was more prevalent during the annual meeting?

Before messengers gathered, one prominent convention personality lamented that Southern Baptists were more divided than he had seen in years. He pointed to the four candidates for president as evidence of the division. Two candidates endorsed the task force report. Two called for its defeat. Also cited as proof of division were two candidates for SBC Pastors Conference president instead of one predetermined choice.

Pre-convention division

At the pre-convention meeting of the EC, more evidence of division surfaced. Former SBC President Frank Page was elected to succeed Chapman as EC president (see story, page 3). But that vote did not come until after almost two hours of closed-session debate. The closed session was the first in 18 years and provided cover for a sizable number of EC members to challenge Page's nomination, which had earlier drawn the ire of a number of megachurch pastors. During the closed session, a number of EC members questioned Page's conservative credentials because he had not been a leader in the conservative resurgence.

Page was elected by a 44-30 vote, participants shared. Page did not challenge the numbers when asked about the vote. He only pointed out that he got more votes than the newly elected chairman, Roger Spradlin of California. Sprad-



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

lin beat out Doug Melton of Oklahoma for that position by a vote of 40-31 (see story, page 3).

At the Pastors Conference, it was hard to tell if it was concern about division or simple passion that was driving the campaign to approve the task force's report (see story, page 6). In addition to preachers in every session promoting its adoption, 10 minutes of each session was devoted to a GCR challenge. The campaign climaxed Monday evening with task force chairman Ronnie Floyd reminding the audience that the Pastors Conference has historically played a major role in determining the direction of the SBC and urging listeners to support the report the following day. The emphasis ended when Mac Brunson, who preached the convention sermon, led those attending the Pastors Conference in prayer for the task force.

'No matter what happens'

The passion for the report was obvious to all. So was the concern about division as several people spoke about "no matter what happens."

During the GCR debate, messengers could not agree about the relationship of the Cooperative Program (CP) and the proposed giving category called Great Commission Giving. The report called for establishing the new category. An amendment from the floor omitted much of that wording and called for "continuing to honor the Cooperative Program as the most effective means of mobilizing churches" in missions.

When a show of ballots was too close to call, parties frantically huddled to work out a compromise that ended up keeping the original wording and adding the emphasis on the CP. At least in this case, passion overcame division.

When the final vote affirmed the report as amended, backers were quick to say only about 25 percent of messengers opposed the report. Others placed the opposition near 40 percent. Without a ballot vote, the exact number will always be unknown. Even though winners usually write the accepted version of history, this writer's observation of the vote placed the opposition closer to 40 percent than 25 percent.

That everyone who voted passionately held to his or her position was obvious. But the passion could not hide the division evidenced by the vote.

The struggle between passion and division did not end with the vote. The next morning, messengers challenged a decision by the task force to seal its records for 15 years. Members said it was necessary to maintain confidentiality for some who testified before them. Those wanting the records made public argued that Southern Baptists should do their work in the open. In the end, messengers concluded it was more important to keep confidentiality than it was to practice transparency.

Both passion and division were still on display, as messengers huddled in small groups to talk about what happened the day before. Feelings pro and con had not subsided. What became evident was messengers were not in agreement on what they had done. Some argued that following the vote, SBC entities had no choice but to implement all the task force's recommendations.

Consider or implement

Others argued that each of the recommendations asked the respective entities to "consider" the proposed action. Many cited the exchange between Missouri Baptist Convention Executive Director David Tolliver and task force member Al Mohler. Tolliver attempted to refer the report to the EC for evaluation and reactions from various entities and state conventions before decisions were made.

Mohler, speaking for the task force, said the task force agreed with Tolliver's desire and that was what the report did (see video of the exchange at www.thealabamabaptist.org).

To use an analogy from last week's editorial, the first inning of the GCR ballgame is over. Now the second inning will be played out in a variety of places where division and passion will continue to be visible. And there will be subsequent innings.

But remember, the game is about what methodology Southern Baptists should use to display their common passion to penetrate lostness.

Southern Baptists must be careful to make sure their differences about methodology do not overshadow their unity concerning passion for the Great Commission. If that happens, then all will ultimately lose.

THE
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"If ye continue in my word, then ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).
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Messengers approve reduced CP budget for 2010-11

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) approved a pared down budget for 2010-11 and honored two agency presidents who are retiring this year.

They approved a \$199,822,090 Cooperative Program (CP) Allocation Budget recommended by the SBC Executive Committee (EC) — down 1.21 percent from the previous year's budget — with 50 percent directed to the International Mission Board (IMB) and 22.79 percent to the North American Mission Board (NAMB).

The budget earmarks \$44,280,576, or 22.16 percent, for the SBC's six seminaries and its historical archives, while setting aside \$3,397,064, or 1.65 percent, for The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

Messengers also adopted an SBC Operating Budget of \$8,643,951, a decrease of approximately 5.5 percent from last year's budget. The operating budget includes the EC, the annual meeting and committees, special programs, building maintenance and administration.

Messengers adopted resolutions of appreciation for EC President Morris Chapman and Jerry Rankin, who retires July 31 as president of the IMB.

Praising his contributions to Southern Baptist life as "enduring, extensive and extraordinary" in helping to change and shape its course, the resolution for Chapman noted that he "has distinguished himself as a consummate statesman."

Under Chapman's leadership, the EC and the SBC adopted the Covenant for a New Century, which

Frank Page elected new EC president

In a closed-door session June 14, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee (EC) voted 44-30 to elect Frank Page as its new president and chief executive officer.

Page, 57, vice president of evangelization at the North American Mission Board (NAMB) since October 2009, was pastor of First Baptist Church, Taylors, S.C., for eight years and SBC president from 2006 to 2008. He succeeds Morris Chapman, who will retire Sept. 30 after 18 years of service.

"This has been a soul-searching time for all of us," said Randall James, assistant pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., and chairman of the EC. "We didn't want to pick who we wanted but who the Lord Jesus Christ had already chosen before the foundation of the world."

"I deeply appreciate this call — and that's the way I perceive it and have felt it in my heart from the Lord — and I do accept your offer," Page told the EC after it emerged from more than 90 minutes of deliberation

to announce his election. "I do so with a great sense of calling and destiny [and] awareness that God has a great future for Southern Baptists."

Page pledged two things to the committee: "I will love you with all my heart and will work with all my might."

He suggested making a "spiritual covenant together" in order to be "unified in our passion and in our hearts to see this world won to Jesus Christ."

James announced Page will serve alongside Chapman as president-elect until Oct. 1.

Standing outside the meeting room while EC members were praying before their vote, Page described as cordial the lengthy question-and-answer session with committee members.

Committee members asked "substantive questions" about his

participation in the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) Task Force over the past year and his views on various items in the group's recommendations to SBC messengers, Page said.

The task force was charged with making recommendations for ways the SBC could carry out the Great Commission more effectively.

"I have been very clear that I did have some concerns about the GCR items," Page said. "But I do want to join our president in a call for a Great Commission Resurgence" across the convention.

While some committee members viewed his involvement with the task force negatively, Page said, "Others were concerned I didn't support it enough."

Page expressed the need to highlight the importance of Cooperative Program (CP) giving to

Southern Baptist missions efforts. "I'm a strong CP supporter," Page said. "While a lot of people talk about the Cooperative Program, I've been raising millions through it because I do believe in it."

At a press conference following his introduction to SBC messengers at the annual meeting in Orlando on June 15, Page noted the diverse opinions currently characterizing the convention were reflected in the divided vote on his election.

"It's indicative of the reality of where we are," he said. "Trust takes place over time. I (will) work hard to build unity in that body."

Page said he has two hopes for his service to the convention: unity "unlike anything we've ever seen before" and a positive public perception of Southern Baptists.

"Southern Baptists have long been known for what we are against," Page stated. "The vast, vast majority of people in our convention are men and women who are loving and caring."

(Editor's Network)



FRANK AND DAYLE PAGE

called for a restructuring of the SBC's entities, reducing them from 19 to 12 and redirecting significant funds into "frontline ministry." The EC also approved establishment of the Council on Family Life, and the SBC adopted Empowering

Kingdom Growth, a vision calling churches and members to pursue the kingdom of God.

In expressing the gratitude of Southern Baptists, a resolution honoring Rankin pointed not only to his 17-year tenure as IMB president but also to his 23 years of service with the former Foreign Mission Board, starting with his appointment as a missionary in 1970.

In other business, Darrell Orman, chairman of the EC's communications subcommittee, requested an extension of one year for a study of greater SBC involvement for ethnic churches.

Convention messengers also

► Changed their 2013 meet-

ing site from Nashville to Houston.

► Approved holding their 2015 meeting in Columbus, Ohio.

► Revised the ministry statement of the Southern Baptist Foundation, broadening its scope to serve all Baptist bodies and entities.

The M.E. Dodd Cooperative Program Award was presented to First Baptist Church, Sparkman, Ark., a 103-member congregation that averages 60 to 75 in Sunday worship but has contributed an average of 32.8 percent in CP giving over the past 30 years, with a high of 43.4 percent. The award is presented annually to the person, congregation or organization that has demonstrated continuous long-term excellence

in supporting the principles, practice and spirit of the CP, Chapman noted.

During the EC meeting, Roger Spradlin, co-pastor of Valley Baptist Church, Bakersfield, Calif., who served as vice chairman this past year, was elected chairman for 2010-11. Spradlin received 40 votes of 71 cast, while Doug Melton, of Oklahoma City, garnered 31.

Earnest Easley, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga., was elected vice chairman, and Joe Wright, director of missions for Dyer Baptist Association in Tennessee, was chosen as secretary, defeating Carol Yarber, of Athens, Texas. (Editor's Network)

Alabama Baptists tapped to serve in SBC roles

Several Alabama Baptists were elected during this year's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting to serve on a board or committee:

► **Scott Guffin**, pastor of Liberty Park Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, and **Mark E. Larrabee**, member of Hillcrest Baptist Church, Enterprise — Committee on Committees.

► **D. Wayne Myrick**, member of Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover, and **R. Ron Madison**, senior pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville — Executive Committee.

► **J. Timothy Wilkes**, member of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, second term — GuideStone Financial Resources.

► **Richard Richie**, senior pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Roanoke — In-

ternational Mission Board.

► **Raymond Jones**, senior pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Dothan, second term — International Mission Board.

► **Randall E. Ingram**, senior pastor of Riverside Baptist Church, Mobile, first term, and **Rickey E. (Ric) Camp**, pastor of Sunrise Baptist Church, Mobile, second term — North American Mission Board.

► **N. Bruce Moseley**, pastor of Zion Baptist Church, Mobile — LifeWay Christian Resources.

► **Edwin J. Hayes**, pastor of First Baptist Church, Cullman — Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

► **Jimmy E. Jackson**, senior pastor of Whitesburg Baptist — Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. (BP)

Alabamians serve during SBC meeting



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Gary Cardwell (right), director of missions for Etowah Baptist Association, and Mark Wood (left), messenger from FBC Fulntondale, work at the credentials booth at the SBC annual meeting June 15.

Other Alabama Baptists serving in various roles at the meeting were Rob Jackson, senior pastor of Central Baptist Church, Decatur; Greg Corbin, associate pastor of teaching and ministry of Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville; Shane Russell, pastor of Shoal Creek Baptist Church, Deatsville; James Taylor, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Sheffield; and Randy Norris, pastor of The Church at Ross Station, Hoover. Of the 11,070 SBC messengers, 869 were from Alabama. (TAB)

GCR report impacts mission boards, state conventions

(continued from page 1)

Church at Pinnacle Hills, Rogers, Ark., said he was surprised by the diversity of task force members in their first meeting and wondered how it would be possible to unify the group. "We needed to understand lostness," he eventually concluded. "If lostness cannot bring us together, my soul, we are dead, dead, dead."

Consequently the theme of the report became "Penetrating the Lostness," and its final six recommendations sprang from the first — establish a missional vision "to present the gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all nations."

Other recommendations

The other recommendations approved by messengers include

- ▶ Core values of Christlikeness, truth, unity, relationships, trust, future, local church and Kingdom;

- ▶ Great Commission Giving, which includes gifts to SBC-related entities to "count" along with CP giving as support for Southern Baptist causes;

- ▶ "Reinvent" and "unleash" the North American Mission Board (NAMB) to implement a missional strategy to reach high population centers in the United States and Canada. This will involve ending the cooperative agreements that have governed NAMB's work with state conventions over the next seven years and possibly decentralizing NAMB's strategic personnel;

- ▶ Remove geographic limitations from International Mission Board (IMB) personnel to enable missionaries to serve in the United States pockets of the people group they serve overseas;

- ▶ Give primary responsibility for CP and stewardship promotion to state conventions; and

- ▶ Move 1 percent of the national CP allocation from the SBC Executive Committee to the IMB. This 1 percent represents about \$2 million, one-third of the Executive Committee's budget.

GCR called 'decisive moment in history'

I think today will go down as a very decisive moment in the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) history," Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said during a news conference following the vote to pass the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) Task Force report.

"This morning ... I prayed the denomination would head toward hope, and I believe that's what happened today."

The SBC overwhelmingly reaffirmed its intention to spread the gospel throughout the nation and around the world, members of the GCR Task Force told reporters June 14.

At least "75 percent to 85 percent or above" of messengers to the SBC annual meeting ratified the task force's seven-part set of recommendations, GCR Task Force chairman Ronnie Floyd said.

The task force drafted the recommendations to turn the convention's focus toward "penetrating the lostness" of the world. It

received stiff opposition from Morris Chapman, retiring president of the SBC Executive Committee, as well as leaders of some Baptist state conventions and others who fear the changes will erode financial support for the convention.

"We thank all Southern Baptists for believing in the Great Commission," Christ's mandate to spread the gospel across the globe, Floyd said, as he was flanked by five other members of the task force.

"The convention vote was very clear," stressed Floyd, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Springdale, Ark., and The Church at Pinnacle Hills, Rogers, Ark.

"As a convention, we have made some basic statements," added Mohler.

Evangelistic priority

One of those clear statements is the convention's priority for telling people all over the world about Jesus Christ, insisted Roger Spradlin, co-pastor of Valley Baptist Church, Bakersfield, Calif., and new chairman of the Executive Committee.

Spradlin noted the convention

voted to move 1 percent of the Cooperative Program, the SBC's unified budget, from the Executive Committee to the International Mission Board (IMB). One percent of the IMB budget translates into 46 missionaries, who will present the gospel to people all around the world who never have heard of Jesus, he said.

"That represents more than dollars on a spreadsheet," he added. "It represents the heart" of Southern Baptists' passion for the gospel.

Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., has experienced that passion through two sons who have served as missionaries among Muslims.

"I saw the lostness of the world. I wanted us — brothers and sisters — to catch a vision for what matters to God," he said of his motivation for the recommendations.

For the past year, every member of the task force has been changed by his or her experience, reported Ken Whitten, senior pastor of Idlewild Baptist Church, Lutz, Fla.

"We have taken a look through

the Lord's eyes to the lostness of the world," he said. "Lostness has broken our hearts."

That brokenness and concern extends to America, Spradlin said, pointing out his state, California, is home to 30 million people who do not follow Christ.

'Right direction'

"You can't think about lostness without it impacting your heart," he noted.

Passage of the task force's report was "another step in the right direction" toward energizing the younger generation of Southern Baptists, Akin said.

Even though the recommendations encountered spirited opposition, Floyd predicted Southern Baptists would rally behind the decision and move forward together.

"When Baptists have spoken, Baptists get their hearts in line," he said. "We are optimistic the convention has spoken." (Editor's Network)

The task force report was approved despite significant opposition by Executive Committee President Morris Chapman, who only moments before debate over the report began said, "Under God, I do not want to go in the wrong direction on the wrong road in the wrong time in our history."

A change of heart

The task force countered, without reference to Chapman, with a detailed presentation focused on "penetrating lostness" and "pushing back darkness."

Task force members continually emphasized only a change of heart will bring about the

changes envisioned by their recommendations.

Before debate began on the recommendations, Floyd reminded messengers the task force's responsibility was to establish a vision but "it is the responsibility of various boards and trustees to implement these recommendations."

Ultimately the five substantive recommendations all are directed to the Executive Committee to consider. If considered positive, then the recommendations will be passed to the boards of the affected entities to consider implementation.

Messengers rejected a move by Bill Sutton of First Baptist Church,

McAllen, Texas, to postpone the report indefinitely because it has been "divisive."

Potential impact

They similarly turned back a motion by David Tolliver, executive director for the Missouri Baptist Convention, that messengers simply receive the report as information to give affected entities a chance to evaluate its potential impact. "It's not a bad report, just premature," Tolliver said. "Jesus urged us to count the cost" before undertaking a journey, he said, adding Southern Baptists don't know the cost of implementing the GCR report.

After a show of hands vote, Floyd

urged messengers to remember that every person in the room supports the Great Commission. He urged that the differences between those who support the task force report and those who do not "should not be exaggerated."

"We are still brothers and sisters in Christ," he said, who "differ on no article of faith" and are guided by commitment to the gospel.

"The Southern Baptist Convention is a convention of churches that is committed to a missional vision of presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world. We are a Great Commission people."

To read the report, visit www.pray4gcr.com. (Editor's Network)

GCR recommendations will not bring resurgence, Chapman warns

Adopting the report of the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) Task Force could have negative repercussions, Morris Chapman warned Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) messengers during their annual meeting June 15.

In his final report as president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee, Chapman extolled the virtues of the Cooperative Program (CP), Southern Baptists' unified giving plan.

Proven to work

While acknowledging the CP has never given every entity all it wanted or needed, he insisted it has given every entity some funds to do the work God called them to do.

"The Cooperative Program has survived many years of tough times. It has brought us through every time," said Chapman, who will

retire from his position Sept. 30. If the report of the GCR Task Force is approved, he warned, the CP will not retain the unique place it has held. "It will be one of several offerings, not one of a kind."

Chapman, who served as president of the convention two years before being elected president of the Executive Committee in 1992, recalled the "conservative resurgence" of the 1970s and 1980s as a "return to Southern Baptists' roots theologically."

Chapman said he fears that the GCR Task Force report, if approved, would lead Southern Baptists from its funding methodology.

"If we abandon our methodology of cooperation, we will become independent Bap-



CHAPMAN

tists, not autonomous, cooperating Baptists," he warned. "If you want to be independent tomorrow, you can declare it so. ... You can walk away as an independent Baptist body of people."

"Failure to fulfill the Great Commission is not a structural problem and it cannot be accomplished with a structural solution," he stressed. Failure to fulfill the Great Commission is a "heart problem, a spiritual problem, a stewardship problem," Chapman said. "We can't manufacture a resurgence of God's power because someone declares it to be so."

In referencing the task force report, Chapman spoke specifically against the last five recommendations of the report (see 'GCR' story above or visit www.pray4gcr.com).

com for an outline of recommendations).

"The last five recommendations will never bring resurgence to the Southern Baptist Convention," Chapman told messengers. Instead, he continued, those recommendations "will bring more confusion and chaos" to the convention. They need more thought, study and prayer, he asserted.

An 'urgency'

However, he did not dismiss the entire report. There is great truth in the "urgency" pointed out by the task force, Chapman said. "We must be urgent in penetrating the darkness."

He also called for the adoption of the challenges listed at the end of the task force report. "The challenges will inspire us to a higher calling, a greater vision," he said. "These two sections can form the foundation of where God wants us to go together." (Editor's Network)

Resolved to act

Oil spill tops resolutions approved by SBC messengers



BP photo

EXHORTATION — Johnny Hunt, SBC president, delivers a fiery address June 15 during the opening session of the SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla.

Hunt calls GCR move 'bold,' 'compelling'

Just as Caleb and Joshua delivered a "bold report" to the Israelites about the promised land, so has the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) Task Force relayed a "compelling vision" to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), President Johnny Hunt told messengers.

Delivering his final address to the convention as its president, Hunt said this year's annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., finds the SBC at a crossroads.

"Many are saying this could be a history-making convention," the pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Ga., told messengers. "God could use some of the things we do here ... to embolden Southern Baptists to their greatest days."

Referring to Joshua 14, Hunt compared the report of the GCR Task Force, which later was adopted by messengers, to the "bold report" Caleb and Joshua brought back to the Israelites after spying out the land of Canaan.

Twelve spies were sent to assess the land promised to them by the Lord; 10 of them brought back "bad reports," Hunt said. Joshua and Caleb saw things differently.

'Ten ... missed God'

"Ten of the spies magnified the problems, spent lots of time reviewing the past and, in the process, missed God," he said.

Caleb and Joshua, however, "magnified the power of God, made so much of the promises of God and desired to lead the people to a brighter future."

After the Israelites rebelled against Joshua and Caleb's report, the tribe would not inherit the land the Lord had promised them for another 45 years, Hunt reminded messengers.

Saying the spirit of the task

force report mirrors that of Caleb's, Hunt called the group's "Penetrating the Lostness" document a "compelling vision" for the denomination — "something that will take the yawn out of Southern Baptist rhetoric."

"I'm tired of yawning. I'm tired of having my membership in a convention that's declining," Hunt declared.

Rallying 'young ones'

"Look around," he said. "We're aging. We're balding. We don't have 45 years. ... We're here to make decisions that will affect what type of convention we offer to the young ones that are coming behind us."

Hunt is being challenged by the up-and-coming generation of church leaders. But they will not lead the convention into the future without the help of those who have come before them, he noted. "I'd like to be a blessing to the ones that went before me that made such an investment in me," Hunt said. "But I want to grab the young group behind me ... and rally them to our greatest days in Southern Baptist life."

Pointing out Joshua was 100 years old and Caleb was 85 when he took the land of Hebron from the Anakites, Hunt said older pastors should not yet concede their ministries. "If you're still breathing, it is still your day," he noted.

"Caleb and Joshua were senior-adult saints that left spiritual wealth to those behind them," Hunt pointed out.

"The future of the [SBC] will not rest on a single vote alone," he said. "But who can calculate what it will mean as a waiting world and a rising generation watch to see if we're serious about emboldened Great Commission faithfulness in the future." (Editor's Network)

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) decried ecological catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico, focused on the family and opposed the normalization of homosexuality as messengers approved seven resolutions with no debate during the SBC annual meeting.

A resolution **on the Gulf of Mexico catastrophe** lamented the deaths of 11 oilrig workers and pledged to pray for their families. It also called on Southern Baptists and other Christians "to pray for the end of this catastrophe and for the homes, lives, cultures and livelihoods in the Gulf Coast region."

It urged the government to end the crisis, ensure corporate accountability to clean up and restore the Gulf region, plan contingencies to respond to future oil spills and "promote future energy policies based upon prudence, conservation, accountability and safety."

Two SBC resolutions targeted the health and well-being of families.

On the scandal of Southern Baptist divorce cited two studies on divorce. One demonstrates conservative Protestants divorce at the same, if not higher, rate than the U.S. population. The other reveals regions where Southern Baptists predominate have higher divorce rates than regions without a strong evangelical witness.

"Even the most expansive view of the biblical exceptions allowing for divorce and remarriage would rule out many, if not most, of the divorces in our churches," the resolution stated, citing "cultural accommodation" as the reason for accelerating divorce rates.

The resolution called on churches to "proclaim the word of God on the permanence of marriage," provide marriage enrichment opportunities,

marry "only those who are biblically qualified to be married to one another," emphasize the gravity of marital vows in wedding ceremonies, minister to couples and families in crisis, and demonstrate compassion to "those who have been left in the wake of family brokenness."

A related resolution, **on family worship**, encouraged churches and families to "rekindle the spiritual discipline of family worship."

The resolutions that opposed the normalization of homosexuality in American society targeted an effort to repeal the U.S. military's homosexual policy and the proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act introduced in Congress.

The resolution **on homosexuality and the United States military** noted, "The Bible describes homosexual behavior as both a contributing cause and a consequence of God's judgment on nations and individuals." It cited the 1993 law that supports the current "don't ask, don't tell" policy as stating no one has a constitutional right to serve in the armed forces. "It is the seasoned judgment of most military leaders that normalizing the open presence of homosexuals in the military is incompatible with generating, strengthening and maintaining good discipline, unit cohesion and combat readiness."

Messengers opposed efforts to change current law to "normalize the open presence of homosexuals in the armed forces." They also deplored acts of violence related to homosexuality, expressed their "pride in and support for all now serving in the United States armed forces" and commended "loving, redemptive ministry to homosexuals."

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act resolution character-

ized the proposed bill as "granting such things as sexual orientation the same employment protections as gender and race, placing these immoral and aberrant behaviors on the same level as the immutable traits of gender and ancestry."

"Homosexual persons are not our enemies but our neighbors whom we love and wish to see find the same forgiveness and freedom we have found in Christ," the resolution said. But it warned "businesses with a religious character," such as religious bookstores and parachurch ministries, would not be exempted from policies that would deny them the right to fire or refuse to hire employees based upon sexual orientation.

Another resolution, **on the centrality of the gospel**, called on Southern Baptists to "reaffirm our commitment to the supremacy and centrality of the gospel of Jesus Christ in our churches," and exhorted churches to proclaim the gospel to unbelievers and to "display the gospel by transcending ethnic, racial, economic and social barriers due to our unity in Christ."

"We recommit ourselves to ... greater faithfulness to the Great Commission, both in personal witness and in sending more gospel workers to the unreached peoples of the world," it said. "We commit to speak to the outside world as those who are forgiven sinners, who have received mercy as a free gift, and not as those who are morally or ethically superior to anyone."

A final traditional resolution **on appreciation** expressed appreciation for all those responsible for planning and conducting the annual meeting and hosting it in Orlando, Fla. (Editor's Network)



BP photo

MORE THAN 1,000 DECISIONS MADE AT CROSSOVER ORLANDO

Approximately 50 Alabama Baptists were among the 1,700 Southern Baptist volunteers who converged on Orlando, Fla., to take part in Crossover Orlando 2010, held June 7–12 prior to the Southern Baptist Convention's June 15–16 annual meeting. During this year's Crossover events, 1,505 salvation decisions were made, including 309 decisions at the Hispanic events.

Pastors Conference

Great Commission Resurgence emphasis flows through all sessions

The Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) is a “natural and spiritual outgrowth of the conservative resurgence,” Danny Akin told participants in the Southern Baptist Pastors Conference, held June 13–14.

Akin, a member of the GCR Task Force and president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., was one of several speakers who either explicitly endorsed the recommendations of the task force or more subtly underscored their importance.

In the final Pastors Conference session, President Kevin Ezell introduced the members of the task force. The group’s chairman, Ronnie Floyd, pleaded with pastors to get firmly behind the measure. While this was the most overt GCR promotion, each session featured a GCR Challenge brought by a task force member.

Akin, who preached Monday afternoon, said, “The conservative resurgence was never just about affirming an inerrant Bible. It was also about getting an inerrant gospel to the nations so that they might be saved.”

Preaching from Hebrews 12, Akin outlined the elements needed and those that need to be discarded to run the Christian race well, whether as individuals, churches or denominations.

“We must guide our people to run in faith unhindered the race God has put before us,” he said. To run with endurance means stay-

ing focused on Jesus, Akin said.

Staying focused only on the essentials means “getting rid of any excess baggage, anything that can weigh you down, even in the denomination.”

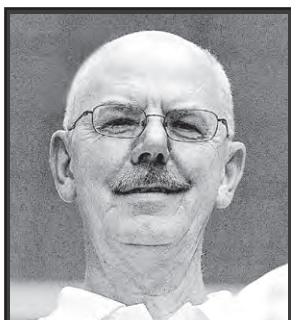
“Pride can become a weight about what we’ve done in the past and who we think we are today,” Akin said.

“Territorialism can be a weight. God forgive us if we are territorial ... if we don’t see the whole world as our missions field,” he said.

While weights can be sinful things, they can also be good things that become bad, such as the Cooperative Program (CP), Akin told pastors. “You take a good thing like the CP and turn it into a god thing and it will be a bad thing.”

Floyd, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Springdale, Ark., and The Church at Pinnacle Hills, Rogers, Ark., echoed Akin in linking the GCR to the conservative resurgence, a movement he said was bolstered by the Pastors Conference.

“Historically the Pastors Conference has played a major directional role in SBC (Southern Baptist Convention) life,” he said. “In recent days, I’ve developed an overwhelming appreciation for the men that have fought for the infallibility of Scripture. ‘Where are the leaders for the GCR?’ he asked. “It appears we are more into playing it safe than risking it all [and] more committed to keeping our reputations than shouting that we



Elected treasurer
— MICHAEL HOLCOMB —
Senior pastor of Iron City Baptist Church, Anniston

Adoption fund launched

The Southern Baptist Pastors Conference took up the cause of orphans June 14 with the creation of a fund to defray the cost of adoptions, a presentation by a choir of Ugandan orphans, a sermon on the theme and a testimony by conference President Kevin Ezell, the father of adopted children.

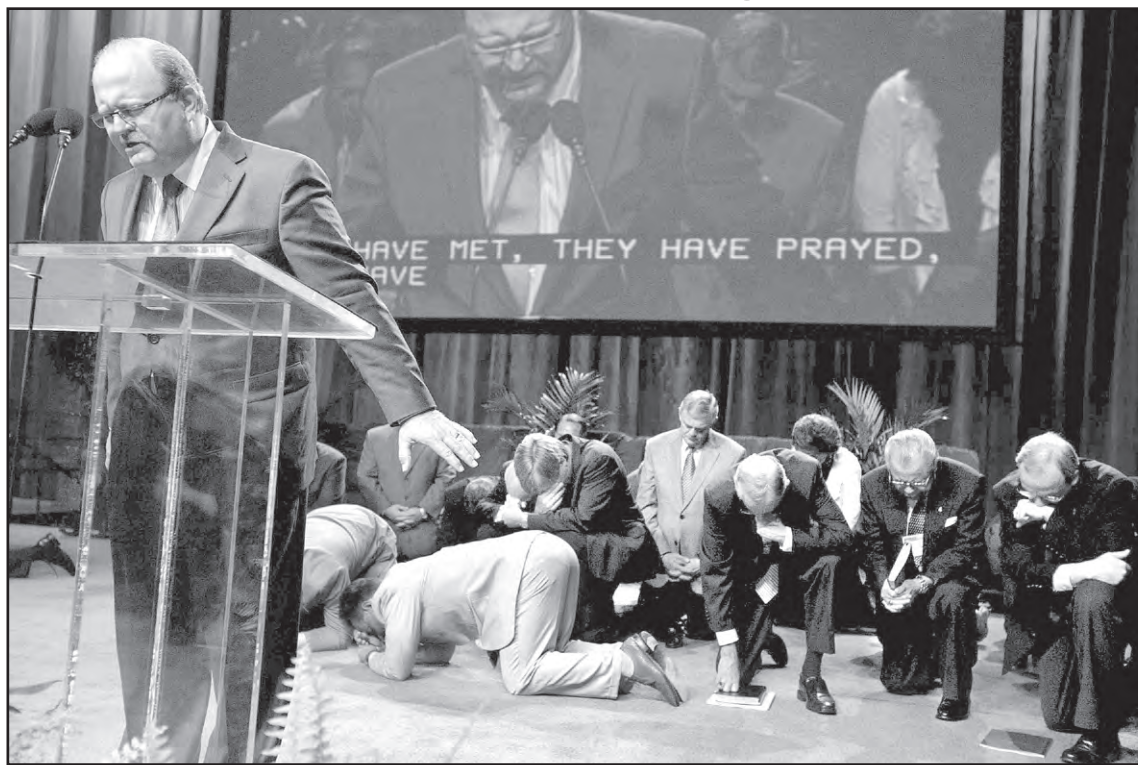
Ezell, senior pastor of Highview Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., who has adopted children from China, Ethiopia and the Philippines, said the Adoption Fund for Ministers (www.sbcadoption.com) will make \$2,000 scholarships available to Southern Baptist ministers and missionaries who want to adopt a child.

Offerings collected at the conference that weren’t needed to cover expenses to host the event

were designated for the adoption fund. And conference participants contributed more than \$25,000 to the adoption fund goal of \$1.5 million.

Ezell introduced a couple — Buff and Cissy McNickle, Floridians who recently adopted twin boys — as the first grant recipients. He surprised them by announcing a donor had provided \$10,000 to pay off the remaining cost of their adoptions.

Russell Moore of Southern Seminary called for every family to pray about what God would have them do to reach out to orphans and widows. He recounted his own experience when he and his wife, Maria, adopted two boys from a Russian orphanage. “Adoption and orphan care is not charity; it is about the gospel and missions.” (Editor’s Network)



BP photo

FINAL MOMENTS — Mac Brunson, pastor of FBC Jacksonville, Fla., prays over the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force during the closing session of the Pastors Conference on June 14.

are willing” to proclaim the gospel to the nations. “We have won the battle over liberalism, but we are losing the fight over lostness,” he charged.

In a reference to the GCR presentation, Floyd said, “Tomorrow is an urgent hour; people are lost and dying, and their eternal destiny is hell. Tomorrow is a day about change.

“Will you rise up and will we be the generation that will do all we can and give all we have to extend the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth and present the gospel and make disciples of all nations?” he asked.

‘Holy obligation’

And while the conference’s headline preacher, David Platt, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, didn’t actually mention the GCR or the task force report, he referenced aspects of the debate that has surrounded the GCR.

“In the next two days, many will speak on behalf of people in my state of Alabama, in my home state of Georgia and other states ... where, by the grace of God, there is relatively universal and unhindered access to the gospel,” he said. “Tonight I want to speak on behalf of the people for which our convention was formed.

“We stand at a crossroads, and our participation in the global mission of God hangs in the balance,” he said. “We have a holy obligation to take the gospel to people who have never heard it before.

“The Word of God is calling us to sacrifice,” he said. “[But] God help us if we cannot sacrifice percentages and programs when He has asked us to sacrifice our lives.”

David Uth, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., described the convention as a defining moment “that will determine [our] legacy.”

“We must hand to the next generation a convention that is fully committed to the Great Commission, fully committed to go to the ends of the earth for our Lord,” he said.

“When we hear 4.5 billion do not know Christ ... does that bother you?” he asked. “All the pretending and imagining and wishing and wanting doesn’t get you there.”

Andy Stanley, pastor of North Point Community Church, Alpharetta, Ga., said many Southern Baptists are merely flirting with the Great Commission. “You believe the Great Commission, preach the Great Commission, celebrate it

when someone becomes a believer, but the organization is not organized around it,” he said.

“Are you going to continue to be in love with a model of ministry and simply flirt with the Great Commission, or are you willing to fall in love with the Great Commission and let go of the ministries that aren’t making a difference?”

Steve Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, Tenn., said while he is for the GCR, what is really needed is “a red hot Holy Ghost revival from God.”

The church is not excited about its ministry like it once was and

members “dabble instead of do,” he noted. It is time for churches and the SBC to wake up, Gaines said. It’s not about living off the momentum of the past, he said, noting what once had life is now lethargic and what once was real is now deceptive. “The passion we once had has been turned into a program.”

Others preaching were C.J. Mahaney, president of Sovereign Grace Ministries; Matt Chandler, lead

pastor of The Village Church, Flower Mound, Texas; David Landrith, senior pastor of Long Hollow Baptist Church, Hendersonville, Tenn.; Francis Chan, founder of Cornerstone Church, Simi Valley, Calif.; Tony Evans, senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship, Dallas; Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville,

Ky.; Ken Whitten, senior pastor of Idlewild Baptist Church, Lutz, Fla.; Ravi Zacharias, founder of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries; and Russell Moore, dean of the school of theology, Southern Seminary.

A new president was also elected. Vance Pitman, senior pastor of Hope Baptist Church, Las Vegas, was elected president over Troy Gramling, lead pastor of Flamingo Road Church, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Dean Fulks, lead pastor of LifePoint Church, Columbus, Ohio, was elected vice president.

(Editor’s Network)



PLATT

Wright wants to see 'major changes'

(continued from page 1)

messengers just minutes before the presidential election results were announced.

Wright and Traylor garnered a combined 66.02 percent of the original vote, which included Jackson and Leo Endel, executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

In the original vote, Wright received 3,433 votes, or 36.84 percent, while Traylor received 2,719 votes, or 29.18 percent. Jackson received 2,482 votes, or 26.64 percent, and Endel received 589 votes, or 6.32 percent. Of the 10,873 messengers registered at the time of the vote, 9,318 cast ballots. Of those, 95 ballots, or 1.2 percent, were disallowed.

In nominating Wright, David Uth, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., said, "He's not been on a lot of programs and you may not know his name.

"He wasn't waiting on a resurgence or a vote of a convention. He has been quietly leading his church ... and doing the Great Commission," Uth said.

Wright helped start Johnson Ferry Baptist 28 years ago and has been its only pastor. The church routinely leads Southern Baptist churches in giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and has a strong missions emphasis.

The church plans to give 3.5 percent of its undesignated receipts — more than \$600,000 to the Cooperative Program (CP) in 2010. Regarding the relatively low percentage for the Southern Baptist Convention's unified budget, Wright said because his congregation is so missions-minded, key leaders questioned why so much of the CP stays in the United States.

"We had a stewardship issue and had to make a decision," Wright said during a news conference following his election June 15. "We wanted the majority of the money to wind up on the missions field where the witness for Christ is not as prevalent" as in the United States.

"I don't plan to encourage churches to bypass the CP," Wright said. "I do think we need to re-prioritize the CP as far as where the funding goes. ... More people would be more passionate about the CP if that would happen."

Wright acknowledged the autonomy of state conventions, but he also noted, "I would encourage state conventions to move ... (toward a) 50-50 (split of CP dollars). We could do such a greater work.

"I feel there will need to be more funding for NAMB (North American Mission Board) and the seminaries. They are vastly underfunded," he said.

"We are at a crossroads. ... Some major changes are going to have to occur," Wright said.

"I would like to see all kinds of practical implementations that will have to occur in moving the convention in the direction it is going to have to go (during my year as president). A lot will have to be done."

Wright said his priorities as president will revolve around reprioritizing the funding structure of the CP, fulfilling the Great Commission, encouraging every church — and particularly every pastor — to experience a missions trip and urging Southern Baptists to "return to our first love for Christ."

Other officers

In the first vice president's race, Ron Herrod, president of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists, was elected with 1,653 votes compared to 1,117 for Jim Drake, pastor of Brushfork Baptist Church, Bluefield, W.Va.

Eric Moffett, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sparkman, Ark., was elected second vice president with 706 votes, while Jim Goforth, pastor of New Life Baptist Church, Forsyth, Mo., received 689 votes. Moffett and Goforth received 66.69 percent of the vote on the first ballot with four candidates.

In the first vote, Moffett received 436 votes and Goforth received 423 votes. Ray Newman, ethics and religious affairs specialist for the Georgia Baptist Convention, received 245 votes, and John Copeland, pastor of First Baptist Church, Fulton, (Ala.) received 171 votes.

Two officers were re-elected — John L. Yeats, director of communication for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, as recording secretary and Jim Wells, director of missions for Tri County Baptist Association in Missouri, as registration secretary.

"I do think we need to re-prioritize the CP as far as where the funding goes."

— Pastor Bryant Wright
Johnson Ferry Baptist Church

Akerman WMU president

Lee honored for 10 years as executive director

Participants at the 122nd annual meeting of national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) elected a new president, listened to Sudan's ambassador, honored Kaye Miller's five years as WMU president and heard missions challenges June 13-14 in Orlando, Fla.

Debby Akerman of Ocean View Baptist Church, Myrtle Beach, S.C., was unanimously elected WMU president to succeed Miller. A native of Massachusetts, she has led GAs in her church since 1982 and served many years as WMU director. She also served as WMU president for the Baptist Convention of New England 1993-1997. In 2007, she received the Dellanna West O'Brien Award for Women's Leadership Development.

Akerman, a nurse for 30 years, and her husband, Brad, share a ministry leading Bible studies at Street Reach, a mission in Myrtle Beach that ministers to the homeless and people struggling with drug and alcohol addiction.

In her last address as WMU president to the 600 registrants present, Miller followed the program theme, "Unhindered," based on Hebrews 12:1, speaking of facing challenges in God's strength despite hindrances.

Miller, a member of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark., said while growing up as a missionary kid in Thailand, she learned many things try to hinder the work of missionaries on the field.

She recalled how her childhood Thai friend Sombon suddenly quit attending school. "She just vanished," Miller said. Years later, Miller saw her in Bangkok.

"Because there was no money in her family, she had been sold into prostitution. ... Her father, an opiate addict, sold her services from the time she was about 11 years old," Miller explained. "My heart broke, partly because I felt guilty for not being able to find her earlier and for all that she had been through. She looked old and used. She was just a shell of who she used to be. ... I never saw her again."

'Stirred in her soul'

In November, Miller received a letter from Sombon.

"After I saw her, something had stirred in her soul and she knew she had to get out of the life she was living. A Southern Baptist missionary woman who felt called to minister to these trapped women often came by her club to talk with her ... to share about Jesus," Miller said, noting that missionary felt called to missions as a GA.

"Sombon escaped from the life of prostitution to a life in Jesus Christ and was able to make a life for herself and her family. She was redeemed in Christ. ... Sombon is now teaching young girls that they,



BP photo

ELECTED — Debby Akerman (left), of Myrtle Beach, S.C., was elected as the new WMU president and Rosalie Hunt, of Guntersville, was re-elected as WMU recording secretary June 14.

too, can be all they can be through Jesus Christ."

Human exploitation "is not just happening on the other side of the world," Miller said. "Right where you live, young girls are being trafficked for prostitution or some form of exploitation."

Miller encouraged the WMU annual meeting participants to open their eyes and hearts, learn about the issues and seek out ways to help.

Noting Wanda Lee has completed 10 years as WMU executive director, Miller told the assembly WMU is renaming its Joy Fund, which meets pressing current needs and secures the organization's financial future through the WMU Foundation, the Wanda Lee Joy Fund.

In his first public address after being elected president of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, Frank Page challenged participants at the WMU annual meeting to guard against complacency. Citing Luke 13:1-9, he shared the parable of the fig tree and said the sin of uselessness is paralyzing Southern Baptist churches.

While God has a plan, Satan also has a plan — to move Christians from their initial excitement over salvation to becoming useless, like the fig tree that did not bear fruit, to being a negative influence in the church, he said.

"It is a satanic strategy to destroy the Great Commission work in the church," Page asserted. "But the reality of grace is that Jesus is interceding on our behalf ... to give us another chance, another opportunity to do what He called us to do in the first place."

Mary Lou Serratt, of Amarillo, Texas, received the 2010 Dellanna West O'Brien Award. Serratt has served in church, associational and state WMU leadership roles, including serving as vice president of Texas WMU and a volunteer multiethnic consultant.

Joy Cranford, a member of First Baptist Church, Fort Mill, S.C., received the Martha Myers GA Alumna of Distinction Award, given annually to recognize a GA alumna who influences the lives of others for Christ and serves as a positive role model for girls.

Cranford has served as a GA leader and director in her church, GA director for York Baptist Association and GA consultant for South Carolina WMU.

Angela Kim, of Houston, and Lee reported growth in missions education among Korean Baptist churches in the United States. In 2007, national WMU and Texas WMU partnered for a special, three-year project to provide Korean-English bilingual missions curriculum for preschoolers and children. With these materials, the Korean leadership team, comprised of Korean pastors' wives across the United States and led by Kim, began

missions education in more than 10 percent of Korean churches in the first year of publishing.

"WMU has long embraced the importance of equipping and involving every church of every language and ethnic group in the Great Commission," Lee said.

More stories from the WMU event will be in the July 1 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*.

(Editor's Network)



LEE

Penetrating 'lostness' in North America

North American Mission Board 'moving forward,' focused on God's Plan for Sharing

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) report June 16 was silent on the biggest news event to come out of the Alpharetta, Ga., office during the past year — then-President Geoff Hammond being forced out in August 2009.

Hammond resigned Aug. 11 after enduring charges of chronic morale problems and leadership issues that undermined the effectiveness of NAMB. The resignation came during a board of trustees meeting that had been called specifically to deal with the problems.

One veiled mention of this came when messenger Larry Thomas of Southside Baptist Church, Heber Springs, Ark., asked why NAMB hired an outside expert to deal with "the August meeting." He also wanted to know how much money was spent and where it came from.

Trustee chairman Tim Dowdy, pastor of First Baptist Church, Eagle's Landing, in McDonough, Ga., noted that while he was not chairman at that point, he did know that money from the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering was not used for the expert.

Transition time

"The reason was so we could have someone with an objective view to guide us through the process in the most expert way," Dowdy said.

Hammond's name was not mentioned. What was mentioned during the report was the trustees' search for a new leader, the transition taking place and God's Plan for Sharing (GPS). GPS is NAMB's major decadelong evangelism strategy that was unveiled during the 2009

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Louisville, Ky., by Hammond.

And the obvious emphases woven throughout the report and following presentation were the Great Commission Resurgence, "penetrating the lostness" and reaching North America with the gospel.

"One thing I ask is that you pray for us in the next few months," Dowdy said. "We are under one of the crucial [times] for us as we search for a new leader of the North American Mission Board.

"In the mean time, we have been blessed to have Richard Harris, vice president of [missions advancement], as interim (president). He has provided rock solid, stable leadership for NAMB in this time."

"Your North American Mission Board is moving forward," Harris said. "It has a bright future. ... We've been attempting to move forward to fulfill the Great Commission. At the forefront is GPS," he said, noting 10,000 churches are participating and 24,000 TV ads and 7,000 radio ads have aired. "We are leading Southern Baptists to reach the 258 million lost people in North America."

Harris said NAMB is ready to lead Southern Baptists to "penetrate the lostness" and will be focused on church planting, evangelism, discipleship, leadership development and metropolitan missions.

The NAMB presentation featured three of these focus areas by highlighting the work being done by a diverse group of NAMB representatives. Each segment of the presentation began with a video story of a representative and the lives that are being changed. Following the video,



Photo by Doug Rogers

IN ALABAMA — Sammy Gilbreath (left), director of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions, shares with Richard Harris, interim president of NAMB, about GPS: Across Alabama on June 16.

the representative and one or more of those featured in the video were interviewed live by Harris.

Those featured were NAMB missionary Jalil Dawood, who works with the Iraqi population in Dallas; Andrew Mann, NAMB missionary in Bronx, N.Y.; and Sammy Gilbreath, director of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions, who has seen tremendous success with GPS.

The Iraqi Christian convert who was featured said Arabs moving to America would "be blessed to meet someone like [Dawood]."

Mann said the neighborhood where he lives and works is rough "but God is here."

Two brothers who accepted Christ and are spreading the gospel among their family and friends said it was Mann's help and attention to them that made the difference.

Gilbreath noted that GPS: Across Alabama "is probably the largest organized outreach ministry attempted by Alabama Baptists."

In the recent GPS Easter effort, evangelistic material was hung on nearly 1 million doors in Alabama. "We didn't have a lack of passion

[for evangelism]," Gilbreath said of Alabama Baptist work before GPS. "But we didn't have a strategy. ... Now we have a way to carry this out." Liberty Baptist Church, Painter, was featured as one of Alabama's GPS success stories (see story, this page).

Noting the contagiousness of Gilbreath's excitement about sharing the gospel, Harris asked him, "Will you help us in pioneer areas?"

"Absolutely," Gilbreath said. "Alabama stands ready not only to penetrate lostness in Alabama but in all of North America." ❧

Alabama's Liberty Baptist, Painter, highlighted in NAMB report



Photo by Matt Miller

TESTIMONY — Richard Harris (left), interim president of NAMB, interviews Barbara McGowan and Jerry McGowan, who accepted Christ as a result of Liberty Baptist Church, Painter, being involved in GPS. Roger White (right), pastor of Liberty Baptist, joins them on stage.

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

When Roger White, pastor of Liberty Baptist Church, Painter, used a 5-year-old and 9-year-old to demonstrate how to prepare and hand out the evangelistic material he had ready for Easter, many church members said, "I can do that!"

And for some of those members, it was the first time they had ever been involved in a visitation program.

"We were able to find a lot of places for people to work," White said, noting more than a third of the 100-plus active members took information to more than 1,000 homes. "We found our people are willing to work if we just show them a place and show them how."

But Liberty Baptist wasn't alone. Thousands of Southern Baptists across the nation were preparing the same packets and anticipating the new believers to come.

The effort — God's Plan for Sharing (GPS) — was highlighted June 16 during the North American Mission Board report to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Orlando, Fla. Alabama's participation in GPS (Across Alabama) was also highlighted, and

White was part of the NAMB presentation.

Also present in Orlando telling the story of what GPS has done in a small town in the South were Jerry and Barbara McGowan.

The McGowans' grandson Robbie is a member of Liberty Baptist and asked White to share Christ with them. They accepted.

"I felt something just washed through me," Barbara McGowan said. "It was a wonderful feeling to know Jesus was going with me."

Jerry McGowan said, "I've been wanting to be a Christian for years. ... My grandson and daughter both encouraged me to go to church. When I did, I met Brother White. ... Brother White made the difference. ... When I stepped into Liberty Baptist Church, I knew it was where I wanted to be saved and baptized."

And when Jerry McGowan was baptized so was Barbara McGowan, Robbie (who renewed his relationship with Christ through this experience) and Robbie's mother, Rhonda.

"So many people assume their neighbors, parents, brothers or sisters are saved," White said. "But we can't assume anything."

"If we just reach one, we've accomplished what GPS was designed for, which is to reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ." ❧

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Gifts through the Cooperative Program are the way Alabama Baptists fund our many ministries as we seek to carry out the Great Commission.



Teman Knight
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Office of Leadership & Church Health



Cary Hanks
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Nancy and Larry Jackson
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For more information on how your church can more effectively tell the story of the Cooperative Program, please contact State Missionary Jim Swedenburg at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 283, jswedenburg@alsbom.org.



This 16-month calendar (Sept. 2010–Dec. 2011) has State Board of Missions events and emphases already printed with plenty of room for you to add your church's events.

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- > Principles and Priorities for Childhood Discipleship
- > Preschool/Children's Disciple-Making Resource Workshop
- > Partner with Parents to Disciple Their Children

Adult (Dauphin Way and Trussville FBC):

- > Adult Discipleship Resources: How to Select Them and How to Use Them Effectively
- > Discipleship: Stepping Stones to Building Your Church Discipleship

Adult (Lindsay Lane Only):

- > Growing Mature Disciples: Christ's Final Command
- > Six Disciplines to Strengthen Every Sunday School Class
- > MasterLife: Multiplying Leaders for a New Generation

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Lad & Dad or Man & Boy Adventure Camp

July 15-17
July 22-24
July 29-31

Cost: \$180/pair
These camps are for boys in grades 1-6 and their dad or a significant male adult.

Lad & Mom RA Camp

July 22-24
For boys in grades 1-6 and their moms. Moms participate in all activities with their sons.

Cost: \$180/pair
Includes hatchet throw, archery, air rifle, swimming, campcraft, canoeing and meeting missionaries.



Challengers

July 12-15, Challenger Camp #1
July 26-29, Challenger Camp #2

Cost: \$180

For young men in grades 7-12. Follows the schedule for the RA Camp but with the addition of time on the ropes course and rappelling wall.



RA Adventure Camp

July 12-15, RA Camp #1
July 26-29, RA Camp #2

For boys in grades 4-6. Those completing the third grade are eligible. This camp includes missions education, opportunity for decisions, relationship building, campcraft and recreation.



ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries



AIM FOR EXCELLENCE

Saturday, August 7, 2010
8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Southern Sportsman Lodge (Lowndes County)
9022 US Highway 80W, Tyler

Registration: 7:30-8:30 a.m.
Competition: 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Deadline to REGISTER:
JULY 30

Men & Women / Boys & Girls

Cost: Registration \$20 (includes lunch and registration).
Pre-registration is required.
Friday night accommodations cost an additional \$40 (men only).

Events:

- Scoped or unscoped .22 rifle
- Scoped or unscoped high-powered rifle
- Skeet shooting
- Black powder competition
- Knife
- Slingshot
- Spear throw
- Archery

Participants supply their own gun, archery and ammunition.
Awards will be given to 1st-, 2nd- and 3rd-place winners.

To register visit www.alsbom.org/marksmanship or contact Ministry Assistant Amy Nelson at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 258, anelson@alsbom.org.

**Youth
ministry
leaders &
parents**

**check THIS out...
www.sbcccampusconnect.net**

Experts tell us that during the first three weeks of college, students set patterns and establish relationships that affect their whole college career. You can help lay the foundation for their experience by connecting yourself and your students with Baptist campus ministers through this new Southern Baptist website!

Once you go to the site you can enter contact information for yourself or your student. It takes less than three minutes and it will be networked to the Baptist Campus Ministry group at the school your student will attend. Help your student make the best transition to the next step on their journey!

For more information contact State Missionary Keith Loomis at kloomis@alshom.org or 1.800.264.1225 ext. 280.

Office of Collegiate & Student Ministries
Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions
www.thestudenthub.org

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

SUPER SUMMER ALABAMA

A leadership experience for youth

Super Summer Alabama . . .
Is NOT a typical summer camp. The focus of Super Summer is Leadership & Discipleship. Students that participate will be challenged to deepen their faith and become the leader God has designed them to be.

Who Should Come . . .
Students at Super Summer must have completed the 8th-12th grade and must exemplify solid spiritual leadership in their local church. They must also meet the camp criteria for a teenage Christian leader. (A complete list of requirements can be found on the website.)

How YOU can get involved . . .
As a Youth Pastor you can bring your core students, help teach in a school and invite other youth pastors to participate from around the state. You will also be able to bring adults and college students with you to help lead at Super Summer. Don't miss this incredible opportunity to train the students in your ministry to become the leader God has intended!



Ed Newton
Camp Pastor



Chris Clayton
Worship Pastor



"Super Summer is the best camp I have ever seen! My students left the camp ready to impact the world. The worship was amazing and the Bible teaching challenged us all to higher commitments to Christ. I would strongly recommend Super Summer to any youth pastor trying to find a place for leadership students to deepen their faith and enhance their ability to lead in the local church!"

Chris Terrell, Youth Pastor
Grace Baptist Church, Oxford, AL

www.supersummeralabama.com

For More Information go to the website or call:
Robert Mullins (Calvary Baptist Church) 205.758.0495
Dennis Tanner (Shades Crest Baptist Church) 205.822.1360

Super Summer Alabama is made possible through a partnership with the Office of Collegiate & Student Ministries, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions



JULY 12-16, 2010
Samford University
Birmingham, AL
\$225 per person
\$50 Registration due April 30, 2010

MUSIC NOTES

Mix456

**Monday through Friday,
July 12-16
Shocco Springs**

Mix456 is a challenging, hands-on, fun-filled worship arts camp experience for 4th-6th graders.

TO REGISTER:

- Step #1: Visit www.shocco.org/reser or call 1-800-280-1105.
- Step #2: Order t-shirts by getting the order form at www.alsbom.org/remix and submit to Office of Worship Leadership & Church Music, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111-0870.

COST, UPDATES AND OTHER DETAILS:
www.alsbom.org/mix456

For more information, please call 1-800-264-1225: State Missionary Keith Hibbs, ext. 217, khibbs@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Cindy Parrish, ext. 230, cparrish@alsbom.org.



worship arts camp

ReMix

**Monday through Friday, July 12-16
Shocco Springs**

ReMix is an exciting experience for 7th, 8th and 9th graders that continues the growth process begun in Mix456.

TO REGISTER:

- Step #1: Visit www.shocco.org/reser or call 1-800-280-1105.
- Step #2: Order t-shirts by getting the order form at www.alsbom.org/remix and submit to Office of Worship Leadership & Church Music, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111-0870.

COST, UPDATES AND OTHER DETAILS:
www.alsbom.org/remix

For more information, please call 1-800-264-1225: State Missionary Keith Hibbs, ext. 217, khibbs@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Cindy Parrish, ext. 230, cparrish@alsbom.org.

Together: Children's Choir Summit

**Friday and Saturday,
July 9-10
Shocco Springs**



COST, UPDATES AND OTHER DETAILS:
www.alsbom.org/children-summit

REGISTER: Visit www.shocco.org/reser or call 1-800-280-1105.

Registration begins Friday at 2 p.m. with lodging rooms available at 4 p.m. Session 1 begins Friday at 2:45 p.m. Grand prize drawing on Saturday at 3:15 p.m.

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

Baptist Men's State Softball Tournament

**August 6-7, 2010
Lagoon Park & Fain Park**

40-team maximum
Round-robin tournament
(eight divisions with five teams each)

Single elimination in
championship round of 16
teams



Every team will play at least
two games (\$135 for
complete tournament).

For a complete list of regulations to participate, please contact Ministry Assistant Mondene Coker at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 273, mcoker@alsbom.org.

WMU & WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP EQUIPPING AND ENRICHMENT

**Friday and Saturday,
July 23-24, 2010
Shocco Springs**

Featuring: WORSHIP • MISSIONARY TESTIMONIES • LEADERSHIP, MISSIONS AND PERSONAL ENRICHMENT CONFERENCES

For all church and associational directors, coordinators, facilitators, leaders and other team members of Women's Ministry, WMU, Women on Mission, Adults on Mission, Sisters Who Care, Acteens, Youth on Mission, Girls Ministry, Girls in Action, Children in Action, Mission Friends

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

For other information, please contact Pat Ingram at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 292, pigram@alsbom.org or visit www.alabamawmu.org

E-zekiel Web Training Workshop

**Thursday, Sept. 30, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd.,
Montgomery**

Join E-zekiel trainer and director of customer services Dacia Gulleage as she shows how to use E-zekiel to build and maintain a great website.

Come learn all the tips and tricks to make an effective and user-friendly website quickly and easily!

Lunch will be provided.

Cost: \$40 for Alabama Baptists and \$50 for all others, if registered before Sept. 15. \$50 after the Sept. 15 deadline.

Register at www.alsbom.org/webtraining.

For more information, contact State Missionary Chris Mills, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 310, cmills@alsbom.org.

Thursday – Saturday, August 26-28 Shocco Springs

MISSIONS UNIVERSITY COURSES OF STUDY

Church Planting/Literacy Missions

The following conferences are three days from Thursday to Saturday. The number in parentheses is the length of the course in hours. One-hour overviews about church planting and literacy missions are also available for those who may be interested in attending one of the conferences next year.

Basic Training for Church Planters-Spanish or English Congregation (*Sign up for Basic Training at alsbom.org/basictraining or call Brenda Niblett at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 244.*)

Adult Reading and Writing (16)

Spanish – Adult Reading and Writing (16)

Tutoring Children and Youth (16)

English as a Second Language (14) (*Sign up for ARW, TCY or ESL at alsbom.org/literacy or call Kristy Kennedy at 1-800-264-1225, ext 311.*)

The courses below will be offered multiple times so that church staff may attend Thursday afternoon through Friday afternoon and bivocational staff and lay people may attend Friday evening through Saturday morning. The number in parentheses is the length of the course in hours.

Missions

Creative Ideas for Promoting the Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong Offerings (1)

Finding Your P.L.A.C.E. (Spiritual Gifts Discovery) (1)

Connecting with Hispanics (2)

Global Missions – Alabama Baptist Partnerships (Appalachian Region, Guatemala, Ukraine, Michigan, New York) (2)

Understanding the Muslim Religion and Sharing My Faith (2.5)

Understanding the Hindu Religion and Sharing My Faith (2.5)

Setting Up and Leading a Mission Trip (national or international) (1)

Church Renewal/Lay Renewal – How to Have Renewal in Your Church (2)

Fellowship of Baptist Educators – What Is It and How to Join (1)

Project Help: WMU's Annual Ministry Initiative (1)

Men's Ministries/Brotherhood Directors

Leadership Training for Men's Ministries/Brotherhood Directors (2.5)

Using Technology to Reach Men (1)

Man in the Mirror/No Man Left Behind (5.5)

Men's Fraternity (3) (*A one-hour overview of this course is also available.*)

Overview of Alabama Disaster Relief Ministries – How to Get Involved (1)

Reaching Every Man – Introducing a Strategy to Leave No Man Behind (1)

Pastoring Men – What Works, What Doesn't and Why (1)

Calling Men to Relevant Faith (Man in the Mirror) (1)

Ark Almighty – Finding Opportunities to Do Missions in Your Church Field (1)

Royal Ambassador Leadership/Challenger Leaders

Leadership Training for RA Leaders (2.5)

Leadership Training for Challenger Leaders (2.5)

Opportunities for Youth in Missions (1)

Pinewood Derby Demo – Track, Computer, Sound Effects (1)

Discipline in the RA Room (1)

Interest Activities for RAs and Challengers (2)

For conference details:

www.alsbom.org/missionsuniversity

For more information, please call 1-800-264-1225: State Missionaries Jamey Pruett, ext. 220, or Steve Stephens, ext. 268. You can also ask to be placed on the Missions University update mailing.

Missions University is a ministry of the Global Missions and Associational Missions & Church Planting offices of the State Board of Missions and of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union. It is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.



MISSIONS UNIVERSITY



Basic Training for Church Planters

Starting a new church is a great challenge and a great blessing. It is often the most difficult yet rewarding experience that a Christian leader will ever face. Some leaders will refuse the challenge and the blessing as well, believing that they are not equipped to plant a new church.

Your State Board of Missions believes that God doesn't just call the equipped, but that He equips the called. That's why we are inviting church planters and their mentors to the Basic Training for Church Planters workshop, Thursday through Saturday, August 26-28 at Shocco Springs. We are excited to offer both English and Spanish language tracts.

During this workshop, church planting teams are helped to explore

the spiritual foundations for church planting, to cast a vision for the congregational identity of the new church, and to discover how to actually launch and grow a new church plant.

Basic Training for Church Planters is a chance to learn about the nuts and bolts of planting a new church. Even more, it is a time for church planters and their mentors to pray and think about the details of how this new congregation will reach new people for Christ's Kingdom. It is also an opportunity to network with other church planting teams and discover how they have overcome similar challenges in their settings.

Again this year, Basic Training will be held as a part of our Missions University. The Missions University is a

new effort to bring together missional workers from all over Alabama to a synergistic training event. It will be a wonderful time of equipping and networking (see page 12).

Because this event is supported by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program, the cost for this challenging training event is only \$100 per church planting team.

To register, go online to www.alsbom.org/basictraining or contact Ministry Assistant Brenda Niblett at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 244, bniblett@alsbom.org. For more information about training for church planters, please contact State Missionary Jamey Pruett at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 220, jpruett@alsbom.org.

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

For all pastors, staff ministers, lay leaders and spouses

LEADER LAB

Tuesday – Friday
July 20 – 23, 2010
Baptist Building
2001 E. South Blvd.
Montgomery



Jeff Iorg

Special Guest: Jeff Iorg, president, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, teaches leadership, preaching and church ministry courses. His publications include three books, dozens of articles and curriculum materials. Iorg will be teaching from his new book, *The Painful Side of Leadership*.

Labs include curriculum courses in Lead Like Jesus, Divine Connections, Leadership

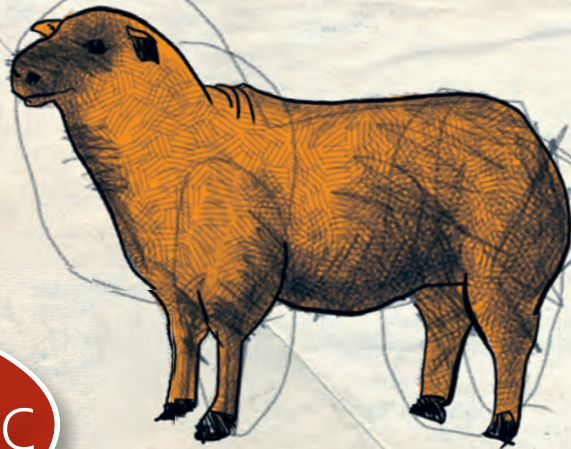
Greatness, Emotional Intelligence, Coaching and a special lab just for ministers' wives.

Cost: \$150 for double occupancy, \$250 for single occupancy or for couples.

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

BREAKKABLE

YOUTH EVANGELISM CONFERENCE 2010



REGISTER NOW at
www.thestudenthub.org/YEC

\$20
PER PERSON

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY,
PETE HANNA CENTER

for more info visit
WWW.THESTUDENTHUB.ORG
call 800.264.1225 EXT. 275



Chris Brooks
Speaker



Chad Norris
Speaker



Dave Rhodes
Speaker



David Walker
Worship

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

Session 1 **break in.**
Session 2 **break through.**
Session 3 **break out.**

JULY 16-17

GREAT COMMISSION POSSIBLE

What is my mission?

Growing people, Reaching,

MAKING YOUR MISSION POSSIBLE

Fellowships, CARING, Praying, Teaching, Visiting Organizing classes, A growing class, Ministering

SUNDAY SCHOOL LEADER TRAINING

August 6-7 * August 13-14, 2010 Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center, Talladega

TO REGISTER: www.shocco.org/reser * 1-800-280-1105

For more information about this event, go online to www.alsbom.org/sslt or please contact State Missionary Jamie Baldwin at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 240, jbaldwin@alsbom.org.

Historical Highlights

from previous issues of *The Alabama Baptist*

Compiled by Kathleen Prude

50 Years Ago June 1960

Alabamians Serve at Convention: Several Alabamians were on the program of the SBC meeting in Miami the week of May 15. A.B. Van Arsdale, of Decatur, and W. Landon Miller, of Birmingham, led in prayer. Charles Bowles, of Birmingham, brought one of the sermons. Alma Hunt made the WMU report to the convention. Robert "Bob" Barker, of Chickasaw, served as secretary-treasurer of the Pastors Conference. George Caldwell, of Montgomery, served as a convention teller and Gerald Coggins as a member of the Resolutions Committee.

40 Years Ago June 1970

Judson President Elected: Alabama Baptists are reclaiming one of their favorite sons in the election of Norman H. McCrummen as president of Judson College. A native of Montgomery, McCrummen had served as pastor of churches in Atmore and Selma before moving to Birmingham in 1959 to be pastor of Woodlawn Baptist Church.

30 Years Ago June 1980

Amendment Rejected: A constitutional amendment that would have changed the meetings of the SBC from an annual session to a quadrennial (every four years)

meeting was rejected by messengers to the 123rd annual meeting in St. Louis.

The amendment was proposed by Wayne Stevens, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lineville (Clay County), who expressed "concern about the enormous amount of money spent at our annual conventions."

Ironically Clay County-native Dr. Herschel Hobbs, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, and past president of the SBC, spoke against the amendment because "the business of this convention is too big and too much to have a quadrennial meeting."

20 Years Ago June 1990

Samford Names New Vice President and Dean of Students: Richard H. Franklin has been named vice president and dean of students at Samford University. He replaces Martha Ann Cox, who was named dean of academic services at Samford earlier this year.

Franklin has been vice president for student development at Gardner-Webb College in Boiling Springs, N.C., since 1988 and previously held a similar position at Anderson College in South Carolina. He is a member of the executive committee of the Southern Association for College Student Affairs.

10 Years Ago June 2000

WMU Installs Lee: Alabamians took center stage during the national WMU annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., on June 11 when the executive director torch moved forward. Russellville-native Wanda Lee was officially installed as WMU's seventh executive director during the opening session of the national meeting. Lee, who was elected as executive director in January and took office March 1, previously served as national WMU president. During the installation ceremony, previous WMU executive directors officially passed the WMU medalion on to Lee.

Across Alabama's Associations

BESSEMER

► **The Church at McAdory, McCalla**, will hold its annual Patriotic Celebration of Freedom services June 26-27, nightly at 6. Bill McCall is pastor.

CLARKE

► **Evergreen Church, Jackson**, will hold revival June 25-27 with Al Brown, of First Church, Creola. Tony Cooley, praise and worship leader for First Church, State Line, Miss., will lead the music. Services

will be Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Howard Gaston III is pastor.

CLEBURNE

► **Ai Church, Heflin**, will celebrate its 125th anniversary June 27, 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow. Donald Leggett is pastor.

COOSA RIVER

► **Marble City Church, Sylacauga**, will host singer, speaker and musical ventriloquist Lee Pitts and Nicky, God's Little Talking Tree,

June 27, 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Michael Trull is pastor.

SIPSEY

► **Sipsey Association** will hold its annual Senior Adult Day of Revival June 29, 10:30 a.m., at Big Hill Church, Gordo. Albert Lyles will speak, and Joe Brown will lead the music. A covered-dish lunch will follow with comedian Cousin Deffie. Ralph Smith is pastor of Big Hill. Max Stripling is director of missions for Sipsey Association.

MARKET PLACE

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

CHURCH POSITIONS

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Midway Baptist Church in Trussville, Ala., is seeking a bivocational pastor. For more information, call Johnny King, 205-655-7688 or 205-307-9825 or call Jackie White, 205-856-2528 or 205-243-0736.

MINISTER OF MUSIC & EDUCATION: Eastwood Baptist Church in Monroeville is searching for a full-time minister of music and education. Mail resumé to: Eastwood Baptist Church, ATTN: Search Committee, 1848 Drewry Road, Monroeville, AL 36460.

MINISTER OF MUSIC: Seventh Street Baptist Church in Cullman is searching for a full-time minister of music with some help in program development. A degree in church music with some experience is preferred. Send resumé to: Search Committee, P.O. Box 931, Cullman, AL 35056, or e-mail: seventhstreetbaptist@hotmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF WORSHIP: Calera Baptist Church is accepting resúmes for a bivocational minister of worship. Please forward resúmes to: Search Committee, Calera Baptist Church, P.O. Box 186, Calera, AL 35040, or e-mail to: andy.gill@cvhealth.net.

MINISTER OF YOUTH & EDUCATION: New Hope Baptist Church in the Clarkdale community of Lauderdale County, Miss., is seeking God's man for the full-time position of minister of youth and education. Please e-mail resúmes to: prawson@bellsouth.net, or mail to: NHBC Search Committee, 6573 Hwy 145, Meridian, MS 39301. Deadline for

submitting is July 17.

YOUTH/FAMILY LIFE MINISTER: Hayneville Baptist Church, Hayneville, Ala., seeks full-time minister for this new position. Send resumé to: hbc99@htcnet.net or P.O. Box 367, Hayneville, AL 36040.

MINISTER TO STUDENTS: First Baptist Church, Tullahoma, Tenn., a conservative Southern Baptist Church, is seeking a full-time minister to students to serve alongside four full-time ministers. The minister will focus on middle school, high school and college students. Contact Pastor Herb Hester at 108 East Grundy Street, Tullahoma, TN 37388, or hester.herb@fbctullahoma.org.

PART-TIME/BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER: Montevallo First Baptist Church is seeking a part-time/bivocational youth minister. If interested please call 205-665-2566.

OTHER POSITIONS

PART-TIME FINANCIAL SECRETARY & PART-TIME COMPUTER GRAPHICS DESIGNER: First Baptist Church, Leeds, is seeking a part-time financial secretary and a part-time computer graphics designer. Call 205-699-6141 or send your resumé to: FBC Leeds, 7481 Parkway Drive, Leeds, AL 35094.

SOCIAL WORKER/COUNSELOR: Needed in Dothan office of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries. Duties include counseling, group home caseload, licensing foster homes and foster care responsibilities. Ideal candidate has clinical and case management experience. Must have LCSW or

LBSW/LPC and be a Christian actively involved in local church. Send resumé to: Kim McGainey, kmcgainey@abchome.org or 1302 Ross Clark Circle, Dothan, AL 36301.

MINISTRY ASSISTANT/SECRETARY: Full-time, experience preferred with a heart for ministry. Send resumé to: Ministry Assistant/Secretary, PMB#304, 1305 S. Brundidge Street, Suite A, Troy, AL 36081.

BUSINESS

CHURCH SIGNS: Reliable Signs offers design, fabrication, installation and service. All types of signs from electronic messaging to traditional. Ask about our exterior light maintenance service. Statewide coverage. Christian-owned. Church references available. www.reliablesigns.com. 800-729-6844, 205-664-0955.

CONSTRUCTION

CHURCH BUILDING PROJECTS: Let Webb Builders help your church expand its facilities. Large or small projects. Your plans or use our custom-design building services. State licensed with 25+ years experience. Call Webb Builders, Inc., 334-285-9302. Millbrook, Ala. Numerous church references available.

FURNISHINGS

STEEPLES, ET CETERA: New pews, refinishing of pews, stained glass windows, baptistries and steeples. Single source for all church furnishings. More than 20 years experience serving churches exclusively. No job too small. Locally owned company. Please call Terry Barnes toll-free 1-888-980-6161. Visit

our Web site at www.steeplesetc.com.

TRAVEL/VACATION

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS CABIN: 2 BRs, 2 BAs furnished cabin. Wheelchair accessible. \$500/week (3 night minimum). \$125/night. Located in mountains of Blue Ridge, Ga. Call 941-755-3655.

LOG CABIN: Lake Guntersville area, beautiful view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log onto www.paradisevista.net to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.

AFFORDABLE BEACHFRONT & BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS: Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Ala. Best value on the beach. Lowest prices. Over 25 top quality condos. Your satisfaction is our top priority. Owned and operated by Christian family since 1988. 205-556-0368 or 205-752-1231. www.gulfshorescondos.com.

SUMMER IN THE SMOKIES: Peaceful mountain cabins, fun of Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg. 1-8 BR cabins, great Web site, www.edencrest.net, 1-888-236-3105. Try Kara Kottage, 2 BRs, 2 BAs, Sleeps 10. Many extras.

FOR SALE

MINI-BUS: 1988 30-passenger minibus. Excellent condition. Great deal. See it to believe it. Call 205-425-4491.

MISCELLANEOUS

CHRISTIAN BOOKS WANTED: Wanted: Christian books, software, tapes, DVDs, etc. Adults, teens or children's. Pastors or church libraries. Leadership material. Call 931-938-7907.

Want to know God?

By Evangelism office
State Board of Missions

God wants to have an intimate relationship with you. He has placed an emptiness in every person that can only be filled by God. People often seek to fill this emptiness with things other than God: material possessions, success in business, sports, alcohol, illicit drugs, immoral sex and so forth. Nothing can permanently satisfy this emptiness other than God Himself.

The problem is our sinfulness keeps us from having this relationship with God. The Bible teaches "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Our sin is separating us from a holy and just God. Moreover, God's Word makes it clear that "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

Our only hope rests in the love of God demonstrated in that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

As is stated, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Jesus lived a sinless life, a life totally in submission to God's will. Christ is the spotless sacrifice to remedy our sin problem. He paid the wages of our sins by His death upon the cross. He died for our sins, was buried and rose again on the third day.

You can receive this salvation and have an intimate relationship with God by turning from your sins and placing your faith in Christ alone. "That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10).

This very moment you can have eternal life if you will:

1. Admit you are a sinner.
2. Be willing to turn from your sins.
3. Believe Jesus died for you on the cross and rose from the grave.
4. Through prayer invite Jesus to be your Lord and Savior.

'Are we there yet?' Rankin asks during his final report

When it comes to reaching the world for Christ, Southern Baptists "are not there yet," said Jerry Rankin, president of the International Mission Board (IMB).

In his final report as IMB president to the Southern Baptist Convention on June 15, Rankin observed he has had the honor of seeing more than 10,000 missionaries being sent to minister during a time "God has chosen to work in unprecedented ways."

Rankin, who retires July 31 after 17 years at the helm of the IMB, cited statistics that indicate progress. But he asked, "Are we there yet?"

"Have we walked every road? Climbed every hill? Have we told every soul?" he asked.

Even though Rankin noted that baptisms around the globe have more than doubled to nearly 500,000 each of the last three years and that in 2008 missionaries and their national partners baptized more than 506,000 believers and started 24,650

new churches across the globe, he said we are not there yet.

Success on the missions field cannot be measured by the record number of missionaries sent, church growth statistics overseas or the

number of new believers baptized, Rankin said.

The only way to determine success is to determine the job that is still to be done, he continued.

"How many people have yet to be touched by the gospel?" Rankin asked.

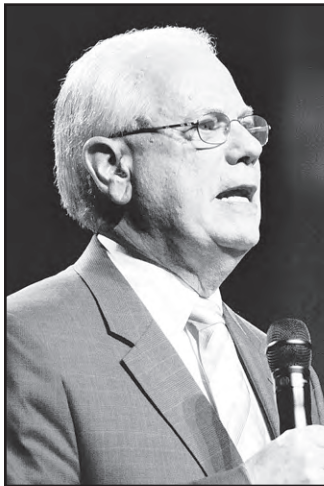
He informed messengers there are 11,000-plus distinct ethnic people groups in the world and more than 6,400 of those are still unreached with less than 2 percent having heard the gospel.

Rankin stressed the only way these people can hear the gospel is to send missionaries who are willing to answer God's call.

"God has blessed and prospered us with numbers and resources and the potential for reaching the whole world," he said. "By what criteria can we justify depriving a lost world of the opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel?"

The IMB leader related that after sending out more than 900 new missionaries in 2008 and reaching a record level of 5,624 missionary personnel overseas, the IMB has to cut back to no more than 5,000 missionaries by the end of 2010 because of budget restrictions.

And this is happening despite



RANKIN



BP photo

AWARENESS — Maggie Walker (right) pulls one of 6,000 stickers from a wall at the IMB exhibit June 14 while her mom, Jean, watches. Each sticker has the name of an unreached people group.

Southern Baptists giving almost \$149 million to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in 2009, an increase of more than 5 percent over the previous year's offering and the third-largest total. "We will still have to restrict appointments and restrict our missionary force," he said.

Many people around the world are simply waiting for someone to tell them about Jesus, said Timothy

Hostetler, an IMB representative whose real name is withheld for security reasons. Hostetler leads 10 teams among Muslims in North Africa and the Middle East.

Speaking from behind a screen, Hostetler contended that people in many Muslim-dominated countries are open to the teachings of Jesus Christ — they just haven't heard those teachings yet.

"Wherever we proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, Muslims are following Him as their Savior," he said. "If there is a place with no believers, it is a place with no personal gospel witness."

Rankin challenged Southern Baptists to resolve that "reaching His people with the gospel of Christ" is the calling that "God has placed on each of us." (Editor's Network, BP)

B21 conference promotes GCR

Supporters of the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) Task Force took a final opportunity to garner votes for the report when they encouraged 1,300 primarily younger pastors attending the B21 conference June 15 to leave the luncheon and become fixtures in the meeting hall.

"Please get into that hall, sit in a chair and do not leave until somebody prays and we go eat," said Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Mohler was one of eight panelists who answered questions presented by Jon Akin and Jed Coppenger, two leaders of B21, a movement intended to help participants discern what it is to be Baptist in the 21st century.

The task force report was the primary topic of conversation, along with frank discussions about reasons to continue being involved with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) or to support its Cooperative Program (CP) missions channel.

Because changes suggested in

the report would require painful adjustments in some entities' budgets because of a shift in priorities, Pastor David Platt was asked to explain how he made such changes in the budget for his church, The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham.

Platt's church determined to shift \$1.5 million from its budget that was spent on comfort and convenience for members "to go to urgent spiritual and physical needs."

No more 'fat' years

Mohler called the decades of the 1950s through the 1980s "fat" years in Southern Baptist life when Southern Baptists could put money into good ideas.

Today "everything's got to be provisional" and open for reconsideration in the light of gospel scrutiny, Mohler said, because "I don't think we're ever going to be there again."

B21 panelist Jimmy Scroggins, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, West Palm Beach, Fla., said he resents that "to be considered a good soldier" in Baptist ranks, he has to cooperate in too many things he doesn't believe in and support

departments in his state convention he sees no reason to have.

He said the task force report gives him hope that such a network "will be the Cooperative Program."

Mohler called the CP a "great economizer" and "great exercise in stewardship" when it was created in 1925. But it is "toxic for a denomination" to "focus on the vehicle rather than on the trip."

He said Southern Baptists have made the CP "worse than a golden calf" — not because they worship the unified budget but because they simply think they have to defend it.

"Who wants to sell a product you can only sell if there's no other option?" he said. "The CP is worthy of support but only as a means to get somewhere we need to go."

Mohler urged the group to "pray this becomes a model for how Southern Baptists can reason together and do the right thing and go home and lead our churches to reason together." (Editor's Network)

GCR records to remain sealed for 15 years

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) meeting defeated an attempt to unseal written and audio records of Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) Task Force proceedings.

The GCR Task Force recently announced it would seal the records for 15 years at the Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives in Nashville.

Jay Adkins of First Baptist Church, Westwego, La., introduced a motion to make the records available "in the spirit of openness and transparency" for review by any interested Southern Baptist.

In debate on his motion, the only one scheduled by the SBC Committee on Order Business, Adkins said Southern Baptists would benefit from "seeing the process" of the task force. "What better way could we as a body come together?"

But task force members argued against the effort to open the records immediately, saying it would require them to break promises of confidentiality they made with Southern Baptists they consulted with in their deliberations.

"This recommendation would require this task force to break its word," said task force member Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

It would also "rob us of our own historical record" and have a chilling effect on future committees, he said. "The consequence of this motion is no future convention committees could record their proceedings because they would be compromised from the beginning."

Greg Wills, a church history professor at Southern Seminary, suggested 15 years "is an entirely reasonable, brief period" for sealing such records. Opening the records now "may serve a short-term political agenda, but we will lose the history of our committees at the most critical time," he said.

An effort by Doug Hibbard of Calvary Baptist Church, Monticello, Ark., to amend the motion so selected portions of the proceedings could be released also failed.

Twenty-nine other motions were referred to boards and committees or were rejected. (Editor's Network)

July 4th Celebration Guide

An Advertising Supplement

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Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

Lamar director of missions retires after 13 years

When Benton Goodman, director of missions (DOM) for Lamar Baptist Association, retires June 30, the thing he will miss the most is “meeting with pastors and getting to know them and their dreams and trying to match them up with churches that have similar dreams.”

Goodman, who has been DOM since January 1997, wasn't looking for a job when the position became available. He didn't give the search committee a resumé, but his fellow pastors gave the committee his name.

At the time, Goodman was serving as pastor of Millport Baptist Church and director of evangelism for the association, which allowed him to establish a good rapport with the other pastors and churches.

He agreed to become DOM because he loves the work of the pastor and wanted to help pastors.

And Goodman is not sorry he made the move. “I've loved every minute of it,” he said.

Completing 50 years in full-time ministry with his retirement, Goodman said he has learned “nothing stays the same.”

“I've learned that pastors are generally good people and that churches want to grow ... (in order) to fulfill the Great Commission,” Goodman said. “I've learned that if we take one step at a time, we do it better.”

Goodman, who has served as pastor in Alabama and Mississippi for a total of 33 years and as a music director for four years, plans to enjoy retirement by traveling with his wife of 48 years, Pat, who will retire in September, as well as by doing some interim work and supply preaching.

Goodman's advice for the next Lamar Association DOM is to “love your pastors and love your churches, and they will know if you do — you won't even have to tell them.”

To contact Goodman about preaching or interim possibilities, call 205-695-6534.



GOODMAN

Ozark's Ridgecrest Church celebrates 50 years

Members of Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Ozark, made sure their church was dressed to impress on its 50th anniversary. Hedges were clipped, lawns were mowed, carpets were cleaned and furniture was polished as they gathered for a cleaning day May 15, nearly three weeks before the celebration. The grounds were readied for the festivity and extra attention was paid to the roses in the church's Memory Garden.

The homecoming service celebrated the Dale Baptist Association church's golden anniversary June 6. Brother and sister Beth Roberts Thompson and Wesley Roberts began the service with special music, and the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a plaque to the church. Several charter members still attend Ridgecrest Baptist. Those who were there were recognized and wore polo shirts that had been specially embroidered for the 50th anniversary. The church also took the time to recognize prior staff including Harmon Naberhuis who served as pastor, Carl Gassett who served as music minister and Cheryl Brown who served as pianist.

Geraldine Byrd, a charter member, read a letter she wrote giving the congregation a brief history of the church. While she read, a slideshow of more than 200 pictures was played on the screen dating back from day one in the church's history.

Jim Hill, current pastor of Ridgecrest, said the crowd was much larger than usual, because of all the guests and prior members who returned for the celebration service. Hill has been a part of Ridgecrest's history pastoring for nearly 12 years. From the time he came in September 1988, the congregation has grown from 40 to nearly 300.

Upon reaching 50 years as a church body Hill said, “I challenge [our congregation] to look outward not inward,” during this time of reflection.

“There is a lot going on for families and individuals, but we always strive to reach out to the community,” he said.

Three years ago Ridgecrest's sanctuary sat less than 200 people. On March 31, 2007, the church completed a new sanctuary building that seats 500. Hill said they hope to grow and fill the new sanctuary.

The homecoming celebration was followed by a lunch on the grounds. Guests and members alike were also able to tour the buildings, especially the sanctuary and remodeled Sunday School rooms.

‘Spiritual tenacity’

Blountsville's Mount Tabor Church marks 200 years

By Kristen Padilla
The Alabama Baptist

When 18-year-old Elisabeth Dorning began singing “Sweet Beulah Land” a cappella June 13 in Mount Tabor Baptist Church, Blountsville, no one made a sound.

Not even the children.

The song about longing for an eternal home where “time won't matter anymore” served as a sweet reminder for those gathered to celebrate the Friendship Baptist Association church's two centuries of ministry.

After all, the focus that day was not merely on the church's history but also its mission — bringing others to Christ so that they may experience that “Sweet Beulah Land.”

“A small church that has been around for 200 years just has a spiritual tenacity to keep preaching the Word of God,” said Ernie Carroll, director of missions for Friendship Association. “[Mount Tabor Baptist is] a small church in a rural part of the county, yet every Sunday when I go there, I can see the impact they are having on the lives of the people of that community.”

And the impact was evident June 13 as old friends and new almost filled the sanctuary to capacity and the church was recognized with a



Photo by Kristen Padilla

PICTURE-PERFECT DAY — Members and friends gather at Mount Tabor Baptist Church, Blountsville, on June 13 to celebrate two centuries of ministry in the Gum Springs community.

certificate from Gov. Bob Riley, a plaque from the association and another plaque from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.

Pastor Ray Long told the congregation it was a day of thanksgiving.

“Today we're thankful God's glory hasn't left us,” Long said. “We give allegiance to the One.”

Though membership has declined over the years, members of the picturesque church, which is nestled away on County Road 26 in the

Gum Springs community, are hopeful that people will see that they are not closing the doors anytime soon.

“It's great to have a church full of people,” said Warren Weaver, who has been a member since 1977 and serves as the church clerk. “I hope we can attract more young folks and young members and become more vibrant.”

Long hopes that the anniversary service helps Mount Tabor do just that.

“I hope this reminds people that the church is alive and well,” he said. “We need a lot of help from individuals — from past friends to new friends.”

Mount Tabor, which is one of only two Alabama Baptist churches that will mark 200 years this year, was originally called The Church of United Baptists at Mount Tabor.

Although there are no records to prove the church was organized in 1810, church members have long held that this was the founding date. By 1819, the congregation was meeting in the home of its first pastor, John Fowler.


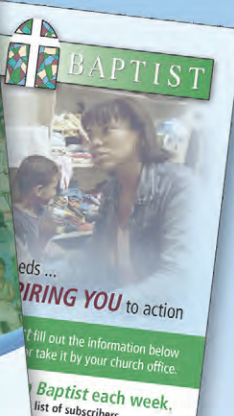
Faithful service

Some time later, after Fowler deeded property to the church, the first building was constructed. Around the turn of the 20th century, a second building was constructed about 30 yards from the original. But this building did not last long as a fire destroyed it in 1906. A third building was constructed around 1915, but in 1945, this building, too, burned. After meeting in a home for three years, a fourth building was constructed in 1948 and is still used by the congregation today.

In a church history book that Weaver compiled and gave to each person on June 13, he wrote, “Mount Tabor, after 200 years, continues to faithfully serve its community and from it, other churches have sprung. Today, a member of the Friendship Association, no church can be prouder of its history or no more certain of its future.”

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 27

Explore the Bible By Robert Olsen

Assistant Professor, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

1 Corinthians 7:10-16, 32-39

Where to Begin (10-11)

In the first century, like today, divorce was prevalent. Paul stressed that his teaching on divorce was not his own but the Lord's, accentuating its authority. Just like Jesus, Paul urged believers to stay married at all costs. In cases of divorce, Christians should try to be reconciled to their spouses if possible. When the Church behaves in the same manner as the world by using divorce as the first option to settle disagreements, we lose our distinction as God's people, set apart to the Lord. As Christians, we ought to be known by our love for one another, including our spouses. If we dissolve a union that was made in the sight of God, then what kind of message are we sending to the world? Instead of seeking a divorce, the Christian needs to seek to be reconciled and maintain his or her marriage.

When to Stay Married (12-16)

Paul addressed the situation in which a Christian has an unbelieving spouse. If this is the situation, then Paul said not to divorce. Apparently the believers thought that they ought to leave their spouses in order to better serve God. But Paul mentioned that being married to a believer sanctifies an unbelieving spouse. It is possible that what Paul was saying here is that the unbeliever will be in some fashion influenced positively by the believer as he or she witnesses to his or her spouse in the way he or she lives as well as verbal testimony. Paul was not suggesting that the unbeliever is somehow saved by the relationship. This is obvious since in verse 16, he brought up the possibility of the unbeliever being saved. Therefore sanctification is not implying salvation. However, the marriage between believer and unbeliever does not make the marriage defiled, as the Corinthians apparently thought. If the unbelieving spouse leaves, then the Christian is under no obligation to remain married. The Christian should let the non-Christian depart. It seems that some of the Corinthians tried to remain married even when an unbelieving spouse left in an attempt

to see him or her saved. Paul said it cannot be known if the Christian can convert the unbelieving spouse; therefore let him or her leave and live in peace. According to this passage, it is evident that the only reason Paul gave for divorce or separation is if the spouse leaves. In our society today, divorce is often the first option that people use when confronted with marital difficulty. This applies to the Christian as well as the non-Christian. There ought to be some difference between the Christian approach to marriage and the non-Christian approach; therefore we need to strive to remain married even when our spouse is a non-Christian. Remaining married to the unbeliever can have a positive influence on him or her and the children within the marriage.

When Not to Marry (32-35)

Paul turned his attention from the married couples to the single Christians. Here Paul mentioned that his teaching is his preference, not a word directly from God, and revealed the advantages of being a single Christian. The married Christian needs to be concerned with earthly things — pleasing his or her spouse, raising children, etc. The single Christian is able to devote time and energy to serving the Lord alone. Paul was not saying it is wrong to be married, but he was showing the advantages the unmarried have. In our church today, there are some, such as Paul, who have the gift of celibacy. Those with this gift are not at a disadvantage but rather are in an advantageous position in several ways.

When to Marry (36-39)

The term "virgin" here represents a fiancée, but it is implied that the fiancée is, in fact, a virgin. There is strong support for celibacy before marriage, which is the biblical standard, whereas society has largely rejected the idea of sex being reserved for marriage. Paul followed up his teaching on being single with the affirmation that those who want or feel they ought to be married should be. While Paul saw advantages in being single, he recognized that this is not for every Christian. Those who are single but want to get married are free to do so.

Bible Studies for Life By James Barnette

Associate Professor, Department of Religion, Samford University

WHEN I MAKE POOR CHOICES

1 Samuel 8:6-9; 12:13-25

Give Me What I Want (8:6-9)

The three-way exchange between Samuel, the elders and Yahweh that begins in verse 4 reflects the point of deep tension at which the Israelites found themselves. When the elders asked to have a king "like all the nations," they were forgetting that Israel's strength was to be unlike the other nations. The Israelites were God's chosen people and He was their King. It is clear that the demand for an earthly monarchy was initiated by Israel, not by the Lord. This agenda was not a rejection of Samuel but of God Himself. The entire history of Israel was one of "forsaking" and going after other gods. This request for a king was one more step in that continuing pattern of mistrust and waywardness. The Lord's instructions to the elderly Samuel were threefold. First, he was to heed the people's request (literally "Hear the voice of the people" in verse 7). Second, he was to "warn them solemnly." Finally, he was to declare the consequences of their demand for a king. As wise believers often remind us, the greatest judgment God can give us is to let us have our own way.

Consequences of My Choices (12:13-19)

The threefold exhortation — to "fear," "serve" and "obey" — characterized the foundational conditions of a right relationship between God and His people and between God and "the king." To underscore this exhortation, Samuel showed the Israelites that the manner in which they were demanding an earthly king had consequences. Instead of first repenting of its sin and trusting that Yahweh would raise up a deliverer for it, Israel was attempting to acquire the benefits of a right relationship without an authentic turning to the Lord. Its demand for a king, then, was not an act of repentance but rather an act of rebellion. The wheat harvest was usually in May and June when the early summer rain rarely falls. This being so, the thunder and rain was readily acknowledged as a miraculous sign in response to Samuel's prayer. Yahweh heard the prophet's prayer and responded with "sounds

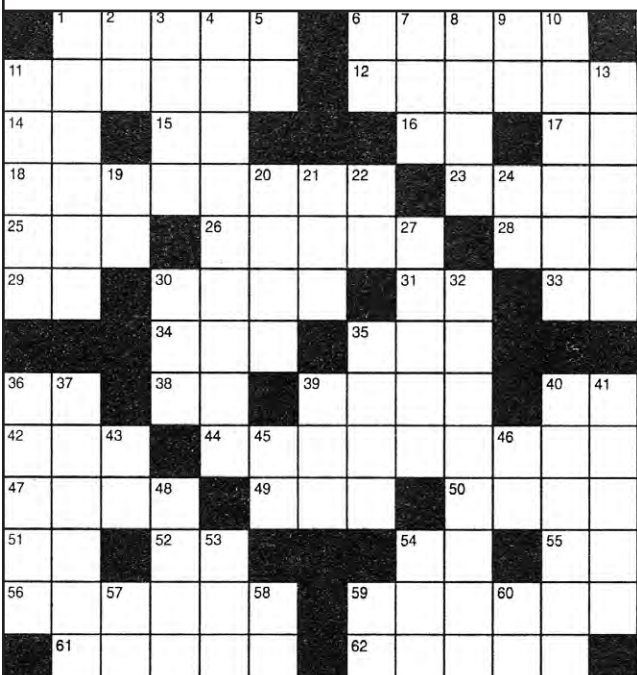
and rain." The people stood "in awe of" not only the Lord but also Samuel. No doubt they understood this supernatural disruption of the natural world to reflect Israel's disruption of the God-ordained pattern of relationship that is to exist between the nation and Yahweh. The phenomenon produced the desired effect, which is a contrite confession of sin. Israel asked Samuel to intercede to Yahweh on its behalf. One cannot help but recall the passages in Exodus 20 and 32 in which Moses mediates for the people. The coupling of these two great intercessors appears in Jeremiah 15:1.

God Is in Control (12:20-25)

Samuel told the Israelites not to fear; in spite of his own frustrations and disappointments with the people, he would not abdicate his prophetic calling to intercede on their behalf. With this assurance, however, came covenantal demand. Twice he warned them not to "turn away," both from the Lord and to useless idols. The original meaning of the Hebrew term for "useless" is "wilderness"; it is used here as a metaphor for emptiness, nothingness. Idols are "empty nothings" that reward the one who trusts in them with only vanity and futility. Samuel made three important points to solidify Israel's newfound resolve for right relationship. First, he gave assurance that the Lord was in a unique partnership with Israel, valued that partnership and would not renege on it. Second, the prophet assured the nation of his own faithfulness to it. He would carry on as Israel's pivotal intercessor, voicing prayers on its behalf and teaching it to live in right relationship with Yahweh. Third, Samuel issued one more summons to fidelity, calling the people to serve the Lord faithfully and with all their hearts. Should the Israelites fail and "persist in doing evil," both people and king would be swept away. The nation's true threat was not an external enemy that could be defeated on a battlefield. The real threat was internal and spiritual. The wayward attitude that caused Israel to demand a king in preference to a restored relationship with Yahweh was soon to foster serious consequences. It will begin with Saul's rejection as king in the chapter to follow.

Christian Crossword

By Diana Rowland Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- God created the heaven and the _____. (Gen. 1:1)
- The darkness he called _____. (Gen. 1:5)
- Doth not even _____ itself teach you. (1 Cor. 11:14)
- They had made themselves _____ to David. (1 Chron. 19:6)
- For the kingdom of heaven is _____ hand. (Matt. 3:2)
- And bring your youngest brother unto _____. (Gen. 42:34)
- Darkness was upon the face _____ the deep. (Gen. 1:2)
- The serpent beguiled _____, and I did eat. (Gen. 3:13)
- Make Jerusalem _____, a den of dragons. (Jer. 9:11)
- We are _____ men. (Gen. 42:31)
- Called by name Bezaleel the son of _____. (Ex. 35:30)
- Lot chose him all the _____ of Jordan. (Gen. 13:11)
- Ninety years _____ and nine. (Gen. 17:1)
- Multiple sclerosis. (abbr.)
- But here is the _____?
- Give me children, _____ else I die. (Gen. 30:1)
- Do, re, mi, fa, so, la, _____, do.
- Abide ye here with the _____. (Gen. 22:5)
- And _____ the lamp of God went out. (1 Sam. 3:3)
- And, _____, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. (Gen. 18:10)

Down

- Among riotous _____ of flesh. (Prov. 23:20)
- Behold, I am _____ the point to die. (Gen. 25:32)
- The fat and the _____. (Ex. 29:22)
- For his _____ unto the Lord _____. (Lev. 5:15)
- Male and female created _____ them. (Gen. 1:27)
- The waters shall _____ more become a flood. (Gen. 9:15)
- _____ set my bow in the cloud. (Gen. 9:13)
- Ask me never so much dowry and _____. (Gen. 34:12)
- _____, every one that thirsteth. (Isa. 55:1)
- What meaneth the noise of this _____? (1 Sam. 4:14)
- The vision of _____ the Elkoshite. (Nah. 1:1)
- Unto thy _____ will _____ give this land. (Gen. 12:7)
- And the king of _____ he hanged on a tree. (Josh. 8:29)
- That ye do not your _____ before men. (Matt. 6:1)
- Slang for "snatch" or "catch."
- Prince Charles and Princess _____.
- Abbreviation for book of Romans.
- And to the east, and to the _____. (Gen. 28:14)
- Also I shook my _____. (Neh. 5:13)
- The sons of Eliezer were, _____ the chief. (1 Chron. 23:17)
- At the _____ of the garden of Eden. (Gen. 3:24)
- Let there be _____. (Gen. 1:3)
- To make _____ wise, _____ and did _____. (Gen. 3:6)
- Missing in Action. (abbr.)
- Of the Gershonites were, _____ and Shimei. (1 Chron. 23:7)

Down

- He _____ his trained servants. (Gen. 14:14)
- Not available. (abbr.)
- And there _____ put the man. (Gen. 2:8)
- And _____ said unto me. (Gen. 24:40)
- Let the sea _____. (1 Chron. 16:32)
- National Council of Churches. (abbr.)
- Go to the _____, thou sluggard. (Prov. 6:6)
- And he knew her again _____ more. (Gen. 38:26)
- Initials of Hubert Humphrey.
- _____ heard thy voice _____, and _____ was afraid. (Gen. 3:10)
- About. (abbr.)





BP photo

VOICES OF MOBILE PERFORM AT SBC ANNUAL MEETING

Voices of Mobile, a traveling team from the University of Mobile, perform during the morning session on June 16 on the last day of the two-day annual meeting June 15-16 of the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando, Fla.

HEART OF MISSIONS ...

Members of **First Baptist Church, Fayette**, and **Salem Baptist Church, Berry**, both in Fayette Baptist Association, and **Harmony Baptist Church, Andalusia**, in Covington Baptist Association traveled to Bailadores, Venezuela.

First, Fayette, Pastor Scott Davis and Missions Coordinator Harrell Trice led the group of 16 men and women on the recent trip. While previous trips to the area consisted of mostly men doing construction projects, this time, it was more of a family missions trip.

There was still construction involved, but a Bible school also was held in the afternoons. The men worked on constructing an educational building that will be used for Sunday School by the local church the missions team partnered with.

Nearly 100 people — most of them members of **East Cullman Baptist Association** churches — traveled to Vineyard Christian Retreat in Ariton June 7-11 to do missions work.

They were planning to build a two-story housing unit for youth, but “God had another plan for us,” said Osmar Morris, chairman of the association’s missions work trip committee. The supplies for the building project had not come in yet, so they completed a chapel already underway. They were able to finish the framing, entrances, steps and a landing.

The other major project they took on was rerouting more than 1,000 feet of 1- and 2-inch water lines.

They also did plumbing, painting, electrical wiring, finishing the dining hall and underpinning of rock. ☞

Brunson urges SBC to refocus on ‘pre-eminence of Jesus’

Florida pastor Mac Brunson urged Southern Baptists to refocus on the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ.

“I’m afraid that in our convention and across the ministry today, we are far better preachers at battling one another than we are at battling our enemy (Satan),” Brunson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla., said in the convention sermon, delivered to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Orlando, Fla.

Basing his message on John 3, Brunson exhorted Southern Baptist ministers to proclaim the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ in their lives and sermons and in relying on God’s resources.

Observing that Jesus’ disciples had become jealous and agitated with John the Baptist, who was also baptizing in the Jordan River, Brunson asserted that it was “all because they had begun to focus on themselves instead of the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ.”

Brunson noted a study conducted years ago by former seminary professor Ken Chafin, who found a high rate of bitterness and resentment among pastors.

“That’s what was happening with the disciples,” Brunson explained, noting that Chafin’s survey found three common attitudes: The pastors tended toward being negative, were highly competitive and didn’t like other preachers.

“There is something happening among pastors today that absolutely



Convention sermon

BP photo

EXPOUNDING — Preaching at the SBC meeting June 16, Mac Brunson, pastor of FBC, Jacksonville, Fla., challenges pastors to avoid a negative, competitive spirit toward each other.

has the watching world astounded, the devil laughing and our almighty God grieving,” Brunson asserted.

To rectify this condition, he emphasized a need for preachers to recognize that any success they have in the ministry is because God gave it.

‘A gift from God’

“I am saved solely because of God’s grace. I have received His salvation,” he said, reminding preachers that “any church growth you have is an act of the sovereign God. You receive it!”

Calling the people of his congregation “a gift from God” that he has received only because of God’s

goodness, he asked, “Do you realize, pastor, you are a gift to that congregation ... (and) that congregation is a gift to you?”

Retelling a story about a church near Dachau, a concentration camp in Germany, which decided to sing louder to drown out the whistles of passing trains and cries of thousands of Jews heading for death camps, Brunson lamented, “Sometimes we get so religious, we shut out the voice of not only the Holy Spirit but also the cries of the lost.

“We don’t need just a resurgence or a revival. We have got to get back and refocus on pre-eminence of Jesus Christ,” Brunson concluded.

(Editor’s Network)

SSYK Someone You Should Know

JUANITA SMITH

*New Hope Baptist Church, Berry
Sipsey Baptist Association*



SMITH

By Kristen Padilla
The Alabama Baptist

FAVORITE BIBLE VERSES: Psalm 121:1-2

FAVORITE HYMN: “Victory in Jesus”

HOBBY: Reading

FAMILY STATUS: Widowed after 33 years

of marriage to Lonnie; four children, Phillip, Danny, Daphne and Patty; seven grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren

Some time ago, Juanita Smith made a commitment that whatever she was asked to do in church that she would try to do the best job she could. In the more than 40 years Smith has been a member of New Hope Baptist Church, Berry, she has served as Sunday School teacher, Vacation Bible School director, Woman’s Missionary Union director and assistant church treasurer. Currently she teaches the senior adult ladies Sunday School class.

raised our own cows and hogs and all. We were always blessed to have plenty to eat. When we went to church, we either went in a wagon or we walked.

Q: How did you come to know the Lord?

A: During a revival service over at Friendship Baptist Church (in Tuscaloosa County), which isn’t active anymore. I was about 21 and had two children, and I couldn’t stand to think about not being able to tell my children (about Jesus).

Q: What have you gotten from

being a Sunday School teacher?

A: Much more than my students did, I’m sure. When you’re preparing to teach someone else, it keeps you closer to God and more in tune to the Bible. Your blessings come back to you time and time again. You get more out of it than you put into it.

Q: What difference has Christ made in your life?

A: He has been with me and helped me to make peace with everything I’ve had to face in life. Only He can give you peace in life when everything is upside down. ☞

Q: What was your childhood like?

A: We grew up on a farm; we

A youthful night

Nolan, Casting Crowns close SBC meeting

Bringing the 2010 Southern Baptist Convention to a rousing conclusion, Evangelist Tony Nolan, of Woodstock, Ga., issued a simple call to salvation June 16 to participants meeting at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla.

Using John 10:10 as his primary text, Nolan drew the crowd in by stating, "My prayer is that those here who are far from God might find life in Christ and those who are in Christ would find a new passion to reach those who aren't in Christ."

Referring to his focal passage, Nolan said most commentators believe the thief Jesus referred to is Satan, who sets out to steal and destroy. "Satan is a thug," Nolan said. "He's not a drug dealer, but he is a hurt dealer."

Using the "hurt dealer" image as a motif, Nolan shared his testimony, recalling that his mother was a "mentally insane prostitute" and he was given up for adoption at age 3. His adoptive father bought him for \$200, he stated. His father said, "You'll never amount to anything. I wish I'd never bought you."

"The hurt dealer uses things like this to tear you apart bit by bit," Nolan said. He continued by testifying how he was on the verge of suicide when a member of an evangelistic Southern Baptist church shared the gospel with him and he received Christ.

"Jesus comes to heal the deepest hurt of every human heart," he said. "The big change for me was that I went from being a sinking ship to a workmanship."

Painting a masterpiece

"This carries the idea of our lives being a canvas on which God wishes to paint a masterpiece of Himself," Nolan continued. "The Christian experience is nothing more than giving God the brushes. Let Him pick the colors. We allow God to paint a picture for others to see."



BP photo

PROCLAIMING — Evangelist Tony Nolan, of Woodstock, Ga., gives an evangelistic message with an invitation during the last session of the annual meeting of the SBC on June 16 in Orlando, Fla. Several people accepted Christ during the invitation.

Nolan continued by telling how he was able to meet his biological mother and found that she was also a Christian living in a dilapidated home for mental patients. He closed his message by walking through a simple plan of salvation.

"I'm trying to describe to you the indescribable joy of being swallowed up by the love of Christ. Give your life to Him," he said. "The hurt dealer doesn't want that to happen. He wants to see

your soul go to hell forever. Stop listening to the devil. Satan wants to steal the painting and in so doing, steal the glory."

Encouraging his listeners to confess God before the world, Nolan issued an invitation. During the altar call led by popular Christian recording artist Casting Crowns, scores of people — many of them teenagers or younger — responded by coming forward for prayer and counseling.

(Editor's Network)



Photo by Doug Rogers

WORSHIPING — Grammy Award-winning Christian recording band Casting Crowns leads the crowd in worship prior to Evangelist Tony Nolan's message during the last session of the annual meeting of the SBC on June 16 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla.

World of Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Murdered pastor cremated before family learns of death

MALLASI, India — A pastor in Assam state was murdered and cremated before family members learned of his death through a photo of his body in the newspaper.

The body of Son Englang, 35, was recovered alongside National Highway 37 on May 20 with marks indicating his hands had been tightly bound before he was shot.

The pastor from Mallasi village, Karbi Anglong district, supported by Gospel for Asia (GFA), had reportedly been kidnapped early in the morning of the previous day as he rode his bicycle to the Bokakhat marketplace to buy paint materials for his nearly completed church building.

The unknown kidnapers, suspected Hindu extremists, reportedly took him to the jungle to kill him.

Local police took his body to a hospital in Golaghat, where he was cremated without being identified after three days.

"The hospital along with the local police cremated Pastor Englang's 'unclaimed body,' as there is a provision in the hospital of holding a body for a maximum of three days," said Juby John, Karbi Anglong diocesan secretary of GFA.

News of his death reached his family four days after he was killed when they saw a photo of his body published in local newspapers reporting him as unidentified.

"With great difficulty, his photo could be recognized," said John. "It was a semi-decomposed body. Pastor Englang's brother with a few villagers identified him and then informed the pastor's wife."

John said Englang had evangelized in the Daithor area for 14 years, and "many, many people came to the Lord because of his extensive evangelism."

Anti-Christian elements in the area likely had taken note of Englang's fearless evangelism and the church building on the verge of completion, John said.

"Pastor Englang gave me a phone call just three days before he went missing," John said. "He was very happy and excited about the completion of the church building and said it was his dream come true."

He had served with GFA since 1996, ministering in Karbi Anglong, about 30 kilometers (19 miles) from the site where his body was recovered.

Along with his wife, Englang is survived by a 6-month-old son and a 3-year-old daughter.

Family beats, abuses daughter for Christian conversion

BARDHER, Somalia — The Muslim parents of a 17-year-old Somali girl who converted to Christianity severely beat her for leaving Islam and have regularly shackled her to a tree at their home for more than a month, Christian sources said.

Nurta Mohamed Farah, of Bardher, Gedo Region in southern Somalia, has been confined to her home since May 10, when her family found out that she had embraced Christianity, said a Christian leader who visited the area.

"When the woman's family found out that she converted to Christianity, she was beaten badly but insisted on her new-found religion," said the source on condition of anonymity.

Her parents also took her to a doctor who prescribed medication for a "mental illness," he said. Alarmed by her determination to keep her faith, her father, Hassan Kafi Ilmi, and mother, Hawo Godane Haf, decided she had gone crazy and forced her to take the prescribed medication, but it had no effect in swaying her from her faith, the source added.

Traditionally, he added, many Somalis believe the Quran cures the sick, especially the mentally ill, so the Islamic scripture is continually recited to her twice a week.

"The girl is very sick and undergoing intense suffering," he said.

Her suffering began after she declined her family's offer of forgiveness in exchange for renouncing Christianity, the source said. The confinement began after the medication and punishments failed.

The tiny, shaken Christian community in Gedo Region reports that the girl is shackled to a tree by day and is put in a small, dark room at night, he said.

"There is little the community can do about her condition, which is very bad, but I have advised our community leader to keep monitoring her condition but not to meddle for their own safety," the source said.

"We need prayers and human advocacy for such inhuman acts and for freedom of religion for the Somali people."