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INSIDE



Chinese Christian community faces issue of religious liberty

◆ Page 3



WMU dedicates new prayer garden in honor of Dellanna O'Brien

◆ Page 5



Q&A with Republican primary runoff candidates

◆ Page 7

Praying for solution to oil spill

Gov. Riley calls for day of prayer; Alabama Baptists seeking ways to help

Spending the weekend at the beach is certainly a different experience for Alabamians this summer. And for beachgoers on the Gulf Coast this past Sunday, it meant knowing people across four states were praying for the area recently devastated by the now infamous oil spill.

Alabama's Gov. Bob Riley, Louisiana's Gov. Bobby Jindal, Mississippi's Gov. Haley Barbour and Texas' Gov. Rick Perry all issued proclamations calling for a day of prayer June 27 for a solution to the oil spill and for citizens impacted by the disaster.

"Throughout our history, Alabamians have humbly turned to God to ask for His blessings and to hold us steady during times of struggle. This is certainly one of those times," Riley said in a statement.

Riley's proclamation reads in part, "Citizens of Alabama are urged to pray for the well-being of our fellow citizens and our State, to pray for all those in other states who are hurt by this disaster, to pray for those who are working to respond to this crisis, and to pray that a solution that stops the oil leak is completed soon."

Paul Smith, pastor of Romar Beach Baptist Church, Orange Beach, said the needs in the area are great.

His congregation is having to decide how to best minister to the people in the area who have been devastated. And he asks all Alabama Baptist churches to help.

"The sight of our sugar-white beaches covered with horrible, black gooky oil has been heartbreaking," Smith said in an open letter sent to *The Alabama Baptist* (see letter, this page).

But "we refuse to whine, complain, point fingers or have a pity party. Rather we recognize that our God is bigger than any problem, including tragedies, disasters and oil spills."

"We must focus on what we can do to help meet the physical and spiritual needs of the community," he said, noting financial assistance is one way to help.

Alabama Baptists will also soon be



THE NEW NORMAL — Three-year-old Morgan Edmonds plays in the surf as a clean-up crew combs the beach on Dauphin Island on May 10, two days after tar balls washed up onshore. Alabama beaches have been severely impacted by the Gulf oil spill.

helping in other ways, said Mel Johnson, disaster relief strategist with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

Noting that Alabama Baptist churches were challenged to participate in the day of prayer, Johnson said, "We want to help through prayer as well as other tangible ways such as disaster relief efforts."

Relief efforts on the way

He said disaster relief teams will soon be working on the Gulf Coast. At press time, he was scheduled to meet with other disaster relief officials and state and federal authorities about the situation June 30–July 2.

The Alabama Baptist school most closely affected by the disaster is the

University of Mobile (UMobile).

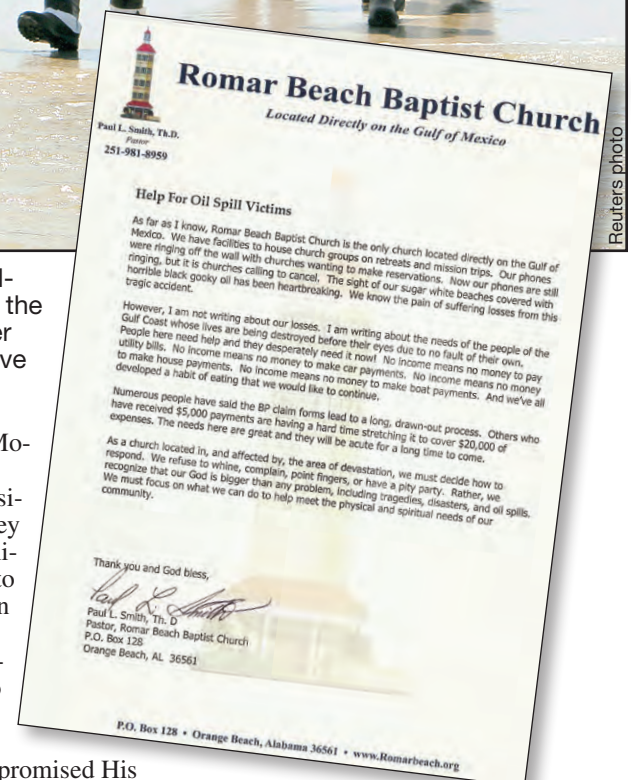
UMobile President Mark Foley called on the university family to join the state in prayer.

"Our responsibility is to humble self, pray, seek and repent. God has promised His response," he said.

Southern Baptist Convention messengers meeting in Orlando, Fla., June 16 also passed a resolution calling on churches and Christians "to pray for the end of this catastrophe and for the homes, lives, cultures,

and livelihoods of those in the Gulf Coast region."

For information about how to help, call Johnson at the SBOM at 1-800-264-1225 or Smith at Romar Beach Baptist at 251-981-8959. (TAB, BP)



Reuters photo

CELEBRATE
INDEPENDENCE DAY
JULY 4

COMMENT

Religious Liberty — The First Freedom

Most Americans shake their heads in disbelief when they read of 250 Christian families in Katcha Khoh, Pakistan, being ordered from their traditional homeland because they objected to sexual assaults of Christian girls and women by Muslims. (*The Alabama Baptist*, June 17)

Most Americans cannot understand why government officials in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, would fine a Baptist believer 20 times the monthly minimum wage because he possessed religious literature, including a New Testament, which the government ordered destroyed. (*The Alabama Baptist*, June 10)

Most Baptists would empathize with Christians in Bekasi, Indonesia, who have been trying to get a building permit for a new church building since 2006. (*The Alabama Baptist*, April 1)

When one reads news stories like these, it is easy to understand why Baptists in most parts of the world pray for the freedom that Baptists in the United States take for granted — the freedom of religious liberty and separation of church and state.

Outside of the United States, Baptists have always lived as a minority people. Baptists were birthed in a struggle to differ with a state church and have fought for the right to worship God freely according to the dictates of their own hearts.

Past struggles

In 1612, Thomas Helwys, pastor of the first Baptist church on English soil, wrote in *A Short Declaration of the Mistery of Iniquity*, “The king is a mortall man, and not God therefore hath no power over ye immortall souls of his subjects.” For such insolence, King James (of the King James Version of the Bible) had him thrown in prison, where he later died.

Also during that time (1612–1614), in the first written Baptist statement of faith called *Propositions and Conclusions Concerning the True Christian Religion*, John Smyth wrote, “That the magistrate is not by virtue of his office to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience, to force or compel men to this or that form of religion or doctrine; but to leave Christian religion free to every man’s conscience and to handle only civil transgressions ... for Christ only is the King and Lawgiver of the Church and conscience (James 4:12).”

The battle for the right of individuals to answer to God for their religious beliefs and not to government has been difficult, even in the United States. Baptist historian Leon McBeth wrote, “Many Baptists were severely whipped, forced to pay taxes to



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

support the state church, had property confiscated, paid fines and suffered lingering imprisonments” because of their religious beliefs.

Baptist pastors were forbidden to preach without a government license, but only ministers of the state church were given licenses. Stories abound of Baptist preachers proclaiming the gospel to waiting crowds through the bars of jail cells.

When public calamities occurred, ministers of state churches frequently interpreted them as God’s punishment for allowing Baptists and other “dissenters” to live in an area. Thus Baptists were blamed for Indian raids as well as outbreaks of pestilences. Evidently the tendency to scapegoat some group for the heartaches of history is a long-standing practice.

Some scholars say the stars all aligned to allow religious liberty and separation of church and state to be embraced for the first time in history in the United States. They point to the impact of the first Great Awakening in the early 1700s that emphasized personal decisions in matters of religion. On the secular side was the Enlightenment, which followed shortly and expressed the belief that individuals should decide issues for themselves. Both undermined the idea of religious coercion inherent in a state church.

Baptists, Presbyterians, Quakers, Mennonites and others advocated religious liberty based on religious convictions. Among them was Baptist pastor and evangelist John Leland of Virginia, who declared, “Every man must give an account of himself to God, and therefore every man ought to be at liberty to serve God in a way that he can best reconcile to his conscience.” Leland added, “Religion is a matter between God and individuals with the religious opinions of men not being the objects of civil government nor in any way under its control.”

While some wanted freedom “from” religion, Baptists championed freedom “for” religion. They wanted the freedom to worship, preach and practice according to their own convictions about biblical teachings. For them, separation of church and state would provide freedom to believe and practice as they chose and mean that no one would be forced to share those

convictions or participate in those practices.

Leland played a key role in translating Baptists’ desire for religious liberty into the law of the United States. After a lengthy meeting with James Madison, Leland withdrew as a candidate for Congress from Virginia and led Baptists to support Madison, who had promised to introduce a Bill of Rights to the new U.S. Constitution. At the beginning of that Bill of Rights would be religious liberty.

In 1791, Congress finally passed the Bill of Rights introduced by Madison as amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The first of those amendments declares, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

Baptists remain defenders

For more than two centuries, Baptists in the United States have been steadfast defenders of religious liberty and separation of church and state. Support for religious liberty has even grown to become a part of U.S. foreign policy. Now the nation attempts to advance the position espoused by Smyth and Helwys — government has no right to interfere in matters of religion or doctrine; religion is a matter of individual conscience. Freedom of religion is now called a basic human right.

What Baptists claim for themselves, they also protect for others since the right of religious freedom is a gift bestowed by God and not by government or denomination. When Baptists stand for religious freedom, they preserve that sacred space between God and man for God alone. No one else may trespass there.

Religious liberty is the first freedom. From it comes freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom to advocate through petition and even freedom of the press to share one’s views. This Fourth of July Sunday it is certainly appropriate for Baptists and all Americans to give thanks to God for our first freedom — religious liberty. 



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

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Someone You Should Know

By Matthew Stephens, Correspondent, TAB

Ola Story

Hopewell Baptist Church, Pinson
North Jefferson Baptist Association

FAVORITE BIBLE VERSE: John 3:16

FAVORITE HYMN: "He Lives"

HOBBIES: Reading books and magazines, planting flowers and raising children

FAMILY STATUS: Widow of Orvell Sr.; three children, Orvell Jr. (deceased), Mary and Faye; eight grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; and one great-great grandchild



STORY

ble School (VBS).

Ola Story has attended the same church, Hopewell Baptist, Pinson, all of her life — all 95 years of it. Over the years, she has served in the kitchen ministry and Vacation Bible School (VBS).

Q: What was your childhood like?

A: I grew up during the Depression. My mother died when I was 10 years old from cancer. It took me a year to get over it. ... My family may have not had much, but God truly blessed us with everything we could possibly have needed.

Q: How did you come to know the Lord?

A: When I was 12 or maybe 13, God spoke to me and that is when I got officially saved, but I have known about God my whole life.

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

A: I was mostly involved with the kitchen ministry at church. I also was a VBS volunteer while my children were growing up.

Q: How have churches changed over the years?

A: Shouting out "Praise the Lord" and "Hallelujah" during a sermon was very popular when I was a little girl, but now you do not hear that much anymore. ... Also there is more missionary work going on now with the church than when I was a little girl. People are going to Peru and other places to spread the gospel. God is doing some amazing work in churches now.

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

A: The question I have to ask myself is how could I have made it without God for all of these years.

Religious liberty in China

Status of Christian community, churches 'a matter of perspective'

Religious liberty in China is expanding and the Chinese Christian community is growing, according to a leader of China's state-sanctioned church — but American observers continue to hope for more progress.

Bao Jiayuan, associate general secretary of the China Christian Council, the officially recognized Protestant umbrella group in China, recently visited the United States. He said religious freedom in China is a matter of perspective. During the country's "cultural revolution" of 1966–1976, many churches and religious institutions were forcibly closed and destroyed. People who practiced their faith openly were persecuted.

Since the end of the revolution, Bao noted the church has grown by leaps and bounds, and freedom has been expanded. Two churches opened every three days during the 1990s. Congregations are expanding, but outsiders seem to harp on what they see as a lack of religious liberty, he insisted.

"We feel it's quite happy now," Bao said. "Society is transforming. But it takes time."

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has recommended that the State Department deem China a "country of particular concern" every year since 1999 for egregious violations of religious liberty. Religious organizations in China must be registered by the government before worshipers can practice their faith, leading to conflicts between the government and unregistered faith groups.

Last year, almost 400 unregistered Protestants were detained and "the Chinese government stepped up efforts to destroy churches and close 'illegal' meeting points," according to the commission's 2010 annual report. The Chinese government remains particularly concerned about the role outsiders play in religious institutions.

Residents can worship and proselytize inside the walls of registered churches, but they cannot conduct either activity outside them. According to multiple reports, the ability of unregistered groups to exercise religious liberty varies from region to region.

Despite the restrictions, the commission reported in May that "religious adherence continues to grow rapidly in China." At this point, Chinese Christians outnumber the membership of the country's Communist Party. Some government leaders have begun publicly applauding the role religion has played in Chinese society.

Derek Davis, director of the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor's Center for Religious



Graphic by Lauren Chow

Liberty, said assessing the status of religious liberty in China is a matter of perspective. While the country has a way to go before reaching the levels of Western countries, it has made progress in the past several decades.

"In the last 30 years, China has made great strides in opening itself up to other religious groups," he said. "You still have to register, which to us sounds like something out of the Dark Ages. But they have moved from illegal to registered, which is progress."

Must register to be legal

Bao understands there are rules requiring churches to register with the government and some choose for a variety of reasons not to register, making those congregations illegal. But Chinese Christians can freely worship if they work within the framework the government has outlined, he insisted.

A delegation from the China Christian Council recently completed a tour of several cities through the United States, scouting locations for an extensive Chinese Bible exhibit and networking with Protestant leaders. Bao pointed out the China Christian Council wants to connect with believers around the globe and is free to do so.

Davis believes strengthened relationships with Chinese leaders could aid the cause of expanding religious liberty in the country. There is a need for people to report religious-liberty abuses, but it may be more important to continue dialogue between Western leaders and Chinese officials, he said.

"There is a great potential for increased religious liberty in China, but we need to be patient while at the same time closely watching and monitoring what they do, offering a hand of friendship more than a hand of criticism," Davis said. (ABP)

Two more small towns in Alabama legalize alcohol

The alcohol industry scored two more wins recently as the residents of Fayette and Centreville voted to go wet.

A state law passed in May 2009 reduced the population requirement in most counties for holding a wet/dry referendum from 7,000 to 1,000, meaning towns like Fayette with 4,800 residents and Centreville with 2,500 residents could decide whether to legalize the sale and distribution of alcohol.

Fayette, which held its referendum June 22, voted to go wet with a strong majority — 58 percent, *The Tuscaloosa News* reported.

Larry Barnes, director of missions for Fayette Baptist Association, said there is

disappointment after so many worked so hard to keep the town dry.

"People are disappointed and I personally hate to see revenues raised by taxing products that are going to ultimately be harmful to the people," he said.

Original vote overturned

Centreville's decision wasn't so clear-cut.

The referendum was held May 11, and it appeared as if the town would stay dry. But the vote was overturned after one citizen and poll worker contested the election results because 37 of the 50 absentee votes

were delivered by a third party, according to *The News*.

Alabama law requires an absentee vote to be delivered by mail or the voter. On June 15, the Centreville City Council certified the recount.

Bill Day, education director of Alabama Citizens Action Program, said people are becoming desensitized to this issue.

"Some of these things that are occurring are really subtle," he said. "They are changing the moral environment for our young people. ... We're implying to them that things that used to be questionable are no longer that way." (TAB)

The blood of Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyz believers reach out, risk lives to help Uzbeks in latest ethnic conflict

Ethnic violence among Kyrgyz and Uzbek people in Central Asia has killed as many as 2,000 people and driven an estimated 400,000 from their homes.

Yet, despite the tensions, Kyrgyz believers have reached out to help Uzbek neighbors, putting their own lives at risk, a Christian worker in the region said.

Kyrgyzstan has been in political turmoil since President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was forced from power two months ago. Conflict now swirls around Osh, the country's second-largest city. Kyrgyz military raids continue in Osh after masked men gutted its main marketplace June 10 and set fire to most of the central part of the city, a 3,000-year-old trading post on the historic Silk Road.

'No one has helped'

"Whole blocks of houses of Uzbeks burned to the ground, people slaughtered — their families, women, children — mountains of corpses in the streets," Victor Ivanovich, a Russian living in Osh, said June 15. "There are wounded whom no one has helped. Entire units of young people are running about the city with weapons in hand, killing and burning everything in their path."

While Uzbeks make up only 15 percent of Kyrgyzstan's population, the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad, which border Uzbekistan in the south, are predominantly Uzbek. Many stores in Jalal-Abad have suffered looting and fire damage similar to that in Osh.

Roza Otunbayeva, Kyrgyzstan's

BGR responds to aftermath of Kyrgyzstan's violence

Baptist Global Response (BGR) is assessing relief needs stemming from the outbreak of ethnic violence in the Central Asian country of Kyrgyzstan.

On June 10, violence erupted between ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in the southern Kyrgyzstan city of Osh. Overnight, thousands of people fought with sticks, steel rods and guns. Over the course of several days the violence spread throughout the city and into surrounding areas. The government says as many as 2,000 people have been killed and that many more injured, according to news reports.

The conflict drove at least 400,000 ethnic Uzbeks from their homes, toward neighboring Uz-

bekistan. The refugees, mostly women and children, are living in tent camps on both sides of the border, afraid to return to their homes.

Uzbeks have accused the mostly ethnic Kyrgyz security forces of collusion with the attacking mobs and continuing violence against Uzbeks who have not left their homes. The Associated Press reported. A military spokesman, however, said troops are conducting security sweeps aimed at people suspected of illegal arms possession and stirring up riots.

BGR is coordinating with field partners to get an accurate assessment of needs, said Francis Horton, who with his wife Angie directs BGR work in Central and South Asia.

"[BGR] International will lead a multiorganization assessment team that is planning to be on the ground by the weekend," Horton said. "They will define ongoing needs and assist field partners to begin to put together a plan of response to this tragedy."

"Relief supplies are beginning to come into the Osh area but security problems are still hampering distribution," he added. "There are reports of some refugees and internally displaced people beginning to return to their homes."

"Many who did not leave their homes during the violence are still barricaded in their neighborhoods," Horton said. "More than 1 million people have been affected, directly and indirectly, by the violence." (BP)

acting president, has said the death toll from violence in Osh and Jalal-Abad could be 10 times higher than the official count of 214.

The United Nations (U.N.) estimates 400,000 people have been displaced as a result of the attacks. At least 100,000 Uzbeks have fled across the border to Uzbekistan, which is feeling enormous strain on its health care system and food supplies.

Although calls for an international peacekeeping force have yet to be answered, humanitarian assistance

is arriving at the Uzbekistan border for the thousands of refugees who have fled Osh and surrounding villages. The U.N., nongovernmental organizations and countries including the United States are providing aid. Southern Baptist workers in the region hope to coordinate a response to the humanitarian crisis as the situation stabilizes in Osh.

Baptist Global Response is coordinating with field partners to get an accurate assessment of needs and a multiorganization assessment team is expected to be on the ground

in Kyrgyzstan by the weekend.

Christian worker Matthew Lake saw smoke still rising from the Osh marketplace four days after the fires were set. "Piles of restaurant furniture were burned and laying in heaps of ashes," he said. "Profane graffiti was written across most of the buildings. There were very few people on the streets. We saw no commerce of any kind — a city broken."

Despite the ethnic tumult, Kyrgyz believers have reached out to help Uzbek neighbors, often risking their own lives, Lake said. There is much

fear among the various ethnic groups of Kyrgyzstan — the Dungan, Russians and Uzbeks, said David Smith, who oversees International Mission Board work in Kyrgyzstan.

While Christians there may not understand why the violence is happening, Smith said they are praying God will work in people's hearts to reconcile them to each other and to God.

Crying for a 'harvest'

"Our heart cry is that a [spiritual] harvest will come through this," Smith said.

He asks Southern Baptists to pray for Christian workers to know the best ways to help the hurting Kyrgyz and Uzbek people.

Kyrgyzstan enacted a law restricting religious activities last year. The number of evangelical Christians in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan is less than 2 percent of the population. The Fergana Valley — a swath of fertile farmland that stretches across the countries of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan — is known for its strong Islamic identity.

Across Central Asia, more than 400 people groups have yet to be engaged by any known Christian witness, making this region the most unreached in the world.

Despite these challenges, Smith said there is great unity among believers in Kyrgyz and the gospel has spread along old trade routes through the valley.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Names have been changed for security reasons. (BP)

Southern Baptists battle repeal of 'don't ask, don't tell'

In many religious circles, the repeal of a military ban on openly gay members is considered practically a done deal. But the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), which has many more active-duty military chaplains than any other denomination, is not giving up without a fight.

The SBC is battling the expected repeal of "don't ask, don't tell" on a number of fronts. Its agencies are contacting Congress and the Pentagon, retired chaplains are sending letters to President Obama and a resolution condemning allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military was adopted at the denomination's annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., June 15–16.

The resolution said in part, "Normalizing the open presence of homosexuals in the armed forces will result in pressuring Southern Baptist and other biblically faithful military chaplains to restrict or redefine the gospel message."

Barrett Duke, vice president for public policy and research of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said, "If a policy makes it more difficult — in fact, discourages — one of the groups that provides one of the largest numbers of chaplains to the military from continuing to engage in chaplaincy ministry, that should raise significant concerns for them about the ... spiritual well-

being of our men and women in uniform."

With about 16 million members, the SBC is the country's largest Protestant denomination but falls well short of the Roman Catholic Church's 68 million members. But whereas the Catholic Church has 252 active-duty chaplains, the SBC has 448 — the most in the military. There are about 3,000 active-duty chaplains overall.

The number of active-duty personnel who say they are Southern Baptist is far smaller than the number of Catholics, but there is no quota system for chaplains. Chaplains serve members of all faiths rather than solely troops of their denomination.

Other denominations concerned

More liberal denominations with smaller numbers of military chaplains worry that the SBC might be more influential in the gay debate.

"We have some concerns about that, sure," said John Gundlach, a retired Navy chaplain who serves as minister for government chaplaincies for the United Church of Christ, which had 17 military chaplains as of March, according to the Defense Department.

Gundlach's denomination joined other groups like the Episcopal Church, the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations and the Alliance of Baptists in writing

to Congress this spring, saying, "This policy of government-sanctioned discrimination is morally wrong."

Southern Baptist leaders have warned their chaplains may have to leave the military if "don't ask, don't tell" is repealed. Even their allies aren't willing to go that far.

Archbishop Timothy Broglio, leader of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, has urged Congress not to repeal the current policy. But John Schlageter, general counsel for the archdiocese, said there are no plans to remove Catholic chaplains if the repeal occurs.

"We don't think that the free exercise would be that restricted that we have to pull out," he said, referring to the constitutional principle of freely exercising religious freedom.

The House of Representatives voted in May for the repeal, and the Senate could consider it at any time. If both houses of Congress pass the repeal, then it would not go into effect until a Defense Department review is completed by Dec. 1 and President Obama and top military officials determine it won't harm military readiness or retention.

Defense Department spokeswoman Cynthia Smith said the review panel's mission "is not to engage in a debate about whether to repeal the law" but rather to learn how it might affect service members and their families.

Asked if a large group like the SBC might have more influence than others, she said, "Our review is going to be thorough and very objective."

Southern Baptists, who say their presence in the military chaplaincy totals 1,300 chaplains when Reserve and National Guard units are included, have told Congress and the Pentagon that chaplains could lose their freedom to preach and counsel against homosexuality if openly gay members are accepted by the military.

"For instance, a chaplain could be told there are certain passages of the Scripture that you shouldn't preach from," said David Mullis, Southern Baptists' chaplaincy associate for military chaplaincy. "If there was a prohibition about certain kinds of literature that did not espouse homosexuality, I can see the Bible being banned in the military."

But Herman Keizer, a retired Army chaplain who once served as the European Command chaplain, who has endorsed chaplains for the Christian Reformed Church, said he doesn't think Bibles will be removed from military chapels and he doubts most Southern Baptists would leave if the repeal were put in place.

"They're dedicated enough to the whole notion of evangelism that they're not going to abandon a missions field," he said. (RNS)



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

ENCOURAGED — Eddie G. Gibson (right) of Eddie Gibson International Ministries prays with Bill O'Brien in the newly dedicated prayer garden in memory of Dellanna O'Brien.

WMU prayer garden honors O'Brien

By Katie Wood
The Alabama Baptist

Friends and colleagues of Dellanna West O'Brien gathered outside the national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) building in Birmingham on June 22 to dedicate a prayer garden in her memory. O'Brien, who died in 2008, served as executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention auxiliary from 1989 to 1999.

Her husband, Bill, said she was a woman of prayer. "I can't think of anything that would honor Dellanna more than a prayer garden," he added.

O'Brien's well-known commitment to prayer for missionaries is why WMU chose to honor her in this way, said Wanda Lee, executive director of WMU since 2000, noting a marker is traditionally placed on the gravesite of former WMU executives and presidents.

The garden itself has been in

progress for about a year. It is filled with some of O'Brien's favorite things, including dogwoods, Japanese maples and azaleas. Resting atop a layer of stonework in the garden's center is a bench made of Alabama sandstone.

'Reminded of prayer'

Lee said after talking to Bill O'Brien about the garden's location, they decided that Dellanna O'Brien would have liked to look out her office window and see it. "The [garden] is in a place where the executive director, whoever it may be, will always be able to look out their window and be reminded of prayer," she said.

Lee also noted that visitors and staff often walk along the sidewalk surrounding the building and hopes that the garden will serve as an encouragement to and place of prayer for all who pass by.

The dedication ceremony began with the singing of one of Dellanna O'Brien's favorite hymns, "I

Love to Tell the Story," led by Andrea Mullins of New Hope Publishers, the publishing arm of WMU. Lee and Bill O'Brien spoke about Dellanna O'Brien's life and ministry. David George, president of the WMU Foundation, concluded the ceremony with a prayer of dedication, saying there were no special words that would dedicate the land but rather people's love for Dellanna O'Brien.

One of the first to say a prayer in the newly dedicated garden was Eddie G. Gibson, international director of Eddie Gibson International Ministries. He joined hands with Bill O'Brien while he prayed and said he felt as though Dellanna O'Brien was there. Gibson noted that she had always encouraged him in his ministry. "It was a special prayer because she was a lady [who believed] in me and prayed for me," he said. "She was a real woman of faith."

Tallapoosa luncheon aids unity, racial reconciliation

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

We can do far more together than we can by ourselves." That was the message at a recent fellowship luncheon for Southern Baptist and National Baptist pastors in Tallapoosa County.

Thirty-five pastors and laypeople from churches in the Southern Baptist Convention's Tallapoosa Baptist Association and the National Baptist Convention's Early Rose District Association met at Great Bethel Baptist Church in Alexander City on June 22 to enjoy lunch and fellowship. The speaker was Ronald

like these "help promote racial harmony and (encourage Christians) to live out the new command of Christ to 'love one another' as He has loved us."

In his message at the luncheon, Davis used the parable of the good Samaritan to illustrate the need for Christians who are willing to "take chances" and share the love of Jesus with their neighbors, regardless of race, customs or church affiliations.

Both Cosper and Davis said they are excited about the potential that such events have to encourage evangelism efforts that cross racial lines and reach more people with

the gospel. This potential is why the SBOM provides funds for such events, Davis noted.

Emerson Ware, pastor of Great Bethel Baptist and moderator of the 28 churches in Early Rose District Association, said while pastors have enjoyed the cooperative evangelism efforts, he has seen stronger relationships among members of area churches as well.

"God has given the church the ministry of [racial] reconciliation, and no one besides the church can get us together," he said. "When others see the great relationships we have, that spirit is going to become contagious."

Cosper said his prayer is that these efforts will enhance the commitment of Christians in Tallapoosa County to do Kingdom ministry together. "What we are discovering is that we are all on the same page," he said.

"We just need this encouragement to work together instead of individually to reach our county."

*"These events ...
create a greater
awareness and
respect for each
other's churches
within the
community."*

DOM Barry Cosper
Tallapoosa Association

Out of a revival

Barry Cosper, director of missions for Tallapoosa Association, said this was the second gathering for the group. Last year's luncheon grew out of a citywide revival held in Alexander City in 2009, which featured preaching by both white and black pastors and music from area churches. That revival led to a "unity of spirit" that was too good not to follow up on, so the luncheons and another revival this year continued the cooperative effort, Cosper said.

"These events enhance fellowship but also create a greater awareness and respect for each other's churches within the community," he said.

Davis also pointed out that events

Rwandan Baptist pastor sentenced to life for 'genocide crimes'

On June 11, a Finnish court sentenced a former Baptist pastor to life in prison for participating in Rwanda's 1994 genocide, according to the British Broadcasting Corp.

Francois Bazaramba, 59, was a pastor of the Baptist church in Nyakizu. Approximately 5,000 members of the Tutsi ethnic group were slaughtered in April and May 1994 in the Nyakizu area. Prosecutors claim Bazaramba was an active member of an extremist group, comprising members of the rival Hutu tribe that orchestrated the killings.

Supporters said they do not believe that Bazaramba, who had been director of the youth wing of the Union of Baptist Churches in Rwanda, was capable of the acts alleged against him.

Bazaramba, who sought asylum in and moved to Finland in 2003, has been in de-

tention since 2007. Finnish authorities refused to extradite him to Rwanda, fearing he would not receive a fair trial and because Rwanda has the death penalty.

Bazaramba's attorney said he was not in a position to have carried out the killings and claimed to have evidence that witnesses in Rwanda were tortured. Family and church friends in Finland discounted the charges, describing him as a good man who helped other refugees fleeing Rwanda's civil war.

The charges against Bazaramba were brought by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, a Tanzania-based court formed in November 1994 to try the masterminds of the massacres. The allegations stem largely from a report on the Rwanda genocide by the Human Rights Watch organization in 1999. Bazaramba's name was not on a 1999 list of genocide

suspects, but his name was No. 19 on a list of 93 Rwandans living abroad published by the government of Rwanda in 2006.

Eyewitness accusations

Rwanda claims that Bazaramba worked alongside Nyakizu's ruthless mayor, Ladislas Ntaganzwa, a hard-line ethnic Hutu wanted for genocide, to secure weapons and lead patrols hunting down Tutsis. The murders in Nyakizu came during a 100-day killing spree following the presumed assassination of Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana on April 6, 1994. Hutus slew Tutsis across Rwanda during the period, with anti-Tutsi sentiment inflamed by Hutu government officials and official broadcasts blaming Tutsis for the president's death.

Eyewitnesses told *Helsingin Sanomat*, Fin-

land's leading newspaper, in 2007 that Bazaramba acquired weapons and led killers. One witness told the newspaper that he got weapons from Eleazar Ziharambere, at the time general secretary of the Union of Baptist Churches in Rwanda. Ziharambere fled Rwanda in 1994 and now works as director for African American Mission at International Ministries of the American Baptist Churches USA.

Ziharambere told the newspaper in 2007 that the Human Rights Watch report's claim that Bazaramba was a good friend of Ntaganzwa is not true, because he was a close friend of the previous mayor, whom Ntaganzwa deposed violently.

The trial, which lasted nine months, was Finland's first for genocide. Bazaramba's lawyers said he plans to appeal. (ABP)

Across Alabama's Associations

AUTAUGA

► **Jones Church** will celebrate homecoming July 11, 11 a.m. Mike McLemore, executive director for Birmingham Association, will speak. Art Hartley will lead the music. A covered-dish lunch will follow. There will be a singing at 1:30 p.m. Walter Johnson is pastor.

BESSEMER

► **The Church at McAdory, McCalla**, will hold revival July 18–21 with Evangelist Danny Lanier. Services will be Sunday at 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Bill McCall is pastor. ► **Southcrest Church, Bessemer**, will hold an Honor Flight Benefit gospel singing July 2, 7 p.m., with Stanley & Company, Crystal River and the Dotson Family. Benefits will go toward sending WWII veterans to Washington, D.C. Dinner will be served at 6 p.m. Scott Bush is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Cahaba Heights Church, Birmingham**, will hold a community lunch July 7, 14, 21 and 28, 11 a.m.–1 p.m., for senior citizens, workers of all ages, mothers, fathers and children in the pavilion or fellowship hall depending on weather conditions. For information call 205-967-2453. Bill Morrison is interim pastor. ► **Deerfoot Church, Trussville**, will host Frank Jones in concert July 18, 6 p.m. Roger Willmore is pastor. ► **Green Valley Church, Hoover**, will hold Summer Nights July 12 with comedian Jeff Allen, July 19 with Wes Hampton of Dove Award-winning Gaither Vocal Band, July 26 with writer and dramatist Steven Mosley as he presents "Chosen Garment: The Whole Bible in One Act" and Aug. 2 with Frank Page, president-elect of the SBC Executive Committee. Services will be at 7 p.m. Child care will be provided for birth through age four. For information visit www.gvbc.org. Bobby DuBois is interim pastor. ► **First Church, Roebuck Plaza**, will host

George and Marynell Winslow, parents of Lance Cpl Ryan Winslow of the U.S. Marine Corps who was killed in the line of duty while serving in Iraq, July 4, 11 a.m. Jim Auchmuty is pastor. ► **Valleydale Church, Birmingham**, will hold its annual Celebrate America July 4, 9:30 a.m. Internationally known writer and speaker Dinesh D'Souza will speak. He also was a former policy analyst under President Ronald Reagan. A barbecue lunch will follow. There also will be inflatables. D'Souza's books will be available for purchase. For information call 205-991-5282 or visit www.valleydale.org. Calvin Kelly is pastor.

CAHABA

► **Pisgah Church, Selma**, will celebrate homecoming July 18, 10 a.m., with former Pastor Lane Harris as guest speaker. Sunday School will be at 9 a.m. The church also will hold revival July 19–21, 7 p.m. Harold Arnold is pastor.

CALHOUN

► **Ron Sweatt** is the new pastor of **First Church, Weaver**. He comes from Hepzibah Church, McCalla, where he served as pastor. He has also served several other Alabama churches. Sweatt is a graduate of New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Tammy, have two children.

COFFEE

► **New Ebenezer Church, Elba**, will hold revival July 11–14. Services will be Sunday at 11 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. and weeknights at 7. The Johnson Family will lead the music. Travis Johnson is supply pastor.

COLUMBIA

► **Jon Barron** is the new youth minister for **Malvern Church**. He comes from Bethel Church, Newton, where he served as youth pastor and associate pastor. Barron is a graduate of The Baptist College of Florida in Graceville. He is married to Amanda. Hosea Parker is pastor.

EAST CULLMAN

► **Adam Edmondson** is the new pastor of **Edge-wood Church, Hanceville**. He and his wife, Lindsay, have one child.

FRANKLIN

► **First Church, Vina**, will celebrate its 100th anniversary with an Old Fashion Day July 11, 11 a.m. Sunday School will be at 10 a.m. A potluck lunch will follow the service. Jerry Swimmer is pastor.

JUDSON

► **Fellowship Church, Newville**, will celebrate its 145th homecoming July 11, 10:30 a.m. Ray Reiley will speak. A covered-dish lunch will follow. Tim McCraney is pastor.

MOBILE

► **Royce L. DuBose** is the new pastor of **First Church, Grand Bay**. He comes from Evergreen Church where he served as pastor. He also served several other churches in Alabama and Georgia. DuBose is a graduate of the University of Mobile and Luther Rice Seminary. He and his wife, Marie, have three children. ► **First Church, Irvington**, will hold a concert with Gold City July 23, 7 p.m., in memory of J.P. Breland, who served as a deacon. For tickets call 251-957-2718 or visit www.fbcirvington.org. Ron Griffin is pastor.

ST. CLAIR

► **Craig Gilley** is the new pastor of **Mount Pleasant Church, Pell City**. He comes from Macedonia Church, Margaret, where he served as pastor. Gilley has also served Riverside Church as youth pastor. He holds a bachelor's degree from Samford University in Birmingham, associate's degree from Southeastern Bible College in Birmingham and is currently pursuing a master of divinity from New Orleans Seminary. Gilley and his wife, Bridget, have two children. ► The adult choir of **Sulphur Springs Church, Trussville**, will lead a patriotic celebration July 4, 10:30 a.m. Men and women of the armed forces will be recognized, and a memorial wreath will be presented in honor of those who gave their lives. Bobby Shipp is pastor. Everett Sollie is minister of music.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Butch Burns**, pianist for **Oak Grove Church, Tuscaloosa**, will celebrate 50 years of playing the piano on July 19, his birthday. Burns also plays for the Travel-Aires quartet. Patrick Branch is pastor. ► **Cornelius Chapel Church, Buhl**, will celebrate homecoming July 11, 10:30 a.m. Calvary's Way and Mercy Given will sing. A covered-dish lunch will follow. Singing will follow lunch. Andy Dockery is pastor.

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

FBC Sandusky music minister celebrates decades of service

Have you ever had something on your heart and the only way to express it was through song? Frank Jones has.

The minister of music at First Baptist Church, Sandusky, in Birmingham wanted to perform a concert during which he could sing whatever he wanted and explain what each song meant to him with no time constraints or other hindrances.

So Jones mentioned the idea to church leaders, and they decided that since he had spent 40 years in music ministry and 20 years at the Birmingham Baptist Association church, they would not only let him perform a concert but also turn it into something more.

On June 13, the church hosted 40 Years of Music and Memories. Jones was honored with a commemorative plaque and several letters that were read by Pastor Herman Pair.

Members of the churches Jones did supply or interim work in his first 20 years of ministry — Forest Hills Baptist Church, Fairfield; Fairview Baptist Church, Birmingham; and Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove — were encouraged to attend the event.

While there were about 75 people in attendance, Roger and Sara Isbell and Ron and Charlotte Perkins were special guests. Jones credits Roger Isbell, who was the music minister at Forest Hills, Fairfield, and Sara Isbell, who led the children choirs at the same church, with directing him toward music beginning at a young age. Ron Perkins, the minister of music at Fairview Baptist, Birmingham, and Charlotte Perkins, Jones' Sunday School teacher at Fairview, helped him launch his career when he was a newlywed.

Jones started the concert with older songs from the beginning of his career and included some of his son Brandon's favorites. Brandon died of cancer in 2001, and the event was held on the ninth anniversary of the day he was buried, making it extra special to Jones. He ended the concert with one of his favorite songs, "It Is Well With My Soul," which he sang at Brandon's funeral.

"It was a real sweet service," Mary Chance, a member of First, Sandusky, said.

A reception followed the event.

That same week, Jones had a cat scan after experiencing severe throat pain and doctors found a mass in his neck. There was a 60 percent chance of it being cancerous. At press time, he was scheduled to undergo surgery to remove the mass June 25.

Retired Alabama pastor Henry Kress Davis dies at 85

Henry Kress Davis, a retired Alabama Baptist pastor, died May 27. He was 85.

Davis spent 50 years in the pastoral ministry, mostly in Boaz. He served twice as pastor of Carlisle Baptist Church, Boaz, and once as pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Boaz; Mount Zion Baptist Church, Boaz; and Butler Baptist Church, Attalla. He was also active in Marshall Baptist Association.

A native of Boaz, Davis took classes through the Howard (now Samford) extension center at Samford University in Birmingham. He also served in World War II with the Merchant Marine.

Davis is survived by his wife of 65 years, Trecy; two children; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild.



JONES

Alabama Ministries

North Alabama Center of NOBTS

► The North Alabama Center of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) has announced classes for the first term of the fall, Aug. 26–Oct. 7.

The center offers the Bible teaching certificate and the Christian education certificate.

Introduction to the New Testament: The Life of Christ, which will be applied to the Bible teaching certificate, will be taught by Ray Stonecypher, pastor of Piney Grove Baptist

Church, Ardmore, from 6–8 p.m.

Discipling Church Members, which will be applied to the Christian education certificate, will be taught by David Co-field, pastor of CrossRoads Baptist Church, Rogersville, and director of the center, from 8–10 p.m.

Classes are held at First Baptist Church, Athens, on Thursday nights.

For more information, visit www.fbcathens.org, e-mail Co-field at nac@fbcathens.org or call 256-247-6336.

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Q&A with Republican primary runoff candidates

Robert Bentley

Dr. Robert Bentley, a dermatologist with Alabama Dermatology Associates in Northport, currently serves in the House of Representatives' 63rd district, representing Tuscaloosa County. Bentley is a member of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa.



1. What is your position on the form of gambling known as electronic bingo in Alabama, and how have you evidenced that position during service in state office?

I am against electronic bingo gambling but I'm against all gambling. I have voted against bills that have come up related to electronic bingo.

This year, had that bill (Senate Bill 380) been brought up in the House, I was a no vote on that bill. I was going to vote no. I told (Rep.) Arthur Payne (who keeps a list of those opposing gambling bills) and AL-CAP (Alabama Citizens Action Program) that I was against it.

2. Many have called for a statewide vote on gambling in Alabama. What does the phrase "statewide vote on gambling" mean to you, and what is your opinion on this?

Many of the bills that have been brought up are statewide votes on gambling, but those are not clean votes. The only bill I would support on a statewide vote for gambling would be where a no vote means we outlaw all forms of gambling in the state of Alabama.

The only way to solve the issue is to have a vote like that and allow those of us who are opposed to gambling — Christians and others who are opposed to gambling — to have the right to vote it out completely in the state of Alabama. That is the only way to rid this state of Indian gambling. You cannot rid this state of Indian gambling because of the IGRA (Indian Gaming Regulatory Act) law. That's why Hawaii and Utah don't have any form of gambling.

3. Would you describe the push for a vote related to legalizing electronic bingo gambling in select locations across the state during this year's legislative session as a "statewide

vote on gambling"? Why and what was your position on the legislation?

It was not a true statewide vote on gambling. I was totally opposed to that because a no vote with that bill did not solve anything. Things would remain as they are at present. It also left up to a future Legislature the enabling legislation, and you certainly don't want to do that. If you have any kind of vote, people ought to know exactly what they are voting on. I would have voted no on that bill. I was on record as a no vote for that bill.

4. As governor of Alabama, what will be your position on gambling and its expansion in any form in the state?

I'm against expansion of gambling and I have always been.

5. Will you work for the defeat of gambling bills in the state Legislature and commit to veto them if they pass?

I will work to defeat any gambling bill, but people must realize if it's a constitutional amendment, I don't have the chance to veto (it). I will veto any gambling bill that is not a constitutional amendment.

6. Why do you hold the position on gambling that you do?

Economically, it hurts any region where it is located because it takes money out of the economy. Ethically, I think gambling is wrong. It hurts people and causes many social problems related to individuals and their families. And I just believe it is morally wrong.

Bradley Byrne

Bradley Byrne served as chancellor of the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education from 2007 to 2009. He is currently working full time on his campaign for governor. Byrne is a member of St. James Episcopal Church, Fairhope.



1. What is your position on the form of gambling known as electronic bingo in Alabama, and how have you evidenced that position during service in state office?

I am opposed to any form of gambling, including electronic bingo. I've taken that public position since my beginning in the Alabama State Senate in 2002 and continued that through the campaign. I never got a chance to officially vote against it because they couldn't get the numbers of people needed to bring it up, but I had a consistent position against it from the very beginning.

2. Many have called for a statewide vote on gambling in Alabama. What does the phrase "statewide vote on gambling" mean to you, and what is your opinion on this?

It means we would be opening the door to the gambling interest controlling the state of Alabama. Therefore I would be against a gambling referendum of any kind.

3. Would you describe the push for a vote related to legalizing electronic bingo gambling in select locations across the state during this year's legislative session as a "statewide vote on gambling"? Why and what was your position on the legislation?

I was against them all because I was

against gambling, period. I'm against any gambling proposal.

4. As governor of Alabama, what will be your position on gambling and its expansion in any form in the state?

I would be opposed to any expansion of gambling in the state of Alabama.

5. Will you work for the defeat of gambling bills in the state Legislature and commit to veto them if they pass?

Yes, I would oppose gambling legislation, and I would veto any that come in the form of a bill. But it would take a constitutional amendment to hold a referendum, and the governor can't veto a constitutional amendment.

6. Why do you hold the position on gambling that you do?

Gambling is bad for individuals, bad for society and bad for the economy.

I'm also worried that if we had gambling in the state of Alabama that the gambling interest would exercise great power over our political system.

That would not be healthy for our political system or the state. Gambling preys on the poor. We need to lift up the poor of our state and gambling brings them down.

The Alabama Baptist plans to sit down with the winner of the runoff as well as Ron Sparks, Democratic candidate for governor, before the November election to discuss more of the issues.

'Prayer is needed'

Ambassador asks WMU to pray for Sudan

Sudan desperately needs Southern Baptists to participate in a 40-day prayer emphasis for it, the war-ravaged African nation's ambassador to the United States said June 14 at the national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting in Orlando, Fla.

The 40 days are scheduled to begin Dec. 1 and lead up to a Jan. 9, 2011, national referendum in Sudan on whether to divide into two nations or remain under one government. Ambassador Akec Khoc hopes the vote will help bring an end to ongoing conflict between Muslims in the north and Christians in the south.

"Prayer is needed," Khoc told the WMU audience. "We are coming to you for prayer to our heavenly Father to give guidance to the leaders and the people of Sudan because it is only through Him that we can get peace."

Joint prayer effort

Sudanese Christians of many denominations are asking Southern Baptists to join in praying that God would establish southern Sudan as a sovereign nation, free from ethnic and religious persecution by the heavily Muslim north. Believers also are asked to pray for the salvation of non-Christians in Sudan.

The prayer initiative was first

proposed by Ken Welborn, North American Mission Board missionary to the United Nations. He told Khoc, a native of southern Sudan and member of the shared Muslim and Christian Sudanese government, that asking Christians to pray for the referendum is a contemporary application of the scriptural command to call upon the Lord.

In response to Welborn's suggestion, southern Sudanese leaders organized a program of prayer and fasting that will begin within the government and extend into the churches of each Sudanese region, including the most remote

villages.

"I wanted to bring it to the WMU, for I know that they are prayer warriors," Welborn told Baptist Press (BP). "This is intense prayer. We want them to be praying. We want them to get their churches involved in praying."

Khoc, a medical doctor and former general in the south Sudanese army, told BP he is a Coptic Christian and that Sudanese believers welcome Southern Baptists' prayer support.

"The north has committed to respect the outcome of the referendum," Khoc said. "So I believe that the north will respect it, but there may be elements both from the north and the south who may wish to spoil the referendum outcome."

And it is these groups, north and south, that need God to take their hearts so they do not spoil this."

Being a Christian is particularly difficult in Sudan because of ongoing pressure to convert to Islam, Khoc noted. That pressure, however, has not stopped him from living out his faith in Jesus.

Northern leaders say, "It would be good for you to be a Muslim," Khoc said. "And when they make such remarks, knowing that I'm a Christian, I tell them, 'You have chosen to be a Muslim. I have chosen to be a Christian, and I think it would be best for you to be a Christian. You will be saved if you are to be a Christian. You are not going to be saved by being a Muslim.'"

"And in most cases, the conversation breaks down at that point."

For more information about the 40-day prayer emphasis, contact Welborn at kwelborn@namb.net. (BP)

"We are coming to you for prayer to our heavenly Father ... because it is only through Him that we can get peace."

Akec Khoc
Sudan's Ambassador to U.S.



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- Focus on issues, not people
- Be as concise as possible

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

Baptist pastor named top religious freedom diplomat

WASHINGTON — President Obama has responded to more than a year of speculation and criticism among advocates for international religious freedom by naming an American Baptist pastor and motivational speaker as the nation's top diplomat for religious freedom.

On June 15, the White House announced that Obama had tapped Suzan Johnson Cook as the State Department's ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom, which had remained vacant since Obama's inauguration nearly a year and a half ago.

But some international-religious-freedom advocates are questioning the nomination because of her lack of professional experience in foreign policy.

Cook has been a teacher, pastor, motivational speaker and political adviser for three decades. Most recently, she served as the founding pastor of Bronx Christian Fellowship Baptist Church in New York. Mariners' Bronx Christian Fellowship is aligned with American Baptist Churches USA and Cook's ordination is through the denomination.

Thomas Farr, who served as the first director of the office Cook will oversee if she is confirmed, praised her resumé as a pastor, but said the position really needs someone with a strong grasp of, and experience in, the complex field of foreign policy.

"If the Obama administration were taking this issue seriously, it would choose an expert in international religious freedom with experience in foreign affairs. It would choose a proven leader who can change things at the State Department and re-energize our flagging (religious freedom) policy," he said.

CBF missions funds nearly one-third below budget

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) will be forced to recall missionaries from the field if donations to its annual Offering for Global Missions do not increase next year, CBF Executive Coordinator Daniel Vestal told the CBF Coordinating Council on June 23.

"People are always saying 'Why don't you appoint more funded missionaries?' The fact is we don't have the money," he said on the eve of CBF's General Assembly June 23–26 in Charlotte, N.C.

Vestal said CBF would have already reduced its missionary force had it not been for several generous designated gifts to global missions. His comments followed a financial report showing contributions to the missions offering running 29 percent behind budget eight months into the fiscal year. Total CBF revenues through May were \$8.6 million, 73 percent of projected receipts of \$11.9 million year-to-date toward an annual 2009–10 budget of \$16.1 million.

Fish, Ham inducted into evangelists' Hall of Faith

ORLANDO, Fla. — Southern Baptist evangelism professor Roy Fish and legendary revivalist Mordecai Ham were inducted into the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists' (COSBE) Hall of Faith on June 12 during the organization's annual meeting in Orlando, Fla.

Fish, known for igniting a passion for evangelism in pastors for more than 40 years, is distinguished professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and is the namesake for the seminary's Roy Fish School of Evangelism and Missions. He also served as interim president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) from 2006 to 2007.

Ham (1878–1961) is known for leading thousands to Christ in the early 20th century — perhaps most notably, in 1934, a young Billy Graham. The Hall of Faith, housed in a meeting room at the NAMB offices in Alpharetta, Ga., was established by COSBE in 2008 and dedicated in January.

Tennessee summer missionary killed in car accident

PORTLAND, Maine — Southern Baptist summer missionary Palmer Maphet, 20, of Mount Juliet, Tenn., was killed and three other Tennessee students and their supervisor were injured June 16 when their car was struck by another vehicle near Portland, Maine.

Maphet, a sophomore at Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville, was serving on a team sent out by Tennessee Baptist Collegiate Ministry to minister at Laconia Motorcycle Week in Laconia, N.H. They were en route to the event when the accident occurred.

According to a news report by the *Portland (Maine) News*, a Toyota Tacoma pickup truck, driven by Paula Haddow, 63, of Standish, Maine, crossed into the lane and struck McClendon's car.

"Palmer Maphet was an exceptional Christian man," said Bill Choate, director of Baptist Collegiate Ministries for the Tennessee Baptist Convention. "He will obviously be missed by so very many." ☞



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

MONTGOMERY PASTOR JAY WOLF RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS SEMINARY AWARD

Jay Wolf (center), pastor of FBC Montgomery, received the distinguished alumnus award from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) at its June 16 luncheon during the SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla. Wolf is pictured with Rick Lance (left), executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, and Chuck Kelley, president of NOBTS.



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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.

New work states looking for assistance

By Richard Nations
Special to The Alabama Baptist

I turned the television set on in the hotel room as I prepared to go to the Orlando (Fla.) convention center and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

There was a flash flood occurring in Oklahoma City, and a television news helicopter was sending live video of a teenage girl being washed down a flooding creek. She was desperately trying to grab tree limbs as she was swept down the creek. Finally she grabbed a strong limb and hung on to a small tree. She still could not get to the bank, and occasionally she would lose her grip and wash down to another tree. As the helicopter circled her, I prayed for her and asked God not to let this girl drown right before our eyes on national television.

Within 45 minutes, CNN's coverage showed the girl being rescued by a boat launched by the fire department. She was rescued, along with some firefighters whose boat had swamped in the attempt to help her.

'Help is coming'

At one point, the camera zoomed in on the small teenage girl and she looked up and waved as if to say, "I know you are here." The commentators were agonizing over her fate, and they kept saying, "Hold on; help is coming."

Later, at the convention, we deliberated on the Great Commission

Resurgence (GCR) Task Force report, and I had mixed feelings about the report's implications. I have been especially concerned about Component 4 and the phasing out of the cooperative agreements between the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and the state conventions.

More missionaries needed

In the state convention where I serve, we are heavily dependent on NAMB funding, and this will mean some considerable rearrangement of our work. If anything, we need more missionaries and not less.

I also reflected on GCR Task Force chairman Ronnie Floyd's recent article, released just prior to the convention, in which he said, "If the GCR recommendations are adopted, more resources are on the way to help reach those regions and states for Christ. If your church or association or state convention is about reaching lost people and planting gospel churches, help is on the way!" (<http://www.pray4gcr.com/2010/06/churches-and-state-conventions-outside-the-south-help-is-on-the-way/>)

I wanted desperately to believe that even though the task force report seemed to indicate missionaries and state convention staff jobs were at risk if this proposal was adopted, that the intent was to bring about a Great Commission Resurgence. I was skeptical of some of the report's recommendations, but

we have been given assurance that "help is on the way."

I was especially encouraged during the NAMB report on the last evening of the convention when a messenger questioned if there could be an emphasis placed on churches adopting churches in need of assistance.

I think that is a great idea that should be encouraged and facilitated by the mission boards, the state conventions and the associations.

As I traveled home, I reflected on the 105 mostly smaller membership SBC churches across Iowa. I'm assisting some of them in their search to find a bivocational pastor, to hold Vacation Bible School and to staff and train their Sunday Schools. Many of them are struggling financially and numerically. We need help.

And it's not only us. Many churches across the Northern and Western parts of the United States need help. For that matter, a lot of churches across the South are still in need of a resurgence in health and growth. We are a long way from "penetrating lostness" in our quest for a resurgence of the Great Commission.

I want to call on Southern Baptists from every part of the country to step up now. We need your help to reach the people in the underserved parts of the United States and Canada. We need your help to

penetrate the great cities of North America. We need your help.

How about leading your church or association to partner with a smaller membership church to assist with special projects such as Bible schools, revivals, evangelistic thrusts like God's Plan for Sharing, building a church building or remodeling existing facilities?

When churches and associations come alongside our churches, it encourages them and helps them accomplish more Great Commission work.

To get involved, do a little Web surfing on www.sbc.net and look for the state conventions directory on the SBCSearch link. There you will find contact information and website links for state conventions all across the United States and Canada. Get in touch with them, and ask if there is a church your church could adopt and assist. Another resource is the website <http://thebridge.namb.net>, which lists projects and links to missions activities.

Lead your church to provide some assistance for a church in need. It may be that you only need to look as far as the next community over or a church down the street from you. It may mean that you could lead your church to travel several hundred miles to help a church in an emerging region get established.

Christian contemporary singing group MercyMe has a song with the lyrics "Hold fast. Help is on the way." I am trusting in that promise as I work with these churches in Iowa. We need your help. Let's have a Great Commission Resurgence.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Richard Nations is the church health team leader for the Baptist Convention of Iowa and publications editor of The Iowa Baptist.

"We need your help to reach the people in the underserved parts of the United States and Canada. ... We need your help."

Richard Nations
Baptist Convention of Iowa



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The discomfort of honesty

The thing I love about her is you always know where you stand." Have you heard that before? People usually say it when they are describing a woman who is very honest. She may even make you uncomfortable with her level of honesty. However, this statement oftentimes carries with it a measure of respect.

I worked with a woman like this. When she would call me, there was always a part of me that cringed inside and thought, "Oh my goodness. What is she going to say to me?"

However, because she was willing to be honest with me and others, I recognized her genuineness and the integrity with which she conducted herself in her relationships. I even found myself seeking her advice in difficult situations. I knew she would be honest with me, even if it was uncomfortable, because she valued honesty in relationships. Honesty is difficult though. It makes us nervous. Sometimes it is because we are afraid of honest feedback about ourselves. Other times, we do not feel qualified to give honest feedback. And sometimes we are afraid of creating uncomfortable moments or hurting someone else.

Yet think of how Jesus conducted Himself. Remember when Jesus was honest with the rich young ruler, telling him he had done well but

A Thought for Women

By Jean Roberson
jroberson@wmu.org



needed to sell his possessions and follow Him?

What about when Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him that evening? Jesus also was honest with the religious teachers of His day when He healed the crippled woman on the Sabbath in order to show them the compassion of God.

Were they uncomfortable moments? Probably so. Was anything said that was meant to be hurtful? Certainly not. Why then did Jesus speak so candidly? Perhaps it was because Jesus knew that honesty makes us better people.

We cannot grow in our faith, work or character unless we are honest with each other. Jesus was committed to those people and their growth more than He was committed to calm relationships. We must be committed to others, too.

Certainly there is a difference between being honest and being mean-spirited. Certainly we know

that how we say something is as important as what we say.

However, we cannot run away from honesty simply because we fear frustration in our relationships. When we are honest, we become more comfortable with it. We develop relationships as those who are honest, which speaks to our integrity and authenticity with others. Perhaps people may even say of you, "With her, you know where you stand."

A Takeaway Value . . .

Honesty, though sometimes uncomfortable, leads to growth in others and develops our integrity.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jean Roberson, MSW, LCSW, is a ministry consultant for national Woman's Missionary Union. She serves as team leader for the adult team and director of Christian Women's Job Corps/Christian Men's Job Corps and International Initiatives.

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HEART OF missions...

Stephen Hall, minister to students at **NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville**, traveled with 14 people 250 miles south of the U.S. border to Ciudad Victoria, Mexico, May 28–June 2. They partnered with Mega Mission, a ministry dedicated to supporting the spiritual and physical needs of the people in Ciudad Victoria.

The team from the Birmingham Baptist Association church traveled 40 minutes outside the city every day to the small town of Soto La Marina to help build the 104th church sponsored by Mega Mission.

Team members attended a ground-breaking service and were able to share in the first worship service at the new church, which was named Rey de Reyes (King of Kings).

This was their second mission to Ciudad Victoria. They were able to revisit a house they built for a local pastor two years earlier and see the progress that had been made in the area.

It was Hall's first time to physically build a church. "It was great to put hard work and sweat into the project," he said.

Hall noted the church will serve as a community center and gathering place. "It is neat thinking about the blessing to a community in poverty," he said.

A group of nearly 100 students and adults from **First Baptist Church, Huntsville**, in Madison Baptist Association, participated in the church's 11th annual summer missions trip to Perry County May 29–June 6. Mike Pearce, minister of missions and outreach of First, Huntsville, said the church has committed itself to Perry County with a goal to help raise the standard of living and to provide a strong witness to one of the poorest counties in the nation.

The past 10 years the group served in Perry County they worked primarily on construction projects, but this year they added service projects.

During the week they stayed at Judson College in Marion, where they worked to replace ceilings, clean dorms and revamp the surrounding areas. The team shared the gospel with 75 kids who attended a one-day sports camp organized by their group and held a Memorial Day piano concert organized by First, Huntsville's organist. The concert was not only to honor those who served the United States, but also to minister to the people within the community.

During the week they partnered with Sowing Seeds of Hope in Marion as they worked to spruce up nearby homes and community churches.

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Picture of Mormons?

Religious imagery in 'Twilight' novels, films unintentional, Mormon author says

Ever since Bram Stoker's *Dracula* began haunting the imagination in 1897, popular culture has identified Christian symbols — crucifixes, holy water, Communion wafers — as weapons to ward off a blood-thirsty vampire.

The "Twilight" novels and film franchise have religious associations, too — but most of them come from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons).

As the film's "Twi-hard" fans get ready for the third "Twilight" installment, "Eclipse," which opened in theaters June 30, few are likely to recognize the religious references in the film based on the novels by Stephenie Meyer, herself a Mormon.

Hard to ignore

"I think people make up all these Mormon references just so they can publish 'Twilight' articles in respectable publications like *The New York Times*," actor Robert Pattinson (Edward, the film's central vampire character), told *Entertainment Weekly*. "Even Stephenie said it doesn't mean any of that."

It's possible that Meyer never set

out to weave Mormon imagery into the "Twilight" background. Yet intentional or otherwise, it's hard to ignore:

► The story's teenage heroine, Bella, avoids coffee, tea, alcohol and tobacco — not unlike the Mormons' "Word of Wisdom" health code. Bella also advises her father to "cut back on steak," much like the Mormon teaching to eat meat and poultry "sparingly."

► Feminists have questioned Bella's frequent cooking and cleaning — household chores that reflect a strong Mormon work ethic and traditional roles for women. The official motto for heavily Mormon Utah is Industry, and its symbol is the beehive.

► Mormons believe angels are resurrected beings of flesh and bone. The most familiar is Moroni, who stands high atop Mormon temples, trumpet in hand. The Book of Mormon says Moroni was a fifth-century prophet who visited founder Joseph Smith in 1823. Smith described Moroni as radiating light and "glorious beyond description."

Bella describes her vampire boy-

friend Edward as an angel whom she can't imagine "any more glorious." Edward's skin sparkles in the sunlight, and he visits Bella's bedroom at night. But Mormon angels don't have wings; in the "Twilight" film, Edward sits in the science lab, the outstretched wings of a stuffed white owl just over his shoulders.

► A crucial Mormon belief is that humans can become divine. In the "Twilight" series, the Cullen family of vampires was once human but now lives without death in a resurrected condition. Their immortality is a kind of probationary period for eternal life. Meyer describes the Cullens, particularly Edward, as "godlike" and "inhumanly beautiful."

► A unique Mormon teaching is that marriages are "sealed" for eternity; spouses are referred to as eternal companions and eternal partners. Bella describes her relationship with Edward as "forever."



RNS photo

LDS CONNECTION — Taylor Lautner (Jacob) and Kristen Stewart (Bella) star in 'Eclipse,' the third installment of the 'Twilight' film series, which features subtle, if unintentional, Mormon imagery.

► Bella and Edward's marriage and her quick pregnancy underscore the Mormon emphasis on the family. But Bella's half human/vampire fetus nearly destroys her, so her distraught husband suggests an abortion and artificial insemination. Mormons permit abortions if the mother's life is in danger, and

artificial insemination is an option for married couples. Bella quickly vetoes both abortion and artificial insemination, reinforcing the essential Mormon teaching of individual choice, or "agency." Meyer has said the apple on the cover of the first "Twilight" novel represents Eve's choice in the Garden of Eden. The poster for "Eclipse" includes the line: "It all begins ... with a choice." The patriarch of the vampire family, Carlisle Cullen, supports Bella when he explains, "It wouldn't be right to make such a choice for her, to force her."

► By the conclusion of the "Twilight" series, Bella's Quileute Indian friend, Jacob, "imprints" on her daughter, meaning he will marry the girl when she's older and establish a genetic link to her vampire family. Mormons believe they share a common heritage with American Indians through ancient Israel.

► The Book of Mormon teaches that a remnant of these ancient people came to America around 600 B.C.; their descendents, the Lamanites, are among the ancestors of American Indians. Quileute names in the series are decidedly Hebrew: Jacob, Paul, Sam, Ephraim, Jared, Seth, Joshua, Levi, Rebecca and Rachel. Jacob's last name is Black, a reference to the Lamanites' "skin of blackness" (metaphorically, a religious rather than an ethnic distinction).

Stoker probably never imagined that vampires would actually represent a religious doctrine. But more than a century later, "Twilight" shows that these nocturnal creatures can accommodate just about anything. (RNS)

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For July 4

Explore the Bible

By Robert Olsen

Assistant Professor, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

WHAT CAN I DO?

1 Corinthians 8:1–3, 9–13; 9:19–23; 10:23–24, 31–11:1

Is It Based on Love? (8:1–3)

Corinth was a city filled with temples and idol worship, making it virtually impossible to escape the presence of idols in the city. Since the various religious sects required sacrifice, food sold in the market often was the product of such a sacrifice. For some Christians, this meat was tainted since it had been sacrificed to an idol, and therefore they resisted eating it. For others, eating this meat was not a problem since they knew that there is only one true God and meat sacrificed to an idol was not tainted, giving them the freedom to eat it. Because of this division among Christians, Paul appealed to love. The Christians who ate the meat ought to desist in order not to offend those who avoided the meat. Even though idol worship is not prevalent in America today, Paul’s principles still apply. We always ought to address issues in the church with love, putting other people first. We are to base our behavior on our love for God, and we can do anything that grows out of this love.

Will It Harm Others? (8:9–13; 10:23–24)

Paul advised the Christians in Corinth to not eat meat sacrificed to idols since this would cause some of the believers to stumble and be led astray. Those who believed it to be wrong to eat meat sacrificed to idols would be tempted to violate their consciences by eating this food, which would hinder their spiritual growth. To those who believed eating meat sacrificed to idols was a sin, eating the meat was a sin. Thus the strong believer, the one to whom eating the meat was nothing at all, was actually causing the weaker brother to sin, and in doing so, the stronger brother actually sinned as well. Therefore, out of concern for the weaker brother, it was better to avoid eating the meat. Just because we are free to eat whatever we want (since all food is clean), this does not mean that we should do so if it is going to create a stumbling block for other Christians.

There are issues in our churches that mirror this scenario. For example, if you attend a church that believes wearing shorts to worship is sinful, then don’t wear shorts. We need to be more concerned with loving our brothers and sisters than with expressing our freedom in Christ. We are to base our behavior on how it will affect others spiritually and do nothing to harm them.

Is It Evangelistic? (9:19–23)

In acting in love, Paul demonstrated how he tried to accommodate his behavior to reach different groups for the gospel. To Jews, he became like a Jew; to Gentiles, he became like a Gentile. Paul set a standard for us in our evangelism. We are to do what we can to win others to Christ. This does not mean that we change the gospel; we must always preach the entire gospel. However, we should try to remove every stumbling block we can that might hinder the gospel. For example, forcing other cultures to try to “do” church the way Americans do church is not necessarily the best way to go about winning other people to Christ. We need to get to the core of the gospel and acknowledge the areas that are preferential or cultural and not force these areas on other people but stick with the gospel: the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice on our behalf. This is the core of the gospel — not how to dress, what type of building to meet in or what style of worship to have; these are side issues to the gospel. Therefore we are to base our behavior on what will lead others to Christ.

Will It Glorify God? (10:31–11:1)

The main point behind Paul’s teaching is that Christians need to seek to glorify God in everything they do and point others to Him. Our example in fulfilling this is Christ. Just as Paul emulated Christ, so are all Christians to do the same. We must put others ahead of ourselves and do our best not to place stumbling blocks in their paths. When we base our behavior on what will glorify God, we will do all that helps others know more about Him and not do anything to offend them.

Bible Studies for Life

By James Barnette

Associate Professor, Department of Religion, Samford University

THE POWER OF CHOICE

1 Samuel 13:8–13; 16:6–13

My Choices

Saul was in Gilgal, where he was anxiously awaiting the passage of the “seven days” at which point Samuel was expected to arrive. It was made clear that the king was to wait until Samuel appeared to administer the appropriate sacrifices. Such sacrifices were offered twice daily: in the early morning and at twilight (Num. 28:1–6). Samuel could have arrived at any time on the seventh day and still fulfilled his role in the process. Saul’s excuses for proceeding with the sacrifices without Samuel appear to be legitimate: The troops were scattered, Samuel had not arrived and the Philistines were gathering right outside Gilgal. His primary concern seems to be that the troops were drifting away toward home. But Saul judged the situation according to what he saw, not by faith in the Lord. Note the significant contrast between Saul here and Jonathan in Chapter 14: While Saul was concerned with the reduction in his troops, Jonathan did not concern himself about the large number of enemy troops and totally depended on God (1 Sam. 14:6). Samuel had nothing to gain if Saul failed on the battlefield, and he knew that God was in control, even in the appointment of the new king. Furthermore this meeting had been planned some two years before, and no doubt Samuel and Saul had discussed this more than once. This meeting appears to be God’s way of assessing Saul’s faith and patience. Unfortunately he placed his trust in his timing instead of God’s.

Their Choices

The central purpose of Samuel’s trek to Bethlehem was to anoint a future king, though the public anointing would occur much later. The prophet was impressed by the appearance and height of Jesse’s oldest son, Eliab. Samuel had been similarly impressed by the tall and striking Saul. Some suggest that Eliab represents a “new Saul” so that in his rejection, Saul is denounced in effigy. Humans look at the outward appearance (literally “the eyes”),

but God looks at the heart. Only the Lord has the capacity to know one’s thoughts, emotions and motivations. Seven sons were presented and yet the Lord had not chosen any of them. So insignificant was the youngest son, David, that Jesse did not even summon him from the flock to the feast. Our story began with the rejection of Saul. Now we see a threefold use of the phrase “not choose.” The combination of “reject” and “not choose” builds the suspense of the story. We are waiting for God’s choice. We do not know how long Jesse’s household waited, but it must have been for a while. It had to wait — and we must wait — for the arrival of the youthful shepherd.

His Choices

Another interesting contrast: Saul was hiding among the baggage when Samuel came to call him, but David was busy caring for his father’s sheep. God calls people who are busy, not people looking for ways to avoid responsibility. In verse 12, for the first time, David is brought into direct contact with Samuel. David is described as “ruddy,” meaning he either sported red-tinted hair or a bronze complexion. He had a “fine appearance” (literally “beauty of eyes”) and was “handsome.” However, the basis of God’s selection was what He saw inside of the young man. Other men who were not firstborn but were selected over their more socially powerful older brothers include Seth, Noah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim and Moses. Often God chose the more disenfranchised family members to carry out His divine mission. Verse 13 is careful not to state that David was anointed king over Israel. To Jesse and the small group assembled, the purpose of the anointing might not have been totally clear. As far as we know, only Samuel knew the purpose of the ritual for certain. David was anointed three times in his life: by Samuel (1 Sam. 16:33) at Bethlehem, by men of Judah to be a “king over the house of Judah” (2 Sam. 2:4) and by the elders of Israel to be “a king over Israel” (2 Sam. 5:3). This progression depicts how ultimately this young shepherd completed the conquest of Canaan and united the entire Jewish nation.

The Alabama Baptist will not publish an issue July 8. Sunday School lessons for July 11 will be available at www.thealabamabaptist.org.

Christian Crossword

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Across

1. We have ____ His star in the east. (Matt. 2:2)

5. Upon the ____ of the rock. (Job 39:28)

9. Which have ____ the burden. (Matt. 20:12)

10. Pitched beside the well of _____. (Judg. 7:1)

12. Elmodam, which was the son of _____. (Luke 3:28)

13. Whose ____ was the sea. (Nahum 3:8)

15. The sons of Judah; ____, and Onan. (1 Chron. 2:3)

17. Large.

19. Even as a ____ cherisheth her children. (1 Thess. 2:7)

20. Federal Aviation Administration. (abbr.)

21. From the blood of righteous _____. (Matt. 23:35)

23. But if thine ____ be evil. (Matt. 6:23)

24. Sickens.

25. The words of king _____. (Prov. 31:1)

27. Now there came a ____ over all the land. (Acts 7:11)

29. In the very _____. (John 8:4)

30. Of a truth thou the Son of God. (Matt. 14:33)

31. And ____ the host _____. (Judg. 7:21)

34. Laying up in ____ for themselves ____ good foundation. (1 Tim. 6:19)

37. Cometh of the ____ of his patrimony. (Duet. 18:8)

38. She was of the ____ of twelve years. (Mark 5:42)

40. And they straightway left their _____. (Matt 4:20)

41. A son of Bela. (1 Chron. 7:7)

42. And ____ even ... they brought unto Him ____ that were diseased. (Mark 1:32)

44. Naaman, ____, and Rosh. (Gen. 46:21)

45. Attorney General. (abbr.)

46. He shall come unto ____ the glory of Israel. (Mic. 1:15)

48. Thou shalt love thy neighbour ____ thyself. (Matt. 19:19)

49. Into the mouth of the _____. (Nah. 3:12)

51. ____ the son of Kishi. (1 Chron. 6:44)

53. A greater than Jonas is _____. (Matt. 12:41)

54. Have ye not ____ what David did? (Matt. 12:3)

Down

1. Let your light ____ shine before men. (Matt. 5:16)

2. Ye do ____, not knowing the scriptures. (Matt. 22:29)

3. Ahira the son of _____. (Num. 10:27)

4. Son of Simeon. (1 Chron. 4:24)

5. Mine enemies ____ me sore. (Lam. 3:52)

6. And it is a ____ thing. (Dan. 2:11)

7. Blessed ____ thou, Simon Bar-jona. (Matt. 16:17)

8. ____ into the land of Israel. (Matt. 2:20)

9. They take a _____. (Amos 5:12)

11. Thus hath the Lord ____ with me. (Luke 1:25)

12. The curse upon mount _____. (Deut. 11:29)

14. Snoop into.

16. Be not ____ with thy mouth. (Eccles. 5:2)

18. Ammiel the son of _____. (Num. 13:12)

20. And the two doors were of _____. (1 Kings 6:34)

22. Not given to filthy _____. (Titus 1:7)

24. His wife was of the daughters of _____. (Luke 1:5)

26. Estimated time of arrival. (abbr.)

28. And did ____ the shewbread. (Matt. 12:4)

31. The churches of ____ salute you. (1 Cor. 16:19)

32. They gave ____ money unto the soldiers. (Matt. 28:12)

33. Doth not even ____ itself teach you. (1 Cor. 11:14)

34. Lydia, a ____ of purple. (Acts 16:14)

35. ____ the son of Kushaiah. (1 Chron. 15:17)

36. Thy will be done in earth, ____ it ____ in heaven. (Matt. 6:10)

39. Western slang for “girl.”

42. Arad, and _____. (1 Chron. 8:15)

43. The Jews of ____ sought to stone thee. (John 11:8)

46. I ____ no pleasant bread. (Dan. 10:3)

50. Saying, ____, thou that destroyest the temple. (Mark 15:29)

52. Before Christ is B.C.; Anno Domini is ____.

World Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Christian, Jewish scholars urge changes for Passion play

OBERAMMERGAU, Germany — Jewish and Christian scholars have called for a full edit of the script for the world's largest Passion play, currently on stage in southern Germany, even as changes couldn't be made until at least 2020.

Produced once every 10 years, the Oberammergau Passion Play is the largest and one of the oldest theatrical reenactments of the final days of the life of Jesus. The Oberammergau play attracts hundreds of thousands of spectators and employs approximately half of the town's 5,200 residents. Like many Passion plays, however, Oberammergau has been criticized for its anti-Jewish elements and stereotypes.

The Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations (CCJR), an umbrella group for more than 30 academic and educational interfaith centers in the United States and Canada, drafted a list of 17 recommendations for a new script, even though the play won't be staged again until 2020.

The report concluded that "Jewish opponents of Jesus are unjustifiably depicted in such extreme terms as to risk impressing on the audience a negative image of the entire Jewish community." The report encouraged editors not to draw primarily from previous versions of the play that contain anti-Jewish elements.

The current script contains edits from the 1980s overseen by director Christian Stueckl and dramatist Otto Huber. Even with an emphasis on Jesus as a rabbi and the elimination of anti-Jewish references from the Gospel of Matthew, the current script continues to raise ire among clerics and academics alike. The study recognized these changes, but called for further adjustments.

The CCJR points specifically to "refinements for the presentation of Old Testament scenes, the relationship between the Roman governor and the Jewish High Priest, the nature of the capital charges brought against Jews and the numbers and mood of Jewish spectators."

The report has been praised by Rabbi Eric J. Greenberg, director of the department of interfaith affairs for the Anti-Defamation League, as a "monumental step forward in proving how Christians and Jews can work together to benefit both faiths."

'Religion leads ... to ... less distress' over mistakes

TORONTO — Religion may provide a "buffer" allowing the devout to feel less anxiety when they make mistakes, compared with nonbelievers, according to new scientific research.

Researchers at the University of Toronto measured "error-related negativity" — people's defensive response to errors — and compared it to religious belief. Their findings were published in the journal *Psychological Science*.

In the experiments, participants had electrodes measuring their brain activity as they performed cognitive tests. One test of 40 students involved making a grammatically correct sentence out of jumbled words; some of the sentences contained words with religious connotations, like "sacred" or "divine."

Another experiment required participants to identify the color of words that flashed on a screen. Some words were depicted in their correct color while others were not. They were then asked to quantify their belief in God on a scale of zero to seven. The study found that those who were religious or claimed belief in God "showed low levels of distress-related neural activity" when they learned of their test errors, compared with nonbelievers.

By contrast, atheists demonstrated a "heightened neural response" and reacted more defensively when they learned of their errors, wrote the study's lead author, Michael Inzlicht, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Toronto.

Inzlicht and co-author Alexa Tullett added, "Thinking about one's religion, consciously or otherwise, acts as a bulwark against defensive reactions to errors; it muffles the cortical alarm bell."

"If thinking about religion leads people to react to their errors with less distress and defensiveness ... in the long run, this effect may translate to religious people living their lives with greater equanimity than nonreligious people, being better able to cope with the pressures of living in a sometimes hostile world."

Campus News



University of Mobile

► Faculty

Concert to Be Held: There will be a faculty concert featuring the

duo Gulf Coast Virtuosi with pianist Kadisha Onalbayeva, adjunct professor of piano at the University of Mobile (UMobile), and violinist Leonid Yanovskiy, associate professor and director of strings at the University of West Florida in Pensacola, Aug. 27 at 7:30 p.m. in Moorer Auditorium in Martin Hall on the UMobile campus.

For information, call the center at 251-442-2420 or visit the website at www.umobile.edu.



Samford University

► Samford Receives Grant for New Careers in Nursing Scholarships:

Samford University's Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing is one of 63 schools that will receive funding to award eight scholarships from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing through

the RWJF New Careers in Nursing (NCIN) scholarship program. Samford is one of three Alabama institutions to receive the grants and the only private university in the state. The other grant recipients are the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of South Alabama in Mobile.

The scholarships are designated for students traditionally underrepresented in the field of nursing, including men and minorities, according to Janet Alexander, director of Samford's accelerated second degree baccalaureate nursing program. Alexander and Joy Whatley, associate dean of the undergraduate program, wrote the grant proposal.

Eight NCIN scholarships in the amount of \$10,000 each will be awarded to Samford students entering the accelerated baccalaureate nursing program during the 2010-11 academic year. Students can use the money for tuition or living expenses while enrolled in the program.

NCIN was launched in 2008 to address the national nursing shortage and fuel the pipeline of diverse nurse faculty. To date, the scholarship program has supported 1,917 students at 101 schools of nursing and continues to develop culturally

competent health professionals and future leaders of the profession.



Judson College

► New Librarian Employed: Andrea Abernathy, of Athens, has recently been employed as librarian at Judson College. She earned her bachelor's degree in English language arts from the University of Montevallo in 2003 and master's degree in library and information studies from the University of Alabama in 2009.

► New Library Director Named: Judson College has named George Washburn director of Bowling Library. Washburn began work at Judson in 1995 as director of information technology and became research librarian in 2002. He and his wife, Leah, also serve in the music ministry at Hopewell Baptist Church, Marion, in Cahaba Baptist Association.

► New Library Director

Named: Judson College has named George Washburn director of Bowling Library. Washburn began work at Judson in 1995 as director of information technology and became research librarian in 2002. He and his wife, Leah, also serve in the music ministry at Hopewell Baptist Church, Marion, in Cahaba Baptist Association.

Youth poster contest under way

GuideOne Insurance encourages church youth groups and young artists across the country to participate in a poster contest for a chance to win \$50 and have their artwork featured in a 2011 calendar.

The annual Keeping America's Churches Safe poster contest and calendar features 13 pieces of artwork representing important safety and security issues in churches.

Posters should depict a scenario focusing on travel safety, fire prevention, storm and weather preparation, playground and playroom rules, youth camp safety, protecting elderly members or other situations about church safety and security.

Rules to enter

Artists must be under the age of 18 to enter. Posters should be created horizontally on an 8.5-by-11-inch sheet of paper, using materials like crayons, markers or paint. Entries that are three-dimensional, electronically created, glued or stapled will not be accepted.

A separate sheet of paper with the artist's full name, age, phone number, personal mailing address and church name should be included with each entry. Posters should be mailed in a large envelope, since entries may not be folded or creased.

All entries must be postmarked by July 31 to be eligible for judging. Please mail entries to GuideOne Insurance, Attn: Jillian Sievel, 1111 Ashworth Road, West Des Moines, IA 50265.

The 13 winners will be announced by mid-August. (GuideOne)



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BP photo

AT PEACE — During a World Cup practice in Pretoria, South Africa, U.S. goalkeeper Tim Howard said he is 'living a dream. And yet if it all went away tomorrow, I know I would still have peace.'

'God has blessed me'

U.S. goalie Tim Howard relies on faith on, off field

It was all about goalie Tim Howard, an outspoken Christian, during the U.S. team's World Cup opening match against England on June 12. The game ended in a 1-1 tie.

In spite of a first-half injury to the ribs that left him in excruciating pain, Howard managed to stay on the field and ward off England's continuous attacks throughout the remainder of the game, a feat that earned him the man of the match title. While thwarting an attempted goal 29 minutes into the match, Howard was kicked in the ribs by England's Emile Heskey. The injury left him writhing in agony at a time his team was down 0-1.

"It felt like agony," Howard said. "I knew Heskey was going to slide in, and he had every right to that ball, the same as I did. You just leave yourself exposed when you're at full stretch, and he came in and caught me just under my chest and my ribs."

Bruised, not broken

Team trainers feared Howard's ribs were broken, but doctors confirmed two days later that they are severely bruised.

"I was hurting and sore [during the game]," Howard said. "I'll be even more sore the next couple days."

England scored in the fourth minute, while the United States appeared on the scoreboard after 40 minutes of play. Both teams seemed to slow down toward the end of the match to accept a draw rather than risk a loss.

A winning team earns three points, while a losing team gets none. In a draw, both teams earn one

point. In the first round of the World Cup, the two teams in each group that earn the most points proceed to the next round.

Howard was happy about his team's performance. "Once we calmed down and got into the flow of the game, I thought we did well," he said.

"Defensively we did our job; it was backs to the wall and, overall, it wasn't pretty. [England was] always going to have their fair share of possession, but we defended, made some saves. Guys were diving in and we were just trying to stay organized but I'm happy overall."

This is Howard's second World Cup. He served as backup goalie for the U.S. squad in 2006. Now he's starting.

In an exclusive interview with Baptist Press, Howard talked about his Christian faith. "I'm certainly just a vehicle for Christ," he said. "And He moves me and the Spirit moves me in miraculous ways — that's from dealing with Tourette's syndrome to the pressures playing on a level like this and in England in the Premier League. I just try to rely on faith."

"I'm not perfect," he said. "I'm far from it and that is the reason I do need Jesus. I try to live it. ... I stumble, as many people do, but always in the belief that I'm loved and that I'm meaningful."

For the first 10 years of his life, Howard suffered with an undiagnosed case of Tourette's syndrome, a neurological disorder characterized by physical and verbal tics.

"I did not experience peace," he

said in a testimony published by Christian organization Athletes in Action. "But even though my life often seemed chaotic, I knew I could always count on at least one person to provide calm and stability — my grandmother. Nana's sense of

peace was so powerful because it came from her faith in the Lord. Through her, God revealed His love for me as well. It wasn't long before I was following in her footsteps. I wanted the same kind of faith and peace she had, and that is exactly what God gave me."

Howard said living with Tourette's is not easy. "But God has blessed me with the gift of athleticism as well," he said. "He has done some powerful things in my life through the combination of these two gifts. ... He also has shown me ways to use my position as a professional athlete to encourage others with Tourette's syndrome."

In 2001, at the age of 22, Howard became the youngest winner of U.S. Major League Soccer's Goalkeeper of the Year award. Two years later, he was signed by Manchester United in the English Premier League. He now plays for Everton in the same league.

"Today I am blessed to be living a dream," Howard said. "And yet if it all went away tomorrow, I know I would still have peace. That probably sounds crazy to most people, but that's the kind of peace Christ gives. It is rooted in His love and it surpasses all understanding." (BP)

"I'm certainly just a vehicle for Christ. ... The Spirit moves me in miraculous ways."

Tim Howard

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Montgomery abortion clinic closes after several violations

MONTGOMERY — The Beacon Women's Center in Montgomery, one of Alabama's seven women's clinics that offers abortions, closed in June after health inspectors discovered numerous violations, according to The Associated Press (AP).

The Montgomery clinic gave up its license, ceased performing abortions June 11 and closed all operations by June 18 after it came under an agreement with the Alabama Department of Health on June 8, AP reported.

An official with the health department said violations included performing abortions without sedation and failing to get parental consent for minors seeking abortion.

This is not the only Alabama abortion clinic that has had problems with violating state laws in recent months.

The Planned Parenthood abortion clinic in Birmingham was put on probation by the health department in February after it violated multiple state laws, including performing illegal abortions on minors.

Joni Eareckson Tada diagnosed with breast cancer

AGOURA HILLS, Calif. — Joni Eareckson Tada, an internationally disability advocate as a quadriplegic, has been diagnosed with breast cancer, according to a June 23 news release from the A. Larry Ross public relations firm. Tada, 60, is the founder and chief executive officer of Joni and Friends International Disability Center in Agoura Hills, Calif., and an artist and author.

"I've often said that our afflictions come from the hand of our all-wise and sovereign God, who loves us and wants what is best for us," Tada said, according to the news release. "So, although cancer is something new, I am content to receive from God whatever He deems fit for me. Yes, it's alarming, but rest assured that Ken (her husband) and I are utterly convinced that God is going to use this to stretch our faith, brighten our hope and strengthen our witness to others."

Doug Mazza, president of the Joni and Friends organization, said Tada will undergo several more tests followed by surgery within a few days, when the extent of the cancer will be determined. She will receive treatment based on the findings from the surgery.

Tada was 17 when, in 1967, she was injured in a diving accident that rendered her a quadriplegic. During two years of rehabilitation, she spent long months learning how to paint with a brush between her teeth. Her high-detail fine art paintings and prints have become collectors' items. Updates of Tada's recovery will be posted to the "Joni's Corner" section of the Joni and Friends ministry website at www.joniandfriends.org.

La. church scammed with \$10,000 bill for chocolate

LaPLACE, La. — Was it frequent trips to the dentist for cavities? Or a trail of sugar ants? Sheriff's investigators in St. John the Baptist Parish aren't saying how 31-year-old Jason Dumas became their chief suspect in a scam that left a church stuck with a nearly \$10,000 bill for a fraudulent order for the World's Finest Chocolate.

But it appears the suspects may have left a paper trail, according to church officials, even though sheriff's officials haven't been able to locate the man after months of searching.

Authorities say Dumas ordered 200 cases of chocolate under the name of Celebration Church on Oct. 27, 2009. The candy was delivered to the church, where authorities say Dumas and another suspect were waiting to unload the order into two vehicles.

Pastor David Jochum said before the delivery, the candy distributor called the church office to confirm the shipment of the chocolate to one of the church's deacons — a Jason Dumas.

The receptionist told them that "there was no one by that name" at the church, but they delivered the chocolate anyway, Jochum said.

The church received an invoice for \$9,020 from World's Finest Chocolate in February.

Is Jesus' Second Coming going to be in your lifetime?

WASHINGTON — Four in 10 Americans believe Jesus Christ will return to earth by 2050, while a slightly larger portion (46 percent) don't believe they'll see a Second Coming by midcentury, according to a new survey.

As part of *Smithsonian Magazine's* 40th anniversary issue, 1,546 adults were asked to guess the forecast of war, energy, science and religion in the next 40 years for a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for People & the Press. Evangelicals were most likely (58 percent) to predict a Second Coming, followed by 32 percent of Catholics and 27 percent of mainline Protestants. The survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

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Smokies, a romantic honeymoon cruise or a trip to the Holy Land. "We offer you the best vacation value for your dollar. Our tremendous buying power combined with our experience, resources and influence allows our customers to choose from a wide selection of travel programs designed to provide the best possible value for their personal travel dollar," Ellis said.

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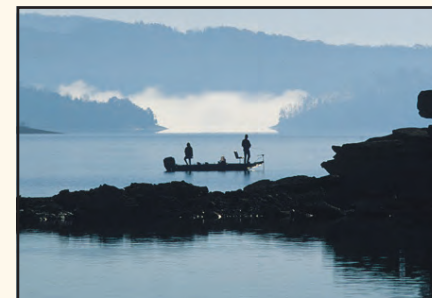
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Christ in the Smokies Museum and Prayer Garden

Tears are not exactly what you expect when you visit an attraction in the Great Smoky Mountains, but it's not unusual for visitors to dab their eyes as they step into the prayer garden concluding their Christ in the Smokies Museum and Prayer Garden experience. This popular Gatlinburg attraction that opened in 2009 is housed in the former location of Christus Gardens on River Road. Similar in concept, visitors journey through 3-D dioramas — 12 in all — that depict in elaborate details the life of Christ — beginning with the Nativity scene and ending with His ascension. Each diorama presents a significant chapter in the life of Jesus and is enhanced in



its realism by life-sized wax figures, elaborate period costumes, dramatic special effects and voice narration. Also included in your tour is a precious gems of the Bible collection and the awe-inspiring sculpture of the face of Christ that follows your every move. The reception from the public has been overwhelming. Visitors have repeatedly expressed their pleasure in having a Christ-centered attraction available to them. It is especially popular for church groups — from senior adults to youth. They all enjoy and appreciate the reverence of the experience. Christ in the Smokies is a regularly scheduled attraction for Steve Ellis Tours church group trips. Let one of his travel specialists book group tickets for this popular attraction for your church's next visit to the Great Smoky Mountains. www.christinthesmokies.com. (865-436-5155)



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The Old Mill Square

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it's one of the most popular places in the Smokies as well as one of the most photographed mills in the country. Visitors can still watch meal and flour being ground the same way by the huge water powered granite French Burs in the mill, or pottery being thrown, or bread and candy being made, all within a strolling distance of the quaint Old Mill Square. So complete your Smoky Mountain experience by spending a delightful day in Pigeon Forge's charming Old Mill Square.

The history of The Old Mill

Almost two centuries ago, The Mill began serving the communities of Sevier County, Tenn., from the banks of The Little Pigeon River, providing much needed meal and flour to the early settlers there. It still does. Originally Pigeon Forge was named for the passenger pigeons that frequented the area when it was settled in the late 1790s. In 1820, Isaac Love established an iron forge as the community's first business. The name Pigeon Forge is a combination of the iron forge and the Little Pigeon River. In 1830, Isaac's son, William, dammed up

Here at The Old Mill we are dedicated to helping old fashioned traditions live on. Our collection of family recipes are a great way to rediscover flavors from the past. Many of these recipes use Old Mill Ingredients such as our stone ground grain, sauces, dips, jams and syrups. To order these products to cook with in your own home go to www.old-mill.com.

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- 9-inch pan of baked cornbread, crumbled
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- 3 large tomatoes, chopped
- 1/2 cup green pepper, chopped
- 1/2 cup green onion, chopped
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 (17 oz.) can of corn, drained
- 1 (12 oz.) package bacon, cooked & crumbled
- Dressing — combine following ingredients or use 2 cups bottled ranch dressing (regular or bacon)
- 1 package ranch dressing mix
- 8 oz. sour cream
- 1 cup mayonnaise

You will layer the ingredients as follows: Place half of crumbled cornbread in bottom of a large serving bowl. Top with half of pinto beans. Combine tomatoes, green pepper and onions and layer half of mixture over beans. Top with half of cheese, bacon, corn and dressing. Repeat layers, cover and chill for 2 hours. Tip — stir leftovers before serving to prevent it from drying out.

In loving memory of Dean Ingle

NOTE: The Old Mill will be featuring one of their famous recipes once a month in *The Alabama Baptist*.

the Little Pigeon and began construction of the first building of what has become The Old Mill. He used yellow poplar logs which are still clearly visible today. Huge river rocks have served to support The Old Mill during all these years. In the early days the mill was the heart of the community and served as a gathering spot for the villagers. It is still such an attraction today, not only for Pigeon Forge, but also for the Great Smoky Mountain National Park area. It's a day's worth or more of delight and wonder.

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Pigeon Forge's Smoky Mountain Christian Village

Ideal setting for church youth groups, senior adult retreats in the Great Smoky Mountains

Smoky Mountain Christian Village
Paid Advertising

Whether it's a senior adult group looking for lodging for a weekday retreat, a weekend marriage encounter or accommodations for a weeklong summer camp for 100 rambunctious youth, Smoky Mountain Christian Village (SMCV) is the ideal solution for any church.

Nestled around a secluded mountain ridge in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains, SMCV chalets and lodges are set in the serenity of old growth trees and nature, yet are only a few minutes away from the shopping and excitement of Pigeon Forge and Sevierville.

This beautiful 44-acre property features accommodations that provide a perfect setting for Christian retreats and meetings. Designed with flexibility in mind, it is ideal for almost any type of event — large or small. From a large family reunion or single-family weekend getaway to association retreats or meetings with 200 guests, the facility can handle it all. The campus boasts modern meeting spaces that are flexible for large or small groups. Amenities include a large, year-round, indoor-outdoor heated swim-

ming pool; hot tubs; gas grills; a children's playground; gazebos; walking trails; pavilion with picnic tables; and a recreational area for pastimes such as horseshoes and sand volleyball.

All accommodations feature fireplaces; many with foosball or ping-pong tables.

The chalets and lodges are equipped with fully furnished kitchens where groups can prepare meals together, or SMCV can arrange food service if you prefer. For guests with physical disabilities, there are limited handicap-accessible rooms and accommodations.

The beautiful outdoor setting provides a nurturing environment where nature can be appreciated and God's presence can be felt. Whether enjoying the colorful fall foliage or singing songs under the stars while warming up to the glow of the outdoor fire pits, you will be rejuvenated body and soul at this Christian retreat site.

The mission of SMCV is to serve the needs of Christian churches, ministries and families through grace-based hospitality and to enable them to accomplish their goals by providing a family-friendly atmosphere conducive to ministry.



Ideal setting for retreats, conferences or family getaways

Pigeon Forge, Tenn. | 866.998.5275 | info@tsmcbv.org | www.tsmcbv.org

Whether it's a senior adult group looking for lodging for a weekday retreat, a weekend marriage encounter or accommodations for a weeklong summercamp for 100 rambunctious youth, **Smoky Mountain Christian Village** is the ideal solution for any church.

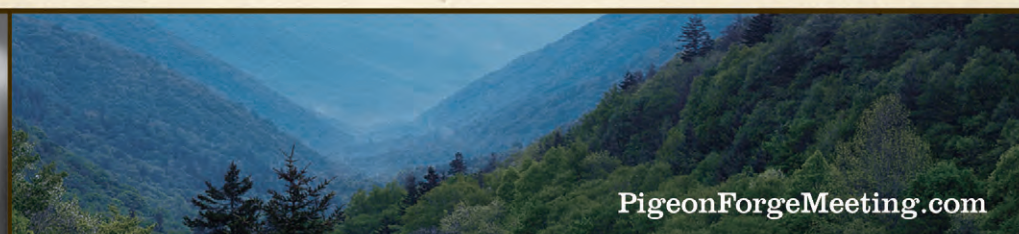
Also available for family reunions, senior outings, weddings and corporate retreats.

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Because of wholesome fun and family values.

There are plenty of reasons church groups keep coming back to see us. The biggest being the variety of fun and wholesome, family atmosphere they find when they get here. Whether it's the shopping, the attractions, the shows, Dollywood® or the beauty of the Smokies, there is truly something for everyone.



The business that faith built: Sevierville's Hidden Mountain Resorts

A family-owned and -operated cabin community nestled in the beautiful Great Smoky Mountains

Hidden Mountain Chalet and Log Cabin Rentals

Paid Advertising

There's one thing that Butch and Brenda Smith have no doubts about ... the overwhelming power of God's goodness and blessings. As the founders and owners of Hidden Mountain Resorts, they have a beautiful, on-going story of trusting God and putting their faith in Him.

Their obedience to Him during a scary and challenging time in their lives allowed them to see the impact of what Faith in God is all about. Being strong Christians and growing up in the Baptist faith, they love to share their testimony of how God has blessed their family throughout the years as they built — one cabin at a time — Hidden Mountain Resorts — a Christ-centered family business based on biblical principles.

Here is their story as told by Butch.

In the spring of 1981, in the midst of a small recession which gripped the country, my wife, Brenda and I were looking for a way to make ends meet. Home building had come to a standstill and with three children ages three, four and five, we were looking for an alternative means of earning a living. We knew the 1982 World's Fair would be coming to Knoxville in just a little over a year. There was talk of a room shortage in the area during the fair. This got us to thinking about the possibility of renting cabins to the crowds who were sure to come.

We thought the idea of log cabins in a rustic mountain setting just might appeal to a lot of people. Armed with this dream, and little else, we bought a few lots in a development that Brenda's dad had created called Hidden Mountain.



(Clockwise from left) Butch Smith; Blue Smith, son; Kevin Hedrick, son-in-law; Misty Hedrick, daughter; Summer Smith, daughter; Brenda Smith, wife; and Lizi Hedrick, granddaughter. Not pictured: Hudson Hedrick, grandson.

In October of 1981, Hidden Mountain Chalet and Log Cabin Rentals opened with seven units and a 16'x 20' office on a gravel road. With help from a few motels in the area we managed to take in \$1,000 per unit that first October.

We were extremely encouraged by our modest success and closed our office for the winter to begin building more units to get ready for the World's Fair traffic the following summer.

Some of our family members got in-

volved with the project and we reopened in May of 1982 with about 25 units and four new partners. Although the World's Fair did not live up to the expectations of area businesses, Hidden Mountain was well received by the people who did come and stay with us. While the area as a whole did not do well during this time, we were encouraged about the possibilities of the Hidden Mountain idea.

After some good old-fashioned horse trading with our partners, Brenda and I once again wound up the sole owners of our dream development. Our dream soon became a nightmare as we realized sometime in late August that the Fair would end in October and so would our income. We personally owned about nine homes which we would have to pay for all winter long with no income.

It was during this very bleak time that a remarkable thing happened to us. God began to teach us about tithing. We were both Christians and attended church regularly, but we had never tithed. We just couldn't afford to. We knew God understood. So why was He asking this of us now?

We were in extreme circumstances and surely, He being God, knew that. But He wouldn't leave us alone. We had all these homes plus our residence in Sevierville and three children to feed with no source of income. Why couldn't He see that? We tried every argument but to no avail. He wasn't going away with this idea. His convicting Spirit was overwhelming.

A former customer of ours who owed us some money had paid us and God wanted the money. All of it! We knew we should trust His promises but when

you're looking bankruptcy right in the face, it sure does make it difficult.

Finally we gave in. We gave Him the money, asking Him to forgive us. We gave it cheerfully and without regret and we asked for nothing in return. For the first time in our lives, we put our total trust in Him.

Total trust in Him

We had not intended to sell the rental units but that seemed like the only way to survive the winter. But we had no customers and didn't know where to look for any potential buyers. But God was true to His promises. Our rental customers began to ask about the possibility of buying a unit. Before Christmas, we sold every rental unit we had. Guess who got the first 10% of the profit?

Since then there has been no stopping. Our business has grown from seven units to over 200! We have accommodated guests from all over the world.

Our units have changed from very simple cabins decorated from thrift shops to the very finest accommodations in the Smokies, decorated by the finest interior decorator, my wife Brenda.

Our goal is to be the best. We want our guests to have the best possible vacation and we will do our part to make it happen. Our three children are now 31, 32 and 33 and it looks like they will be a part of Hidden Mountain for a long time. They grew up with Hidden Mountain and they, too, want to see it continue to grow and prosper.

We look forward to their ideas and input to keep Hidden Mountain "the premiere place to vacation in the Smokies."



Hidden Mountain Realty

www.hiddenmountainrealestate.com

Before Hidden Mountain Resort was even a dream, Brenda was living in and learning about Smoky Mountain real estate from her father, C.B. McCarter, a nationally recognized auctioneer who developed a lot of land in Sevier County, including the land where Hidden Mountain West is now located. This real estate tradition has been passed down to daughter Misty and son, Blue, but it's Misty and Kevin's 3-year-old daughter Lizi who is well on her way to selling you your own cabin in the Smokies!



The Dell Motorcoach Resort

www.thedellrvresort.com

Butch and Brenda found traveling a lot easier when they took their first trip in a motor coach. After visiting many motor coach resorts (not to mention friends and family's front yards), they realized a luxury motor coach resort was a natural addition to Hidden Mountain. Added bonus: Your visiting family can stay in a cabin instead of the pull-out sofa!



Lighthouse Pointe Marina

www.lighthousepointemarina.net

Butch grew up on lakes in Tampa, and the love of the water has been passed down to his son, Blue. Blue now runs Lighthouse Pointe Marina on beautiful Douglas Lake. In-season, Lighthouse Pointe offers fishing, ski and pontoon boat rentals, as well as jet-ski rentals.



The Tin Roof Cafe

www.underthetinroof.com

Butch and Brenda's daughter Summer has opened a café full of local color just down the street from Hidden Mountain East. In a white farmhouse complete with a henhouse in the backyard, you can find homemade soups, salads, paninis and desserts at this little café. Call in a pick-up order for the cabin, dine in to enjoy free wireless Internet and a latte, or dine out on the front porch or in the backyard to enjoy the sunny days. Everyone needs a little sunshine!

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Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

Where the church crowd feels right at home

Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism
Paid Advertising

Pigeon Forge, Tenn., whose next-door neighbors are the majestic Great Smoky Mountains, is a tourist town that sometimes overwhelms the senses with neon, thrill rides, theme parks, shopping, fudge and fun.

At the same time, there's a sense of "all's right with the world" because of the family-friendly environment. It's comfortable. It's safe. It's clean. It's, well, wholesome.

"That's our great appeal to many people, families and church groups alike," said Leon Downey, executive director of the Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism. "We create an action-packed environment for fun, and there's an overlay of faith that's easy to see."

The Miracle Theater is ready proof of that. Its evening production is the Broadway hit "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," and its matinee show, "The Miracle," recreates the life of Christ in epic proportions.

Elsewhere, you'll find rousing gospel and sacred music segments in several other shows — there are more than a dozen theaters — mixed in with country, bluegrass, 50s rock 'n' roll and Broadway tunes.

The main part of Pigeon Forge



(population 5,800 and 10 million guests a year) fills a valley just outside Great Smoky Mountains National Park. A five-mile-long thoroughfare simply called the Parkway is lined with more than 40 attractions, scores of restaurants, outlet malls, specialty shops and even a couple of churches.

Hotels, motels and condos are in the Parkway mix, and cabins and chalets are nearby and still in the city limits (10,000 rooms in all). All are accustomed

to working with church groups and family reunions.

Pigeon Forge, of course, is home to Dollywood, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Local heroine Dolly Parton is the park's namesake, and she keeps it true to its mountain theme.

Along the Parkway are adrenaline-producing go-cart tracks, bungee jumps and aerial rides. Two special attractions are Flyaway (an indoor skydiving facility with an enormous fan powered by an airplane engine) and Zorb Smoky Mountains (a peculiar ride from New Zealand that resembles a giant beach ball big enough for three human passengers). Another attention-getter is WonderWorks, an upside-down building dubbed "an amusement park for the mind."

A touch of history accents Old Mill Square. It is anchored by a gristmill built in 1830 and still operating today. The mill's flour and cornmeal are used in two adjacent restaurants, and a collection of shops (including a candy store and an ice cream parlor) provides extra diversions.

Pigeon Forge is easy for Alabama visitors to reach, just south of Knoxville off I-40 at Exit 407.

Visitor information is at www.MyPigeonForge.com (1-800-251-9100), and group leaders have special resources at www.PigeonForgeTours.com (1-800-285-7557).



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Cirque de Chine: Incredible one-of-a-kind show provides wholesome entertainment

Cirque de Chine
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Tourists don't flock to the Great Smoky Mountains just for the scenery anymore. That's because the once rustic hamlets of Pigeon Forge and Sevierville are now meccas for world class entertainment appropriate for all ages. So it's no surprise that the crowds keep coming back for more!

Among the most popular entertainment venues in the bustling area of Sevierville (just outside of Pigeon Forge) is one that you would least likely expect to find in the mountains of Tennessee — Smoky Mountain Palace's Cirque de Chine. The 50-member cast, composed of award-winning athletes from their native China, flawlessly perform an incredible two-hour mixture of traditional Chinese acrobatics, gymnastics, music and theatrics that mesmerize audiences from ages 5 to 95.

The Chinese artists, ranging in age from 12 to 33, that make up the Cirque de Chine troupe impeccably push their physical limits to the extreme. Their spellbinding feats such as aerial trapeze acts, extreme juggling, chair and vase balancing, human catapulting combined with martial arts, are accentuated with powerful music, spectacular lighting, extravagant costumes and dramatic special effects. Their incredible, gravity-defying stunts are performed in an elegant and effortless manner and reflect amazing feats of skill, athletic ability, balance and grace. And just when you think you've seen it all the show's finale features the Guinness Book record holder, the famous flying motorcy-

cles: an eye-popping act that concludes with five motorcyclists simultaneously riding circles around each other inside a large metal sphere.

So during your Great Smoky Mountain experience be sure to include on your "must do" list a visit to the Smoky Mountain Palace to see the talented Cirque de Chine performers as they combine movement and music for a one-of-a-kind display of Eastern arts. Afternoon and evening performances available from March through the first of January. Children under six are free and senior and group discounts are available.

For ticket information call 1-800-826-2933. For group information and reservations, call Monica Jones at Ext. 146 or visit www.smokymountainpalace.com.

Second Annual Adopted Chinese Children Association Reunion

On July 10, the Smoky Mountain Palace is hosting its 2nd Annual Adopted Chinese Children Association (ACCA) Reunion for families who have adopted children from China. "This is our way of saying 'Thank You' to families who have adopted Chinese children and have given them a home filled with love," said Smoky Mountain Palace Marketing Manager Joan Brock. This experience will provide the children and their families an opportunity to connect with Chinese culture through food, newfound friendships, entertainment and traditional Chinese games. For details contact Kathy Qiu at 1-800-826-2933 or 865-429-1601, Ext. 227, or e-mail reunion@cirquedechine.com.

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Dinner Menu

Creamy vegetable soup, garden salad, pot roast with baby carrots and seasoned boneless chicken breast, corn, green beans, mashed potatoes, roll, homemade cobbler with ice cream, soda, coffee and ice tea. Vegetarian meals are available.

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