

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



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Photo courtesy of The Huntsville Times

CAVED IN — Firefighters arrived soon after the roof of the Christian Life Center at Wall Highway Baptist Church, Madison, caved in while seven men were playing basketball July 20. What looks like snow is actually insulation that was scattered everywhere by the roof collapse.

'God held it up'

Seven men escape roof collapse at Wall Highway Church without injury

By Kristen Padilla
The Alabama Baptist

Members of Wall Highway Baptist Church, Madison, are still thanking God that no one was injured when the roof of their Christian Life Center (CLC), built in 1988, collapsed while seven men were playing basketball in its gym July 20.

"About five minutes after 7 (p.m.), we heard six or seven pops that sounded like it was coming from the ductwork," said Gregg Frost, leader of the Madison Baptist Association church's men's basketball outreach ministry, Hoop It Up for Him. "We looked around and saw nothing. About 40 seconds later, we heard a series of pops. ... The walls in the church started to bow a bit, and the roof started coming in, the very first

of it coming down quickly." It was at this point they witnessed God's protection, Frost said.

A hand of protection

"It was like God just reached down His hand and let us get to safety," he said. "The six guys got out through the exit doors. I knew when I saw it fall that I didn't have time to get out like they did. I just went to a corner and watched.

"It was like God held it up until we were safely out of the way and then

He gently lowered it to the floor. It wasn't a big crash," Frost continued. "I don't know why but I didn't panic at all. It was like God said, 'You're going to be OK. Just go ahead and watch.'"

The seconds that followed seemed to go by slowly for Frost, but once the damage was done, firefighters, police officers and emergency medical technicians arrived within minutes. It also didn't take long for church staff and members to arrive.

By the end of the evening, around

40 people circled in the sanctuary's foyer for a prayer of thanksgiving.

Phillip Carithers, Wall Highway Baptist's associate pastor and minister of education, said God's protection was seen not only in the moment with the seven men but also in the timing of the incident.

Perfect timing

Just four days earlier, the church had hosted approximately 400 people — parents and children who had (See 'Baptists,' page 17)

Students learn to be 'breakable' at YEC

Around 1,300 Alabama Baptist students were challenged to let God break in, break through and break out of their lives at the July 16-17 Youth Evangelism Conference (YEC), held at Samford University in Birmingham.

The "Breakable" theme kicked off quickly the night of July 16 as T-Force Ministries, a team of power lifters, mesmerized the students by breaking concrete blocks and metal baseball bats while sharing the message of God's power to change their lives.

Chris Brooks, college minister at Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, in Tuscaloosa Baptist Association, followed T-Force with a message about allowing the peace of God, made possible at the cross, to break in to their hearts.

An example of humility

The next morning, Chad Norris, co-founder of Wayfarer Ministries in Greenville, S.C., explained that just as David came from humble circumstances before he was king, believers

today also must be humbled before the Spirit of God can break through.

Also on that day, Keith Loomis, an associate in the office of collegiate and student ministries of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, shared how God has remained faithful during a time of brokenness in his life.

Loomis, diagnosed with terminal cancer last October, challenged the students to seek to bring God glory even in the broken stages of life.

(See 'YEC,' page 3)

COMMENT

Essential for Baptist Democracy

Baptist commitment to the priesthood of all believers requires it. Political theory says it is necessary. And the recent discussion of the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) Task Force report demonstrates that the state Baptist paper is essential for Baptist democracy to work.

Baptist understanding of the Bible holds that God's Holy Spirit speaks to all believers. Each believer is God's representative, a priest responsible for the stewardship of every action, every decision. This is the birthright of every Christian and cannot be traded away or usurped by others.

Baptists reject any hierarchy of believers, affirming instead that the ground is level at the foot of the cross. While some may have special responsibilities — such as pastors — all are equal in God's sight and equally responsible for hearing and obeying His call. That is why Baptists have long held to the old adage of “tell the truth and trust the people.”

The practical application of this theological conviction is that all Baptists are entitled to information that allows them to be educated participants in the life of their church and denomination. Providing that information is one of the roles of the state Baptist paper.

Occasionally some leader may prefer that only information that advances the position he or she advocates be shared through Baptist media. Experience has proven that position as flimsy as shifting sand. Theologically it violates the priesthood of all believers. Practically it is shortsighted because information will become known over time. If Baptists ever conclude they have been manipulated by someone withholding important information from them, then he or she will never be trusted again.

During the GCR discussion, *The Alabama Baptist* published articles in which GCR leaders advocated for their position. The articles explained why the proposed changes were necessary and gave voice to the leaders as they called for the adoption of the task force's report. The state Baptist paper reported news stories about what the task force's chairman said at national meetings and in national conference calls. The paper also reported Alabama Baptists' reactions to what he said. *The Alabama Baptist* twice provided detailed information about each of the task force's recommendations so readers would know what changes were being proposed.

After the task force issued its preliminary report, the state Baptist paper examined the potential impact of each recommendation. Related to the report's impact on Alabama, the paper interviewed Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) Executive Director Rick Lance, evangelism director Sammy Gilbreath and associational missions/church-planting director Gary Swafford.

Reaching underserved areas of the United States was a major concern of the report, so *The Alabama Baptist* interviewed leaders of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan, one of the SBOM's current partners.



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Executive Committee, was interviewed about the proposal to cut about one-third of that entity's annual budget. International Mission Board (IMB) President Jerry Rankin and North American Mission Board Interim President Richard Harris were interviewed about the proposal to allow the IMB to work in North America.

All of this was done to fulfill the essential role of the state Baptist paper in Baptist democracy. The stories enabled readers to be informed participants. They heard from the people most directly impacted by the recommendations.

Political theory teaches that volunteer organizations such as churches must have a trusted voice providing common information in order for members to work together effectively. Again that is one of the roles of *The Alabama Baptist*.

‘Tell the truth and trust the people’

During the 15 years I have served as editor, every staff member has worked hard to provide a quality newspaper prepared in a professional manner by born-again believers who are active in Baptist churches. The more than 150 national awards earned by staff members indicate *The Alabama Baptist* provides the highest level of Christian journalism for its readers. Our bias is for the gospel and the people of God known as Baptists. That is why our practice is to “tell the truth and trust the people.”

The task force's report recommended increasing the IMB portion of the SBC Cooperative Program (CP) budget by 1 percent. The state Baptist paper attempted to put that recommendation in context showing that in years past, using another budgeting system, the IMB received more than 50 percent of the CP budget. Sometimes knowing the context of a suggestion is as important as knowing certain facts about it.

In the issue that fell just prior to Cooperative Program Sunday, according to the SBC calendar, the paper lifted up the importance of the CP and encouraged churches large and small to practice equal sacrifice for the sake of the Great Commission.

During the yearlong process, *The Alabama Baptist* published a number of letters from readers representing a variety of views about the GCR

although a majority of letter writers opposed the report.

And as decision time neared, the paper invited two Alabama Baptists to share opposing views about the GCR Task Force report.

All of this was done to make sure Alabama Baptists knew their state Baptist paper represents the values the state convention affirms and presents fair and balanced information.

Only after readers had opportunity to examine each recommendation and read a variety of views about the task force's report did *The Alabama Baptist* declare its editorial position on the issue. This allowed readers to draw their own conclusions about the task force's report based on the words of state and national leaders rather than read these words through the filter of the editor's opinion.

Over the years, the state Baptist paper has become a trusted voice for Alabama Baptists, offering readers the best of Christian journalism. Through a 16-member board of directors, readers are assured the paper is accountable to the Alabama Baptist State Convention for how it fulfills its essential role in Baptist democracy of “telling the truth and trusting the people.”

In summary, *The Alabama Baptist* reported the genesis of the GCR idea and followed its development through endorsement by messengers to the SBC annual meeting. The state Baptist paper provided opportunity for leaders of the movement to share their views as well as their recommendations. The paper provided in-depth examination of the potential impact of the report from a variety of viewpoints. Some of the recommendations, as well as the process, were put in historical context to increase readers' understanding. And through it all, the paper provided a forum for Alabama Baptists to voice their own opinions.

The GCR discussion is just one example of the ongoing contribution made by *The Alabama Baptist* that makes it an essential part of Baptist democracy at work. Every church that cares about its members being informed participants in this process will make sure they have opportunity to receive their state Baptist paper.

THE
ALABAMA BAPTIST

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

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Someone You Should Know

By Matthew Stephens, Correspondent, TAB

Daniel Lawson

New Bethel Baptist Church, Collinsville
Lookout Mountain Baptist Association

FAVORITE BIBLE VERSE: Romans 8:28
FAVORITE HYMN: "In the Sweet Forever"
HOBBIES: Playing guitar
FAMILY STATUS: Wife, Suzanne; three children, Luke, Matthew and Grace



LAWSON

As the bivocational pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church, Collinsville, Daniel Lawson works hard to divide his attention among his family, church and job as production control manager at Yachiyo Manufacturing of Alabama, a Honda supplier in Steele. His desire to see lost people come to know the Lord keeps him knocking on doors and visiting in the community every Tuesday night.

Q: When were you led into the ministry?

A: I announced the Lord's calling on my life to preach when I was 18 years old at New Hope Baptist Church in Geraldine.

Q: What does the ministry demand?

A: A calling from God, the gifts of patience and compassion, the desire to study and grow and a heart for evangelism and missions.

Q: How do family members support you?

A: I could not effectively do what God's called me to do without my wife. I could not have chosen a better partner in this journey than the one God chose for me.

Q: What do you get from the ministry?

A: The blessings of seeing people go from accepting Christ to growing in His grace. ... It is truly a blessing to serve and see people that you witnessed to not only receiving Christ but also becoming grounded, fruitful servants of Christ leading others to Him.

Q: What difference will this ministry make for you in the future?

A: "To live is Christ but to die is gain." Although I know the future may hold many challenges and even some heartaches, I know that every facet of my life is blessed with the knowledge of Christ as my Lord and Savior and heaven will be my home when I leave this world.



Photo by Chris Mills

SING OUT LOUD — David Walker leads worship at this year's Youth Evangelism Conference at Samford University in Birmingham. About 1,300 Alabama Baptist students attended the July 16-17 conference.

YEC

Students encouraged to share gospel

(continued from page 1)

Loomis, diagnosed with terminal cancer last October, challenged the students to seek to bring God glory even in the broken stages of life.

Brokenness reminds us of our total dependence upon God," he said. "Anything that we are is only what God does in and through us. I have learned to be humble and totally dependent on the Father just as Jesus was. Everything we do cannot be about us; it has to be about bringing glory to Christ."

A weekend of worship

Students were led in worship all weekend by David Walker and his band from Spartanburg, S.C.

Dave Rhodes, co-founder of Wayfarer, closed the conference by encouraging the students to allow the gospel to break out to the world.

Follow one student on her journey



KLEPAC

Lauren Klepac, an active member of the youth group at Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery, is one of several hundred students who accepted a recent spiritual challenge.

It was part of the "take-home" assignment at the recent Youth Evangelism Conference in Birmingham. Those who accepted the challenge will participate in a dif-

ferent assignment each day for 21 days as a way to form a habit of sharing the gospel.

The Alabama Baptist will be following Klepac in her effort and will do a follow-up article in the Aug. 19 issue.

For daily updates on Klepac's progress and journey, join us on Facebook (Alabama Baptist) and Twitter (@AlabamaBaptist).

(TAB)

Following his message, students were issued a 21-day challenge to take what they learned and go into their communities with the gospel. Students were encouraged to be accountable to each other and their leaders through Facebook and other methods.

Hundreds of students took the challenge and made commitments during YEC. To learn more about the conference, watch the video package on the event at www.thealabamabaptist.org. (SBOM)



Photo by Zach Pratt

GEARED UP — (Above) Youth from Spring Valley Baptist Church, Springville, in St. Clair Baptist Association gear up for the Youth Evangelism Conference (YEC). (Right) Girls at YEC come together with an 'all-in' before playing the game Ninja.

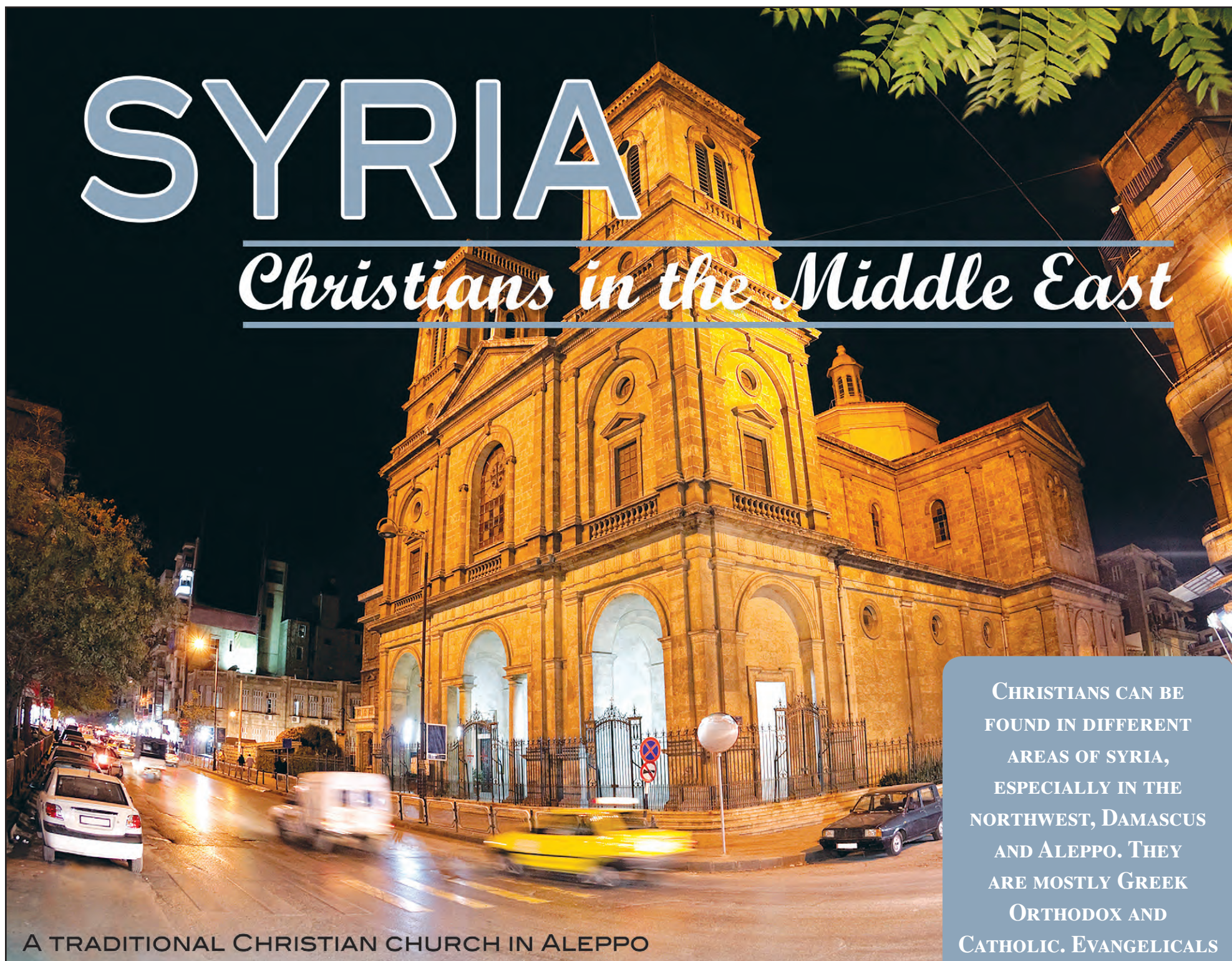


Photo by Zach Pratt



SYRIA

Christians in the Middle East



A TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN ALEPPO

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Syria an important part of biblical life in both Old, New testaments

By Shadi Saad
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Syria is called “Aram” in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). Its territory varied considerably and had vague boundaries. This was a territory of approximately 300 miles north to south and 50 to 150 miles east to west.

The main cities of Syria were Damascus, Antioch, Hama (Hamath), Byblos, Aleppo, Palmyra and Carchemish. These lands were characterized by the many rivers and good soil, which made Syria more prosperous than its neighbor to the south.

Abraham’s connection

Syria played an important part in biblical history. Genesis 14:15 reveals that it was a well-known landmark in Abraham’s time. En route from Ur, Abraham found in Syria a steward, Eliezer, whom he considered his

heir until Isaac came (Gen. 15:2–3). Abraham also chose a wife for Isaac from Syria (Gen. 24), and Jacob labored long in Syria for Rachel (Gen. 29).

David dominated and ruled the city of Damascus for a time (2 Sam. 8:5–6; 1 Chron. 18:3–6). Solomon made extensive purchases from Syria (1 Kings 10:29). A strong kingdom was developed under Ahab, with merchants in Damascus (1 Kings 20:34) until the Assyrian king, Tiglath-pileser III, attacked and destroyed Damascus.

The city of Damascus remained of little importance until 333 B.C., when an army of Alexander the Great captured it. Then followed two centuries of rise and fall. In A.D. 63, Syria became a province of the Roman Empire.

Damascus’ checkered history

In the New Testament, Damascus was an important center. A strong Christian com-

munity had developed during the days of the apostle Paul. While en route to Damascus to arrest the believers, Saul had the magnificent encounter with Jesus and was converted (Acts 9:1–18). He escaped his Jewish enemies in the city by being let down from a wall in a basket (Acts 9:25; 2 Cor. 11:33).

After a checkered history under Rome, Damascus was captured by Muslims and remained the center of Muslim faith until 1918, when it came under the French mandate after World War I. In 1946, it became a free state.

Home of first Gentile church

Antioch also has an important place in the early history of Christianity. One of the original deacons of the apostolic church was Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch (Acts 6:5). The first Gentile church, the mother of all others, was founded there.

Many fugitive Christians, scattered at the

CHRISTIANS CAN BE FOUND IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF SYRIA, ESPECIALLY IN THE NORTHWEST, DAMASCUS AND ALEPPO. THEY ARE MOSTLY GREEK ORTHODOX AND CATHOLIC. EVANGELICALS ARE A MINORITY IN SYRIA DISTRIBUTED OVER 80 LOCAL CHURCHES (PRESBYTERIAN, BAPTIST, ALLIANCE, NAZARENE, ETC.), AND THEY FACE DIFFERENT KINDS OF CHALLENGES AT THE HANDS OF NONEVANGELICALS.

death of Stephen, went to Antioch and inaugurated a new era by preaching not only to Hellenist Jews but to “Greeks also” (Acts 11:20).

The Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to assist in the work; after laboring there for a while, Barnabas summoned Paul from Tarsus to assist him.

The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch (Acts 11:19–26). The church at Antioch sent Paul and his companions out on his three missionary journeys (Acts 13:1 ff; 15:36ff; 18:23), and he reported to it on his return from the first two.

Christians formed the majority of the population until the 11th century, but unfortunately today, they are considered a minority because of many factors.

The main factor is the rise of Islam and the forced conversion of the inhabitants to the Muslim faith.

This consequently led to the emigration of many Christians.

Today, too, Syria is experiencing a growing emigration movement as Christian families — particularly the younger generation — travel to Arab, as well as Western, countries, in search of education, work opportunities and a space of freedom from the pressure of being a minority among a Muslim majority. Every family in Damascus has at least one member living abroad.

Christians can be found in different areas of Syria, especially in the northwest, Damascus and Aleppo.

They are mostly Greek Orthodox and Catholic.

Evangelicals are a minority in Syria distributed over 80 local churches (Presbyterian, Baptist, Alliance, Nazarene, etc.), and they face different kinds of challenges at the hands of nonevangelicals.

A range of amendments has been made to the laws related to the different denominations in Syria.

The most recent amendment gives women inheritance rights equal to men. Religious courts, rather than civil courts, handle divorce-related cases.

Interfaith marriages

In Syria, a Muslim cannot “officially” become a Christian. And if a Christian wants to get married to a Muslim partner, then he or she needs to register the marriage in the Islamic religious courts after renouncing the Christian faith and becoming a Muslim. Children will be registered as Muslims if one parent is Muslim.

At the political level, Christians are represented by 17 deputies in the Syrian parliament and have three ministers in the Syrian government.

In the last count of Christians in Syria (2000), the population was estimated at 1,526,997, which reflects a decrease because of the emigration movement over the years — 1958, 1961, 1970 and 1980. Around 300,000 people have emigrated.

Christians in Syria benefit from the freedom to worship their God and exercise their rituals as they wish in their church buildings. The government does not interfere in church ministries or activities as long as they do not jeopardize the peaceful relations between Muslims and Christians. The government also provides free-of-charge services and facilities (water, electricity, etc.) to the places of worship of the various religious denominations.

Moreover the Syrian president regularly attends the Easter ceremonies held at the Greek Orthodox Church — being the largest Christian denomination in Syria.

The Christian church leaders are well admired and respected by the officers in the government as instructed by the Syrian president.

Prayer needs

We kindly ask you to pray for

▶ The emigrating Christian population. Pray that they may realize the importance of their presence in Syria and how their choice to leave impacts Christians’ presence in the country.

▶ The economic situation that is causing many to leave the country in pursuit of better opportunities.

▶ The Lord’s wisdom and strength that Christians may not be overwhelmed by the fact that there is a mosque near almost every church.

▶ The government. Praise God for the freedom that is granted to Christians to worship Him and practice their faith, ministries and programs.

▶ The Lord’s hand in the midst of non-evangelical churches. Pray that we may together reflect and witness to the true Christian faith.

▶ The testimony

and witness of the Baptist churches in Syria and their continuous growth.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Shadi Saad is a pastor of a local Baptist church in Syria and the secretary of the Convention of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Lebanon (CEBCL).

Christians in the Middle East

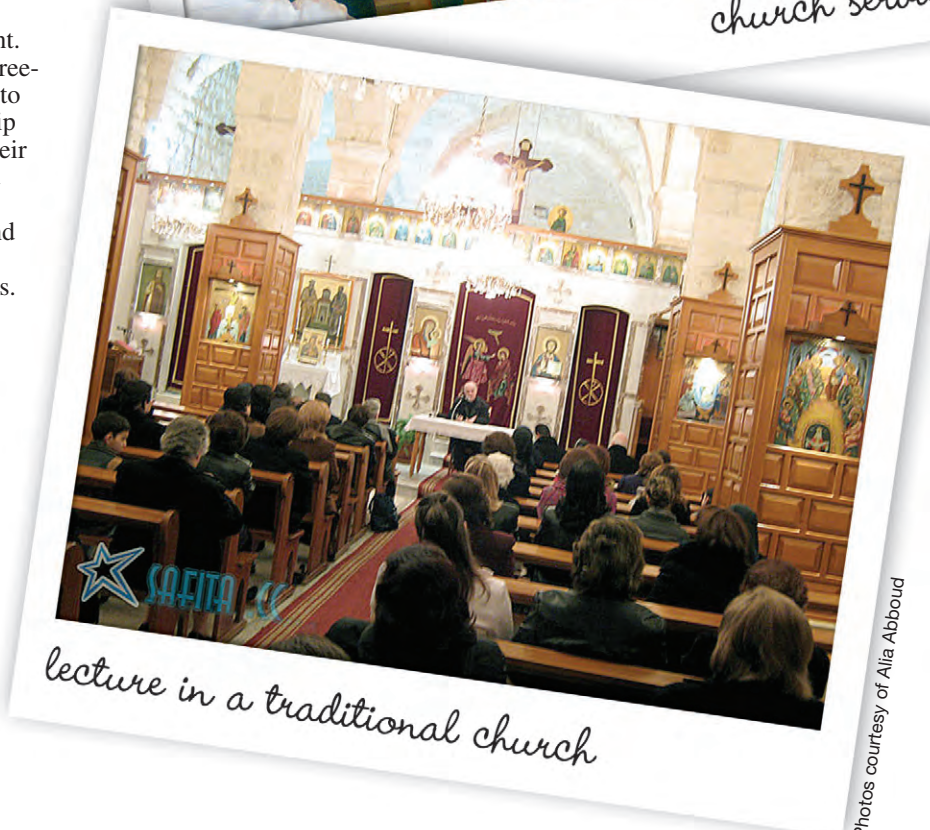
A series describing life for believers in several Middle Eastern countries



Syria



church service



lecture in a traditional church

Photos courtesy of Alia Abboud



Across Alabama's Associations

BIRMINGHAM

► **Birmingham Association** will hold its annual ministers fish fry Aug. 9, 11:30 a.m., at First Church, Hoover. Henry Morris III of Institute for Creation Research (ICR) in Dallas will speak. The fish fry is a pre-conference event for the Demand the Evidence Conference Aug. 28 at the Boutwell Auditorium in Birmingham. It will be sponsored by Chris Gillon and ICR. For reservations call 205-599-3245 or e-mail register@bbaonline.org. For information about the conference visit www.icr.org/conference/birmingham. Randy Atkinson is pastor of First, Hoover. Mike McLemore is executive director for Birmingham Association. ► **East Lake Full Gospel Church, Birmingham**, will hold revival Aug. 4-6, nightly at 7. Fennie Hood will speak Wednesday. There will be different speakers each night. For information call 205-836-3031. Terry Bates is pastor. ► **East Gardendale Church** will hold August Alive! Wednesday nights in August at 6 p.m. On Aug. 4, Mike Mason will speak, and The Lamb Family will provide special music. A nursery will be provided. For information call 205-608-0889. Allen Davis is pastor. ► **Eastside Church, Birmingham**, will hold Awesome August. Cross Connection service will be Aug. 1, 5 p.m., with Ron Pate as guest speaker. Old Paths will sing Aug. 8, 6 p.m. Squire Parsons will sing Aug. 15, 6 p.m. Evidence will sing Aug. 22, 6 p.m. The Aug. 29 service will be held in Leighton. For information call 205-833-3463. Mark Smith is pastor. ► **First Church, Trussville**, will host Michael Adler, worship pastor for Shades Mountain Church, Vestavia Hills, and his wife, Linda, along with the Shades Mountain worship band and choir in concert Aug. 1, 6 p.m. Buddy Champion is pastor.

COFFEE

► **Westside Church, Elba**, will hold Marvelous Monday Nights in August at 7 p.m. Sammy Gilbreath will speak Aug. 2, Mike Orr Aug. 9, Mike Long Aug. 16 and Kenny Hoomes Aug. 23. James Newell is interim pastor.

FRANKLIN

► **Sam F. Wallace** is the new pastor of **Crooked Oak Church, Tusculumbia**. He served Courtland Church as pastor for nine years. He has also served other churches in Alabama, Louisiana and Tennessee. Wallace and his wife, Brenda, have three children and 14 grandchildren. ► **Crooked Oak Church, Tusculumbia**, will hold revival Aug. 1-4. Kenny Marsh will lead the music. Services will be Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Sam F. Wallace is pastor.

LIMESTONE

► **Clements Church, Athens**, will host The Reggie Saddler Family Aug. 1, 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. For information call 256-729-1328 or visit www.clements baptist.org. Tim Anderson is pastor.

MADISON

► **Lee Singley** is the new pastor of **Union Grove Church, New Market**. He has served churches in Alabama, Georgia, Ohio and Florida for the past 31 years. He holds a bachelor's degree in theology from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Mo., and master of divinity and doctor of ministry from Lake Charles Bible College in Louisiana.

MOBILE

► **Gulfcrest Church, Chunchula**, will celebrate its 101st homecoming Aug. 1, 10:30 a.m. Lewis Scott will speak. Grace Trio will lead the music. A covered-dish lunch will follow. For information call Pastor Jason Hall at 251-802-5914.

NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Sharon Heights Church, Birmingham**, will hold August Nights of Revival. The kickoff will be Aug. 1, 6 p.m., with Lawrence Phipp. An ice cream social will follow. A patriotic rally will be Aug. 8, 6 p.m., and Aug. 9, 7 p.m., with Tim Lee. Richard Land, president of The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, will speak Aug. 15, 6 p.m. Rick Lance, executive director for the State Board of Missions, will speak Aug. 22, 6 p.m. Steve Loggins will speak Aug. 29, 6 p.m. For information call 205-674-9206 or visit www.sharonheights.org. Jason Dunlap is pastor.

SHELBY

► **First Church, Pelham**, will hold revival Aug. 1-4 with Evangelist Bob Pitman. Services will be Sunday at 8, 9:15, 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Keith Hibbs, director of the office of worship leadership & church music for the State Board of Missions, will lead the music Sunday. Monday will be Pack-a-Pew night with Chris Neugent, worship leader for Riverside Church, Helena. Tuesday will be children's night with George Weeks, minister of worship for Hilldale Church, Center Point. Wednesday will be student night with Sam Neugent of E-3 Partners and former worship leader for First, Pelham. A nursery will be provided for preschool children. Mike Shaw is pastor.

SIPSEY

► **Sipsey Association** will hold the children's program, "Creation Celebration," July 31, 5 p.m., at New Hope Church, Berry. Kelvin and Tiffany Morrison are children's directors. Ed Steelman is pastor. Max Stripling is director of missions. ► **Big Hill Church, Gordo**, will hold revival Aug. 1-6 with Leonard Hill, pastor of Flatwoods Church, Gordo. Services will be Sunday at 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Ralph Smith is pastor. ► **Moore's Bridge Church, Elrod**, will hold revival Aug. 2-4, nightly at 7. Larry Bonner is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Alberta Church, Tuscaloosa**, will celebrate its 89th anniversary with a homecoming and dedication service for its renovated facilities Aug. 8, 10:30 a.m. Rick Lance, executive director for the State Board of Missions, will speak. A covered-dish lunch will follow at noon. Larry Corder is pastor.

WALKER

► **Pumpkin Center Church, Quinton**, will hold a singing Aug. 1, 5-7 p.m., with Dan and Brenda Robinson and New Desire. For information call 205-221-4007. Jimmy McLain is pastor.

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

FBC Roebuck Plaza honors music minister for 25 years

Not everyone loves surprises but when your church throws a surprise celebration in your honor, what's not to love?

Just ask Roger Isbell, music minister of First Baptist Church, Roebuck Plaza.

The Birmingham Baptist Association church honored him for 25 years as its music minister during the morning service and a luncheon June 27.

But surprising Isbell, who also serves as a deacon and Sunday School teacher, took hard work and careful planning. The special events committee advertised the luncheon as a pre-Fourth of July event and it worked.

"I was completely surprised," Isbell said.

Special guests, friends of Isbell and former members of the church came to share in his special day. During the service, he was presented with a large plaque by Kay Lesley, who nominated him to come to First, Roebuck Plaza, as music minister 25 years ago.

During the luncheon, Isbell was presented with another plaque and a love offering and he joined Wayne Linderman, interim music minister at McElwain Baptist Church, Birmingham, in an impromptu a cappella duet. Linderman and Isbell were once members of a quartet at Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham.

"Roger is deeply loved and widely appreciated. He has been a real leader in the best sense of the word," Pastor Jim Auchmuty said, noting that Isbell's wife, Sara, was also recognized for her support and active involvement in the music ministry.

Isbell said he very much appreciated the recognition.

"It has been a total blessing working at First Baptist Church, Roebuck Plaza," Isbell said, adding he has something all choir directors wish they could have: the most dedicated choir and the best pianist in the world, Barbara Ray. "These things sure make staying [at First, Roebuck Plaza] a lot easier."

Valley Grande Baptist member is city's Citizen of the Year

Will Langston "is casting his net and reeling them in for the Lord," and in the process, he caught a big title — Citizen of the Year.

The Valley Grande Exchange Club presents the Citizen of the Year award to a Dallas County resident who is involved in multiple facets of the community.

Langston, a member of Valley Grande Baptist Church, fit the bill.

"Will is constantly involved in the community," said Benny Austin, president of the club.

Langston is also involved in his church and is a driving force behind Selma Baptist Association's men's ministry.

"He constantly gives his time and energy to anything that appeals to men and is always concerned that the events that we plan not only be enjoyable but also point men to Christ," said Clarke Skelton, pastor of Valley Grande Baptist.

Nearly 10 years ago, Langston's love of fishing led him to establish the Valley Grande Annual Buddy Bass Tournament. One of the only rules for entering the tournament is that a

believer must bring a nonbeliever as his "buddy." They get to enjoy the sport, fellowship with each other and at the end of the day, hear the gospel.

Skelton noted that several members of his church became Christians because of the tournament.

While the ministries Langston is involved in tend to focus on men, they have also reached a number of women, youth and children, Skelton said.

Still Langston never expected to be named Citizen of the Year on June 22.

"It's a great honor. ... It means quite a bit to me," he said.

But Langston pointed out that it's just another "God thing" in his life.



LANGSTON



Photo courtesy of Belmor Baptist Church

BELMOR BAPTIST BREAKS GROUND ON NEW SANCTUARY

Belmor Baptist Church, Mooresville, in Limestone Baptist Association held a groundbreaking ceremony for its new sanctuary July 11. Pastor Keith Crouch (far left) is pictured with the building committee of the church.

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Great Commission Ministries

news and features about missions and ministries from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (800) 264-1225 www.alsbom.org

ALABAMA BAPTIST CONVENTION STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

God Is at Work in Haiti

I would suppose most everyone has some expectation, at least in part, of what awaits them at the end of a new travel experience. Such was the case for me when our disaster relief assessment team set out for Haiti earlier this year.

When Alabama Baptists were cleared to respond to the January 12th earthquake, the decision to go flipped a mental switch focusing my attention to scan for the latest news clips and headlines. Such information would prove useful as we moved to explore the needs of a nation in peril.

Armed with a well-used passport, I felt confident that my international experience, coupled with testimonies received from both media and missionaries, were adequate to provide us a working knowledge of the situation surrounding ground zero of this hemisphere's largest natural disaster.

Even though technology ensures the American appetite for information stays well fed by an almost real-time exposure to global events, I was ill prepared to face in person what our nightly news had

revealed.

My personal expectations fell far short of reality. As soon as I stepped off the plane, my senses were bombarded

with the sights, sounds and smells that the horror of a quarter-million deaths in 30 seconds can perpetuate.

I quickly found myself struggling to stay afloat in a sea of information overload. If it is true that a picture is worth a thousand words, then trust me: A firsthand glance at this level of destruction is a full-length feature film in 3-D.

July marks six months and several return visits for me to Haiti. I can easily affirm that the devastation and desperation caused by this disaster still rumbles, with the aftershocks of fear and feelings of helplessness for those affected.

From lost limbs to lost loved ones, visitors can easily sense the pain that exists in almost every direction. I have ministered to many communities forced to live in abject poverty, but none compares to the severity that exists in Haiti.

There are also other dangers mixed in the rubble of collapsed buildings and broken hearts. Hidden among the shipments of relief and volunteers are those preaching a false gospel. I was



surprised to see a side of Islam I had never before witnessed. The organization and effort behind a movement that was virtually non-existent prior to the event makes it clear there is much at stake for the survivors of this crisis. Clearly, we are in a race for souls. To walk away would seal the eternal fate of scores of people.

By Mel Johnson
State Missionary
Disaster Relief Strategist



Disaster demands that Christ's followers respond in ways that offer life-supporting and soul-sustaining help. God has blessed us with the means and message to make a difference. Alabama Baptist churches were among the first to adopt a zone for crisis mitigation in Haiti.

In cooperation with other state conventions, Alabama Baptists are now calling the Haitian city of Jacmel and its surrounding villages a home front

for holistic mission support.

From medical ministries to "Buckets of Hope," Baptist churches across the state are sharing the hope of Christ. July indeed marks six months since this terrible tragedy began, but it also marks 150,000 new believers added to the ranks of 1,135 Baptist churches, 135 of which are new church plants.

Clearly, God is at work in Haiti. Through their generous support of missions through the Cooperative Program, Alabama Baptists have been, are now, and will continue to be a Great Commission convention.

Thank you, Alabama, and remember that you make the difference!

For more information on the Haiti relief effort, please contact Mel Johnson at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 389, mjohnson@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Mondene Coker, ext. 273, mcoker@alsbom.org.

To donate to the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Fund, go online to www.alsbom.org/haiti.



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

Get Acquainted Day

at the Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd. in Montgomery
Thursday, September 2, 10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

9:30 - 10 Check-in and refreshments

Register by calling or emailing Charleen Hobbs, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 231, chobbs@alsbom.org, or go online to www.alsbom.org/gad.





The Acts 1:8 Challenge is an opportunity for Southern Baptist churches to commit to a comprehensive missions strategy in their community (Jerusalem), state (Judea), continent (Samaria) and world (ends of the earth).

Acts 1:8 Connections is an opportunity to learn how your church can develop a missions strategy and hear about opportunities for missions service. The Office of Global Missions, the North American Mission Board and missions volunteers will be sharing about the future missions connecting points.

September 7, 2010:

Morning Session: Millbrook Baptist Church, 3431 Browns Rd., Millbrook, AL 36054-2417; (334) 285-4731; millbrookbaptist.org

Evening Session: Canaan Baptist Church, 2543 Morgan Rd., Bessemer, AL 35022-5036; (205) 425-4381; www.canaanbaptist.net

September 9, 2010:

Morning Session: East Gadsden Baptist Church, 211 N. 6th St., Gadsden, AL 35613-2708; (256) 543-7300; www.egbaptist.org

Evening Session: Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, 1300 Lindsay Ln. S, Athens, AL 35613-2708; (256) 232-0020; www.lindsaylane.org

Morning sessions, 9 a.m.- noon (lunch provided). Evening sessions, 5:30-8:30 p.m., (box supper provided).

Pre-registration is required. To register, please contact Ministry Assistant Sheron Poole at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 298. The \$5 registration fee per person may be mailed to: Office of Global Missions, Acts 1:8 Connections, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111-0870.

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Nominations Sought for Outstanding Mission Volunteer



The Office of Global Missions of the State Board of Missions would like to honor an Outstanding 2010 Missions Volunteer. Your help is welcome.

Please think about lay people who are worthy of such recognition, and let us hear from you. We realize there are many who could fit this requirement. However, for this purpose only one individual or

couple will be selected.

Your recommendation will make a difference. The following information is required for a person or couple to be considered:

1. The name, address and phone number of the person or couple being nominated.

2. The name of the pastor, church and association, with address and phone number, to which he/she/they belong.

3. A list of volunteer mission service based on Acts 1:8 (projects in their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and Uttermost that he/she/they have participated in during the past five years, including locations and dates). If the nominee(s) has not served in at least three of the Acts 1:8 areas, please do not nominate that person.

4. Statements supporting your nomination as Outstanding 2010 Mission Volunteer (why you feel he/she/they should be recognized in this manner.)

5. Your signature with address, phone, church and association.

PLEASE NOTE: No phone calls or e-mail

recommendations and/or endorsements accepted.

DEADLINE:

Nominations must be received (not postmarked) no later than Friday, September 24, 2010.

To request your Information Sheet and Nomination Application, please contact Ministry Assistant Virginia Gardner at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 238, vgardner@alsbom.org or write: Global Missions Office, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111-0870.

By Reggie Quimby
State Missionary



New Developments Affecting the Church as Employer

There are many new laws and regulations this year affecting the church as employer. Additional regulations will become effective in future years.

Updates will be provided periodically through State Board of Missions Church Compensation Services in the 2010 Financial Issues Book, the Financial Issues Workshop at Shocco September 10-11 and the Church Tax Workshops in December and January.

HIRE Act

The HIRE act provides a tax break to employers for hiring a person who has not worked more than 40 hours in the previous 60 days. The tax break is the 6.2 percent Social Security employer match. It is effective for wages paid from March 19, 2010, through December 31, 2010.

The credit is reported on the revised IRS Form 941, lines 6a through 6d.

Non-profits Are Eligible.

Qualified employees are individuals who begin employment with a qualified employer after February 3, 2010, and before January 1, 2011, who have been unemployed or employed for less than 40 hours during the 60-day period ending on the date such employment begins, and who are not family members of or related in certain other ways to the employer.

For more details and to see if your employee qualifies, go online to <http://alturl.com/q2gm> which will redirect to the IRS web page with details.

Health Care Developments This Year

— Children with pre-existing conditions will be able to get insurance (effective now).

— Children will be able to be carried on their parents' insurance until age 26 (effective September 23).

— A pool will be established for adults who have had trouble getting insurance. The states will establish these pools, and a federal version will be available for states that do not.

— Small Business Health Insurance Tax Credit. (see below).

Small Business Health Insurance Credit

This credit is available to small businesses including tax-exempt organizations with fewer than 25 FTEs (Full Time Equivalents). The credit will be claimed on a new version of IRS Form 941 which will be available in July. Here are a few key points:

1. The employer must pay at least 50 percent of the premiums.
2. Credit of up to 35 percent of the employer's contribution.
3. Available up to six years — 2010 through 2013 — plus two years beginning in 2014.
4. Credit phased out as the number of FTEs increases from 10-25.
5. Credit phased out as average compensation increases from \$25k to \$50k.

For more complete information, see this Q&A on the IRS website: <http://alturl.com/vn9e>

Health Care Changes for Future Years

1. Who is subject to the employer mandate? Only large employers of 50 full-time employees.

2. Keeping the same coverage. Employers will be able to avoid some of the law's requirements by keeping their coverage the same. Waiting periods must be less than 90 days. No lifetime max. Dependent care up to age 26. No annual limits (possible additional regulations to follow).

3. New benefit. If an employer does not keep coverage the same, then must provide:

- a. 100% coverage preventive care.
- b. Remove prior authorization requirement or increased cost

- c. No pre-existing limitation for children under 19.
- d. Coverage of routine patient costs for life threatening diseases.
4. FSA/HRA/HSA changes: Flexible Spending, Health Reimbursement and Health Savings Accounts
 - a. 2011. No more over-the-counter medications to be included.
 - b. 2011. Nonqualified withdrawal penalty increases from 10% to 20%.
 - c. 2013. Employee contributions to FSA capped at \$2500.
5. Employee notification of value of health care coverage.

By Lee Wright
State Missionary



- a. 2011. Notified on W-2.
- b. 2013. Notify of state exchanges and available premium subsidies and free choice vouchers which will begin 2014.
6. Part of the act but unrelated to health care — 2012: Provide 1099 to all corporate service providers receiving \$600 or more for services or property. (There is proposed legislation to repeal this provision.) Source: Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability: www.ecfa.org

Other news

New Alabama Child Labor Law
www.alalabor.alabama.gov/childlabor/div.htm

— The new act reforms Alabama child labor enforcement standards, transferring the permitting process from the public school system to the Department of Labor. In addition, new recordkeeping requirements and administrative penalties have been added.

— Under the new system, work

permits are no longer required for each minor employed. In its place, employers are required to obtain a Child Labor Certificate in order to employ minors.

Misclassification of Employees

The IRS is very concerned about worker misclassification. If a worker should be classified as an employee, but instead is given a 1099, it could result in the church paying back FICA and penalties.

In a recent determination, the IRS ruled that a minister of music should be classified as an employee and given a W-2. Typically, pastors, other ministers on staff, secretaries,

nursery workers, pianists, organists, etc. should all be classified as employees and given a W-2.

Typical examples of those who might receive a 1099 if payment was \$600 or more would include evangelists, interims and

supply preachers. Plumbers, electricians, painters, carpenters and other non-employees who are not incorporated would also receive a 1099 if the amount was \$600 or more.

Examples of workers who might be either employees or contract workers depending on the circumstances could include the persons who clean the buildings and the person who cuts the grass.

The IRS has tests to determine if a worker is an employee or a contract worker. If in doubt, the IRS says to treat the person as an employee.

For more information about these and other questions, please contact one of these state missionaries at 1-800-264-1225: Lee Wright, ext. 241, lwright@alsbom.org; Jim Swedenburg, ext. 283, jswedenburg@alsbom.org; or Jo Ellen Johnson, CPA, ext. 204, jjohnson@alsbom.org.



When a blacksmith pounds a piece of heated iron on his anvil, the force of the impact shapes the metal into a useful object and changes it forever. As Christians, we have the opportunity to have the same kind of transforming impact on the lives of those around us.

MPACT Alabama is a weekend designated for students, student ministry groups, BCM groups, churches and associations all across Alabama to focus on the ministry needs of their local community.

For more information, contact your local Baptist association or the Office of Collegiate & Student Ministries, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, **1.800.264.1225**, ext. **276**, or visit www.thestudenthub.org.

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

E-zekiel Web Training Workshop

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

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

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

Lunch will be provided.

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

To register or for more information, go to www.alsbom.org/webtraining, or contact State Missionary Chris Mills, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 310, cmills@alsbom.org.

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

**Youth
ministry
leaders &
parents**

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

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

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

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

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

Drawing Leaders to Make a Difference

Featured Speaker/Leader
Joe McKeever
Preacher, cartoonist and retired director of missions



Pastor, Deacon, Spouse Retreat September 24-25, 2010 / Shocco Springs



THEME: "God's Plan for Sharing: 2010-2020 – A Decade to Make a Difference"
Begins with lunch on Friday and ends with lunch on Saturday.

\$78 per person (double occupancy)

MAKE RESERVATIONS WITH SHOCCO: 1-800-280-1105 or www.shocco.org/reser

Outstanding leaders and break-out conferences
Music Leader/Worship • George Weeks

For more information or questions, please call or email Mike Jackson at 1-800-264-1225, ext 210, mjackson@alsbom.org or ministry assistant Judy Duncan, ext. 218, jduncan@alsbom.org

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



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

Limit **12 COPIES** per church. To order, please **call, fax** or **e-mail** your request to Charleen Hobbs at 1.800.264.1225, ext. 231; 334.288.2693 (fax); chobbs@alsbom.org; or **order online** at www.alsbom.org/cpg.

Be sure to **include** your name, church name, mailing address and number of church planning guides needed (up to 12).



order your 2010-2011 church planning guide



GREAT COMMISSION POSSIBLE!

**Sunday School
Leader Training I & II
August 6-7, 13-14, 2010
Shocco Springs**



Remember the old television series *Mission: Impossible* where the spy team was given their mission instructions on a self-destructing tape? Jesus gave us very specific instructions for our mission in an indestructible Book! Our mission: teach them about the Bible, about Jesus! One effective way to carry out that mission is through teaching Sunday School to plant seeds of faith and to prepare others to help carry out the Great Commission.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

-Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore, your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to attend Sunday School Leader Training at Shocco, August 6-7 or 13-14. There will be training for all: brand new, highly experienced, older, younger — all Sunday School age group teachers, leaders, directors, pastors and church staff, as we focus on Great Commission Possible.

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

For more information, please contact State Missionary Jamie Baldwin at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 240, jbaldwin@alsbom.org

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

If you can't attend Sunday School leader training at Shocco Springs, consider one of these area conferences. These conferences include 1-1/2 hours worth of training to help you improve your ability to communicate biblical truths as a teacher/facilitator while fostering a sense of community through meaningful ministry in a Sunday School class or Bible study group.

For more information, please contact State Missionary Jamie Baldwin at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 240, jbaldwin@alsbom.org.

- Northside Baptist Church, Selma Tuesday, Aug. 3
- Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Moulton Tuesday, Aug. 17
- First Baptist Church, Opelika Thursday, Aug. 19
- Ino Baptist Church, Kinston Tuesday, Aug. 24
- Calvary Baptist Church, Scottsboro Thursday, Sept. 2
- First Baptist Church, Bay Minette Thursday, Sept. 2
- Meadow Brook Baptist Church, Gadsden Tuesday, Sept. 14
- First Baptist Church, Albertville Thursday, Sept. 16
- Highland Baptist Church, Florence Tuesday, Sept. 21
- Santuck Baptist Church, Wetumpka Tuesday, Sept. 28

Communicating *Truth*
and Building **Community**

Thursday – Saturday, August 26-28 Shocco Springs

MISSIONS UNIVERSITY COURSES OF STUDY

Church Planting/Literacy Missions

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

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

Adult Reading and Writing (16)

Spanish – Adult Reading and Writing (16)

Tutoring Children and Youth (16)

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

The schedule below is designed so that church staff may attend Thursday afternoon through Friday afternoon and bivocational staff and lay people may attend Friday evening through Saturday morning. The number in parentheses is the length of the course in hours.

Missions

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

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

Connecting with Hispanics (2)

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

Understanding the Muslim Religion and Sharing My Faith (2.5)

Understanding the Hindu Religion and Sharing My Faith (2.5)

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

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

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

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

Men's Ministries/Brotherhood Directors

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

Using Technology to Reach Men (1)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Royal Ambassador Leadership/Challenger Leaders

Leadership Training for RA Leaders (2.5)

Leadership Training for Challenger Leaders (2.5)

Opportunities for Youth in Missions (1)

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

Discipline in the RA Room (1)

Interest Activities for RAs and Challengers (2)

For conference details:

www.alsbom.org/missionsuniversity

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

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



MISSIONS UNIVERSITY



DISCIPLESHIP NEWS

DISCIPLESHIP TRACKS: PART OF SUNDAY SCHOOL LEADER TRAINING I AND II

August 6-7 and 13-14, 2010, at Shocco Springs

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

Adult:

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

Student:

- > OWN the Strategy: Developing a Student Discipleship Strategy for Your Church

Childhood:

- > Principles and Priorities for Childhood Discipleship
- > Preschool/Children's Disciple-Making Resource Workshop
- > Foundational Discipleship for Preschoolers

DISCIPLESHIP TRACK AT "MAKING THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CONNECTION" REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Choose from one of three locations, 8:30 a.m.-12 noon:

- > Saturday, August 21: Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Athens
- > Saturday, August 21: Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile
- > Saturday, August 28: First Baptist Church, Trussville

Childhood (*all locations*):

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

Adult (*Dauphin Way and Trussville FBC*):

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

Adult (*Lindsay Lane Only*):

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

For more information, please contact State Missionary Sonya Tucker at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 271, stucker@alsbom.org.

Basic Training for Church Planters

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

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

During this workshop, church planting teams are

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

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



and discover how they have overcome similar challenges in their settings.

Again this year, Basic Training will be held as a part of our Missions University. The Missions University is a new effort to bring together missional workers from all over Alabama to a synergistic training event. It will be a wonderful time of equipping and networking (see page 15).

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

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

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

Baptist Mens State Softball Tournament

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

40-team maximum
Round-robin tournament
(eight divisions with five teams each)
Single elimination in championship round of
16 teams
Every team will play at least two games
(\$135 for complete tournament)
*For a complete list of regulations to
participate, please contact Ministry Assistant
Mondene Coker at 1-800-264-1225,
ext. 273, mcoker@alsbom.org.*

Historical Highlights

from previous issues of *The Alabama Baptist*

Compiled by Kathleen Prude

50 Years Ago July 1960

Church's Only Pastor: Andy F. Hardy of Woodward Avenue Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals, has served the church for 15 years and is the only pastor the church has had. He was called to be the full-time shepherd of 47 members who were meeting in an unfinished concrete block building. Since then, 963 people have united with the church and the pastor baptized the 400th convert in June of this year. An auditorium seating 600 was completed in 1955, and a new parsonage valued at \$25,000 was built in 1958. The church's ministry also includes a weekly paper and radio broadcast.

40 Years Ago July 1970

Alabamians at BWA: Alma Hunt, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union and a member of Southside Baptist Church, Birmingham, was elected vice president of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Tokyo. Among the several hundred other Alabamians attending the world meeting were pastors Bill Culbreth, of Birmingham; Harper Shannon, of Dothan; Charles Gibbs, of Pratt City; Herman Cobb, of Cullman; and Bernard Lee, of Opp, and Dr. and Mrs. Hugh Chambliss (superintendent of missions), of Madison, and Dr. and Mrs. Hudson Baggett (editor, *The Alabama Baptist*), of Birmingham.

30 Years Ago July 1980

New Education Building: Don Johnson, director of missions for Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association, brought a message of challenge to Union Grove Baptist Church, Ope-

lika, when ground was broken for a new education building. One of the oldest churches in Alabama, Union Grove Baptist was first used as a place of worship in 1828. Legend has it that the church was gathered by a "circuit-riding preacher" who held an open-air church among a grove of pine and oak trees on the spot. Tuskegee Lee Association records show Union Grove first reported to the association in 1858. Durwood Knowles is pastor of the church.

20 Years Ago July 1990

New Chief Executive: Declaring that Alabama Baptists are "family," Troy L. Morrison has succeeded A. Earl Potts as executive secretary-treasurer of the Alabama Baptist State Convention. Director of church minister relations for Alabama Baptists since 1985, Morrison previously served as pastor of Southside Baptist Church, Gadsden, and 17 years as pastor of Twelfth Street Baptist Church, Gadsden.

NAMB expands Messianic outreach

So many Jewish people are asking questions now that they've never asked before," Messianic leader Ric Worshill said.

Worshill was among more than two dozen leaders in Messianic outreach who met at the North American Mission Board to discuss ways to make the gospel known to the 6.5 million Jewish people in the United States and Canada.

Finding common ground was a key point of discussion during the two-day meeting of representatives of various groups involved in Jewish evangelism, including those associ-

ated with what is known as the Messianic Congregational Movement, which gives Messianic Jews places of worship where Jewish tradition and ceremony are respected.

10 Years Ago July 2000

Retirement: Braves baseball games and ice cream stops depict the kind of fun activities Charles Powell planned for the senior adults of First Baptist Church, Jasper. Powell, who always completes his suit with a bow tie, retired recently as associate pastor and minister of senior adults at First, Jasper, after 30 years. Before coming to Jasper in June 1970, he worked with the senior adult program at Gardendale's First Baptist Church. He also served churches in Tennessee, Georgia, Florida and Mississippi, working in church education with students and youth as well as senior adults.

Participants discussed a range of ideas for expanding Messianic outreach, including the fostering of more diversity in outreach and church-planting methods; seeking greater involvement from the church in general for outreach to Jewish people; and helping churches gain a greater understanding of the relationship between the Scriptures and ancient Jewish culture. (BP)

He was pastor of three Kentucky churches while attending Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. Potts, who will retire Sept. 1 after six years in the executive secretary-treasurer post, will be honored at a statewide reception Aug. 24 at Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills.

ReMEDy program helps minister to the disabled

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

As a quadriplegic, Diana Ames knows the importance of having reliable medical equipment. She also knows how expensive new equipment can be, especially when insurance does not cover the cost.

"There are so many people out there, and often their need is immediate — they need the equipment now," Ames said.

That's why when she sought a project for the missions committee of Westwood Baptist Church, Forestdale, she immediately felt drawn to ReMEDy, a new program started by BBA and its Center at Central Park.

ReMEDy's goal is to involve churches with an ongoing effort by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) to provide pre-owned medical equipment to people in need. ADRS's STAR (Statewide Technology Access and Response) program accepts donations of medical equipment and places the items on a monthly inventory list available online. The equipment is then loaned to family members, caseworkers, school employees and others around the state who work with individuals with both long- and short-term disabilities or illnesses.

"By partnering with ReMEDy, church members can help find and collect equipment, help find people who need to be loaned this equipment and can help pick up or deliver," said Jim Branum, associate director for volunteer mobilization at the center. "In

addition, if a church has unused space, it has the option to serve as a collection or distribution site as well."

In the two months since Westwood Baptist has been actively working with ReMEDy, church members have donated equipment and missions committee members have gotten the word out about the program.

First Baptist Church, Alabaster, in Shelby Baptist Association has also partnered with ReMEDy and is seeking a storage site.

Avenue of God's love

Lance Lee, a member of First, Alabaster, and chaplain and volunteer coordinator with Family Comfort Hospice of Alabaster, pointed out that meeting a physical need during a medical crisis can provide "another avenue to remind people that God does love them and that God is with them through this crisis."

Branum said his long-term goal is that at least one church in every Alabama association will partner with ReMEDy to collect and loan equipment both to individuals in its community and around the state. He believes a solid statewide network will not only help more people but will also help them get much-needed equipment quicker. In addition to church partners, the program also needs volunteers to locate equipment and people in need of it and pick up and deliver equipment to help with expenses.

For more information, visit www.bbaonline.org or contact the center at 205-783-9170.

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sions, Jacksonville Baptist Association. Please send to: DOM Search Committee, c/o Lynn Stone, Jacksonville Baptist Association, 2700 University Blvd. S, Jacksonville FL 32216, or e-mail: lstone@jaxbaptist.org.

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Want to know God?

By Pastor Tim Evans
North Clay Baptist Church, Birmingham

It is often stated that there are two basic ideas with which everyone must come to terms. First “there is a God.” Second “you are not Him.” If these two ideas are indeed true (and they are), then there are two crucial questions everyone must answer. First “what kind of god is this God?” Second “what does this God require of me?” The Bible answers both questions with great clarity.

The Bible reveals to us that the one true and living God is the God who has created everything, rules over His creation and has most clearly revealed Himself in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is all good news.

Now comes the bad news and it’s really bad. God requires absolute perfection from each of us. Jesus said, “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). I may not think that I am really bad, but I know with absolute certainty that I am not perfect. The awful reality is that I have not loved God with all my heart and do not love my fellow man as much as I love myself. Beyond that, I have said things that are not true, had impure thoughts, taken things that did not belong to me and my list of failings goes on and on. The Bible allows for no exceptions to the universal indictment “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

Thankfully it is our understanding of the bad news that prepares us for the greatest news of all. This good, loving and powerful God has provided everything that He requires of me through Jesus. He has forgiven my failings (my sin) through the blood of Jesus. Not only that, God gives to me the perfect record of Jesus. The good news is that through Jesus, I meet God’s requirement of perfection. The great transaction of the gospel is that on the cross of Calvary, Jesus received the punishment I deserve. Therefore, by faith, I can receive the blessings of His obedience.

There is a God and His requirement is that you trust in His crucified Son.

Would you trust Him as your Lord and Savior today? Would you turn from your sin and, by faith, claim the accomplishments of the life and death of Jesus?

Baptists rally in support of Wall Highway

(continued from page 1)

participated in the Winshape camp held that week — for a meal and final celebration in the area of the CLC where the roof fell in.

“We thank God that (the roof did not come down that night),” Carithers said.

“We really praised God that no one was hurt. If it had to happen, this was a good time (for it) to happen.”

He said Wall Highway has seen an outpouring of love from the Baptist community — area churches, the association and the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) — since the incident.

“We’ve had a lot of churches come by and pray for us,” Carithers said. “It’s been a great time of everyone coming together and praying for us.”

The SBOM offered two mobile chapels in which to host adult Sunday School classes, which met in the CLC. Carithers said the church hopes to have those by early September.

The Mother’s Day Out program, Awana children’s ministry and Upward basketball program lost their meeting space, too.

But these ministries will continue because the roof collapse will not stop the work of the church, Carithers said.



“This is just a building, and we’ll continue on doing ministry,” he said.

‘God will use it for good’

“We’re going to readjust and the prayers of the people are going to help. In all things, we might see this as bad but God will use it for good.”

Carithers noted the cause of the collapse is unknown and there were no visible signs of termites or water damage.

An investigation is currently

under way, and Wall Highway is working with its insurance company to find out the next steps to take.

At this time, Carithers asked for prayer.

“We need prayer — prayer that the people won’t get discouraged and prayer for unity in our body that we may continue to serve God and do His mission.”

To be placed on the church’s e-mail update list, e-mail contact information to info@wallhighway.com.



Photos courtesy of *The Huntsville Times*
DAMAGE — Insulation covers the gym floor of Wall Highway Baptist’s CLC following the roof collapse.

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FBC Talladega Springs marks 100 years of service

By Ashley Anderton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

A silver-plated cup, a large Bible and a framed bank note replaced the usual floral arrangement on the Communion table June 13 at First Baptist Church, Talladega Springs.

Each article represented a piece of the Coosa River Baptist Association church’s early history as it commemorated its 100th anniversary.

Even the speaker that day represented a part of the heritage of First, Talladega Springs. Chris Mitchell — who is the great-grandson of two of the church’s founding fathers, W.H. Mitchell and J.J. Jackson — delivered the morning message.

Also highlighting the service was an opening prayer by Pastor Wesley Higginbotham; a certificate of recognition presented by the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission; and congregational singing led by Music Minister Danny Thornton.

Rich history

“One hundred years ago, Talladega Springs had a post office and about five general stores. They didn’t have a church,” explained longtime member Margaret Mitchell. “Four men — J.H. Hastie, W.H. Mitchell, J.J. Jackson and V.C. Cooper — lived in the community. On

Feb. 28, 1910, they met to discuss organizing a church in Talladega Springs. That’s how the church began.”

On June 19, 1910, 23 charter members began worshipping as First, Talladega Springs. Today the church has an average attendance of 20 and continues to gather in the original building, which was constructed in 1910. However, an estimated 80 people came to First, Talladega Springs, to help celebrate the centennial.

Just last year, a building project on the campus added a pastor’s study, flower room and Sunday School room. The project was a collaborative effort not only of church members and Higginbotham, who is a carpenter, but also his sons and volunteers from Coosa River Association.

The next phase is to construct a new fellowship hall.

As First, Talladega Springs, grows physically, it is also working to grow the kingdom of God. The church gives money through missions offerings and the Cooperative Program to aid in spreading the gospel. Also some members work with Coosa River Association and Carpenters for Christ, a national organization that assists in the Lord’s work through construction projects.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 1

Explore the Bible By Robert Olsen

Assistant Professor, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

RELATIONSHIPS: THE INTEGRITY FACTOR 2 Corinthians 1:3-12; 2:14-17

Live for Others (1:3-7)

Paul's relationship with the Corinthians had been strained, and 2 Corinthians was written in order to defend his authority as an apostle since some had questioned it. Typically Paul would begin his letters by thanking God for the believers to whom he was writing. However, in this instance, he did not do so. Instead he began by comforting them, emphasizing that God comforts us in our troubles so that we can comfort others. As evidenced by the first letter to the Corinthians, the church in Corinth had a lot of internal problems, and Paul was writing to show the members that they needed to be comforting each other and not allowing the divisions to persist. Paul mentioned that Christians are comforted by Christ but this does not exempt them from sufferings. In fact, Paul emphasized that just as Christ suffered on our behalf, we likely will suffer for Him and should be willing to do so. In America, our sufferings are quite light compared with those of other Christians throughout the world who are persecuted with imprisonment, torture and even death because of their faith in Christ. Yet, even if this should befall us, we take comfort in the fact that we have an eternal reward that outweighs our current troubles. Even in death, Christians are victorious. We ought to find comfort in the salvation that we have in Christ when we face trials. Furthermore, when we overcome our bad experiences through Christ, we then are able to encourage others with the hope of Christ. When we see God's hand in our situations, it should spur us to relate this to other believers in similar situations to be an encouragement to them.

Live in God's Strength (1:8-11)

Paul recounted the sufferings he faced throughout Asia for the cause of the gospel. Throughout his account, he pointed out that he relied on God for his salvation. Regardless of the circumstance, Paul depended on God. Sometimes believers lose hope in despairing situations, perhaps thinking God has abandoned them or does not care for them. This is

the wrong understanding. God is with us in all of our situations, both good and bad. God never promises an easy life, despite the preaching of some in America today. Paul asserted that in times of trials, rather than abandoning us, God is trying to get us to rely on Him all the more. Paul emphasized this so that the Corinthians would not have a misconception about suffering. Paul confirmed that he was delivered precisely because of the Corinthians' prayer for him. God delivered Paul from his trials so that he could write to the Corinthians of his circumstances that they may, in turn, give thanks to God for hearing their prayers. Christians need to remember to be praying for each other. Not only are we to do this because we are told to do so but we also pray to remind us that Christians do not operate solo. The body of Christ is a unity of believers. In America, where we focus on independence and self-reliance, Christianity strikes opposite, affirming that the body of Christ is made up of many parts. When we hear of suffering in other parts of the world — Christians jailed in China or believers killed in Sudan — it should motivate us to pray for these brothers and sisters just as the Corinthian church did for Paul.

Live So God Approves (1:12; 2:14-17)

Paul had a clear conscience about how he had acted toward the Corinthians because he was doing what God wanted of him. His actions were not based upon worldly wisdom but rather were done according to God's grace. The gospel is not spread by preaching what the world wants to hear. The gospel is an offense because it points out sin and tells people that they are unable to save themselves. There are many preachers today who say what their audience wants to hear, but this is no gospel at all since it makes believers comfortable in their sin. The true preaching of the gospel is the word of life to believers, but to unbelievers, it is a death sentence. Paul preached the true gospel with sincerity. Paul made tents to support his ministry; he did not take advantage of his listeners, and because of this, it should have been evident to the Corinthians that he was living with integrity, which is what all believers should strive to do.

Bible Studies for Life By James Barnette

Associate Professor, Department of Religion, Samford University

RESPECT GOD'S HOLINESS 2 Samuel 6:1-15, 17

Honor God in God's Way (1-5)

Because of his recent victories over the Philistines, David was expecting reprisals from the Israelite enemy. An attack against Israel in order to seize and destroy the Ark of the Covenant must have been attractive to the Philistines given that the Ark was located only a few miles away from their territory. In response, David brought together a large army of 30,000 men to "bring up" the Ark and move it to a more secure location. David's army was genuinely a national force, not merely tribal. Ultimately his goal was to get the Ark to Jerusalem, as it would symbolize "one nation under God." It was his hope that past divisions and tribal differences would be set aside for the greater purpose of unity in faith. Relocating the Ark was an idea embraced by all parties. Unfortunately David did not follow his usual practice of asking God for direction about significant ventures like this one. The Lord had given specific instructions through Moses as to how the Ark was to be erected, dismantled and transported from place to place (see Numbers 4). Overlooking these instructions, David had the Ark placed on a new cart drawn by oxen instead of having Levites carry it on their shoulders. Not only was this a direct violation of the Torah but it also followed the pattern of the pagan Philistines (1 Sam. 6).

Respect the Holiness of God (6-11)

Because he was not an Aaronic priest, Uzzah was prohibited from touching the holiest object of the Israelite faith. His conscientious effort to protect the Ark actually defiled it, and the unintended act of irreverence cost him his life. The Ark and the laws related to it were never to be presumed upon, taken for granted or treated with familiarity. To touch the Ark was to impinge on God's holiness. Uzzah's death evoked an awestruck question on David's lips: "How can the Ark of the Lord ever come to me?" David came to fear God in a fresh way.

The Church needs to be reminded about the

holiness of God. When people are no longer respectful or fearful of God's holiness, the community of faith is put at risk. Furthermore no amount of unity or enthusiasm can compensate for disobedience. When we do God's work in a worldly way, failing to follow His expectations, we cannot expect Him to bless our efforts. In fact, such imitation of the world can result in terrible consequences.

Worship With Enthusiastic Reverence (12-15, 17)

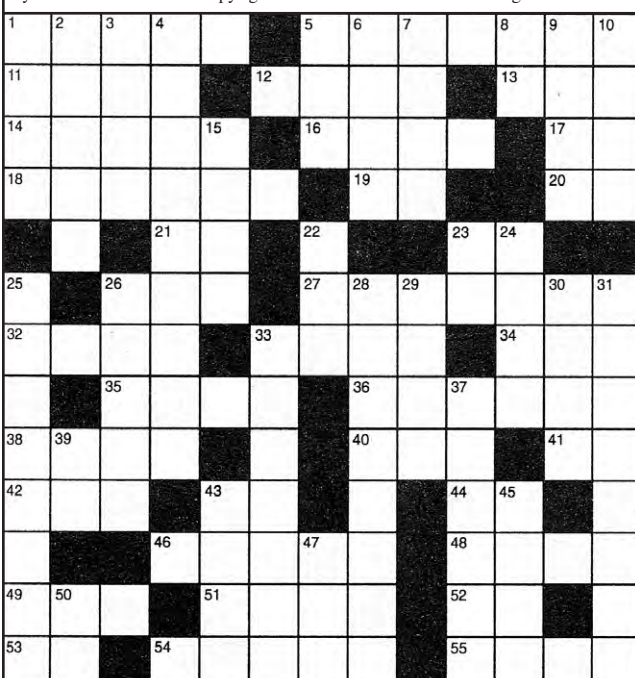
When David heard that the Ark's presence was blessing the household of Obed-Edom, the king was ready to bring it to Jerusalem to bless all of the people. So, after a three-month delay, the procession of the Ark was resumed. A bull and fattened calf were offered after six steps were taken. The pause after six steps might have represented a symbolic Sabbath rest, signifying a consecration of the Ark's journey to Jerusalem.

The dancing and singing responded to the assurance that God was present, that Jerusalem was now the home of the Ark and that God had taken residence in the city of David. The mood of the event was one of unfettered, unashamed celebration. David himself broke with any royal prestige and protocol he might have assumed when he danced without restraint before the Ark and in the presence of the people. He was dressed for the occasion in a priestly linen ephod. Though he was not of the tribe of Levi, David was acting as both king and priest — a foreshadowing of Jesus, a descendant of David, who holds both offices "in the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6; Ps. 110). In the days of Abraham, Melchizedek was both king and priest of Salem (Gen. 14); now David was worshipping as king and priest of Jerusalem.

Following the joyful procession, the Ark was set in its place of honor. Then David "sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the Lord." It is unclear whether David actually officiated at these sacrifices or simply directed the Levitical priests to perform the rites. If he did perform them himself, then he might have been acting on the precedent set by Melchizedek.

Christian Crossword

By Debra Michaels Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- Musical instrument. (Dan. 3:5)
- Large water bird. (Lev. 11:18)
- A stroke with a whip. (Gen. 10:7)
- In my Father's house ___ many mansions. (John 14:2)
- Straight across a ship; abreast.
- Wild animals or birds hunted.
- Arkansas. (Zip code abbr.)
- ___ of Eden.
- Pound. (abbr.)
- Ancient Thebes and capital of upper Egypt. (Nah. 3:8)
- Delaware. (Zip code abbr.)
- Senior. (abbr.)
- Species of ox.
- Moses' ark was made of this. (Ex. 2:3)
- Double reed woodwind

- instrument.
- God is ___ present.
- The pure in heart ... shall ___ God. (Matt. 5:8)
- Musical composition for two.
- Set the table with these.
- Certain days in the Roman calendar.
- Yes.
- Prefix meaning "two" or "double."
- A close friend.
- Tennessee. (Zip code abbr.)
- Right Reverend. (abbr.)
- I ___ unto the Lord with my voice. (Ps. 3:4)
- Jot.
- To meet the Lord in the ___. (1 Thess. 4:17)
- Form of the word *air*.
- There ___ I in the midst of them. (Matt. 18:20)
- Right. (abbr.)
- Poet Thomas.
- To wash.

Down

- Wild plant. (Job 8:11)
- Give Jacob his two daughters. (Gen. 29)
- One who uses. (Matt. 10:3)
- One of the apostles. (Matt. 10:3)
- A thick pin.
- Son of Shobal. (Gen. 36:23)
- Favorite sacrifice. (Ex. 29:39)
- California. (Zip code abbr.)
- A child of Dishan. (Gen. 36:28)
- Roman emperor who persecuted Christians.
- The ___ ... shall inherit the earth. (Matt. 5:5)
- International Business Machines Corporation. (abbr.)
- Sister. (abbr.)
- Where moth and ___ doth corrupt. (Matt. 6:19)
- Captain of Pharaoh's guard. (Gen. 37:36)

- To sing with sudden changes in voice.
- ___ able; not forgivable.
- Easter flower.
- To Abraham and his ___ were the promises made. (Gal. 3:16)
- To feel or sow indecision.
- Son of Kenaz. (Josh. 15:17)
- In the air.
- Irish father.
- Waiter's necessity.
- Pear-shaped tomato.
- A period of time.
- And God saw the light, that ___ was good. (Gen. 1:4)



World Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Christians in Bhutan fear proposed 'anti-conversion' law

THIMPHU, Bhutan — Christians in this Himalayan nation who are still longing to openly practice their faith were disheartened in July when the government proposed the kind of "anti-conversion" law that other nations have used as a pretext for falsely accusing Christians of "coercion." The amendment bill would punish "proselytizing" that "uses coercion or other forms of inducement" — vaguely enough worded, Christians fear, that vigilantes could use it to jail them for following the commands of Christ to feed, clothe and otherwise care for the poor.

"There was always a virtual anti-conversion law in place, but now it is on paper, too," said a senior pastor from Thimphu on condition of anonymity. "Seemingly it is aimed at controlling the growth of Christianity." Kuenlay Tshering, a member of Bhutan's Parliament and the representative of its Legislative Council, told Compass Direct News the National Council proposed that offenses under the proposal be classified as misdemeanors, punishable by one to less than three years in prison. Tshering said the amendment bill "may be passed during the next session of Parliament, after the National Assembly deliberates on it in the winter session."

Authorities usually act on complaints by local residents against Christian workers, so frivolous complaints can lead to their arrest, said another pastor who requested anonymity. The ambiguous status of Christians in Bhutan has led to another problem: In the Lamperi area, near Thimphu, a national daily recently reported that at least eight graves of Christians had been exhumed and the skulls and thigh bones extracted for a Buddhist ritual. Although the report marked the first time the practice had made the news, Christian leaders said more than 100 graves have been dug up as the trade in human bones has been going on for more than five years.

Reads like script of action thriller but real for 3 believers

LAHORE, Pakistan — Suspected Islamic extremists fired bullets into the car of a Christian evangelist with impunity in June, while in another Punjab province town, stray gunfire led to two Christians being falsely accused of murder.

Following a youth revival in Essa Nagri, near Faisalabad, Pastor Kamran Pervaiz was in the passenger seat of a Toyota Corolla returning to Faisalabad with his team June 25 when 12 armed men tried to stop their car, Pervaiz said. The rear window suddenly broke to pieces as bullets pierced the car. The driver turned into a field and turned off the engine and the assailants sped past.

Pervaiz said they were targeted because of their involvement in the Christian revival meeting; Muslim groups had warned the Christians to abort the meeting after banners and posters were displayed across Essa Nagri.

At Ghulam Muhammad Abad police station in Faisalabad, acting Superintendent Shabir Muhammad declined to register a First Information Report on the attack because of pressure from local Muslim groups, he said.

In Gujrat, by contrast, police quickly arrested two young Christian men after shots fired into the air by a drunken man killed a neighbor. Saleem Masih, 22, and John Masih, 23, were falsely accused of robbery as well as murder, a later police investigation found, and they were released. Their employer, Chaudhry Ashraf Gondal, had become inebriated along with friend Chaudhry Farhan on June 18, and Farhan fired gunshots into the air for fun, killing Malik Sajid, said senior superintendent of police operations officer Raon Irfan.

Islamic extremists kill 2 Christians in police custody

FAISALABAD, Pakistan — On July 19, suspected Islamic extremists shot dead two Christians accused of "blasphemy." Armed gunmen shot a pastor, Rashid Emmanuel, 32, and his 30-year-old brother, Sajid Emmanuel, days after handwriting experts July 14 notified police that signatures on papers denigrating Muhammad did not match those of the accused.

Expected to be exonerated, the two leaders of United Ministries Pakistan were being led in handcuffs under police custody back to jail when they were shot at 2:17 p.m., according to Rizwan Paul, president of Life for All.

"Five armed, masked men attacked and opened fire on the two accused," Paul said, noting that Sajid died on the spot, while Rashid Emmanuel died later. The shooters escaped, and the superintendent of police and deputy superintendent police have reportedly been suspended for their failure to provide security for the slain brothers.

Christian Lawyers' Foundation Pakistan President Khalid Gill said the two bodies bore cuts and other signs of having been tortured, including marks on their faces.

HEART OF MISSIONS ...

A team of 41 students and adults from **Huffman Baptist Church** in Birmingham Baptist Association traveled to Gulf Shores June 5–12.

This was the team's third trip to the area, and the plan was to minister in the same manner as previous years. But the team was forced to change its plan, as it arrived just three days before oil hit the shore.

"We just had to let the Lord direct what we did," Student Pastor Pam Windle said.

Instead of spending the day doing beach evangelism, team members spent the morning visiting two RV campgrounds, where they put on a backyard Bible club-type program that included games, crafts, songs and other activities for children. In the afternoon, they headed for the beach, where they passed out koozies (water bottle and soda can holders) and backpacks, talked to people about Christ and played games and made salvation bracelets with children and adults.

In the evening, the team worshiped on the beach. People who had been invited by the team that afternoon and even some who were just passing by would join in praise. On the last night, a boy and a girl from Missouri, ages 10 and 12, accepted Christ.

Windle said the girl texted a team member to say, "Thanks all you crazy peeps for telling us about Jesus."

First Baptist Church, Columbiana, took a group of 25 people to McMinnville, Tenn., on a construction missions trip June 6–11.

It partnered with **Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa**, which traveled with a group of about 30 members. Most of the team helped build Bridges of Hope Fellowship Church's first building, while the rest of the team held Bible school for area children. Bridges of Hope Fellowship broke ground June 1 and plans to have the building completed by the end of June.

"It is always a life changing experience. ... You gain so much spiritually," Mike Miller, senior pastor of First, Columbiana, said of going on these types of trips.

Stanley Kilgore, pastor of **Center Grove Baptist Church, Cullman**, in East Cullman Baptist Association, took a team of 12 to the Toledo district of Belize May 31–June 7.

The missions team was composed of nine members of Center Grove Baptist and three members of Greater Vision Baptist Church, Cullman. The team conducted pastoral training for Maya and Kekchi pastors and Vacation Bible School (VBS) and did construction work on a women's training center.

The theme of the pastor's school was "The Biblical Chain of Leadership" taken from 2 Timothy 2:2.

More than 1,000 children and 700 adults attended the three-day VBS, with seven adults and 38 children making professions of faith. This was the sixth year for conducting VBS in this area. The training center will house a new ministry designed to teach the wives of church leaders about discipleship, women's ministries and doctrine, among other things.

Kilgore said the projects were a great success and plans are already being made to return to the area next June.

Members of 15 **Franklin Baptist Association** churches were among the more than 100 volunteers who spent the week of June 21 building an addition to Mountain View Baptist Church, Mills, Wyo. This was the sixth construction project in that state for the association.

Other volunteers represented four other Alabama churches, one Mississippi church, two Virginia churches and one Illinois church.

"This was a good trip," said Larry Dover, Franklin Association director of missions. "We accomplished a lot in a short period of time."

First Baptist Church, Montgomery, in Montgomery Baptist Association sent a team of four on a missions trip to the small town of Jacmel, Haiti, located less than 50 miles south of the capital of Port-au-Prince, May 28–June 5. The team's work was part of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' partnership with Jacmel. The primary goal was to assess the area for future projects.

Brian Gay, minister of missions for First, Montgomery, looked for ways that the church could help like construction projects and orphan ministry. While assessing needs, the team did Bible studies, prayer walks and a children's program.

A team of seven from the **University of Mobile** traveled to the European country of Malta May 10–20. Team members worked with International Mission Board representatives Earl and Robin Pinkston to share the gospel.

They led worship services, shared their testimonies and taught Bible studies. They also were able to join a few Maltese believers to witness and pray at the University of Malta. The gospel was presented to approximately 80 people, and at least one of them responded in faith.

Thomas Fletcher, a student who went on the trip, said he learned that "culture is part of who people are, and it is the best way to reach them."



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Church on 'battlefield'

Virginia evangelist focuses on Civil War re-enactors

From his Old Testament beard down to his scuffed boots and battered Bible, Alan Farley looks the perfect picture of a Civil War chaplain.

On a dusty field five miles from where the Battle of Gettysburg was fought 147 years ago, Farley acts the part well, thundering sermons from his home-made pulpit, praying with bedraggled soldiers and handing out tracts with titles like "Everlasting Punishment."

The thousands of soldiers and spectators at the Gettysburg Civil War Battle Re-enactment in early July could be forgiven for swallowing the chaplain's performance — the tracts look aged, the religion old time.

But it is no act, Farley said; it is a divine calling.

For 26 years, Farley has driven thousands of miles, distributed millions of pages of tracts and delivered hundreds of sermons — all for one mission: bringing Civil War re-enactors to Jesus.

"No one was reaching them," said the 59-year-old Virginian. "They are gone every weekend, and most wouldn't darken the door of a church ordinarily. But they need to get saved."

Farley's Re-enactor's Missions for Jesus Christ combines modern means with 1860s-style evangelism to reach the estimated 50,000 Civil War enthusiasts who live to relive famous battles like Bull Run, Antietam and Shiloh year after year.

Pitching a cross-steeped tent beside the battlefields, Farley and a handful of volunteers in period dress pray with re-enactors; promote a Civil War chaplains' museum in Lynchburg, Va.; and preach as often as seven organizers will allow. Farley estimates that 1,800 re-enactors have been led to Christianity through his ministry.

One day, he hopes, he'll see an evangelical revival like those that blazed through Confederate camps during the Civil War.

In some ways, Farley and his family are typical Christian missionaries, albeit with an unusual missions field.

They live in Appomattox, Va., where Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant in 1865. But the Farleys spend 40 weeks a year away from home, crisscrossing the country in a RV that carries Alan and his wife, Faith, to scores of Civil War re-enactments and events. Often their young adult children — both re-enactors — come along.

Fifteen churches support the Farleys through their monthly missions budgets. "Just like missionaries go-



Photo courtesy of Re-enactor's Missions for Jesus Christ

1860S-STYLE — Alan Farley, a Civil War re-enactor, is not acting when it comes to telling others about Christ. Farley combines modern means with 1860s-style evangelism in his ministry.

ing to Africa, or Ireland, or wherever," Farley said. Farley was ordained by an independent Baptist church in 1994, at, of course, a Civil War re-enactment.

While many fellow re-enactors adopt a specific historical persona, Farley does not.

"I feel very strongly that if I portrayed somebody, and somebody realized I was not that person, they might think the message or gospel I'm trying to share with them is also phony," he said.

Re-enactors spend countless hours learning to dress, shoot and speak like Civil War soldiers. But for all their historical high-mindedness and fastidious attention to period detail, re-enactments can be

bawdy affairs, with modern-day enthusiasts assuming the role of dissolute soldiers on the eve of bloody battles. Then as now, drinking and gambling are the biggest vices.

At a re-enactment two decades ago in North Carolina, where Farley was playing a Confederate soldier, he read the Bible in his tent as the moon rose. It was the Book of Ezekiel, in which God warns that those who do not dissuade backsliders will be held accountable. "I said, 'Lord, are you speaking to me about these re-enactors?'" Farley recalled. "And the Lord said, 'Look at them singing and carrying on around the campfire. My Son died for them, and no one is coming to them. If you go, I'll give you the strength.' From then on, my burden was for the re-enactors."

Since re-enactments are often held on isolated farms, getting to

church on Sunday and back by battle-time can be nearly impossible. Farley resolved to bring church to the men. He began with 15-minute sermons held in the shade of an oak tree between battles.

At the recent Gettysburg re-enactment, Farley led two services packed with hundreds of soldiers and spectators in a tent beside the battlefield.

Collins' story

That's where Williams Collins, of Portland, Ind., heard him July 4, just hours before he rushed into battle as the Color Sergeant in Pickett's Charge. Three years ago, Collins said Farley saved his life — eternal and temporal.

"I was going down the wrong road. He brought me back and gave me a new outlook," he said.

Not everyone appreciates his ministry, Farley admits. Some chaplain re-enactors, turned off by his evangelism, go the opposite direction when they see him coming. Some spectators and re-enactors turn up at his 1860s-style worship services expecting a show, only to find real conviction.

Farley's preaching blends past and present — he keeps 200 period sermons in boxes in the RV — but they leave no room for middle ground — you are saved or you are not. Each service closes with an altar call.

"It's the same message men 150 years ago were preaching," he said. "That never changes."

The preacher has no patience for chaplain re-enactors who dress the part but lack the passion.

"I run across men out here who portray chaplains and have the mannerisms and the dress of a Civil War chaplain down to a 't,'" Farley said. "But when they preached, I realized they were not genuine. They were just reading a sermon that someone else preached." (RNS)

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Sex-ed curriculum for younger students spurs controversy

HELENA, Mont. — A controversy over proposed sex-ed curriculum in Helena, Mont., for students as young as kindergarten should lead parents elsewhere to be more in tune with what their schools are teaching, an expert on the topic says.

The proposal, which has drawn nationwide attention, attracted an overflow crowd at the Helena School Board Meeting on July 14, when more than 300 people attended, although the board had time to hear from only 64. It could take a vote next month on whether to approve the curriculum.

Among the more controversial elements, the proposal says kindergarteners would learn the "basic reproductive body parts (penis, vagina, breast, nipples, testicles, scrotum, uterus)" and first-graders would learn "human beings can love people of the same gender & people of another gender." Fifth-graders would learn that "sexual intercourse includes but is not limited to vaginal, oral, or anal penetration" and seventh-graders would learn about Supreme Court opinions on abortion and "reproductive health."

Chad Hills, an analyst for sexual health with CitizenLink, an arm of Focus on the Family, said parents have plenty of reasons to be upset.

"Parents are the primary teachers of sexuality to their children," Hills told Baptist Press. "This is not an issue that is without morals, without values. This issue is highly specific to families, and it's not the school's place to impart values and morals to the children. It's the parents' place to do that. The school is there to educate them in English, math. Parents should be outraged."

Parents would have the opportunity to opt out of the curriculum, but some parents say that's not sufficient.

"The school teaches one set of values," Mikal Wilkerson, a parent who attended the board meeting said. "I teach another set of values. And now the kid's stuck right at the middle. And it undermines the authority of both the parent and the teacher in the school."

A handful of organizations, Hills said, are promoting similar sex-ed program nationwide. Among them are Planned Parenthood, SIECUS (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States) and Advocates for Youth. The controversy will be "coming down the pike" in a "lot more states," he said.

Former Muslim, son of Hamas leader granted U.S. asylum

SAN DIEGO — Mosab Hassan Yousef, the eldest son of a prominent Hamas leader on the West Bank and author of a globally circulated book recounting his conversion to Christianity, has been granted asylum in the United States by an immigration judge.

In a 15-minute hearing June 30, Judge Rico Bartolomei said Yousef will be allowed to remain in the United States after he is fingerprinted and passes a routine background check. An attorney for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security told Bartolomei the government was dropping its objections to Yousef's request for asylum.

The surprise decision came after a storm of public criticism over Homeland Security's announced intention to deport Yousef back to his West Bank homeland — making him almost certain to be killed by Hamas, supporters said. His life also would be in danger for leaving Islam to follow Jesus Christ, they noted.

In his book, "Son of Hamas," Yousef, 32, recounted that he worked as a secret agent for the Israeli intelligence agency Shin Bet for more than 10 years as a way of countering violence in the Mideast that he had come to regard as senseless. In a 2008 Baptist Press article, Yousef said he became disillusioned with Hamas' lack of morality and integrity after he was incarcerated at age 18 for his leadership in a Hamas youth organization.

"It's the same message men 150 years ago were preaching. That never changes."

Alan Farley
Re-enactor's Missions
for Jesus Christ



I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.

Philemon 6