



INSIDE

Christians in the Middle East

A series describing life for believers in several Middle Eastern countries



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'Doing missions together'

Families from across U.S. converge on Shelby County for NAMB ministry

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Ask Terry Stone what she will remember most about the week Families on Mission spent at Klein Baptist Church, Harpersville, and she will talk about the children's smiles.

Stone, whose husband, Joe, serves as pastor of Klein Baptist, had joined other church members in praying for a way to reach families with children in their community, many of whom feared the strangers who knocked on their doors.

It had been more than 10 years since the Shelby Baptist Association church had held any type of Vacation Bible School (VBS), but volunteers from the association and Families on Mission made it happen. Twenty-one children attended VBS at the church in the mornings, and in the afternoons, 18 more, most of them children of local migrant workers, participated in a backyard Bible club at a local RV park.

"By the end of the week, they (the parents and children) weren't afraid (of us) anymore," Stone said. "People had loved and cared for these children that week. That was a moment Families on Mission brought us."

Missions experience

Families on Mission is a ministry of the North American Mission Board that allows family groups — children, youth and adults — to serve together in a missions experience. Each day for a week, volunteers participate in family devotions, worship, evangelism training and ministry projects in a selected area. Shelby County was one of seven sites around the country that was touched by the ministry this summer.

Susan Long, a member of First Baptist Church, Alabaster, served as project coordinator for Shelby County, along with her husband, Scott. The Longs participated in Families on Mission in Helen, Ga., in 2008 and were immediately hooked on the concept.

"Missions trips are often for youth or senior adults or couples, but we



Photo by Anne M. Decker

LENDING A HAND — Sisters Karis (left) and Qian (center) Bland, of Inverness, Fla., help a nursing home resident in Alabaster make a sock animal during the recent Families on Mission event in Shelby County. The Bland sisters and their parents were participating in their second Families on Mission trip.

were looking for an opportunity for our family to do missions together. We got that through Families on Mission," Susan Long said.

In part because of the Long family and its experience with Families on Mission, Shelby County was selected as a site in 2009 and again this year.

During the week of July 25-30, 132 people, representing more than 30 fam-

ilies from Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Missouri, Virginia, Colorado, Florida and Alabama, came to Shelby County ready to work. They participated in 16 projects at eight churches: Klein; First, Alabaster; First Baptist Church, Vincent; First Baptist Church, Columbiana; Grace Baptist Church, Montevallo; Northside Baptist Church, Cal-

era; First Baptist Church, Pelham; and Crossway Baptist Fellowship, a new church start in Pelham.

To prepare for the volunteers, Debbie Snyder, ministry development director for Shelby Association, worked with churches to develop specific ministry projects, and then she and Long worked together to (See 'Families' page 16)

Hawaii event marks 20th Baptist World Congress

More than 4,500 Baptists from 105 nations gathered for the 20th Baptist World Congress July 28-Aug. 1 in Honolulu, Hawaii. The event is held every five years and sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), which represents 219 Baptist conventions, unions and fellowships around the world with a membership of more than 37.3 million baptized believers.

Among those gathered were members of the Sanctuary Choir of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, who sang in four Congress-related events, performed in churches and shopping centers and participated in hands-on missions projects in local homeless shelters.

Speakers and Bible study leaders from around the world helped participants understand the Congress theme, "Hear the Spirit."

BWA President David Coffey told opening session participants that human efforts and creative strategies are futile apart from an anointing by God's Holy Spirit.

Coffey, former general secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, completed his five-year term at the international gathering.

"We can be a purpose-driven church. We can be a seeker-sensitive

church. We can be an emergent and creative church. We can be a justice-and-peace church. We can be a conservative Calvinist church. But if we fail to hear the Holy Spirit of the living God, then all our serving will be futile and fruitless," he said.

Baptists run the risk of having "the appointing without the anointing," Coffey warned, noting whenever Baptists choose to follow their own methods and timing rather than God's, they fail to follow the Spirit.

"The Holy Spirit is integral to the (See 'Hear,' page 3)



UPTON

COMMENT

Welcome in Your Town?

If the Hutaree wanted to build a church and headquarters building in your town, would you be concerned?

You remember the Hutaree? It is a Michigan group concerned about the end times and keeping the testimony of Jesus Christ alive. But before making a decision about its proposed church and headquarters building, you might want to consider what happened to the group March 29.

That is the date the FBI arrested eight members of the group and charged them with conspiring to overthrow the U.S. government. According to reports, the Hutaree — also known as “Christian warriors” — planned to kill a police officer. Then it planned an attack at the officer’s funeral to kill as many unsuspecting police officers as possible.

The next step was to retreat to prepared rallying points to do battle with the government.

The group does not sound like the kind of religious group most communities would welcome. Despite Baptists’ commitment to religious freedom, most Baptists might even oppose the Hutaree out of concern for the welfare of their community.

At the same time, it would be unlikely that the majority of Baptists or other Christians would oppose all Christian groups building in their community. Most would understand that it is wrong to judge a group by one member or a faith by a few extremists.

Now consider the tensions building in such different places as New York City and Murfreesboro, Tenn., over plans to build Islamic centers, including mosques, in each place.

In New York, the controversy is over plans to build a huge mosque and Islamic center one block from Ground Zero. Some who support the plan say it would be a wonderful example of the religious freedom enjoyed in America. Others say in light of recent events, the plan is inappropriate.

Appropriate to ask

“Recent events” include the Sept. 11 bombing of the World Trade Center and the nearly 3,000 deaths that resulted. Another example is the attempted car bombing in Times Square on May 1. Faisal Shahzad was arrested and has pleaded guilty to the attempted bombing. Authorities said if the bomb had been properly detonated, thousands would have been killed or maimed.

It is appropriate to ask if these events should help inform the decision about building the Islamic center at Ground Zero in the same way the Hutaree’s plans would inform a decision about that group building a church and headquarters building in your community.

On July 14, more information about the attempted bombing in Times Square came to light. A video was aired on Arab television showing Shahzad with an AK-47 rifle next to him, declar-



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

ing, “Islam will spread on the whole world and democracy will be defeated.” At least for Shahzad and his Taliban cohorts, shown with him in the video, their struggle with the West is not about religious freedom, as we understand it. Their struggle is about the overthrow of democracy.

Religious freedom affirms the right of an individual to worship God as he or she pleases without interference from government. But religious freedom does not give an individual, a group or a religious faith the right to impose a value system on others. That is totalitarian, even if done in the name of a religion.

Religious freedom values the rights of the individual. So does democracy. Totalitarianism degrades personal liberties and imposes, instead, the needs of the regime.

A question of democracy

Historically both Christianity and Islam have much to repent of considering how both used the sword to advance their respective faiths. Today the situation is different. In most majority-Christian countries, democracy is the prevailing style of government and the value of individual rights is evidenced in religious liberty. Where in majority-Islamic countries is the right of the individual celebrated or democracy openly practiced or religious freedom evidenced by the unhindered practice of Christianity?

That brings us to Murfreesboro. The Rutherford County Planning Commission is under fire for allowing construction of an Islamic center on ground previously zoned for religious purposes. Again those approving the action say it is a matter of religious freedom, a value Baptists uphold.

Dusty Ray, pastor of Heartland Baptist Church, disagrees. “My main concern is that our freedoms are being threatened,” he said in a recent newspaper article. “The principles of the Islamic nation do not coincide at all with our Constitution ... so there’s a huge concern here.”

In both New York and Murfreesboro, the political standoff is hot, just as it would be in your town if the Hutaree wanted to build a church and headquarters building. Religious freedom appears to be in controversy with concern for the community and nation.

One can only wonder if the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony felt similarly toward Roger Williams and the other early Baptists.

Again one cannot judge Islam by the actions of Shahzad or even the Sept. 11 terrorists. But it is appropriate to examine the values the faith adheres to today in places where Islam is predominant. And it is appropriate to see if the teaching of a group threatens the well-being of the community or nation whether that group has a Christian heritage, such as the Hutaree, or is of some other faith.

The United States has a long and proud history of protecting itself from enemies of democracy and those who would destroy our government and that determination must continue.

Learning to live together

Ultimately Christians and Muslims must learn to live together in constructive ways. Together the two faith groups make up over half the world’s population. How they will learn to live together is still an open question, but it will have to involve religious freedom for all and respect for differing views and practices.

In the meantime, maybe those caught in the turbulence of disagreement on this issue can learn to appreciate those driven by religious freedom as well as those driven by passion for the well-being of the community.



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

(ISSN 0738-7741; USPS 011-080)

© The Alabama Baptist, Inc.

is published weekly except for one week in July and December by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 1-800-803-5201. Fax: 205-870-8957. Web site: www.thealabamabaptist.org E-mail: news@thealabamabaptist.org or circulation@thealabamabaptist.org. Periodicals postage paid at Birmingham, Ala., and other locations.

Subscription Rates:

Church Budget — \$12.50 (plus tax)

Individual — \$19.95 (plus tax; Web and credit card, no tax)

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NEWS SERVICES: Baptist Press (BP), Associated Baptist Press (ABP), Religion News Service (RNS), Compass Direct (CD), Evangelical Press (EP), Forum 18 (F18).

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Alabama Baptist, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209.

ADDRESS CHANGE: Send old and new addresses, and name of church to Circulation Department, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Allow two weeks.

Someone You Should Know

By Christine Kapurch, Correspondent, TAB

Edith Snider

Fellowship Baptist Church, Reform Pickens Baptist Association

FAVORITE BIBLE VERSE: John 3:16
FAVORITE HYMN: "How Great Thou Art"
HOBBIES: Crocheting and quilting
FAMILY STATUS: Widowed after 56 years of marriage to Elton; one daughter, Edith; and two grandsons



SNIDER

Edith Snider grew up right next-door to her church, and since her husband was in the Navy, she spent her married life traveling the world teaching Sunday School and Vacation Bible School to children of all ages.

Q: How did you come to know the Lord?

A: I just knew I needed to be saved and was ... at a revival at my church.

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

A: I have been teaching Sunday School for many years. I love my Sunday School class. I have one little boy who will help me from the second to first floor every Sunday. ... I was also secretary and treasurer of the church many years ago. I was always there if there was anything I could do.

Q: What have you gotten from those ministries?

A: It's a peace of mind to think that you are trying to do what the Lord wants you to do. I think He wants us to work for Him.

Q: How have churches changed over the years?

A: People are not going to church like they used to. Church is very important to me; I feel like you need to be there and He doesn't want us to sit down and do nothing.

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

A: I feel like the Lord expects me to work and to know about His work. I will continue to teach Sunday School for as long as I live.

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

A: I don't know how people can live without being a Christian. I love the Lord with all my heart, and I love my Christian children.



Photo courtesy of Robin Wilhelm

SING PRAISE — Robin Wilhelm, a member of the Sanctuary Choir of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, sings during the Baptist World Congress in Hawaii. The other Southern Baptist choir to perform was the Chamber Corale of Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

'Hear the Spirit'

Baptists reminded that without Holy Spirit ministry is useless

(continued from page 1)

birth, the identity and the missions ministry of Jesus," he observed. "So why is it we so often choose to go it alone?"

Pablo Deiros, president of International Baptist Theological Seminary in Buenos Aires, Argentina, told participants, "As Baptists, we need to realize the proclamation of the good news is the central task of the church. There is no church without this proclamation. And there is no other mission for the church than to proclaim Jesus as Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit."

Christians take their mandate from the testimony of Jesus recorded in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of Luke, Deiros said, quoting, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me because He has anointed me to preach good news, ... He has sent me to proclaim freedom."

"As witnesses today around the world, we need to recover this confidence," Deiros said. "We need to grow in the conviction that we are not representing ourselves before the world but we are facing the world in the name of Christ the Lord and with His authority and power (through the Spirit)."

Lance Watson, pastor of Saint Paul's Baptist Church, Richmond, Va., declared, "It is the business and mission of the church to make a difference in the world." He urged Baptists to step down into the "deep valleys of human need, rolling up your sleeves, signing up for service, getting off your seat, standing on your feet ... getting involved with hurting humans."

But the Christian needs to draw on the power of the Holy Spirit in order to perform such tasks, Watson said.

"(If you) try to visit the sick or serve the poor on your strength alone, you can't do it," he said. "You can't serve God, sing to God, sacrifice to God, please God, walk with God, praise God or preach God without God."

Other major speakers included Alongla Aier, co-founder of Oriental Theological Seminary in Dimapur, India; Janet Clark, vice president and academic dean of Tyndale Univer-

sity College & Seminary in Toronto; Ngwedla Paul Msiza, president of the All Africa Baptist Fellowship; Allan Demond, senior pastor of NewHope Baptist Church in Melbourne, Australia; and Karl Johnson, general secretary of the Jamaica Baptist Union.

In addition, Bible studies were offered in nine Asian and European languages. Focus groups considered a wide array of theological, social and ethical issues, including pastoral leadership, worship, Christian-Muslim relationships, human trafficking and the environment.

Back to the basics

During the final session, participants accepted a report asking them to

- ▶ spread the truth of God in Jesus Christ as the hope of the world,
- ▶ develop greater familiarity with the teachings of Christ,
- ▶ cultivate a rich prayer life,
- ▶ bear witness to the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ and
- ▶ provide examples of godly living reflecting the values taught by the Lord of the church.

Those present also agreed to support the

values reflected in the U.N. Millennium Development Goals, including helping remove "the scourge of poverty and hunger," supporting efforts to provide universal education and working for environmental sustainability.

John Upton, executive director of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, was elected BWA president. Upton served as a Southern Baptist Convention representative to Taiwan and a Virginia Baptist pastor before accepting a position with the state convention. He will serve through the 2015 Congress scheduled for July in Durban, South Africa.

BWA officials lamented the fact that more than 1,000 people who registered for this year's Congress were unable to attend because they were denied visas by the U.S. government.

Neville Callam, BWA general secretary, acknowledged nations' desire to protect themselves but added, "It is difficult when general secretaries and presidents (of national Baptist conventions and unions) have saved to come to a conference and they are denied a visa."

Callam said other global Christian bodies also have been impacted by American visa denials. (TAB)



Photo courtesy of BWA



IRAQ

Christians in the Middle East

THE BELIEVER IN IRAQ HAS TO BE CAREFUL WHEN HE OR SHE SPEAKS AND TO WHOM HE OR SHE SPEAKS. BECAUSE THERE HAS BEEN A RELIGIOUS CLEANSING IN IRAQ BY RADICAL MUSLIM GROUPS AFFILIATED WITH AL-QAIDA TO GET RID OF CHRISTIANITY, A CHRISTIAN FACES THE THREAT OF KIDNAPPING AND ASSASSINATION EVERY TIME HE OR SHE LEAVES HOME. WHEN HE OR SHE IS IN CHURCH, THE CHURCH FACES THE THREAT OF BEING ATTACKED BY AL-QAIDA AND SUNNI AND SHIITE ROGUE MILITANT GROUPS.

Believers face challenges, rejection, understand the cost

By Elijah Abraham
and Nabeeh Abbassi
Special to The Alabama Baptist

The Lord is doing a mighty and miraculous work in Iraq.

To give a background of the church and its environment in Iraq, we must look at how the church existed for centuries and the challenges for its existence. The church in Iraq goes back to the second century. It was a center for learning theology and the preservation of biblical manuscripts. With the Roman Empire's acceptance of Christianity in the fourth century, the church in Iraq became stagnant and aligned with Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. These churches survived the Islamic invasion in the seventh century and exist under Islam's rule to this day. The church did not shine its light in Iraq because of Islamic law

(Shariah) and society's mockery of Christians.

Most Christians in Iraq have preserved the Aramaic language, which was the language of Jesus. After so many centuries, the Lord remembered Iraq and its church in 2003. Since the fall of President Saddam Hussein, both nominal Christians and Muslims have turned their hearts to the Lord. The Lord has turned a violent and horrible period of Iraq's history into good for His glory.

Life of a believer

Most Christians I encounter in the West ask me what a born-again believer's life is like in Iraq. It is a good question, considering that all we see and hear about Iraq is jihad, bombs, kidnappings, war, refugees and a country that lies in ruins. There are two kinds of believers in Iraq: those who came

from Eastern Orthodoxy and those who came from Muslim faith. They both face similar challenges such as rejection by their families for believing in Christ as the only Way. The convert from Islam to Christianity faces even greater persecution. According to Islamic law, for a Muslim to leave Islam is punishable by death not only by his or her family but any Muslim. He or she could also face insults, mockery and lose his or her job or even his or her life. Since 2003, many believers have lost their lives because they converted from Islam. Their blood has not been forgotten by the Lord and is a testimony to others and strength for those who are following in their footsteps.

Being a believer in Iraq is not just a religious affiliation, church membership and status. It is a way of life. It is a life of commitment to death because Christ challenged

believers that if they are not willing to carry their cross and follow after Him, then they are not worthy of Him. They truly understand the cost of being a disciple.

The believer in Iraq has to be careful when he or she speaks and to whom he or she speaks. Because there has been a religious cleansing in Iraq by radical Muslim groups affiliated with al-Qaida to get rid of Christi-



anity, a Christian faces the threat of kidnaping and assassination every time he or she leaves home. When he or she is in church, the church faces the threat of being attacked by al-Qaida and Sunni and Shiite rogue militant groups. Christian women and girls face kidnaping for ransom. There have been many who have suffered such a fate. Such acts of violence have forced many Christians to leave Iraq, and many have suffered emotional trauma. Many, if not all, of the Christians and the rest of the Iraqi population need counseling because of the violence that Iraq has gone through since 1980, when the eight-year Iran-Iraq War began.

Yet believers have constant joy and peace in Christ. They even do outreach to the community to help those in need. They help orphans, those in prison, youth, widows and those who persecute them. They truly walk through the shadow of death without fear, because they know the Lord is with them. Believers in Iraq encourage one another and live as a community taking care of one another.

It is very clear that God is at work in Iraq in mighty and miraculous ways. He is opening the hearts and minds of people we never thought would be open to the gospel. Many Christians from the middle and southern part of Iraq have migrated to the northern part of Iraq to live among the Kurdish people. God also has revealed Himself to the Kurds, and many have received Him as Savior. The church among the Kurds is growing by the witness of Kurdish believers and their Iraqi brothers and sisters who have migrated to the north, reading the Word of God in Kurdish and missions work of Arabs and Westerners. Iraqi churches caught the vision from the Lord that the Kurds are ready for the gospel, and they responded by planting churches in the Kurdish region.

The Kurds are either Muslims or Yazeedies (devil worshipers). We have met some of these former devil worshipers in northern Iraq who are now ministers of the gospel. There is surely nothing impossible for God. The Lord is pouring out His Spirit on Iraq, and He is using technology such as Christian Internet sites and satellite channels, the "JESUS" film, Bible distribution, dreams and Iraqi Christians.

Taking the next step

There is no doubt the Christian work in Iraq is hard and sometimes dangerous. But believers in Iraq say, "We are no longer afraid of the bombs and the violence. We walk with the Lord, and He is our refuge and strength and has called us to reach our people." What a testimony of God working through His Word and Spirit in the lives of believers in the midst of death and destruction. Surely they are following in the footsteps of our church fathers who persevered to preach the gospel as they walked through the valley of death.

Ministries from Jordan and Lebanon and other partners have been working closely together to help these believers face the challenges. One of these believers' greatest needs is theological education. Our concern is to help the church in Iraq start with good

sound biblical doctrine. To achieve that, there are many steps that we can help them take:

The first step is unity and cooperation among pastors and churches. These days in Iraq, they cannot afford to be competitive and be lone rangers.

Train the leadership and their congregations theologically and missiologically.

Help them to cast a vision for their churches and communities.

Empower them to implement goals to achieve the vision the Lord has given them.

Train pastors' wives to be leaders and role models for other women.

Advocate for the Iraqi church by partnering with the global body of Christ.

The global church can help the Iraqi church by praying; providing financial support for pastors, ministries, projects and church planting; and supplying tools for evangelism.

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Iraq

EDITOR'S NOTE — *Elijah Abraham is the founder and director of Living Oasis Ministries. He is an Iraqi believer who converted to Christianity after being raised a Muslim. Nabeeh Abbassi is the former president of the Jordan Baptist Convention.*



Photos courtesy of Nabeeh Abbassi

DANGEROUS BELIEF — Believers in Iraq, like the one being baptized, face challenges including rejection, mockery and even death for believing in Christ as the only Way. They are challenged to walk through the shadow of death without fear, knowing that the Lord is with them.

Across Alabama's Associations

BALDWIN

► The sanctuary choir of **First Church, Bay Minette**, will lead in a night of praise called "Doxology" Aug. 22, 6 p.m. For information call 251-937-9536. Garnett "Chip" Starnes III is pastor.

BESSEMER

► **CrossBridge Community Church, Helena**, will hold a movie event for youth and college students Aug. 20-21, 6:30 p.m. To Save a Life will be shown. The movie is not recommended for students under the age of 12. There will be a separate children's event during the Aug. 21 showing for those under 12. Space is limited. To RSVP e-mail events.cbcc@gmail.com with a contact name, number and which showing you will attend. For information visit www.crossbridgehelena.com. Morrell Aldridge is pastor.

BIBB

► **Schultz Creek Church, River Bend**, will celebrate homecoming Aug. 15, 10:30 a.m. Henry Cox will speak. Lunch will follow. Cross Roads will provide special music during the service and following lunch. The church also will hold revival Aug. 16-18, nightly at 7, with Evangelist Darell Ham-maker. Paul Davis is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► Members and friends of the former **Belcher Memorial Church, West End**, will celebrate their annual homecoming Aug. 21, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., at Eastern Valley Community Center. ► **First Church, Chalkville**, will host The Harvesters Quartet in concert Aug. 15, 3 p.m. Joel Farrow is pastor. ► **East Gardendale Church** will continue August Alive! Aug. 18, 6 p.m., with Evangelist Bob Pitman. To the End will provide special music. A nursery will be provided. For information call 205-608-0889. Allen Davis is pastor.

COFFEE

► **Damascus Church, Elba**, will hold revival Aug. 22-25 with Tommy Green, pastor of Oakey Ridge Church, Andalusia. Services will be Sunday at 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. There will be special music each night. For information call Pastor Hubert McWaters at 334-347-2198. ► **New Haven Church, Elba**, will celebrate homecoming Aug. 22, 10 a.m. Former Pastor Charlie Shields will speak. Joe Ward will lead the music. Lunch will follow. For information call Pastor Gary Dunn at 334-897-8245.

COLBERT-LAUDERDALE

► **Grace Life Church of the Shoals, Muscle Shoals**, will hold a fall outreach with Ed Lacy called From Darkness to Light Aug. 29-

Sept. 1. On Sunday, small group Bible study will be at 9 a.m. and services at 10:30 a.m. and 6:15 p.m. On Monday, the service will be at 7 p.m. On Wednesday, there will be a student pizza supper from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. with the service at 7 p.m. On Wednesday, there will be a Swamp John's supper from 5 to 6:30 p.m. with the service at 7 p.m. For information visit www.gracelifeshoals.org. Jeff Noblit is pastor.

COLUMBIA

► **Mount Enon Church, Dothan**, will hold revival Aug. 15-18 with Bill Harrell. Bruce Spivey will lead the music. Services will be Sunday at 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. For information call 334-677-5340. Jerry Hood is pastor.

GENEVA

► **New Hinson Church, Slocomb**, will hold its third annual tailgate party Aug. 29, 5 p.m. The outreach event is for local high school football teams, bands and cheerleaders as well as a kickoff to the football season. There will be food. Former University of Alabama football player Mickey Andrews will speak. He played for Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant when the team won two national championships. Andrews recently retired as associate head coach and defensive coordinator at Florida State University (FSU). Clint Purvis, the FSU team chaplain for football and baseball also will be in attendance. Teddy Ward is interim pastor.

MADISON

► **Liberty Church, Huntsville**, will hold a benefit singing for the Watson family Aug. 13, 7 p.m., with the Joymen Quartet, Millie Bonham and other local talent. Kenneth Mitchell is pastor.

MARSHALL

► **Second Church, Boaz**, will hold a red book singing/congregational singing from the church hymnal Aug. 21, 6:30 p.m. Jimmy Harrison is pastor.

MOBILE

► **First Church, Irvington**, will celebrate homecoming Aug. 22, 11 a.m., with Thomas Wright, executive director for Mobile Association. The Heartmen Quartet will sing. A covered-dish lunch will follow. The quartet also will sing at 1 p.m. Ron Griffin is pastor.

MORGAN

► **East Highland Church, Hartselle**, will hold revival Aug. 22-25 with Evangelist Phil Glisson, of Memphis, Tenn. Services will be Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Walter Blackman is pastor.

MUD CREEK

► **Union Hill Church, Besse-**

mer, will hold its annual pep rally to kick off the high school football season Aug. 25, 6:30 p.m., with former University of Alabama football player Bobby Humphrey. Football players, coaches, cheerleaders and band members are invited to attend. Mickey Bell is pastor.

SHELBY

► **Grace Church, Montevallo**, will celebrate homecoming Aug. 15. Royal Masters quartet will sing at 9:45 a.m. Former church member Nathan Moore, of Louisville, Ky., will speak at 11 a.m. Lunch will follow. Greg Walker is pastor.

SIPSEY

► **Macedonia Church, Northport**, will hold revival Aug. 18-20, nightly at 7, with Ben Carrol and Ben Carrol Jr. Ralph Rice is pastor. ► **Sipsey Association** will hold the youth program, "Fun in the SON," Aug. 28, 11 a.m., at the Sipsey Arena. Scott and Karen Jones are youth directors. Max Stripling is director of missions.

ST. CLAIR

► **Macedonia Church #2, Ragland**, will hold revival Aug. 16-20, nightly at 7, with Ken Maddox, pastor of Argo Church, Trussville. Archie Maddox is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► The Catching Kids Puppet Ministry of **Northridge Church, Northport**, will host a training workshop Aug. 21, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. The puppet ministry also will present "Join the Hall of Faith" Aug. 22, 6 p.m. The children's choir will sing. For information call 205-657-1266. Brad Smith is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **First Church, Reeltown**, in Notasulga, will celebrate homecoming Aug. 15. The Seekers will sing at 10 a.m. A covered-dish lunch will follow at noon. Don Johnson will speak at 1:30 p.m. The church also will host a back to school water party sponsored by UBC (United Between Churches) Aug. 15, 2-4 p.m., for 4th-6th graders. There will be activities and food. Ross Kilpatrick is pastor.

WALKER

► **First Church, Oakman**, will celebrate its 125th anniversary Aug. 15, 10 a.m. Former Pastor Randy Johnson will speak. There will be a reading of the church history, video presentation and recognition of former pastors, music ministers and members. Patrick Welch, a church member who recently returned from a missions trip to Guatemala, also will be recognized. Lunch will follow. Bill Phillips is pastor.

World of Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Five Pakistani Christians killed while exiting church

SUKKUR, Pakistan — A dozen masked men shot five Christians to death as they came out of their church building in Sukkur on July 15, two months after a banned Islamic extremist group sent church leaders a threatening letter, relatives said. Pastor Aaron John and church members Rohail Bhatti, Salman John, Abid Gill and Shamin Mall of Full Gospel Church were leaving the church building after meeting to discuss security in light of threats they had received, said the pastor's son, Shahid John.

"As we came out of the church, a group of a dozen armed gunmen came and opened fire at us," said Shahid John, who survived a bullet in his arm. Besides Shahid John, five others were wounded in the attack.

In May church leaders received a letter from Islamic extremist group Sip-e-Sahaba (formerly Sipah-e-Sahaba until it was banned) warning the Christians to leave the area, said Kiran Rohail, wife of the slain Rohail Bhatti. Sip-e-Sahaba and Sunni Tehrik extremist groups are both linked with an area Islamic school whose students had been threatening the church since 2008, Christian sources said.

The masked gunmen of July 15 had young physiques like those of students, Christian sources said, and their manner of attack indicated they were trained extremists. The students that have threatened the church since 2008 belong to the Sunni Tehrik extremist group, the sources said.

Pastor John and Bhatti had reported the threats of the past two years to police, but officers at the local station did not take them seriously, relatives said. Police also declined to register a First Information Report when church leaders reported the threatening letter of May.

An independent government source confirmed the shooting deaths of the Christians, adding that local Islamist pressure had prevented media from reporting on it.

Pastor in Russian republic of Dagestan shot to death

MAKHACHKALA, Dagestan — A pastor in the Russian republic of Dagestan known for founding the biggest Protestant church in the region and for successfully reaching out to Muslims has been killed by unidentified gunmen, local authorities have confirmed.

Artur Suleimanov, 49, pastor of Hosanna Christian Church in Makhachkala, the capital of Dagestan, was shot on the evening of July 15 while leaving his church building. The identity of the shooters remains unclear, but in the weeks leading up to the killing Dagestan media broadcast calls for people to take measures against Suleimanov because he was too "active" and converted ethnic Muslims.

According to a letter Suleimanov wrote several years ago, 80 percent of the congregation is made up of former Muslims. The church distributes food and other aid to residents of the poverty-ridden country.

His death follows the shooting of Orthodox priest Daniil Sisev of St. Thomas Church in Moscow last November; a Muslim group claimed responsibility for the slaying. Suleimanov is survived by his wife, Zina, and five children.

Pentecostal churches in Belarus hit with large fines

MINSK, Belarus — New Life Pentecostal Church in Belarus' capital Minsk had a massive fine imposed on it July 29 for alleged "environmental damage."

Added to an earlier fine, the two fines and "compensation" total \$89,300.

Sergei Lukanin, the church's lawyer, said the church will pay neither fine, arguing that if there is any pollution at the site it dates from the time before the church owned the property.

He insisted that the church has kept the building and site in good order.

A city environmental official claimed in an official report on the church before the fines that grass growing for a children's playground damaged the environment.

Meanwhile two small Pentecostal churches in villages near Minsk have been fined for using the properties they own for worship. Officials claim the properties are registered for domestic use and therefore worship is illegal.

The small congregations will struggle to pay these fines, a church member said.

"The fear is that officials could do this again — the mechanism is there," the church member said.



Plugging in to churches 'crucial' for college students

By Katie Wood
The Alabama Baptist

In an age of social media when information is available at lightning speed, one would think plugging in to a Baptist ministry in a college town would be a simple click away.

But finding a church requires more than just visiting Facebook or Twitter pages. Even though it can be scary and overwhelming, college students have to visit churches.

And do it soon, college ministers and students advise.

Courtney Strickland, a student at Auburn University, visited three churches before settling on Lakeview Baptist Church, Auburn. So why that one?

"The church has an adopt-a-college-student program that gets the student plugged in to a family during their time there away from their family," she said.

Strickland added while it may be hard, "don't choose a church just because your friends go there."

"Find somewhere you can serve and where you feel that God wants you," she said.

After all, service is the next step, according to Tim Simpson, college pastor of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa.

"I think when [students] start serving and getting to know adults (in the church) is when they begin to really feel like a part of the church," he said.

For Robert Sharpe, a University of Alabama (UA) student, it was the opportunity to serve and even lead at Hopewell Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, that appealed to him.

Maturing as a Christian

When he first started going there, the college and young adult ministry was "almost nonexistent." So Sharpe has spent the past three years building the ministry from the ground up. The experience has helped him "mature as a follower of Christ."

"As mature as I thought I was when I first began college, I quickly learned that God

had so many more blessings in store for me once I took my faith into my own hands and began to understand the eternal significance of our time here on earth," he said.

And having a strong faith is crucial while in college, said Laura Reeves Wilder, a student at the University of Montevallo.

Handling the challenges

"You are meeting new people with different beliefs and perspectives, and you are in classes where some professors will challenge your faith," she said. "Belonging to a body of believers who can encourage you on a regular basis is crucial to a strong relationship with Christ amidst daily interaction with nonbelievers."

One way for students to grow spiritually is to join a small group.

"There is no better and easier way to get involved," said Bret Waldrep, who found a freshman Bible study at Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, his first week on UA's campus.

"[Small] groups helped me to get involved in other areas and are a great way to meet people," he added.

An on-campus ministry is another way to "build relationships with your peers," Wilder said.

"It is also a great place to invite nonbelieving friends, whereas church may be intimidating," she added.

But Trace Hamiter, minister to college students at First Baptist Church, Opelika, cautions students not to replace church with a campus ministry.

"Students who left college only being plugged in to a campus ministry do not know how to get plugged in to a church when they get out in to the real world," he said.

Curtis Black, student minister at Lakeview Baptist, agreed that there is nothing like a church.

A church makes "a commitment" to the student and spends four years equipping him or her to live selflessly for Christ, he said.

For more suggestions, visit www.thealabamabaptist.org and *The Alabama Baptist* Facebook page.

"Belonging to a body of believers who can encourage you on a regular basis is crucial to a strong relationship with Christ."

Laura Reeves Wilder
University of Montevallo student

How to reach college students

By Kristen Padilla
The Alabama Baptist

Have you heard the statistics?

More than two-thirds of young adults — ages 18 to 22 — who attended a Protestant church for at least a year in high school will stop regularly attending a church once they move to college or in to the workforce, according to a 2007 LifeWay Research study.

Not only is the church dropout rate among college students high but there is also a large unchurched, non-Christian population on college campuses.

Chad Cossiboom, university minister of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, believes churches should see college students as an unreached people group and college campuses as missions fields.

"We need to ask ourselves: How do we reach college students with the gospel? How do we reach these campuses?" Cossiboom asked.

Kevin Johnson, associate pastor/college students of First Baptist Church, Florence, said churches in college towns must become visible on campus, make contact with students and use a variety of means to plug students in to their ministry.

"The biggest thing is trying to make that touch with them as soon as they get on campus, and [the sooner] you get in touch with them, the sooner you get in touch with their faith," said Johnson, whose church is located in the same town as the University of North Alabama. "Put forth the best effort you can and the best product you can so that they realize that Christianity is applicable to their lives."

"So many times, college students think they can take four years off from Christianity, and one of our jobs is to keep the flame burning while they are in college," he added.

Contact is the key to reversing the dropout trend, according to Brad Waggoner, vice president of LifeWay's B&H Publishing Group.

"Frequent and intentional contact can either prevent or counter-

(See 'Connecting,' page 11)



Baptist Campus Ministries events

On Alabama college and university campuses this fall, Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) will welcome new and returning students with events designed to intentionally engage them in a life-changing ministry experience. BCM is a ministry of the State Board of Missions of the Alabama Baptist Convention and local Baptist associations and is made possible by gifts from Alabama Baptist churches through the Cooperative Program. For more information, visit www.thestudenthub.org.

Alabama A&M University

- ♦Aug. 14: Church festival on the campus quad, 5 p.m.

Auburn Montgomery

- ♦Aug. 16: Coke booth on the quad, 10:30 a.m.–2 p.m.
Bowling, Brunswick Lanes, 8 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 17: Coke booth on the quad, 10:30 a.m.–2 p.m.
Capture the flag, Baptist Student Center, 9 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 18: Free cookout and cokes on the quad, 11:30 a.m.–2 p.m.
Broom hockey, Eastdale Mall, 9 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 19: Free pizza, Baptist Student Center, 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.
The Amazing Race (scavenger hunt), 8 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 23: RESONATE (worship), Baptist Student Center, 8 p.m.

Auburn University

- ♦Aug. 16: “The Big Supper Road Trip” (meet at the BCM at 5:30 p.m. to carpool)
- ♦Aug. 17: Coffeehouse and worship, 8 p.m., BCM
- ♦Aug. 18: 1st Wednesday Lunches, noon and 1 p.m., free lunch at the BCM. Weekly lunch devotion begins at school of veterinary medicine (noon)
- ♦Aug. 19: Freshmen Insight kickoff, 7 p.m., BCM (freshmen Bible study and fellowship)
- ♦Aug. 19: Global Café, 7 p.m., BCM (International student ministry)
- ♦Aug. 20: Girls’ and guys’ night out (meet at BCM, 6 p.m.)
- ♦Aug. 21: Field Day Mania, Kiwanis Park, 2 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 22: Worship in local churches
- ♦Aug. 23: King’s Acres local outreach ministry (meet at BCM, 3 p.m.)
- ♦Aug. 24: 1st Tuesday discipleship life groups, 6 p.m., BCM, 1st fall BCM worship, 8 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 27–28: BCM fall retreat (for sign-up details check out our Facebook group Auburn BCM or call 334-887-6521)
- ♦Aug. 29: Worship in local churches
- ♦Aug. 30–Sept. 2: Concourse outreach on AU campus

Bishop State Community College — Main Campus

- ♦Aug. 15: Campus prayer journey, 2 p.m., meet at the Baptist Student Center, 5904 Old Shell Road, pray on three local campuses
- ♦Aug. 16: Grillin’ and Chillin’, 11 a.m.–1:30 p.m., free food, live music, Food for the Soul on the lawn beside the library
- ♦Aug. 23: Monday Middy, 11:30 a.m. and 12:20 p.m., Delchamps Student Center Cafeteria

Jacksonville State University

- ♦Aug. 23: Survival for freshmen and transfer students, 1–4 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 25: Free pancake breakfast — first day of classes, 8–11 a.m.
- ♦Aug. 26: Welcome party, 8 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 27–28: Back to School Retreat, Friday and Saturday, cost: \$25 – Camp WorldSong
- ♦Aug. 31: Every Tuesday, 8 p.m., Celebration, weekly student worship, Baptist Student Center
- ♦Sept. 1: Agape Lunch every Wednesday from 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., Baptist Student Center

Samford University

- ♦Aug. 27: Freshmen move in
- ♦Aug. 28: Church Connections and upperclassmen move in
- ♦Aug. 29: Connections Worship
- ♦Aug. 30–Sept. 4: Welcome Back Week
- ♦Aug. 31: University convocation and Shiloh Worship
- ♦Sept. 2: Chapel service
- ♦Sept. 3–4: New student retreat

Shelton State Community College

- ♦Aug. 24: BCM Breakfast On the Run — grab free breakfast on your way to class, 8–10 a.m. in the Atrium (or until supplies last). Discovery begins — join us each week for contemporary worship and biblically relevant teaching, 7 p.m., BCM Student Center, 401 University Blvd
- ♦Aug. 31: Shelton Get on Board Days — learn more about BCM
- ♦Sept. 7: Tuesday lunch begins — stop by Room 2410 from 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. each week for free lunch and Bible study

Southern Union Community College/Opelika

- ♦Aug. 12–13: Welcome to Southern Union-Opelika! Fellowship with new students, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 14: War Eagle Game Night/ Fellowship, 7 p.m., with Auburn BCM
- ♦Aug. 15: Worship in local churches
- ♦Aug. 16: BCM fellowship/ discipleship groups (10 a.m.–2 p.m.), SUCC campus
- ♦Aug. 16: “The Big Supper Road Trip” (meet at the Auburn BCM

- 5:30 p.m. to carpool)
- ♦Aug. 16–20: Campuswide outreach on Southern Union-Opelika Campus
- ♦Aug. 17: Coffeehouse and worship, 8 p.m. with the Auburn BCM
- ♦Aug. 18: Noon and 1 p.m., free lunch at the Auburn BCM
- ♦Aug. 19: BCM fellowship/ discipleship groups (10 a.m.–2 p.m.), SUCC campus
- ♦Aug. 19: Freshmen Insight 7 p.m. (freshmen Bible study and fellowship), Auburn BCM
- ♦Aug. 20: Girls’ and guys’ night out (meet at Auburn BCM, 6 p.m.)
- ♦Aug. 21: Field Day Mania, Kiwanis Park, 2 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 22: Worship in local churches
- ♦Aug. 23: King’s Acres local outreach ministry (meet at Auburn BCM, 3 p.m.)
- ♦Aug. 24: Discipleship life groups, 6 p.m., Auburn BCM collegiate worship
- ♦Aug. 27–28: BCM fall retreat
- ♦Aug. 29: Worship in local churches

Spring Hill College

- ♦Aug. 15: Campus prayer journey, meet at USA Baptist Student Center, 2 p.m.
- ♦Sept. 1: Small group Bible study, for information contact shughes@alsbom.org

Troy University

- ♦Aug. 9: Survival 2010 for freshmen and transfer students, 6 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 10: Concert and cookout in the amphitheater, 8 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 11: Weekly lunch is served by local churches, free your first week, 11 a.m.–noon
- ♦Aug. 12: Broom hockey, Eastdale Mall, Montgomery, \$5 includes hockey and pizza, meet at Baptist Student Center, 7:45 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 13: All Nations Church meets at BCM for meal, worship and Bible study, 6 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 16: Discipleship/family groups, freshmen meet at the BCM, 7 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 17: Alpha Omega, weekly praise and worship, Baptist Student Center, 8 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 27–29: Beach retreat, Panama City Beach, \$50 includes lodging and four meals

University of Alabama

- ♦Aug. 15: UA Plaza Live — student organizations welcome students to the university, 7 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 16: Survival — freshmen and transfer students join this party for help adjusting to life at Bama. \$5 covers everything (including a T-shirt), Baptist Student Center, 6:45 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 17: BCM house party, 7 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 18: Steak lunch, Baptist Student Center, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 19: Ice cream and church, 7 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 20–21: Back-to-School Retreat, weekend of fun, worship and Bible study, \$15
- ♦Aug. 23: Journey groups begin. Freshmen groups meet at the BCM at 7 p.m. on Mondays. Upperclassmen groups meet on campus, 7 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 24: Discovery begins — contemporary worship and biblically relevant teaching, 7 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 25: Wednesday lunch, Baptist Student Center, 11:30 a.m. Get on Board Day on the quad. Church road trip — visit five different area Baptist churches during this free progressive dinner, 5 p.m.

University of Alabama at Birmingham

- ♦Aug. 15: Move upperclassmen into dorms
- ♦Aug. 16: Welcome party at Baptist Student Center, 7 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 17: Baptist Medical and Dental fellowship, Volker Hall, noon
- ♦Aug. 19: Weekly worship service, 8:30 p.m., Baptist Student Center
- ♦Aug. 20: Bible Study for Chinese students, 7 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 20–21: Welcome retreat at Camp WorldSong
- ♦Aug. 24: First freshman Bible study, Baptist Student Center, 8:30 p.m.
- ♦Sept. 13: Conversational English classes for international students, Baptist Student Center, 9:30 a.m.–noon

University of Alabama at Huntsville

- ♦Aug. 14: Dorm move-in, 8 a.m., CCRH and NCRH
- ♦Aug. 16: Muffin and drink handout, 8 a.m.–until, outside the UC
- ♦Aug. 17: Celebration (weekly worship), 8:30 p.m., Baptist Student Center
- ♦Aug. 19: Free lunch, noon, Baptist Student Center
- ♦Aug. 20: Video/game night, 7 p.m., Baptist Student Center

University of Montevallo

- ♦Aug. 28: “The Start Off” church progressive dinner, 5 p.m., register by Aug. 20 and get a free gift
- ♦Aug. 29: The Welcome Back Bash, Baptist Student Center, 7 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 30: Cookout and frisbee, Orr Park, 5–7 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 31: “Resonate” (worship), Baptist Student Center, 8 p.m.
- ♦Sept. 1: Café Escape (lunch), Baptist Student Center, 11:15 a.m.–1 p.m., \$2
- ♦Sept. 2: Late night movie on the patio, Baptist Student Center, 10 p.m.
- ♦Sept. 3: “Man Trip,” meet at the Baptist Student Center, 5 p.m. B.F.C. “Ladies Night” meet at

- the Baptist Student Center, 5 p.m.
- ♦Sept. 6: O.F.F. “Operation Fresh Families”
- ♦Sept. 7: “Resonate” weekly worship, church fair ice cream social, 8 p.m.

University of North Alabama

- ♦Aug. 21: Dorm move-in day
- ♦Aug. 25: First noonday lunch, Baptist Student Center, 11 a.m.–12:45 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 27: Cookout on campus, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 30: Progressive dinner with local churches, 5:30–8:30 p.m.

University of South Alabama

- ♦Aug. 15: Campus prayer journey, Baptist Student Center, 2 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 21: Freshmen move-in day, Epsilon dorms, 9 a.m., JagFest campus fair, 5 p.m., free giant pretzels
- ♦Aug. 22: Beat the Heat, USA Rec Fields, 2 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 23: BCM open house, Baptist Student Center, 5904 Old Shell Road, 8 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 24: MERGE Worship kickoff, Baptist Student Center, 7 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 25: The Café, \$5 home cooked meal, guest speaker and “Surviving & Thriving Spiritually in College,” Baptist Student Center, 12:15 p.m. and 1:15 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 26: Outdoor Living Room, USA Student Center, 11 a.m.–2 p.m., free brownies, free soft drinks and new friends
- ♦Aug. 27: Church road trip, meet at the Baptist Student Center, 6 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 30: FiSH freshman Bible study groups kick-off night, Baptist Student Center, 7 p.m.

University of West Alabama

- ♦Aug. 18: Welcome lunch and Bible study, SUB Tigers Den, 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.
- ♦Aug. 19: Get on Board Day, SUB, 2–4 p.m.

Huntingdon College

- ♦Aug. 20: Freshmen move-in day/ BCM water booth, Ligon Hall
- ♦Aug. 20–21: Big Red Weekend for all incoming freshmen

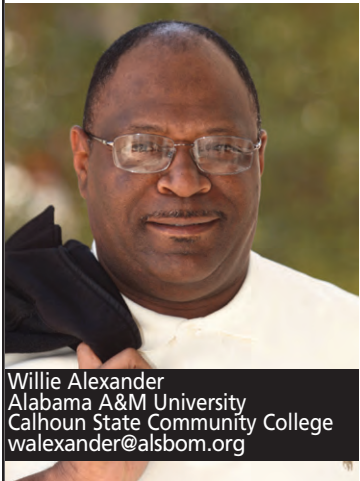
Jeff State Community College — Shelby Campus

- ♦Aug. 24: Campus ministry lunch, HSB room 154, 12:30 p.m.

Northeast Alabama Community College

- ♦Aug. 28: Day trip to Enfuego, Verbena, Ala.
- ♦Sept. 4–6: BCM BTS Weekend Encounter — intense Bible study and fellowship at a location close to home. Weekly NACC BCM meets Wednesdays, student center, for fellowship, lunch and Bible study, noon. College Bible study, Wednesdays, various locations, 8 p.m.

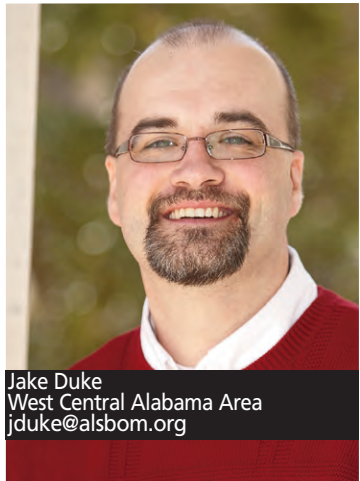
CAMPUS MINISTERS READY FOR FALL



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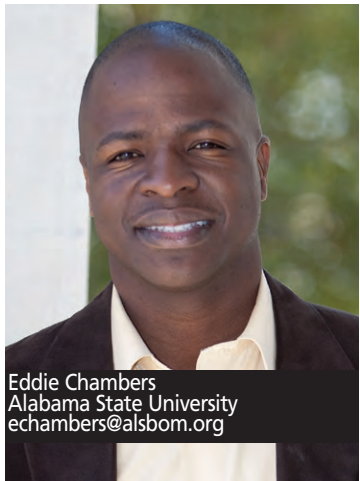
A special breed of state missionary serves on campuses across the state. If you or someone you know is enrolling in an Alabama college or university this fall, consider contacting one of these campus ministers.



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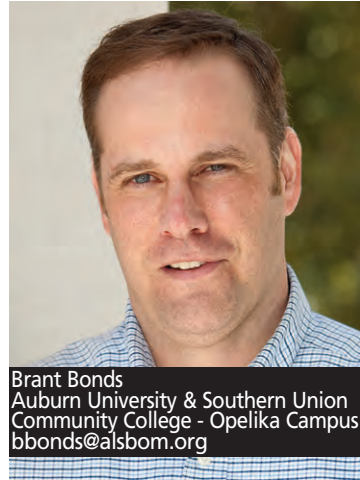
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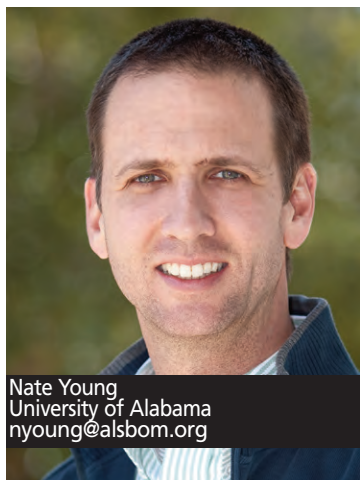
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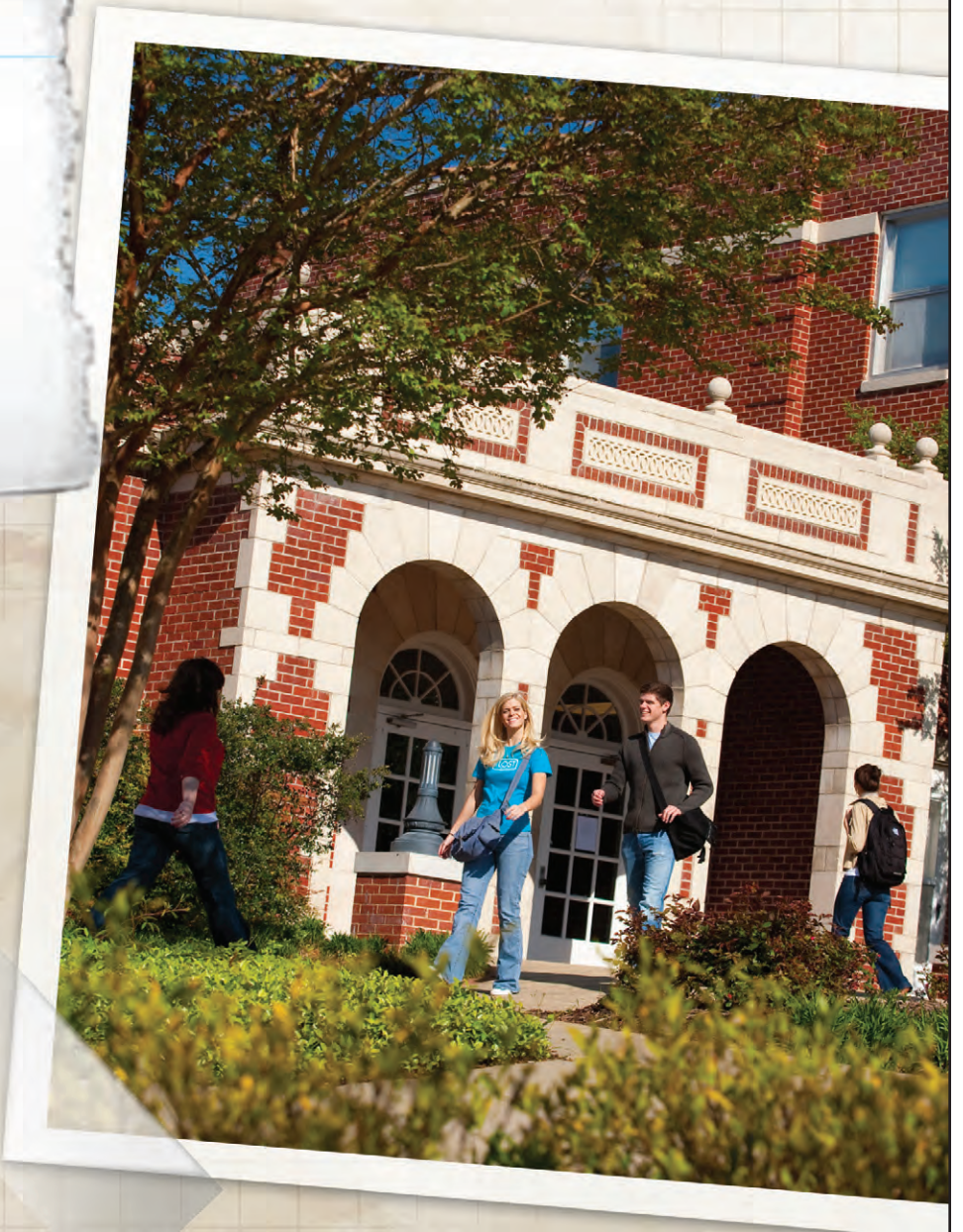
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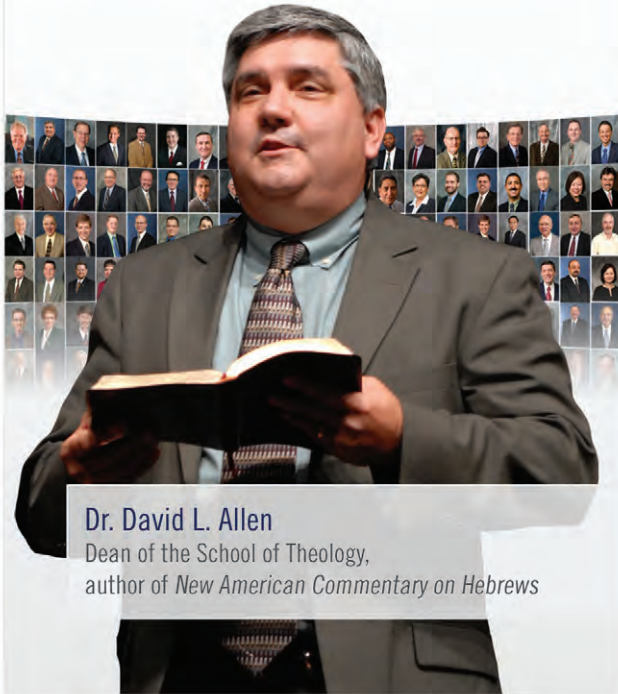
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SOUTHWESTERN
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Samford ranks high among most religious campuses report

Baptist-affiliated Samford University in Birmingham ranked No. 6 on the list of the most religious campuses in the Princeton Review's annual ranking of "The Best 373 Colleges in the United States."

Affiliated with the Alabama Baptist State Convention, Samford was the highest-ranking Baptist school among the top 20 campuses having the most religious students.

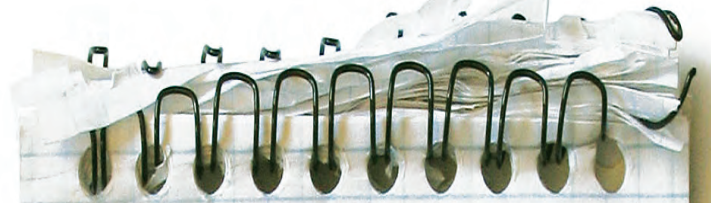
Baylor University, affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas, ranked 10th followed by Furman University, a private liberal-arts school that severed formal ties with the South Carolina Baptist Convention in 1992, at No. 11. William Jewell College, which receives support from the Baptist

General Convention of Missouri, came in at No. 19.

All of the 20 most religious campuses are private schools except one. The United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo., ranked 14th.

The religiosity ranking is one of 62 categories included in the annual report. Editors selected 373 institutions based on their high opinion of their academics and surveyed more than 122,000 students about their impressions of the schools.

Samford also ranked near the bottom in use of hard liquor and marijuana. Both Samford and Baylor were among the 20 least-friendly campuses toward gays and lesbians. (ABP)



Connecting with students

(continued from page 7)

act the tendency of some to drop out of church," Waggoner said.

So how can churches connect with college students?
▶ Help with freshmen move-in day. Many churches use this as a way to initiate contact with students and become visible on the college campus.

▶ Advertise. The college ministry of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, sends out a connect card that includes contact information and its schedule to all the incoming students who have indicated to the University of Alabama that they are Baptist.

▶ Adopt a group on campus. The college ministry at Bush Memorial Baptist Church, Troy, provides a dinner for international students who have moved to campus early. First, Florence, hosts a watermelon cutting for the soccer team after one of its practices every year. "Every year, we've had a soccer player or two be a part of our ministry (as a result)," Johnson said.

▶ Offer small groups. Once a student visits the church, plug him or her in to a small group. West Mobile Baptist Church and First Baptist Church, Opelika, have found small groups to be the most vital part of their college ministries.

▶ Provide ministry opportunities. Churches like Bush Memorial Baptist and Shades Mountain Baptist provide opportunities for college students to serve in leadership roles in their children's and youth ministries.

▶ Adopt a college student. At Shades Mountain, the college ministry has a Mocher ministry.

A student can sign up to be "adopted" by a family in the church whom he or she can "mooch" off of while in college.

▶ Offer watch care membership. By allowing students the option to become a member under watch care, they can keep their membership back home while connecting with a church while in college.

These people do not go to our church, but we hope you will!

This is not our worship service, but we do have a band-driven college-friendly service with relevant teaching!

This guy does not cook our college lunch, but we do have a great time of fellowship over a FREE meal each week!

THE GATHERING
Sunday @ 9:40
The Chapel @ Dawson

COLLEGE LIFE GROUP
Sunday @ 11
The Upper Room

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BACK TO CAMPUS

Churches outside college towns can stay engaged

With approximately 270,000 college students in Alabama, “almost every Alabama Baptist church can be or should be a ‘college church,’” said Mike Nuss, director of the office of collegiate and student ministries at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

For a church not located in a college town, the challenge may be more difficult but it is not impossible.

Chris Taylor, youth and media pastor of Friendship Baptist Church, Grand Bay, said his church has been able to minister to college students because it has offered something for them — a Bible study on Wednesday nights.

“You can’t just expect them to come to church,” Taylor said. “College students have so much going on and so many opportunities that the world is presenting them that you have to have something for them.”

That something could be an activity during the winter or summer break or an ongoing ministry op-

portunity. Keep students connected with each other by taking them skiing or camping or hosting a game or movie night. Keep them connected to the church by opening up leadership roles in the children’s or youth ministries to them.

If there are not enough students in town to merit a Bible study or Sunday School class, then make sure there is “someone who lets them know they are not forgotten,” said Kent Dodson, pastor of Liberty Hill Baptist Church, Clanton.

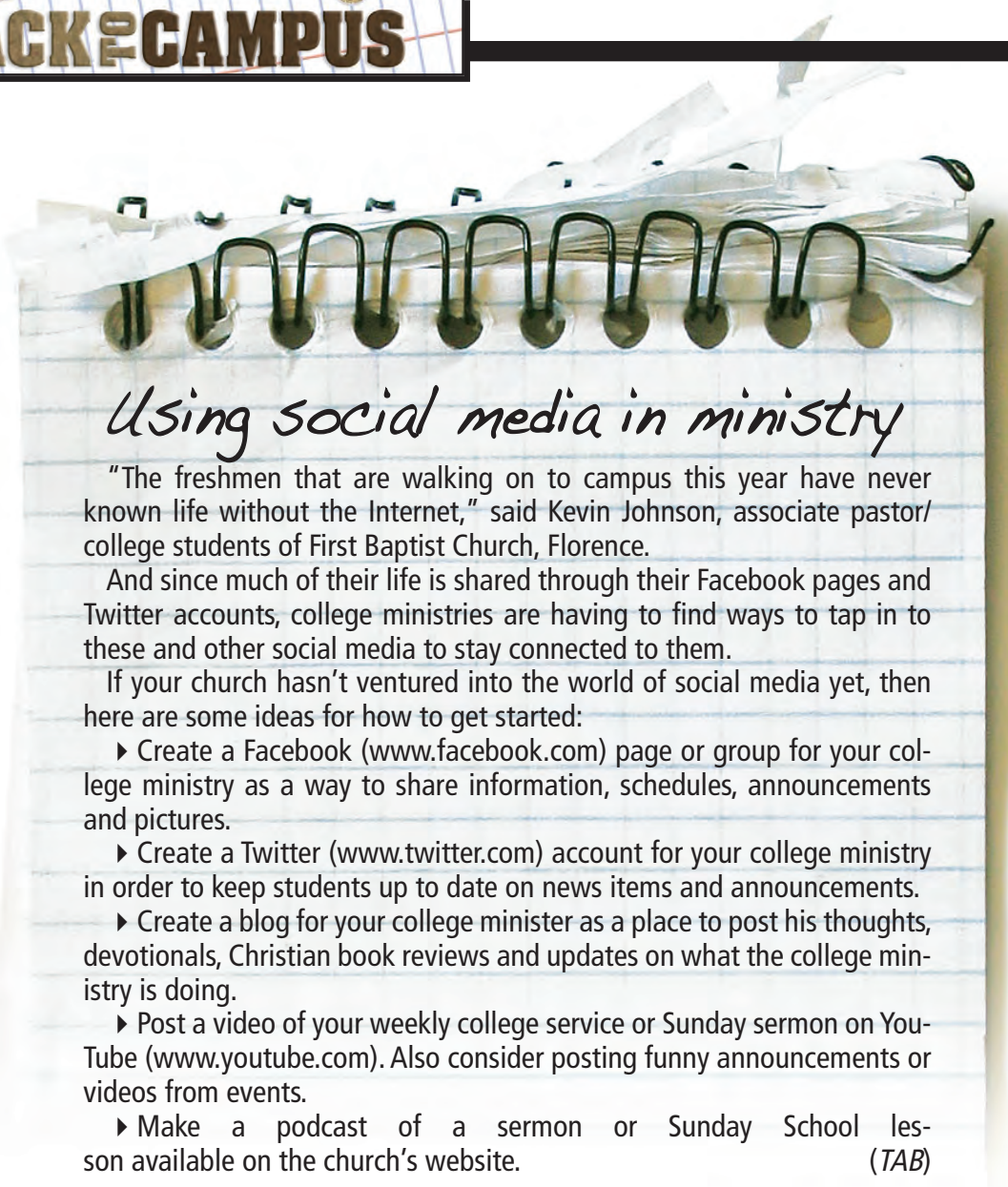
There are a number of ways to do this. Mail, e-mail or even text a note of encouragement. Send a care package of goodies during a stressful time like finals week. Become a Facebook friend.

Have families or adult Sunday School classes “adopt” college students.

They could pray for the students, call them to check in, do their laundry or cook them a meal. (TAB)

“College students have so much going on and so many opportunities ... that you have to have something for them.”

Chris Taylor
Friendship Baptist Church
Grand Bay



Using social media in ministry

“The freshmen that are walking on to campus this year have never known life without the Internet,” said Kevin Johnson, associate pastor/college students of First Baptist Church, Florence.

And since much of their life is shared through their Facebook pages and Twitter accounts, college ministries are having to find ways to tap in to these and other social media to stay connected to them.

If your church hasn’t ventured into the world of social media yet, then here are some ideas for how to get started:

- ▶ Create a Facebook (www.facebook.com) page or group for your college ministry as a way to share information, schedules, announcements and pictures.
- ▶ Create a Twitter (www.twitter.com) account for your college ministry in order to keep students up to date on news items and announcements.
- ▶ Create a blog for your college minister as a place to post his thoughts, devotionals, Christian book reviews and updates on what the college ministry is doing.
- ▶ Post a video of your weekly college service or Sunday sermon on YouTube (www.youtube.com). Also consider posting funny announcements or videos from events.
- ▶ Make a podcast of a sermon or Sunday School lesson available on the church’s website.

(TAB)

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Judson College

Math professors find Judson 'a good place to be'



BARTON

Chelsea Barton continues family tradition at Judson

Chelsea Barton graduated from Judson on June 26 with an English major and journalism minor.

Q: You're from Marion, and went to a state university for your freshman year. Why did you come back home?

A: I decided after high school to try something new, go to a larger school and meet new people. But I was always drawn to Judson. My grandmother, mother and several aunts went to Judson, so I had a heritage. At Judson I made new friends from all over the country.

Q: What is the major difference you discovered between the schools?

A: At the university I was in large classes and not all my teachers knew my name. At Judson we have a familiarity with students and teachers.

Q: What did you enjoy most about your Judson years?

A: I took the three-year option and graduated ahead of many of my friends who have a year left in college. I enjoyed traditions like Pageant and Step Sing and through these found a bond with Judson sisters from previous generations.

Q: What would you say to prospective Judson students?

A: At Judson you can serve in leadership positions as I did in the SGA and on the "Scrimshaw" staff. And it's a Christian school. You don't have to put your faith in a box. Chapel is a plus with different speakers every week who encourage us.

Q: You did an internship last summer at ABC 33/40 in Birmingham. How did that come about?

A: Judson alum Deborah Pugatch is news director at the station. I worked primarily with "The Talk of Alabama" morning show doing scheduling and guest hospitality and went out into the field with reporters and crew. It underscored for me that this is what I want to do.

Q: What's next?

A: I've been accepted for graduate study in communication at Alabama and Auburn. I'm still praying about what's best for me. (JC)

What do Judson College math professors Ray Price and Brett Stiefel think about the old adage, "Algebra has nothing to do with real life?"

"Algebra isn't the final destination; it's a step to greater things," Price explained.

"It's like a music student who takes piano lessons and later writes a symphony. Algebra teaches logic, which is a helpful foundation for other goals in life."

Stiefel agreed.

"A football player runs sprints and does bench-presses. These aren't what he does in the game, but they prepare him for the game," he said. "Math teaches one to think logically and solve problems. Even if they don't go into a math career, I want students to leave my classes with the ability to make decisions by attacking issues step-by-step."

Price grew up the son of an Episcopalian rector in North and South Carolina and knew early on that math appealed to him as a career. He attended Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C., earning a graduate scholarship to Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C.



STIEFEL

After completing his class work at Wake Forest, Price spent two years with the Peace Corps teaching math to teenagers at a boarding school in Ghana. "Third-world countries want math and science," he said, "so I was welcomed to the village and to the Anglican school."

Price returned to Wake Forest to complete his thesis and accepted a Judson teaching position in 1979.

He met and married his wife, Ann, a Judson alum who taught home economics at the college, and they moved to Virginia Tech in Blacksburg in 1981 for his Ph.D. study. The



Photo courtesy of Judson College

ALL IN THE FAMILY — Caroline Price, who graduated from Judson this summer, stands next to her father, Ray Price, a Judson math professor.

Prices returned to Judson in 1987. Price described Judson as "a good place to be."

"People treat one another well, and we worship together every week," he said.

"Our students' attitudes and goals are always at the highest level."

'A spiritual dimension'

Stiefel agreed that Judson's Christian atmosphere impacts his teaching.

"At Judson I can discuss ideas and use illustrations that have a spiritual dimension," he said.

"I've taught at state schools and I know your job can be in jeopardy if you talk about faith. But I often talk in my classes about our 'calling' as believers and use faith to motivate students to excel."

Stiefel, a Rainsville native, earned degrees from the University of Montevallo and the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

He begins his seventh year at Judson in the fall. He attends First Lutheran Church in Birmingham and serves as a deacon and Bible teacher.

"I've taught the book of Isaiah and the gospel of John," he said. "John is my favorite book in the Bible."

Price is organist at the St. Wilfrid's Episcopal Church in Marion.

Ray and Ann Price celebrated their daughter Caroline's graduation from Judson this summer. Caroline begins pre-med studies this fall in the Rural Medical Scholars Program at the University of Alabama. (JC)

Judson College's 2010-11 chapel schedule

AUGUST 31

Roger Willmore
pastor, Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville

SEPTEMBER 7

Larry Teasley
pastor, Marion United Methodist Church

SEPTEMBER 14

Ed Hayes
pastor, First Baptist Church, Cullman

SEPTEMBER 21

Kacey L. Moore
Samaritan Counseling, Birmingham

SEPTEMBER 28

Patricia Barnes
founder, Sister Schubert's Homemade Rolls, Luverne

OCTOBER 5

Mary Kay Beard
Encourager Ministries, Birmingham

OCTOBER 12

Hymn-Sing, George and Leah Washburn
Judson College

OCTOBER 19

Matthew S. Kerlin
minister to the university, Samford University, Birmingham

OCTOBER 26

Ron Stone
pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Selma

NOVEMBER 9

Joe Godfrey
executive director, ALCAP, Birmingham

NOVEMBER 16

James Earl Massey
Beeson Divinity School

NOVEMBER 30

Jerome Kirk
pastor, Provewell Baptist Church, Sprott

JANUARY 11

Rick Lance and Keith Hibbs
Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, Montgomery

JANUARY 18-20

Christian Emphasis Week, Mark Gignilliat
Beeson Divinity School

JANUARY 25

Daven Watkins
pastor, First Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove

FEBRUARY 1

Stan Lewis
pastor, First Baptist Church, Birmingham

FEBRUARY 8

Beth Chapman
Alabama secretary of state

FEBRUARY 15

Michael Thurman
pastor, Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, Montgomery

FEBRUARY 22

Irene Latham
author, Birmingham

MARCH 1

Judson College Music Department concert

MARCH 8

John Killian
pastor, Maytown Baptist Church

MARCH 22

Bill Mathews
vice president and general counsel, Judson College

MARCH 29

Elizabeth Hostetter
associate minister of music and organist, First Baptist Church, Huntsville

APRIL 5

Campus Ministries Honor Chapel

Samford University

A 'special community' of learning, faith offering life-changing experiences

Samford University's founders dedicated themselves to forming an institution of "high character."

"That promise is renewed each year as seniors graduate and new students join their lives with ours to create a very special community of learning and faith," says Samford President Andrew Westmoreland, as he looks to welcome some 840 freshmen and undergraduate transfer students this fall, making for an expected total student body of about 4,700.

Even as enrollment from Alabama remains steady and strong, he notes, the school's national reputation for providing quality higher education is reflected in the number of students coming from across the country and throughout the world.

This fall, students from about 60 of Alabama's 67 counties will be joined by classmates from some 43 states and more than a dozen foreign nations. Included in the mix will be 10 students from mainland China and Taiwan who will study in Samford's master of science in environmental management program.

International diversity

While at Samford, the students will develop skills and knowledge to contribute to China's critical need for better environmental management and stewardship. In turn, their presence will expand the international diversity on campus.

The new link with the Asian nation underscores the strength of Samford's graduate and professional programs that are growing in na-

tional and international reputation.

The Alabama Baptists who founded Samford in 1841 would be pleased that the stated mission of today's leaders is to nurture persons in their development of intellect, creativity, faith and personhood. And furthermore, as a Christian university, Samford seeks to foster academic, career and ethical competency while encouraging social and civic responsibility and service to others.

Samford's attention to learning and professional development regularly garners recognition from the academic community. Recent accolades include:

► Selection as one of the nation's 50 "Best-Value" four-year private universities in the annual *USA Today* Princeton Review listing.

► For the third straight year, ranked in the top tier of national

doctoral research universities, according to the annual college rankings released by *U.S. News & World Report*.

► Inclusion in the 2011 edition of *The Princeton Review's* popular guidebook, "The Best 371 Colleges" as one of the nation's best institutions for undergraduate education.

Samford's Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing recently received grants and scholarship funding totaling almost \$500,000. The available monies will help the school recruit students underrepresented in nursing, including men and minorities, and graduate students pursuing an advanced degree so as to become a nursing educator.

Campuswide, dedicated faculty members cultivate a climate of



Photo courtesy of Samford University

WELCOMING STUDENTS — A colorful campus will welcome new and returning students to Samford University in Birmingham in late August for the beginning of the fall semester.

scholarship and creative activity that brings acclaim to them and the school, and results in special academic opportunities for their students. Programs to be unveiled during the new academic year include:

► A religion and science program that will help frame teaching and research in the sciences and mathematics by the "big questions" of meaning and value.

► A church music curriculum that will focus on worship leadership.

► A Pharmaceutical Sciences Research Institute that will allow enhanced faculty/student research us-

ing a mass spectrometry laboratory.

As a vibrant community of Christian faith and service, Samford regularly hosts gatherings that bring church leaders and lay persons to campus for workshops and programs on varied topics.

At the same time, Samford actively sends forth faculty, staff and students on missions endeavors and social ministry projects throughout the year.

Whether a visit to an Alabama Baptist pulpit by Dr. Westmoreland, a "hands-on" day of service in a struggling Birmingham neighborhood or a student missions trip to Malaysia, a commitment to living the faith is readily evident.

Samford promotes intercultural and international understanding in ways both academic — such as study abroad opportunities at its Daniel House in London and other foreign sites — and missional — such as recent cross-cultural immersions in which students collaborated with nationals ministering in China and India. Hundreds of Samford students annually engage in missions trips sponsored by the school or arranged on their own. The summer of 2010 found more than 100 students sharing the gospel in six

states and 30 countries, in locales ranging from an impoverished area of eastern Kentucky to an orphanage in Romania.

Eight students, led by university ministries staff members Brian and Renee Pitts, were in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where they introduced local college students to Connexion

Bandar Utama, an international student ministry in the city.

"We learned a great deal about the complexities of Malaysian culture, with its diversity of religious and ethnic groups mingling together in a country with a Muslim majority," said Renee Pitts.

While encouraged by the Christians they met and their personal commitment to living out their faith, said Pitts, "We were also challenged by the task of relational evangelism in a context where it often takes many months or even years to decide to convert to Christian faith from another religious tradition."

Such experiences change the lives of Samford students and possibly the lives of students a world away, forever.

To learn more about Samford, check the website at www.samford.edu. (SU)

Samford's attention to learning and professional development regularly garners recognition from the academic community.

Hundreds of Samford students annually engage in missions trips sponsored by the school or arranged on their own.

Samford's fall 2010 calendar

Aug. 30

Fall semester classes begin

Sept. 3-4

University Ministries
Freshman Retreat

Sept. 20-23

Newsweek magazine
contributing editor Eleanor
Clift in residence as a Woodrow
Wilson Visiting Fellow

Sept. 24-26

Family Weekend

Sept. 25

Admission Preview Day

Sept. 26

Hymn Sing
Reid Chapel, 2 p.m.

Oct. 11-12

Fall Break

Oct. 16

Admission Preview Day

Oct. 26-28

Reformation Heritage Lectures
presented by Samford's Beeson
Divinity School

Nov. 5-7

Homecoming Weekend

Nov. 20

Admission Preview Day

Dec. 2

Hanging of the Green &
Lighting of the Way

Dec. 18

Fall Commencement

Samford hosts a variety of performing arts, informative lectures, sports events and other activities throughout the year. Many are free.

For more information, check the website at www.samford.edu.

Meet UMobile students



JEMISON

Rachael Jemison

Junior, finance major
Cloverleaf Baptist Church,
Tillman's Corner

Rachael grew up in a Christian home, where biblical values guided her path.

For college, she wanted a place where those values are honored and biblical ethics are integrated into academic learning — a place to keep her on track spiritually and academically. At the University of Mobile, Rachael is traveling the road to real success, with a future as a Christian leader in the banking industry.



FREEMAN

Jared Freeman

Graduate student, 5-year
integrated MBA program
Camellia Baptist Church,
Prattville

As soon as Jared drove on campus, he knew he belonged at the University of Mobile. Through two terms as Student Government Association president, meeting national leaders such as Mike Huckabee and Jeb Bush, and an internship with the CEO of a credit union which led to a management position in charge of lending and investments while he completes his master's degree, Jared knows one thing about UMobile. It has changed his life.

university of mobile

New programs, new look mark new year at UMobile

The University of Mobile (UMobile) is starting the new school year with an emphasis on "new" as Alabama's youngest Baptist college nears the half-century mark.

Students will move onto campus Friday, Aug. 20, and classes begin Monday, Aug. 23.

The first week of school includes Ram Rush new student orientation. A variety of events designed to help new students make friends and learn the ropes of college life include concerts by Christian artists Matt Wertz and Charlie Hall, poolside movies, skate party, pep rally and soccer game, citywide service project, Dinner on the Run progressive dinner at area churches and a circus-themed carnival complete with fire breathers and live circus animals.

The first week also kicks off First Wednesday, a campuswide chapel led by UMobile President Mark Foley, and the weekly Bible study True Spin.

Freshman Seminar, a course which provides freshmen with practical tips for being successful in college, and the UM Expo which introduces new students to the many clubs and activities available, are included in the back-to-school whirlwind.

Here is quick look at just some of what is new at UMobile for 2010-11:

► **George W. Bush** — Former President Bush will be the keynote speaker at the 6th annual University of Mobile Leadership Banquet on Oct. 7. The event raises financial support for the university's annual academic scholarship fund. Tickets

Stay connected to UMobile

It's easy to be linked in to the University of Mobile (UMobile) news and events online.

► **www.umobile.edu** — official website includes a calendar of activities, admissions information, special visit days, faculty directory, academic catalogs and more.

► **UM NewsNet** — Sign up to receive UM NewsNet e-mail newsletter at www.umobile.edu/news.

► **Facebook** — UMobile is on Facebook at www.facebook.com/universityofmobile.

www.youtube.com/universityofmobile.

► **YouTube** — See UMobile videos at www.youtube.com/universityofmobile.

► **Follow UMobile President Mark Foley's blog** at <http://markfoleysupdate.blogspot.com>.

► **Twitter** — Keep up with Rams sports scores and news at www.twitter.com/mobilerams.

► **Join the movement to transform America** through the Center for Leadership Development at www.twelve23.org.

are available by calling the UMobile Development Office at 251-442-2237. For more information, visit www.umobile.edu/banquet.

► **New Center for Leadership Development (CLD)** — This new center is part of 2020 Vision, the university's 10-year strategic plan to become a nationally recognized leader in the revitalization of Christian faith and character in a nation that has distanced itself from God. Information on the twelve23 Prayer Movement for America, a project of the CLD, is online at www.twelve23.org.

► **New entrance** — The entrance to UMobile gets a distinctive new look with a gatehouse, gates and decorative fencing. UMobile trustee Jim Daniel, CEO of the 103-year-old Daniel Metals Inc. in Birmingham, donated the gates and fence.

"I see this Christian college making an impact on a lot of young

people's lives, and that is something I have a passion for. This college is molding the lives of young people, and it's exciting to be a part of that," Daniel said.

► **New website and logo** — With direction from UMobile student focus groups, the university has a new logo. The new look is featured on the new website at www.umobile.edu.

► **New major** — The School of Christian Studies has a new major in Intercultural Studies, designed for students preparing for the missions field. The degree is useful for working in a multicultural setting in an American city or an international setting in a global business network, missionary agency or non-governmental organization.

► **New paving** — The entire campus is being repaved, including parking lots.

That's more than 20,000 tons of asphalt which will give a smooth ride and a fresh look to campus.

With more than 40 areas of study, UMobile students have a varied and strong academic program that integrates learning, faith and leadership. Courses are offered through the College of Arts and Sciences; the schools of business, Christian studies, education and nursing; the Center for Performing Arts; the Center for Adult Programs and the Graduate School.

For information on admission, call enrollment services at 800-WIN-RAMS or 251-442-2222, or e-mail umadminfo@umobile.edu. (UMobile)



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile

GLOWSTICK CONDUCTING — Students in conducting class use glowsticks to spell out UMobile during spring semester. Al Miller, dean of the Center for Performing Arts (CPA), said conducting in the dark with glowsticks allowed students to actually see the patterns they were conducting. The CPA has a full schedule of performances for the 2010-11 year, including Christmas Spectacular Nov. 17, 18 and 19 at Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile. Also season tickets are on sale for Upper Room Theatre productions. For more information on concert schedules for the university's 21 performing ensembles, visit www.umobile.edu or call the CPA at 251-442-2420.



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile

WELCOME TO UMOBILE — The entrance marker featuring the original Mobile College seal has been moved to the flag plaza at the foot of the entrance drive to the University of Mobile. This is part of the distinctive new entrance to the 880-acre campus just north of Mobile.



Photo by Philip Hicks

SHARING TIME — Three Families on Mission volunteers gather with children participating in a backyard Bible club at Heardmont Park in Pelham on July 28.

Families find missions 'take-home value'

(continued from page 1)

match families with the appropriate project.

"We had to make sure that the family structure would fit the project," Long said.

Volunteers conducted VBS and sports camps, distributed more than 6,000 packets of information for Crossway, gave away Bibles, completed light construction projects at churches and in neighborhoods and shared the gospel wherever they went. They also worked with a hospice group and at a nursing home, hospital and health clinic. By the end of the week, 51 people had been saved, including

seven volunteers, and at least 975 people had heard the gospel.

"God was so glorified ... in our worship and our work," Long said. "Every family who participated gained an understanding of how to take this back to their community and do ministry on a regular basis."

Shelby Association Director of Missions Hugh Richardson said the churches and their communities gained something, too. "The benefit to those who re-

ceive a loving touch through the ministry, whether through the gift of a Bible or something done on their home, is that they are introduced to Jesus Christ," he said. "The benefit to the churches is that they receive help to carry out short-term projects, like VBS, painting and maintenance or literature distribution."



Photo by Anne M. Decker

For more information on Families on Mission, visit www.namb.net and click on the Mission Opportunities tab.

Federal judge overturns Calif. ban on gay 'marriage'

A federal judge Aug. 4 handed down a landmark decision that could impact religious freedom and lead to the overturning of traditional marriage laws in every state, striking down California's voter-approved constitutional amendment that banned gay "marriage" and ruling it violates the U.S. Constitution's equal protection and due process clauses.

It is the first ruling of its kind and is certain to be appealed to the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, typically viewed as one of the nation's most liberal courts. From there, the Supreme Court would be the next stop.

If the nation's highest court upholds the decision it likely would result in the reversal of constitutional amendments and statutes in 45 states defining marriage as between one man and one woman. Only five states and the District of Columbia currently recognize "marriage" between homosexuals.

The decision overturned what is known as Proposition 8, a constitutional amendment that passed by a margin of 52 percent to 48 percent in 2008 and defined marriage as between one

man and one woman in California. Proposition 8 reversed a ruling by the state's highest court legalizing gay "marriage."

It is the second time that courts have overturned California voters on the issue of marriage. The 2008 California Supreme Court decision temporarily legalizing gay "marriage" reversed Proposition 22, an initiative that passed at the ballot in 2000 defining marriage in the traditional sense.

'Prepared to fight'

California is among 29 states to define marriage as between one man and one woman in their state constitutions. Another 16 states define it in state statute.

"What's at stake here is bigger than California," Andrew Pugno, an attorney allied with the Alliance Defense Fund, which is fighting in court to uphold Proposition 8, said in a statement. "Americans in numerous states have affirmed — and should be allowed to continue to affirm — a natural and historic public policy position like this. We are prepared to fight all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court if necessary." (BP)

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CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR PASTOR: Ballwin Baptist Church is seeking a full-time conservative pastor. Seminary and pastoral experience required. Send resumé to: Ballwin Baptist Church, P.O. Box 3446, Ballwin, MO 63022.

PASTOR: Currently seeking pastor for small, mission-minded congregation dedicated to serving the Lord, our communities and others through local and SBC-supported ministries. Strong, active children's and youth ministry. Send resumé to: Pastor Search, P.O. Box 1101, Sylacauga, AL 35150.

PASTOR: Calvary Baptist Church currently accepting resumé through Oct. 29 for full-time experienced Southern Baptist pastor. Mail resumé to: Calvary Baptist Church, P.O. Box 740236, Tusculum, AL 35674.

PASTOR: Marshall Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: pastorsearch@marshallchurch.org or Marshall Baptist Church, ATTN: Search Committee, 436 Marshall Church Road NE, Thomson, GA 30824.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC/WORSHIP LEADER: First Baptist Church, Rogersville, Ala., is currently seeking a bivocational minister of music/worship leader. Please send all re-

sumés to: First Baptist Church, Rogersville, 222 College Street, Rogersville, AL 35652.

PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER: Bethlehem East Baptist. Please call 334-541-2426 or 334-283-2033 and leave your name and number. We will return your call and provide additional information.

PART-TIME YOUTH PASTOR: FBC Falkville seeking part-time youth pastor. Send resumé to: fbcfalk@charter.net or mail to: FBC Falkville, P.O. Box 382, Falkville, AL 35622.

OTHER POSITIONS

FINANCIAL SECRETARY: Riverside Baptist Church, Helena, Ala., is seeking a full-time financial secretary experienced in QuickBooks and Microsoft Office. Send resumé to the church at 1919 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080, or e-mail to: lynda@rbchelena.org.

PIANIST: Bellview Baptist Church in McCalla, Ala., is seeking a pianist. Please send all inquiries to the church at 6674 Eastern Valley Road, McCalla, AL 35111.

ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE EVANGELIZATION & MISSIONS TEAM: The South Carolina Baptist Convention is currently accepting resumé for the position of associate

executive director for the evangelization and missions team. Qualified applicants must be an active member of a Southern Baptist church, have knowledge of evangelistic methods as well as a successful record of evangelistic and mission involvement. In addition, the candidate should possess appropriate educational, ministry and supervisory experience. Please send resumé to: Search Committee, c/o Office of the Executive Director — Treasurer of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, 190 Stoneridge Drive, Columbia, SC 29210.

BUSINESS

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CONSTRUCTION

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

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

CONFERENCES/RETREATS

CHRISTIAN RETREAT: Stoney Creek, new 52-acre Christian-based retreat facility perfect for family reunion rentals, church gatherings, weddings and receptions. Amenities galore. Located in Vinemont, Ala. Reservations: 256-338-5583. www.stoneycreekalabama.com.

TRAVEL/VACATION

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

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

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About Alabama

AYP Not Only Way for School Success

By Jim Williams
Special to The Alabama Baptist

On Aug. 2, the Alabama Department of Education reported which public schools and school systems made and didn't make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for 2010. Measuring AYP is required by federal law, and consistent failure brings penalties for schools with large amounts of federal funding.

However, AYP calculations are complicated and sometimes they mask rather than expose performance differences. This may be an inevitable result of defining student performance goals at the national and state levels instead of providing transparent results that local communities can use to engage in improvement efforts. Making the correct list becomes more important than improving the performance that was originally to be measured.

AYP goals are defined in terms of the percent of students who exceed a certain score on statewide reading and math tests. Federal law requires the percent of students who exceed that score to rise each year; the unlikely goal is for 100 percent of students to exceed the target score by 2014. Like a number of other states, Alabama has set its target score low, and optional calculations

are available for schools and systems that don't meet them.

AYP goals apply to all students in a school or system and any defined subgroup with 40 or more members. All subgroups have to make the goal. Subgroup definitions are based on poverty, race and ethnicity, language proficiency and special education status. Oddly students above the poverty level are not in a subgroup, although they comprise almost half of all students statewide.

Thus one school may be on the Made AYP list without meeting real AYP goals in any subgroup through the optional calculations, while a higher-performing school may be on the Did Not Make AYP list because one small subgroup did not succeed.

Parents, school officials and others interested in improving Alabama's schools may find that simple, direct presentations of student results are more helpful than the AYP data in recognizing success and targeting improvement efforts. Read more about this at <http://parca.samford.edu>.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jim Williams is executive director for the nonprofit, nonpartisan Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama. Jim may be contacted at jwillia@samford.edu. ☞

Gadsden knitters find international ministry outlet with their craft

By Anna Swindle
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

When Amelia Day and Linda Dees took a knitting class at the Mary G. Hardin Center for Cultural Arts in Gadsden last year, they never dreamed it would lead to a ministry impacting hundreds of people locally and internationally.

The women had heard of people using knitting as a way to reach out to those in need but they were both beginners. Still they decided to embark on their first knitting project — to finish 100 scarves for Way of the Cross, a neighborhood soup kitchen, by Christmas 2009.

"I figured Linda had lost her mind," Day recalled. "This was in May."

But by the time December rolled around, the women, with the help of a group they formed at their church, MeadowBrook Baptist, Gadsden, had not only met their goal but exceeded it. They created 200 scarves to hand out at the annual Christmas party at Way of the Cross.

Like Day and Dees, most of the members of the Ladies Fellowship Group didn't know how to knit or crochet before joining.

"I just fully believe that this is a God thing, because we can't all teach or sing or do other things, but in a small way, I just feel like this is the way to keep the Lord's work going and to touch people," Dees said.

And the women involved are impacting each other's lives, too.

"We've created a bond among us," Dees said. "We've cried together, we've prayed together



Photo courtesy of Amelia Day

A GIFT OF LOVE — Prayer shawls and skullcaps are among the items knitted by the Ladies Fellowship Group of MeadowBrook Baptist Church, Gadsden, to use in various ministry opportunities.

and we've laughed together."

The group meets twice a month to have prayer, a devotional and conversation about current and upcoming projects. About half of the 12 to 15 women are members of the Etowah Baptist Association church, whose pastor is Randy Gunter.

Spanning the globe

So far, they've produced the scarves for Way of the Cross, slippers for a missionary in Jordan, skullcaps and salvation bracelets for a church member's trip to Africa, prayer shawls for members of their church and community and chemo caps for patients at The Kirklin Clinic in Birmingham.

"I would be very happy if we

could get more involved in the prayer shawls," group member Rose Ann Wade said. "What's so neat about that is that when you make a prayer afghan, you go around and have everyone do a few rows of it and as they work, they pray and that's really meaningful for us to do something like that."

It's meaningful for those who receive the prayer shawls, too.

"We took a prayer shawl to one woman whose son had cancer and the woman said, 'I can't believe they did this for me. Why would they do this for me? They don't really know me,'" Day said.

"And I told her, 'Because that's what Christians do. We help each other.'" ☞

FBC Vina marks 100 years with old-fashioned dress

Members of First Baptist Church, Vina, have an appreciation for simple, old-fashioned ways.

To celebrate the Franklin Baptist Association church's 100th anniversary July 11, they dressed as the charter members may have a century ago. Men wore overalls and top hats, while women donned dresses with aprons and feathered hats or bonnets. Ken Stovall, minister of music for First, Vina, led the congregation in singing gospel songs popular in 1910.

Danny Wooten, chairman of deacons, read the church history and paid tribute to Pastor Jerry Swimmer for being in the ministry 50 years. Swimmer, who was terminally ill, was unable to attend the service. He died July 24.

One hundred years ago — July 10, 1910 — 14 charter members met at an old school building in Vina to organize the church. A few months later, members selected the first pastor and by July 14, 1911, were making plans to construct a building.

In 1930, a larger sanctuary replaced the first building. In the 1970s, members renovated that sanctuary to make Sunday School rooms and constructed a new sanctuary. In 2007, a family life center was completed. It houses a commercial kitchen, additional bathrooms and a ladies' banquet room. The congregation plans to construct a gymnasium in the future.

Spiritual growth

But the growth of First, Vina, hasn't been limited to its building — the church has baptized 100 people in the past three years.

The church also has an active Brotherhood, Woman's Missionary Union and two youth drama teams and a commitment to support the Decatur campus of the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries.

For longtime member Gerelene Overton, there is a spiritual kinship among members. "It's my second family. There's just no place like it." (TAB)

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 15

Explore the Bible By Robert Olsen

Assistant Professor, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

RELATIONSHIPS: RECONCILIATION FACTOR 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:1; 7:2-4

Reach Out in Openness (5:11-13)

Although the bond between Paul and the Corinthians was fractured, he did not think it was beyond repair and reached out to them to reconcile the relationship. Paul had a fear of the Lord and knew that God could see his motivations. The apostle was not operating out of any type of selfish ambition and hoped that the Corinthian church could see his motives so that it could then boast of him against the false teachers. These false teachers took pride in themselves and their outward actions, not the condition of their hearts. Paul focused on the inward motives and hoped that the Corinthians would see through the false teachers and judge appropriately. In the same way, we need to be judges of character and not of appearance. There are many flashy preachers and teachers in the world today, and we need to be careful not to be captivated by any message that is not the gospel. We need to judge the speaker by the content of his message and not his appearance or eloquence. In the last section of this passage, Paul suggested that if it appeared he was out of his mind, then it was for the sake of God. Perhaps the Corinthian false teachers had looked at the trials Paul had faced as suggesting he was crazy. Instead Paul turned this accusation into an affirmation of his obedience to God. His actions were not done out of some selfish attitude but rather for his concern for the Corinthians' spiritual well-being. Paul sought reconciliation with the Corinthians just as we are to seek to be reconciled to those with whom we have broken relationships.

Respond to Christ's Love (5:14-16)

Paul demonstrated the love that Christ has for us in these passages, as he emphasized the death of Christ for all people in order to reconcile us to God. Note only those who believe and accept Christ receive this reconciliation but God offers this to all of humanity. Because of this reconciliation, Paul showed that in like manner, Christians should seek to be reconciled to each other. Christ is the example for

all Christians to follow. If we say we believe Christ and yet choose to not follow His example, then we are hypocrites and bad representatives for Him.

Remember God's Work in Christ (5:17-21)

The change that occurs in a person when he or she accepts Christ is described clearly by Paul. Whoever is in Christ is a new creation. This is one of the key verses in the Bible that describes the Christian's new relationship with the Creator. Our old self is replaced with a new one. We no longer need to feel guilty about our past ways of living and our past transgressions since our relationship with Christ blots these out. What a wonderful feeling to know that we have been reconciled to God. He no longer counts our wrongdoings against us. We likewise need to forgive our brothers and sisters in Christ and thus bring about reconciliation.

Reassure Others of Your Desires (6:1; 7:2-4)

Paul appealed to the Corinthians to not take God's grace lightly. Our salvation should have a profound impact on us. Therefore, being new creations, we no longer live like our old selves. If we believe God's Word, then we need to live accordingly, loving and forgiving each other. Paul urged the Corinthian believers to open their hearts to him and his co-workers. The Corinthians had had a fractured relationship with Paul, and he was pleading with them to be reconciled with him. Paul had never mistreated or taken advantage of them. Therefore they needed to put aside these barriers and embrace Paul as their fellow believer and brother in Christ. In the same way, the relationship that believers have with Christ trumps anything that might otherwise separate us. We need to embrace other Christians and lay aside that which disrupts our relationships. The body of Christ is to be one, and we dishonor God and are bad ambassadors for Christ when we argue and do not forgive each other. We need to take time to seek out others with whom we have disagreements and be reconciled, for this is the will of God. ☞

Bible Studies for Life By James Barnette

Associate Professor, Department of Religion, Samford University

DEMONSTRATE KINDNESS 2 Samuel 9:1-13

Determine to Show Kindness (1-3)

The introduction of Mephibosheth at the outset of this passage highlights the fact that Saul's descendants posed a potential threat to David and his dynastic line. Under similar circumstances, it was common for the ruler of a new dynasty to exterminate the entire house of his predecessor. However, by the time of this episode, most of Saul's descendants were completely gone. A key theme to this story is David's practice of hesed, the rich Hebrew term meaning "lovingkindness" or "covenant faithfulness." Three times in verses 1-8 this word is used. David had promised hesed toward Saul and Jonathan and intended to follow through on these oaths. David's initial motive for seeking out Mephibosheth was not to show sympathy to a poor, lame person but rather to honor Jonathan, Mephibosheth's father. David practiced this covenant-based kindness "for Jonathan's sake" (1 Sam. 20:11-17). Mephibosheth was 5 years old when his father died in battle (2 Sam. 4:4), so he was now about 21 years old and had a son of his own. David could not show kindness to Jonathan at this point, so he sought out one of Jonathan's relatives to whom he could offer his care. One cannot help but liken this to the Son of David, Jesus, who sought us out that we might experience the hesed of His grace. As David made the first move to surprise a lowly, lame person with grace, so Jesus made the first move to surprise us when He brought us out of our darkness into His marvelous light.

Seek Opportunities to Show Kindness (4-6)

David learned of a candidate to receive his kindness from Ziba, a well-to-do servant of Saul's household who apparently managed the former king's estate. Ziba informed David that there was "still a son of Jonathan" living with a wife and son in self-imposed exile at the house of a man named Makir. Mention of the detail that this son of Jonathan was crippled was perhaps reported to explain to David why he had never heard of him. Or it is possible

that his handicap was mentioned to assure David that the man was no political or military threat. It is noteworthy that the man's name is not mentioned at this point. He is a no-name. He is someone who appears not to matter, yet he becomes entitled to the house of David. Once again, we cannot help but apply this to ourselves as undeserving no-names who become entitled to Christ's inheritance. The lame young man understandably was terrified by the sudden summons to appear before the king. Mephibosheth inquired as to what King David would have to do with a "dead dog" like himself. He was utterly defenseless. Henlee Barnette, the leading Southern Baptist ethicist of his generation, was once asked what he had learned through all of his studies in Christian ethics. Barnette replied, "You can measure the character of someone by how he or she responds to a defenseless person." Here, then, David displayed the high character marked by kindness toward a frail, powerless soul.

Practice Kindness (7-13)

David's words "eat at my table" are found four times in these verses. In spite of Mephibosheth's self-designation as a "dead dog," he now would be treated as one of David's sons. Many have theorized as to why this chapter closes oddly with a reiteration of the fact that Mephibosheth was "crippled in both feet." Some have suggested that the concluding line was a reminder that Mephibosheth was disqualified from leading a separatist movement. A more likely reason for its presence is to spotlight the kindness of David toward one who does not appear to deserve such extravagant treatment. A heretofore "nobody" was now given the grace of eating at the king's table. Another key theme of this passage is the kingship of David. The name "David" is used at least six times in the chapter; several times he is referred to as "the king" and "King David." No one but King David could have shown such extravagant kindness to a lowly, lame man like Mephibosheth. One cannot help but liken this fact to the Son of David who is King of all kings. No one has such riches to dispense to lowly, lame sinners like us except the King who sits on the throne of heaven. ☞

Christian Crossword

By Janice A. Buhl Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

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Across

- Thy master's son shall ___ bread. (2 Sam. 9:10)
- Be ___ to do my commandments. (1 Chron. 28:7)
- Is not this a ___ plucked out of the fire? (Zech. 3:2)
- Be ye ___ as your fathers. (Zech. 1:4)
- Stretch out thine hand over the ___. (Ex. 14:26)
- Let us go and serve ___ gods. (Deut. 13:6)
- Streets. (abbr.)
- And Jacob stole ___.
- The first ___ was like a lion. (Rev. 4:7)
- ___ gleaned grapes shall be left in it. (Isa. 17:6)
- ___ you into your tents again. (Deut. 5:30)
- I will ___ mine hand upon my mouth. (Job 40:4)
- ___ the son of Abdiel. (1 Chron. 5:15)
- As with the ___ of usury. (Isa. 24:2)
- He shall eat ___ my table. (2 Sam. 9:11)
- ___, inquire of Baal-zebub. (2 Kings 1:2)
- His offering shall ___ of fine flour. (Lev. 2:1)
- He moveth his ___ like a

- cedar. (Job 40:17)
- And ___ went out, and wept bitterly. (Luke 22:62)
- Zilpah ___ maid bare Jacob a son. (Gen. 30:10)
- Have ye a father, ___ a brother? (Gen. 44:19)
- I have ___ the ways of the Lord. (2 Sam. 22:22)
- They took a ___, and opened them. (Judg. 3:25)
- ___ the Ahoite. (1 Chron. 11:29)
- I turned to see the voice that spake with ___. (Rev. 1:12)
- Then I came to them of captivity at ___-abib. (Ezek. 3:15)
- The Egyptian had a ___ in his hand. (2 Sam. 23:21)
- The children of Gad called the altar ___. (Josh. 22:34)
- ___ him, and let him go. (John 11:44)
- To be ___, and to be bakers. (1 Sam. 8:13)
- The inhabitants of ___-dor and her towns. (Josh. 17:11)
- French. (abbr.)
- Related.
- Down**
 - Horns of ivory and ___. (Ezek. 27:15)
 - Thou ___ a virtuous woman. (Ruth 3:11)
 - They departed from ___.
 - Hearken unto me every ___ of you. (Mark 7:14)
 - There had been ___ rain in the land. (1 Kings 17:7)
 - The world also shall be ___. (1 Chron. 16:30)
 - If we ___ to commune with thee. (Job 4:2)
 - The wicked fall into their own ___. (Ps. 141:10)
 - He shall never ___ of death. (John 8:52)
 - Behold, all things are become ___. (2 Cor. 5:17)
 - Gather them in their ___. (Hab. 1:15)
 - Mine hour is not ___ come. (John 2:4)
 - The merchants of the ___ shall weep. (Rev. 18:11)
 - Out of the ___ came forth meat. (Judg. 14:14)
 - He asked for a writing ___. (Luke 1:63)
 - A son of Shemaiah. (1 Chron. 3:22)
 - They shall ___ the way of the Lord. (Gen. 18:19)
 - Joshua burnt ___. (Josh. 8:28)
 - I am appointed a preacher, and an ___. (2 Tim. 1:11)
 - Two ___ three witnesses. (Heb. 10:28)
 - ___, and it shall be given you.

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Want to know God?

By Evangelism office
State Board of Missions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HEART OF MISSIONS

Fifteen members of **Indian Grave Baptist Church, Billingsley**, traveled to Clever, Mo., on a construction missions trip June 6–12. They were part of a 42-member team that also included members of **First Baptist Church of Posey Cross Road, Prattville**; **Providence Baptist Church, Clanton**; **Westwood Baptist Church, Alabaster**; and Baptist churches in Tennessee and Mississippi.

The team helped add on to Union Ridge Baptist Church by building additional Sunday School rooms, bathrooms and a larger fellowship hall.

“Distance of miles may have separated us, but our love of Jesus made us brothers and sisters, and that knowledge brought us close,” said Debbie Price, a member of Indian Grave Baptist.

Mount Hebron West Baptist Church, Elmore, served as a place for 190 Mission Serve volunteers from North Carolina, Virginia, Arkansas and all across Alabama to lay their heads and grab a bite to eat July 12–16.

Mission Serve is a Cumming, Ga.-based organization that exists to strengthen neighborhoods and improve individuals’ lives by working to eliminate substandard housing through volunteerism and community involvement.

The volunteers gave 15 project sites in Elmore County makeovers

by doing things like repairing roofs and replacing windows and siding. They also offered the people they came in contact with the opportunity to make over their lives by sharing the gospel with them. Each night, the volunteers gathered at the Elmore Baptist Association church for corporate worship and to recap their day with their church groups.

Jeremy Jones, Mount Hebron West Baptist’s youth pastor who served as project coordinator and speaker during worship, said the missions project was an eye-opening experience for the youth of his church, showing them both the physical and spiritual needs of those around them.

Ty Coffey, minister of communications and creative design of **Westwood Baptist Church, Alabaster**, traveled to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, May 23–29 with Tim Wampler, president of Delaware-based Shoes 2 Share International.

The two men delivered 6,500 pairs of shoes collected by the Shelby Baptist Association church. In February, Westwood Baptist held a barefoot Sunday when people were encouraged to wear a pair of shoes to donate to Haiti during the morning service. With the help of its members and members of another Baptist church in Alabaster, the church gathered 3,500 pairs of shoes. A local man donated the other 3,000 pairs anonymously.

Besides delivering the shoes, Coffey preached, shared the gospel and assisted with a medical clinic.

Seven Alabama Baptists — four members of **First Baptist Church, Greenville**, in Butler Baptist Association; one member of **First Baptist Church, Tarrant**, in Birmingham Baptist Association; one member of **First Baptist Church, Rutledge**, in Alabama Crenshaw Baptist Association; and one member of **Wadsworth Baptist Church, Deatsville**, in Autauga Baptist Association — traveled to Jacmel, Haiti, July 2–10 on a construction missions trip. The trip was organized through the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), and the team was led by Gilbert Jennings, a SBOM disaster relief volunteer and member of Wadsworth Baptist.

The team worked with the Salvation Army to build transitional shelters for those displaced from their homes by the January earthquake. It completed five shelters in three and a half days. Each time a shelter was completed, the team would pray with the family who received it.

The team had opportunities to witness to people everyday as it worked on the shelters and even while it toured some of the city. Team members also visited three churches and spoke at a revival.

Russell Baptist Association went to Crystal Springs, Miss., for its annual Builders for Christ associational missions trip June 19–26.

Jill Clark, a member of Central Baptist Church, Phenix City, and the Russell Association coordinator of Builders for Christ, coordinated

the trip, while Gary Forrester, also a member of Central Baptist, led the trip. Jerry Rudd, a member of Concord Baptist Church, Salem, was the construction supervisor. Forty-two Alabama Baptists out of a total of 74 people participated.

The team’s mission was to help construct a building for Pilgrim’s Rest Baptist Church, Crystal Springs, Miss. The team did framing, electrical work and work on the soffit and facial part of the siding. At the end of the week, the team gave the church an unexpected love offering of \$4,000. Pilgrim’s Rest Baptist is still under construction and plans to have a dedication in December.

Richard Parker, minister of youth and education of **First Baptist Church, Russellville**, led a team of 61 to Rochester, N.Y., July 10–16. It was their 20th trip to the area.

The Franklin Baptist Church team held a four-day day camp for the children living in The Pines of Perinton-Fairport, a government-subsidized housing project. Approximately 110 children — ranging in age from preschool to high school — attended.

Following the camp theme of Celebration, the children celebrated a different holiday each day, ending the camp with a birthday celebration in honor of First, Russellville’s 20th year. At the birthday celebration, each child received a bear and a Bible. Five decisions were made for Christ the entire week.

During the 20 years Russellville has been ministering in Rochester, 11 students have gone into full-time ministry and three have become International Mission Board representatives.



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Missions comes to Shocco

Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega hosted approximately 4,000 youth at five Student Life camps this summer. At two of the five camps sponsored by Shocco Springs and the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, nearly 700 youth participated in a missions track. They completed 42 missions projects in the surrounding communities.

The projects included

- ▶ hosting backyard Bible clubs at apartment complexes in Talladega;
- ▶ volunteering in assisted-living and nursing homes in Sylacauga, Talladega and Pell City;
- ▶ working with children at the Boys Club of Sylacauga;
- ▶ doing yard work, painting and cleaning at several schools in Talladega;
- ▶ renovating the Alabama Woman’s Missionary Union

WorldSong Camp facility in Cook Springs;

- ▶ stocking shelves, doing yard work and cleaning at the Red Door Kitchen, a soup kitchen in Talladega; and

- ▶ doing yard work and interacting with residents at Rainbow Omega in Eastaboga, a faith-based home for adults with special needs. (TAB)

Worship at the Wharf

The Restoring Hope Project will be hosting Worship at the Wharf in Orange Beach on Aug. 15, 4:30–7 p.m., as Christians respond to the oil spill crisis through prayer and giving. Alabama Baptists will be helping with the event in various ways.

For more information, visit www.restoringhopeproject.com or contact Joe Savage at jsavage@mail.umobile.edu. (TAB)

Five years later

Hurricane Katrina recovery continues in New Orleans

By Joe McKeever
Columnist, Baptist Press

New Orleans artist Sherry Francalancia has been making the rounds asking local artists for their handprints on a work she is producing. The painting symbolizes this city, Sherry says. So many people have left permanent imprints on our lives for the better.

Think of that painting as a metaphor for New Orleans in its post-Katrina existence. Over the five years since that hurricane made landfall causing the poorly constructed levees to flood the city, untold thousands of God's people have come from the ends of the earth to bless New Orleans.

A recent ad for a law firm seeking clients in a class action suit against the global energy company BP began: "When Hurricane Katrina devastated our part of the world, Louisianans stood alone."

Nothing could be further from the truth. We were inundated with friends from every direction.

Even before most of us returned from evacuation, volunteer crews arrived from churches across America to clear streets and prepare meals for first responders. Later a second wave of church teams arrived to mud-out houses and churches and begin the rebuilding process. They bore witness to their faith in Christ and reported hundreds opening their hearts to the Lord.

That process of ministry in the name of Jesus continues today.

Duane McDaniel, executive director of missions for New Orleans Baptist Association, was part of that process. He himself brought seven teams from the church he was then serving in Honolulu to work in rebuilding New Orleans.

So where are we today? The answer is a complex one.

We have fewer churches in the association. A dozen or more congregations came into being after Katrina. Some are strong, some are not. All are experiencing the greatest challenge of their lives.

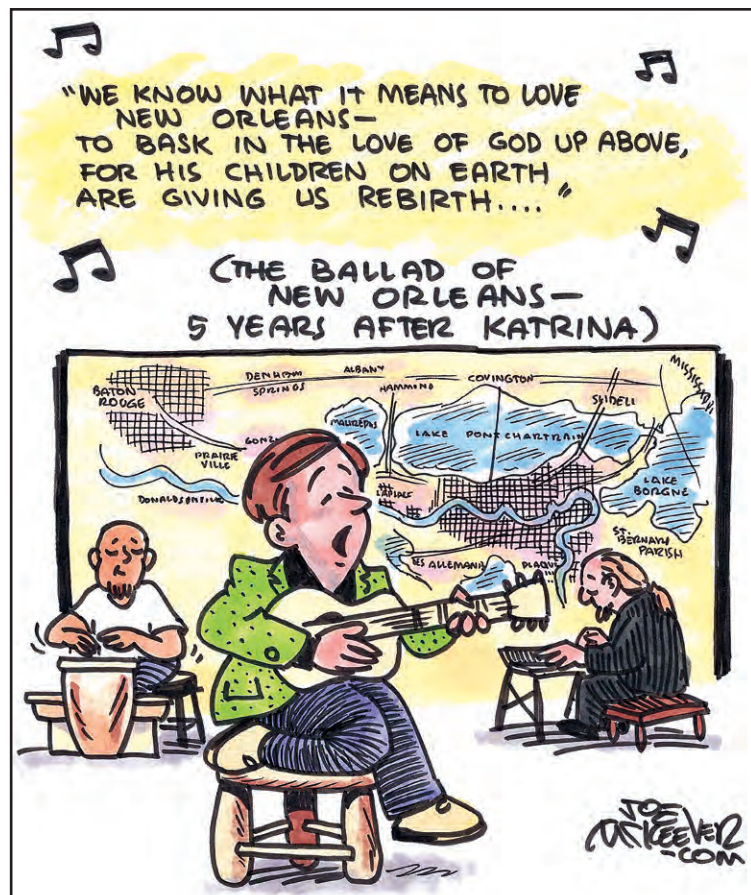
'Churches are stronger'

David Crosby, pastor of New Orleans' First Baptist Church, said, "It's an exciting day to be serving God in New Orleans."

Dennis Watson, pastor of Celebration Church, added, "Our churches are stronger in purpose and character than before."

He said megachurches were hit hardest. Most have either not rebuilt or are carrying on a slimmed down version of themselves. (Watson's Celebration Church seems to be the exception. From an average attendance five years ago of 1,800, this church — with its multiple services on several campuses — is running on average above 2,500.)

The population of New Orleans proper numbers some 100,000 under five years ago. Next door, how-



Cartoon by Joe McKeever

ever, Jefferson Parish — Metairie, Kenner and other smaller suburbs — now ranks as the most populous parish in the state.

Economically New Orleans is experiencing the same problems as the rest of the nation. The oil spill has resulted in the loss of jobs. At Michoud Assembly Center, the final external fuel tank for NASA's space shuttle has rolled off line, ending hundreds of well-paying positions. The University of New Orleans is downsizing its staff. Northrop-Grumman, the giant defense contractor, has announced the 2013 closing of the local shipyard with its 5,000 highly paid positions.

"Regarding crime, we're at the bottom," Crosby said in assessing the city. "Health care is dismal right now. But in the long term, the new LSU Teaching Center and the VA Medical Center will bring in hundreds of doctors and medical staff.

The infrastructure of the city is still recovering, he said. "The widened Huey P. Long Bridge spanning the Mississippi River is going to be great. And the new bridge across Lake Pontchartrain to Slidell is open. However, we remain the most blighted city in America."

A new mayoral administration now runs City Hall. Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu was elected handily and has brought in a strong team. In an interview with *The New York Times*, the mayor admits his work is cut out for him.

"The oil spill's much worse than we ever thought. The budget's much worse, the dysfunction is much worse, the NOPD is much worse. But ... that's why I signed up."

New Orleans Baptist Association moves forward on several fronts under McDaniel's leadership. With the support of the Louisiana Baptist Convention and the North American Mission Board, the association has brought on Jack Hunter as the mission/rebuild strategist and is now searching for a full-time church development strategist. Plans are in the works for a new volunteer center to host church teams from across America wishing to do ministry in an urban situation.

Anticipating work of art

McDaniel envisions building health centers in needy communities that will draw in professionals called to minister to the downtrodden and oppressed.

The glamorous part of the rebuilding work — if there ever was such a thing — has come and gone. These days, the work is hard and slow and often goes forward without the glare of television lights or the exposure of the media. At the moment, we're somewhat like Francalancia's painting — finished in places, incomplete in others, with lots of work still to be done. We look forward to the day when New Orleans will be a finished work of art. When that happens, look for the fingerprints of God. They will be all over it.

Editor's Note — Joe McKeever served five years as director of missions for New Orleans Baptist Association (formerly Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans), retiring in April 2009. The previous 14 years, he was pastor of the New Orleans-area FBC Kenner. (BP)

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Anglicans reject move to 'separate' U.S. church

LONDON — Anglican leaders meeting in London have rejected a move to "separate" the Episcopal Church from the wider Anglican Communion, a proposal that officials called premature and "unhelpful." The proposal was offered July 24 by Dato Stanley Isaacs, a member of the Anglican Communion's Standing Committee from the Province of South East Asia, according to a statement issued July 26. The Episcopal Church has come under fire from sister Anglican churches for its decision to consecrate an openly gay bishop in New Hampshire in 2003, as well as a lesbian assistant bishop in Los Angeles earlier this year.

In June, the U.S. church was removed from Anglican panels that host ecumenical dialogue with other Christians, as well as a committee that determines doctrine and authority. But the 13 members of the Standing Committee — who are elected from the 44 member churches of the 77 million-member Anglican Communion — said formally exiling the U.S. church was not the proper response.

"Committee members acknowledged the anxieties felt in parts of the Communion about sexuality issues," the statement said. "Nevertheless, the overwhelming opinion was that separation would inhibit dialogue on this and other issues ... and would therefore be unhelpful." At the Standing Committee's last meeting, just days after the Diocese of Los Angeles elected its lesbian bishop, the panel called for "gracious restraint" on actions that would test the fragile unity of the communion. When that statement failed to make any difference, Egyptian Bishop Mouner Anis resigned from the panel, saying it had "no desire ... to sort out the problems which face the Anglican Communion and which are tearing its fabric apart."

N.J. Supreme Court declines gay 'marriage' case

TRENTON, N.J. — Supporters of gay "marriage" said they would press on with their fight despite the New Jersey Supreme Court's decision not to hear a case in which six same-sex couples asked for the right to marry. "We ... will never give up — not until our dying breath," said Steven Goldstein, chairman of Garden State Equality, the state's largest gay rights organization. Goldstein said the announcement July 26 by the state's highest court maintains the unequal legal status of same-sex couples.

Though the court said it won't consider the case now, it left open the possibility it could hear it in the future. The justices said the case needs to be filed anew in Superior Court — where it originated eight years ago — and wind its way back up. "This matter cannot be decided without the development of an appropriate trial-like record," the court said. The seven-member court currently has one vacancy, and the remaining six justices were split down the middle, one vote short of the four votes needed to grant a motion.

In 2006, the Supreme Court ruled same-sex couples were due the full rights and benefits of heterosexual married couples, but left it up to the Legislature to provide those rights, leading to the 2006 civil union law. Armed with a legislative commission report saying civil unions had failed to achieve equal status for gay couples, same-sex "marriage" advocates pushed for full marriage rights. But after the state Senate rejected the gay "marriage" bill, the case made its way back to the state's highest court.

Legalization of Internet gambling in U.S. progresses

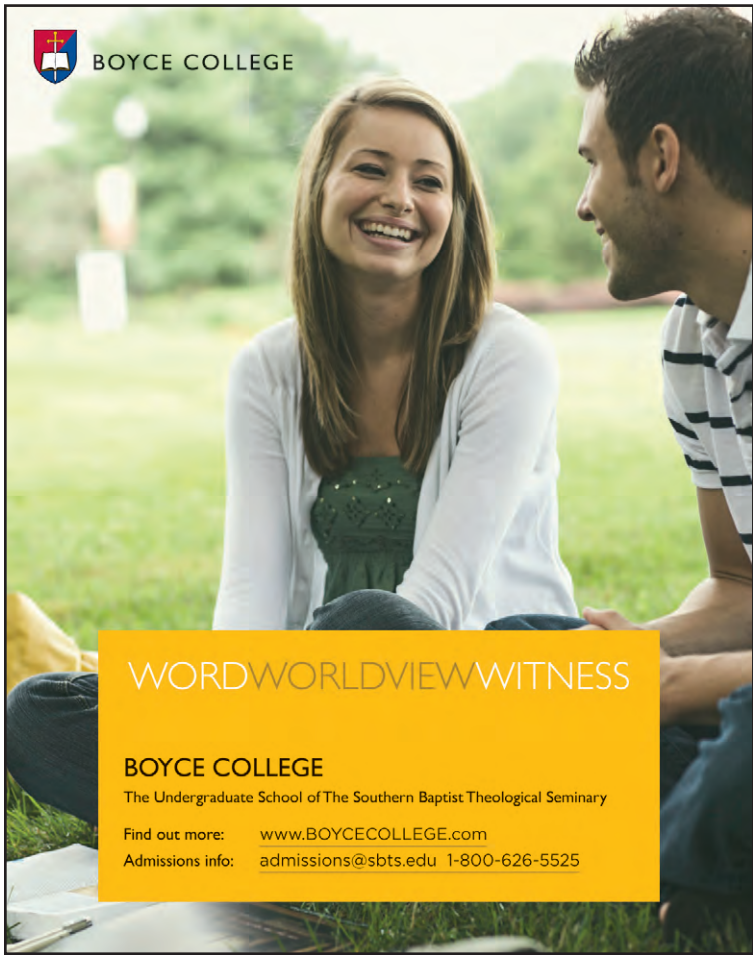
WASHINGTON — Congressional advocates for legalizing Internet gambling in the United States have made progress in their effort less than two months after rules implementing a 2006 law that cracked down on the practice finally took effect. The Financial Services Committee of the House of Representatives voted 41-22 to forward to the full chamber the Internet Gambling Regulation, Consumer Protection and Enforcement Act, H.R. 2267.

The bill would have the effect of rescinding the four-year-old Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act, which largely barred online gambling in the United States by requiring financial institutions to block credit card and other payments to Internet wagering businesses. Long-delayed regulations enforcing the law went into effect June 1. The new online gambling measure, sponsored by Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., would both legalize such wagering and authorize the federal government to regulate it.

Before the current restriction on Internet gambling was enacted, Americans were expected to pay \$5.9 billion, about half of the \$12 billion wagered worldwide on Internet gambling, to overseas online casinos in 2006, supporters of the ban said. Online gambling sites frequently act as fronts for money laundering, drug trafficking and financing for terrorists, foes said.

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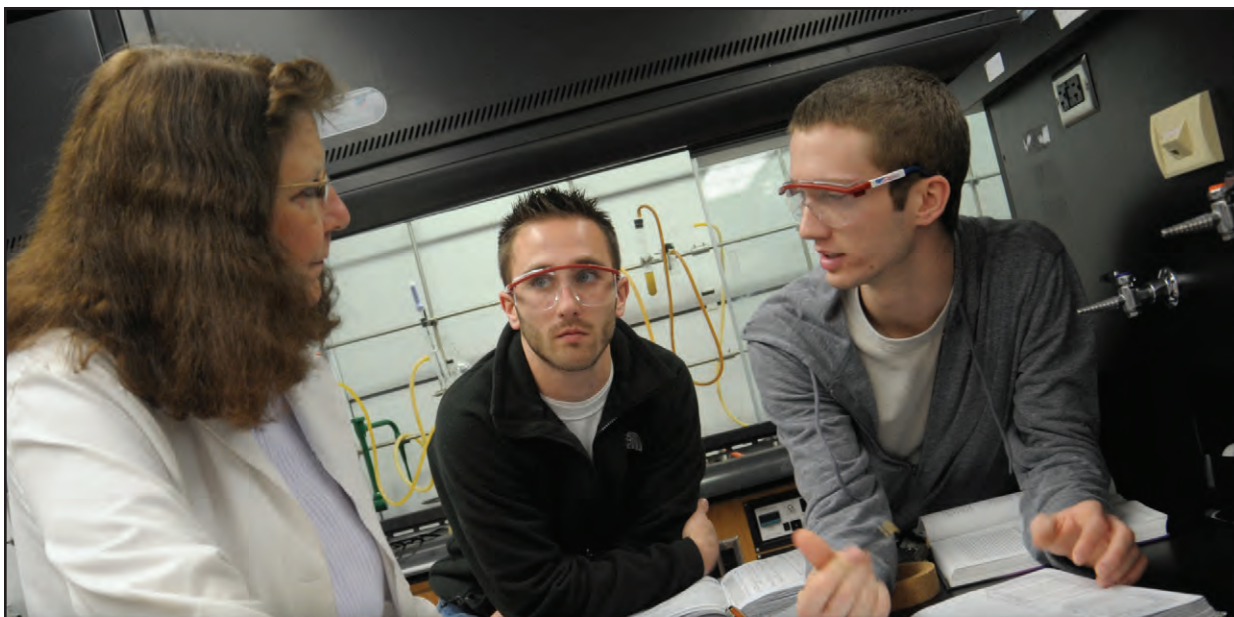
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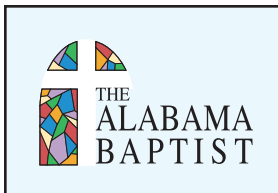
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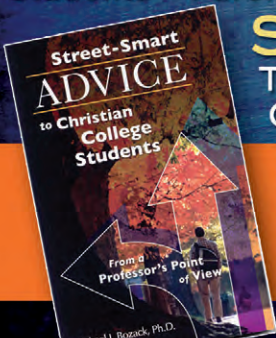
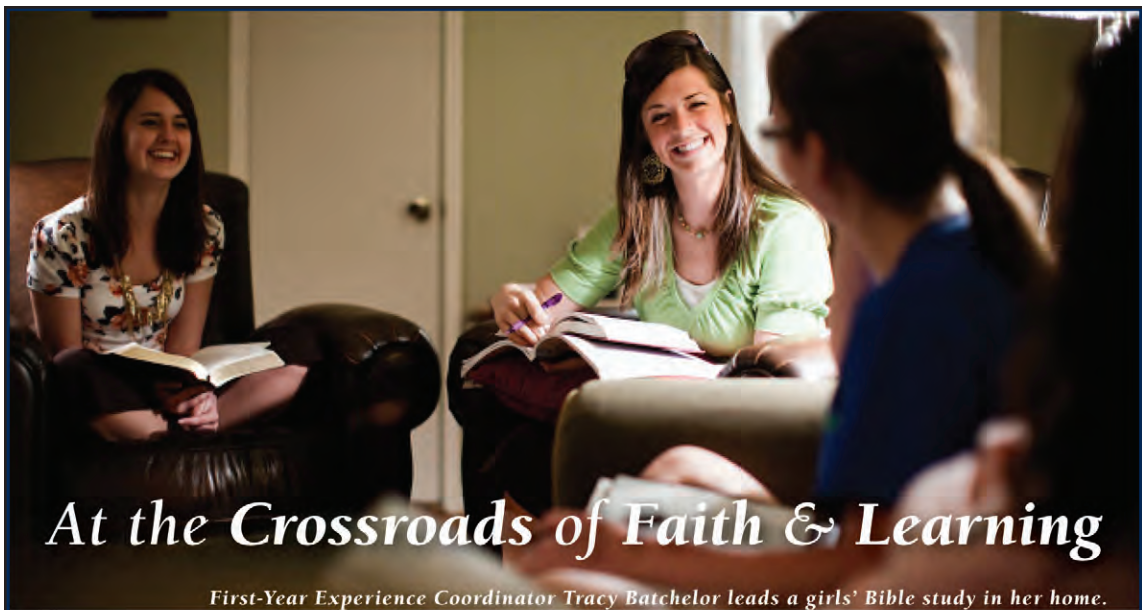
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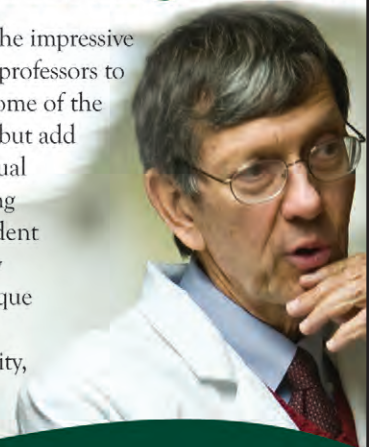
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