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Model for missions

Shades Mountain Baptist completes missions vision plan, increases CP giving

By Kristen Padilla
The Alabama Baptist

What happens when a church casts a God-sized vision? "If it comes to fruition, then only God did it and God gets the glory," said Tom Boston, a member of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills.

So when the Birmingham Baptist Association church fulfilled a vision this year that many members thought was impossible and crazy when Pastor Danny Wood first proposed it in the fall of 2001, the congregation gave all credit to God.

"The vision was out there, but whether or not it could be accomplished (was the question)," Wood said. "God has gone beyond what I can imagine."

And with the fulfillment of that vision, Shades Mountain Baptist might be mistaken for being an official arm of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and the International Mission Board (IMB) because of how involved church members are in the United States, Canada and IMB's focus areas worldwide.

Wood also led Shades Mountain Baptist to go one step further — the church increased Cooperative Program giving while enhancing and expanding its missions emphasis — modeling how churches can be involved at all levels of missions and ministry in Southern Baptist life.

The so-called 2010 Vision came about after Wood went to a conference in the fall of 2000 put on by Global Focus, an organization that helps local churches develop a strategy for global evangelization. After hearing conference speakers talk about the personalization of missions, he wanted Shades Mountain Baptist to partner with Global Focus.

"In the midst of that, I began to pray about what we needed to do as far as missions for our church," Wood said. "Keep in mind that at the time, we averaged eight missions trips a year with about 250 participating and had two (family) units with eight people on the missions field." Shades Moun-



Photo by Lauren Chow

PRAY. GIVE. GO. — Pastor Danny Wood (left) and Jeremy Griem, minister of global ministries, of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, keep global ministries in front of church members with this display in the church foyer.

tain Baptist had approximately 7,000 members.

In the fall of 2001, Wood led the church through 40 days of prayer and fasting. It was during this time that God solidified the vision.

'God seemed to clarify it'

"I had already put together some of the ideas, but as I prayed through [the 40 days], God seemed to clarify it and said, 'This is what you need to do,'" Wood said.

At the conclusion of the 40 days, Wood presented to the church the six parts of the vision: send missionaries to work in all 24 time zones, plant churches in every IMB region, do missions work in all 50 states, adopt a strategic focus city, plant at least five churches in the United States and plant at least one church in Canada.

"When the 2010 Vision got cast, I think I was like anyone else at that time," Boston said. "I walked out of the worship conference and thought, 'That guy is crazy.'"

But as Shades Mountain Baptist, along with Global Focus, began the personalization process by having a Global Impact Celebration (GIC), people began to catch the vision.

"Through [the first GIC] week, our people began to get it and connect with

some of these missionaries," Wood said. "Once [church members] began to understand their hearts, they realized there was something they could do to help them."

Shades Mountain Baptist began offering about 35 missions trips a year and invited the missionaries with whom members would work on these missions trips to its annual GIC. Sunday School classes would adopt a mis-

sionary and host him or her for the week of GIC. As people began forming relationships with the missionaries, they would go on missions trips. When they returned, they would share their story with others. In this way, more and more people caught the vision and the number of people going on missions trips grew, Wood said.

From 2002 to 2009, 9,800 church (See '2010,' page 5)



Photo courtesy of Marla Habermas

SERVICE — A September fellowship event with Crossings Church, Payson, Utah, (a Southern Baptist church plant) and Shades Mountain Baptist Church members was part of the missions trip that completed Shades Mountain's 2010 Vision.

COMMENT

Giving — A Worship Experience

It is bill-paying time. Perhaps it is the first of the month, the 15th or whatever schedule on which one might be paid. There is the electric bill, the gas bill, the water bill, the mortgage and all the others that have accumulated since the last time bills were paid.

In the stack of bills are the offering envelopes from the church. It is time to write a check to the church, too. Baptists often say the first check one should write should be to the church. That keeps God a priority. It helps one be obedient and not give God the leftovers after he or she has cared for himself or herself.

“Obedient.” That might be the right word. One writes a check to the church to be obedient. But is it also an act of worship? Sometimes writing a check to the church, along with paying all the other regular bills, seems like obedience. One has done his or her duty. Another bill is paid, this one to the church. But if it is only a routine act, then the experience is far from an act of worship.

Of course, Baptists do not often treat the time for offerings like an act of worship. Ever since Baptists started using the six-point record system in the early 1900s, members have been encouraged to turn in their offering during Sunday School. Under the system, one marks the box “Giving to the Church,” along with “Present,” “Studied Lesson,” “Daily Bible Reading,” “Brought Bible” and “Attending Church;” places the offering in the envelope; and hands it to the class secretary.

The system was great to encourage regular giving. It was not uncommon for 90 percent or more of the weekly offering to come in through Sunday School. But it had little to do with worship. When the offering plate was passed in the worship service, it was just handed from person to person and frequently remained empty. One could always tell who had not been in Sunday School. They were the ones who put something in the offering plate.

Few churches use the system anymore, but churches still make it easy for one to be “obedient” and give an offering. Weekly offering envelopes are still provided. Many churches allow members to give by credit card. Numerous churches expect “the eagle to fly,” a reference to offerings mailed in by members who cannot be present. Some churches even ask members to allow their offerings to be electronically deducted from their bank accounts on a regular basis. When offering plates are passed



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

during services, the most common reason for giving advocated is to be obedient. After that, it is to finance the work of the church. In most places, little is said about giving as an act of worship.

The Old Testament is clear about offerings and sacrifices. From the beginning of time, Adam and his family brought physical elements as acts of worship before God to express their devotion, thanksgiving and plea for forgiveness.

Caring for others

The Old Testament commanded the Jews to make burnt offerings, grain offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings and guilt offerings. Deuteronomy 14:28–29 stipulated the tithe was to be used to care for the Levites, orphans, widows and foreigners. By New Testament times, rabbis taught that the faithful were to give three tithes: one for support of the temple system, one for praise and thanksgiving to God and one for charity.

Always the temptation was to trust in the sacrificial system’s tithes and offerings as sufficient to be right with God, to be obedient. Repeatedly the prophets condemned the people because they ignored the elements of faith, confession and devotion.

In the first chapter of Isaiah, the prophet said God rejects the nation’s sacrifices. Instead God calls it to “Stop doing wrong, learn to do right. Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow” (Isa. 1:16–17). Jeremiah taught that the symbols of sacrifice must be expressed in individual lives. Micah echoed Isaiah’s words, calling on the people to “act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (6:6–8). Malachi accused the people of despising God by their lack of obedience — offer-

ing sick and lame animals instead of ones “without blemish” as the Law required.

One wonders what Malachi would say to Baptists today who give, on average, about 2 percent of their income as a sacrifice to God through the work of their local church. Would the prophet condemn our meager sacrifices as demonstrations of selfishness? Would he say our offerings show contempt for God’s command rather than devotion to it?

Even though the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary’s cross (Heb. 10:12) ended the animal sacrificial system for Christians, the Bible teaches believers to offer sacrifices of a different kind. Hebrews 13:15–16 says, “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that confess His name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

Jesus was more pointed. In Matthew 23:23, He told the Pharisees they should have tithed and observed the “more important matters of the Law — justice, mercy and faithfulness.” His words sound like those of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Micah.

In 1 Peter 2:5, the apostle wrote that believers are a “holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices to God.” It is impossible to miss the Old Testament connection between priesthood and sacrifice. It is impossible to miss the connection between obedience to God and what the apostle Paul calls “living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God” (Rom. 12:1).

As the check is written to the church or the money is placed in an offering plate, Christians are still bringing a physical element as an act of worship before God, as an expression of devotion and thanksgiving. But being obedient by making an offering is not enough. It never was.

An offering is supposed to be an expression of loving God with heart, mind, soul and strength. It is an expression giving one’s self to God. It is an act of worship. Nothing less meets God’s demands.

Letters to the Editor

CHRISTMAS CARDS

With Christmas 2010 just around the corner, it is time to begin gathering Christmas cards for the HIV/AIDS inmates at Limestone Correctional Facility. For several years, people across the state have helped with this MAC D Ministries’ project. Select cards like you do

for your friends. Christmas cards need to be signed with a name or a group. We have been asked not to include a personal address or phone number. Please do not address or seal the envelopes.

The cards are to bring a little Christmas cheer to some who may not have much to be cheerful about. Remember

that as you select your cards. Please pray for the person who will receive your card. Cards are needed by Dec. 6. This will give time for the inmates to enjoy their cards. Mail them to MAC D Ministries or Scarlett Dunnam, 4030 Sixth St. E., Tuscaloosa, AL 35404. (See ‘Letters,’ page 18)



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

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BP photo

'A LEGACY' — Morris H. Chapman addresses 400 attendees at his Sept. 20 retirement dinner in Nashville, themed 'A Legacy of Leadership.'

SBC Executive Committee honors Morris Chapman

In appreciation for his service, Morris H. Chapman was named to the honorary position of president emeritus of the Executive Committee (EC) and was presented the M.E. Dodd Award for Cooperative Program (CP) support during a retirement dinner Sept. 20 in Nashville.

Throughout his tenure as pastor of four churches over a span of 25 years and as president of the EC for 18 years, Chapman led the way in his support of Southern Baptists' method for funding missions, Roger Spradlin, chairman of the EC, said.

As an M.E. Dodd Award recipient, Chapman received a bronze sculpture of a farmer sowing the Word as he walks across the world, depicting international evangelism.

While other recognitions honor annual accomplishments in CP support, the Dodd award is for sustained achievement.

Spradlin also reported that the EC, in addition to EC personnel policy retirement provisions, will make additional contributions to health insurance costs for Chapman and his wife, Jodi; provide a life insurance policy; and pay travel expenses for the Chapmans to the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meetings.

Spradlin also presented Chapman with the title to the vehicle that has been furnished to him by the EC, and made a tribute to Jodi Chapman.

"It's been a great privilege to serve the Lord Jesus through all these years among Southern Baptists," Chapman said.

"My mother was a Methodist and my dad was a Baptist. When they were married, my mother joined the Baptist church, so I was born into the Baptist faith." (BP)

Lifetime Baptist network

Page pledges to 'work together' in new Executive Committee role

When Frank Page was a child, his parents were not Christians, but God used an older couple, Raymond and Elsie Hampton, to draw him to Christ, Page said as he recounted some formative influences on his path to the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Executive Committee (EC).

His family was very poor and new to the Greensboro, N.C., area when the Hamptons reached out to them by inviting the children to Vacation Bible School and Sunday School at Southside Baptist Church.

"In one of those somewhat classic situations, during the invitation I went forward and I asked the pastor if he would help me come to know Christ," Page said. "He prayed with me, and I prayed a prayer of confession and repentance and of begging God to come into my heart."

"Right there in front of the congregation there at Southside Baptist Church on that Sunday night I gave my life to Christ. I was baptized shortly thereafter, and then later my brother, my sisters, my mom and dad were as well." Page was 9 years old.

Page acknowledged some struggles that are part of the Christian journey.

"Certainly there are many challenges of being a Christian. The ongoing struggle with sin in life as Paul talked about toward the end of his life, how he struggled even at the end to do what he should do and not do what he shouldn't do," he said. "That's a continued challenge for me and I know for every believer to deal with the sinful nature that besets me and besets us."

Last November, Page's oldest daughter, Melissa, died tragically at age 32. In subsequent days, Page said he, his wife and his two younger daughters "have truly experienced God's graceful hand."

"God's grace is sufficient, and we have seen it, we have experienced it. He doesn't give us more than we need, but He never gives us less than we need. So we've seen His hand of provision," Page said.

"Someone once asked, 'How have you handled the death of your daughter?' And I always respond and say, 'I could never put that in the past tense. I handle it every day. ... You deal with it every day. Some days are harder than others.'"

As he begins his tenure as president of the EC, Page, a former president of the SBC and former pastor for 34 years, said he believes he has been called by God to fill the role, and he cited an awareness of how God has ordered his life to shape him for the position.

Looking back, Page said he can see that in those 34 years God led him to pastor churches of varying sizes and styles, from small country churches to large city churches. Along the way, Page cooperated with Baptists on the associational, state and national levels.

"Everybody knows Southern Baptists are independent in nature and in polity, but to know that we do try hard to work together, I believe God has blessed that, and that's a joy for me to know that I have partnerships at various levels with various people all over the world who are Southern Baptists."



BP photo

'ENCOURAGER' — Frank Page (right), president-elect of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, is photographed with Raymond and Elsie Hampton, who invited Page as a child to Sunday School and Vacation Bible School at Southside Baptist Church, Greensboro, N.C., where he made a profession of faith in Christ at age 9.

During a brief greeting to EC members in Nashville on Sept. 21, Page, president-elect of the EC, emphasized the importance of partnerships in the gospel ministry.

"The Bible tells us in Philippians Chapter 1 that there is a partnership in the gospel. The New King James Version calls it a fellowship, but most versions call it a partnership in the gospel," said Page, who will assume the role of president Oct. 1.

"I want to pledge to you my partnership with you. I pledge that to you, and when I say I am a partner with you, that means a great deal to me because partners work alongside one another. They take care of one another."

Page said the Greek term *paraclete*, though often translated "comforter" or "encourager," comes from classic Greek literature in which two Greek soldiers were paired together.

"When the fighting got intense and even became hand-to-hand combat, one's *paraclete* backed up to your back and you fought to the front and to the side, knowing that someone was behind you protecting that which you could not protect yourself," Page, who was elected in June, told EC members.

"To me, that's a partnership. That's where I want us to be, that we care for each other in that way, that we stand with each other in that way."

While he is excited about the days ahead, Page said he realizes that the role of president of the EC is "way beyond" his ability.

"There are forces swirling about us in our convention, in our society, that do not bode well for partnership ministry. There are forces that pull us apart, that pull us into more individual directions," he said.

"But I pledge to you to do all that I can to be your partner and to work together to see

the gospel spread and the Great Commission accomplished."

At subsequent EC meetings, Page said, he will present a 10-year vision and strategy, which will include a goal of seeing the International Mission Board reach every unreached people group with the gospel message.

"I'm going to be the CEO. Do you know what that means? Chief Encouragement Officer," Page said. "I want to encourage the North American Mission Board by the year 2020 to be able to share the gospel with every man, woman, boy and girl on this continent."

Page also intends to support the convention's other entities, including the seminaries.

"Some say this whole ship is sinking," he said. "Some say fast, some say slow. But I will tell you this: Without partnerships, it is a lost cause."

What is needed more than anything for a Great Commission resurgence, Page said, is a "Cooperative Program (CP) resurgence."

"The truth is that the pie [CP] has to get bigger," Page said. In order for that to happen, he said the EC will work in conjunction with Baptist state conventions to promote the CP.

Promoting Jesus' vision

Asked if the EC would promote "Great Commission giving" — one of the recommendations of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force — Page underscored: "We will celebrate all missions giving, but we will promote the Cooperative Program."

However, Page emphasized that "we are not going to beat people over the heads" with the idea that they have to give through the CP in order to be a good Southern Baptist.

"We are going to promote the vision of our Lord Jesus — that being the Great Commission — and ask people to come together to support a vision, not a program," Page said. (BP)

"We will celebrate all missions giving, but we will promote the Cooperative Program."

Frank Page
Executive Committee

Church attendance increases nationwide due to Back to Church Sunday event

Church attendance increased at more than 3,800 churches last weekend during the second national Back to Church Sunday, held Sept. 12.

Participating churches reported an average increase of 26 percent in weekly attendance.

In addition, the overwhelming majority of the visitors said they were favorably impressed with the churches they visited.

According to a post-event survey conducted by Outreach Inc., a Southern California-based church marketing company endorsing the initiative, church members invited more than 1.4 million friends, neighbors, co-workers and family members to special services geared toward those who once attended church, but for a variety of reasons, no longer attended.

"We broke all our previous attendance records for first-time visitors," said Will Kahkonen, lead pastor of Victory Christian Church in Livermore, Maine. "There were multiple commitments and renew-

als, and several others who requested more information about the church. Back to Church Sunday is one of the most successful outreach events that we have ever hosted."

"We were pulling chairs out of everywhere just to get everybody in there," said Todd Vinson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Keiser, Ark., on accommodating the crowd. Normal Sunday attendance at his church is 165, yet 240 came to the Back to Church Sunday service. The usual children's church attendance jumped

to 53, from 25.

"If there are still people not going to church, there's a missions field," Vinson said.

"In just its second year, Back To Church Sunday is already becoming an annual event in churches across America," said Eric Abel, Outreach's vice president of marketing.

"Much of the success of this year's campaign is the heart change in those already active in church,

as they leave their comfort zones to invite someone to share the pew with them. That may make them more open to inviting their friends, neighbors, co-workers and family members every Sunday."

Although there is a national Back to Church Sunday, the campaign is ongoing, with some churches holding events throughout the year.

The next National Back to Church Sunday will be held on Sept. 18, 2011.

Survey results show 95 percent of participating churches would take part in Back To Church Sunday again. Churches are starting to register for 2011.

Although 83 percent of American adults identify themselves as Christians, LifeWay Research, an arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, found that only about 20 percent attend church on any given Sunday. Yet 67 percent of Americans say a personal invitation from a family member would be effective in getting them to visit a church, and 63 percent say an invitation from a friend or neighbor would likely move them to respond.

In support of Back To Church Sunday, Outreach maintains an interactive Facebook page at www.facebook.com/backtochurch and a list of participants at www.backtochurch.com/roster. (RNS)

"We were pulling chairs out of everywhere just to get everybody in there."

**Pastor Todd Vinson
FBC Keiser, Ark.**

Marijuana blamed for drug use increase

The rate of illegal drug use in the United States rose last year to the highest level in nearly a decade, and the nation's top drug adviser said a growing acceptance of medical marijuana could be to blame.

"I think all of the attention and the focus of calling marijuana medicine has sent the absolute wrong message to our young people," Gil Kerlikowske, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, told The Associated Press (AP).

Using marijuana for medical purposes now is legal in 14 states, and a handful will address the issue in some form on ballots in No-

vember. California, which became the first state to legalize medical marijuana in 1996, will vote on whether to legalize recreational use of the drug.

'Mixed messages'

Kerlikowske told CBS News that young people are being exposed to mixed messages about marijuana and while it may have properties that have medicinal values, it is not medicine and, in fact, is "an entry drug."

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health, released Sept. 16 by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Adminis-

tration, interviewed about 67,500 people in 2009 and found that 8.7 percent age 12 or older admitted to using an illicit drug during the past month. In 2008, the rate was 8 percent.

The annual survey, which began in 2002, is the primary source of information on the use of illicit drugs, alcohol and tobacco in the country.

Marijuana was the most commonly used illicit drug, the study found, and in 2009, 6.6 percent said they had used the drug during the past month, which would amount to 16.7 million. The rate was 6.1 percent in 2008 and 5.8 percent in 2007. The survey did not distinguish between medical and recreational marijuana use.

Also of note is that the use of methamphetamines increased by 60 percent last year and the use of ecstasy jumped by 37 percent. A 2006 law that said cold tablets containing pseudoephedrine must be placed behind pharmacy counters led to a drop in meth rates, but Kerlikowske told AP more people are getting around the law and meth is coming across the border from Mexico.

Survey results indicated that 21.2 percent of young adults experimented with illegal drugs in 2009, with the trend "driven in large part by the use of marijuana." (BP)

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

Kansas seminary hosts Burmese refugee pastors

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — As refugees from Myanmar's military government pour into the United States and fan out across the country to resettle, a Baptist seminary is working to provide for one of their many needs: ministry training for leaders of Burmese Christian communities.

Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kan., recently hosted 26 Burmese refugee pastors for three days of classes. They included courses on ministerial ethics and Baptist polity, tailored for the contexts in which the pastors are serving.

The school's leaders hope the courses will be the first in an ongoing program for refugee Burmese ministry leaders in the United States. Approximately 16,000 refugees, mostly from the Chin and Karen ethnic minorities in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, were re-settled here this year. About half of them are Baptists.

"It was one of the most productive short-seminars we ever had, enriching and relevant," said Stephen Hre Kio, a pastor in Indianapolis. "The teachers were excellent and the subjects are needed both for long-term and short-term perspective in our ministry."

The classes were conducted in late August in partnership with the American Baptist Home Mission Societies and with sponsorship through a three-year, \$300,000 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation. The grant supports joint programs between Central and the Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT).

In 2007, Central and MIT officials begin re-exploring their historic partnership through exchanges and trips. This spring, a group of 14 Central students, faculty and staff spent 10 days traveling across Myanmar and experiencing what life is like for Baptists and others there.

Churches damaged in New Zealand earthquake

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — A number of Baptist churches were damaged in an earthquake that affected the South Pacific nation of New Zealand in the early morning of Sept. 4. Despite being a powerful temblor measuring 7.1, a similar strength as the earthquake that devastated Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince on Jan. 12, killing several hundred thousand people, the New Zealand earthquake did not result in loss of life.

Buildings and other structures were severely affected, including churches, and there were widespread power outages. "Several of our churches are very badly damaged and one will have to be demolished," said Rodney Macann, national leader of the Baptist Union of New Zealand.

Macann informed the Baptist World Alliance that the churches were fully insured. "Money is not the greatest need, rather prayer for people to deal with the trauma as the aftershocks continue and many have had their normal living patterns disrupted." The aftershocks, he reported, are expected to continue for several months.

There are approximately 30 Baptist churches in the area close to the epicenter of the quake near Christchurch, New Zealand's second largest urban area. Members of these churches have been offering assistance to those affected. "A number of our churches have responded magnificently to community needs," Macann said.

Alabamian elected chair of ERLC's trustees

NASHVILLE — Eunie Smith, of Birmingham, president of Eagle Forum of Alabama, was elected as chairwoman of The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission's trustees during their Sept. 14-15 meeting in Nashville. Smith is believed to be the second woman elected as chair of a Southern Baptist Convention entity's trustee board. Stephen Faith, associate pastor of Charlestown Road Baptist Church, New Albany, Ind., was elected vice chairman and Charles Lord, pastor of Royal Palms Baptist Church, Phoenix, was elected secretary.

See You at the Pole celebrates its 20th anniversary

Thousands of students across the state gathered around flagpoles to pray as part of the national See You at the Pole 2010 event Sept. 22.

This year marked the 20th anniversary of the First Priority-sponsored annual event. More than 25,000 students were estimated to participate in See You at the Pole activities in Alabama. This year's theme was "Reveal"

based on Matthew 6:19-23.

"For 20 years now, See You at the Pole and First Priority have partnered to encourage and challenge students to lead out in prayer, live out their faith and God to reveal who He is not only on their own campus but all over the United States and world," said Greg Davis, president of First Priority Greater Birmingham. (TAB)



SPEAK UP on issues in the Baptist world by writing a letter to the editor of *The Alabama Baptist*.

Remember to:

- Include your name and address
- Focus on issues, not people
- Be as concise as possible

World Hunger Fund

SBC combats famine issues worldwide

They volunteered to die. The elderly men and women in this famine-wracked West African community knew there was simply not enough food to go around. Unwilling to watch their families starve to death, some made a choice: They would not eat so that their children and grandchildren might live. Some have already wasted away and perished — the price, they believed, of preserving the future.

The babies did not volunteer to die; in fact, their mothers were trying to save them. As local government officials handed out pans of grain, the desperate women swarmed the site, knowing there was not enough for everyone. They pressed into each other under the blistering sun, their infants tied to their backs.

“Three babies died that day from suffocation and heat,” said Kate Gibbs, a field partner for Baptist Global Response (BGR).

Harsh drought

Gibbs and her husband, Todd, live among a people in crisis. These nomadic herders usually sell animals to buy food for their families, but a harsh drought has wrecked their livelihoods.

“In our visits with them, we have

watched watering holes dry up,” Gibbs said. “Daily, we feel the effects of the dust blowing across the arid fields. The people all tell us that the dust blows like that this year because there is no grass to hold it. That also means no grass for the animals to eat.”

As the animals grow thin and feeble from hunger, the price they fetch at market plummets. At the same time, the drought has caused food prices to skyrocket. This deadly combination means starvation for Gibbs’ people, who are already contending with chronic malnutrition.

“In normal times, a shepherd can sell one animal and buy a bag of grain for his family,” she said. “Right now, he would need to sell three animals to get a bag of grain. Most herds are very small, and these people just cannot afford to do that.”

The Gibbsses’ hearts broke as the local people spoke of their hunger and in some cases, showed up at the Gibbsses’ doorstep pleading for food to feed their families. Something had to be done.

The Gibbsses decided on a food relief program for their community. They worked with local leaders to identify the most needy families, who would receive a series of

food shipments hauled in on donkey carts. They also planned a deworming program to kill nutrition-robbing parasites in the stomachs of the people and their animals.

“Since food security is an ongoing issue, we hope to help them make the most out of the food that they are able to obtain,” Gibbs said.

Through BGR, money was allocated from the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund to purchase grain, rice and powdered milk for distribution. When the supplies began to arrive for the first distribution, the local people were so hungry they could not keep to the schedule the Gibbsses set.

‘A drop in the bucket’

“The distribution was moved ahead three days, because when the people heard that the food was in the storage room at the distribution point, they begged to get it,” Gibbs said.

The famine is so severe, she knows the few thousand people her team is able to help are only “a drop in the bucket” compared to the number of the starving in her country. But doing nothing was not an option.

“[Had we not done this food program], we would be showing a selfish and unloving attitude,” Gibbs said.

She hopes that what little she and her team were able to do will show her people that Christians care for their needs. As she considers how blessed she is simply to never have starved, Gibbs recalls an experience



BP photo

SAVABLE — A girl in Pakistan tries to salvage a piece of furniture pulled from the ruins of her home, which was wrecked by devastating rain and floods in August. Hungry Pakistani families are being helped by money from the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund.

that she hopes will inspire Christians to take stock of their own blessings and help those who suffer.

“One day, I was sitting on a mat among a group of my people,” she

said. “They were all telling stories about times when they were hungry due to lack of food. I just sat and listened. Finally I said that I was very blessed because I had never gone hungry because of lack of food. They all agreed that I had lived like a queen! ... Do not take that blessing for granted. Pass some of that blessing on to others less fortunate.” (BGR)

2010 Vision ‘challenged people to get feet wet’

(continued from page 1)

members participated in 300 missions trips — 185 national and 115 international — and 144 people — 44 family units — were sent as full-time missionaries. (2010 numbers won’t be added to this list until later this year.)

“The challenge to plant a church in what was then the 11 regions for IMB and to do missions work in the 24 time zones really challenged people to get out and get their feet wet, and it just changed the mentality of the church to be more outwardly focused,” Boston said. “It’s been a powerful thing for us.”

Wood admits the vision was a shotgun approach (a strategy in which the aim is to cover as wide an area as possible), but it served its purpose in getting people out from behind the walls of the church.

“Even more impressive than coloring in the states and checking off the boxes is that our church has a missions mind-set,” he said of accomplishing the vision. “Missions is the DNA of our church. If you cut us, we will bleed missions.”

“Within six years, we had a 100

percent increase in giving to missions,” Wood continued. “We also increased our Cooperative Program giving from 8 percent to 10 percent in 2003. At this point, we’ve given \$13 million to missions.”

And this increase in missions giving continued despite having two capital campaigns for renovations and expansions to the church campus during this time.

Even the children’s and youth ministries saw a change in focus. Now if someone begins at Shades Mountain Baptist as a sixth-grader and continues until he or she graduates from high school, then he or she will have 11 opportunities to go on a missions trip, including four international trips.

On Sept. 20, the last trip connected to the vision concluded in Salt Lake City. The church had planted churches in every IMB region; done missions work in all

50 states; adopted a strategic focus city, New Brunswick, N.J.; and planted seven churches in the United States and one church in Canada. The only part that was not completed was sending missionaries to work in all 24 time zones; the church sent long-term and short-term missionaries to work in 21 time zones.

“The only three time zones that weren’t met were in the Pacific Ocean (area),” Wood said. “(But) we believe that we covered about everything. ... It’s just truly amazing to think in

eight years, that we’ve been able to cover those areas all around the world.”

Boston, who had only been on several Builders for Christ missions trip prior to the 2010 Vision but has since taken numerous missions trips to places like Thailand, Spain, Indonesia and South Africa, said had it not been for the 2010

“Missions is the DNA of our church. If you cut us, we will bleed missions.”
Pastor Danny Wood
Shades Mountain Baptist Church

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First Baptist Church, Dora

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1440 Sharon Blvd. | Dora, AL 35062
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Auburn's Farmville Church marks 175 years

By Sammie Jo Barstow
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Mabel Bryant was there 25 years ago when members of Farmville Baptist Church, Auburn, put certain keepsakes into its cornerstone to commemorate its 150th anniversary.

And she was there Aug. 22 to see the keepsakes removed from the cornerstone as the Tuskegee-Lee Baptist Association church marked its 175th anniversary.

"I remembered most of what was in it: newspaper articles, two Bibles and a lot of letters," said Bryant, a longtime church member.

Rich history

Pastor Josh Tanner was eager to see what the cornerstone held to learn more about Farmville Baptist's history. He was particularly interested to find fund-raising letters that were sent to community leaders and prominent people in the state in an effort to rebuild the church after it burned Jan. 14, 1951.

"Not only people in the community responded but also many state senators and legislators and prominent businessmen in the state," Tanner said. "This just demonstrates to me that Farmville was and still is a significant influence in the life of our community. We look forward to continuing to work in every way we can to impact the Kingdom."

More than 200 current and former members and friends gathered to celebrate nearly two centuries of doing just that.

The church, which began with 17 members, now averages 130 in Sunday School.

David Bentley was the guest speaker. A retired pastor from Opelika, Bentley has served as interim

pastor of Farmville three times.

"Farmville has always been a good, strong church because it is theologically sound and traditionally strong," he said. "It has always been at the center of Baptist thought and leadership."

The church was established in 1835, four years before the city of Auburn was incorporated. The congregation met in a schoolhouse until the first church building was constructed in 1893.

Other than those bits of information, Farmville's history is difficult to trace because the 1951 fire destroyed its records.

However, the blaze did not harm the congregation's spirit. Members met the night of the fire and determined to rebuild.

After worshiping in a local community center for 54 weeks, they relocated to the basement of what would become the present sanctuary.

On May 16, 1954, the new building was dedicated. The sanctuary's furnishings incorporated the only pieces that could be salvaged from the burned building: five pews and a piano.

In 1967, an education building was added.

Two events held

Because the exact date of the church's founding is unknown, the congregation decided to celebrate the 175th anniversary with two events.

The first event was held May 16. Nearly 210 people attended that morning service, which was followed by a churchwide, potluck dinner and old-fashioned games, such as a watermelon-eating contest and three-legged race.

'Faithful to its mission'

Fairford's Liberty celebrates its 100th anniversary

By Sammie Jo Barstow
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Attendance at Liberty Baptist Church, Fairford, more than quadrupled Aug. 29, when the Washington Baptist Association church celebrated its 100th anniversary.

More than 220 people gathered for the landmark occasion at the church, which generally averages fewer than 50 in its Sunday morning worship service.

Mark Dunn — pastor of Rockville Baptist Church, Jackson, in Clarke Baptist Association, whose father, Robert, served his first pastorate at Liberty Baptist in the early 1950s — preached the celebration sermon.

"It speaks well of the church that so many people returned to celebrate the anniversary," Dunn said. "This church has always been faithful to its mission of sharing the gospel."

Special occasion

During the celebration, Michael Scarborough, music minister at Thomasville Baptist Church in Clarke Association, led the special music.

Former Liberty member Reggie Young played piano. Also Jack Wright, District 7 Commissioner for the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented a plaque to Pastor Larry Thompson and the three oldest deacons: John Young, Robert Evans and Earl Pugh.

For this special occasion,

Thompson's wife, Wilene, collected more than 400 photographs to create a pictorial history of the church, which was shown during the celebration.

The church traces its history to the early 1900s, when Baptists in the Fairford community near McIntosh had to travel to nearby Citronelle, Calvert and Redbud (now named Malcolm) to attend church. Recognizing the need for a church in their own community, 10 Fairford residents met Aug. 21, 1910, in the home of John C. Jones to organize Liberty Baptist Church.

They also agreed to call William E. Bradley as their pastor.

By the end of 1910, 14 new members had joined. Membership had increased to 53 by 1929.

Shortly after the church was formed, its first building was constructed on land across the street from the current site. That first structure contained 20 handmade pews.

Evans, who has been a member of Liberty for 65 years, recalled having Sunday School under a large tree when he was a child and that the church was heated with a wood stove during the winter.

In 1947, a new concrete block

church was completed across the street. Some of the original lumber was used in the new building, which boasted electric lights, gas heaters and window fans.

In 1976, a brick sanctuary was added to the block building, and a fellowship hall followed in 2000.

Some of the handmade pews from the original building can be found in the fellowship hall.

Young, whose 72-year membership is a church record, has seen many of the changes that have come about at Liberty. But through the decades, one thing has remained constant: the congregation's willingness to meet needs in

"We have a mandate to win the world for Christ. And Liberty Baptist wants to do our part in making Christ known."

Pastor Larry Thompson
Liberty Baptist Church

Jesus' name.

"Over the years, our church has been able to help numerous families that were having bad financial trouble, and we still continue to do that," Young said.

Helping those in need

Of course, helping those in need opens the door for the church to accomplish its ultimate purpose.

"We have a mandate to win the world for Christ," Thompson said.

"And Liberty Baptist wants to do our part in making Christ known."

Alabama Ministries

Alabama Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

► Ronnie Brewer was called as the new state coordinator for the Alabama Cooperative Baptist Fellowship on Sept. 10.

He comes from Trinity Baptist Church, Madison, where he served as senior pastor from 1987 to 1990 and 2001 to 2010.

A graduate of the University of Montevallo and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., Brewer also served as senior Baptist campus minister of the University of Alabama and Baptist campus

minister of the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Brewer and his wife, Janet, have two children.

Sav-A-Life Shelby

► Sav-A-Life Shelby is celebrating its 25th anniversary with an event at the Cahaba Grand Conference Center in Birmingham on Oct. 19 at 7 p.m. The featured speaker will be former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee.

For ticket information, call 205-664-1667 or visit www.savlifeshelby.org.

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Someone You Should Know


JEANIE ROBINSON

By Shirley Clower
Special to The Alabama Baptist

First Baptist Church, Headland
Judson Baptist Association

FAVORITE BIBLE VERSE: Psalm 34:1
FAVORITE HYMN: "He Touched Me"
HOBBIES: Reading, gardening, cooking and traveling

FAMILY STATUS: Married to Herman for 50 years; one daughter, Lillian; and one grandchild



ROBINSON

Jeanie Robinson has been very active in her church. She taught Sunday School for 50 years for age groups ranging from the junior department to senior adults. Robinson has served on numerous committees and was a longtime member of the adult choir.

Q: What was your childhood like?
A: We lived in the country. Our church had services only twice a month.

Q: How did you come to know the Lord?
A: I came to know the Lord when I was 8 years old from my GA (Girls in Action) teacher.

Q: How have you been involved in church through the years?
A: I taught Sunday School for 50 years, taught Training Union, ... taught GAs and Bible study groups. At the present time, I am a member of the WMU (Woman's Missionary Union) prayer group.

Q: What have you gotten from these ministries?
A: A blessing only God could give.

Q: How do you see yourself involved in the church in the future?
A: As long as I am able, I will serve the Lord in my church.

Q: What does the Christian life mean to you?
A: Peace, joy, love in my heart, giving God the praise and glory for all my family and also my church family.

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

Wife of FBC Eclectic student pastor wins state title

Competing in a pageant may seem like an odd way to relieve stress, but for Jancsi Roney, it did just that.

Roney competed in and won the Mrs. Alabama pageant, held June 26 at the Indian Springs Theater. She said her husband, Brandon, who is the student pastor of First Baptist Church, Eclectic, encouraged her to try something new.

"I chose to participate because it was a fun distraction from the normal routine of life, and it allowed me to set goals for myself spiritually, intellectually and physically," Roney said.

The new responsibilities of her title only add to Roney's already busy schedule. She works at Worthy's Inc. in Eclectic while pursuing a master's degree in education from Auburn University at Montgomery. She is also active in her church as a small group leader, girls Bible study leader and children's church volunteer.

Roney's platform focuses on encouraging others, especially women and girls, to find their confidence in the Lord instead of earthly things. She plans to travel the state and share her message of gaining confidence through God and personal testimony of His faithfulness.

"I was, and at times, still am, one of the most self-conscious women, but I have come to know that the Lord alone is able to sustain me and give me confidence in all situations," Roney said. "I have concluded that no [earthly things] can trump the grace and peace that makes a woman of God beautiful beyond measure because she knows to whom she belongs."

On Aug. 31, she traveled to Tucson, Ariz., to compete for the title of Mrs. America. While she did not place in the pageant, Roney accomplished what she set out to do: share the Word of God. She gave her fellow contestants a Bible engraved with their name on the cover.

"It was beyond a blessing to hear one contestant tell me she had always wanted a Bible but this was the first one she ever owned," Roney said. "It was beyond amazing to share God's Word with a woman from every state in our country."

Russell Wilks retires after 60 years in music ministry

Russell Wilks' favorite song is "Well Done, My Child," so it was no surprise that he wanted it sung during the Aug. 29 afternoon service honoring him upon his retirement as music director at Sylvania Baptist Church.

Wilks, who just turned 92, began his 60-plus years in music ministry in gospel quartets. A Henagar native, Wilks went to Oklahoma City in February 1947 to sing with a quartet. Over the next two years, Wilks sang with four other quartets, moving between Alabama and Texas.

By 1952, Wilks had moved back to the Sand Mountain area and organized a couple of quartets. He also began serving as part-time choir director for Henagar Baptist Church in Sand Mountain Baptist Association. He remained at Henagar Baptist until 1988, when he moved to Sylvania Baptist, also in Sand Mountain Association, to become its part-time choir director.

"I have felt called to work in that position (at the churches)," Wilks said. "It was just carrying out another thing I ought to do for the Lord."

But he couldn't have done all of it alone. Wilks said his wife of 71 years, Donnie, has been "a big part" of his ministry.

Wilks, who has sung in 20 states and at numerous weddings and funerals, said although he is retired, he is going to keep on singing.

And that's what Wilks did Aug. 29. The first hour of the special service was spent in the sanctuary singing favorite gospel hymns.

"[The service] was very special in the fact that Russell really likes four-part harmonies and there was a lot of that done during that hour of singing," said Pastor David Starling. "[Wilks] was very faithful. Even though he was up in years, he was still faithful in doing what the Lord called him to do in leading the singing."

The remainder of the service was spent in the fellowship hall visiting with old friends. The church presented Wilks with a plaque for his service, and church members gave him a money tree.

"I think some of us are called to different jobs, and I think [singing] was my calling," he said.



RONEY



WILKS

Across Alabama's Associations

AUTAUGA

► **Glynwood Church, Prattville**, will celebrate its 20th anniversary Oct. 3, 10:15 a.m. Former pastor Glenn Brock will speak. Former choir members are invited to sing in the choir. C. Bruce Hose is pastor.

BALDWIN

► **First Church, Fairhope**, will hold a senior resources expo Oct. 12, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. There will be health screenings, flu shots, educational breakout sessions, food and entertainment. Jerry M. Henry is pastor.

BESSEMER

► **Canaan Church, Bessemer**, will host RamCorps, a 22-member brass group from the University of Mobile, Oct. 3, 9 and 10:30 a.m. The group is under the direction of Kenn Hughes. Morgan Bailey is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Shades Mountain Church, Vestavia Hills**, is holding a grief recovery support group for those who have lost loved ones Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. in Room D636. The church also is holding a cancer support group for patients and caregivers Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. in Room D644. For information call 205-822-1670 or e-mail lwaits@shades.org. Danny Wood is pastor. ► **First Church, Thomas**, in Birmingham, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 3, 11 a.m. The Dotson Family will sing. Lunch will follow. Bud Thomson is pastor. ► The women's ministry at **First Church, Trussville**, will hold fall tablescapes Oct. 18. Hot cider will be served at 6 p.m. Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. Donna Ryan, a house parent at Big Oak Ranch, will speak. For tickets call June Murray at 205-901-0211 by Oct. 11. Buddy Champion is pastor.

CHEROKEE

► **East Centre Church** will celebrate its 61st anniversary and homecoming Oct. 3, 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow. Former pastors will be recognized. John Allen is pastor.

CLARKE

► **First Church, Fulton**, will host Ronnie Cottingham in concert Oct. 3, 6 p.m. Cottingham records for Jus' Jesus Records, a division of Jus' Jesus Ministries Inc. and Jus' Jesus Music Company. John Copeland is pastor of First, Fulton.

COFFEE

► **New Haven Church, Elba**, will hold revival Oct. 3-6 with Ray Jones, pastor of Ridgecrest Church, Dothan. Services will be Sunday at 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. For information call Pastor Gary Dunn at 334-897-8245.

CONECUH

► **Bower Memorial Church**,

Evergreen, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 3, 10:30 a.m. Tommy White will speak. Lunch will follow. For information call 251-578-1024. Jim Griffin is pastor.

ELMORE

► **Jonathan Studdard** is the new children and youth minister for **Tallaweka Church, Tallassee**. Isaac Kervin is pastor. ► **Refuge Church, Tallassee**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 3, 10:30 a.m. Heartline gospel group, of Prattville, will sing. Reggie Quimby, director of the office of global missions for the State Board of Missions, will lead the music. A covered-dish lunch will follow. Steve Scarborough is pastor. ► **Santuck Church, Wetumpka**, will celebrate the second anniversary of its Celebrate Recovery program Oct. 7, 7 p.m. Iris Blue, of Lucas, Texas, will speak. For information call 334-567-2364. Gary R. Miller is pastor.

HALE

► **Hank Atchison** is the new pastor of **Gallion Church**. He comes from Valley View Church in Tuscaloosa, where he served as youth pastor. He and his wife, Charlie, have four children. The church also has a new Sunday schedule. Sunday School will be from 9:45 to 10:40 a.m. The service will be at 10:50 a.m.

LIMESTONE

► **Lindsay Lane Church, Athens**, will hold revival Oct. 3-6 with Vance Pitman, pastor of Hope Church, Las Vegas. Teddy Johnson, worship arts pastor for Hope Church, will lead the music. Services will be Sunday at 8:45 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. and weeknights at 6:30. Child care will be provided for birth through four years old. Student night will be Wednesday. For information call 256-232-0020 or visit www.lindsaylane.org. Dusty McLemore is pastor.

MOBILE

► **Adam B. Dooley** is the new pastor of **Dauphin Way Church, Mobile**. He comes from Red Bank Church, Chattanooga, Tenn., where he served as pastor. He also has served churches in Kentucky. Dooley holds a bachelor's degree in ministry from Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville, Ky., and master



DOOLEY

of divinity and doctor of philosophy from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He and his wife, Heather, have two children. ► **Bayou Sara Church, Saraland**, will celebrate its 50th anniversary homecoming Oct. 3, 10:30 a.m. Former Minister of Music, Education and Outreach

Jim Lott and his wife, Kaye, will be special guests. Lunch will follow. Dennis E. Dunn is pastor.

MORGAN

► **Bethlehem Church, Hartselle**, will hold a gospel singing with Soul Seekers Quartet Oct. 2, 7 p.m. Joe Laidley is pastor. ► **East Highland Church, Hartselle**, will celebrate its 40th homecoming Oct. 3, 10:30 a.m. Sunday School will be at 9:15 a.m. Lunch will be at 11:45 a.m. There will be no evening activities or service. Walter Blackman is pastor.

RUSSELL

► **Ladonia Church, Phenix City**, will host Another Day Closer to Heaven Ministry's first Saturday night of the month gospel sing Oct. 2, 6-8 p.m. EST. Gospel singer/songwriter Denny Grimes, Deliverance and local gospel artists will sing. For information or to be a part of the monthly singings contact Grimes at 334-297-8167 or dennygrimes64y2k@bellsouth.net. David Howle is pastor. ► **Seale Church** will celebrate homecoming Oct. 3, 10:30 a.m. Former pastor Dan Deliz will speak. Lunch will follow.

SALEM-TROY

► **Salem-Troy Association** will hold an invitational soccer tournament as an outreach event for the Hispanic community Oct. 3, 3 p.m., at the Troy Sportsplex. There will be teams from Troy, Dothan, Enterprise and Eufaula. There will be food. For information call 334-372-2397. Avery Walker is director of missions.

SELMA

► **Elkdale Church, Selma**, will hold DivorceCare Sundays from 4:30 to 6 p.m. starting Oct. 3. Cindy Duck will be the leader. For information call 334-872-3456. Cory Horton is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Flatwoods Church, Northport**, is holding its annual pumpkin patch Mondays-Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sundays from 1 to 4:45 p.m. until Oct. 30. Benefits will go to youth attending World Changers, local projects and other youth events. Cecil Smith is pastor.

WALKER

► **Matt Lotspeich** is the new youth minister for **First Church, Jasper**. He is a graduate of Shorter College in Rome, Ga., and Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. He is married to Lindsey.



LOTSPEICH

Plan now to leave a legacy

Estate planning allows individuals to provide for their family's, church's future

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The sudden death of state Rep. Lea Fite, of Jacksonville, on Oct. 26, 2009, was a shock to many, including the members of Iron City Baptist Church, Anniston, his church home.

Nearly 10 months later, the Calhoun Baptist Association congregation was stunned once again when members of Fite's family presented Senior Pastor Mike Holcomb and the church with an \$850,000 check.

Holcomb believes the donation stemmed from a conversation he had with Fite about the challenges that often come with church growth, including the cost of constructing new buildings. Soon after this conversation, he believes Fite made plans to include Iron City Baptist in his will, never imagining that in four months, he would die.

"Lea loved his church so much and invested in it for the future," Holcomb said. "He was about leaving a legacy, and this (offering) will be used to further the kingdom of God."

Though estimates vary, surveys by financial experts suggest that at least half and perhaps as many as three-quarters of American adults do not have a will. However, a will is a person's last opportunity to distribute his or her assets, according to Barry Bledsoe, president of The Baptist Foundation of Alabama (TBFA). Though it can be



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frightening to face the prospect of our own mortality, estate planning, including writing a will, is a critical part of stewardship for adults of all ages, he said.

"When it comes to stewardship, the largest act of financial stewardship most of us will ever undertake is how we plan our estate," Bledsoe said.

Act of stewardship

But the church is the most overlooked "charity" in America when it comes to estate gifts, he said.

The term "estate" refers to everything a person owns, including property, retirement accounts,

insurance policies and anything else with monetary value. "When we die, everything we own goes to other people in one of three ways: by right of survivorship, by contract or by will," Bledsoe said.

The right of survivorship means that anything owned jointly goes to the person named as joint owner, which is usually a spouse or child. Houses and bank accounts often pass in this way. Retirement accounts and life insurance policies pass by contract because they require that the owner specify a beneficiary. The beneficiary can be the owner's estate but only if it is in writing.

The remainder of an individual's assets, including gifts to family, friends or organizations, may be distributed through a will. However, few assets actually pass by will because many are either jointly held or have a designated beneficiary, Bledsoe said.

"If you co-own a home with your spouse but you state in your will that the home should go to your children, your will is ineffective. Likewise if you write in your will that you want an IRA to go to the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes but you have your son named as the beneficiary, by law, the son gets the IRA. A will is the only opportunity we have to make charitable gifts, if we choose to do that, but it has to be done correctly," he said.

Randy Driggers, TBFA vice president for development, works to educate Alabama Baptists about the principles of biblical stewardship and the many ways the Foundation can help them design an estate plan.

Though TBFA does not write wills, staff members can help individuals construct language for gifts to Baptist entities. The Foundation also can serve as executor of an estate for those who agree to

leave 10 percent of their estate to Alabama Baptist causes.

TBFA provides helpful tools for those who are just getting started on an estate plan. One tool is LegacyLinc, available through the Foundation's website (www.tbfa.org). LegacyLinc takes about 30 minutes and guides the user through a series of questions about assets, taxes and stewardship. By the end of the tutorial, the user can have a starting point for an estate plan.

Sharing the message

But TBFA doesn't just help individuals. Its Kingdom Stewardship Alliance (KSA) is designed to equip local church leaders to teach others about estate stewardship. Driggers called KSA an ongoing way of sharing the stewardship message with people in the local church, which is critical for the long-term support of work at the local, state, national and international level.

"It is so important for the people in the pew to understand that how they plan their estate may be the most significant gift they can give to further the missions work of the church," he said.

For more information, call 334-394-2000.



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The Smile Makes All the Difference



walking the streets will show winning smiles while they work. Women carrying the burden on their heads will surprise you with smiles, and even some Moped taxi drivers could find the smile when we smiled at them.

The church people know how to smile when they greet each other. It is as though they are saying, "We have, by the grace of God, survived another day. We are getting stronger, and we are

During my fast-track visit in Haiti in early September, I was able to meet many pastors and associational leaders as well as my approximate counterpart in missions and ministry assignments. When we would greet each other, broad smiles enveloped the faces of these Haitian Christian leaders. The old adage about having a winning smile could be traced applicably to Haiti. The people know how to genuinely smile.

After leaving the airport and flying out of Port-au-Prince, we saw the mountain communities and the natural beauty of the land called Haiti. I don't want to seem overly sentimental or maudlin, but the mountains seemed to offer a broadly-creviced smile pointed toward us as we flew fairly low over the range of tropical mountains.

In Jacmel, the smiles are abundant and genuine. The people

moving forward into the future with the smile of God on our faces."

At the Voice of Hope Orphanage, little displaced children won the smiling contest. They were so thrilled to see guests from the US. They ran to us with open arms and huge smiles. We tried to learn their names, and they succeeded in pronouncing "Alabama" in an exuberant way. They wanted to learn my first name, and it was fun to hear them saying it over and over with radiant smiles on their faces.

One event defined the trip for me. I had been asking myself about the smiles. How can you smile when so much suffering has been visited upon you? How can you smile when your world has been shattered?

As our party made our way down a back-alley road, we needed to turn around. This was slowly and cautiously done due to



popularly known as riding shotgun. When our vehicle pulled into the backyard of a family, the mother and three or four children came to see this spectacle. I smiled and waved, and they all did the same.

pedestrian and Moped traffic. I was riding in the passenger seat up front,

robbed them of the smile of God in their lives.

In Christ, we have the joy of the Lord in us now and forevermore. Nothing can destroy that relational spirit of Christ living within us. As Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again, I say rejoice." The Haitian believers took that admonition seriously, and that has provided them with the power

to see it through. The smile of God in their lives made all the difference between serious discouragement and glorious encouragement.

For more information about Alabama Baptists' global partnership in Jacmel, Haiti, please contact State Missionary Mel Johnson (disaster relief strategist) at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 389, mjohnson@alsbom.org.



By Rick Lance
State Missionary
Executive Director-Treasurer

I gave them a thumbs-up for hope. Their smile brightened, and I did the same.

What happened next touched me in such a way that it actually defined the spirit of the trip for me. After smiling and waving and smiling with thumbs up, I placed my hand over my heart and offered a teary-eyed smile. They all responded in kind with even broader and loving smiles.

The point I see in this experience of happy Haitians is rather obvious.

They may have faced a catastrophic disaster, but they haven't lost their smile. They are undergoing the frustrations of a political election. Yet, the less than ethical conduct by some have not



SENIOR ADULT CHOIR FESTIVALS**Thursday and Friday, October 21-22**

These events will be held on October 21 at Green Valley Baptist Church, Birmingham, and Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery, and on October 22 at First Baptist Church, Fairhope, and Providence Baptist Church, Opelika.

For a registration form or for other information, please call

1-800-264-1225: State Missionary Keith Hibbs, ext. 217, khibbs@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Susan Corley, ext. 279, scorley@alsbom.org or go to www.alsbom.org/seniorfest.

KEYBOARD FESTIVALS**November 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14**

Dates and locations include: November 5, First Baptist Church, Huntsville, 2-6 p.m.; November 6, Meadow Brook Baptist Church, Birmingham, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; November 7, First Baptist Church, Gadsden, 2-5 p.m.; November 9, First Baptist Church, Enterprise, 3-6 p.m.; November 9, Government Street Baptist Church, Mobile, 2-6 p.m.; November 13, Parkview Baptist Church, Eufaula, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.; and November 14, Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Gordo. 2-4 p.m. The cost will be \$5 per student (money to be turned in by the teacher).

To register online go to www.alsbom.org/keyfest, or for more information, call 1-800-264-1225:

Music Specialist Karen Gosselin, ext. 318, kgosselin@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Susan Corley, ext. 279, scorley@alsbom.org.

**NEWSONG 2011 TOUR****Friday through Sunday, January 7-9, 2011**

NewSong, the 7th & 8th grade honor choir, will feature Ed Cleveland as guest clinician. The cost of \$225 is payable by December 12, 2010 (includes music, shirt, local bus transportation, meals and activity). Students must arrange transportation to Shocco Springs and from Albertville. Audition forms and CDs are due by November 12. Notifications will be sent out by November 19.

For a tentative schedule and other details, please call 1-800-264-1225: State Missionary Keith Hibbs, ext. 217, khibbs@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Susan Corley, ext. 279, scorley@alsbom.org or go to www.alsbom.org/newsong.

ALL-STATE CHILDREN'S HONOR CHOIR TOUR**Friday through Saturday, March 4-6, 2011**

The members will be chosen by audition from some of the finest young musicians in our state. There will be four regional rehearsals, and then the group will come together for joint rehearsals and concerts March 4-6, 2011, in the areas of Panama City and Enterprise. Check online at www.alsbom.org/chc-tour for specifics as updated information is posted.

Older children in grades 4, 5 and 6 who are actively involved in a children's choir are eligible to audition. Selection of honor choir members will be based on an audition CD and the completion of required registration forms (available online). Directors must submit a recorded audition of the children (one CD for all voices) from their church, using the material on the registration form.

Audition form, CD and agreement form are due in the Office of Worship Leadership & Church Music no later than November 1.

The total cost for the trip is tentatively set at \$200 (includes bus transportation while on tour, meals, two nights' lodging, music packet and two t-shirts to be worn during performances). This money will be due by February 1.

For more information, please call 1-800-264-1225: Music Specialist Karen Gosselin, ext. 318, kgosselin@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Cindy Parrish, ext. 230, cparrish@alsbom.org.



FILL
MY CUP,
LORD



"I SHALL LIFT UP THE
CUP OF MY SALVATION AND
CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD."

PSALM 116:13 NIV

ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF
BAPTIST SECRETARIES
CONFERENCE

SUNDAY THROUGH WEDNESDAY,
MARCH 6-9, 2011
SHOCCO SPRINGS

GENERAL CONFERENCE LEADER:
JANIE WALTERS, MADISON, MISS.

DEVOTIONAL LEADER: AL SONANSTINE

WORSHIP LEADER: "SHACK ON A ROCK"

SAMPLE OF BREAKOUT SESSIONS BEING
OFFERED: PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION
MODULES, COMMUNICATION AND
ADMINISTRATION, PERSONALITY PROFILE, FREE TO
FORGIVE, THE POTTER'S WHEEL, "STAMPING UP,"
QUICKBOOKS, FINANCES AND TAXES, MEDIASHOUT,
PUBLISHER, EXCEL, GENERATIONS, THE VALUE OF
BIBLE STUDY, DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE,
TIME MANAGEMENT, THE SECRETARY AS A
WEDDING COORDINATOR, THE NEW/FIRST TIME
SECRETARY, THE ASSOCIATIONAL SECRETARY AND
MUCH MORE.

PLEASE CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT
WWW.ALABAMABAPTISTSECRETARIES.COM AND LOOK
US UP ON FACEBOOK.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT
RENEE RIZZO, AABS PRESIDENT,
AT (334) 774-2071 OR (334) 237-0684,
RENEERIZZO@CHARTERINTERNET.COM.

FOCUS on One Mission

Nominations Sought for Leadership Award

The Troy L. Morrison Leadership/Church Health Award has become a significant recognition since its inception in 1999. During the first three years of its existence, the award was presented in two categories: New Work and Established Work. In 2002, the award was expanded to include a minister from a Bivocational Work.

Persons who would like to submit nominations for the award need to call the



Office of Leadership & Church Health to obtain criteria for nominees and a nominating form.

Completed nomination forms should be sent to the Office of Leadership & Church Health prior to October 29, 2010. The presentation of the awards will be made at the 2010 annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention in November at Hunter Street Baptist Church in Hoover.

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

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

STATE RACE SOAPBOX DERBY

Saturday, October 16

*In front of the State Capitol
down Dexter Avenue*

Registration: 9 a.m.

Race: 10 a.m.

Bring a car and race* or just come to watch.



**Rules of the race and car specifications are available by contacting State Missionary Steve Stephens at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 268, sstephens@alsbom.org, or visit www.alsbom.org/ra*



FREE

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

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

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

order your 2010-2011 church planning guide



IMPACT:
to have an
immediate
and powerful
effect on
something or
someone



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

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

Some ideas might include caring for the elderly, sharing the Gospel door to door, holding a fifth quarter rally for local school students, raking leaves for homebound church members, holding an evangelistic block party, organizing or restocking a local food pantry, ministering to international families in your community, painting or fixing up a neighbor's home, serving your community by volunteering for the job nobody else wants to do... it's all up to you!

MPACT
alabama:
to have an
immediate and
powerful
effect on *your*
community for
the cause of
CHRIST!

There are hundreds of thousands of students across Alabama who can make a powerful, positive and eternal **MPACT** on their local mission field. Will you and your students join that force of Great Commission Christians and make an **MPACT** this year?

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

www.thestudenthub.org

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

CALLED TO COMMUNICATE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4
9 A.M.—4 P.M.



Danny Wood,
pastor,
Shades Mountain
Baptist Church,
Birmingham



Frank Page, pastor,
president and chief
executive officer,
SBC Executive
Committee



**Worship Leaders
Michael &
Linda Adler,**
Shades Mountain
Baptist Church

Take Your Preaching • Speaking • Teaching to the Next Level of Effectiveness

Our annual "Called to Communicate" conference is expected to draw another capacity crowd to the Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery, on November 4.

LEADERS:

- Danny Wood, pastor, Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham
- Frank Page, president and chief executive officer, SBC Executive Committee.
- Michael and Linda Adler, Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham. Michael is SMBC's worship pastor, and both Michael and Linda are professional vocal coaches and former members of TRUTH.

COST: \$20 (covers all materials, lunch and breaks)

Some of the potential topics to be considered:

- Spiritual preparation for preaching, speaking, teaching.
- What style of preaching, speaking, teaching is truly effective in changing lives? Is one style more effective than another? Is "style" an appropriate consideration?
- What about the content of preaching, speaking, teaching? What tools do effective communicators use to prepare to preach, speak, teach?
- Why the truth of the Word of God continues to be the message we must deliver. Why we must continue to work diligently at the task due to the importance of it.

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

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



REACHING FAMILIES THROUGH STUDENT MINISTRY

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21 • 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
BAPTIST BUILDING, 2001 E. SOUTH BLVD.,
MONTGOMERY



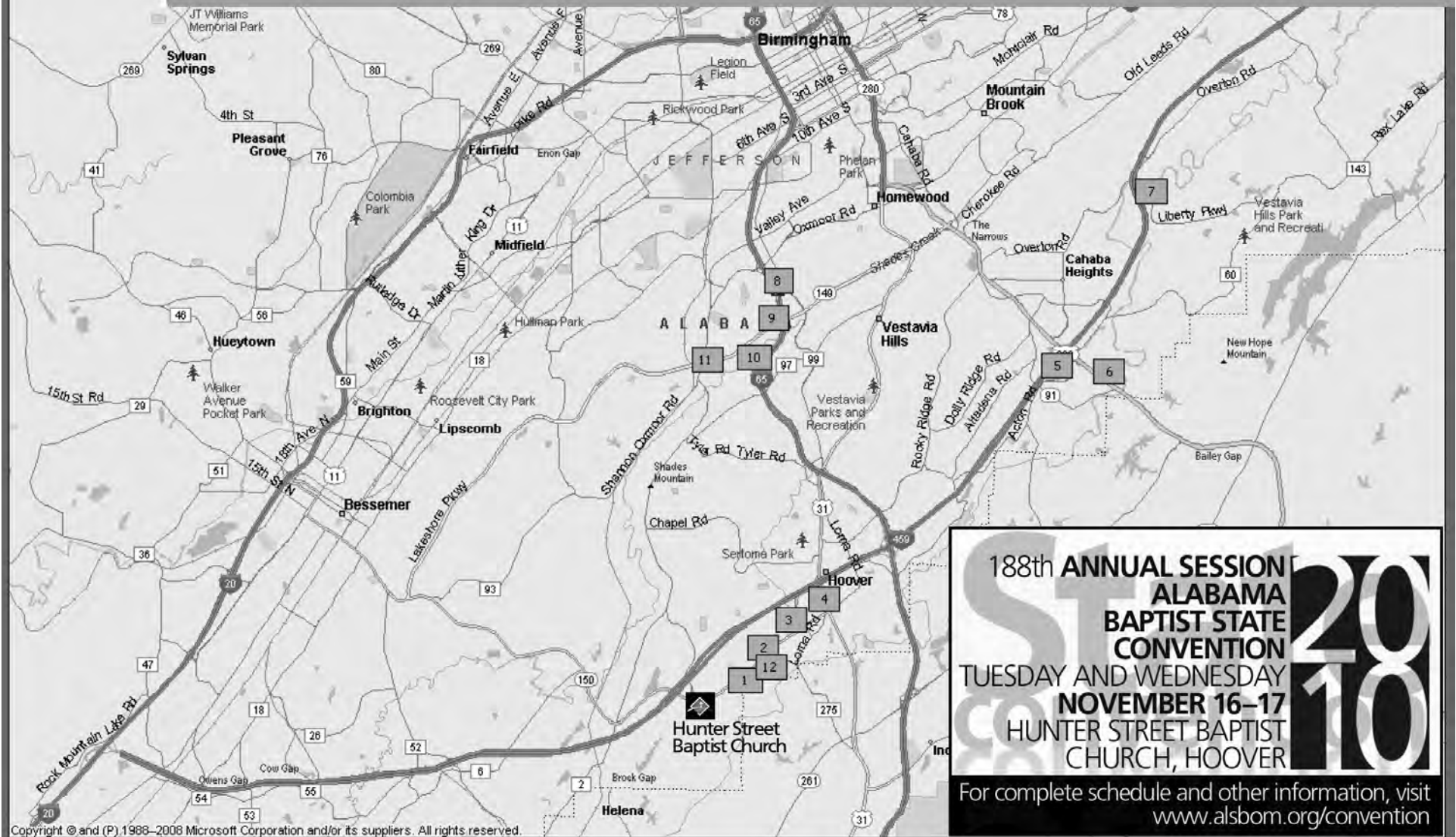
Speaker: Brian Haynes, associate pastor, Kingsland Baptist Church, Katy, Texas; author of "SHIFT: What it takes to finally reach families today"

A one-day training event for all student ministry leaders, children's ministers, pastors and anyone interested in helping reach families

The cost of \$10 per person includes lunch, book and conference materials. To register for the event call Angelle Saba at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 275. For more information, call Kyle Wiltshire at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 415, kwiltshire@alsbom.org or Eileen Mitchell, ext. 221, emitchell@alsbom.org.

This conference is made possible by gifts from Alabama Baptist churches through the Cooperative Program.

Alabama Baptist State Convention Hotel Guide



Hotels Offering Special Rates

1. **Residence Inn Marriott**
2725 John Hawkins Pkwy
Hoover, AL 35244
205-733-1655
\$99-\$109
2. **Hyatt Place Hotel Hoover**
2980 John Hawkins Pkwy
Hoover, AL 35244
205-988-8444
\$89
3. **Hampton Inn & Suites**
4520 Galleria Blvd
Hoover, AL 35244
205-380-3300
\$110-\$155
4. **Wynfrey Hotel**
*Convention Hotel
1000 Riverchase Galleria
Hoover, AL 35244
205-987-1600
\$122

5. **Hilton Birmingham**
Perimeter Park Hotel
8 Perimeter Park South
Birmingham, AL 35243
205-967-2700
\$99
6. **Birmingham Marriott**
3590 Grandview Pkwy
Birmingham, AL 35243
205-968-3775
\$115
7. **Hilton Garden Inn**
BirminghamSE/Liberty Pk
2090 Urban Center Pkwy
Birmingham, AL 35242
\$99
8. **Hampton Inn**
Birmingham/Lakeshore
30 State Farm Parkway
Birmingham, AL 35209
205-313-2060
\$89

9. **Best Western Carlton**
Suites
140 State Farm Pkwy
Birmingham, AL 35209
205-940-9990
\$79-\$89
10. **Holiday Inn**
Birmingham/Homewood
492 Wildwood North Cir
Birmingham, AL 35209
205-942-6070
\$89
11. **Hilton Garden Inn**
Birmingham/Lakeshore
520 Wildwood North Cir
Birmingham, AL 35209
205-314-0274
\$109
12. **Embassy Suites**
Birmingham/Hoover
2960 John Hawkins Parkway
Hoover, AL 35244
205-985-9994
\$129

188th ANNUAL SESSION
ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION
 TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 16-17
 HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, HOOVER

For complete schedule and other information, visit www.alsbom.org/convention

FOCUS on One Mission



Three Important Facts About Cooperative Program Giving in Alabama

1. Alabama Baptists have sent more Cooperative Program money to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) than any other state convention for two consecutive years!
2. One out of every 10 Cooperative Program dollars given to the SBC comes from Alabama Baptists.
3. Alabama Baptists give more through the Cooperative Program per person than any other state convention.

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

Friday and Saturday, **January 14-15, 2011** « WorldSong Missions Place, Cook Springs « www.alabamawmu.org/camp

Theme: *DANGEROUS SURRENDER*

\$45 per person

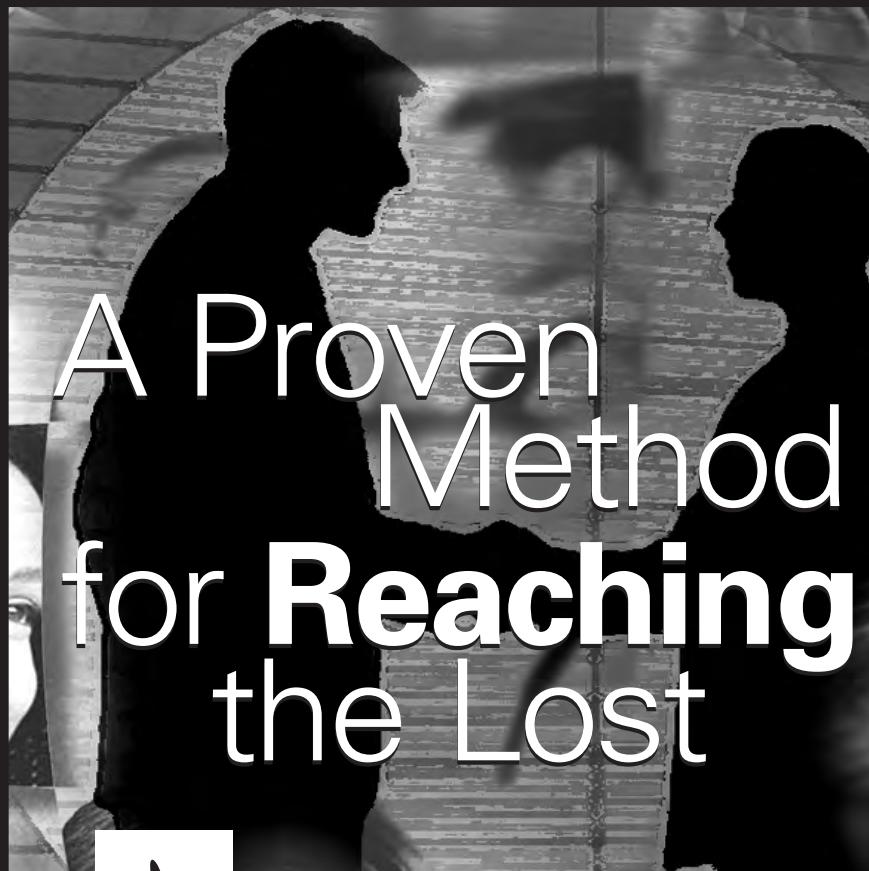
Registration deadline: Tuesday, **January 4, 2011**

This awesome two-day event for students in grades 7-12 will expose students to missions through Bible study, worship and engaging the community with local mission projects. Students will hear personal stories from a young missionary who is answering God's call to serve Him. They will also participate in a variety of mission projects in the communities surrounding Cook Springs. SMW will encourage and challenge your students to dream big and allow God to lead them to do mighty works for Him!

For more information, go online to alabamawmu.org, or please contact Erin Bishop, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 224, ebishop@alsbom.org.

WMU
Student
Missions Weekend 2010

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



New churches reach people faster than established churches.

Alabama still has 2,000,000 lost/unreached people.

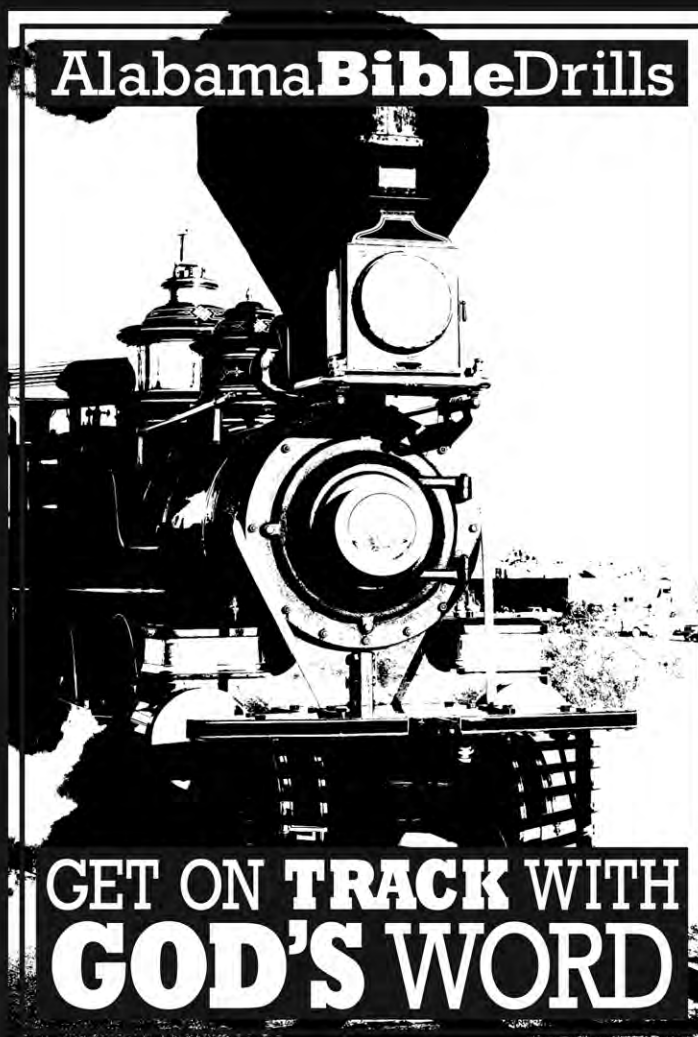
Will you lead your church to pray for and partner in the church planting process?

Will you lead your church to identify groups of unreached people in your community?

Will you lead your church to start a new ministry or congregation as a part of your response to the Acts 1:8 Challenge?



For more information, please call the Office of Associational Missions & Church Planting, **1.800.264.1225**, ext. **383**, www.alsbom.org/churchplanting



Alabama Bible Drills

GET ON TRACK WITH GOD'S WORD

**Friday and Saturday,
January 28-29, 2011**

Shocco Springs

“GET ON TRACK WITH GOD’S WORD”

Guest Speaker: Keith Peyton Thomas, co-writer, executive producer, collaborating director and lead actor in the film “Click Clack Jack: A Rail Legend.”

See more information online at
www.ClickClackJack.com

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

For more information, please contact the Office of Sunday School & Discipleship at **1-800-264-1225**, ext. **313**, or visit our website at www.alsbom.org/bibledrills.

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

Royal Ambassador Basketball Tournament

*Saturday - Sunday,
February 4-5, 2011*

Leagues:

* 4th-6th grade * 7th-9th grade * 10th-12th grade
Sixteen sbts are available in each age group so get your registration in early.

Eligibility:

Must be active in an RA or Challenger Missions Education Group.
Completion of mission projects from the **Alabama Baptist Royal Ambassador Advancement Workbook for All Ages** or **Alabama Advancement Workbook for Challengers**.

Receive and abide by the requirements of the “State RA/Challenger Guidebook.”

Register your team by Friday, January 14, 2011 (Registration form is on the front of the guidebook.)

For a copy of the guidebook or other information, please contact State Missionary Steve Stephens at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 268, sstephens@alsbom.org.

2011 STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

Monday and Tuesday, February 28-March 1
Gardendale First Baptist Church

Kicks off Monday with a lunch/Q&A session with James Merritt and Steve Gaines.

Concludes Tuesday evening with a Harvest Event featuring Will Graham, grandson of Billy Graham and son of Franklin, and premier Southern Gospel vocal group, the Booth Brothers.



Will Graham



Booth Brothers

Other speakers during the two days include James Merritt, Steve Gaines, Kevin Hamm, Don Wilton, Reginald Calvert, Jay Wolf, Bob Pitman, Robert Smith and Nelson Price, with praise and worship led by Rick Stone and the Gardendale FBC choir and Hunter Street Baptist Church choir.

Monday's Q&A luncheon is \$5 per person with limited seating. Call 1-800-264-1225, ext. 245, or email Stephanie McClelland at smclelland@alsbom.org.

For a full schedule, visit www.alsbom.org/sec.

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



If you need ideas on how to tell the story of CP in your church, please call 1.800.264.1225, ext. 283, or visit www.alsbom.org/cp.

October is **Cooperative Program** month.

Historical Highlights

from previous issues of *The Alabama Baptist*

Compiled by Kathleen Prude

50 Years Ago September 1960

Longtime Dream Realized: The people of First Baptist Church, Butler, have finally realized their dream. Leon Macon, editor of *The Alabama Baptist*, recently dedicated the first unit in the church's building program. The people of First, Butler, have longed for a new church building. The old one was a wooden frame building located on a very small lot in the center of town. Butler was one of the few county seat towns left with a frame building. The new church is located on the edge of Butler, which is a fast growing city. Charles W. Wagner is pastor.

40 Years Ago September 1970

Mission Becomes Church: On Sept. 13, 37 people signed the charter of Southside Baptist Church, Montevallo. This fellowship had been a mission of Montevallo Baptist Church since Feb. 4, 1968. Jim Putman, a layman at Montevallo Baptist, was chief liaison in getting the Southside work started.

Many Baptist Student Union students from the University of Montevallo have assisted also, with ministerial students preaching until January 1969, when Dan Harrell was called as pastor. John Duncan, superintendent of missions for Shelby Baptist Association, preached the constituting message. The potential at Southside was long recognized by retired associational missionary B.B. Curry. Richard G. Crowe, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Florence, was pastor of Montevallo Baptist when the work started. George Steincross is the present pastor.

30 Years Ago September 1980

Montgomery Missions Team Works in Jungle: Ten men and women from Montgomery

went to Manaus, Brazil, recently to build a chapel and dormitory at a youth and laymen's training camp 25 miles outside the city in the jungle. Lonnie and Janelle Doyle, Southern Baptist representatives for 30 years on the Amazon, coordinated the missions effort. The builders are members of Capitol Heights Baptist Church, where Gil Barrow is pastor, and Valley Park Baptist Church, where Ron Clay is pastor.

20 Years Ago September 1990

Chapel Dedicated: A small group of Alabamians traveled to Pennsylvania recently for the dedication of Ligonier Baptist Chapel in southwestern Pennsylvania. The dedication of the chapel culminated a Carpenters for Christ missions project, which had its beginnings more than 10 years ago and has involved 66 churches in Coosa River Baptist Association. J. William Casaday is the director of missions, and Jerry King is Ligonier Baptist's pastor. Bloise Zeigler, a pioneer missions director of First Baptist Church, Sylacauga, was instrumental in establishing the Ligonier congregation.

10 Years Ago September 2000

Volunteers Help Construct Addition: One hundred volunteers — some from as far away as Hawaii — have helped to construct a 6,000-square-foot, two-story addition to Central Baptist Church in the Argo-Trussville area. The group of Carpenters for Christ volunteers also secured and put up a steeple for the church's sanctuary and installed a kitchen in an existing building. The addition will provide educational space, a fellowship hall and a children's worship area. It is the first addition to the church campus in 35 years. Dewey Corder is pastor.

Letters

(continued from page 2)

With postage up, you might want to mail early to avoid Express or Priority Mail rates. For additional information, call 205-553-1592 or e-mail adunnam@bellsouth.net.

This ministry is successful because so many of you care and participate. Thank you in advance for the many Christmas cards you will send. An early Merry Christmas to each of you.

Scarlett M. Dunnam
Tuscaloosa, Ala.

WHAT OUTCRY?

There is an outcry when a pastor in Florida is to burn the Quran, the (holy) book of Muslims. There is an outcry when the Muslims plan to build a mosque two blocks from Ground Zero. The president of our nation showed a lack of judgment and wisdom when he defended their right to build there. Now where is the outcry when the Muslims in Nigeria and other countries persecute, imprison and kill Christians and burn their church buildings and Bibles?

We are asked to be tolerant toward Muslims and (those of) other religions. Muslims, by and large, are not tolerant of Christians and Jews, especially in countries like Saudi Arabia and some others. God gave man a choice to choose Him, but He said, "You shall have no other gods before me." I, as a Christian, am not tolerant of other religions because they are in defiance of God and are false. They lead people away from God, and they are lost to the devil's hell. But I will do them no harm, only love and pray for them.

There is only one God, the God of all creation. There is only one way of salvation, and it is in Jesus Christ, God's only Son. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

I pray for the Christians everywhere who are persecuted by the Muslims and

others, and I pray the Muslims and others will come to believe in Jesus and be saved. If all of us who are Christians will pray, we just might see a change in things that are happening.

Eugene R. Thomason
Pell City, Ala.

CONCERN

The vote has been taken, and Dr. Ezell is the new president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB). I congratulate him and will pray for his leadership in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). However, my concern is that as a pastor, his Cooperative Program (CP) giving went down every year he was at his church. It seems to me the committee would have wanted someone that had been faithful in giving to the unified plan of the SBC.

Let me state that I have nothing against him. So far as I know, he is a godly man and loves the Lord. I do not question his character.

I had the privilege of serving on the Home Mission Board, as well as NAMB. Dr. Larry Lewis was president. He had been a missionary and was passionate about the CP. My fear is that in another generation, we will see the demise of the CP and a return to each church doing its own missions programs. We Southern Baptists have always prided ourselves on having the best missions program of any denomination. Will that be true in the future?

The so-called megachurches can certainly give money to their own missions projects, but the average church cannot do that, or if they do, it is very little. If our missions program is only supported by the megachurches, there will be little missions work going on.

I will support Dr. Ezell as president of NAMB and hope that his position will lead him to a greater commitment to the CP.

Ken Cheek
Tuscaloosa, Ala.

FOLLOW US ON



@AlabamaBaptist

MARKET PLACE

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

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR: Fairmount Baptist Church is currently seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resumés to: Fairmount Baptist Church, Pulpit Committee, P.O. Box 66, Red Level, AL 36474.

PASTOR: First Baptist Church of Baton Rouge, La., is seeking a pastor with a vision for growing a downtown church. Send resumés to: JRWLSU@bellsouth.net by Oct. 31.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: New Life Baptist Church in Bay Minette is now accepting resumés for a bivocational pastor. Mail resumés to: The Pastor Search Committee, 47480 Lea Baird Lane, Bay Minette, AL 36507. Deadline for receiving resumés is Nov. 30.

PART-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR: Hillcrest Baptist Church, Maplesville, seeking part-time youth director. Send resumé to: Hillcrest Baptist Church, 10045 US Hwy 82, Maplesville, AL 36750, or e-mail: jvjsmith@bellsouth.net.

CHILDREN'S MINISTER: Circlewood Baptist Church is currently seeking a full-time children's minister. Please send resumés to: Circlewood Baptist Church, 2201 Loop Road, Tuscaloosa, AL 35405.

BUSINESS

CHRISTIAN HOME-BASED BUSINESS: High-tech manufacturer offers unique opportunity for Christian family home-based business. Call toll-free 1-877-623-7088 for recorded message and complete information.

WHOLESALE BIBLES: Wholesale Bibles case quantity for all church needs. Got joy? Be blessed, be fulfilled, give Bibles away. Huge discounts. Free shipping. Call now. 1-888-761-7159. Visit www.MissionsBibles.com.

VIDEO PRODUCTIONS: Get ready for Christmas. Par 64 LED cans with 177 RGB LEDs, 2 for \$240, 4 for \$400, 6 for \$540, 8 or more \$80 each. Cans are aluminum, DMX controlled. Contact John at powerproductions@mchsi.com, or

call 251-625-2801, Ext. 2.

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

CONSTRUCTION

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

TRAVEL/VACATION

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

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

GULF-FRONT CONDO NEAR DESTIN: Gulf-front condominium for rent near Destin, Fla. Great time to enjoy God's awesome surroundings. Owner's special rates you can afford. Call Lucy, 770-831-3541. Lucyclark9@aol.com.

LAKE GUNTERSVILLE VACATION RENTAL: Waterfront duplex. Photos and information at www.4125hideawaydrive.com. 256-264-5556.

SKI TIMBERLINE, WV: \$99 complete two-day ski package. Now extended through Dec. 26-27. Two-nights bunkhouse lodging, lift ticket, regular ski rental, beginner ski lesson, five meals. 1-800-392-0152.

FOR SALE

KIMBALL ORGAN: Kimball Temptation Organ with percussion, bass pedals,

bench, headphone jack and manual. Perfect for home or small church. In-state delivery can be arranged. \$550. 334-288-4226.

CHURCH: Odenville church for sale. Facility includes a worship center, seating for several hundred, education and youth areas, kitchen, offices and a day-care facility. \$599,000. Moody Realty, 205-640-7671.

THRIFT STORE IN HOOVER: Great opportunity for individual or church for fundraising. Selling due to health. Day, 205-822-0776, night 205-822-6695.

STAIR CHAIR: Bruno brand, used 8 months. \$3,000. Call Virginia Cornelius. Phone: 205-620-4343 or cell, 205-260-5093.

CABIN AT GLORIETA: Cabin at Glorieta LifeWay Conference Center. Six apartments, 2 large dorms, large meeting area. Sleeps 56. Contact Taylor Memorial Baptist Church, 1700 E. Yeso, Hobbs, NM 88240. 575-397-7447 or dalehooktaylor@bc.org.

Want to know God?

By Robby Hyché
Minister to singles
First Baptist Church, Trussville

A few years ago, someone asked me to visit a young woman whom she referred to as “unchurched.” “Cold calls” are not my specialty but I agreed.

Taking two friends with me, I knocked on the door and awkwardly explained who sent us. The college student invited us in and politely introduced us to her boyfriend. He looked perturbed. He offered a sideways comment that we interrupted their “study time” (I didn’t see any books open but I digress).

I launched into my gospel presentation honed by hours of practice. The girl was alert, asked questions and gave answers that you would expect an “unchurched” person to give. The guy sat there like a slug, staring me down as I went through my superslick spiel. The girl thoughtfully admitted that she was not a Christian. Smiling, she added, “We don’t believe that stuff.” Great. I was reeling them in tonight. I finished the outline. The girl remained polite but when I asked, “Would you like to ask Jesus to be your Lord and Savior tonight?” She perkily replied, “No, thank you. Not tonight.”

Summarily dismissed, I almost got up to leave but something stopped me. I turned to the guy and asked him, “What about you? Would you like to get saved tonight?” Something changed in him. He humbly said, “Yeah, I need to do that.” I almost said, “You’ve been rude. You didn’t answer any questions. You weren’t nice to us. You can’t get saved!” The girl’s head jerked around so fast I thought she would snap her spine. Glaring, she looked at me as if I had put a weird alien in his body. She whispered something to him, and he simply said, “I’m a sinner. I need to get saved.”

Here’s the deal: I don’t save anybody. The girl was pretty. She was polite. She’s the one I wanted to get saved. The guy was a slug. Who wanted him in our group? God. God is the One who saves. Not me.

There are more people who need to get saved. It may be you or one of your friends. First Timothy 2:5-6a says, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all” (HCSB). Tell the story. Someone needs to hear it.



SBC Representatives Around the World

It has been pretty crazy recently. It all started when my landlord said the owner of my apartment was returning and I’d need to transfer to another unit.

She told me a few places were available at “tower A” (same apartment complex but a different building).

I asked God to give me one of the apartments with a courtyard (only one floor has them). Sure enough, one was available at the end of August.

I moved Saturday, Sept. 4. It was a draining process (physically and financially) but the Lord sustained me.

We were already having Bible studies by Tuesday. Seems both of the new groups that meet on Tuesday are really serious about continuing with Bible study. I’ve shared the gospel and I believe many have trusted the Lord from these groups. The Wednesday night group came that week as well.

I praise God for providing a new place in which to continue doing ministry.

On Wednesday, Sept. 22, I did a True Love Waits seminar at San Sebastian, Cavite. This is a Catholic school located an hour or two outside of Manila.

Sunday, Sept. 26, I accepted the invitation to speak at a large evangelistic crusade in Bohol (Central Visayas region).

Pray that Christ will be glorified in all that I do.

Kevin Sanders
Manila, Philippines

On Sept. 18, a group of about 14 people from Baan Athitaan Church went on a missions trip to Huay Khu Village, a Hmong village about three hours from the city of Chiang Rai. We went to help a small church in that village rebuild their church that was destroyed by strong winds just a few months ago.

We had hoped to raise enough funds to replace this very weak bamboo structure with a more solid block structure and anticipated spending less than \$2,000.

That may not sound like much, but to those of us who live in this part of the world, that is a lot of money.

Our church took up a special offering and tried various ways to help raise these funds here, and praise God, we have been able to raise a little over \$500. That was not enough to put up the block structure that we had hoped, so we put up a

very similar bamboo structure on this trip.

It simply reminds me of the truth that because the Christian population in countries like Thailand is so small, we still desperately need resources from Christians from other parts of the world that have a heart for missions.

We would like to do so much more and need your partnership to make that happen.

For more information, visit www.gontim.org.

Michael
Northern Thailand

We are moving along in the process to head back overseas. We are going to be working in a new job with a people we call “The Hidden People.”

For security reasons, we can’t say too much about them right now, but we look forward to sharing more as time goes on. We

should be going back through training in January, then heading to Asia after that.

Our people live in a pretty tense environment where many lack basic things needed to live.

Ask that the Father would provide the food and shelter they need today.

They have been taught from birth to worship other men and have no awareness of the one true Father. Ask that messengers would be able to bring them news and that they would have ears to hear.

Also please pray that we would grow in wisdom as husband and wife and as parents (Jack is almost four months old.).

Ask that we would serve with diligence and humility in our church family. Jerry will continue to serve on the elder team until we leave early next year.

Jerry, Sarah and Jack Howard
Asia

Wright calls for ‘radical’ change

The new president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) called for a “radical reprioritization” of spending in remarks to convention leaders Sept. 21.

In his first remarks to the SBC Executive Committee, Bryant Wright, pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga., said, “It is my hope and dream, knowing the autonomy within our convention, that the leaders within our

state conventions will take a radical, prayerful look at this priority.

“State leaders could be the real heroes here,” he continued.

“They are controlling the funds. The Southern Baptist Convention has no authority in this area. It is my hope that there will be a radical reprioritization so that we can bring about these thousands of people groups who have practically no witness of the gospel.” (BP)

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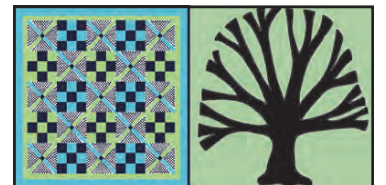
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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 3

Explore the Bible By Dale Younce

Professor of Christian Studies, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

GOD'S POWER COMES BY GRACE Ephesians 3:1-13

Salvation sparkles with God's grace and power. Most Christians recognize that both grace and power are necessary in order to be saved. They also recognize that both are necessary for Christian witness and spiritual growth. But some seem to fail to understand that every opportunity to serve God comes as a result of His grace and an expression of His power. Consequently some believers miss out on the blessing of seeing God at work in their lives. In this week's lesson, the apostle Paul explains the ministry to Gentiles, who had been given to him by God. The gospel message contains the great grace of God as well as the great power of God. The Christian's responsibility is now to share the riches of Christ. We who are believers need to rely on God's grace and power.

Recognizing God's Grace (1-2)

The gospel is good news, not just good views. It is good news that God loves us, accepts us in Christ, forgives us and shares His life with us. It is the believer's responsibility to share the good news so that others come to know Him. The apostle was in prison in Rome but did not consider himself a prisoner of any government or person. Rather he saw himself under Christ's control with every aspect of his life in the Lord's hands. He was in prison for preaching to the Gentiles. Just as the apostle saw himself as a special witness to Jesus so are we qualified and equipped to witness for Christ.

Recognizing God's Revelation (3-6)

Paul felt compelled to state his authority for preaching the oneness of Jew and Gentile in Christ. This was a new, unexpected and far-reaching truth that many of the Ephesians apparently did not understand. God had given Paul a significant stewardship ("dispensation") as the apostle to the Gentiles. The result of the preaching of the gospel was the unity in Christ of believing Jews and believing Gentiles. Paul referred to this truth of oneness as a "mystery of Christ." The term "mystery" means that the spiritual oneness of believing Jews and

believing Gentiles was in God's eternal plan but was not revealed in the Old Testament; it has been revealed in the New Testament. As he wrote the Ephesian believers, Paul felt the need to explain this truth. Although God had promised universal blessing through Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), the full meaning of that promise became clear only with the preaching of the gospel (Gal. 3:28). Paul explained what even the greatest prophets did not understand: The Church, composed of all the saved since Pentecost (both Jews and Gentiles), exists as one united body with no racial, social, cultural or economic distinctions. We all are fellow heirs in Christ. As part of God's revealed, eternal plan, we have opportunities, by sharing the gospel, to serve Him and see others enter the united body, the Church.

Responding Through God's Power (7-10)

No one can make himself or herself God's servant, because the calling, message, work and power for genuine ministry are God's to give. However, when, by God's special favor and mighty power, a person is appointed His servant, it is a wonderful privilege. Even if one is not appointed in the same way Paul was, all believers have the exciting privilege and special joy of telling others the good news. We can tell others about the endless spiritual treasures found in Christ. When the gospel is shared, God's multifaceted wisdom is put on display for the angels (both holy and unholy). God, by means of the one body of the Church, also displays His glory to all the angels. We are responding through God's power when we accept opportunities to serve Him.

Rejoicing With Reason (11-13)

It has been God's eternal purpose for the Church to glorify Him, and that purpose has been carried out through Jesus Christ. Because of Christ, we can come before God at any time, not in self-confidence but Christ-confidence. Consequently our sufferings glorify God, too. We can rely on Jesus regardless of what happens to us and rejoice in whatever helps others participate, by faith, in God's eternal plan.

Bible Studies for Life By Kenneth B.E. Roxburgh

Chair and Armstrong Professor of Religion, Department of Religion, Samford University

SIN IS A BIG DEAL Genesis 3:1-6, 16-19, 24; Romans 5:12-14

The *London Times* once invited several eminent authors to write essays on the theme "What's Wrong With the World?" G.K. Chesterton contributed a letter: Dear Sirs, I am. Sincerely yours, G.K. Chesterton. In the 21st century, little attention is given to the notion of sin. The end result is that our understanding of grace and salvation is distorted because we have lost an understanding of the depth and depravity of human sinfulness. Humans are a mystery to themselves. We are rational and irrational, capable of deep friendship and murderous hostility, free and in bondage, the pinnacle of creation and its greatest danger.

Sin Defined (Gen. 3:1-6)

The Genesis account of Adam and Eve's sin reminds us that sin involves turning our backs on the generosity of God's love shown to His creation, determining that we can live on our own resources rather than trusting in His providence. Sin is characterized by human pride, choosing to live in our own way, focusing on our own needs rather than others' needs. Sin not only brought about a breakdown between God and humankind but also Adam and Eve began to blame each other and their relationship suffered. In 1972, I wrote to professor F.F. Bruce at the University of Manchester in England and asked him about the origin of sin. His response told the story of a conversation during a Bible study that had taken place during his student days at a university. The question was do we sin because we are sinners, or are we sinners because we sin. He recounted the concluding comments of an elderly gentleman from Ayrshire, Scotland, who said, "Isn't it a great sin to be a sinner at all?" This is the heart of the matter: Every one of us chooses, on a regular basis, to turn away from God's generosity and His holy love to live according to our own aims.

Sin's Consequences (Gen. 3:16-19, 24)

The Genesis story of sin's entry into God's created order indicates that disorder affects human relationships. Notions of patriarchy,

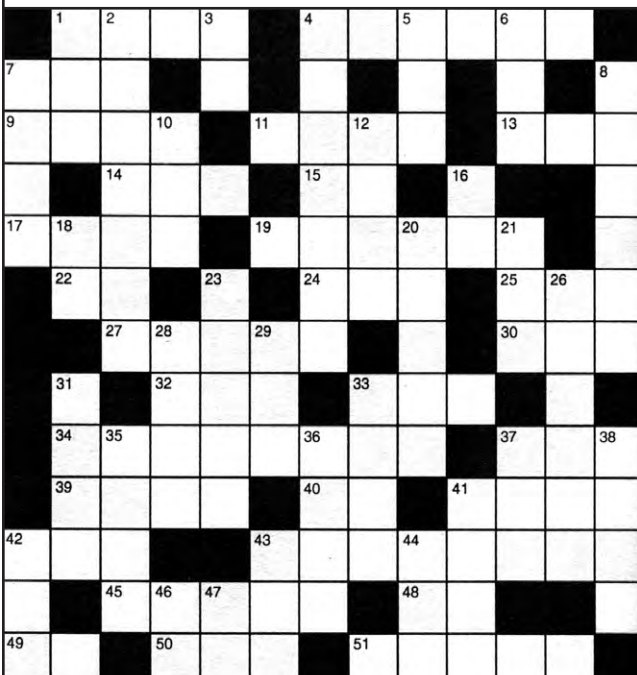
of men and women striving with one another, ought not to be seen as God's original intention but as disorder — a consequence of sin. Even work, originally a gift of God for human beings to find fulfillment, is now filled with frustration and weariness. Life is seen as temporary as death enters into the cycle of life, presenting human beings with concepts of fear, uncertainty and even dread.

Everyone Sins (Rom. 5:12-14)

The Christian understanding of human nature is starkly realistic. While affirming the good of human existence as created by God, the Bible takes with utter seriousness the profound disruption, alienation, brutality and oppression that characterize the actual human condition. The image of God in which humans were created is obscured and distorted by sin. There would be no sin and fallenness were there not a standard to fall away from. Adam and Eve refused to obey God's command. Paul was convinced that the law of God is a verbal expression of the created order, dimly apprehended within our hearts as conscience, and spelled out in the moral Law of the Old Testament. Yet we will never fully understand the depths of the nature of sin if we see it only in terms of breaking a moral code rather than sinning against God's love, declaring our freedom from His presence. This is why sin is a universal condition and a self-chosen act for which we are all responsible. Sin insinuates itself into all human attitudes and actions. Indeed sin may be most seductively and demonically at work under the guise of doing good. Worst of all, sin's greatest consequence is death, which affects every human being, bringing a deep sense of fear into people's hearts and finally revealing itself in the "second death," which indicates God's judgment on our sinfulness. Herein is the real terror of the death of the ungodly: endless separation from God, life and love. Thankfully Paul went on in Romans 5 to demonstrate that although sin's universality is clearly evident for all to see, "the grace of God ... has abounded to many." Human failure is never the final word on humanity — God's grace has triumphed over sin and offers hope for society.

Christian Crossword

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Across

1. Woman who gleaned Boaz's fields.
4. I will ___ them from death. (Hos. 13:14)
7. Informal word for sibling.
9. A dueling sword.
11. One tenth of a dollar.
13. Organ of hearing.
14. To allow or permit.
15. Informal word for "mother."
17. The Holy Ghost shall come upon _____. (Luke 1:35)
19. Moses' father-in-law. (Ex. 18:5)
22. In the same manner.
24. To note maiden name.
25. Any monkey.
27. To walk proudly.
30. A metal of low strength.
32. Used in rowing.
33. A nephew of Abram. (Gen. 12:5)
34. Mary ___ the feet of Jesus. (John 12:3)
37. A chum.

Down

1. To cast off.
40. A printing measure.
41. Second letter of Greek alphabet.
42. A mineral spring.
43. To become ragged.
45. And ___ bare Abram a son. (Gen. 16:15)
48. Introducing an alternative.
49. A negative vote.
50. Small child.
51. A heavenly messenger.
12. A companion.
16. Emergency Room. (abbr.)
18. A sound of triumph.
20. When ___ the king had heard these things. (Matt. 2:3)
21. A cereal grain.
23. A quality of character.
26. And delivered him to Pontius ___ the governor. (Matt. 27:2)
28. An instrument to aid in manual work.
29. A water vessel.
31. Thy word is a ___ unto my feet. (Ps. 119:105)
33. Forty days of fasting prior to Easter.
35. Captain of a floating zoo.
36. Rip or rend.
37. For each.
38. To dip a liquid.
41. A thick mass of ice.
42. Thou art my beloved _____. (Mark 1:11)
43. To make an edging.
44. Large measure of weight.



Buddhist extremists detain Chakma Christians

Buddhist extremists detained eight Chakma Christians, members of a Baptist church in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, for four days in August.

The extremists held the men — a pastor, church secretary, village leader and five church members — captive in a Buddhist temple to attempt to force them to return to Buddhism, sources reported.

During their captivity, the Buddhist extremists forced the men to adopt a Buddhist lifestyle and worship. The Christian believers had to wear Buddhist robes, shave their heads, bow down before a statue of Buddha and clean the temple. The extremists threatened the believers with severe beatings and even death if they tried to escape.

Death threats

The men's wives had orders to bring food twice a day. The extremists threatened the women with severe punishment or death if they refused to comply with their requirements of showing honor to Buddha. The women had to first bow down to a statue of Buddha, present food to the statue and give food to the Buddhist priests before they were al-

lowed to give food to their husbands.

The Christians, detained Aug. 23, originally were told they would be confined to the temple for seven to 15 days, but after four days in captivity the men were released under orders that they remain Buddhist.

'Not allowed to pray'

"They are not allowed to pray to Jesus nor read Bibles, but they say they are still Christian in their hearts," a Christian source said.

Both the extremists and the Christians are Chakmas. Although most Chakmas are Buddhists, about 3,000 Chakmas are evangelical Christians, according to reports.

Recently, 10 new Chakma churches began and about 300 Chakmas professed their faith in Jesus.

The Chakma people group is concentrated in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, an area that was specifically reserved for indigenous people groups in southeastern Bangladesh during British colonization.

The Chakma people are among many tribal people groups who inhabit the area. (BP)

Campus News



Samford University

One-day Writing Workshop Offered:

A one-day workshop, *The Basics of Writing to Publish Books and Articles*, will be taught by published authors Denise George and Carolyn Tomlin on Oct. 9 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School. George and Tomlin are co-founders/co-teachers of Boot Camp for Christian Writers, a writing seminar held throughout the United States. For registration information, call 205-726-2731 or visit www.beesondivinity.com.

► **Samford Presents Wind Ensemble Concert:** Samford University will hold a Wind Ensemble concert on Oct. 21 at 7:30 p.m. in Brock Recital Hall. For more information, call 205-726-2851.

► **Samford Presents Trio Voronezh:** Samford University school of the arts' Davis Guest Artist Series will present Trio Voronezh on Oct. 26 at 7:30 p.m. in Brock Recital Hall. For tickets visit, www.samford.edu/arts/tickets. For more information call, 205-726-2853.

► **Beeson Hosts Annual Reformation Heritage Lectures:** Beeson Divinity School's annual Reformation Heritage Lectures will feature church history specialist Scott M. Manetsch Oct. 26-28. Manetsch, chair of the church history and history of Christian thought department at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill., will lecture at 11 a.m. in Hodges Chapel each day with an additional lecture at 1 p.m. Oct. 27. For more information, call 205-726-2991.

► **Samford Presents Jazz Ensemble Concert:** Samford University will present a Jazz Ensemble

concert Oct. 28 at 7:30 p.m. in Brock Recital Hall. For more information, call 205-726-2851.

► **Samford Presents Graphic Design Student Exhibition:** Samford University will present a graphic design student exhibition Nov. 1-30 in the Samford Art Gallery. The gallery is open weekdays 9 a.m.-4 p.m. There will be an opening reception Nov. 2 from 4-6 p.m. For more information, call 205-726-2840.

► **Samford Presents Percussion Ensemble Concert:** Samford University will present a percussion ensemble concert Nov. 4 at 7:30 p.m. in Brock Recital Hall. For more information, call 205-726-2851.

University of Mobile

UMobile Offers International Missions Trips:

The University of Mobile (UMobile) will offer 10 international missions trips to individuals, groups and students through its University Missions program during 2011. The University Missions program has sent more than 1,500 participants on short-term missions trips to 44 nations since the program began in 1992.

Teams are led by UMobile faculty members, and participants may be involved in a variety of activities, from building a chapel or teaching English to providing basic medical services or leading prayer, worship and Bible study for all ages. Deadline for applications is Nov. 15.

For more information about costs, class credit or to apply, call 251-442-2406 or e-mail ctaylor@umobile.edu. Training sessions for University Missions team members will be held Jan. 22-23.



Judson College

Judson Professor Receives Award:

Judson College professor of music Betty Campbell received the Faculty Award of Excellence from the Professional Fraternity Association at its annual meeting in Lexington, Ky., on Sept. 13. Campbell was honored for more than 30 years of work with Judson's Delta Omicron music fraternity.

► **Noted Pianist to Perform at Judson:** In celebration of the 200th year of pianist and composer Robert Schumann, the Judson College Delta Psi Chapter of Delta Omicron International Music Fraternity will present Argentinean pianist Donald Garcia in a performance of Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor, opus 54, Oct. 5. Judy Ransom, chairman of the department of fine arts at the college, will perform the orchestra part on a second piano.

The miniconcert will begin at 7 p.m. in Alumnae Auditorium. For more information, call 334-683-5149.

► **Louisville Artist Featured at Judson:** The exhibition "We Are Dying to Have You for Dinner" features the ceramics of Louisville, Ky.-based artist Steven Cheek. The show runs through Oct. 22 at the Marian Acree Tucker Gallery at Judson College.

Cheek has received several awards and recognitions, and his work is included in many private and public collections.

Works in the exhibition are for sale. For more information, call Jamie Adams at 334-683-5251 or visit stevencheek.com.

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Photo courtesy of Kemp Baptist Church

ADDISON'S KEMP BAPTIST CHURCH BURNS NOTE

Kemp Baptist Church, Addison, in Winston Baptist Association celebrates paying off the church's worship center with a note burning. Pictured are (l to r) Roger Parris, Pastor Sean Easterwood, Bobby Everett, Jimmy Gaines and Doug Speegle.

'God is a mighty God'

Former Thai inmate discovers God's provision

Rather than looking forward to freedom, Noon dreaded the day of her prison release.

During the almost two years that she had served time in Thailand for drug possession, no one had visited her or had even written her a letter. She realized that when prison officials set her free, she would have no place to go and no home to go to.

"Everyone in my family, my relatives, they rejected me and forgot me," the 25-year-old remembered.

But then another prisoner, a Christian, told her about God. The Christian prisoner also began to teach Noon how to pray.

"The first prayer I prayed was 'If you are God, please bring someone to visit me,' because for almost two years, no one visited me or wrote a letter to me," Noon said. "I said, 'God, if you want me to know your grace, answer me and let someone come to visit me.'"

One week after her plea to God, an officer announced over the loudspeakers that a visitor had, in fact, come to see her.

She remembered crying, "Oh, thank you, God! Thank you, God!"

"I was so excited and very glad," she recalled. Noon went to the room used for prison visits, and through the glass that separates inmates from visitors, she saw an aunt, her mother's sister, who had come to bring news from her family.

And she knew that with a miracle such as this, God must be real.

She began worshipping with a Christian group that met inside the prison. She also learned about a team that came each week from the Christian Prison Ministry Foundation to share Christ's love through music, Bible study and preaching. The prison ministry was formed by an International Mission Board representative, supported by Southern Baptists' giving through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Cooperative Program. For the past 10 years, a Thai Christian has led the foundation.

'Opened my heart'

"So at the time of the service when the leader of that group asked us to open our hearts for Christ, I opened my heart and asked Jesus to be my Savior," she said.

After Noon accepted Christ, she still had five months of her sentence to serve. As her release day loomed nearer, she worried because she felt that she had no one to depend on, and certainly no one who would be waiting outside the heavy prison gates to take her home.

"The people that I used to write letters to never answered me. I had no one," she said.

Tiwan, a member of the prison ministry team and a former prisoner herself, explains that it's very difficult for prisoners when they are released. Most leave prisons with



IMB photo

CLASPED IN PRAYER — At the Women's Correctional Institution for Drug Addicts in Bangkok, Thailand, hands are clasped in a prayer. The women of the prison listen and pray along with the speaker, Tiwan, a former prisoner.

nothing — no clothing, no allowance, not even enough coins for a bus fare.

"In many prisons, they don't allow them to bring out notebooks, Bibles, diaries. They have to leave everything," Tiwan said. Because they leave with nothing, they are particularly vulnerable.

It was about that time that Noon heard about the Christian halfway house that is one of the endeavors of the Christian Prison Ministry Foundation. The House of Blessing provides a place for former inmates to live as they begin new lives outside the prison walls. Daily Bible study and worship strengthen former prisoners as they build a new future.

Tiwan assured Noon that she would have a place at the House of Blessing. But just getting to the House of Blessing was a task Noon could not complete on her own. She was relying on the ministry team to be there on her release day.

But Noon was not released on a Monday, the usual day that the ministry team visited her prison. When it was too late to notify the team, Noon discovered that she would be released on a Tuesday.

Furthermore, because of some special meetings, the team had missed two consecutive Monday sessions at Noon's prison.

Noon recalls her dread about the approaching day of her release. "I was so worried about no one to pick me up," Noon recalled. "I didn't have a place to

stay. But I prayed and prayed."

And again, God answered her prayer.

Tiwan, not knowing that Noon's day for release had been changed, had rearranged her schedule that week and arrived at the prison on that very Tuesday.

"When she saw us, she cried," Tiwan said. "When she came out, she was so happy."

'What we do'

"I took her to shop for clothes, for everything that she didn't have," Tiwan recalled. "This is what we do." She then took her home to the House of Blessing.

Since coming to the halfway house, Noon has been baptized. She is studying the Bible, as all those who live there do, and gaining strength through daily studies and worship times. She said she feels stronger and more confident in her life and her knowledge of God.

"In the past I bowed down to the idols all the time. Every time I saw an idol, I bowed down," Noon said. "But since becoming a Christian, I don't bow down to idols because I know that God is a mighty God."

She gives God the credit for providing a way forward for her life. "One thing that I confirm since I became a Christian, I won't go back to my old life or old ways any more," Noon said.

"I want to thank God that He has called me and chosen me from nothing." (BP)

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

IHOP sues church for trademark infringement

LOS ANGELES — Usually known for serving 24/7 breakfasts, the International House of Pancakes (IHOP) has instead served a suit to the International House of Prayer, a Missouri church, for trademark infringement.

The restaurant chain — which uses the website IHOP.com — said the Kansas City church — whose website is IHOP.org — is intentionally misleading customers.

"We've asked International House of Prayer to stop using the name because it is our protected trademark," said IHOP spokesman Patrick Lenow. "They've refused and it's confusing our guests."

The lawsuit, filed Sept. 9 in the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles, said the church "intended to misappropriate the fame and notoriety of the household name IHOP to help promote and make recognizable their religious organization."

The restaurant chain, which started in 1958, has used the acronym since 1973.

The church declined to discuss the suit beyond a brief statement. "We are aware of the lawsuit," it said. "We are reviewing the situation. At this time, we have no comment."

Episcopal Church calls for resignation of bishop

PHOENIX — The Episcopal Church's House of Bishops called Sept. 21 for the "immediate and unconditional resignation" of Bishop Charles Bennison of Philadelphia, who had been charged with not reporting his brother's relationship with an underage girl.

"As the House of Bishops, we have come to the conclusion that Bishop Bennison's capacity to exercise the ministry of pastoral oversight is irretrievably damaged," the bishops said in a resolution passed overwhelmingly during their meeting in Phoenix.

Bennison was removed from ministry in 2007 after being charged with "conduct unbecoming a member of the clergy." He was found guilty in 2008 for failing to investigate or discipline his younger brother and fellow priest John Bennison for an affair with an underage parishioner in the 1970s.

However, the elder Bennison was reinstated as bishop in August after a church appeals court ruled the statute of limitations on the charge had expired.

Episcopal Church spokeswoman Neva Rae Fox said the vote by the House of Bishops was unprecedented. "It was a very emotional time," she said Sept. 22. "The bishops took it very seriously."

Religious minorities suffer zoning discrimination

WASHINGTON — Religious minorities figure prominently in religious freedom investigations by the Justice Department, a new report shows.

"Jewish synagogues and schools, African-American churches, and, increasingly, Muslim mosques and schools are particularly vulnerable to discriminatory zoning actions taken by local officials, often under community pressure," the 14-page report stated.

The department released the report Sept. 22, the 10th anniversary of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act. The law, which passed with bipartisan support and the advocacy of a range of faith groups, aims to protect both religious liberty in zoning matters and free exercise of religion for prisoners and residents of government-run nursing homes.

Of 51 investigations opened in the last decade, 16 involved Muslims, Jews or Buddhists. Half of the department's probes of land-use violations involving Christians involved racial or ethnic minorities.

U.S. poverty on the rise; social services impacted

WASHINGTON — The number of people in poverty in America increased to its highest recorded point last year, and the poverty rate rose to its highest level since 1994, new statistics show.

The Census Bureau released data Sept. 16 that showed a significant annual increase in poverty, rising 1.1 percentage points to 14.3 percent in 2009. A total of 43.6 million live in poverty — the highest since recording began in 1959 — and up from 39.8 million in 2008.

As result of the ongoing financial crisis, social service programs such as Catholic Charities USA are faced with the challenge of increased needs from individuals and working families, budget cuts and a decrease in individual donations.

Catholic Charities served more than 9 million people in 2009 and reported a 10 percent increase in need for nutrition, housing and financial services.