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Seasoned leaders

FBC Pelham's Shaw elected president of Alabama Baptist State Convention

By Kristen Padilla
The Alabama Baptist

I have a great debt to pay," Mike Shaw said solemnly.

"First of all, I owe God for loving me while I was a sinner," he said. "I owe Alabama Baptists for sending a deacon and a pastor to tell my parents about Jesus. I owe Baptists for allowing me to go to Samford (University in Birmingham)."

And Shaw might have found a way to pay some of that debt back — by serving effectively as president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC).

He was elected to the position Nov. 17 after running unopposed.

Tim Cox, pastor of Liberty Baptist Church, Chelsea, who nominated Shaw, said, "He is a seasoned leader among Alabama Baptists. Dr. Mike Shaw is a well-informed, well-equipped servant of the Lord in Alabama and would do well as our president next year."

Leading up to the state convention annual meeting at Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover, Shaw said he was neither seeking nor refusing to become president. He would do whatever God's will was for him — something he has tried to do in every area of his life.

When Shaw; his wife of 39 years, Mary; and two sons moved to Pelham in 1979 for him to become pastor of First Baptist Church, Pelham, he hoped to stay at the church for at least five years. But five years quickly turned into 10 years, 10 years turned into 20 years and 20 turned into 31.

"I've told the Lord I'm willing to go or to stay," Shaw said. "I just want to be in [God's] will. That's the way it is about being the president of the convention. I don't want to run for it, but I don't want to run from it."

Now that messengers have had their say, he said he will turn his attention



Photo by Lauren Chow

NEW OFFICERS — Mike Shaw (center), pastor of FBC Pelham, was elected state convention president Nov. 17. Also elected were John Killian (left), first vice president, and Travis Coleman, second vice president.

to being Alabama Baptists' greatest cheerleader.

"I want to have a positive influence all over the state," Shaw said. "I want to encourage pastors to reach out to each other. I want to serve as an encourager. I don't want to put a burden on anyone. I want to love everybody as Jesus loves them."

'Love one another'

In what way does he want to encourage state Baptists the most? To love one another, he said. That will be Shaw's personal theme as president.

"I want to show the world that we

love one another as Alabama Baptists," he said. "Jesus said, 'A new commandment I give to you.' He says that you are to love one another 'as I have loved you.' That's different. If I love my neighbor as I love myself, that is human love, but if I love my brothers and sisters as Jesus loves them, that's agape love."

One way state Baptists can love one another is by every church participating in the Cooperative Program (CP), Shaw said.

"We have churches every year that don't give to the Coopera-

tive Program," he said.

Despite that fact, "we give the largest amount of dollars to the CP," Shaw said, noting one out of every 10 CP dollars comes from the ABSC.

Recently, while reading a magazine put out by New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) — where he earned master of theology and doctor of ministry degrees — Shaw came across an article that noted the single, largest gift to the seminary following Hurricane Katrina was \$6 million from the CP.

"There's no church that I know of in the SBC (Southern Baptist Convention) that can give \$6 million to NOBTS," he said. "But all the churches did. Every one of them gave something. Think about the impact."

That impact of everyone working together through the CP makes Shaw want to "pull some people in that haven't been involved before (with giving)" to Southern Baptist causes. Why? For an even greater impact.

Working together

"I'm going to encourage directors of missions to go to churches that haven't been giving to the Cooperative Program and say, 'Our president has asked that we all work together on this,'" he said.

Shaw also plans to encourage those

(See 'Killian,' page 16)

Alabama Baptists pass reduced CP budget

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Baptists adopted a reduced Cooperative Program (CP) budget for 2011 of \$43 million, down from \$46 million this year.

"We are praying and hoping to bring in at least \$42 million of the \$46 million budget for this year," said Travis Coleman, chairman of the State Board of Missions (SBOM), noting Alabama Baptists are currently about \$4 million behind budget for the year. "That's why you will see a decrease in the budget [next] year."

Messengers also approved des-

ignated giving budgets of \$300,000 for state causes and \$400,000 for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). No challenge budget goal was offered because of difficult economic times.

Special offering goals also were approved, totaling \$20,955,000. They are Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions (LMCO) — \$11.5 million; Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions (AAEO) — \$6 million; Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries — \$2,555,000; World Hunger Offering — \$800,000; and Disaster Relief Offering — \$100,000.

Of the \$43 million proposed base budget, \$18,278,739 will go to the SBC, \$12,876,909 to the SBOM and \$11,844,352 to state convention entities.

"One out of every 10 CP dollars that goes to the SBC comes from Alabama Baptists," Coleman said. He also noted that Alabama is No. 1 among state conventions in AAEO giving and No. 2 in LMCO giving.

The distribution percentages of the Alabama Baptist CP budget are 57.5 percent to Alabama Baptist ministries and 42.5 percent to SBC ministries.

(See 'Focused,' page 17)

COMMENT

Ways to Better Focus Our Resources

The 188th session of the Alabama Baptist State Convention was only minutes old when President Jimmy Jackson, senior pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, took what may prove to be the most important action of the annual meeting.

Jackson told messengers he had appointed a special committee to study “ways to better focus our resources 2011 through 2020.” He said the reason for the committee was to “help Alabama Baptists focus our resources and conduct Great Commission Ministries through the coming decade.”

When messengers accepted his report, along with the announcement of other committees appointed by the president, the state convention’s course of action was set even though many messengers may not have realized the importance of the action at the time.

“Ways to better focus our resources” is code for how Alabama Baptists will divide their missions gifts channeled through the Cooperative Program (CP). Will Alabama Baptists increase the percentage (42.5 percent) given to national causes? If so, then how? And what impact will this have on state ministries?

These and other similar questions were on the minds of many, if not most, of the 943 messengers who registered for the Nov. 16–17 meeting at Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover. They were asked in hallway conversations and informal discussions in the display area.

And they were asked from the convention floor. During the first opportunity to introduce miscellaneous business, two pastors offered motions that would move the convention to a 50–50 split of CP funds between state and national causes (see story, page 7). Both called for a study committee to recommend how to move to the new percentages. One went further. He asked the study committee to investigate all state entities and ministries to make sure they were aligned with Southern Baptist doctrinal and missional positions.

Messengers never discussed the motions. One was ruled out of order because it would bind future conventions — the 2010 annual meeting would be deciding budget percentages for future annual meetings. The other was judged moot because the special study committee mentioned above had been appointed earlier by Jackson.

What should not be missed is that the issue of how best to invest CP funds will be discussed. It will be discussed thoroughly, and recommendations will be brought to messengers for consideration. That is the responsibility of the special committee.

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, told messengers, “We are going to try to work with our Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) partners.” He added, “We have no intention of abandoning the ministries of Alabama Baptists as we look toward the future.”



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Lance succinctly stated the dilemma facing state conventions. Does a state convention increase giving to national causes at the expense of state ministries, or does it focus on state ministries at the expense of national causes?

Recently some state conventions have opted to increase giving to national causes and cut back what is done in the state. Others have voted to continue valuable state-sponsored ministries while giving to national causes at traditional levels.

Unanswered questions

Alabama Baptists have chosen not to be rushed in making their decision. During the two-year study, the direction of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) will become clearer. Will NAMB phase out its work in Alabama, asking the state convention to invest more funds in state ministries? Will there be a comprehensive church-planting strategy? Will state conventions be asked to help support Baptist work in new work areas? What direction will the International Mission Board go? How will those decisions impact Alabama Baptists?

Much is unclear at this time. And because much is unclear, Alabama Baptists wisely chose to gather more information and take additional time to understand the implications of the information before committing themselves to a path different from the one they now travel.

While recommendations will be formed by the special committee, discussion about the issue will be statewide and involve people of every persuasion. That is the Baptist way. No one should be excluded from this important discussion.

That point was illustrated the day before the annual meeting when the state’s directors of missions (DOMs) adopted an open letter to Southern Baptists asking that the implementation strategies of the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) be revisited before being put in place. With only one dissenting vote, the DOMs expressed fear that the strategies will have negative results on Baptist ministries and witness (see story, page 6).

Doubtless others will call for Alabama Baptists to immediately adopt all the GCR goals.

It also will be important to make sure things are done according to the Baptist way. One of the mo-

tions introduced called for a committee to study every Alabama Baptist entity and ministry to make sure they were aligned doctrinally and missionally with the SBC’s positions.

Ensuring that state convention entities and ministries stay true to the purposes for which they were founded is the responsibility of the trustees and directors elected by Alabama Baptists to oversee them. Trustees and directors also are charged with keeping the entities and ministries supportive of Alabama Baptists’ goals.

For a motion to be offered that implies a special committee is needed to do the task given to trustees and directors is unfortunate.

A word about participation. The 943 messengers who registered for this annual meeting is 15 percent below the 1,104 who registered last time the convention met in Birmingham. The total continues the downward trend from 1,778 in Montgomery in 2000 to just over half that number this year.

The low turnout occurred despite the election of a new president, concern about the implications of the GCR for Alabama Baptists and potential controversy over the convention budget. Also meeting in the central part of the state (Birmingham area) typically produces a higher registration than when the convention meets in Mobile or Huntsville.

Perhaps it is the economy. Church budgets are hurting just as the budgets of church families are hurting. Still attention to the annual meeting’s role is in order.

How representative of Alabama Baptists is the decision of 943 messengers from 419 churches when we report 1.1 million members and only one out of eight churches send messengers to the annual meeting?

Lance was correct when he observed that the key to remaining a healthy state convention is cooperation. That includes the way decisions are made about our future as Alabama Baptists.

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

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

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DR. BOBBY S. TERRY, EDITOR

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Key to healthy convention is cooperation, Lance says

By Kristen Padilla
and Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

The future of many Southern Baptist ministries remains a mystery, but Alabama Baptists need not wonder how their ministries will fare.

"We have no intention of abandoning the ministries of Alabama Baptists as we look toward the future," said Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Lance shared his evaluation of the Alabama Baptist State Convention during the afternoon session of the annual meeting Nov. 16.

He acknowledged there is a lot of uncertainty about the future, especially in regard to what Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) cooperation will look like.

"I realize ... there's a huge question mark related to that funding mechanism," Lance said. "That means there is a built-in uncertainty. We ... are going to try to work with our Southern Baptist Convention partners. We're going to do the best we can in terms of the future.

"There's been much discussion about cooperative agreements," he noted. "Cooperative agreements between the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and various state conventions have been a tool of the North American Mission Board with state conventions ... all across America."

Lance shared that he has had conversations with NAMB's new president, Kevin Ezell, about the partnership.

"This state convention has been true to its mission since 1823. It helped form the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845," Lance said. "This state convention has tried to be leaders in Southern Baptist life. We've tried to model partnership. We've tried to model cooperation."

And although the United States has experienced a terrible financial crisis, "Alabama Baptists have led the Southern Bap-

tist Convention in Cooperative Program giving for two years," he said. "Since 1925, your state convention — in one of the poorest states where average church attendance is 65 people — has given well over \$1 billion through the Cooperative Program. That's big stuff — a big mission enterprise for missions.

"Your state convention is in a healthy set of circumstances, not perfect but healthy," he said. "We also want to make sure we have healthy churches. ... The churches we began in Alabama (10 years ago) are functioning, fruitful, growing churches. No one church can do all the Great Commission, but all of us together can make a huge dent in the Great Commission in our generation."

The key to remaining a healthy state convention is cooperation, he added.

"Our future can be fruitful, and the way we can be fruitful in the future is to rediscover the principle of cooperation," Lance said.

"We never get beyond any set of circumstances where God is not."

As Alabama Baptists continue to cooperate with one another and the rest of the SBC, he encouraged them to have Christlike spirits toward one another.

"I'm not

for burning bridges but for building bridges," Lance said. "I believe salvation is stronger than sin ... forgiveness is stronger than bitterness ... reconciliation is stronger than hatred ... the resurrection is stronger than the crucifixion ... light is stronger than darkness.

"[A]s Great Commission ministers with Great Commission ministries, let us press toward the future, not with a sense of despair or lone ranger spirit, but (with) a sense of hope and cooperation as partners.

"I'm excited about what God is doing in Alabama," Lance said. "I love your commitment to doing the work of the Lord and doing it together. The Cooperative Program will only exist where there is Christlike selflessness." ❧

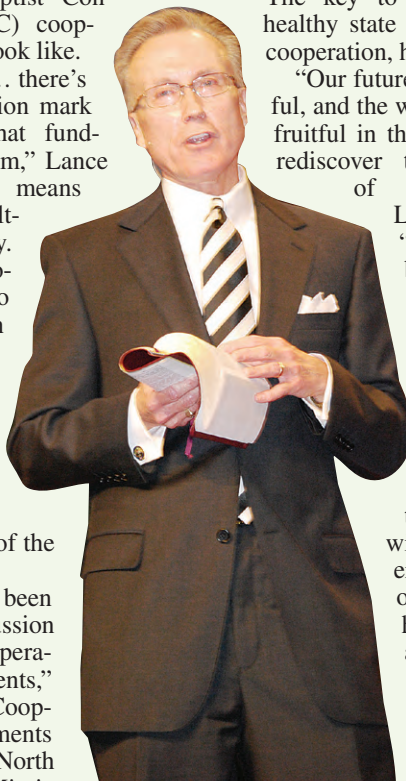


Photo by Lauren Chow

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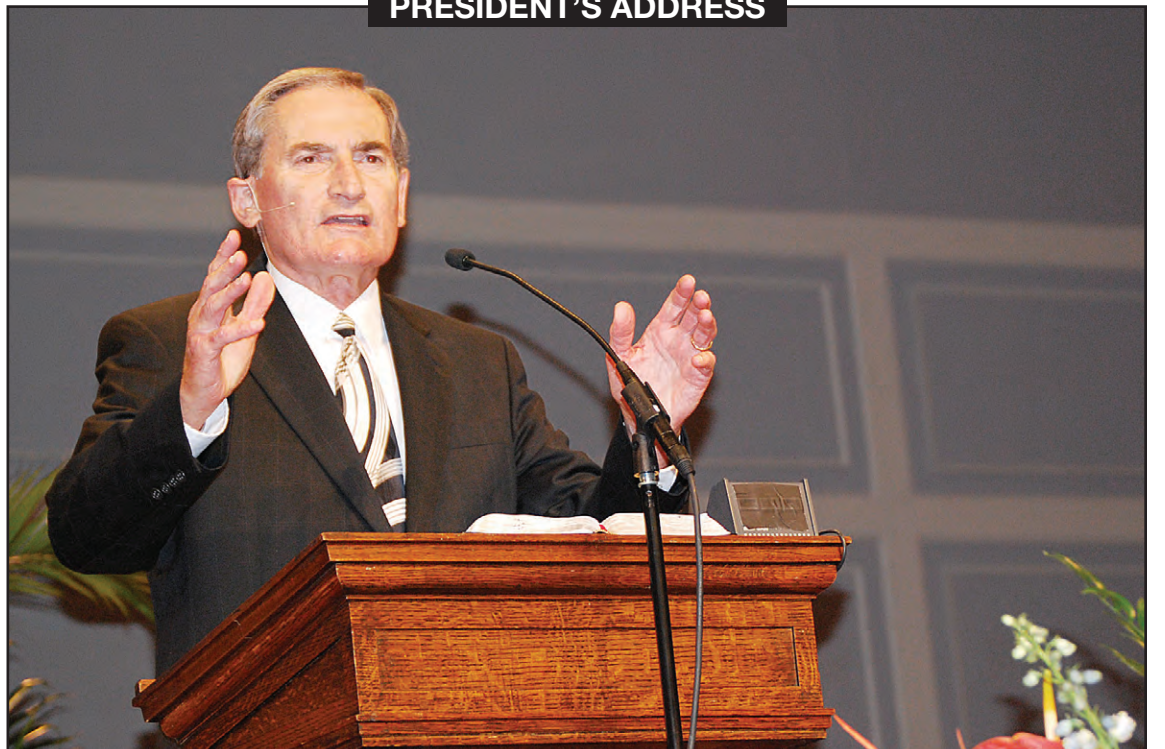


Photo by Lauren Chow

'TROUBLED TIMES' — Jimmy Jackson, president of the state convention and senior pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, preaches about 'instructions for troubled times' from Habakkuk during his presidential address Nov. 16. 'Only God can fix what's wrong with us,' he said.

'Nothing matters except Jesus'

Jackson urges messengers 'to stay to the end'

By John Evans
The Alabama Baptist

We can quarrel among ourselves and debate over issues, how it's best to be done, but the bottom line is that our Lord stayed to the end, and He expects us to stay to the end, no matter how hard it is," declared Alabama Baptist State Convention President Jimmy Jackson during his presidential address at the annual meeting.

Warning that "we are as a nation and world in a lot bigger trouble than we make out we are," Jackson, senior pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, urged attendees to turn to the Lord.

"Only God can fix what's wrong with us," he said.

Drawing from the Book of Habakkuk, Jackson examined the deteriorating state of ancient Judah: Spiritual corruption was spreading through the land as the Babylonians threatened to conquer the nation. He compared the dire times Habakkuk experienced to the current spiritual and economic distress in the world.

"It's dark today in the lives of many Alabama Baptists, and there are people and pastors of churches wondering what they're going to do if things go the way they seem to be going," Jackson said.

When times of trouble come

He challenged attendees to think about what would happen if their retirement savings dried up, their bank accounts ran out and they could no longer find gas for their cars.

"There are times when what goes on around us and in our lives is so painful that it isolates us, there's no one else we can turn to and the insides are sucked out of us.

"There will come a time in your life when nothing matters except Jesus," Jackson said.

Those times of trouble and loss, when everything else is stripped away, can serve as a powerful means of reminding believers that Jesus is all they ever needed in the first place, he said.

"As we grow in the grace of God, the adversities of life tend to press the world out of us, leaving more room for Jesus in us.

"What have you really lost if you lose the world but gain Jesus?" Jackson asked. "In the long run, Jesus is all we really had."

When adversity comes, he said, it can lead to some of the best years of ministry yet, since it drives believers to total dependence on God. Jackson encouraged attendees to live by faith in Christ and lean on God's promise that He will never leave them.

"If we trust in Jesus Christ, when time comes to an end, when there's trauma, difficulty or the world collapses, 'the just shall live by faith.' We shall live and keep on living." ❧

"I know we are not perfect, but we are healthy in our state. There's not a church in our state that's not doing what it ought to do but certainly not doing all it wants to do. Our church is not where it ought to be in the area of giving. I shouldn't expect my church to be where it ought to be until I get where I ought to be. Once I get to 20 percent, then I believe I have something to say. Once I get my church there, then I can have something to say to the state convention, then the Southern Baptist Convention. I still have work to do. We should be trusting the Lord ... and lead people to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We just need to get serious about it again." ❧

President
Jimmy Jackson
Alabama Baptist State
Convention

Samford students provide living examples of university's contributions to cause of Christ

Stepping onto the podium during the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 16, Samford University President Andrew Westmoreland duly noted the 10 minutes allotted for his report. But instead of filling the time alone — as he admitted would have been easy for him — he invited three students to share the stage. Through them, Westmoreland provided attendees with living examples of the work the 169-year-old university is doing to further the cause of Christ.

Ben Telfair recently earned a bachelor's degree from Samford and is now a first-year student at its Beeson Divinity School. The Tallahassee, Fla., native chose Samford because he knew of some students who were fulfilling their callings through the university's programs. As Telfair became more familiar with Samford, he became even more impressed.

"I saw the passion of the faculty and staff," Telfair said.

Jen Taylor, a senior English major from Indianapolis, is involved in University Ministries, and that involvement has helped strengthen her faith.

"I had never been around people so hungry and desperate for God," she said. "It gave me a bigger picture of Christianity."

Jeremy Towns, a sports medicine major from Birmingham, plays on the football team.

He chose to attend Samford after offers to play football at other schools fell through. "I



Photo by Lauren Chow

OFF THE CUFF — Samford President Andrew Westmoreland (far right) interviews Samford students (l to r) Jeremy Towns, Jen Taylor and Ben Telfair during his report to Alabama Baptist State Convention messengers Nov. 16.

know it was God bringing me to Samford," Towns said. A nonbeliever when he arrived on campus, Towns was led to Christ through the efforts of former coach Chris Brasfield.

"This is the future," Westmoreland said, gesturing toward the three students. "It's hard for me to be discouraged about the future of Christian work because of

young men and young women like these."

Samford's partnership with Alabama Baptists has helped the university develop into a nationally recognized academic institution that continues to be "anchored to the cause of Christ," Westmoreland said.

"We're grateful for this partnership, and we'll hold fast to it for all time." (TAB)

Scholarships help prepare students for ministry

Melba Brown came by her position on the Alabama Baptist Education Commission honestly.

The only daughter of seven children, Brown gave her heart to Christ at age 10. Her parents were very active in a Baptist church, which meant she was, too.

"My memories of growing up are memories of church," Brown said.

So when she graduated from high school, Brown naturally gravitated toward attending a Baptist college. But with two older brothers already in college and the added expense of tuition at a small private college, the option seemed unaffordable.

But she was determined. To help defray costs, Brown sold an expensive formal gown

and her car so she could attend the college of her choice.

"The experience prepared me for the ministry life," said Brown, now a minister's wife, Bible teacher and adjunct professor of voice at the University of Mobile (UMobile).

Christian higher education

The experience also placed a passion in her heart for ensuring others have access to the same opportunities for Christian higher education that she'd enjoyed.

"That passion is what drives me today," Brown told attendees at the Alabama Baptist State Convention on Nov. 16 as she delivered the education commission's report.

Established in 1979, the commission seeks

to be an effective advocate for Christian higher education in Alabama and define the role of higher education in relation to the Great Commission.

Its purposes include serving in an advisory capacity, periodically reviewing the distribution of Cooperative Program funds for Christian higher education, acting as a catalyst for prayer and serving as a liaison between the three Alabama Baptist institutions of higher learning: Samford University in Birmingham, Judson College in Marion and UMobile.

The commissioners meet with the presidents of these institutions three times a year to discuss academic issues, student life and related issues.

Also relating to the three Baptist schools in the state is the Board of Aid to Students in Church-related Vocations, which awards scholarships to students who are going into vocational ministry.

Bill Goodwin, vice chairman of the board of aid and pastor of Lincoln Baptist Church, shared the same morning how a scholarship from the board helped him. "When I began as a freshman at Samford, my pastor and student minister urged me to apply for the Board of Aid scholarship," he said. "And for the next four years, I received it." Goodwin was touched by "the spirit in which it was given." "People had given money through the Cooperative Program to support me and others like me," he said. "Thank you for giving then and giving now in supporting future pastors, missionaries and church leaders."

According to the Book of Reports, the board awarded 243 scholarships in the amount of \$272,788 to undergraduate students this year. (TAB)

'State paper is invaluable,' McLemore says

This year's Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting is an historic event," Bob Terry, president and publisher of *The Alabama Baptist*, told messengers Nov. 17.

It is historic because Mike McLemore, executive director for Birmingham Baptist Association, rotates off the newspaper's board of directors after 21 years.

Telling messengers it has been his "joy and wonderful privilege" to serve, McLemore, a former president of the state convention, had nothing but praise for *The Alabama Baptist* as he spoke about his years on its board.

He praised the state Baptist paper's successful presentation of social and political issues from a Christian perspective and specifically pointed to its recent package on gambling in Alabama. He said the paper has helped him make informed decisions on how to vote on several political matters.



McLEMORE

McLemore said he has long believed "an informed Baptist is an asset to our churches and our collective work as a denomination; however, an uninformed or misinformed Baptist is a danger to both."

He then quoted Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, "but I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren," to underline the importance of the paper to Alabama Baptists.

"In our state paper, you have in one publication the news concerning the ministries of local churches, local associations, the work of our state convention, the work of the Southern Baptist Convention, news stories concerning Baptists and other faith groups from around the world and social and political issues that concern the Christian church," McLemore said.

"It is truly a highly professional and balanced news resource that provides us up-to-date information on issues that we as Christians are concerned about.

"I have found both as a pastor and now as the executive director of the Birmingham Baptist Association that the paper is invaluable to me personally and to the churches I have served and now the organization which I lead," he said.

And it is because of the paper's invaluable quality that McLemore commended it to messengers.

"I commend the paper to you and pray that we will always have such an effective news resource and publication provided to us in order that we might be informed and inspired to do an even greater work together for the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ," he concluded. (TAB)

Shocco 'a place of opportunity'

It's evident that in God's economy, there is no recession," Buster Taylor, executive director of Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center, said as he delivered his report to the Alabama Baptist State Convention on Nov. 17.

Acknowledging Shocco Springs' core mission to "provide a distinctly Christian environment for spiritual transformation and renewal," Taylor noted that more than 130 people made public professions of faith in Christ through the center's camps, retreats and other events in 2010.

The Book of Reports indicates overall attendance is down but points to an "upward trend" in several areas; summer at-

tendance was steady at more than 18,000 and international groups are increasing.

The Book of Reports also noted that major renovations of facilities have been completed and more are ongoing. In addition, Shocco is increasing its media presence, with an improved website, electronic newsletters, Internet videos and slideshows and social networking.

Cory Horton, pastor of Elkdale Baptist Church, Selma, recounted his experiences at Shocco from attending camps as a child to meeting his wife to working there to help pay for seminary. "God is a God of opportunity, and Shocco has been a place for that in my life," he said. (TAB)

Worship and Word unite messengers at annual meeting

Hunter Street choir, Rick Lance sermon

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Baptist State Convention President Jimmy Jackson's silky smooth "Welcome to Tuesday evening at the state convention" — combined with silent, perfectly positioned horns peering out of the orchestra pit — set the stage for a relaxed evening of enjoyable entertainment.

But entertainment was not the order of the night. Worship was. And worship Alabama Baptists did with the assistance of the worship ministry of Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover, where the state convention annual meeting was held Nov. 16–17.

Typically a time of more elaborate presentations, convention leaders opted for a more traditional worship service this year, sticking with the host church choir and orchestra and hearing from Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions Executive Director Rick Lance.

This set up allowed for simplicity and fiscal responsibility.

But dare not think simple meant snoozing could take place in the pews.

Scott Allred, minister of music at Hunter Street Baptist, ensured that didn't happen.

The praise team, choir and orchestra led worship, sang hard, played with fury and kept the audience involved for almost an hour and a half.



Photo by Lauren Chow

SONGS OF PRAISE — The Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover, praise team, choir and orchestra lead messengers in worship at the Tuesday evening session of the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting.

The worship experience was explosively contemporary and left Allred wiping sweat from his brow, but just when the traditionalists in the crowd felt completely abandoned, out came "How Great Thou Art" and "Amazing Grace." And the across-the-board favorite of the night landed with the well-loved hymn of the faith "Victory in Jesus."

But Lance might have captured

the most stirring moment of worship with the conclusion of his sermon.

"So Send I You" takes Lance back to his ordination service. It was the only hymn sung, he said.

But the words remain true today as more than 40 years later, Lance continues working out his calling.

While typically not a publicly emotional man, Lance was obviously moved as Eileen Mitchell's a cappella version of the song filled the sanctuary. A chilling, piercing spirit penetrated the room. And Lance's calling was very real to him.

He recalled his transition from executive director-elect to executive director and how he penned the now well-rehearsed and sometimes mocked mantra for Alabama Baptists: One mission, the Great Commission; one program, the Cooperative Program; many ministries, Great Commission ministries.

Great Commission mission

"Since then, I've tried to bring the State Board of Missions and whatever influence I've had throughout Alabama Baptist life in line with the Great Commission," Lance said. "I believe it is our mission. Until the day I die, I want to be a Great Commission Christian. You may have a different view than I, but that does not mean we can't work together."

Obviously comfortable and poised in the pulpit, Lance focused on "The Greatest Invitation Ever Given" from Matthew 11:28–30.

"The greatest invitation was given by Jesus Christ Himself," he said, noting the invitation is for everyone.

But what happens when you come to Christ? Lance asked.

First, "when you come to Christ, you find rest in Him."

"Only people who have come to Christ understand we have our ultimate rest in Christ," Lance said. "There is no other source of rest except in the Lord Jesus Christ ... but lest you think that rest means we just go to sleep, He says when you come to [Him], you are yoked with Him."

Illustrating this second point with an oxen's yoke, held steady by Associate Executive Director Bobby DuBois, Lance said, "When the beast of burden were yoked together, they were yoked solidly together.

"They were not able to pull twice the weight but 10 times the weight," he said. "When we come to Christ and are yoked with Him, we are yoked as co-laborers with God. When we come together in Christ, our ability to carry the load and do His ministry grows exponentially.

"There is no other yoking we want," Lance explained. "We don't want to be yoked with the world, the stock market, a man or a leader. We want to be yoked with Christ, because when we are yoked with Christ, we can pull the load and it's His load, too."

Third, "when you come to Christ, you learn from Him."

"I will be a lifelong apprentice of Jesus Christ," Lance said. "I bank on Jesus."

This means learning to love like Jesus Christ and leading like Him.

"Peter says [Jesus] is the One ... you trace your life around. He is the pattern," Lance said.

Fourth, "when you come to Christ, you make disciples for Him," he said, quoting Matthew 28:19–20.

Lance grew up in a "blue-collar, lower middle class family ... on the western side of Birmingham."

'Somebody took the time'

His father had only a sixth-grade education. His mother just slightly better.

But still "somebody took some time to tell this little buck-toothed boy from Birmingham how he could come to Jesus and have eternal life."

And about a half-century since making that decision to follow Christ, he stands before Alabama Baptists with more than a decade under his belt as their leader. He has spent his life and ministry focused on the Great Commission, and that's what he plans to do going forward.

"He's respected ... as a real Baptist statesman," said Charles Carter, pastor emeritus of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills.

"I do not know an executive director who is any more equipped or effective as a pastor, leader and administrator than Rick Lance." ❧



Photo by Lauren Chow

'THE GREATEST INVITATION' — Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, preaches from Matthew 11:28–30 during the Tuesday evening session of the annual meeting.

DOMs call for slow down to missions funding changes

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

In an effort to protect funding for work in pioneer areas as well as ministries traditionally organized for rural America, the Alabama Baptist Conference of Directors of Associational Missions is speaking out. It wants Southern Baptists to slow down the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) funding changes, specifically as they relate to the North American Mission Board (NAMB), and make sure they understand the results of “pulling the plug” on some of the ministries.

The GCR Task Force report recommended phasing out the “cooperative agreements” that govern state convention and local association relationships with NAMB and has many state conventions and local associations reassessing their vision, strategy and financial plans.

An open letter to all Southern Baptists (see below) from Alabama directors of missions (DOM) was overwhelmingly approved during the group’s annual meeting Nov. 15 at Gardendale First Baptist Church.

“We want to address the areas that are going to be left out of the Great Commission Resurgence paradigm,” said Steve Loggins, president of the conference and DOM for North Jefferson Baptist Association.

Selma Baptist Association DOM Tom Stacey brought the idea to the attention of the DOMs. “He is very concerned about work in the pioneer areas of the country,” Loggins said. “He has been connected to new work areas since serving as a summer missionary in Wyoming almost 30 years ago.”

Stacey said work in pioneer areas “is not just observatory” for him. It is real. “My dear friends and background are invested in this,” he said, noting Selma Association has had an unofficial partnership in a new work area for 13 years.

After the GCR Task Force report passed at the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando, Fla., in June, “I decided I wanted to do something,” Stacey said.

“[Tom] knows the devastation that GCR will have and has shared with us things we needed

“We want to address the areas that are going to be left out of the Great Commission Resurgence paradigm.”
DOM Steve Loggins
North Jefferson Baptist Association



Photo by Lauren Chow

OFFICERS — New officers for the Alabama Baptist Conference of Directors of Associational Missions are (l to r) President Steve Loggins of North Jefferson Baptist Association, President-elect Bill Morgan of Autauga Baptist Association and Secretary-treasurer Jim Jackson of Elmore Baptist Association.

to hear,” Loggins noted. “But we kept our letter focused on the way GCR is going to affect missions in North America because of the changes GCR is going to make to the North American Mission Board.

“We hope it will make people stop and think about some areas they didn’t think about,” he said. “We all want to see the gospel go to the ends of the earth, but we

can’t abandon what we have here. It doesn’t have to be an either/or but a both/and.”

Loggins said, “Some people want to abandon everything for just the uttermost, but I don’t see that we have to choose. We’ve got to do it all.”

While the letter is an expression of support for the Cooperative Program (CP), he said DOMs also are committed to keeping existing ministries in place.

“We are not going to let those ministries being abandoned by NAMB fall through the cracks,” Loggins said, noting the director of the International Ministries Center in Mobile is one of the positions for which the longterm funding is unsure.

NAMB vice president for communications Mike Ebert said the position is guaranteed through the end of 2011.

“We are in a very active, ongoing process with state executive directors about how states and NAMB can most effectively partner to reach North America for Christ,” he said. “It’s a collaborative process and it’s going well. This is the top priority issue for our president, Kevin Ezell, right now, but just two months into his presidency, it’s too early to have answers for everyone.”

“See our heart”

Still, the DOMs want Southern Baptists to hear what they have to say, but Loggins said they didn’t want to be confrontational in their efforts, so they decided an open letter was the best way to share their message.

“We hope all Southern Baptists will have an opportunity to see our heart,” he said. “We would like folks looking at giving through the GCR viewpoint to consider what we are presenting here, something beyond that paradigm.”

“Come together”

Stacey added, “What I pray happens is that we as Southern Baptists can come together at the table and ... can work out a unified plan that we can all still be on board with.”

“What I pray happens is that we as Southern Baptists can come together at the table and ... can work out a unified plan that we can all still be on board with.”
DOM Tom Stacey
Selma Baptist Association

“We’re praying Kevin Ezell will start understanding more and that these entities and agencies will do some studies before they pull the plug on whatever they are going to pull the plug on,” he said. “We are backed into a corner, and we are trying to be as gentlemanly as we can.”

Both Stacey and Loggins agreed that Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

Executive Director Rick Lance has worked to communicate this message with a cooperative spirit, but they realize he can’t do it by himself.

“Rick Lance has been an eloquent spokesman for Alabama Baptists and has said so much about this to us and beyond about the fears of what will happen when GCR comes to pass,” Loggins explained.

“And since GCR has been passed, he has done his best to partner with this paradigm.

“But it is time for someone to step up, come alongside him and say it as well.”

Open letter to Southern Baptists from the Alabama Baptist Conference of Directors of Associational Missions

As directors of missions of Alabama, we stand at the forefront of missional engagement of our churches on fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord. We recognize all efforts to fulfill this mandate at all levels of Baptist life.

But due to the recent changes in direction of Southern Baptist Convention leadership — specifically the adoption of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force report in Orlando, Fla., June 2010, we wish to voice our concerns and offer some suggestion as to how to respond to what many perceive are serious changes that impact mission support.

The North American Mission Board (formerly Home Mission Board) historically has partnered with state conventions in cooperative mission work. This partnership has expressed itself as a two-way street of mission support and cooperation, resulting in many different tasks. The local Southern Baptist church is the source of funding for all the cooperative mission enterprises of the conventions from church planting to disaster relief at the various levels of Baptist life: associations, state conventions, mission boards and other fostered entities of the convention.

In recent days there is a movement within the Southern Baptist Convention that not only alarms many committed to Southern Baptist mission work, but also causes division among all entities of the Southern Baptist Convention. In our understanding, the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force and documents proceeding from the task force essentially have:

1. superseded the Cooperative Program, South-

ern Baptists’ main funding for working together;

2. programmed the coming withdrawal of cooperative agreements with home missionaries in established state conventions and new work areas;

3. set the stage to dismantle the Southern Baptist family’s systematic, cooperative and comprehensive approach to missions (which we the directors of missions of Baptist associations in Alabama support) — the cherished plan known as the Cooperative Program; and

4. greatly damaged already fragile “new work” associations and state conventions of North America.

Since Alabama Baptists are leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention in Cooperative Program giving, we, the Alabama Baptist Conference of Directors of Associational Missions, first-line promoters in Cooperative Program giving, desire to express grave concern over the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force’s recommendations and pledge to:

1. encourage all Southern Baptist churches/associations to support the Cooperative Program within the parameters of traditional, faithful administration by the Southern Baptist family and

2. encourage all churches, associations and established state conventions to institute and continue to develop direct SBC missions partnerships within the infrastructure of existing pioneer associations and state conventions by providing financial, prayer and manpower support for Vacation Bible School, revivals, evangelistic outreach, church construction and other ministries deemed necessary to aid in reaching rural and small-town America and other areas outside the focus of the GCR paradigm.

Baptists affirm CP, pass 10 resolutions

By John Evans
The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Baptist State Convention messengers affirmed the Cooperative Program (CP), condemned gambling and tackled a host of other issues in 10 resolutions that passed without debate during the annual meeting Nov. 16–17.

▶ On Unity Through the Cooperative Program praises the unity, sense of common purpose and ministry funding accomplished through the CP and pledges to “work with the churches, associations and the Southern Baptist Convention in promoting Cooperative Program giving.”

▶ On Alabama Gambling condemns all types of gambling in the state and urges stepped-up enforcement efforts against violators. It also encourages Alabama Baptist pastors to “educate their congregations on the evils of gambling” and ask them to support authorities who oppose gambling.

▶ On Homosexuality and the United States Military opposes normalization of homosexuality in the military, specifically applauding Alabama Sens. Richard Shelby and Jeff Sessions for opposing the repeal of the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy. The resolution calls upon authorities and Alabama Baptists to oppose normalization as well.

▶ On Physical Health cites statistics on obesity in the state and calls for Alabama Baptists to repent of overeating and practice moderation as they eat.

▶ On the Employment Nondiscrimination Act opposes pending legislation in Congress that would add protections for sexual orientation to current anti-discrimination laws. Warning that the law could impede the free speech rights of pastors and ministers opposed to homosexuality, the resolution states continued opposition to legislative attempts to normalize homosexual behavior.

▶ On the Tragedy in the Gulf acknowledges the loss of lives as well as economic and environmental damage caused by the April 20 explosion aboard the Deepwater Horizon oil rig. It expresses sympathy and resolves to pray for those affected by the tragedy. The resolution pledges to try to replenish the region affected by the spill.

▶ In Support of Smoke-free Ordinances encourages state lawmakers and/or local municipalities to enact laws banning smoking in all workplaces, restaurants and public buildings to promote the safety and health of the public.

▶ On Dr. David Potts’ 20th Anniversary as President of Judson College expresses appreciation for Potts’ leadership.

▶ On Appreciation cites the contributions of Hunter Street Baptist Church staff in the convention process.

▶ On Affirmation of the State Board of Missions and Entities Staff affirms and encourages the staff of the SBOM and Alabama Baptist entities. ☞

Special committee appointed to study funding; 2 motions to change CP allocations blocked

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Addressing the distribution of Cooperative Program (CP) funds from Alabama Baptists came up three times during the Nov. 16–17 annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC); once in the form of a special committee appointment and twice in the form of motions.

Just minutes after the opening gavel, ABSC President Jimmy Jackson announced the appointment of the new committee.

“As we begin a new decade — The Decade to Make a Difference (as Alabama Baptists are calling 2011–2020) — we want to have thoughtful and deliberate planning, to help Alabama Baptists focus our resources and conduct Great Commission ministries through the coming decade,” Jackson said.

Noting the economic pressure a new com-

mittee would put on the convention budget, Jackson said he decided to appoint the existing State Board of Missions executive committee as the committee.

“It is made up of ministers and laymen from every district of Alabama who have a close proximity to grass-roots Alabama Baptists,” he said. “It is the most efficient choice in time management and conserving CP dollars.”

It will be “charged to study ways to better focus our resources 2011 through 2020. This committee will serve for at least two years and will bring a preliminary report to the 2011 convention and any appropriate recommendations to the 2012 convention.”

During miscellaneous business, two motions related to CP funding were introduced, but both were later ruled out of order.

The motion by Shawn Merithew, senior pastor of Morningview Baptist Church, Montgomery, stated: “In light of the Great Commission Resurgence report ... I hereby move that the president elected at the 2010 ... convention name an independent committee of no less than 10 Alabama pastors to evaluate the current allocation of CP dollars ... and to bring recommendation(s) to ... the 2011 (convention) composing a vision for a more efficient and missional use of CP dollars.”

The motion also noted goals to include moving to a 50–50 percentage split of CP dollars between state and national causes and tabulating those percentages without using special offering amounts, ensuring that all entities and ministries receiving CP dollars are aligned doctrinally and missionally with the ABSC and Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), and affirming the CP as the main channel for missions giving.

Merithew’s motion was ruled out of order because the convention bylaws say the Budget Committee is responsible for this. “Plus the point is moot,” because Jackson has already appointed a committee to evaluate the allocation of CP dollars, said Charles T. Carter, chairman of the Order of Business Committee.

The motion introduced by John Thweatt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pell City, stat-



Photo by Lauren Chow

FOCUSED ON CP — Shawn Merithew, senior pastor of Morningview Baptist Church, Montgomery, introduces a motion calling for a study committee to evaluate the use of CP dollars.



Photo by Lauren Chow

CONVENTION BUSINESS — John Thweatt, pastor of FBC Pell City, introduces a motion calling for a 50–50 CP allocation between the state and national budgets.

ed: “That the [state convention], beginning with the 2012–13 budget, make percentage adjustments in the allocation of the CP funds for SBC causes until it reaches 50 percent by the 2020–21 budget. This percentage would be determined using the current accounting procedures.”

It was ruled out of order because it would bind future conventions.

Jackson told messengers that he would make sure the new committee considers the ideas presented in the motions.

Merithew said, “My intention is very supportive of the CP. ... I would love to be able to give input.”

Thweatt agreed but also noted that “the majority of people in our churches want to see Alabama give 50 percent to [SBC causes]. ... If we are not moving that way next year, then we will resubmit another motion.”

“I think Alabama can do better,” he said. ☞

Children’s Homes ‘answers the call to serve’

By Kristen Padilla
The Alabama Baptist

Two girls around the age of 8 stole several people’s hearts as they smiled and waved at the people gathered for the morning session of the Alabama Baptist State Convention on Nov. 17.

They were 67 people — men, women and children — who filled the stage area of the sanctuary at Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover, for the Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH) report.

The people represented ABCH social workers, counselors, houseparents, foster families and administrators.

“Are you willing to continue to protect, nurture and restore children and families?” Paul Miller, ABCH president and CEO, asked them.

“We will,” they replied in unison.

For Mary Williams, one of 13 social workers present, her role with ABCH allows her to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.

“I answered the call to serve because all

children need a voice, and I feel I can speak loudly for them,” she said. “We receive referrals of children who have been physically, emotionally abused. The children have no voice. We can stand in the gap for these children. We as social workers can make a difference in the lives of these children even for a short while.”

Jimmy Harris, who, along with his wife, serves as a houseparent, said his desire to serve came from a challenge his grandfather gave him — to be a living sacrifice.

‘Reflect God’s love’

“We should reflect God’s love and not absorb it selfishly,” he said. “With Christian love and gifts from you (Alabama Baptists), we try to help [the children] ... physically. But not only that, we give them the opportunity to meet our Lord and ... have a relationship with Him.”

According to the Book of Reports, because of Alabama Baptists’ support through the Cooperative Program and annual ABCH offering, in the first six months of this year, ABCH has

▶ served 232 children in foster, group and emergency shelter homes,

▶ served 49 mothers and children through Family Care Homes,

▶ garnered 73 foster families out of a goal of 85 and

▶ seen 1,801 clients for 5,653.25 counseling hours.

While those on the stage said, “we will,” in answer to God’s call, Miller said it does not have to stop with them.

“This call to care for these hurting children is not just for these down here,” he said. “Is He calling you to do some of the things that these people are doing? Is He calling you to respond?”

My challenge to you is this ... pray and ask God [for] Him to tell you where you need to be serving in children’s and family ministries.

“Let the redeemed of the Lord out here that are willing to ask God what He’d have you to do in serving and doing what the apostle James called true religion say so,” Miller challenged the audience. ☞

Alabama Baptists tapped for service

During the 188th annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, Baptists from across the state were elected to serve on the governing boards of convention-related entities. Also approved by messengers were individuals to serve on the committees of the convention.

The Committee on Boards and Commissions nominates members to serve on the executive committee, the State Board of Missions (SBOM) and convention entities. The Committee on Committees names members to convention committees. The following is a complete list of individuals approved for service during the annual meeting. The list was provided by the SBOM. An asterisk (*) before the name indicates a layperson.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairman: Mike Shaw

District: David Chambers, Robert Gamble, Philip R. Morris, *Mitchell E. Gavin, Danny E. Wiggins, Larry Cummings, Charles E. Brown, *Emily B. England, John P. Gates, *Olivia J. Wages, John H. Killian, Lawrence H. Phipps. Members at large: Greg Pouncey, John T. Brock, Timothy M. Cox, John A. Nixon Jr., James S. Watkins, A. Bryan Blass, Jim Cooley

STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

Terms to Expire 2013: Mark Stokes, Autauga; Garnett P. Starnes, Baldwin; Glenn E. Brock, Barbour; Randal W. Mims, Bethel; Brad Campbell, Bigbee; Mike D. McLemore, Birmingham; *Bridget Ramsey, Calhoun; Joseph Fain, Central; Lynn Hughston, Cherokee; Rex D. Kent, Chilton; *Jimmy L. Thompson, Choctaw; Philip R. Morris, Cleburne; Danny Wiggins, Coffee; *Jeanette G. Glover, Columbia; John K. Coates, Coosa River; *Martha Thompson, Dale; *Debbie Early, DeKalb; *Frank Gingrich, East Cullman; *Jane W. Barrett, Elmore; Gene Balding, Franklin; Scott Stevens, Hale; George Moses, Lookout Mountain; Charles Ballew, Marion; Richard Pettijohn, Keith Williams, Marshall; Terry Cutrer, Mobile; Martin D. Steelmon, Morgan; *Maurene Guffin, Jason A. Dunlap, North Jefferson; *Gail Burns, James Sampley, St. Clair; *Patricia Patty, Sand Mountain; Michael D. Miller, Shelby; Robert Gamble,

Tennessee River; Dwayne Norman, Walker; James S. Watkins, Washington

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Chairman 2010–11: Jim Cooley, First Baptist, Haleyville

Terms to Expire 2012: Dusty McLemore, Lindsay Lane, Athens; *Vicki Stoner, First Baptist, Boaz; Philip Morris, Heflin Baptist; *Cathy Cospier, First Baptist, Alexander City; John Granger, Church on the Circle, Enterprise; *Evelyn Andrews, Robinsonville, Atmore; *Mack Duck, First Baptist, Bay Minette; Guy Anderson, Elkdale, Selma; Scott Davis, First Baptist, Fayette; *Charman Brock, Highland, Florence; Tim Cox, Liberty, Chelsea; Lawrence Phipps (chairman 2011–12), Vaughn Forest, Montgomery

CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION

Terms to Expire 2014: Edwin Hayes, First Baptist, Cullman; John F. Screws, Second Baptist, Fort Payne; Dan Ireland, Green Valley, Birmingham; Darryl Wood, First Baptist, Vincent

BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Terms to Expire 2013: John W. Nicholson Jr., Siloam, Marion

Terms to Expire 2014: *Forrest S. Latta, Spring Hill, Mobile; *William T. Coplin Jr., First Baptist, Demopolis; *Clifford L. Eubanks, First Baptist, Troy; *Stephen G. Rutledge, First Baptist, Montgomery; *W. Thomas Gaither, First Baptist, Eufaula

EDUCATION COMMISSION

Terms to Expire 2014: *Cynthia P. Hicks, Concord, Newville; Charles F. Hobson Jr., Vaughn Forest, Montgomery; Hugh M. Richardson Jr., First Baptist, Alabaster; *R.L. Guffin, First Baptist, Tuscaloosa

BOARD OF AID

Terms to Expire 2014: William E. Goodwin III, Lincoln Baptist; *Raymond M. Hutchison, University, Huntsville; Randy Johnson, Cottage Hill, Mobile; *Karen Cottrell, First Baptist, Brewton

INTER-BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

Terms to Expire 2013: Earl Johnson, Christ Community, Huntsville; *Kathleen Sparks, Eastern Shore, Daphne; Kenneth Hale, Southside, Ozark; Edwin Velez, Primera Hispana, Albertville; D'Linell Finley, Southlawn, Montgomery

CHILDREN'S HOMES

Terms to Expire 2014: *Charolette Hamby, Dawson Memorial, Birmingham; *Rick M. Weber, Calvary, Dothan; *Alan Wilks, Hena-gar Baptist

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Terms to Expire 2014: *Nancy Beasley, First Baptist, Athens; *Virginia Craig Stephenson, First Baptist, Enterprise; *Bill Matthews, Siloam, Marion; *Don Donald, Bethsaida, Pine Apple

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

Terms to Expire 2014: Allan Murphy, North Shelby, Birmingham; *Jim Oakley, Centreville Baptist; *Judy Stiefel, Golden

Spring, Anniston; *B. Wayne Randall, Calvary, Tuscaloosa

JUDSON COLLEGE

Terms to Expire 2014: David Byrd, Northside, Jasper; *Judith K. Favor, Hayneville Baptist; *Leigh Hayes Wiatt, First Baptist, Montgomery; *Patricia B. Compton, First Baptist, Montgomery; Ed Cruce, Fairfield Highlands, Bessemer; *Anne Williamson Shumaker, First Baptist, Centre; *Frances Hamilton, First Baptist, Montgomery; *Barry Keel Jr., First Baptist, Selma

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

Terms to Expire 2013: *Paul A. Stanley, Shiloh, Saraland

Terms to Expire 2014: *Martin E. Dorsett, Luke 4:18 Fellowship, Mobile; *Patricia H. Dorsett, Cottage Hill, Mobile; *Robert McGinley, Dauphin Way, Mobile; *Kenny Harris, Farmstead, Jasper; *Roger E. McConnell, Spring Hill, Mobile; *Michael B. Tew, First Baptist Tillman's Corner, Mobile

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

Terms to Expire 2014: *William J. Stevens, Dawson Memorial, Birmingham; *James R. Jackson, Beulah, Sterrett; *Michael P. Dunn, First Baptist, Montgomery; *Albert P. Brewer, Mountain Brook, Birmingham; *Charles W. Lancaster, Meadowbrook, Gadsden; *J. Theodore Jackson, First Baptist, Montgomery; *Beth Thorne Stukes, First Baptist, Jasper; *David R. Belcher, Shades Mountain, Birmingham; Joseph Godfrey, Shades Mountain, Birmingham

SHOCCO SPRINGS

Terms to Expire 2014: Robert Paul Jr., Woodward Avenue, Muscle Shoals; *Milton A. Ferguson, Hepzibah, Talladega; *Melinda Gunn Poole, First Baptist, Alexander City; Barry Holcomb, First Baptist, Russellville

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Chairwoman 2010–11:

*Melissa Sahagun, First Baptist, Trussville
Terms to Expire 2013: *Phyllis Ingram, First Baptist, Montgomery; *Cecil Seamon, First Baptist, Prattville

RESOLUTIONS

Chairman 2010–11:

Rob Jackson, Central, Decatur
Terms to Expire 2011: Rob Jackson, Central, Decatur; Michael J. Brooks, Pine Flat, Selma; Gary Fenton, Dawson Memorial, Birmingham; Mike McLemore, Lakeside, Birmingham; Max Roden, Gilliam Springs, Arab; *Patrick Davenport, Mount Gilead, Dothan; James Watkins, First Baptist, Leroy

RETIREMENT CENTERS

Terms to Expire 2014: *Sharon S. Kirksey, First Baptist, Spanish Fort; William R. Carr, First Baptist, Bay Minette; *Regina H. Washburn, Greensboro Baptist; *Marlin Dyess, First Baptist, Montgomery; James W. Cochorn, Parker Memorial, Anniston

MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

Chairman 2010–11: Allen Winn, Spring Creek, Honoraville

Terms to Expire 2011: Allen Winn, Spring Creek, Honoraville; Ronnie McCarron,

Jackson names committees

Two committees, the Credentials Committee and the Tellers Committee, were appointed during the state convention's opening session Nov. 17. The Committee on Committees also was named during the Tuesday sessions.

State convention President Jimmy Jackson, senior pastor of Whitesburg Baptist, Huntsville, in Madison Baptist Association, announced the appointments 30 days prior to the annual meeting in accordance with bylaw requirements, but messengers had to ratify the appointments during the meeting.

The convention Credentials Committee helps with problems regarding registration and seating of messengers.

Serving as chairman of the committee was Philip Morris, Heflin Baptist. Serving with him were Scott Bush, Southcrest Baptist, Bessemer; Robert Heard, First Baptist, Pelham; William Gregory Hyche, Brent Baptist; Terry Sutton, First Baptist, Montevallo; Roger White, Liberty Baptist, Crossville; and Joshua Young, Westside Baptist, Boaz.

Tellers Committee members would have helped convention officers tabulate convention votes if ballots had been used.

Steven W. Loggins, Beechwood Baptist, Mount Olive, served as chairman. Other members were Matt Basford, Hartford Baptist; J. Brad Eubank, Bethsalem Baptist, Billingsley; Steve Johnson, Union Springs Baptist, Randolph; and Billy Kendrick, Millry Baptist.

The following also were elected to serve on the Committee on Committees until 2013: John A. Nixon Jr., Northport Baptist, chair; J. Scotty Hogan, Westmeade Baptist, Decatur; and Tim Patton, First Baptist, Greenville. (TAB)

Cottage Hill, Mobile; *Margery Gunnells, Spring Hill, Mobile; Paul Moore, First Baptist, Pelham; Harrell Cushing, First Baptist, Montgomery

INSURANCE COMMITTEE

Chairman 2010–11:

*Charles Ed White, Heflin Baptist
Terms to Expire 2013: Hardy Sellers, Vaughn Forest, Montgomery; *John Witherington, Southside, Troy

TIME, PLACE, PREACHER

Chairman 2010–11:

John Nicholson, Siloam, Marion
Terms to Expire 2011: John Nicholson, Siloam, Marion; Bill Hurt, First Baptist, Decatur; Hugh Richardson, First Baptist, Alabaster; Steve Loggins, Beechwood, Mount Olive; Jack Collins, Northside, Cullman; Wanda McLemore, Lakeside, Birmingham; Judy Riddle, Deerfoot, Trussville

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Chairman 2010–11: Michael D. Miller, First Baptist, Columbiana

Terms to Expire 2013: Rusty Sowell (chairman 2011–12), Providence, Opelika; Henry Cox, Durant Chapel, Bay Minette

Time, place, preacher report

The 2011 annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention will be held at Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, in Mobile Baptist Association Nov. 15–16.

The convention preacher for the 2011 annual meeting will be Rick Evans, pastor of Dalraida Baptist Church, Montgomery, in Montgomery Baptist Association.

Alternate preacher is Zach Richards, pastor of Union Grove Baptist Church, Crossville, in DeKalb Baptist Association.

Messengers voted for Dauphin Way Baptist to be the site of the 2015 state convention annual meeting, which will take place Nov. 17–18 of that year. (TAB)

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Dec. 17 at 7 p.m. | Dec. 18 at 7 p.m. | Dec. 19 at 4 p.m.
Sulphur Springs Baptist Church, 7500 Roper Road, Trussville, AL

See and hear the sights and sounds of Christmas as the adult choir and drama present "The Gift Goes On." The wreath stands 11 feet tall with 3,600 colored lights. A nursery will be provided. Everett Sollie is minister of music. Bobby Shipp is pastor. 205-655-2970.

Christmas with Larnelle

Featuring Grammy Award Winner Larnelle Harris and First Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove Worship Choir.



November 28th
6 p.m.
Free Admission

First Baptist Church - 724 4th Street - Pleasant Grove, AL
www.fbcpg.org - 205.744.2806

The music ministry of Sulphur Springs Baptist Church, Trussville, Ala., presents the children's choir in the musical

From Our Herd To Yours

December 12 at 5 p.m.
Brenda Sollie is director.
Bobby Shipp is pastor.
205-655-2970

The preschool and children's choirs of The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla, will present their Christmas programs
Sunday, Dec. 19 at 6 p.m.

The children's choir will present
"Star of Wonder"
and the preschool choir will sing selections from
"My Best-est Friend"

205-477-8265

The adult worship choir of The Baptist Church at McAdory will present
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Pastors Conference adds new Q&A session with state pastors

By Kristen Padilla
The Alabama Baptist

Fourteen years ago at the state pastors conference, I was parking cars," said Zach Terry, senior pastor of Capshaw Baptist Church. "It's neat to serve a God who moves people out of the parking lot to the pulpit."

"I'm trying to think if you're the guy who messed up my car that night," joked Buddy Gray, pastor of Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover.

The friendly dialogue was part of a question-and-answer time during the morning service of the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference at Gardendale First Baptist Church on Nov. 15.

This was the first year the pastors conference included a question-and-answer session, something Kevin Hamm, president of the conference and senior pastor of Gardendale First, hoped would encourage pastors to "learn from one another and grow together."

Hamm moderated a panel of pastors — which included Terry and Gray, two of the six conference speakers — who answered questions from the floor or sent earlier by e-mail. The other members of the panel were the other Alabama Baptist pastors on the conference program: Ed Litton of First Baptist Church, North Mobile, in Saraland and Lawrence Phipps of Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery.

Dealing with criticism

One of the questions was "How do you deal with criticism and resistance?"

"Preachers in the South are like house cats; we are well-fed and stroked often but (also) often evaluated and criticized," Litton said lightheartedly.

But in all seriousness, he said, that criticism does hurt but that's why a pastor must place his security in God, not in what others say.

Terry agreed and added that there are times when criticism is good.

"You've got to remember in every criticism, there's an ounce of truth," he said. "Sometimes your critics will be your best friends. Sometimes I've written critics and I'll say, 'Thank you. That is a faithful wound of a personal friend.'"

Hamm asked if there was a pastor in the room who had never been criticized by a church member. No one raised a hand.

"Criticism is part of ministry and it does hurt and all of us experience it," Hamm said. "There's an innate desire as a shepherd to please everybody, and when someone doesn't love you back, you think, 'What's wrong with me?'"

He then asked the panelists to discuss how the recession has impacted the ministry of their churches.

Dealing with the recession

"To be honest, we haven't handled it well," Litton responded. "My staff and I were slow to understand it. It sent a message ... that we were disconnected because we were."

Phipps said he was guilty of something similar in his church.

"I was doing the thing that was the wrong thing to do. I was telling my people that God owns it all and He's going to supply, and I was telling my congregation that I wasn't in touch with where they were," he said.

Even though those statements were true, Phipps said he wasn't meeting people where they were. "Our people weren't giving, saving and living on the rest," he said. "It wasn't about unemployment. ... We started having to deal with the fear issue."

Audience member Tony Banning, pastor of Pine Grove Baptist Church, Bay Minette, echoed his struggle and said the issue of fear has been the greatest struggle in his church.

"The economy is causing people to live in fear instead of living in faith. I'd like to hear how you all have dealt with that," Banning said to the panel.

"One thing that happens is that when your god is attacked, you become fearful," Gray said. "This is a way for us to find out who it is that we really worship. If [your God] is Jesus Christ, then He is the same yesterday, today and forever. I want to encourage you to teach your people how great our God is."

Phipps noted that about a year and a half ago, America's god — its financial systems — wasn't just attacked; it died.

"That god isn't coming back to life. ... We've been setting our God up there with all the other gods," he said.



Photo by Lauren Chow

BELOVED — Evangelist Junior Hill said he is in the 'fourth quarter of ministry' during his sermon of the evening session of the Pastors Conference Nov. 15.

Junior Hill reflects on ministry, honored by Pastors Conference

By Kristen Padilla
The Alabama Baptist

"I'm in the fourth quarter of ministry," Evangelist Junior Hill said to those attending the evening session of the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference at Gardendale First Baptist Church on Nov. 15. "Some smart aleck told me, 'The way you look, you're in overtime.'"

Although still preaching and cracking jokes after 55 years in ministry, the 74-year-old said he has been thinking about what it will be like to see Jesus.

"I'm coming down to the end, and I've been thinking a little bit about it," Hill said. "Sometimes, at night when I lay down to sleep, I think what it's going to be like when I appear before that judgment seat of Jesus."

Emotional at times, he said at the end of your life, it's not about how many sermons you preached, how big your church became or how much money you made but about whether you surrendered all you had to God, even if it was nothing more than rotten rags.

Using Jeremiah 38:7-13 as one of his texts, Hill explained that when the prophet Jeremiah was thrown into a deep pit, a man by the name of Ebed-Melech asked the king if he could take him out of the pit. So Ebed-Melech let down a rope, but with the rope, he let down rotten rags for Jeremiah to put between the rope and his skin so that his skin would not be cut by the rope.

"Here's a man who walked the face of human history, and when God gave the summary of his life, He gave mention that [Ebed-Melech] gave rotten rags to Jeremiah," Hill said. "The truth of the matter is [God] isn't interested in glitz and glamour but rotten rags that are given in the name of Jesus."

"We think we better give Him our strengths, so we offer up to God what we know," he continued. "He'd like to have some churches that'd fall down on their faces, that'd say, 'We don't have anything to offer You.' God takes rotten rags given in the name of Jesus and makes something wonderful."

Tearing up, Hill told the audience about

a recent trip he took to central Florida to preach at a church. The night before he was to preach, he only got one hour of sleep.

"I woke up about as bad as a human being could feel," Hill said. "I said, 'Oh, God, I can't go to church today,' but I knew I had to do it."

"This is so precious to me that I won't ever forget it," he went on. "I got down on my face and said, 'Dear God, I don't have one thing to offer You today but my utter weakness. I don't want to go to church; I don't feel like preaching. All I have is my weakness.' ... That morning, God saved 41 people. He wants some old rotten rags, because that's all you got to offer Him."

Because God has used his weaknesses to reach many for Jesus Christ, pastors conference leaders wanted to honor him. It would be the first time for Hill to be honored collectively by Alabama Baptists.

Special presentation

Receiving a standing ovation, Hill was presented a special plaque with a collage of pictures and Scripture verses and a five-day trip for two to The Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa in Asheville, N.C.

Conference leaders also put together a video with pictures of Hill and messages from friends, including Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions; Jerry Vines, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.; Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Ga.; and Steve Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, Tenn.

But what moved Hill to place his head in his hands and cry was not the plaque, trip or video — it was a personal letter from Evangelist Billy Graham that Kevin Hamm, president of the pastors conference and senior pastor of Gardendale First, read out loud. Hill then was presented with the framed letter. "I don't know any other evangelist that has had any more impact than Junior Hill, my friends," Hamm said. "He just preaches Jesus."

"We just want to tell you how much we love you," he said to Hill. "To God be the glory; great things He has done."



Photo by John Evans

PANEL DISCUSSION — Alabama Baptist pastors (l to r) Lawrence Phipps, Zach Terry, Buddy Gray and Ed Litton respond to questions from the audience and that were e-mailed ahead of time during the Q&A session of the Pastors Conference on Nov. 15.

Smith shares about son's murder, focuses on cross

By John Evans
The Alabama Baptist

I know my son went down in a tragedy, but Calvary makes it a triumphal moment, because those who die in Christ shall be raised to live with Him," said Robert Smith Jr., whose son Antonio or "Tony" was murdered Oct. 31. "So I preach the cross, because it means life to me."

Smith, associate professor of divinity at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, was one of six speakers who preached Nov. 15 at the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference, held at Gardendale First Baptist Church.

"Life and ministry go up and down," he said. "Christ is not only the bright and morning star but He's the lily in the valley when you're down and He's with you wherever you are."

Smith's message, preached from the alternating themes of hope and despair in Psalms 42 and 43, exhorted attendees to rely on God even when things don't make sense, since "many questions will never be answered."

"This psalm wants to remind us that we ought not to always research for reasons but rely on the promises of God," he said. "While we walk through the mist of mystery, we know God is still in control and we still preach, even though we don't understand."

"Believers are inspired to worship God even in the absence of the voice of God, because of the presence of the face of God," Smith continued, explaining that "even though God's not saying anything, being in His presence affects my face, so I can praise Him even without saying a word."

Near the end of his message, he brought the focus back to the certain purpose of Christ's death on the cross, proclaiming, "Calvary was not an accident; Calvary was an accomplishment."

The cross and the crucified Christ were also addressed by **Buddy Gray**, pastor of Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover.

"When we look at the cross, we see God's mercy at its greatest and the depths of our sin at their greatest," he said.

Preaching from the account of Jesus' crucifixion in John 19, Gray said people seek community, intimacy and eternity in life but they often look in the wrong places. In the cross, Jesus provides all those things, he said.

Jesus provides community because His death allows believers to enter into a new fellowship, Gray noted.

"At the cross, all of our relationships are rearranged and all our loyalties are realigned," he explained. "When Jesus Christ died, He was creating a new family."

Gray said Jesus provides intimacy because He satisfies our deepest longings. People have a deep thirst in their souls, which many try to satisfy with the things of this world.

"You can drink and drink of those things, and your soul's thirst will not be quenched," Gray said. "You have a profound thirst in your soul. The Bible teaches what we thirst

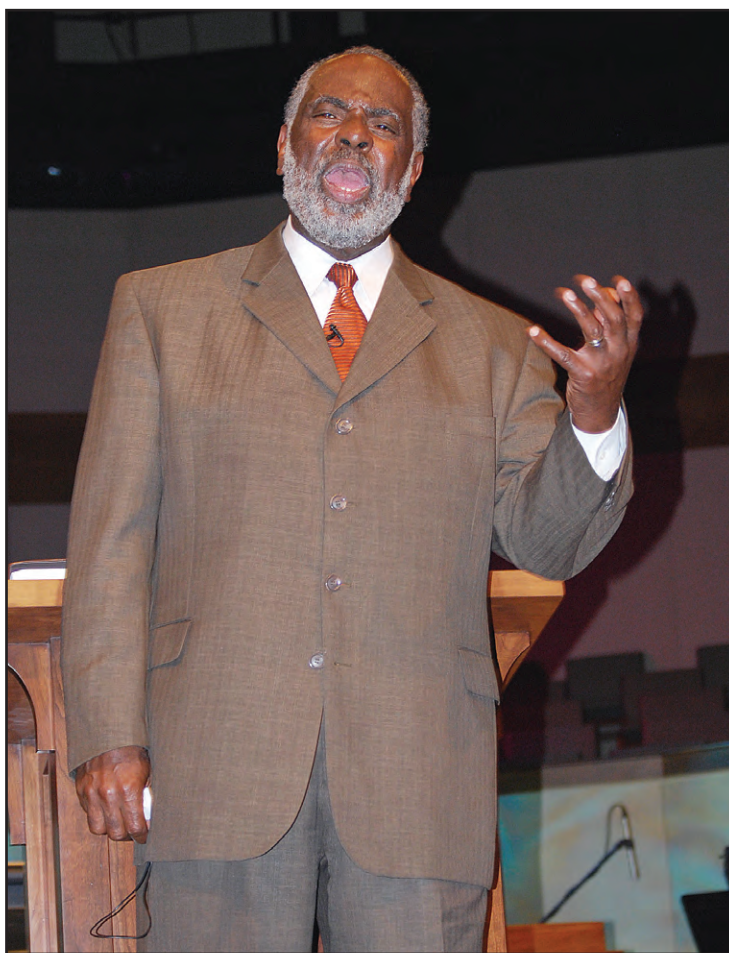


Photo by Lauren Chow

PREACH — Robert Smith Jr., associate professor of divinity at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, concluded the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference on Nov. 15.



KEVIN HAMM
2010 pastors
conference president

for and need the most in our lives is not stuff but God, and people die of that thirst."

Because Jesus' death purchased redemption for mankind, Gray said, He provides the eternity people seek if they believe in Him.

"When you understand what grace is and what God has done, all of a sudden, this desire for eternity is given to you by God," he said. "You will be with God forever, and He is with you now."

Zach Terry, senior pastor of Capshaw Baptist Church, warned pastors about the creeping influence of seemingly small sins that can lead to major failures.

"I want to talk to you this evening about things that can take our eyes off Jesus," he said.

Terry identified three issues in the life apostle Peter's that led to his denial of Jesus: pride, ignorance and lack of prayer.

He said Peter's frequent insistence that he would never deny Jesus indicated pride, which is a common temptation to all pastors today.

"Pride is one of those unique sins that has a pull on each of us," Terry said. "We may not all feel the temptation to gambling, and we may not all feel the temptation toward drunkenness. But we all sense the tug of pride, and Satan capitalizes on that effect."

Peter's pride led him to feel he was spiritually invincible and made him ignorant of the fact that he could fall into sin, he said.

"When you see people who fall, do you ever see yourself as incapable of the same thing?" Terry said. "I used to hear about it, and I would get angry, thinking, 'Did they count the cost?' Today, when I hear about somebody who falls, it terrifies me. But for the grace of God, there go I."

"We must be reminded, lest we toy with

sin, that we're capable of great disgrace," he said.

Terry also identified a lack of prayer in Peter's life as contributing to his denial of Jesus. He encouraged pastors to remain faithful in prayer to guard against falling into sin.

"The Lord told Peter, 'Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation,' but he neglected prayer," Terry said.

Ed Litton, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, North Mobile, in Saraland, told those gathered for the afternoon session about "the gift no one wants."

That gift is suffering, he explained.

"How's your heart? How is it really?" Litton asked. "How many of you in this room are suffering?"

Suffering is not a stranger to him. Litton explained he knew the depth of suffering when he received the call that his wife of 25 years had been killed in a car accident Aug. 16, 2007.

"They rushed me to the scene, the hardest place I ever stood, and my world was forever changed. And I stood there in real pain," Litton said. "But ... He was there."

"Those of you who are hurting today will not consider your suffering a gift ... but it has put you in a position of not trusting yourself," he continued, adding,

"You have no one else to depend upon but the Spirit of the Lord — but that is all you need."

"It takes one man of God yielded, broken," Litton said. "We don't know what to do ... but the Lord knows what He's doing. You can trust Him."

Even though suffering is the gift that no one wants, it is what draws us near to God, he explained.

"When we suffer, God's presence is real," Litton said. "My brother pastor, you've never been closer to the Lord than when you're suffering, when you're hurting."

Learning from Paul and how he dealt with suffering in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, Litton

pointed out that God did not take suffering — the thorn in his flesh — away from Paul. Instead God's grace was sufficient.

"God's answer to grief and suffering is grace," he said. "I need the same grace that it took to save me when I was 8 years old ... to get me up on Monday mornings. When we suffer, God's grace is enough."

Trusting in God through life's difficulties was the message **Lawrence Phipps**, senior pastor of Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery, had for attendees. He encouraged them to rely on the Lord and prepare to win life's battles in His strength.

"When you get in trouble, where do you run?" Phipps asked, referencing the account in 2 Chronicles 20 in which King Jehoshaphat of Judah seeks the Lord for deliverance from an attacking army. "The first place I run is to the altar, to my knees, to my Father, because I want to find out what He says before I find out what anyone else thinks."

'My eyes are on You'

He urged attendees not to fear their own inadequacies or an uncertain future.

"Oh, that we would leave this place tonight and say, 'God, I still don't know what I'm going to do, but my eyes are on You,'" Phipps said. "If everyone leaves here tonight with that attitude, everything else is going to be OK."

He also exhorted attendees to carry out their callings without fear, faithfully obeying God's commands despite opposition.

"What we've done is shrink from the enemy," Phipps said. "We've got to decide we're going to face the enemy. We're going to move in the direction God wants us to go, wherever that is." He urged pastors to live righteously, spread the gospel and spend serious time with God. Only by relying on Him can victory be won, Phipps said.

"When God is fighting the battle, He's got a path to deliverance," he said. "All we've got to do is follow Him."

Officers elected for the 2011 pastors conference were President John Copeland, pastor of First Baptist Church, Fulton; President-elect Michael Cassity, pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Montgomery; First Vice President Fred Lackey, pastor of Westside Baptist Church, Jasper; and Treasurer Doug Chappelle, pastor of Thelma Baptist Church, Wetumpka. (Kristen Padilla contributed)



Photo by Lauren Chow

ELECTED — New officers for the 2011 Pastors Conference are: (front row, l to r) president, John Copeland; president-elect, Michael Cassity; (back row, l to r) first vice president, Fred Lackey; and treasurer, Doug Chappelle.

UMobile's influence makes difference in students, world

By Kristen Padilla
The Alabama Baptist

The influence continues and it continues in University of Mobile (UMobile) classrooms, in faculty offices, among alumni, halls of business, halls of government," said UMobile President Mark Foley in his report to messengers Nov. 16. "It continues in public and private elementary rooms, recording studios and movie sets; it continues in church pulpits [and] church pews. It continues through graduates, faculty and staff of Mobile. It is a culture of influence. It's the story of Christ in and through you put forth through a college campus."

And the story of Christ through the ministry of UMobile is one that has influenced, is influencing and will continue to influence the nation and world, Foley said.

Since 1992, UMobile has sent 122 international missions teams to 44 nations and has raised and invested more than \$4.2 million in missions. Through the work of UMobile missions teams, 11,559 professions of faith have been made and dozens of churches have been planted.

"UMobile's vision, 'Changing Lives to Change the World,' is changing a nation through the influence of graduates and Christian leaders who are trained with a Great Commission mind-set," according to the Book of Reports.

How is God "changing lives to change the world" through UMobile?

God is changing the life of an education major from Trussville who sought out one of her professors to mentor her. The student poured her heart out to her professor, and they cried and prayed together.

ALCAP shares how Alabama Baptists are making a difference

What makes Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP) different from the other ministries of the Alabama Baptist State Convention?

"ALCAP and our school program, American Character Builders, are on the front end of trying to stop [things like alcohol abuse and gambling addiction] from happening while our other ministries are trying to pick up the pieces," ALCAP Executive Director Joe Godfrey said during his report Nov. 16.

One way ALCAP tries to stop the negative impact of these behaviors is through legislation.

This year, it monitored 134 of the 1,425 bills introduced in the state House of Representatives and Senate. Senate Bill 380 (SB380), which dealt with electronic bingo, was one

"A college professor and her very talented student prayed for God's wisdom and direction," Foley said. "Influence that a future teacher will carry to the classroom and to students."

God is changing the life of a student who grew up in a Christian environment and thought everyone thought as he did. On a UMobile missions trip to minister to youth staying in European hostels, he met people who had never heard about God or seen a Bible.

"It awakened him to a reality of a very lost world around him," Foley said. "He returned ... and uses his influence to model and invest in young men who have little to no knowledge of Jesus Christ."

God is changing the life of an athlete who did not know what it meant to follow Christ. Through the influence of UMobile coaches and staff, she came to trust Christ as Savior.

"It is through the university's influence that she came to faith," Foley said. "Last semester, she found herself in a deep conversation with a teammate ... and through that conversation, [she] shared her faith and that teammate accepted Christ. And so the influence continues."

But the influence UMobile is having on students for the kingdom of God would not be possible without the support of Alabama Baptists, Foley said.

"On behalf of the University of Mobile family ... I want to thank you," Foley said in conclusion.

"It is the influence of Christ in this world. It's what we do. Is it a legitimate investment? Yes, yes, it is. It is what we do and we do it together."

of those bills. Two weeks after failing to be brought up for debate on the Senate floor, a revised version of the bill passed by one vote. But thanks in part to Alabama Baptists, the bill failed to pass in the House.

"As a result of hundreds of phone calls, letters and e-mails from church members across Alabama, SB380 never garnered enough support in the House to come to the floor for a vote," according to the Book of Reports. "This experience shows the importance of Christians being involved in the political process. Together we can make a difference in our culture."

"That's the power that you have," Godfrey said. "[We] go down (to Montgomery), but it's when you make those calls to your legislators that change happens." (TAB)



FOLEY

CONVENTION SERMON

Coleman focuses on 'serving God in our generation'

By Jennifer D. Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Lots of Alabama/Auburn ribbing took place throughout the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 16-17. Some even yelled out an occasional "Roll Tide" or "War Eagle" in the sanctuary of Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover, where the meeting took place.

But stirring up the team spirit among conventiongoers was not the only purpose of talking football. A sermon analogy also showed up here and there, such as Travis Coleman's Tim Tebow example of finishing strong even though his final regular season game with the University of Florida didn't turn out to be a win.

"Alabama Baptists, let's finish strong," urged Coleman, who preached the convention sermon at the conclusion of the meeting.

Coleman, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Prattville, and newly elected second vice president of the convention (see story, page 1), preached from Acts 13:36 on the theme "Serving God in Our Generation."

"Look at our lives and ministries," he said. "In years to come, what are they going to think about us? Your life, your ministry, your church, Alabama Baptists, the Southern Baptist Convention?"

"We are writing it now but what will it be?" he asked.

Pointing to David and how long he had to wait before taking the position of king, Coleman challenged Alabama Baptists to possess a servant mind-set.

1. "We are to serve," he said. "David ... served the nation as servant, warrior and king."

But David is not the only model servant, Coleman noted. There is also Jesus Christ.

Jesus as example

"In John 13, it says that right before the Lord's Supper, He washes the feet of His disciples ... and tells them, 'I want you to go and serve; do the very same thing.'

"Jesus said those who are going to be great among us have to be our servants.

"We have David as an example and Jesus as an example," Coleman said. "God has called



Photo by Lauren Chow

'LET'S FINISH STRONG' — Travis Coleman, senior pastor of FBC Prattville and newly elected second vice president, delivers the convention sermon at the conclusion of the annual meeting Nov. 17.

us to be servants as well, not to be lazy.

"Are you truly being the servant God wants you to be?"

2. "We are also to serve God's purposes," Coleman explained.

"When God called David and anointed him for the throne, He had high expectations for this man.

"It is not just to serve anybody or anything. It had to be God," Coleman said. "We are going to serve our God and serve His purposes."

David understood. Jesus understood.

"What's your mission? Your purpose?" Coleman asked.

"It's not about us. It's all about God," he said. "We have been called to love Him with all our being and our neighbor as ourselves. We are to follow after Him.

"We have to stop and make sure we are not letting ego and pride get in our way but that we are submitting to whatever purpose He has called us in life and ministry, to be sure.

"It's easy to get distracted in this day or just be spread thin with our work ... but we have to be sure we are serving with our focus on Him ... and serving God with our best," Coleman said.

"The time is over for a mediocre performance," he said. "God de-

sires it and He deserves our best."

3. "We are to serve God's purpose in this generation," Coleman said.

"Paul made sure [his listeners] understood redemption. He brought the message into [the] first century. He related to them all that ... forgiveness only comes through Christ. Everywhere he went, he tried to develop that message to the city.

"Paul was willing to become all things to all people. He understood something about serving God in his generation.

"But how do we serve God in our generation?" Coleman asked.

By living an authentic Christian life and being students of "our generation," he said.

"The world is watching us. ... They need to see authenticity in your life. People need to know it works.

"We need to understand the people and have courage to do what we need to do in reaching the people out there," Coleman said, noting this does not mean Christians and churches are to attempt to stay up with the latest fads.

"We need to be seeking God in His wisdom for our culture in our city, in our ministry, understanding the people and having the courage to do it," he said.

"We've got a challenge."

4. "We are to serve God's purpose in this generation, then die," Coleman said.

"Jesus served God's purpose, then died with a satisfaction that He had accomplished God's will.

"Paul had won the course, finished the race, fought the good fight, accomplished God's purpose.

"Same with David; same with Simeon. He finished God's purpose for his life," Coleman said.

"Alabama Baptists, I think God wants us to serve Him in this generation for His purposes and then we will die," he added. "Until that time comes, I pray we will be doing exactly what He wants us to do."

"We are to serve God's purpose ... then die."

Senior Pastor Travis Coleman
FBC Prattville

Across Alabama testimonies

Pastors tell how God's Plan for Sharing reaches people, changes churches

By June Mathews
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

When Robbie McGowan began attending Liberty Baptist Church, Crossville, little did some of his family members know the eternal difference it would make in their lives. McGowan not only led his grandparents, Barbara and Jerry McGowan, to Christ but also has been instrumental in sharing the gospel with other family members.

He began attending the church in large part thanks to its outreach efforts sparked by GPS: Across Alabama, an Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) evangelism initiative created to spread the gospel to every part of the state.

The McGowan family's story was presented via video during the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 16 at Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover. This was one of two Across Alabama testi-



BROCK

monies presented to convention messengers by Sammy Gilbreath, SBOM evangelism director.

Gilbreath interviewed Liberty Baptist Pastor Roger White following the McGowan family video. White shared what GPS has meant to him and his church.

He said one of the best things participating in GPS has done for him as a pastor is shown him simple ways to lead his church in

leading others to Christ. "One of the hardest things we do is communicate how to get the gospel out," he said.

White also noted a new willingness in his church members to get involved.

"We had some folks who would never get involved who are now eager to help," he said.

Liberty's outreach events have included car shows, tractor shows and skateboarding competitions. White said an outdoor extravaganza and hunter safety courses have been discussed as possibilities for future events and other types of gatherings also are being considered.

Interviewed by Gilbreath during the second Across Alabama testimony was John Brock, pastor of Highland Baptist Church, Florence.

When Highland Baptist decided to do a GPS: Across Alabama project, Brock knew the task would be monumental and lots of helping hands would be needed.

"We decided to go to the Sunday School departments and classes and ask them to get involved," he said. "And they rose to the challenge."

In the spring, just before Easter, about 200 church members hung gospel packets on the doors of 10,000 homes in the Florence area. Included in the packets were invitations to Highland Baptist's Eas-



Photo by Lauren Chow

SPREADING THE WORD — Sammy Gilbreath (left), director of evangelism for Alabama Baptists, interviews Roger White, pastor of Liberty Baptist Church, Crossville, about GPS: Across Alabama.

ter services, which all but ensured an even greater attendance than usual that day.

"We know some came because of GPS," Brock said. "We preached a simple message based on John 3:16. It was an incredible day."

Precise planning

The distribution of the gospel packets was the result of months of planning, which included consulting with postal employees to de-

termine how many homes could be covered in a couple of hours.

Brock said because of the project, the motivation for evangelism in his community was raised and participation was high. In fact, he said, the project coordinator shed joyful tears over the number of people who responded.

"People came to help who had never really gotten involved before," Brock said.

"To see God call these people

out to a new level was amazing."

In addition to offering people a simple way to share the gospel, the project provided good family time.

"I went with my wife, and it was fun for us to go out together," Brock said.

"And it reminded me of the importance of sowing the seeds of the gospel. Everybody deserves an opportunity to hear the gospel.

"Blessings of God tend to follow forward motion." ❧

Judson 'girls' eager to impact world

Judson College instituted a new major in equine studies and a new bachelor's degree program in social work this fall. The school also is known for the high level at which it prepares young women for medical school, but it does more than just prepare young women professionally.

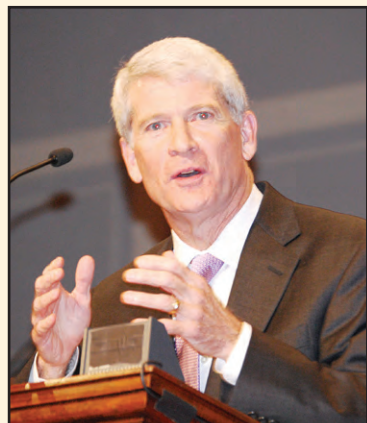
It is a place of opportunity and spiritual nurturing, according to Judson College President David Potts and the Book of Reports.

Missionary in residence and Judson alumna Laura Lee (not her real name) agreed.

Speaking to Alabama Baptists via video as Potts' report to Alabama Baptist State Convention messengers Nov. 16, Lee said she is proof of both of these.

"God planted a seed of missions in my heart at 17 while I was a student at Judson," she said. "My call to serve was nurtured by the faculty, staff and many friends."

Lee, who serves as a Southern Baptist representative in North



POTTS

Africa, said the problems she witnesses "would bring many of us to the brink of despair."

"(The women she ministers to) struggle with HIV Aids and overwhelming poverty, making a difficult life even more so," Lee said. "I am blessed as I see their lives transformed in Jesus Christ."

Lee said the first woman she led to Christ in this area has since

started sharing the gospel with her family.

Another woman who was dying from HIV-related issues could not believe it when Lee helped her to a hospital and found blood for her for a transfusion. Lee wanted to donate her own blood, but she was not a match so she bought blood from men on the street.

"As I arrived (to visit her), blood was flowing from her nose and mouth," Lee said. "No one would touch her. I gathered her up and took her to the hospital."

Another honor for Lee is training and mentoring young Ethiopian believers.

"These are young women who go out into the villages sharing the gospel and helping," she said.

"I'm honored to be serving ... at Judson," Lee noted. "The girls here are amazing and eager to impact the world. They are seeking and asking for the will of God in their lives." (TAB)

Alabama Baptist Historical Comm. helps with anniversary events

When members of Blue Eye Baptist Church, Lincoln, write the history of its 175th anniversary celebration, the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission (ABHC) and Executive Director Lonette Berg are sure to be included. And when the ABHC shares with churches how to organize an anniversary celebration, it will definitely point to Blue Eye Baptist.

Blue Eye Baptist member Connie O'Dell told Alabama Baptists

just how she did it as part of the ABHC report Nov. 17.

More than 2,000 people have been saved at Blue Eye Baptist and those records have been preserved through the ABHC microfilm ministry, O'Dell said. And everyone in the congregation was able to get a copy of the church history because of the ABHC study grant ministry.

Troy Morrison, former executive director, also shared during the ABHC report. (TAB)

Audit/insurance: 'Everything good'

The Audit and Insurance committees' reports at the Alabama Baptist State Convention on Nov. 16 were simple and direct: "Everything looks good."

Bobby DuBois, statistical secretary for the convention and associate executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said laypeople in the insurance business volunteer their time to make sure the property and casualty insurance coverage on Alabama Baptist entities is what it should be.

"Our entities are being run very well with adequate coverage," he said.

"We're in good hands with our insurance."

A few minutes later, DuBois reported that the audits submitted by each entity were deemed by certified public accountants to be clear and clean.

"That's what we want to hear," he said. "Our funds are being used and managed as wisely as possible." (TAB)

Killian, Coleman tapped as VPs

(continued from page 1)

churches that are giving not to stop.

In addition, he will encourage churches to partner with other churches in their association that are struggling financially or numerically, plan evangelistic events such as revivals and crusades, go on missions trips across the street and around the world and pray for one another.

Shaw, who tries to go out weekly and knock on someone's door to tell him or her about Jesus, wants to see other Alabama Baptists doing the same.

If it weren't for a deacon and a pastor from the former Woodlawn Baptist Church, Birmingham, who knocked on his parents' door to tell them about Jesus, then his life might have been very different.

"You don't have to go to Haiti, South America or New Orleans; just going across the street is to do missions," he said.

"We are called to be salt and light. We are the hands and feet of Jesus. If you're not willing to go across the street,

then don't go across the world.

"I think that the best translation of the Great Commission is 'As you are going,'" Shaw added. "That's what I want for Alabama Baptists — that we are going to be going and while we are going, we are going to be ministering."

A Birmingham native, Shaw served as first vice president of the ABSC from 2008 to 2010 and second vice president from 2006 to 2008.

He served on *The Alabama Baptist's* board of directors from 1990 to 1995. From 1994 to 1995, Shaw served as chairman of the board, during which time the board chose Bob

Terry as editor of the state Baptist paper.

Shaw currently serves on the board of ministerial mentors at Samford and the board of regents at the University of Mobile. He also has served as a volunteer chaplain for the city of Pelham for the past 31 years.

Also elected to serve were

► First Vice President John Killian, pastor of Maytown Baptist Church, and

► Second Vice President Travis Coleman, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Prattville.

Barry Holcomb, pastor of First Baptist Church, Russellville, originally indicated he would allow his name to be proposed for second vice president, but a few days before the convention, he decided not to run.

"Travis is well poised to step into this position and he has my support," Holcomb told *The Alabama Baptist*.

"I'll reconsider being nominated for second vice president in a couple of years."

Also re-elected were Mary Sue Bennett, Bobby DuBois and Billy Austin — all of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions — as recording secretary, statistical secretary and registration secretary, respectively.

"You don't have to go to Haiti, South America or New Orleans; just going across the street is to do missions."

Pastor Mike Shaw
First Baptist Church, Pelham



Photo by Lauren Chow

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM TOP GIVERS

CP awards go to Danny Wood (center), Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, for largest total gift of \$660,675; Jerry Butler (right), South Sauty Baptist Church, Langston, for the largest gift per resident member of \$437.91; and Charles (deacon) and Jacque Stone of Damascus Baptist Church, Brewton, for largest percentage of undesignated receipts, 22 percent.

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PASTOR: Slackland Baptist Church of Leesburg, Ala., is currently seeking a pastor. Please send resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, Slackland Baptist Church, 75 County Road 20, Leesburg, AL 35983.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Ashby Baptist Church is currently accepting resumes for bivocational Southern Baptist pastor. Send resumes to: Ashby Baptist Church, P.O. Box 22, Brierfield, AL 35035.

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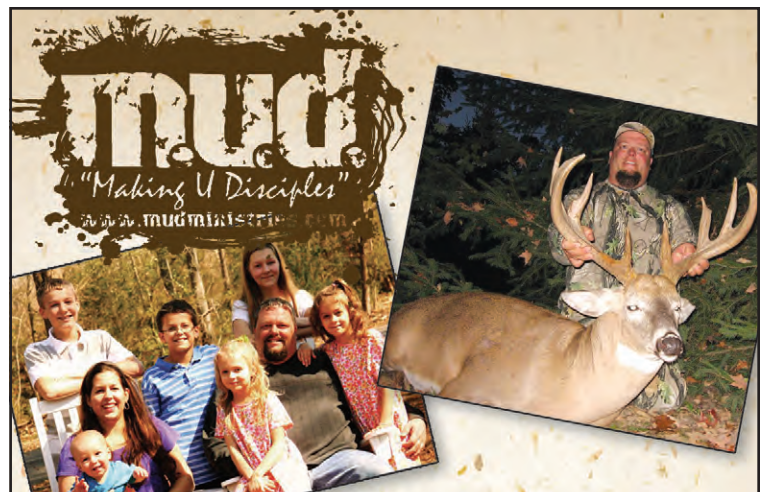
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— Frank Bowling, Senior Pastor, FBC Medina, Tenn.

Eric Hixon has been preaching revivals, conferences and leading mission teams for many years. He enjoys the outdoors and has been featured as a Pro Staff Member and special guest on many Outdoor TV shows. Many churches have him in to preach at **WILD GAME FEAST/ OUTDOORSMAN BANQUETS** each year. He is a member of COSBE and you can be sure that he is a man of integrity and passion for God's Word. His family is a walking testimony of what it means to be living for Christ!



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Retirement Centers residents thank Alabama Baptists

Safety, family and a sense of purpose are just a few of the many benefits a resident of one of the four Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers (ABRC) receives.

Just ask the resident of Baptist Village in Dothan who said, "Baptist Village is perfect for me. ... I feel safe here; I tell everyone I see about my home."

As ABRC President Billy Austin stood before messengers to the Alabama Baptist State Convention on Nov. 17, he recounted what six ABRC residents said when asked what they would say to Alabama Baptists.

A resident of Eastview in Montgomery said she found security after moving to the retirement center because someone tried to break down the door of her home of 47 years.

"I am so happy to be here," she said. "Now I feel very safe and secure. I know that someone is looking out for my safety at night when I go to bed."

Family and comfort were waiting for a resident of Knollwood in Roanoke who had been living in a home that had little insulation and no windows.

"I feel like I have died and gone to heaven," he said. "I wish I had moved here years ago. We are all one big happy family. I am blessed to have a roof over my head, cool air in the summer, warm heat in the winter and a Christian environment to live in. God is good."

Another Knollwood resident said, "I feel needed" for the first time in awhile.

The ABRC thanks Alabama Baptists. (TAB)



Photo by Lauren Chow

ALL IN FAVOR — Messengers vote on various reports during the State Board of Missions report, which included approving a \$43 million Cooperative Program budget and \$20,955,000 in special offering goals.

Focused on missions

Alabama Baptists vote to extend partnerships, give awards

(continued from page 1)

Alabama Baptists also voted to extend their partnerships with Baptists in Guatemala, Ukraine and Michigan and Baptist work in Jacmel, Haiti, in conjunction with a partnership with the Haiti Baptist Convention and the Florida Baptist Convention. The partnerships will be extended through 2012.

During the Properties Committee report, chairman Scotty Hogan said there was no recommendation to bring about the recent court ruling dealing with the SBOM's attempt to sell its property on Taylor Road in Montgomery.

Alabama Baptists have been in the process of selling the property since 2007, but disagreements with the homeowners' association of the subdivision to which the property backs up have delayed the process. The issue went to court in 2009.

Montgomery County Circuit Judge William A. Shashy recently

ruled in favor of the homeowners' association. "We are seeking to arrange a meeting with the homeowners' association for us to get on common ground," Hogan said. "We are trying to do things God's way."

"It is our desire to move us forward in that sale," he said. "The course of the meeting will determine our future action."

Top CP supporters

Also taking place during the SBOM report was the recognition of the top CP supporters (see photo outline, page 16).

Jim Swedenburg, director of the SBOM office of CP and stewardship development, presented the top giver awards to Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills; South Sauty Baptist Church, Langston; and Damascus Baptist Church, Brewton.

Reggie Quimby, director of the

SBOM office of global missions, presented the Alabama Baptist Volunteers of the Year award to Allen and Laurelle Stoudenmire (full story coming in the Dec. 2 issue).

And Mike Jackson, director of the SBOM office of leadership and church health, presented the Troy L. Morrison Leadership awards.

For established work — Terry Cutrer, pastor of Moffett Road Baptist, Mobile.

For new work — Todd Mitchell, pastor of Trading Post Cowboy Church, Scottsboro.

For bivocational work — Joey Rich, pastor of Heritage Baptist Church, Pell City.

"Thank you so much," Rich said.

"This is not an individual honor but an honor for all those who serve bivocationally."

In other business, the auditor's report of the SBOM was received and approved by messengers. ☰

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 28

Explore the Bible By Dale Younce Professor of Christian Studies, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

BEING PREPARED Ephesians 6:10-24

Evil dominates much of today's world and is a threat to Christians. Many Christians are unaware of the help God affords us for this never-ending spiritual battle. He provides us with unmatched spiritual armor so we can resist evil. If we use it, then we will be prepared for anything Satan shoots at us. We will be safe in any skirmish and will be standing after the battle. This week's lesson details the spiritual armor and urges us to use it.

Get Stronger (10-13)

The apostle Paul called attention first to our position in Christ. Our spiritual strength lies in Jesus and our union with Him. The command "Be strong" does not mean to strengthen ourselves. The verb means to be made strong by someone else. No Christian ever succeeds when he or she proceeds on his or her own power. The believer must receive power from outside himself or herself. It is God's strength that makes a Christian strong. This conflict is with spiritual forces, not human resources. Paul was telling us that we have no strength, weapons or wisdom except in the Lord. Our enemies fall into four categories: principalities, powers, world forces of darkness and spiritual forces of wickedness. Their sphere of operation is the "heavenlies" from which they have access to earth. Their leader is a strategist par excellence, and we are warned against his schemes (similar to guerrilla warfare tactics). Victory over such spiritual odds requires more than our moral strength. We must use divine resources, the invulnerable coat of spiritual armor prepared for us.

Stand Firm (14-17)

"Stand firm" means that we hold our position in Christ. No assault will dislodge us from continuing to trust Christ. The spiritual equipment given by the Lord is needed to repulse the enemy's attack. For every point of Satan's attack, God provides defensive armor. Each piece of armor is a reference to God's Word. First is the belt of truth (Isa. 11:5). The belt, or girdle, was the part of the soldier's equipment that held the other pieces of armor in place,

guaranteeing freedom of movement. As the girdle gathered loose clothing into control, so truth has an integrating effect giving a sense of control and balance to the whole of life; it is truth and sincerity based on Scripture. Second is the breastplate of righteousness (Isa. 59:17). This breastplate protected the back and front from the neck to the middle, especially the heart. It refers to imputed righteousness from Christ, our positional righteousness that we appropriated by faith in Him and our practical righteousness worked out in irreproachable conduct. The third piece of armor is the shoes of the gospel of peace (Isa. 52:7). The emphasis is on a secure footing for standing in combat and pursuing the enemy. A soldier's shoes must be adequate for all types of terrain as well as suitable for combat. The meaning is a secure footing on a sure foundation, which, of course, is the gospel message, which gives us stability in living. The fourth piece of armor is the shield of faith (Gen. 15:6). This word refers to the "door shield," a large shield for overall protection. The shield's size provides protection for the whole body. It was used against the "fiery darts" of the devil, arrows in combat dipped in burning tar. Faith in God's Word extinguishes the arrows of temptation. The fifth piece of armor is the helmet of salvation (Isa. 59:17). Salvation is a marvelous head covering, protecting our minds against the intrusions of false teaching and giving us assurance of our salvation. The sixth piece is the sword of the Spirit, the only offensive weapon; it refers to the entire Word of God. Jesus gave us a clear demonstration of its use in His own temptation (Matt. 4:1-10).

Pray Always (18-20)

The believer needs to watch and pray on behalf of others. This, too, points to the battlefield. Just as combat troops must have supply lines bring in material, munitions and food to them, so prayer brings God's spiritual supplies to Christians.

Be Encouraged (21-24)

These concluding verses of Paul's letter expressed concern for the well-being of others. We can encourage each other to resist evil. ☞

Bible Studies for Life By Kenneth B.E. Roxburgh Chair and Armstrong Professor of Religion, Department of Religion, Samford University

LIFE WORTH SHARING

Romans 1:14-17; 9:1-3; 10:1, 14-15; 15:17-20

The church of Jesus Christ in the Book of Acts was once described as having "turned the world upside down." Since we live in a contemporary culture with 2.77 billion people who have never heard of Jesus, we need to recapture something of the early enthusiasm and evangelistic endeavor of the early church, which rightly deserves to be called the church that changed the world. Evangelism occurs when ordinary folk begin to simply and sincerely speak to other people about someone called Jesus, whom they know personally as their Lord and Savior. Evangelism only takes place when we want others to hear the good news about God's love for sinners and are totally convinced that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe.

The Power of the Gospel to Change Lives (1:14-17)

Paul explained to a church he had never visited why he wanted to visit it and how he would use his visit as the launching pad for a visionary evangelistic enterprise to the Roman Empire's outer limits. It is all because Paul believed that the gospel was the good news of God's love for sinful humanity and was not ashamed to speak to others about Jesus. Paul was anticipating arriving at the very center of Roman imperial power and announcing that Jesus is King of kings. He did not shrink from what he regarded as his joyful responsibility. In all his missionary work, he experienced the way in which the lives of men and women could be transformed by the gospel's message of forgiveness, love and hope. It is a universal message that comes to Jews and Gentiles, reminding us that there is no racial, ethnic or religious barrier to hearing the good news of God's unconditional love. To all who sense their need of forgiveness, meaning and purpose, the gospel proclaims a way of righteousness, a way in which they can be accepted by God, enter into a covenant relationship with Him and enjoy the assurance of eternal life. If the gospel is such good news, then why do

we hesitate in telling other people about it?

The Concern of Christians for the Lost (9:1-3; 10:1)

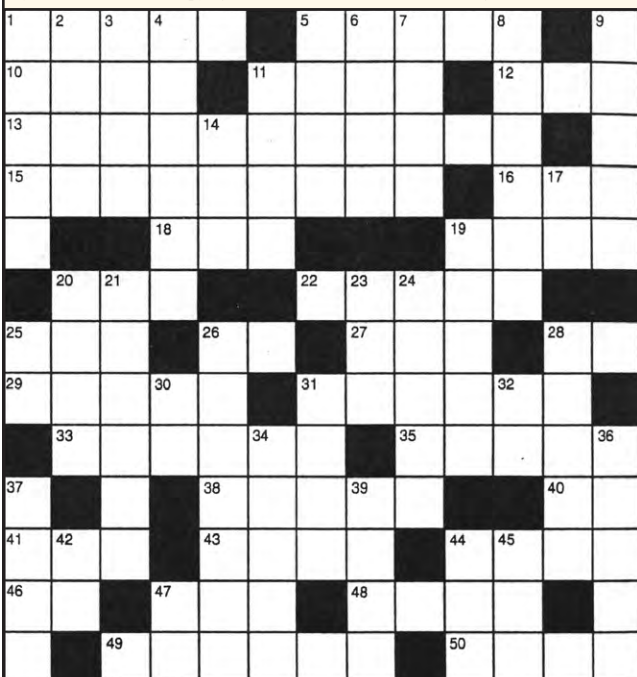
The way in which Paul expressed himself in these verses is startling. He spoke of his awful grief and the anguish that gripped his heart and drove him to the place of prayer. He was burdened with the spiritual needs of his own people, the Jews, and longed for them to be saved. His concern was so great that he was willing to be "cut off" from Christ if only they might be saved. Considering the fact that Paul had just stated that "nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus," this might seem, at first sight, to be merely pretence. Yet such was his selfless concern for others that he expressed his passion for the lost in such a stark and striking manner. William Booth, the founder of The Salvation Army who traveled 5 million miles and preached more than 60,000 sermons, once reflected on his ministry by encouraging others to "work as if everything depended upon your work, and pray as if everything depended upon your prayer." He believed that the gospel was the power of God unto salvation — do we?

The Activity of Christians in Evangelism (10:14-15; 15:17-20)

Paul believed that although salvation was based upon God's grace, the Church had an enormous responsibility to communicate that message to others. For Paul, this involved telling the story because without hearing the message, nobody would ever be able to believe. In Paul's context, that literally meant walking throughout the empire. In our context, we need to use creative ways to communicate the message but we must communicate it one way or another. Near the end of his letter, Paul could truthfully declare that he had "fully proclaimed the good news of Christ" from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum (on the Balkan coast opposite Italy). He had a particular burden for the unreached people of his day and longed to go to Spain and tell people there how much God loved them. What about us? What passion for the needs of the lost do we have in our hearts? ☞

Christian Crossword

By Karen Bush Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- He shall send his ___ before thee. (Gen. 24:7)
- Three strands intertwined, typically hair.
- For every head shall be ___ (Jer. 48:37)
- A toothed wheel.
- I and my Father are ___ (John 10:30)
- Like a high wall in his own ___. (Prov. 18:11)
- Children of Israel ___ the house of the Lord. (1 Kgs. 8:63)
- A young person.
- The kingdom of heaven is like unto a ___. (Matt. 13:47)
- Plural of 18 across.
- Shall he ___ in harvest. (Prov. 20:4)
- Love of ___ is the root of all evil. (1 Tim. 6:10)
- Behold, the ___ is become as one of us. (Gen. 3:22)
- An expression of acknowledgement.
- Abbreviation for a washroom.
- ___ he went and took Gomer. (Hosea 1:3)

29. And ___ and Abihu. (Lev. 10:1)

- Our fathers did eat manna in the ___. (John 6:31)
- River in Lebanon.
- Put on the ___ of light. (Rom. 13:12)
- Suitable for a king.
- ___ prophet is accepted in his own country. (Luke 4:24)
- Even as a ___ tree casteth. (Rev. 6:13)
- Genuine.
- To write specifications.
- And there appeared ___ angel. (Luke 22:43)
- Nickname for Theodore.
- Book of the Bible following Joel.
- Flushes with water.
- Crafty.

Down

- Who shall ___ in thy tabernacle? (Ps. 15:1)
- How excellent is thy ___! (Ps. 8:1)
- A wise son maketh a ___ father. (Prov. 10:1)
- Border.

5. ___ your plowshares. (Joel 3:10)

- To value.
- Excessively dry.
- Immediately you will find a ___. (Matt. 21:2)
- Blessed is he who ___. (Rev. 1:3)
- Ye blind guides, which strain at a ___. (Matt. 23:24)
- From the breath of God ___ is made. (Job 37:10)
- For ___ was dry upon the fleece only. (Judg. 6:40)
- I ___ knew you. (Matt. 7:23)
- Take the prophets of ___. (1 Kgs. 18:40)
- Opposite of "beginning."
- Bravo!
- Of or relating to the nose.
- Symbol for manganese.
- Sing, ___, thou that didst not bear. (Isa. 54:1)
- Shall not leave in thee one ___ upon another. (Luke 19:44)
- But ___ the end it shall speak. (Hab. 2:3)
- If a man shall ___ pit. (Ex. 21:33)

32. Ream. (abbr.)

- God shall supply all your ___. (Phil. 4:19)
- And the other seed fell on ___ soil. (Luke 8:6)
- From a great distance.
- ___ master! For it was borrowed. (2 Kgs. 6:5)
- When they couch ___ their dens. (Job 38:40)
- For they neither ___ nor reap. (Luke 12:24)
- Greek letter following chi.
- Tone following La.



Empowering others at EMA

By Kathleen Penton
The Alabama Baptist

Church staff members play two roles at one time — They are part of a ministry team and the leader of a specific ministry of that team.

That's not news to the Alabama Baptist Education Music Association's (EMA) members. But those education and music ministers did learn new ways to play that dual role more effectively at their annual meeting, held at First Baptist Church, Birmingham, on Nov. 15.

In the first conference session — led by Andrew Westmoreland, president of Samford University in Birmingham — these leaders learned how to empower others, particularly those who are eager and those who are invisible.

Westmoreland pointed to Jesus' example in dealing with both types of people.

In Mark 2:1-5, four eager people brought their paralytic friend to Him.

"They've got this friend who has a problem. They know Jesus is the answer," Westmoreland said, noting they got their friend to Him by tearing the roof off a building.

But Jesus didn't reprimand them. He overlooked their excesses, i.e., their impulsiveness and enthusiasm.

Westmoreland said the lesson is to celebrate and affirm eager people's enthusiasm. And be sure to affirm their specific strengths, not just their positive attitude, he said.

Leaders also can help them weigh the cost of commitments and learn to say no so they don't become overcommitted and can't follow through with their ideas, Westmoreland noted.

However, don't promote them too quickly, he warned. Westmoreland said they need to learn how to focus before being handed the reins of responsibility.

He said leaders need to be careful in the way they engage in follow-up because eager people can become easily discouraged.

In Mark 10:14, Jesus asked the most invisible people of His day, children, to come to Him.

The lesson in this case is to look for invisible people, Westmoreland said.

It's something he said he strives to do better because he's a "hurried person."

"I'm convicted of the fact that occasionally if I would just slow down, those relationships are right there," Westmoreland said.



Photo by Kathleen Penton

NEW OFFICERS — Officers elected to serve in 2011 were President Scott Corbin (center), associate pastor/minister of music of FBC Springville; President-elect Jim O'Dillon (far right), minister of education and outreach of FBC Cullman; Vice President Guy Anderson (second from right), minister of music and senior adults of Elkdale Baptist Church, Selma; Secretary Bill Carr (far left), associate pastor of administration and education of FBC Bay Minette; and Treasurer Jim Simpson (second from left), minister of senior adults of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham.

He said people's tendency is to look around and see extremes: the A-one performers and the troublemakers. But there are others who may be lonely, cautious or skeptical because they've been burned by leadership before.

"We need to help them form new relationships with people who are sensitive and kind," Westmoreland said. As with eager people, he said follow-up with invisible people requires care because once they develop a bond with someone, they will most likely want to stay in touch.

The second session — led by Te-man Knight, pastor of Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery, and Dale Huff, director of the office of LeaderCare and church administration of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, focused on building a powerful ministry team and maintaining it when conflict arises.

"It's easy to say, 'Our mission is to reach our entire city' or 'Our mission is to fulfill the Great Commission,'" Knight said.

But he noted that within the ministry team leading a church to fulfill its stated mission are leaders with more specific concerns like how big the choir is or how many people are involved in Sunday School.

"The truth is you can function as stars and get a lot of good work done," Knight said.

However, the combined efforts of a team produce a greater result, or synergy, because its leaders are willing to sacrifice their personal agendas, he said.

"The Holy Spirit gets involved and He multiplies that synergy," Knight said.

He shared the six characteristics of a powerful ministry team, which all involve cooperation:

- ▶ common purpose,
- ▶ clear roles,
- ▶ accepted leadership,
- ▶ effective processes,
- ▶ solid relationships and
- ▶ excellent communication.

Of course, working toward a common vision doesn't mean everyone on the team will be best friends or will agree on everything, Knight said.

But "you've got to trust each other. You've got to love each other. You've got to be kind to each other," he said.

The uh-oh

Huff, who serves as EMA's adviser, pointed out that life is dynamic and in every relationship, there comes the pinch, the ouch, the uh-oh.

So when conflict comes, he said the issues at the root of that conflict need to be addressed.

"Deal with it early. Deal with it quickly," Huff advised.

He noted that the Bible's advice is contrary to human nature. People tend to avoid dealing with broken relationships, but verses like Matthew 18:15 say to go to the person with whom you have a conflict.

"When there is some difficulty, you move to get it corrected," Huff said.

Following the sessions, there was a banquet with special guest After Class, an instrumental string trio. Two awards were presented during the banquet. The Paul Stewart Excellence in Music Ministry Award was presented to Jerry Dykes, former minister of music of First Baptist Church, Sylacauga (now senior adult choir director). The Christian Educator of the Year Award was presented to Larry Armstrong, retired associate pastor of education and administration of Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery.

Jerry Dykes

First Baptist Church, Sylacauga

The Paul Stewart
Excellence in Music
Ministry Award

Larry Armstrong

Eastern Hills Baptist
Church, Montgomery

The Christian
Educator of the
Year Award

Alabama WMU 'telling, teaching about missions'

Ron and Susan Bartholomew are living examples of the influence of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). The couple, who are members of Pleasant View Baptist Church, Foley, shared their story during the Alabama WMU report to Alabama Baptist State Convention messengers Nov. 17.

"We as Christians, as followers of Christ, are given a commandment, and that is to go and tell so that all nations may know Him," Susan Bartholomew said. "That telling starts at home. It was done in my home as a child; it changed my life and now it's changing the lives of my family."

As they shared about their family's missions trips and their two daughters, Emma and Mary Alice, recited Scripture, the Bartholomews lauded Alabama WMU's history of missions education.

"The Alabama WMU has done an amazing job of telling and teaching children about missions," she said.

Candace McIntosh, executive director of Alabama WMU, declared that the organization "equips and

motivates Alabama Baptists to live a life of missions and ministry."

The Book of Reports detailed some of the ways that is happening.

This year, Alabama WMU equipped more than 500 leaders through its training events, including 400 at the WMU and Women's Leadership Equipping and Enrichment, 27 teenage girls at the Emerging Leaders Forum and 28 Christian Women's Job Corps and Christian Men's Job Corps leaders.

Missions events

Alabama WMU missions events drew more than 4,100 children, teenagers and adults. Events included Renew, an event for women; Children's Missions Explosion; Complete, a gathering for girls in grades 7-12; Student Missions Weekend; Summer Missions Camps; and Global Classrooms.

Despite tough economic times, Alabama Baptists gave more than \$34 million through the Kathleen Mallory State Missions Offering, Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. (TAB)

Christian Life Commission marks routine ministries making impact

We may never see the faces of those who received food from our associational food pantry. We may never see the twinkle in the eyes of the child who receives the only gift they get at Christmas from the associational gift shop. We may never see the tears of joy fall from the eyes of the one burned out by a house fire who has obtained clothing, furniture and household supplies from the gifts of our contributing churches, but God sees it all and He records it."

Page Hughes of Westwood Baptist Church, Alabaster, wrote these words as she gathered facts and figures for Mitzi Holladay, chairman of the Christian Life Commission, to present to Alabama Baptist messengers Nov. 17.

Hughes was one of eight people working with ministries that receive World Hunger funds who provided information about what was happening in their areas.

"Great work is being done through 20 ministry centers and associations that ... receive World Hunger funds," Holladay said as she described various work and ministries in Abbeville, Albertville, Arab, Birmingham, Boaz, Gadsden and Montgomery.

"We also have two others that raise their own support to help others," she said. "We as a commission hope these testimonies inspire all of us as churches and individuals to address moral issues, to become informed and to act according to Christian principles." (TAB)

TBFA focused on stewardship

Barry Bledsoe, president of The Baptist Foundation of Alabama (TBFA), presented his message of stewardship to Alabama Baptist messengers through a video.

Giving his report Nov. 17, he shared his "Big Jar of Giving" illustration through the video, explaining that 91 percent of the average American's worth is noncash assets and only 9 percent is cash assets.

However, most congregational giving comes from cash assets, only representing a small portion of individuals' total worth.

Recently, the Kingdom Stewardship Alliance was introduced to help teach church members stewardship of estate assets or giving from the "big jar."

"How we plan our estate is the single largest act of financial stewardship any of us will ever undertake," TBFA says on its website.

TBFA includes the charitable gift administration, the charitable gift and estate planning services, institutional investment management services, estate settlement services and elder care. (TAB)



IMB photo

OPEN WIDE — Dr. Hamit Kaya examines a little girl who has a slight fever and sore throat. The girl's mother invited Dr. Kaya to visit after seeing him in her village. His reputation for kindness and medical expertise opens doors throughout the Tunceli province of Turkey.

A heart for home

Turkish doctor returns home to meet physical, spiritual needs

Hamit Kaya's ministry has a distinct rhythm: tea before medicine, medicine before words.

Kaya is the first indigenous church planter to the Zaza people of eastern Turkey. Once a month he travels to his hometown and its surrounding villages. He uses his medical training to minister to villagers' physical needs, while using his understanding of the culture to communicate God's love to the Zaza in a language they can understand — the language of relationships.

"The first day and a half of our trip, he drank copious amounts of tea and visited with group after group, individual after individual, deepening friendships and trust all the while," explained a Southern Baptist worker who has traveled with him.

"He is practically required to visit everyone each visit or relationships will suffer and the intimacy of friendships will fall away. People become offended."

After Kaya re-establishes relationships, the Zaza are ready for his help. A man calls after a bad fall, describing his difficulty breathing. A young mother worries about her son's persistent cough. Kaya sees new patients and follows up on previous visits.

Southern Baptist help

With help from Southern Baptists, Kaya buys medicine from a local pharmacy and distributes it to the community. He also gives out staple food items to each family, including cooking oil, flour and dried goods.

"He is well-known and well-

liked, from the head of the local hospital down to the poorest village shepherd. He knows local teachers, doctors, businessmen, farmers, shop owners, hotel owners, restaurant owners and the town mayor," the worker said.

Kaya has a long-term ministry vision that involves speaking the truth of Christ during teachable moments. His convictions grow out of his own experience hearing about Jesus during a long afternoon drinking tea with a believer he met in college. After earning his medical degree and helping injured Turks following the 1999 Izmit earthquake, Kaya's heart turned toward his own people.

Today, with a handful of believers and one outreach group, Kaya is seeing God work. The people in Kaya's home province follow a strain of Islam that tends to be respectful of other belief systems. As a result, opposition toward believers so far has not been pronounced.

The Zaza number two to three million people in Turkey. Another 200,000–300,000 live in Europe, primarily Germany. In addition to the ministry available through Kaya's work as the first indigenous church planter, the first portions of oral Scripture in the Zaza language are now available.

Pray for Kaya as he works to reach the Zaza. The present focus of his outreach is a small town of 3,000 people, most of whom never leave their community. The closest church, which has about 30 people, is 100 miles away in another province. "If it weren't for [him], the chances of these people ever hearing the gospel just one time in their life would be close to zero," said a worker concerned about the Zaza.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Names have been changed to protect the individuals. (BP)



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS OFFICERS

Newly elected State Board of Missions officers are Chairman Lawrence Phipps (left), senior pastor of Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery; Vice chairman Jim Cooley, pastor of FBC Haleyville; and Secretary Mary Sue Bennett of the SBOM.

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Pakistani woman appeals death sentence for 'blasphemy'

LAHORE, Pakistan — Attorneys for Asia Noreen, a Christian mother of five sentenced to death by hanging for allegedly speaking ill of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, have filed an appeal of the verdict, they said.

Bowing to pressure from Muslim extremists in Pakistan, according to Ashiq Masih, Noreen's husband, and rights groups, a district court judge handed down the stunning sentence to Noreen on Nov. 8. He delivered the verdict under Pakistan's controversial "blasphemy" statute, the kind of law that a resolution before the United Nations condemning "defamation of religions" would make legitimate internationally, and also fined her \$1,150.

Noreen is the first woman to be sentenced to death under Pakistan's widely condemned law against defaming Islam. Her lawyer, Chaudhry Tahir Shahzad, said that among other allegations, she was accused of denying that Muhammad was a prophet. "How can we expect a Christian to affirm a Muslim belief?" Shahzad asked.

Noreen has been in isolation in jail since June of last year after she argued with fellow field workers in Ittanwali village who were trying to pressure her into renouncing Christianity. Masih said the argument began after the wife of an Ittanwali elder sent her to fetch water in Nankana Sahib district, about 47 miles from Lahore in Punjab province. On June 19, 2009, the Muslim women suddenly raised a commotion, accusing Noreen of defaming Muhammad.

"Several Muslim men working in the nearby fields reached the spot and forced their way into our house, where they tortured Asia and the children," said Masih, who confirmed his wife is 45 years old and they have five children — four girls and a boy. The oldest daughter is 20. "Asia has been convicted on false charges. We have never, ever insulted the Prophet Muhammad or the Quran."

Lao officials to expel more Christian families from village

KATIN, Laos — Officials in the Katin village of southern Laos have ordered six more Christian families to renounce their faith or face expulsion in early January, advocacy group Human Rights Watch for Lao Religious Freedom (HRWLRF) reported Nov. 9.

The Katin chief and the village religious affairs officer, along with local security forces, recently approached the six families with the threat after having expelled 11 Christian families, totaling 48 people, at gunpoint last January. The six families had become Christians since the January expulsion.

The eviction last January followed months of threats and harassment, including the confiscation of livestock and other property, the detention of 80 men, women and children in a school compound and the death by asphyxiation of a Christian villager.

Immediately after the expulsion, two more families in Katin village became Christians despite the obvious risk to their personal safety, according to HRWLRF. The village chief allowed them to remain in Katin but warned all villagers their own homes would be "torn down" if they made contact with the expelled Christians.

In July, in spite of talk by higher officials of legal guarantees of the rights of religious minorities, village heads said they would shoot every Christian who returned to Katin. Shortly after this, four more families in Katin became Christians, according to HRWLRF.

Russian leaders denounce arson attacks on churches

KARACHAEVSK, Russia — Political and religious leaders in Russia's mainly Muslim North Caucasus region denounced arson attacks on two Russian Orthodox churches and one Baptist church overnight Nov. 1.

An Orthodox church in the village of Ordzhonikidzevsky in the province of Karachayevo-Cherkessia was nearly destroyed totally. Two other churches in the nearby city of Karachaevsk were damaged but saved by night attendants. No one was injured in any of the blazes.

Authorities don't know who is responsible, but the attacks on churches appeared to be part of a growing Islamic insurgency within predominantly Christian Russia seeking an independent state where they could establish Islamic law.

Ismail Berdiev, head of regional spiritual administration for Muslims, said he believed attempts to damage Christian churches were aimed at destabilizing the mixed Christian and Muslim society of the southern Russian republic.