

# THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



March 24, 2011  
Vol. 176, No. 12

Reporting. Connecting. Inspiring.

Toll free 1-800-803-5201  
www.thealabamabaptist.org

## INSIDE



**Friendships formed among Baptists bring blessings to Michigan, Alabama**

◆ Pages 7-9



**Alabama Baptists use videoconferencing, broadcast services online**

◆ Pages 12-13



**Alabama Baptists partner with Adopt London to reach lost world**

◆ Page 15

## 'Biblical, balanced, bold'

### Elliff unanimously elected as IMB's 11th president, shares new vision

Before outlining his vision of expecting the International Mission Board (IMB) to be biblical, balanced and bold, newly elected IMB President Tom Elliff leaned over and kissed his wife, Jeannie, before a receptive audience of trustees, staff and guests.

"There's a reason our kids say they want to love their spouses like I love mine," he said, paying tribute to his partner of 44 years before addressing the 76 trustees who unanimously elected him March 16 as the 11th president of the IMB.

Elliff thanked both Clyde Meador, who served as IMB interim president in addition to his responsibility as executive vice president, and Jerry Rankin, who retired in July 2010 after 17 years as IMB president.

Elliff said Southern Baptists, in a world rocked by natural disasters, physical challenges and financial worries, "ought to constitute a veritable furnace of intercessory prayer."

"I'm grateful for the manner in which they have determined to provide ministry in Japan based on a long-standing relationship with Japanese Baptists," Elliff noted in reference to IMB missionaries and staff.

Elliff described his theology of missions that will entail three questions before taking any action. In asking first whether an action is biblical, Elliff said that priority will keep the IMB from being swept away in tides of either sentimentalism or pragmatism.

"Our doctrines, our beliefs have come to us at too high a price for us to ignore asking this question," Elliff said, announcing his intention to recommend a candidate at the next trustee meeting to fill the vice presidential position he vacated two years ago.

The nominee, Elliff said, "will be someone of noted theological expertise, who passionately loves missions and missionaries, who will work closely and carry the banner for God's Word and our staff and team on the field, and reach out to our schools and seminaries."



Photo by Chris Mills

**FOCUSED ON PRAYER** — Then International Mission Board presidential nominee Tom Elliff gives an altar call at First Baptist Church, Montgomery, during the Great Commission Prayer Conference March 4-5.

"We're the International Mission Board, but we don't have the corner on strategy," Elliff said, urging an appreciation for strategy developed by Southern Baptist seminaries and local churches.



ELLIFF

Secondly, Elliff said he will ask whether an action is balanced, citing the need to include evangelism, discipleship and church planting in pursuit of the Great Commission.

Thirdly, Elliff said, "There is no way the Great Commission can be obeyed without an incredibly bold, sacrificial, selfless lifestyle," explaining his focus in asking whether an action is bold.

"The truth is this is a whole different world than it was 18 months ago when you resigned," Elliff said, looking to Rankin. "The urgency of the hour requires a fresh kind of boldness on our part."

### Working together

Elliff described a plan that meshed with a desire of Southern Baptist Convention President Bryant Wright to see local churches adopt the remaining 3,800 unengaged unreached people groups. "The simple truth behind the Cooperative Program is that we can do things together better than we can alone," Elliff said.

Pleased that the IMB already has developed all the pieces necessary to fully

engage all unreached people groups, Elliff acknowledged, "Some assembly is required." He asked churches to come on board to embrace the remaining groups by 2012.

"It's by God's grace we have 5,000 missionaries on the field," Elliff said, adding, "It also is going to require local churches — your church becoming burdened for the unengaged and unreached of this world, signing on, creating biblical partnerships."

Borrowing what he called an Oklahoma phrase, Elliff said, "Let's cowboy up and do this thing. Your missionaries are anxious for you to do this."

Elliff made a personal appeal for prayer in seven specific areas, promptly. (See 'Elliff,' page 3)

## Alabama Baptist joins disaster relief team in Japan

John Hayes, an Alabama Baptist disaster relief coordinator from Birmingham Baptist Association, left for Japan on March 21 as part of a second Baptist Global Response (BGR) disaster relief assessment team to head to the country.

Jeff Palmer, executive director of BGR, announced March 18 that a "second wave" team of two members

was set to follow the two-member assessment team that arrived March 12.

Mel Johnson, disaster relief coordinator for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said Hayes will assist in establishing an incident command center.

"They will set up and work to establish the communication and logistical needs, housing, etc.," he said.

Once the center is in place, volunteers can be deployed in the areas needing help, Johnson said.

"John will be working outside the disaster zone," he said. "Our folks are quite some distance away from the nuclear crisis and are under no immediate threat."

Hayes, a 13-year disaster relief (See 'Long-term,' page 3)

# COMMENT

## Protecting Our Pastors in Retirement

**F**orty-seven years of full-time pastoral ministry — that was the record of Pastor Jones (not his real name) when retirement finally came. And all those years had been given to only three churches.

When Pastor Jones graduated from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the late 1950s, he was called to what people at the time considered a good country church in Alabama. Sunday School attendance was strong. The buildings were in good shape. The community was stable. And the church wanted to take care of its pastor. Along with a salary and parsonage, the church included \$400 a year in his retirement program through the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annuity Board (now GuideStone Financial Resources). That is what the convention suggested, and that is what the church did.

Pastor Jones served that church for almost 20 years. He worked hard and was known as a good preacher who loved his people. But his pastoral skills could not compensate for the people who moved out of the community. Every year, the church baptized new believers but more members died than were added to the church roll. The budget seemed to grow by about the same amount as expenses, so there was little new money to support the pastor. Retirement contributions remained at \$400 a year.

In his mid-40s, Pastor Jones was called to a first Baptist church in a small town two counties away from his rural church. First Baptist had sold its parsonage, so it agreed to help him buy a house but helping with the house meant it could not provide anything for his retirement.

### Caring for people, teaching the Bible

Again it was a happy ministry. Pastor Jones' care for people and his Bible-teaching ability endeared him to members. And he became well known in the small community, even serving on the local school board.

Nearing his 60th birthday, Pastor Jones started thinking about retirement. His home was almost paid for, and he and his wife had built up some savings, but they had not been able to plan for retirement. Raising a family seemed to take all they could make. The answer was simple: He would have to continue serving as a pastor well past the normal retirement age. That meant he would have to find another church, because he would not be able to keep up with the physical demands of ministry in his current church and community for another decade or more. It was better to act now, he reasoned, than to wait until a crisis developed.

God led Pastor Jones to a church in a neighboring town. It was a smaller situation where life was a little slower. He would not have as many community demands as he did as pastor of First Baptist Church. He could work out of his strengths: caring for people and teaching the Bible.



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

It was a good 12 years at the church — the one from which Pastor Jones retired. He and his wife were frugal. They pinched pennies, trying to make up for the lack of preparation for retirement, but medical bills were a growing concern as they both faced unanticipated health challenges.

After his 72nd birthday passed, Pastor Jones knew it was time to retire. His house was paid for. He had some savings. He hoped he could do supply preaching in the community to help financially, but he knew it was time for him to retire from full-time pastoral work.

Pastor Jones soon learned that after one has been retired about six months, invitations begin to dry up. Churches want to hear from young men with energy and vision more than listen to older men tempered by experience and wisdom. And then the Great Recession hit. Those savings he had counted on, those investments that were supposed to help him financially, all dropped precipitously. He was left with barely enough to buy food. Paying utility bills was a challenge. There was not enough money for medicines or other expenses.

That is when concerned friends brought his situation to the attention of GuideStone, the SBC agency that helps pastors and others prepare for retirement and provides other financial services.

GuideStone's Mission:Dignity (formerly Adopt An Annuitant) is a program designed to help retired pastors and their widows. In fact, almost 2,100 retired pastors or their widows with critical financial needs now receive supplemental financial support through the program.

Pastor Jones' situation was carefully reviewed and documented. Thankfully he met the guidelines of the program and now, in his late 70s, receives a monthly financial supplement to help pay utilities and other necessary expenses.

Many retired church workers do not meet the guidelines, meaning no help can be given to them. They live from month to month with the challenge of making too little money stretch too far.

Whose fault is it that Pastor Jones ended 47 years of full-time pastoral service without adequate resources for retirement? No one's and everyone's. In the 1950s, the SBC urged churches to put \$400 a year in a pastor's retirement fund. Later the SBC

quit using dollar amounts and urged churches to put an amount equal to 10 percent of a pastor's salary into his retirement fund. Some listened. Most did not.

State conventions encouraged churches to provide a retirement account for pastors and other church workers by providing protection benefits (life insurance, disability, etc.) for those people enrolled in the church annuity program. Again some churches put in only the minimum to get the "free" benefits from the state convention.

Churches know that as employers, they have a responsibility to their pastors and other staff members. But when budgets are tight, churches frequently balance them on the backs of staff members by cutting salaries and benefits, including retirement. How many churches cut staff portions of the budget before missions, for example?

### Poor benefits, poor planning

A few churches are just plain stingy. They want to buy their pastors as cheaply as possible, so they refuse to provide medical insurance, life insurance, retirement or other benefits.

Pastor Jones and others like him also are responsible. It may seem noble to forgo raises or decline retirement support at the time, but how does it feel years later when there aren't enough resources to pay bills or necessary living expenses? God expects all of us to prepare for the future.

Churches, pastors and other staff members need to encourage each other in doing good, including preparing for retirement. Every church budget should include adequate support for the pastor and staff members for today and tomorrow.

If all encourage each other, then perhaps the day will come when good and godly men like Pastor Jones with 47 years of faithful service to churches will not come to the later chapters of life without adequate resources to support them.

Until that time comes, thank God for Mission:Dignity, for those who contribute to make the fund possible and the help it provides for needy pastors and their widows.

For more information, visit [www.missiondignity-sbc.org](http://www.missiondignity-sbc.org).

**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).**

(ISSN 0738-7741; USPS 011-080)  
© The Alabama Baptist, Inc.

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

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to The Alabama Baptist, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209.  
**ADDRESS CHANGE:** Send old and new addresses, and name of church to Circulation Department, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Allow two weeks.

## Someone You Should Know

By Elaine Price, Correspondent, TAB

### Mary Roden

The Church at Lake Guntersville  
Marshall Baptist Association

**FAVORITE BIBLE VERSE:** "So many I cannot even count."

**FAVORITE HYMNS:** "Amazing Grace," "Jesus Loves Me" and "Just As I Am"

**HOBBIES:** Gardening and cooking

**FAMILY STATUS:** Widowed after 29 years of marriage to J.P.; one son, Craig; and two grandsons



**RODEN**

**M**ary Roden celebrated her 90th birthday Dec. 29. Retired after 37 years of teaching, she enjoys seeing former third-grade students and their families. She is an active member of the adult Sunday School class at The Church at Lake Guntersville.

#### Q: What was your childhood like?

**A:** Wild! But we knew what we had to do and we did it. I grew up country but it was good. We were all in church. I grew up "keepin' the preacher," because we lived right across the street from the church in Martling, Ala. We had an extra bedroom, so when the preacher came to town, he stayed with us. I had one sister and two brothers.

#### Q: How did you come to know the Lord?

**A:** I was saved in elementary school. We did not have a baptistry, but there was a cotton gin in the middle of town. So when we had a big enough group to be baptized, they would drain the pool that was used to wash the cotton and refill it with clean water so we could use it for baptisms. I was baptized there between the third and fourth grade. I remember always reading a chapter in the Bible before bed every night in front of the fireplace.

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

**A:** I have been involved in church as long as I can remember. I was involved in WMU (Woman's Missionary Union), VBS (Vacation Bible School), Sunday School and now the senior program. One year, we had VBS on my farm.

#### Q: What have you gotten from that involvement?

**A:** I have always loved the literature that helps me connect one Sunday to the next. It really helps me learn from the Bible. Mostly I am thankful that I always have Someone to talk to that will always listen.

# 'Long-term challenge'

## Prayer, money needed most right now; volunteer opportunities to come

(continued from page 1)

veteran, is a member of Adamsville Baptist Church and is the state convention's district 11 disaster relief coordinator.

"We just hope to find some areas of missions work that Alabama Baptists can perform to help the people of Japan to get over this disaster and to make their lives better," Hayes said.

"Hopefully we'll be able to show the people (of Japan) the love of Christ and make a difference in their spiritual lives."

Hayes helps train others in disaster relief and has been deployed more than a dozen times to deal with damage from ice storms, tornadoes and hurricanes, Johnson said.

At press time, Hayes was scheduled to be in Japan 10 days. He is joined by a disaster relief specialist from South Carolina.

The center being established by the four-member team will allow "for a unified Southern Baptist disaster relief base," Palmer said.

Because government restrictions prevent a large-scale overseas volunteer effort, the initial relief projects will be conducted in partnership with Japanese Baptists and other humanitarian groups, he added. The projects will focus on earthquake survivors outside the tsunami zone, where the nuclear crisis is most serious.

"Because so much of the U.S. media coverage is on the nuclear crisis in the tsunami zone, we aren't seeing how serious the situation is in other areas," Palmer said. "The area devastated by the earthquake is much larger and the conditions in those areas are very serious."

Based on the disaster assessment conducted in mid-March, the initial relief effort will focus on life-essential items: basic food items, water, blankets, hygiene supplies and kitchen utensils, said Pat Melancon, BGR's disaster management specialist. The first round of relief supplies also will include radiation detectors.

Ben Wolf, who with his wife, Pam, directs BGR work in the Asia Rim, said, "We know how anxious our Southern Baptist disaster relief specialists and other volunteers are to come to Japan and help.

"They know people are in desperate need, and they are willing to take whatever risks are necessary to take the love of Jesus to hurting people," he said. "The reality, however, is that right now we can't go ourselves, so we will focus on praying and giving so our partners in Japan can get the job done.

"Because of the scale of this disaster, recovery will be a long-term challenge, and we believe there will be plenty of opportunities to go in months to come. For now, donations to Japan relief, especially to the general fund, are the critical need."

Johnson echoed that request.

"It is important for our churches to understand that the best way we can help support Japan at this time is through prayer," he said.

"People are looking to collect water and other items for us to ship to Japan, but it is really better to purchase those things in country or from sources close by," Johnson explained.

But while "in-kind donations need to be



BP photo

**MEETING NEEDS** — The four-member Baptist World Aid Rescue24 team, made up of Baptists from Hungary and North Carolina, unload boxes of food at an evacuation shelter in Sendai, Japan, one of the hardest hit areas. The team arrived there March 13.

withheld at this time, donations made to the disaster relief fund will be sent immediately to teams on the ground, so they can purchase food or whatever is needed," he added.

The nuclear crisis has led to the evacuation of all International Mission Board personnel in east Japan to southwest of Tokyo. They will be given temporary assignments south of Nagoya. At press time, the relocation was expected to be completed by March 19.

#### Additional help

In addition to the Southern Baptist assessment team, Baptist World Aid (BWAid) sent a four-member assessment team, made up of humanitarian relief specialists from Hungary and North Carolina, to Sendai on March 13.

Bela Szilagyi, Rescue24 team leader, said that the city of Sendai, one of the hardest hit areas, "was calm and the spirit of the people was shaken but firm."

They visited the Katahira evacuation center where approximately 400 people were in the gymnasium and classrooms of a primary school. There was need for food, water and electricity. Rescue24 helped to provide instant noodles, but indicated that "it was almost 'Mission Impossible' to procure food for the evacuees. All the stores we saw were closed in Sendai, a city with a population of 1 million."

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship also

has sent an initial \$5,000 for immediate relief to the Japan Baptist Convention (JBC).

And as Baptist volunteers are trying to find ways to help, the JBC is still trying to make contact with some of its churches in the areas hardest hit by the disaster.

Makoto Kato, executive director of JBC, wrote in a letter to BWAid:

"Basically, the inland churches and mission points sustained breakage to their smaller structures, but the larger buildings were not severely damaged. Unfortunately several members of the JBC churches living in the vicinity of the Pacific coastline remain unreachable; we are anxious for their safety.

"Additionally, about half of the 14 JBU (Japan Baptist Union) churches and mission points are along the coast, and most of these have serious damages."

Pastor Sato of Fukushima Daiichi Baptist Church, which is located close to the troubled nuclear plant, said in a letter to an Alabama Baptist pastor:

"Our church has suffered various damages. I have been unable to contact families living near the coast. The railway station has been washed away by (the) tsunami and our town is really devastated."

To donate to relief efforts in Japan, visit [www.alsbom.org/japan](http://www.alsbom.org/japan) or call 1-800-264-1225.

(Compiled from wire sources)

## Elliff outlines prayer requests

(continued from page 1)

ing trustees to jot down the list to remember their commitment to uplift the new leader. He and his wife requested:

▶ "that there would be in our hearts a looming awareness of the fact that we are ambassadors for Christ and must act in a way that's consistent with our Lord, but act with confidence."

▶ "a pure heart," citing Psalm 24.

▶ the exercise of spiritual work in the fullness of the Holy Spirit "so the life of Christ can be manifested through us."

▶ exhibit the gifts and graces of the Spirit, citing Galatians 5 and Isaiah 11:2.

▶ "that never would we unwittingly place in the hands of the adversary something that he might use to mock our Savior."

▶ "that God would keep us faithful to the vision."

"There's no better atmosphere than with the International Mission Board," Elliff said, praising the zeal for Christ and sense of urgency to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth. (BP)

# 'What would Jesus cut?'

## Fighting hunger, poverty makes economic, political sense, Christian activist says

Despite deep divisions in U.S. society, Christians can lead the way toward bipartisan solutions to the pain of poverty, insisted one of the world's top hunger fighters.

"Church people — whose congregations often span the political spectrum — have the moral imperative to push for bipartisan efforts to eliminate poverty and hunger," said David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World and 2010 recipient of the World Food Prize.

Bread for the World is a multi-denominational Christian organization that urges politicians to make decisions that will alleviate hunger in the United States and around the world. Beckmann, an ordained Lutheran minister and former missionary, has led the organization since 1991.

He outlined a two-part strategy for convincing lawmakers to preserve federal programs that protect poor people: Illustrate the needs but also demonstrate how meeting those needs makes economic and political sense.

"Right now, there are huge pressures to cut programs for poor people in the name of deficit reduction," he acknowledged.

For example, the House of Representatives is proposing a 10 percent reduction in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program that provides supplemental food for low-income women and children up to age 5, he said.


But that expense reduction equals bad economics, he added. The fed-

**2011 OFFERING OF LETTERS WORKSHOP**

**A campaign aiming to finish the work of reforming our nation's foreign aid system so that it is more focused, effective and efficient at reducing hunger and poverty**

**Thursday, March 24, 7-9 p.m.**  
**Dawson Memorial Baptist Church • 1114 Oxmoor Road • Birmingham, Ala.**

- Participate in interactive training and get ideas about how to conduct an Offering of Letters in your church, campus or community group.
- Learn about how U.S. foreign assistance is changing lives in countries like Haiti and Liberia, as well as what we can do to ensure an even greater impact.
- Connect with other people of faith who are answering God's call to end hunger.



**To register, visit [tinyurl.com/4jz47ae](http://tinyurl.com/4jz47ae).**

breadfortheworld  
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

Graphic by Lauren Chow

eral General Accounting Office has demonstrated WIC saves more than it costs by reducing the amount of Medicaid spent on premature babies whose mothers were undernourished during pregnancy. And long term, even moderate undernourishment of small children reduces their productivity later in life.

"It just doesn't make economic sense to cut assistance to pregnant mothers and small children," he said.

### Higher prices

Globally food prices are higher than they have been in decades, and they're expected to increase because of rising fuel costs, Beckmann reported, adding he is proud the United States has led the world in investing in poor farmers, yielding improved nutrition.

Nevertheless the House budget

proposes to cut overseas agriculture support by 30 percent, meaning 19 million people worldwide will lose their dietary assistance, he said.

That doesn't make economic sense, either, especially for fiscal conservatives, he noted. For every \$1 the U.S. government spends on global hunger, other governments and groups contribute \$10, leading to a "surge in investment in poor farmers." But the budget cuts could undercut U.S. leadership in hunger reduction and cause other nations to curtail their support, he warned. And that will lead to worsened conditions for the world's farmers, resulting in even greater need.

These aren't simply the concerns of "bleeding-heart liberals" but also of "clear-eyed conservatives," Beckmann said.

"Both (political) parties can agree on steps that will make aid

programs for needy people work better," he stressed. "Bread for the World is serious about using tax dollars well. ... We can get bipartisan agreement to use tax dollars more effectively in foreign aid."

### Leading the charge

In fact, Bread for the World has led the charge in demanding accountability from aid programs, he said. During the past three years, the organization has pushed for greater transparency in the programs, demanded tighter measures of effectiveness and insisted the programs "make things work better for people in need."

The time is right for Christians to promote bipartisan support for anti-hunger programs, Beckmann noted. "Despite political polarities, Americans are more sensitive to poor people than they were 15 years

ago. This especially is true with the economic recession. We've all been touched and just about everyone has a close friend or family member who has lost a job."

So Christians should demand their lawmakers find other ways to reduce the federal deficit rather than shave away programs designed to help the poor and hurting, he said. Those programs that respond to people in need — both domestic and international — constitute only 15 percent of the budget.

"There are other ways to reduce the deficit: Grow the economy, go after the other 85 percent of the budget and close tax loopholes," Beckmann suggested.

"Ask yourself, 'What would Jesus cut?' He wouldn't cut WIC. The Bible doesn't say that specifically. But the Bible says God does support the poor. We do not need to make hungry people hungrier."

"Bread for the World is grounded in Jesus and deeply connected to the Church," he reported. "We're grateful for the long-standing support of ... Baptists, as well as Lutherans; Presbyterians; Catholics; various African-American denominations, such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church; and other groups."

This spring, Bread for the World is providing Christians with an opportunity to call for support for the world's poor and hungry through its annual Offering of Letters.

For more information about the project, visit [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org). (ABP)

## 'Perhaps emphasis on abstinence ... has had some influence'

A growing number of teenagers and young adults are virgins, according to a study by the Centers For Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) described as "the largest and most in-depth federal report to date on sexual behavior" in the United States.

What's more, the mainstream media is recognizing that the trend may be attributable in part to abstinence education. An Associated Press article stated, "Perhaps emphasis on abstinence in the past decade has had some influence."

According to the CDC report released March 3, 27 percent of men and 29 percent of women ages 15-24 have never had a sexual encounter, up from 22 percent for both men and women in a 2005 survey based on 2002 data. An increase from 22 percent to 27 percent among men is a gain of 5 percentage points, or in other words a 5/22 increase or almost 23 percent jump.

### Men vs. women

The difference for women was even more pronounced: 29 percent compared to 22 percent is a 7 percentage point change or 7/22 increase which equates to about 32 percent more.

In the most recent study, based on data from 2006-08, 68 percent of boys and 67 percent of girls ages 15-17 have never had sexual intercourse, and 53 percent of boys and 58 percent

of girls age 15-17 had no sexual contact of any kind. In 2002, only 46 percent of boys and 49 percent of girls in that age range reported no experience.

Valerie Huber, executive director of the National Abstinence Education Association (NAEA), said the CDC report challenges the wisdom of recent federal funding cuts to abstinence education.

"One hundred sixty-nine abstinence education programs lost funding and over 1 million students lost access to the very programs that can support and encourage the positive trends represented by this data," Huber said, referring to funding cuts that began with the 2010 federal budget.

"If we are serious about decreasing teen sexual activity, we need to use the data to instruct public policy. Funding priority should be given to programs that support this healthy trend rather than capitulating to those who want to normalize sex among teens and simply offer contraception as a solution," Huber said. "The data renders null and void the 'abstinence is unrealistic' claims made by anti-abstinence advocacy groups."

"We must insure programs that support sexual risk avoidance are available to as many youth as possible," she said. The data is based on interviews with about 13,500 males and females between ages 15 and 44, including more than 5,000 ages 15-24.

Respondents gave their answers on com-

puters in an effort to promote honesty.

Richard Ross, co-founder of the True Love Waits abstinence movement, sees more value in promoting the positive aspects of postponing sexual activity versus scaring teenagers into obedience.

### Making a commitment

"Those in the abstinence-until-marriage movement tell teenagers we have great faith in their ability to make promises and keep promises. We tell them we believe in them," said Ross, a professor of student ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. "We show them powerful advantages that come with living in moral purity ... and surround them with peers who support them."

"On the other hand, those in the so-called comprehensive sex education movement put disease and pregnancy prevention front and center," Ross said. "This suggests to the teenagers that leaders have little confidence they can remain abstinent. In fact, if abstinence is mentioned in those programs, it often is presented as an afterthought. So, the question is, 'Which of those two movements seems more responsible for the fact that more and more students are choosing abstinence?'"

Also in the study, just 1.1 percent of women and 1.7 percent of men identified themselves as homosexual.

Anjani Chandra, a health scientist at NCHS

and lead author of the study, said the increase in virginity could be attributed to messages about abstinence. Last year the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released a report showing that a majority of teenagers support premarital abstinence in general and for themselves.

The National Survey of Adolescents and Their Parents also found that about 70 percent of parents were opposed to premarital sex both in general and for their own teenagers, and most parents favored their adolescents receiving abstinence messages from multiple sources.

Ordered from most preferred to least preferred, parents in the survey favored abstinence messages delivered at a place of worship (85 percent), a doctor's office or health center (85 percent), school (83 percent), a community organization (71 percent) and the Internet (55 percent), HHS said.

Adolescent frequency of attending religious services was strongly associated with more conservative general views about sex and abstinence among adolescents, the report said.

The NAEA is calling on Congress to reinstate abstinence education as a community-based approach in the 2012 federal budget.

"The data is clearly siding in favor of a renewed priority on the risk avoidance abstinence education approach ... and it just happens also to be the healthiest option for teens," Huber said. (BP)

## Greenetrack attempts 'new' type of bingo

About 45 people lined up on the third floor of Greenetrack to play electronic bingo when the facility reopened March 18, according to *The Birmingham News*.

Greenetrack announced March 17 it was reopening with tabletop computer monitors for playing bingo. The new machines are reportedly not like the slot machine-style games that were in the facility when it was shut down in July 2010 by the Governor's Task Force on Illegal Gambling.

The task force was created by Gov. Bob Riley to rid the state of illegal gambling operations. Since Gov. Robert Bentley took office in January, he has disbanded the task force and given that assignment to Attorney General Luther Strange.

Strange's office issued a statement explaining that officials from the attorney general's office had met with attorneys from Greenetrack earlier.

"They are aware of the state's legal position against slot machines and the Supreme Court of Alabama's definition of the game of bingo," the statement said. "This issue will be held like any other law enforcement matter."

Greenetrack President and CEO Luther "Nat" Winn said in a press statement that about 100 machines were initially installed but space was being prepared for more. He said the new machines meet the legal requirements for bingo in Alabama, but he did not describe how they differ from the previous machines, according to the *News*.

Greenetrack is one of four legal dog tracks in Alabama. It became one of a handful of sites fighting for slot machine-style gambling rights, claiming it was a new electronic form of the already legal paper bingo.

Attempts to legalize this type of gambling have failed. (TAB)



Photo by Neisha Fuson

**REACHING NEW HEIGHTS** — Samford women's basketball coach Mike Morris (center) instructs his players at a practice March 17 in preparation for their first-round NCAA tournament game against Florida State on March 20 in Auburn.

## On and off the court

### Samford women's basketball coach 'committed to faith, family ... athletes'

By Anna Swindle

Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

After 17 years with the Samford basketball program — nine of those spent as the women's head coach — coach Mike Morris was thrilled at press time that his girls were headed to Auburn to play Florida State on March 20 in the first round of the NCAA tournament.

"We all have such a feeling of fulfillment and satisfaction," Morris said.

"It's great, because at Samford we can recruit kids with such great character, but who are also competitive at sports and work hard to win."

Basketball has been close to Morris' heart

since childhood. In fact, he attributes his college education to the sport.

Without the basketball scholarship Morris earned, he said it would have been difficult to afford his two years at Jefferson State Community College in Birmingham and two years playing Division II ball at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

"Coming through high school, basketball was the only thing I was really good at," he said.

#### 'Love being at Samford'

"Playing basketball really opened doors for me."

Those doors eventually led him to an assistant coaching job at Berry College in Rome, Ga., where he met someone from the Samford basketball coaching staff and eventually became a Bulldog himself. Now there's no place he'd rather be.

"As a Christian, I love being at Samford," Morris said.

"It's not like I have to preach to the kids — they can see how your faith is important. They're able to see how your relation-

ship with Jesus impacts your decisions, and I can be open about that relationship at Samford."

And, according to Samford President Andrew Westmoreland, Morris' faith and integrity are evident in all he does.

"To know coach Morris is to know a man who is committed to faith, family and the well-being of his student-athletes," Westmoreland said.

Morris and his wife, Melanie, are members of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, along with their two children: 18-year-old Peyton and 14-year-old Paige, both Homewood High School students. Peyton will be a Samford freshman in the fall, and Morris can't wait for his son to be a part of the Samford community.

"As you can imagine, our students are thrilled that the team is going to the national tournament," Westmoreland said. "With our talented student-athletes, a great coaching staff across all sports, a strong commitment to academic success and a winning attitude, I believe that our athletic program is poised to reach new heights." ❧

## Disaster relief training set for April at Shocco Springs Conference Center

Want to be able to help when disaster strikes? Then you may be interested in the next training opportunity.

Alabama Baptist State Disaster Relief Training will be held at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega April 1-2.

Those just starting out will need to attend the Involving Southern Baptists in Disaster Relief class, a prerequisite for all specialized disaster relief training, April 1 at 1 p.m.

Other classes will focus on training for the following disaster relief teams: feeding unit,

cleanup/recovery/mud-out/chain saw, shower unit, communications (ham radio license required), child care and chaplaincy.

Re-credential courses will be offered for those needing to renew badges for feeding unit, chain saw, shower unit and administration. Administration training will be held April 1 only.

To register, go to [www.sbdr.org](http://www.sbdr.org). Reserve lodging and meals through Shocco Springs at 1-800-280-1105.

For more information, call 1-800-264-1225, Ext. 273. (TAB)



Photo by Chris Mills

**MISSIONS VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED FOR 20 YEARS OF SERVICE**  
Gil (right) and Marge (center) Butler of First Baptist Church, Guin, in Franklin Baptist Association were recognized for 20 years of service as Mission Service Corps mission mobilizers. Pictured with them is Reggie Quimby, director of the office of global missions for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

# Across Alabama's Associations

## AUTAUGA

► **The Church at Pine Level, Deatsville**, will hold Spring Spectacular March 27–30 with Evangelist Tommy Fountain Sr. of Fountain of Joy Ministries. Services will be Sunday at 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Wednesday is youth night with a pizza blast at 5:30 p.m. For information visit [www.thechurchatpinelevel.net](http://www.thechurchatpinelevel.net). Chance Darlington is pastor.

## BESSEMER

► **Southcrest Church, Bessemer**, will hold a benefit singing with the Royal Masters and Crystal River April 2, 7 p.m. Proceeds will go to the family life center. Dinner will be served at 6 p.m. Scott Bush is pastor.

## BETHEL

► **Nanafalia Church** will celebrate homecoming April 10, 10:30 a.m., with former Pastor Randy Daniels. Lunch will follow in the fellowship hall. Hal Taylor is pastor.

## BIRMINGHAM

► **Eastside Church, Birmingham**, student ministries will hold Battle of the Bands May 7, 6 p.m., at the outdoor field adjacent to the church. DPB (David Paul Brooks) will be the special guest judge. Caleb Waid will be the emcee. Attendees will vote for their favorite band. Fifty percent of the score will be by popular vote, and 50 percent will be from a panel of judges. For participation information contact Nathan Farrow at 205-337-3461 or [nate.farrow@gmail.com](mailto:nate.farrow@gmail.com) or visit [www.ebobinfo.wordpress.com](http://www.ebobinfo.wordpress.com). The grand

prize will include a three-song demo courtesy of Echelon Studios. Mark Smith is pastor.

## COFFEE

► **Cool Springs Church, Enterprise**, will present The Living Last Supper April 3, 6 p.m. Merlin Morris is pastor.

## EAST LIBERTY

► **Fairview Church, Valley**, will hold revival March 27–31, nightly at 7, with Robert Rhodes, pastor of Union Grove Church, Opelika. Jeff Cleghorn, of Warner Robbins, Ga., will lead the music. A nursery will be provided. The van ministry will be available. For information call 334-756-3746. Timothy Bass is pastor.

## ELMORE

► **Santuck Church, Wetumpka**, will host Bruce Rapp of Jews for Jesus April 6, 6:30 p.m. Rapp will recreate the traditional Passover service and explain how it foreshadowed Jesus' death and resurrection in a presentation called Christ in the Passover. For information call 334-567-2364. Gary R. Miller is pastor.

## LAMAR

► **Kennedy Church** will host Missions Madness March 26, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. The children's missions event for grades K–6 will include guest missionary speakers, a Skype session with a missionary couple in an undisclosed location, food samples from several countries and preparation of a special bean soup representing a way to pray for missionaries. For information call 205-

431-6758. Keith Martin is pastor.

## MADISON

► **Mable Hill Church, Ardmore**, will hold a gospel concert and cookout with award-winning Palmetto State Quartet April 2. The cookout will be from 5:30–6:30 p.m. The concert will be at 7 p.m. The church also will hold Youth Explosion revival April 14–16, nightly at 7 with Alan Ostrzycki. Road to Damascus will provide music. There will be a cookout Saturday at 5 p.m. For information call Pastor Mike Clark at 256-420-8172, e-mail [mhbc@ardmore.net](mailto:mhbc@ardmore.net) or visit [www.mablehillbaptist.org](http://www.mablehillbaptist.org).

## RANDOLPH

► **Herren's Grove Church, Woodland**, will hold the Sisterhood Spring annual yard sale April 2, 7 a.m., in the fellowship hall. There will be multiple family donations and a bake sale. Stephen Dedman is pastor.

## SHELBY

► **Bethel Church, Sterrett**, will hold a dedication ceremony for the Old Sterrett Cemetery, which has been named a historical site, April 9, 2 p.m. The ceremony will begin at the church then move to the cemetery where there will be Civil War re-enactment actors on site. Bring photos and memorabilia from your family's history to be displayed at the church. Earl Hardy is pastor.

## TUSCALOOSA

► **Circlewood Church, Tuscaloosa**, will hold Awakening revival March 27–30, nightly at 6:30, with Evangelist Jeff Crook. A nursery will be provided. Herbert Thomas is pastor.

## WEST CULLMAN

► **Stoney Creek Church, Vinemont**, and Christian Camp will host Triumphant Quartet in concert April 1, 7 p.m., at the Cullman High School auditorium. Tickets can be purchased at the door. Mika Marcum is pastor.

## OTHER

► **First Church, Mobile**, is holding its divinity school spring session through April 13 on Wednesdays from 5:45–6:30 p.m. The classes are Characters of the Passion of Jesus with instructor Howell Easterling; Walking Through Life and Works of C.S. Lewis with Gary Minton, Laura Lemley and Pastor Chris George; Serving God Through Serving Others (Track 1: Sewing and Crochet with Sarah Helmers, Edna Williamson and Peggy Gudmundson; Track 2: Construction with Jamey Duke and Seth Pritchett); and a kids' option called Serving Others (Track 1: Sewing and Crochet). There will be activities and a nursery for younger children. For information call 251-432-6513.

## Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

### Linden marks 100 years attendance at FBC Silverhill

When she was 6 weeks old, Violet Gustafson Linden's parents added her name to the cradle roll at First Baptist Church, Silverhill. On Feb. 19, Linden held the framed certificate while family, friends and members of the Baldwin Baptist Association congregation took pictures and celebrated her 100th birthday.

"I am thankful for having been born to Christian parents in a country where the gospel is taught," she said as those attending the celebration from as far away as California praised her as a role model and blessing.

Linden remembers riding to church in a buggy as a child and the kerosene lamps that lit the interior. Her parents, John and Emma Gustafson, were among Silverhill's early Swedish settlers and active members of First Swedish Baptist Church, Silverhill, which became First, Silverhill.

Baptized in 1924, she has served in a number of ministry roles including musician and Sunday School teacher. In 1992, the church recognized Linden with an award for 67 years of faithful service as pianist and organist.

"How rare it is to have a person attend the same church for 100 years, but even more so, what an amazing blessing to faithfully serve the Lord and the people of that church for most of those years," said Interim Pastor Joe Savage, who interviewed Linden about her life during the Feb. 20 worship service.

In 1934, she married another first-generation child of Swedish settlers in Silverhill, Robert T. "Bob" Linden. He passed away in 1998. They have four children, seven grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

According to a biography written by daughter Gloria Buck, Linden was actively involved in the community and business world, as well as being a "diligent and attentive homemaker." She was employed in secretarial and accounting work at various times, served as a plane spotter for civil defense during World War II, was active in Eastern Star and community organizations and continues to be active in retirement.

"She has always been faithful, consistent and loving — a tribute to the effect of God in her life," Buck said.

Daughter Bobbie Benton, with whom Linden lives in nearby Fairhope, likened her mother to the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31, adding, "Her life celebrates the Lord."

### FBC Fayette puts major emphasis on revival

First Baptist Church, Fayette, held revival Feb. 13–16, with featured guest Ron Herrod, first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention. He is also founder and president of R.H.E.M.A. (Ron Herrod Evangelism Ministries Association), which focuses on evangelistic crusades and missions projects.

"My belief is that God prepares a church for revival in His timing," said Scott Davis, pastor of the Fayette Baptist Association church. "We had prayer meetings leading up to this. ... I think God was preparing us for these revival services. All throughout the year, we've been focusing on revival and outreach."

To open the revival, Herrod preached the morning of Feb. 13. That evening, an associational evangelism rally was held.

A Valentine's Day banquet was held Feb. 14. Herrod spoke about family and those in attendance shared a meal.

Traditional worship services were held Feb. 15–16, with Herrod preaching. Shannon Knight, associate pastor and worship leader at First Baptist Church, Guin, provided music.

Five people made professions of faith and 11 rededicated their lives to the Lord during revival.

"Revival services are kind of like throwing a pebble in the water; there is a big splash at first, but the waves continue long after," Davis said.



Photo courtesy of Liberty Baptist Church

### DEATSVILLE'S LIBERTY CHURCH BURNS NOTE

Liberty Baptist Church, Deatsville, in Autauga Baptist Association celebrates paying off the land it bought less than three years ago in preparation for its new building with a note burning Feb. 20. Pictured are Pastor Clay Carroll (left) and deacon chairman John McGalliard.

### Want to see your news in The Alabama Baptist?

E-mail your information to [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org); fax it to 205-870-8957 or call 1-800-803-5201. Church announcements should arrive three weeks prior to the event.



# More than an 'official' partnership

## Friendships formed among Baptists bring blessings to churches in both states

By Neisha Fuson  
The Alabama Baptist

It's hard to imagine just how much we have been blessed by Alabama Baptists," said Dexter Hardy, pastor of Connections Community Church, Ypsilanti, Mich.

Hardy said the missions teams sent by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) have helped Connections grow spiritually.

"Our church has begun to understand what missions is all about," he said. "Most of our congregation has no Southern Baptist background. As teams have come, it's made my job easier to foster a missions environment in our own church."

### 'Just what we needed'

Of course, providing help with weaknesses is what a partner is supposed to do. And since 2007, the Alabama Baptist State Convention and the Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM) have been doing just that for each other.

Pastor Roger Green was called to serve Lake St. Helen Baptist Church, St. Helen, Mich. — his first church — one month before teams from Alabama helped host simultaneous revivals in nine of Pines Baptist Association's 12 churches in 2008.

"The revival was just what we needed," Green said. "We took the revival ideas and kept the momentum going. The church doesn't stop at the walls of the church building. The people here have taken that idea to heart."

Before the revival, seven members attended Lake St. Helen Baptist, and now more than 80 attend on a regular basis.

Reaching out to the community was the message several missions teams brought to Fellowship Baptist Church, Saline, Mich.

"Through the relationships formed in town, we are provided an open door to share our faith," Pastor Bert Span said, adding the church

really has become "a necessity for Saline now."

But Alabama Baptists' help has been more than just spiritual.

In 2010, a team of Mobile Baptist Builders worked on Holland Baptist Church's building, taking it from foundation to nearly finished in two weeks.

"We called it the Extreme Makeover: Church Edition," said Mike McCoy, director of missions for Woodland Baptist Association, of which Holland Baptist is a member.

The SBOM has provided the funds to complete the building.

Trinity Baptist Church, Newaygo, Mich., needed help drilling a well on the church property. The SBOM provided the funds to complete the work on the well and "helped [Trinity Baptist] out tremendously," McCoy said. "[The church] is in their building now."

First Spanish-American Baptist Church, Lansing, Mich., needed financial help in 2009. The building's gas had been turned off because of a \$3,000 debt incurred by the previous owner.

"We couldn't pay it off, but Alabama Baptists really helped us out," Pastor David Pizaña said.

The SBOM donated \$2,500 and the heat was turned on and services began again.

### No end in sight

During the state conventions' partnership, Michigan Baptists have used their gifts and talents to help meet needs in Alabama, too. Over the past few years, Central and Lendale Baptist associations have sent youth teams to West Cullman Baptist Association to do prayer walking and evangelism.

"Real partnership is about building relationships," said Reggie Quimby, director of the SBOM's office of global missions, which facilitates missions partnerships.

That's something Alabama and Michigan Baptists seem to have



Photo courtesy of Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association

**CLOWNS FOR VBS** — More than 30 volunteers on two teams from Alabama's Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association serve in Lansing, Mich., during a Vacation Bible School.

done well as their partnership has evolved from one state convention working with another to associations partnering with each other and church-to-church partnerships.

"[Alabama Baptists] are just like our friends now. We've fallen in love with one another," said Hardy, who also serves as the BSCM's African-American leader. "It's not even about having an official partnership anymore."

Comments like that are encouraging for Michigan Baptist leaders like Ted Stephens, the BSCM's church-planting team leader.

"Even after the actual partnership ends (in 2012), I have no doubt that some (associational and church partnerships) will continue for years to come, because they've built relationships," he said.



Photo courtesy of Trinity Baptist Church

**LIVING WATER** — Trinity Baptist Church, Newaygo, Mich., has a new well, thanks to Alabama Baptists and their donations to complete the project. The church now meets in its building.

## Prayer requests from Michigan

"A prayer we have had for this church is the knowledge to help the church to grow and to run the way God would want it to run. We need Sunday School teachers and worship leaders as well. We pray for growth and for many in our neighborhoods to accept Christ."

— Pastor David Pizaña of First Spanish-American Baptist Church, Lansing

"We need a leader for our children's ministry. We just don't have anyone with a passion for that area of work. This has been a long-running prayer. We also pray for continual spiritual growth for our membership. About 80 percent to 85 percent of our congregation is made up of new believers."

— Pastor Dexter Hardy of Connections Community Church, Ypsilanti

"We are praying for a recommitment of our people and churches to touch this state for Christ."

— Director of Missions Chuck Turner of Central and Lendale Baptist associations

"Every Wednesday morning, six to eight pastors and I meet to pray for west Michigan. We would love it if Alabama Baptists would join with us in prayer for this area. We've seen God move in Woodland Association with a 75 percent increase in baptisms. We think that is because we have our folks gathering together in prayer."

— Director of Missions Mike McCoy of Woodland Baptist Association

(Compiled by Neisha Fuson)



Photo by Neisha Fuson

**PRODUCTION LINE** — A factory in Monroe, Mich., sits behind a large farm. Michigan is a labor union state, has harsh winters and is home to the Motor City (Detroit).

# Michigan Baptists' new exec brings new ideas

By Neisha Fuson  
The Alabama Baptist

It was 1990 in a Shoney's Big Boy in Ardmore, Okla. Brenda Gilstrap looked at her husband, Bobby; motioned toward his father, a director of missions (DOM) in Georgia; and said, "That's what you need to do one day, isn't it?"

Bobby Gilstrap, recently elected executive director of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM), was in only his second pastoral role at the time, and his wife was already telling him the direction he should head.

"I learned a long time ago, the smart thing to do is to listen to your wife," Gilstrap said with a smile.

Born in Fort Worth, Texas, he and his parents moved to Guatemala with the Foreign Mission Board (now the International Mission Board) when he was just 7 months old. The family moved to Georgia seven years later. After graduating from high school, Gilstrap went on to Brewton-Parker College in Mount Vernon, Ga., and Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, where he earned a bachelor of arts in sociology. He earned a master of divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth and a doctor of ministry from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

A licensed pastor since 1981, he felt the pressure from seminary and those around him to be a "good pastor." After serving four churches in

Georgia, Oklahoma and Texas, Gilstrap recognized his strengths and skills as a person who supports and provides resources to others, but not necessarily as a person behind the pulpit. "I looked back on my personal history and realized everything was about starting, re-creating or restructuring to become more effective. I think in the 'How can we do better?' kind of mind-set," he said.

In 2001, Gilstrap and his family, including sons Robert and Andrew, moved to Ypsilanti, Mich., and he assumed the role of DOM for Huron and Southeastern Baptist associations as an appointed missionary for the North American Mission Board. He was offered several positions outside the state but no door was opened and the family felt called to stay in the North.

## 'Laboring in the field'

In November 2010, Gilstrap was elected executive director of the state convention.

"It was incredibly affirming and very humbling when they chose me for the position," he said, adding with a chuckle, "I'm not the sharpest crayon in the coloring box. I've just been laboring in the field, sometimes in difficult or good situations, but up and down, you try to stay faithful."

Once again, it was his wife who recognized his potential even before he did.

"In the process of nomination, I



Photo by Neisha Fuson

**VISION** — Bobby Gilstrap (center), the Baptist State Convention of Michigan's executive director, shares his hopes for Michigan with Tim Chappell (right), pastor of New Beginnings Church, Lake Orion, Mich.

was hesitant to have my name be submitted for the position," Gilstrap admitted. "Brenda told me, 'I think you need to allow them to put your name in, because I think this is what you were created for.'"

Chuck Turner, DOM for Central and Lendale Baptist associations, and the other members of the executive director search committee agreed.

"I knew him when he first came to Michigan," Turner shared. "Bobby's resumé jumped out when we started going through the characteristics we felt we needed in a leader."

Many at the BSCM are supportive of the new executive director and have high hopes for the future.

"We have not had a well-stated vision of why we are here," said Ted Stephens, the church-planting team leader. But after Gilstrap's first three weeks, he was already seeing "very positive" signs of change.

"I know he's got a vision and knows what he wants to get accomplished here in the state, and he's brought a freshness to the office," Stephens said.

Gilstrap's first day on the job, he

set a new direction for the BSCM. The ministry team, formerly known as the administrative team, left the office to help a church plant, The Tree, on the University of Michigan's campus in Ann Arbor.

"There's been a huge response to the staff of the BSCM getting out with the churches and working in a ministry together," Gilstrap said. "In the history of our convention — that's 53 years — that work and cooperation has never been done before."

## Change needed

And the BSCM may be doing a lot more things it's never done before because "tremendous change needs to happen structurally" if Michigan Baptists are going to be effective in "pushing back lostness," he said.

"Churches need to know we are here for them," Gilstrap said. "We are trying to cast a vision for our churches and for how to reach the lost."

He also said the BSCM needs to do a better job of planting churches. "When we plant a church in Michi-

gan, [it needs] to last," Gilstrap said.

After living and serving in Michigan for more than a decade, he recognizes it is different from any other state. It is a labor-union state, is a recreational state, has harsh winters and is ethnically diverse.

"The way we need resourcing is going to be different from [other states]," Gilstrap said. "We need to find our own way, and then ask others for help."

Some of those "others" will be Alabama Baptists. The BSCM has a partnership with the Alabama Baptist State Convention that runs through 2012.

However, Gilstrap hopes to encourage relationships between the two state conventions that look at "end-vision, not end-date."

"We need long-term, committed partners," he said, noting that 21 of Michigan's 83 counties don't have a Southern Baptist witness and there are new church plants in need of nurturing and existing churches and leaders in need of strengthening.

For more information on partnership missions opportunities, see page 9.



Photo by Neisha Fuson

**FELLOWSHIP** — BSCM Executive Director Bobby Gilstrap (center) gets to know some pastors of Durbin Baptist Association churches at a men's breakfast in Pontiac, Mich.



## Parents responsible for teens' spiritual growth, Bible says

By John Evans  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Leaving your teenager's spiritual growth solely to your church's youth program is dangerous, says Scott Heath — and he's a youth minister.

"The mentality for a number of years was 'Drop your kids off [at the youth program] and we'll make them what they need to be,'" said Heath, minister of students at Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills. "That doesn't work for a lot of reasons."

He said youth ministers don't have the time, training and experience to shoulder the full load of helping teens grow spiritually.

But Heath and others who minister to teenagers say there's an even bigger reason. "At its very root, it doesn't work because it's not biblical," said Bob Bunn, who has min-

tion to their own spiritual lives.

"If parents want their children to grow spiritually, they have to make sure they are nurturing their own spiritual lives ... so they can escape the trap of hypocrisy, because kids will turn you off in a minute if they think you're a hypocrite, not practicing what you preach," he said.

Heath recommends parents have regular devotions and prayer with their teens and look for chances in daily life to talk about the Lord. Bunn also encourages parents to watch for casual moments when spiritual topics can come up.

"My son and I have had some great conversations in the car just during those casual moments," he said. "I wasn't lecturing him spiritually. ... We were just talking about life and stuff. God can use those times, and if a parent is wise and observant, a parent can pick up

those moments, run with them and plant some seeds that can grow."

Kyle Wiltshire, an associate in the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' office of collegiate and student ministries, said parents also should make sure their teenagers know how important they

*"The fact that it's messy doesn't mean it's not worth fighting for."*

Bob Bunn  
Living With Teenagers

are to them.

"Your child has to know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that they are more important to you than your work, your hobbies or your activities," he said. "The only two things that come before them are the Lord and your spouse. This doesn't mean that they rule the roost. It means that they get your best and not your leftovers."

Bunn and Heath said another key aspect is for parents to partner with the youth ministries at their churches to ensure they are working together to move teens closer to the Lord.

### Familiarize yourself

"I think what [parents] can do is make themselves aware of what their kids are learning, familiarize themselves with it and engage their child in discussion," said Heath, who also suggested parents find places to serve in the youth ministry. But even with all the best methods and most careful attention, parenting can still be messy, said Bunn, who has learned that lesson himself.

"You have to stick with it," he said. "There are times you can celebrate little victories, and there are times you're going to cry. You can be the greatest Christian influence you can be as a parent, and you're still going to have distressing times and painful times. That's just how it goes in life sometimes. The fact that it's messy doesn't mean it's not worth fighting for."

Bunn said research has shown that parents can have a significant amount of influence in shaping their teenager's values. "Parents have the opportunity to do that if they embrace that role, their God-given responsibility to do that," he said.

For parents who want to take an active role in helping their teenagers grow closer to Christ, Bunn said they must pay atten-



To Alabama Baptists:

*"We certainly do appreciate the partnership. All the things you've helped us with, it just wouldn't be possible without your teams that come to help. They've worked tirelessly. Thank you so much."*

Pastor Roger Green of Lake St. Helen Baptist Church

## 'Tell the good news'

### Missions opportunities still open to Ala. Baptists

Alabama Baptists are Great Commission Christians and want to tell the good news of Jesus Christ in Alabama, in Michigan and around the world," said Reggie Quimby, director of the office of global missions for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

And even though Alabama Baptists' partnership with Michigan Baptists is nearing its end, there are still opportunities for them to help their fellow believers reach Michigan for Christ.

Escambia Baptist Association is taking a small team of pastors to Michigan's Central Baptist Association March 28-31. It is a "discovery trip" to find opportunities for missions teams to go to Michigan in June and July.

### Making connections

"We are hoping to make connections with Michigan folks and see where it goes from there," said Pat Andrews, director of missions (DOM) for Escambia Association.

For more information, call 251-

296-4640 or e-mail Andrews at brotherpat@bellsouth.net.

This summer, three Hispanic Baptist churches in Alabama will begin a partnership with Hispanic Baptists in Michigan. Primera Hispana Baptist Church, Albertville; Primera Iglesia Bautista, Enterprise; and Iglesia Cristiana Agape, Hoover, will send teams to Lansing, Mich., June 30-July 3 and July 28-31 to work with Vacation Bible schools and do street evangelism, prayer walking and construction projects. The Hispanic Baptist Association in Alabama and the three churches are sponsoring the trips. Volunteers are still needed.

For more information, call 205-410-7273 or e-mail Pastor Pablo Moscoso of Agape at phmv29@hotmail.com.

On Sept. 18-23, Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association will sponsor a construction missions trip to the association it partners with in Michigan, Central Association. Plans are to take about 20 people, but more volunteers are still needed to help remodel and improve a church building.

For more information, call 256-383-7021 or e-mail DOM Eddy Garner at eddy.garner@gmail.com before Aug. 1.

For a complete list of missions opportunities, visit [www.alsbom.org](http://www.alsbom.org) and search for "Michigan." (TAB)



Photo courtesy of Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association

**CONSTRUCTION** — Volunteers from Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association have worked on construction projects for churches and communities near Lansing, Mich., since the partnership began.

# Families on Mission ministry continues in Shelby Association; volunteers needed

By Lindsey Robinson  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Although the North American Mission Board (NAMB) discontinued its Families on Mission (FOM) ministry in November, Shelby Baptist Association has decided to keep the ministry alive.

The association will host FOM, a five-day missions project, July 23-27. Initial registration is due by April 30.

This will be the third year for Shelby Association to host FOM. In 2009 and 2010, families from a number of states and other parts of Alabama traveled to Shelby County to evangelize on street corners, pass out Bibles in emergency rooms, repair school buildings and housing facilities and donate their time to local churches, including ministries for Hispanic populations.

After NAMB discontinued the ministry, Debbie Snyder, the association's ministries development director, contacted those who had registered to work in Shelby Asso-

ciation or one of the other six national FOM sites about continuing their participation.

"We just decided we had a good momentum going with this," Snyder said.

"We never said, 'Well, gee, we're just not going to do it.'"

divided by urban and rural sensibilities with a widening gap between the very rich and very poor. The county's population is growing and increasingly multicultural. Within just 20 years, the number of languages represented in local schools has climbed from three to 60, Snyder said.

But the growth in local churches doesn't mimic Shelby County's cultural and industrial boom. A large portion of the population never attends church, she said. With FOM, Snyder hopes that will change.

"It's such a good way to be the hands and feet and face of Christ to people," she said.

Hugh Richardson Jr., director of missions for Shelby Association, has noticed the impact the ministry has made on the community.

In the past two years, FOM has donated an estimated \$40,000 in renovation, labor and gifts to Shelby County, Richardson said. And he expects this year's FOM to be just as beneficial.

"We never lack for projects. There's always something to do," Richardson pointed out.

For more information, visit [www.shelbybaptist.org](http://www.shelbybaptist.org) and click on the FOM logo or contact Snyder at 205-470-7977 or [debbie@shelbybaptist.org](mailto:debbie@shelbybaptist.org).

other relatives as long as all family members are of kindergarten age or older.

"It's a great way for families to do missions, but it's also a great way to meet needs in the community," Snyder said.

Shelby County is what she calls a "study in contrasts" — a county

*"It's a great way for families to do missions, but it's also a great way to meet needs in the community."*

Debbie Snyder  
Shelby Baptist Association

## LIVING HISTORY DAYS

at the Foxfire Museum & Heritage Center

Pioneer Appalachia brought to life. Woodworking, music, smithing, fireplace cooking, games, food, more-fun for all!

**Fri-Sat, April 15-16**  
**Mountain City, GA**  
**info: 706-746-5828 or**  
**[www.foxfire.org](http://www.foxfire.org)**





# DAY OUT WITH THOMAS

LEADER OF THE TRACK TOUR 2011



**All Aboard For:**  
25 minute ride with a full size Thomas the Tank Engine™  
Meeting Sir Topham Hatt

**Storytelling, Live Music, Build with Mega Bloks® and Much More!**

**Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum**  
1919 9th Street • Calera, AL • [www.hodrrm.org](http://www.hodrrm.org)  
**April 1-3 and April 9-10**



**For tickets and information, visit**  
[www.ticketweb.com/dowt](http://www.ticketweb.com/dowt) or call 866.468.7630

One Day With Thomas™ Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends™  
 Based on The Railway Series by The Rev. W. Awdry.  
 © 2011 Calera Railroad Center, Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends, Thomas & Friends, The Railway Series and the characters of Calera Railroad Center, Thomas & Friends, and George King, Ltd. All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks of the Calera Railroad Center © 2011. MCA, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

## More Than Just A Play

More than 250 actors and live animals recreate the Passion of Christ in one of the most epic performances you'll experience. The New Great Passion Play is also home to exciting on-site attractions, including the unique Living Bible Tour and the family-friendly Christian Comedy Dinner Theater, right in Eureka Springs, just 48 miles south of Branson.

800-882-7529  
[greatpassionplay.com](http://greatpassionplay.com)

44<sup>TH</sup> YEAR



# THE NEW GREAT PASSION PLAY

MORE THAN JUST A PLAY™



Interactive Living Bible Tour



Christ of the Ozarks



New Great Passion Play

## Want to know God?

By Pastor Stan Lewis  
First Baptist Church, Birmingham

Small children's honesty is one quality that makes them so endearing to us. Whatever is in their heart, they say.

But through the process of socialization, we slowly teach them not to be quite so honest when they speak about other people or certain situations.

And slowly over time, they lose their innocence and honesty, and eventually they are less appealing to everyone else because the child who has grown up is less trustworthy.

Perhaps this is what is so appealing about Jesus — His honesty. Finally we see a person who was without any deceit or cunning.

He had no hidden agendas and never left anyone with any doubt about what was in His heart.

In the Gospels when we see Jesus in social situations, He does not withhold painful truth. With religious hypocrites, He called them what they were.

Even with His closest disciples, He openly rebuked them for their political scheming or when they tried to hinder His work.

In every case in which we see Jesus speak and interact with people, He is absolutely honest and that is why we love Him.

So when Jesus says, "Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," we want to trust Him.

He is believable beyond doubt when He says, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except by me," all because He was a man of unparalleled truth.

And because we see no deceit in Jesus when He tells us, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," we know we can trust Him and turn our lives over to Him.

Today won't you follow the Man who never lied to anyone? He claimed to be the Messiah who came to deliver us from our sins, and since He never lied once, we can believe that He is the One who will deliver us if we will just believe in Him.

Call upon Him today and let Him speak truth into your life.

# Alabamian serving in Middle East asks for prayer

By Ava Thomas  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

In the country where Lucy Hamilton works, the predominant religious view on what the end times look like is pretty different from the way it looks in the Bible.

But with North Africa and the Middle East in their current state of turmoil, some people she knows are starting to take another look — and ask some questions.

"The other day, I had a conversation with someone about the end times," said Hamilton, an Alabamian serving as a Southern Baptist representative among the peoples of North Africa and the Middle East. "He was wondering if possibly everything that is happening here was a sign that the end was near. In Islam, their idea of what this will look like is very different from what the

Bible describes. I was able to share with him a little about Christ's return and His ability to rule and be glorified by all the world."

It's not the first time the unrest has opened a door for her to talk about Christ, and it likely won't be the last.

"He's definitely at work," Hamilton said. "With everyone searching for change and more freedom in their lives, we've found many opportunities to speak about the Truth."

The protests against the governments — while staged for valid needs at times — are really souls crying out over a deeper unmet need, she said.

"It is clear they are seeking for some purpose and hope in their lives. We are praying He will use these times to show Himself clearly



Observe  
**Day of Prayer**  
for the Middle East  
March 27

Graphic by Lauren Chow

in the midst of people's struggles and open the way for His Kingdom to come in this country," she said. "I think most of the people here think that God is on their side, whether they are pro-government or with the current opposition. They are confident that He will help them and will make things right. However, their concept of God keeps them from seeing the bigger picture of what He might be doing and from seeing what He would personally teach them."

Hamilton asks that believers in Alabama pray for people to experience conviction and realization of sin, as well as God's wrath against sin, so that they can see their need for the Savior.

"Please pray also that this time of unrest in this area of the world will open the doors for His Kingdom to enter into a place that has been so dark for so long," she said.

She also asked for prayer for the handful of believers in her country, that they would be strengthened and used by the Father to spread hope among a people desperately searching for it.

"Please ask for boldness and wisdom for those working here to make the most of opportunities He has given during this time," Hamilton said. She noted specifically three of her friends that she's gotten to share Truth with since the unrest began.

"So much stands in their way but He opens blind eyes," she said.

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, is encouraging Alabama Baptists to set aside March 27 as a Day of Prayer for the Middle East.

### 'Overall impact'

"While the Middle East has always been a hot spot, we have never seen this type of overall impact and unrest," he said.

"Pray for those areas and the people in general and particularly for Christians as they try to be salt and light in a very extreme, difficult time."

For more information, visit [meppray.net](http://meppray.net).

EDITOR'S NOTE — Name changed for security reasons.

An Evening With The  
**REGGIE SADDLER FAMILY**  
and  
**DOVE BROTHERS**



Reggie Saddler Family




Dove Brothers

April 2 at 7 p.m.

Jefferson State Community College  
Newly Opened Recital Hall  
1850 Lay Dam Road, Clanton, Alabama

For ticket information, contact  
Ken Moates at 205-755-0784.

Visit  
**Exciting!**  
\$2.00  
ADULT ADMISSION  
WITH THIS AD



An unforgettable adventure  
for the whole family!

- Battleship USS ALABAMA and Submarine USS DRUM • 20+ rare historic aircraft
- Exciting Flight Simulator ride • America's most unique military attraction

**USS ALABAMA**  
BATTLESHIP MEMORIAL PARK  
BATTLESHIP PARKWAY, MOBILE BAY, MOBILE, AL  
OPEN DAILY 8:00 A.M. (EXCEPT CHRISTMAS) • 1-800-GANGWAY  
[www.ussalabama.com](http://www.ussalabama.com)

This Easter  
Treat Your  
Front Yard  
To A New  
Look...



He Is Risen!  
And It Is Finished...

Join The 2011  
Easter Cross Witness  
Unify + Celebrate + Testify

To Order Crosses Go To  
[EasterCross.org](http://EasterCross.org)  
214-900-5872

THE EASTER CROSS WITNESS  
He Is Risen!  
Better Together

# 'Exciting, simple, cost-effective'

## Southern Baptists use Skype, other videoconference services to connect

By Gary Hardin  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Janine Winkler loves reading books to her 2-year-old grandson, Judah, but instead of sitting on her lap at her home in Michigan, he's usually half a world away in Nigeria, where his father works for Wycliffe Bible Translators.

What connects them is Skype, the free online telephone and video service, which has made expensive phone calls and lengthy periods of no contact a distant memory for many missionaries abroad and their families back home.

"I've told people that I think God waited to send them overseas until the technology got to where it was," said Winkler, who never had a camera on her computer or used Skype before her son and his family left the country. "I couldn't imagine just waiting to get letters from them."

More and more Southern Baptists are making use of Skype and other videoconference and call services, too.

The Sunday after Independence Day in 2009, Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, used Skype to talk to a church member serving with the military in Afghanistan.

"He told us about his typical day in Afghanistan, talked about freedom and thanked us for supporting his family in his absence," Communications Director Brian Harris said. "Our people talked about this video experience for weeks."

But that wasn't their first experience with Skype.

"To promote the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in 2008, we spoke through live video with one of our former students serving as a



sxc.hu, graphic by Lauren Chow

[Baptist representative] in a high-security country," Harris said. "We played a short Lottie Moon video and when it ended, on the screen was our own [representative], live. People gasped and cheered. You could hear people throughout our congregation crying tears of happiness."

Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover, also has used Skype for live video talks with Baptist representatives around the world, but it uses Polycom videoconference systems on a weekly basis for distance-learning classes offered

by Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

Unity Baptist Church, Ashland, Ky., leaders keep one of its MasterLife class members who attends college out of town involved with Skype.

### Part of the group

"We wanted him to be part of our group (which meets weekly)," said Senior Pastor Floyd Paris, who leads the class. "Other members of the group see and talk with him, and he sees and talks with us."

The University of Mobile (UMobile) wants its students to stay in contact with their families, so all of its dorms have a computer equipped with Skype.

"Students use their own Skype accounts, log in on the dorm computer and have real-time, face-to-face conversations with their families back home," said Kathy Dean, media relations director for UMobile.

Skype, along with other tools, has also found its way into the classroom at UMobile, as well Alabama Baptists' two other schools.

At UMobile and Judson College in Marion, Skype has allowed professors from other college campuses to give lectures to students. Judson's departments of education, social work and arts have even used it to administer tests, and one education faculty member teaches her classes via Skype so she can be home with her newborn.

David Smolin, a law professor at Samford University in Birmingham, is also teaching a course that way, but the students

are in a classroom in Virginia.

Samford business professors Betsy Holloway and Jeremy Thornton have used AIM Chat and Skype to speak with students at other colleges abroad. Samford business students have used these videoconference services to make presentations to business leaders in other cities.

The colleges and other Alabama Baptist entities also are utilizing Skype as a means of streamlining the hiring process.

"In the past, when there was a faculty or staff search conducted by the academic dean's office, I would use the telephone for interviews with prospects who lived out of state. Now I use Skype," said Sara Kiser, Judson's vice president and academic dean.

Buster Taylor, executive director of Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega, said he uses Skype to conduct all his initial interviews with potential staff. Unlike a phone interview, "you can see the person and his or her reactions to questions," Taylor noted.

Shocco Springs recently used another conference system, GoTo-Meeting, to meet with trustees.

### Saving money

"We were connected through computers and audio," Taylor said. "I presented the budget figures, and the trustees could see them on their computer screens. The online meeting saved money on travel expenses."

The International Mission Board (IMB) is doing the same thing.

"Our trustees use videoconferencing in the committee work they

do. This work is done virtually and eliminates travel to Richmond (Va., where the IMB has its headquarters)," explained Bill Bangham, director of media production for the IMB.

The directors of the IMB's five communications centers around the world also have found Skype to be a timesaver. They use Skype for conference calls twice a week.

"The technology eliminates time spent at a keyboard writing e-mails," Bangham noted.

In Southern Baptist disaster relief efforts, Skype has saved the day.

"In American Samoa (after the September 2009 earthquake and tsunami), we had trouble using our cell phones. We could get an Internet connection, so we used Skype's phone service," said Bruce Poss, disaster relief coordinator for the North American Mission Board (NAMB).

"In Haiti (after the January 2010 earthquake), we had the same experience."

The American Red Cross and NAMB have connected several times through Skype videoconferencing to see what each entity is doing during disasters. "Instead of having to travel to them, we could see what they were doing by looking on a computer screen," Poss said.

According to Poss, NAMB also uses WebEx web conferencing to connect the 35 state disaster relief coordinators a couple of times each year.

The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) has used Skype to connect with its churches.

### Interactive experience

When Providence Baptist Church, Daleville, wanted an exciting way to kick off its fall children's missions programs, the SBOM set up a Skype conversation with Scotty Goldman, an associate in the office of global missions.

"He told the children about missions partnership work being done by Alabama Baptists, specifically the partnerships in Ukraine and Guatemala, then answered questions from the children," said Doug Rogers, coordinator of communications services.

Rogers pointed out that video technology has opened the door for churches to have live access to previously unavailable people: missionaries in the field, members on missions trips and experts in a training session in another city or state.

"With a computer, a free Skype account, a high-speed Internet connection and a webcam, a church can do many exciting, but simple and cost-effective, things," he said. (RNS contributed)

## Skype: 'Next best thing to being there in person'

Mike and Pat Mason, of Huntsville, used Skype on Christmas Day to talk to and watch their children and grandchildren in Florida open gifts.

"It worked great and was the next best thing to being there in person," Pat Mason said.

But what is Skype, how does it work, what equipment is needed and how much does it cost?

Founded in 2003, Skype is a service that uses the Internet to make audio and video calls. Users also can use the chat option and send instant messages. The service boasts more than 340 million registered users worldwide.

Skype uses a novel technology, VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol), that changes the way

most people think about long-distance calls.

To make audio calls, personal computer users need a free Skype subscription and a computer microphone or headset. The addition of a computer camera allows the user to make video calls.

Family and friends can even be called from a TV. All that is needed is a Skype-equipped TV, a high-speed Internet connection and a TV webcam.

Calls between computers are free. The no-fee feature also applies to one-to-one video calls. Skype calls can be made from cell phones for pennies per minute. For a small monthly fee, a group video calling feature can be added. (TAB)

# Sharon Heights broadcasts Sunday, Wednesday services on church's website

By Sondra Washington  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Websites, Facebook and Twitter have become mainstays for many Alabama Baptist churches trying to keep their members and guests informed. But sermon notes, blogs and tweets about church programs can only do so much for those who can't attend regular worship services.

That's why leaders of Sharon Heights Baptist Church, Brookside, decided to expand their online ministries by offering live broadcasts of Sunday and Wednesday services on the church's website, [www.sharonheights.org](http://www.sharonheights.org).

Since launching last year, the outreach, which originally was created for the North Jefferson Baptist Association congregation's large number of firefighters and medical professionals working on Sundays, has regular viewers across the country and beyond.

Each week, between 40 and 50 computers are logged into the church's services with repeat visitors from Wyoming, Texas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Florida and Alabama. The church even had a viewer from the United Kingdom once.

"It's a great ministry tool," Pastor Jason Dunlap said. "It's just another area of ministry that we thought was a necessity. ... Lots of people call it (the Internet) an evil tool but not if you use it right. Anything can be evil or used to glorify God."

He said the staff receives comments every week from church members who are pleased with the online services.

Eric Morrison, church video director, points out that they are great for reaching the homebound or people who are at home sick. And he makes sure that they don't miss a thing.

## Seeing everything

"We [video the services] from beginning to end," Morrison said. "So everybody gets to see everything. That way if there is a decision made, they get to see it."

Snow and frozen roads threatened to make everyone miss services Dec. 26. Worship services were can-



Photo courtesy of Sharon Heights Baptist Church

**AND WE'RE LIVE** — Eric Morrison, church video director, monitors and directs the cameras during the broadcast of a recent worship service at Sharon Heights Baptist Church.

celed but Dunlap, who lives across the street from the church, and Morrison taped a worship service with only one other member in the building. Usually a seven-man team handles this job. More than 150 computers were tuned in, allowing a large number of the 400–500 churchgoers typically present on Sundays to join in worship online.

James Bensko, a firefighter for two firehouses, can only go to church one out of three Sundays, so he is very thankful for the online services. "Being able to see it online is the next best thing to being there," he said. "You get to hear the sermon, hear the expression, see the people and hear the songs that the choir sings. It puts you there without actually being there. ... Even though we are not able to fellowship there, you get the feeling of being able to fellowship."

Bensko said his family also has "attended" online services.

"My wife and family were home sick once, and my wife was able to log onto the Internet and watch with two out of three of the kids," he said. "It's a huge benefit for me, but it's a benefit to single mothers or parents who have to stay at home on Sundays. ... If you are out of town, you can watch the service on Sunday morning and still be on vacation."

The British person who viewed a service said he found the church

through an online chat, according to Morrison.

"He said he didn't go to church because there was a lot of bickering amongst the members, but finding us was so great," Morrison said. "He said that [Dunlap] was the first pastor he actually met where it (the sermon) made sense and he really enjoyed watching the service. The people in the church didn't argue."

## Responding to needs

But people aren't just watching the services. In some cases, they are responding to needs they learn about. Recently an online donor — who is not a member of Sharon Heights Baptist — gave the church \$5,000 for its elevator fund-raiser.

Dunlap encourages other church leaders who may be looking into offering live online services to take it slow and don't go cheap.

"It takes time for people to catch on to what you are doing," he said. "Don't expect it to be 1,000 viewers on there (from the beginning). ... If you are going to do something for Jesus, do it great. Why be good when you can be great? But if it's going to be great, it's going to cost."

Sharon Heights' online services, which are provided through an Atlanta-based company, cost about \$800 per month. But Morrison said some individuals in the church have gone above and beyond their regular tithe to make sure the ministry continues.

"It's been exciting and an incredible ride for all of us," he said. "We all are trying to do the best that we can. ... We know that there are people out there depending on us, and these people are coming back. It's a blessing to see them coming back to see us and wanting to be fed by what we are doing. ... It's powerful to know that technology allows us to do what we are doing now. We used to have to pay thousands of dollars for airtime on TV and radio, and now you can use the power of the Internet to reach double the amount of folks."



BP photo

**SOCIAL MEDIA MINISTRY** — Pastor Andy Childs of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Toccoa, Ga., speaks to others online from his home Dec. 26, when the church canceled its activities because of inclement weather.

## Storm can't stop church from worshiping online

Like every Southerner, Andy Childs was thrilled with the Christmas Day snow. Like every pastor, however, he kept an eye on road conditions and the possibility of canceling services the next day at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Toccoa, Ga.

"Most of the day, we watched weather reports, deciding to take a wait-and-see approach," Childs said. Around 8 p.m., he phoned worship/media leader Caleb Jones about whether to cancel the church's Dec. 26 activities. Jones had just gone by Ebenezer Baptist and reported that the parking lot had ice in it.

An hour and a half later, Childs and Jones had a plan to go ahead with worship — though not at Ebenezer.

Using the social media site Ustream, Childs was able to broadcast from his home while church members logged in online for the 10:30 a.m. service. Jones created a link to Ustream from Ebenezer's website to simplify the process. "He's the tech guy; I'm just the dreamer," Childs, 39, said. "I wanted it to be from our home page and made simple to use."

Childs' idea came from using Skype, a free online software application that allows users to make video phone calls. Childs and his wife had used Skype to call her family in Arizona for Christmas. In planning an alternative to meeting at the church building, Childs looked at taping a message versus a live broadcast. Ustream provided the option for the webcast, while 40–50 local churches ulti-

mately canceled their services.

Church members were notified of the broadcast through the church's website, Facebook page and e-mails. After a 30-second commercial (required for the free Ustream account), Childs appeared on viewers' screens with his family's Christmas tree in the background.

After a brief welcome, the pastor read through Luke 2 in completing a series, "The Gift of Hope."

"I thought about having my wife sing Christmas carols," he said. "But she had the flu."

By Childs and Jones' estimate, more than 280 viewers logged on to participate in Ebenezer's service, including church members visiting family in California and North Carolina.

What began as a quick fix has opened up ministry ideas, Childs said.

"It's created a lot of buzz. When we broke down the facts among viewers, we found a lot of senior adults had watched. They were excited about being able to be with the church and worship together even if we couldn't be at the same building," Childs noted.

"This has inspired more conversations about how to use technology for ministry," added Childs, whose church also has a podcast and regularly uploads missions trip updates to the video-sharing website YouTube. "We were forced to go on our maiden voyage [with the snow and ice], but it's steered us into being more intentional on how to use social media to spread the gospel." (BP)

*"They were excited about being able to be with the church and worship together."*

Pastor Andy Childs  
Ebenezer Baptist Church  
Toccoa, Ga.



Photo courtesy of Sharon Heights Baptist Church

**TEAM EFFORT** — Chuck Glover manages the PowerPoint presentation for Pastor Jason Dunlap's sermon during a recent service.



Photo by Charlie Daniels

**SAYING THANK YOU** — In Kenya, colorfully dressed Samburu church members present IMB representative Tim Cearley (center) with a beaded hat as a way of saying thank you.



Photo by Scott Bradford

**A GIFT** — IMB representative Tim Cearley (far right) receives a robe from a tribal chief in the country of Ghana.

# What does following Jesus look like in Africa?

By John Evans  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Tim Cearley swerved his pickup truck to avoid hitting the 3-year-old boy who wandered into his path on a road in Mozambique. But the boy ran toward the Southern Baptist worker's swerve as he hit the brakes. A "thump" told Cearley he was too late.

"All I could think was, 'God, please have mercy,'" said his wife, Charlotte, who piled out of the truck with her husband and three children.

People around them were screaming. The child's father held him, eyes rolled back, in his arms. Then he made a noise. Tim put him and his father in the truck and started the 20-mile drive to the nearest hospital.

With no room for them, Charlotte and the children stood by the roadside crying. Serving the Lord in Africa, she said, required some adjustments.

Tim and Charlotte began their journey together when they met at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1978 and were married the next year.

## Alabama connection

Charlotte had deep roots in Alabama, where she spent her high school years in Andalusia and graduated from Samford University in Birmingham. Her father, Harrell Cushing, former Alabama Baptist State Convention president and director of the stewardship department (now the Cooperative Program and stewardship development office) for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, is currently interim pastor of Evergreen Baptist Church.

Tim, a North Carolina native, graduated from North Carolina State University in Raleigh before going on to seminary.

The couple were appointed as Southern Baptist representatives

with the Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board, IMB) in 1982. They chose to go to Zimbabwe, where Tim had previously served as a journeyman, to begin their careers as church planters.

Life in their new home with their 8-month-old son, Matt (their two daughters, Joy and Sarah, would later be born in the South African country) was a challenge, especially in the era before cell phones. When Tim left in the morning, Charlotte had no idea what happened to him until he returned.

"I remember the first time he was away overnight; I was scared and worried about him and about me," Charlotte said. "I thought, 'Lord, I signed on for this for life. Am I going to have 35 years of this? I can't do that.' I feel like God told me I would have to trust Him in that."

A 6-foot cobra enjoyed sunning itself next to the sandbox Tim built for the children, and Charlotte endured a jarring brush with a small house snake on a windowsill.

"I looked out the door and prayed God would send me a helicopter to escape Africa because I was so scared," she recalled.

But the couple endured, pressing ahead with the work of church planting. Tim found areas with no evangelical churches and helped empower local partners to start some. He estimates 100 churches in Zimbabwe and 30 in Mozambique (the next stop in Tim and Charlotte's journey) — small congregations meeting under trees or buildings with grass roofs — grew this way.

"We were careful not to breed

dependence on me or on foreign aid in that," he said. "They could start a church with very little money, mainly by witnessing to other people."

The couple were careful not to import an American style of Christianity but rather see how the biblical way of following Jesus looks in Africa. With this humility, they learned

quite a bit from African believers, including the value of relationships.

"As Americans, we can learn a lot about that, because we just hop from one thing to another and never appreciate the person we're with," Tim said.

Charlotte remembered when the family's dish cabinet fell off the wall, shattering everything inside. At church the next morning, the couple told the pastor what had happened.

"When church was over, he said, 'We're now going up to the Cearleys' house to pray,'" Charlotte recalled.

The pastor called the congregation into the kitchen and prayed that God would bless the family and remove any evil spirits that might be there.

"I would never have thought to pray for a neighbor when their dish cabinet falls off the wall, but I learned to do that," Charlotte said.

The next day, she learned something else from her fellow believers. "People living on less than \$50 a month showed up at our house with dishes. They brought them to replace our loss. I didn't cry about the dishes breaking, but I cried when they brought that stuff."

The couple witnessed the explosion of HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe,



IMB photo

**SERVING** — IMB representatives Tim and Charlotte Cearley are now in South Africa.

which Tim said caused the number of funerals in their area to skyrocket.

"If you went to church, nobody would be at church because they were down the road at a funeral," he said. "We would sit around the fire, talk about Scripture and help people grow in their faith at funerals (which last for days there)."

In 1995, Tim and Charlotte moved their family to Mozambique, a desperately poor Southeast African country struggling to recover from a 16-year civil war.

"When we went to Mozambique, we felt like we were dropping into a hole, because ... it was very underdeveloped," Charlotte said, adding that unexploded land mines littered the country.

She conducted True Love Waits programs for students who told her they had to sleep with their teachers to move to the next grade in school. She spoke about having a future and hope in God to people who sold their bodies for a necklace or pair of shoes.

"I was trying to describe true love to them, and I realized I was working with people who didn't know what real love is, who had never been loved by their parents, husband or wife," she said.

In 2009, the family moved to South Africa, when Tim became the IMB's affinity group strategy leader for sub-Saharan African peoples. In this new role, he directs strategies to bring the good news of Jesus to the 600 people groups south of the Sahara Desert who are unreached with the gospel.

"For the next few years, I'm asking people to consider where they are and if God would lead them to go further into the darkness," he said.

Tim and Charlotte encourage Southern Baptist churches to continue giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and the Cooperative Pro-

gram and consider partnering with them directly to reach more areas and people groups.

"We don't have enough IMB [representatives] to take it on and reach these (people groups), so we want to join with churches to do that," Tim said.

## Overwhelming needs

The couple thank Southern Baptists for the support they provide, while emphasizing that the needs in Africa, both spiritual and physical, are still overwhelming.

One of Tim's most gripping memories is of a mud-walled, grass-roofed hut in a South African town. Inside the hut were a 9-year-old girl and her two siblings, one just a baby and the other 5 years old. Their parents, grandmother and two other siblings had perished from HIV/AIDS and were buried in the front yard. The children slept on the bare mud floor and hid their clothes so they wouldn't be stolen while they were at school. A woman who acts as a caregiver to them and about 100 other homes can only stop by once a week.

Yet amid the dire situation in their region, Tim and Charlotte are given hope for the future by the way the gospel is transforming lives.

"People dying of AIDS are coming to Christ," Tim said. "Christ is making a difference. Churches are providing school fees so [children] can go to school and monitors to make sure they're studying."

Even the story of the boy he accidentally hit on the road in Mozambique did not end with tears.

"To make a long story short, the child recovered," Charlotte recalled. "In the months that followed, Tim started meeting with that family. That boy would meet Tim, hold his hand and walk down the hill singing 'Jesus Loves Me.'"

To contact Tim and Charlotte, e-mail [africapetitions@gmail.com](mailto:africapetitions@gmail.com). ☛

# 'Disciple-making movement'

## Hunter Street Baptist embraces London borough, partners with IMB to reach lost world

By Ava Thomas  
International Mission Board

Dave's been inflicting pain on people almost all day long — every day — for 12 years. But he likes them or else he wouldn't do it.

Tattoo artists come a dime a dozen on Camden High Street in central London, and so do the crowds of punk youth snaking through street booths displaying Converse shoes, tights and body jewelry.

Plenty of business to be had.

So Dave's not afraid to say "no" to using his handmade machines to ink your arm with My Little Pony, not because the pony is stupid but because you don't like the way he approaches his art. Without blinking, he'll turn you around and send you to the shop next door. Not because he's insecure or hurt by your criticism, mind you.

"I'm not trying to be all noble. I am providing a service, like the guy fixing your sink or delivering your pizza," he said. "It's not a life-or-death matter. You don't have to like me."

But he has to like you.

"Potentially I could be spending 15–20 hours in a person's company, smelling their sweat, their breath, having their blood on my hands — through gloves — but still. It's very intimate, very personal. If I don't like you, I don't want your money and I don't want to spend 15 hours with you, because we'll probably kill each other."

No pretense there.

Authenticity. That's what Camden's supposed to be about, and that's why Dave said his employer opened the street's first and longest-running tattoo studio in 1986.

But the area's seen some change since then, he said. "I don't think parents would've let their teenagers come here unaccompanied back then."

Back then, it was a "scunge pit," where punks used to stitch their own stuff and create their own look. Tattoo shops wouldn't sit within miles of each other out of artistic courtesy, he said. Now they're practically on top of each other and the area is drawing name-brand stores amid the grunge.

The neighborhood is "slightly going up, and I see it becoming more of a safe, packaged version of what we were. Same as tattooing, I guess," Dave said. As a whole, it's



Photo by Amanda Sicheloff

**TATTOO ARTIST** — Dave diligently creates his art on a customer's arm at his shop on Camden High Street in London, an area adopted by Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover, as a part of the International Mission Board's Adopt London project.

not as much about art as it used to be — it's more about business. A few doors down at a shop just three months old, Lee agreed. He'll ink pretty much whatever the customer asks for without much discussion, even though he likes it best when he can inject a little of his own creativity. It's a business though — not much room for personal opinion.

But he and Dave, they still have the same mantra.

"There's something about the permanence of being able to ink good art on someone's skin — it's like you're making a lasting impact on them," Lee said. "It's a way to further my art. I've always been creative with everything, and if I don't do that, I end

up a shell of a man, you know?"

He doesn't talk while he tats as Dave does, only while he's rolling and smoking a cig out back in between appointments.

His cigarette dangles out of his mouth as he talks about the pleasure he gets from the craft and the challenge of overcoming difficult pieces.

But purpose — where does he find that? "God, I have no idea."

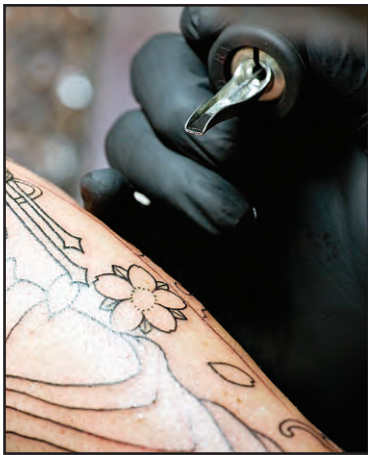


Photo by Amanda Sicheloff

Folks at Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover, are hoping to show him.

In 2007, the Birmingham Baptist Association church, which is led by Pastor Buddy Gray, adopted Camden, one of London's 32 boroughs, as part of the International Mission Board's Adopt London project. All the world's countries are represented in the city, and Adopt London aims to partner a church like Hunter Street Baptist with each borough and, in turn, reach the world.

"As evangelicals, we cannot afford to let this gathering of the world pass us by," said Matt Fontenot, partnership coordinator for the project. "We must be involved in bringing the gospel to London."

Spencer Knight, minister of ministries at Hunter Street, said the church sent its first team to serve in Camden in 2008 and has progressively sent more teams each year since.

"Right now, we are forming relationships, identifying needs and discovering barriers and bridges to a culturally appropriate gospel presentation," Knight said. "We're doing that so that we may be a part of a disciple-making movement of God in this area. Our desire is to meet and partner with local like-minded Christians to plant a church in the area."

### Using talents, gifts

Adopting churches become their own strategists for reaching their borough, Fontenot said. Training and support is given, but churches are given the green light to use their own creativity in reaching their boroughs.

"Once a church is trained, it is pretty much up to that church to define how they will use the talents and gifts of their congregation to reach London," he said. "This could be by joining groups in the borough based on hobbies and interests of the church's people down to engaging people on the streets of London."

The next two conferences for interested churches are May 1–6 and Sept. 18–23 in London. For more information on the project, visit [adoptlondon.com](http://adoptlondon.com).

## Auburn's Lakeview ministers in London

By Ava Thomas  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

From where it stood in a park in London, the team from Lakeview Baptist Church, Auburn, could see the whole world pass by.

People from Great Britain, yes.

"We're sowing seed in a post-Christian society, people who are 'over' the church," said Cliff Knight, associate pastor of family ministries at the Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association church.

But as team members struck up conversations in the park, they met people from all corners of the world and a multitude of different religious backgrounds.

"Our experience has been that because we are American, people will talk with us," Knight said.

"We engaged a lot of folks that way. It's a huge city, probably considered the capital of the world in some ways." The church has adopted a particular borough of London as part of the International Mission Board's (IMB) Adopt London project (see story, this page).

It has had a relationship with a Baptist church in the borough for several years and is working alongside it and the IMB to reach out to area residents with the gospel.

### 'Making a difference'

The Alabama Baptist congregation is "making a difference," said Matt Fontenot, partnership coordinator for the project. "They prayed along the streets of their borough last summer. Recently a Bible study was started along one of those very streets. Pray for the voices of the nations in London to begin echoing the whispers of the gospel."

Lakeview Baptist engages in missions work all over the world, but it chose London for one of its projects because it's relatively easy to get to and great for engaging the church's families and youth especially, Knight said.

"And the gospel is just as desperately needed there as it is in some of the hard places."

This summer, the church is planning to take its youth to serve among the people of its adopted borough.

Some youth who went on last year's trip already have seen success in sharing the gospel there and have kept in touch over Facebook with the people they met. The youth are looking forward to reconnecting with those folks when they get back to London, Knight said.

"What we see through this project is our young people catching a vision for where the Lord has commissioned us to go — to the nations," he said.

"They see they can make a difference in one life at a time, then affect a whole family and maybe a generation, and who knows what God may do there." ❧

**Adopt London**  
[www.adoptlondon.com](http://www.adoptlondon.com)  
CONFERENCE DATES:  
May 1–6 and Sept. 18–23  
in London  
*"If you reach London, you reach the world!"*  
Graphic by Lauren Chow



## SBC Representatives Around the World

When we first began to survey the Lomwe (people) near the coast, we had no idea how Islam was spreading so fast among this people group who are usually either ATR (African Traditional Religion) or Catholic.

We have now begun to put together a picture of what has been happening in this area for many years.

The Lomwe people have always been nonconfrontational and easily assimilated into other societies, but Lomwe chiefs and government officials are now complaining that Islamic Makuwa Moniga men are traveling into Lomwe villages to sleep with their women and “marrying” them when pregnancy results as required by Lomwe tribal culture.

They eventually divorce the women and demand 80 percent of their land in the settlement. Even though the Lomwe are [matrilineal], the Moniga fathers consider the children to be Muslim, according to their own religious laws; the children are even said to be no longer Lomwe but Moniga instead (some-

times called Makuwa Lomwe).

Please pray for us as we literally place ourselves “in the gap” between encroaching Islam and the Lomwe people we love and have served these many years.

Pray for two other missionary families who are engaging the Moniga people.

**Bob and Pam Brownfield**  
Pebane, Mozambique

Steve serves as boarding home administrator at Faith Academy. The campus overlooks the megacity of Manila, a metropolis of more than 17 million people.

The school’s enrollment is from pre-k through grade 12 with 560 students from more than 24 different nations. Its primary focus is to provide for the educational needs of missionary families serving in Asia.

One of the real privileges of our ministry is that we get to partner with families who are on the cutting edge of evangelism.

By caring for and providing their children with a quality education at Faith Academy, we are investing in God’s Kingdom work,

allowing parents and families the opportunity to penetrate the darkness around us.

We are the rope holders in much the same way that you are as you pray for our ministry here in the Philippines and give of your tithes/offerings.

Pray that the students would have an appreciation and understanding of their parents’ ministry and that parents would have wisdom in how to balance family and ministry needs.

Pray that they would have a personal relationship with Christ, putting Him first in their lives with a thankful attitude.

Pray for good cultural adjustments/transitions to their host culture as well as re-entry to their “home” culture and appreciation for their unique experiences.

Pray that God would continue to give Steve and Judy wisdom as they counsel and make decisions concerning the boarding program as it affects the lives of many.

Pray for our family as we begin to prepare for our upcoming one-year stateside assignment, starting this June, and all the logistics of housing, transportation, schooling and schedules.

Pray for all our kids’ adjustment back to living in the States and that it would be a positive experience and smooth transition for them all.

**Steve, Judy, Brandon,**  
**Brittney, Bailey, Beth Ann**  
**and Ben Anderson**  
Manila, Philippines



**The Lord will vindicate me; your love, Lord, endures forever — do not abandon the works of your hands.**

Psalm 138:8

## MARKET PLACE

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

### CHURCH POSITIONS

**PASTOR:** Antioch Baptist Church, a congregation of approximately 250–300, in Oxford, Ala., is prayerfully searching for God’s man to serve as full-time pastor. Forward resumés and recommendations no later than March 31 to: Antioch Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 3290, Oxford, AL 36203, or e-mail to: churchsec@antiochoxford.com.

**PASTOR:** Calvary Baptist Church is currently accepting resumés through April 30 for a full-time experienced Southern Baptist pastor. If possible, send DVD of sermon with resumé. Mail to: Calvary Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 740236, Tusculumbia, AL 35674.

**FULL-TIME MINISTER OF WORSHIP/FAMILY MINISTRIES:** Ridgecrest Baptist Church is currently accepting resumés for a full-time minister of worship/family ministries. Submit resumés to: Worship Search Team, 5260 Vaughn Road, Montgomery, AL 36116, or e-mail: michael@rbcmontgomery.com.

**PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER:** Carrolls Creek Baptist Church in Northport, Ala., is seeking part-time music minister. Send resumé to: broalan@charter.net, or mail to: Carrolls Creek Baptist Church, 14247 Hwy. 69 N., Northport, AL 35475.

**MINISTER OF YOUTH & RECREATION:** Traditional, conservative, grow-

ing Southern Baptist church in Memphis, Tenn., metropolitan area seeks minister of youth and recreation. Send resumé by April 15 to: Personnel, Covenant Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1165, Collierville, TN 38027-1165.

**YOUTH MINISTER:** Fairview Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a part-time youth minister. Please send resumés to: fairviewbc@knology.net, or 600 River Road, Valley, AL 36854.

**STUDENT MINISTER:** Grades 6th–12th, part-time. Send resumé to: Student Minister, Ridgecrest Baptist Church, 912 31st Street East, Tusculooosa, AL 35405.

**BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER TO STUDENTS:** Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, NW Florida, seeking bivocational minister for students grades 6–12. One willing to devote time, resources and energy to help youth grow in their personal relationships with the Lord. Send resumés to: PRBC Search Committee, 1015 Pleasant Ridge Road, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435, or e-mail: prbc1015@gmail.com.

**PRESCHOOL/CHILDREN EDUCATION MINISTER:** Sardis Springs Baptist Church, Athens, Ala., is accepting resumés for preschool/children education minister (part-time position). Send resumé to: Sardis Springs Baptist Church, 18310 AL Hwy 251, Athens, AL 35613, or e-mail: tkeenum@arilion.com for more information.

### OTHER POSITIONS

**PART-TIME PERSONAL ASSISTANT:** We are seeking an intelligent/dependable part-time personal assistant. Seekers must be willing to learn, hard-working, computer literate, shopping and errands. For more information, contact Thomas Robinson at michaelgilbert20001@gmail.com.

**FULL-TIME CAMP DIRECTOR:** Camp Whispering Pines, a 225-bed ministry of Mobile Baptist Association in Citronelle, Ala., accepting resumés for camp director. Seeking gifted administrator committed to evangelistic ministry, preferably with SBC seminary degree and minimum five years camp management experience. Visit [www.campwhisperingpines.com](http://www.campwhisperingpines.com) for job description, candidate requirements and additional information. E-mail resumés before June 15 to: rec@mobilebaptists.org.

### BUSINESS

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

### FURNISHINGS

**STEEPLES, ET CETERA:** New pews, refinishing of pews, stained glass win-



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

#### Remember to:

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

## ISRAEL TOURS

MANY GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

### Superb Biblical Guides

with a tremendous understanding of current and historical geography, culture, the Greek & Hebrew text and practical application of Scripture.

A “LIFE CHANGING” EXPERIENCE!

24 wonderful packages - year-round for the Evangelical Christian. Excellent value for small groups, large groups, and individuals.

Also, a large selection to Greece & Turkey Steps of Paul, Italy, Germany, Petra, Egypt Steps of Moses & Joseph.

[www.pilgrimtours.com](http://www.pilgrimtours.com)

Box 268, Main St., Morgantown PA, 19543 800-322-0788

“Christian Fellowship Tours Since 1987”

dows, baptistries and steeples. Single source for all church furnishings. More than 20 years experience serving churches exclusively. No job too small. Locally owned company. Please call Terry Barnes toll-free 1-888-980-6161. Visit our Web site at [www.steeplesetc.com](http://www.steeplesetc.com).

### CONSTRUCTION

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

### CONFERENCES/RETREATS

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

### TRAVEL/VACATION

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

**OCEANFRONT CONDO IN PANAMA CITY:** Christian-owned oceanfront condo in Panama City, Fla. Sleeps 4. Great vacation spot. Family games and videos

available. Ask for unit B2-308. Mention this ad and receive \$100 off the weekly rental. Call 1-800-874-8823.

**GULF SHORES VACATION HOME:** Spring special \$499/week. Summer special \$899/week. Including cleaning fees. Sleeps 12. Call 985-515-5133 or visit [www.gsfamilyretreat.com](http://www.gsfamilyretreat.com).

**AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS:** Gulf Shores and Orange Beach. Rent direct-Christian family owners. Lowest prices on the beach. Spring special: 4 nights efficiency unit (2 adults and kids) \$444 includes everything (1, 2, 3 bedroom units also available). Even lower prices for those in the ministry. 205-556-0368, 205-752-1231, [www.gulfshores.com](http://www.gulfshores.com).

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

### FOR SALE

**BALDWIN ELECTRIC ORGAN:** \$2,500 OBO. Can be seen at East Huntsville Baptist Church, 256-539-1861.

**PATRIOTIC SINGING FLAG FOR SALE:** Six-tier lighted patriotic singing flag (Elizabethtown, Ky.). Used for choir cantatas. Manufacturer’s construction/lighting instructions included. Photos available. Contact John Rice, [john@severnvalley.org](mailto:john@severnvalley.org) or 270-765-7822.

# Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

## India's Aier wins annual BWA human rights award

DIMAPUR, India — Wati Aier, principal of Oriental Theological Seminary (OTS) in Dimapur in the northeast Indian state of Nagaland, is the recipient of the 2011 Baptist World Alliance (BWA) Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award. Aier is being recognized for his work in helping to broker the signing of a peace accord between three nationalist groups in Nagaland in September 2010.

For decades, the three groups in Nagaland have been in conflict with each other and with the Indian government over issues of autonomy and sovereignty for Nagaland state and the Naga people. Between 1992 and 2009, more than 2,330 insurgency-related fatalities have been recorded in Nagaland. As a result of the longstanding disputes, exceptionally tight security has been imposed on the state by the Indian government, with multiple checkpoints scattered throughout the state. Aier, founder of OTS in 1991, was convener of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR), which comprised several organizations, including Baptist groups. He spent almost 20 years trying to bring the warring groups to the negotiating table. The FNR, formed in 2008, convened more than 60 meetings of the various Naga factions in the peace process.

"Over the years, Wati has worked tirelessly, often against overwhelming odds, to keep a process alive that would allow deeply conflicted Naga parties to negotiate their bitter differences sufficient to extinguish the flames of violence," said Ken Sehested, co-pastor of the Circle of Mercy Congregation in Asheville, N.C., and who has known Aier since 1993. Aier, a former vice president of the Asia Pacific Baptist Federation, one of six regional fellowships of the BWA, helped to found a liberal arts junior college program for Karen refugees from Myanmar in the Mae La refugee camp in Thailand. He also helped to launch the Karen Bible School.

He previously served as a member of the BWA Commission on Freedom and Justice and the Academic and Theological Education Workgroup. He now serves on the BWA Commission on Peace and on the BWA Congress Committee. The Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award is given out each year during the BWA Annual Gathering, which will be held this year in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from July 4-9.

## PBA president resigns, pleads guilty to federal charges

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Lu Hardin, president of Palm Beach Atlantic University, resigned March 4, less than two years after coming to the school.

Hardin pleaded guilty in Arkansas on March 7 to federal charges of wire fraud and money laundering, according to a news report in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* online. At Palm Beach Atlantic on March 4, he had cited "personal and family reasons" for his sudden resignation, according to the chairman of the Palm Beach Atlantic board of trustees.

The Arkansas newspaper said Hardin, president of the University of Central Arkansas prior to coming to Palm Beach Atlantic, said he had taken "full responsibility" for actions related to what was reported as a scheme deceiving the school's board of trustees into giving him nearly \$200,000 which he has since repaid.

Palm Beach Atlantic formerly was affiliated with the Florida Baptist Convention.



BP photo

**UNCONVENTIONAL USE** — Mark Chandler (far right) and his wife, Beverly (front), show off their ministry tool with (from left) their son Lucas, missionary Robert Fontenot, and their son Elijah.

# 'Inspiration from God'

## Alabama native uses old school bus as ministry tool

When most people think of a bus, they envision children loading up for a day of school, but Mark Chandler, a principal and a pastor in New Mexico, sees a bus as more than just a means of transportation.

In fact, Chandler's church — First Indian Baptist, Gallup, N.M. — has never used the bus parked in its lot to transport people. Rather its main purpose is to be more of an extra room that can be driven into communities, providing a place from which to minister.

The bus, once used to haul people after rafting, has seen its seats gutted and now includes a tile floor, flat screen TV, puppet stage, wall lighting and a generator.

Born in Kilpatrick, Ala., Chandler grew up in a farming community. He was ordained as a deacon at Kilpatrick Baptist Church in DeKalb Baptist Association at the age of 26 and graduated from Jacksonville State University in 1991. He and his wife, Beverly, thought of the bus ministry while they still lived in Alabama but later went to serve a church in Cartersville, Ga., and eventually made

their way to New Mexico to plant a church among the Navajo people.

Chandler told the *Baptist New Mexican* that he has no other explanation for the idea other than inspiration from God.

His dream would not develop into a reality until Dale and Katie Zunedell, family friends in Colorado, donated an older bus, once owned by a rafting company, to the Chandlers.

### A God thing

The Zunedells had been using the bus as a tool shed and had already removed the seats. Whether the bus would crank was a concern; it had been sitting in one spot for more than a year and a half. Dale Zunedell went to the ignition to give it a try and surprised them all when the old bus fired up immediately — something Mark Chandler attributes to God as well.

It took the Chandlers about a year to get the bus ready to be used, including help and donations from churches and individuals from Eastern states who were interested in seeing the project become a reality. All in all, the remodeling took between

\$1,500 and \$2,000 to complete.

Since completing the remodeling, the Chandlers have used the bus during several activities and events, such as a women's conference held on a reservation during the fall.

A one-room building was being used to house the women for the event — leaving the bus as an extra room to keep children. "The bus was able to be close enough to parents so that they were not worried about their children," Beverly Chandler said. Vacation Bible schools, revivals and missions trips are among the other events that have used the bus.

"My sons have even spent the night on the bus before," said Mark Chandler as he spoke of missions teams that have used it as shelter while working with the church.

"The first time we used [the bus] with kids, they did not know what to do or how to handle it," Beverly Chandler said. The side of the vehicle bears the word "immersed" — a name given to it by the Chandlers. The couple spoke of a Bible verse that served as the inspiration for the name and purpose of the bus: "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him" (John 7:38).

"[I]f we are immersed in the Holy Spirit, then it's naturally going to flow out of us as we use [the bus]," Beverly Chandler said.

"One of our future goals is to go out into communities and provide tutoring," she said, adding that offering practical things such as tutoring also opens a door to witness to the parents of the children with whom they work. Until the winter weather ends, though, the bus can be found sitting in the church parking lot, still bearing the painted blue waves from its rafting days that coincide with its name and ready to be driven into communities. (BP)



SERVICE | SELECTION | PRICING  
**WE'VE GOT IT ALL!**

CHURCH **BusCenter.com**

Just a few clicks  
and you'll find  
the right bus  
for your needs  
AND your budget!

- Special Financing Offers
- Exceptional Service Facilities
- Dedicated Warranty Personnel
- Full Inventory of Replacement Parts

**800-367-9463**  
A DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION SOUTH

**WE BUY**  
**GOLD**  
AND SILVER, COINS, CHAINS  
BROKEN JEWELRY  
& DIAMONDS

**WE'VE MOVED**

**ALABAMA WHOLESALE DIAMONDS**  
HIGHWAY 11 AT TIN VALLEY CIRCLE - TRUSSVILLE  
(ACROSS FROM THE PANTS STORE & 1 BLOCK FROM VELMA'S)

TUES-FRI 10:30am-6:00pm  
SATURDAY 10:30am-4:00pm

**205 661-1667**  
alabamawebuygold.com

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For March 27

## Explore the Bible By Cecil Taylor Dean, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

### LIGHT UP THE WORLD Philippians 2:12-30

#### Appeal (12-18)

Based on Christ's "mind," i.e., His attitude of humility, Paul called the Philippians to live a life that would honor God in time and eternity.

Whether Paul was present or absent, they had to "continue to work out ... [their] salvation." This does not suggest anyone must work for salvation. The historian Strabo referred to "the working out" of once famous Spanish silver mines. Using the very word Paul used here, he meant miners were getting out into use what was already securely in their possession. Paul's readers were not to work salvation into their lives but to work it out of their lives in daily saved behavior. "Fear and trembling" resulted from recognizing that it was God to whom they owed this responsibility.

"Working out your salvation" involves avoiding "complaining," i.e., discontented muttering, and "arguing." Arguing ("dialogismos") appears in the New Testament only in a negative sense for evil thoughts or untrusting anxiety. "Without complaining" forbids an outward act; "without ... arguing" forbids an inward attitude.

The previous two items kept the Philippians from their own highest development and greatest service to others. To reach their highest potential, believers must become (this verb suggests a gradual process) "blameless" in others' sight. Christians must take care not to open themselves to criticism. They must become "pure" in their own sight. Sadly many a professed Christian is pure publicly but vile privately. Christians must be "without fault" in God's sight.

To render their greatest service, believers must live a straight life in a godless culture. This world is "crooked," bent out of straight, i.e., its will always crosses God's will. It is also "depraved," bent out of shape, i.e., warped and twisted at heart. Believers must not isolate themselves but stand in the center of a world blacked out by sin and "shine like stars" so men can steer accurately by them.

This they do by "holding forth" or "holding up" as a torch the gospel that gives life. Picture the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor holding forth the Torch of Freedom. Shining also involves speaking, because life without a word is an uninterpreted parable. People may know a believer's life is different. They will never know why unless he or she tells them.

On Judgment Day, Paul wanted to present the Philippians to Christ as proof that he did not live and work for nothing. The Philippians' faith was both a sacrifice, i.e., an offering, and a service, i.e., priestly service in presenting the offering. On their sacrifice thus laid on the altar, Paul was ready to pour out his life as a drink offering, crowning the sacrifice. To him, it would be all joy. They, too, should rejoice — probably because it would win for him the martyr's crown.

#### Assistants (19-30)

Paul could not go to Philippi, so he intended to send Timothy to help the Philippians and bring back to him a good report. Paul sent Timothy because he cared for the Philippians as he did. Others looked out for themselves, but Paul knew Timothy's character well from his labor side by side with him in the common cause of the gospel.

The Philippians sent a gift to Paul by Epaphroditus. He stayed in Rome to help but fell ill and almost died. Knowing the Philippians worried about them both, Paul purposed to send Epaphroditus home with word of their well-being. In describing Epaphroditus, Paul chose each word carefully. In faith, Epaphroditus was a brother; in work, a cooperater; and in the conflict with Christ's enemies, a fellow soldier.

As the Philippians' "fully authorized messenger," he went to Rome to "minister to ... [Paul's] needs." Now he was homesick and heartsick with worry, because he knew word of his illness distressed his friends in Philippi. God's mercy to Epaphroditus in healing him was mercy also to Paul. Epaphroditus deserved a hero's welcome. In coming to Rome, he risked his life, not from Roman fever or the emperor Nero's wrath but to do for Paul what the Philippians could not do in person.

## Bible Studies for Life By M. Sydney Park Assistant Professor of Divinity, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

### STAY THE COURSE 1 Peter 4:1-2, 7-19

For many Christians in modern-day America, Christianity has very little to do with suffering. Rather the Christian faith is an escape from all forms of earthly suffering. God is the God of love who only seeks to provide comfort and alleviate all discomfort in the lives of His people. The modern-day Christian faith has no resemblance to Christ's sufferings; indeed some believe that Christ died so that we may continue to live our lives as the world lives with the added insurance of God's blessings.

#### Live in Light of the End (1-2, 7-11)

Peter's first letter is a challenge to this misunderstanding of the Christian faith. Because Christ suffered in the flesh, we also are commanded to equip ourselves with the same mind-set. But what does this mean? In 1 Peter 3:18, Peter explained that Christ suffered for the sake of making the unrighteous righteous; He died to atone for humanity's sins. Based on this, Peter exhorted believers to live a life separate from sin. Christ died for our sins so that we may live a life of holiness. This life of holiness is drastically opposed to that of the secular culture in that we no longer live to satisfy our desires but to do God's will. To be sure, the testimony of our faith lies in our refusal to participate in the secular culture, which only seeks to quench any and all forms of desire (self-glory, financial comfort/luxury, power, sexual gratification, etc.).

For Peter, it was not only the model of Christ's suffering that shaped the Christian life but the certainty of His Second Coming also served to remind believers to be faithful. In light of the reality that Christ will come again, Peter exhorted believers to live a life of discretion, discipline and prayer. And without doubt, both discretion and discipline reinforce prayer. Peter's reminder is critical. But furthermore we live in times when both discretion and discipline are seen as dated notions. Perhaps, as Peter suggested, these elements are tied together; if we pray more, then maybe we also would exercise more discretion and

discipline. The life lived in anticipation of Christ's work on the cross and His return does not neglect love for the body of Christ. We are encouraged to love one another genuinely. And love motivates us to show generous hospitality to one another. Further we are encouraged to use our gifts, not for self-glory but for God's glory.

#### Endure Suffering With Joy (12-16)

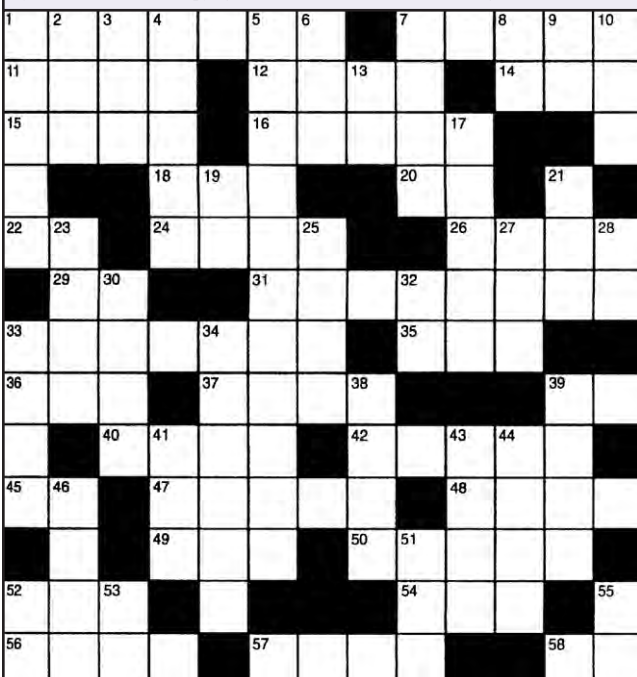
To counter any misunderstanding that the Christian faith signifies the absence of suffering, Peter counseled believers to expect suffering as the norm. We do not reject suffering as something foreign to faith but rejoice in it, because if we share in Christ's sufferings, then we also will be glad at His reappearance. Peter encouraged believers to rejoice when they suffer for the sake of Christ's name, since God's presence and His glory are upon them. Thus suffering as a Christian is not cause for shame but joy since God is glorified through it. And to be sure, Peter also reminded believers that this suffering is righteous and not the result of their immoral behavior; there is no credit to suffering for misdeeds (2 Pet. 2:20).

#### Prepare for God's Judgment (17-19)

Peter's exhortations for believers to embrace suffering, particularly suffering for the sake of Christ, are framed by eschatology. In other words, judgment is coming. Contrary to what many believe, Peter stated that judgment begins with God's people. Before we look to the world and call for repentance, we should look to ourselves; repentance begins with God's people. How should we live in light of the certainty that Christ is coming again? First we should embrace suffering as part and parcel of Christian faith since Christ also suffered. Second our experience of suffering should be different from that of the world. In our suffering, we rejoice and our joy gives glory to God. And our suffering should not be the result of unethical behavior but in spite of blameless conduct. Third we should live a life of discernment, discipline and prayer in view of Christ's coming. We should actively love one another and faithfully exercise our gifts to glorify God.

## Christian Crossword

By Helen Walter Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



### Across

- \_\_\_\_\_ is the man. (Ps. 1:1)
- Of the same quantity.
- Why do the heathen \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 2:1)
- They shall deceive the elect. (Matt. 24:24)
- \_\_\_\_\_ brought forth her firstborn son. (Luke 2:7)
- Object of worship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ into his gates with thanksgiving. (Ps. 100:4)
- A bird of the \_\_\_\_\_. (Eccles. 10:20)
- The ungodly are not \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 1:4)
- Why \_\_\_\_\_ I mourning? (Ps. 43:2)
- He is our \_\_\_\_\_ and our shield. (Ps. 33:20)
- Make thy face to shine \_\_\_\_\_ thy servant. (Ps. 31:16)
- Veterans' Administration. (abbr.)
- Under the shadow of the \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 91:1)
- Let go.
- \_\_\_\_\_ word is a lamp

- \_\_\_\_\_ unto my feet. (Ps. 119:105)
- Thy right hand, and thine \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 44:3)
- Italic. (abbr.)
- Associated Press. (abbr.)
- Indian garment.
- Thou shalt have none \_\_\_\_\_ gods before me. (Deut. 5:7)
- Printer's measure.
- Commander of Saul's army. (1 Sam. 17:55)
- Came down.
- August. (abbr.)
- Psalm writer.
- Total.
- Precious stone.
- Army \_\_\_\_\_ hall.
- Arise, O Lord; \_\_\_\_\_ me. (Ps. 3:7)
- \_\_\_\_\_ are his people. (Ps. 100:3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Psalms.
- His mercy is \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 100:5)
- Animal home.
- Our \_\_\_\_\_ wait upon the Lord. (Ps. 123:2)
- ... the glory which shall be revealed in \_\_\_\_\_. (Rom. 8:18)
- Word of contentment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God arise. (Ps. 68:1)
- Route. (abbr.)
- Not smooth.
- That is.
- The ungodly shall \_\_\_\_\_ stand. (Ps. 1:5)
- Above.
- \_\_\_\_\_ bargain.
- Physician. (abbr.)
- New York. (abbr.)
- Do not your \_\_\_\_\_ before men. (Matt. 6:1)
- \_\_\_\_\_ is a good thing to give thanks. (Ps. 92:1)
- Rejoiceth as a strong man to run a \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 19:5)
- A large plane.
- O \_\_\_\_\_, rebuke me not.

- Barren. (Ps. 38:1)
- Automobile Association of America. (abbr.)
- I \_\_\_\_\_ put my trust in the Lord God. (Ps. 73:28)
- They came to \_\_\_\_\_. (Ex. 15:27)
- It is he that hath \_\_\_\_\_ us. (Ps. 100:3)
- Mine \_\_\_\_\_ is as nothing before thee. (Ps. 39:5)
- I \_\_\_\_\_ troubled. (Ps. 38:6)
- District supervisor. (abbr.)
- Judge \_\_\_\_\_, O God. (Ps. 43:1)



# World Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

## Pope says Jews not to blame for Jesus' death

VATICAN CITY — The Jewish people as a whole were not responsible for Jesus' crucifixion, and their descendants have not inherited blame for his death, Pope Benedict XVI writes in a new book published March 10.

The statements appear in excerpts, which were released March 2, from "Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week: From the Entrance Into Jerusalem to the Resurrection," the sequel to Benedict's 2007 best seller, "Jesus of Nazareth."

"Who insisted that Jesus be condemned to death?" Benedict writes in the new book. Noting that the Gospel of John says simply, "the Jews," Benedict explains that this expression "does not at all indicate — as the modern reader might tend to interpret it — the people of Israel as such, and even less does it have a 'racist' character."

Noting that Jesus and all his original followers were Jews, Benedict writes that the term refers in this case specifically to the "aristocracy of the temple," or the leading priests who called for Jesus' death.

Benedict also explains the statement, "may his blood be on us and on our children," attributed to the Jews in the Gospel of Matthew, is not a curse but actually a kind of blessing.

"The Christian will remember that the blood of Christ ... is not spilled against anyone but ... for many, for all," Benedict writes.

"Read from the point of view of the faith, this means that we all need the purifying force of love, and that force is his blood. These words are not a curse, but redemption, salvation."

The book, while not bearing the weight of official church teaching or dogma, is nonetheless likely to help Benedict's relations with Jews.

Critics have questioned his moves to approve a Good Friday prayer that calls for Jews' salvation, and also to readmit a schismatic bishop who turned out to be a vocal denier of the Holocaust.

## Christian couple banned from foster care

LONDON — Two senior judges have banned a Christian couple from any further foster care because they oppose homosexuality, a stance that the judges said has no place in the laws of a "largely secular" Britain.

Owen and Eunice Johns, of Derby, England, have already fostered 15 children, but the High Court in London ruled that they can no longer continue the practice because their anti-gay views are legally wrong. In their decision delivered Feb. 28, Lord Justice James Lawrence Munby and Justice Jack Beeston said that under 21st-century British law, the rights of homosexuals "should take precedence" over the rights of religious faiths, including Christians.

The two judges decreed that Britain had evolved into a "largely secular," multicultural society whose laws "do not include Christianity." Eunice Johns, a retired nurse, called it "a sad day for Christianity." The judges said that "although historically this country is part of the Christian West, and although it has an established church ... which is Christian, there has been enormous changes to the social and religious life of our country over the last century."

The couple had fostered children since 1992 until taking a break. When they reapplied in 2007 to resume fostering, they were told that their attitudes toward gays violated Britain's new sexual equality laws. Eunice Johns argued that "all we were not willing to do was to tell a small child that the practice of homosexuality was a good thing." Gay-rights campaigners applauded the court's decision to put "21st-century decency above 19th-century prejudice."

## Japan's largest Protestant group reports damage

TOKYO — The Sendai-based Northeastern District Center Emmaus of the United Church of Christ (UCC) in Japan, the country's largest Protestant denomination, has reported churches and schools have been damaged following the devastating March 11 earthquake and tsunami. No casualties among their members have been reported.

The UCC in Japan also reported a chapel of its Shinsei Kamaishi Church in the coastal fishing city of Kamaishi is "drowned into the water" and filled with mud and oil.

The pastor and his wife were evacuated. Built in 2000, the chapel was known as a pioneer "eco-church," with a solar-power system and transparent glass roof.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Saitama, north of Tokyo, reported "severe damage" to a monastery in the coastal city of Mito.

The Orthodox cathedral in Sendai was not damaged, according to several Orthodox websites.

# CAMPUS News

## JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson Says Goodbye to Financial Aid Director:** Judson College bade farewell to retiring Director of Financial Aid Doris Wilson on March 9. Wilson and her husband, Thomas, began their work at Judson in 1972. He teaches biology and she taught in the child development center for a number of years before moving to the financial aid office in 1986.

► **McCorquodale Named Professor at Judson:** Gwen McCorquodale has been promoted to professor at Judson College. She began her work in the education department at the college in 2008 and was named head of the department last year. McCorquodale received degrees from the University of Mobile and the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She is a Sunday School teacher and choir member at Vestavia Hills Baptist Church.

## UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **'Art of Politics' Displays Art, Documents From Mobile's Civil War Past:** The University of Mobile's (UMobile) history and art departments have combined forces to present "The Art of Politics: Mobile's Civil War Past."

The exhibit includes more than 25 hanging pieces as well as 19th-century city of Mobile documents drawn from the resources of the university's Caldwell Delaney Historical Reference Collection and loans from private collectors.

Included in the display are original illustrations from *Harper's Weekly*, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, the *New York Herald* and the *New York Tribune* — all highlighting Mobile's role in the great conflict.

Civil War-era city documents include mayoral correspondence dealing with issues ranging from emergency finance measures to a license for public carriage operation. Prints from local artists such as Fairhope's Dean Mosher as well as rare photographs and maps are also on display.

The exhibit, located in Martin Hall on the UMobile campus, is open to the public. Hours are 8 a.m.-4 p.m. weekdays through March 31.

Guided tours can be arranged for individuals or groups by calling 251-442-2319.

## SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **School of Arts to Host Dance Concert:** The Samford University school of the arts' Michael J. and Mary Anne Freeman Theatre and Dance Series will present the annual dance concert featuring the best of ballet, modern and jazz styles March 31-April 3 in Harrison Theatre. Performances will be at 7:30 p.m. March 31-April 2 and 2:30 p.m. April 3.

For more information, visit [www.samford.edu/arts/tickets](http://www.samford.edu/arts/tickets) or call 205-726-2853.

► **Author Greg Mortenson to Speak at Samford:** Greg Mortenson, co-author of the *New York Times* best-seller "Three Cups of Tea" and a founder of Central Asia

Institute and Pennies for Peace educational charity, will speak at Samford University on April 11 as the inaugural speaker in the Thomas and Marla Corts Distinguished Author Series.

The 7 p.m. event in Wright Center Concert Hall will benefit Samford's Orlean Bullard Beeson School of Education and Professional Studies. The author will hold a book signing after the lecture. Mortenson has established or supports 171 schools in rural and often volatile regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. They provide education to more than 68,000 children, including 54,000 girls, where few educational opportunities existed before.

"Three Cups of Tea" has sold more than 4 million copies in 45 countries and has been a *Times* best seller for more than 186 weeks. In the book, Mortenson and journalist David Oliver Relin recount the journey that led Mortenson to successfully bring education and hope to remote communities in Central Asia.

The new lecture series honors the late Thomas Corts, who was president of Samford for 23 years, and his wife, Marla, who has supported a Christian school in Africa that bears her name for almost two decades.

For tickets, go to [www.samford.edu/wrightcenter](http://www.samford.edu/wrightcenter) or call 205-726-4343.

► **Levenson Named Beeson's Doctor of Ministry Alumnus of Year:** Episcopal rector Russell J. Levenson Jr. has been named 2011 Doctor of Ministry Alumnus of the Year by Samford University's Beeson Divinity School. Levenson, who earned a doctor of ministry degree from Beeson in 1997, received the award during a divinity school worship service March 8.

Rector of the 8,400-member St. Martin's Church in Houston, Levenson is the author of many articles and two books, "Provoking Thoughts," a collection of Lenten meditations, and "Preparing Room," a collection of Advent meditations.

Prior to being called to St. Martin's, the largest Episcopal congregation in the United States, in 2007, he was rector of Christ Church Parish in Pensacola, Fla., and the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Lafayette, La. At each post, Levenson has been known for fostering membership growth and increased budget, outreach and building programs and holding diocesan leadership roles. While enrolled at Beeson, Levenson was associate rector at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Birmingham. He also was head spiritual director for the Cursillo ministry in Alabama.

A graduate of Birmingham-Southern College, he holds a master of divinity from Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria.



Photo courtesy of Shiloh Baptist Church

## OPELIKA'S SHILOH COMPLETES NEW BUILDING

Shiloh Baptist Church, Opelika, in Russell Baptist Association recently completed its new fellowship hall. The 3,500-square-foot facility includes a large commercial kitchen, walk-in pantry, restrooms and classrooms. The building also is debt free. At the recent dedication service, the church also celebrated the birthday of its oldest member, Millard Herring, who turned 100. R.L. Cole is pastor.



NAMB photo

**TALKING STRATEGY** — North American Mission Board church-planting missionary Howard Burkhart (second from right) holds a church-planting strategy session in Walnut Creek, Calif.

# ‘Everybody needs Jesus’

## California missions field includes deaf population

Attending a beginning sign language course as part of the deaf ministry at 38th Avenue Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, Miss., in 1979, Howard Burkhart III liked his teacher so much he married her.

Because of Tina McMillan (Burkhart) and her attentive pupil — both students at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg at the time — untold hundreds of the hearing and hearing-impaired from Mississippi to California have not only been taught how to communicate but also how to accept Christ as their Savior.

Today the Burkharts’ ministry — based in Benicia, Calif., just north of San Francisco — extends far beyond the deaf community, although that remains their first love. Howard Burkhart, 52, is a church-planting strategist in the San Francisco Bay and San Diego areas and a jointly funded missionary for the North American Mission Board and the California Southern Baptist Convention.

### Ministry funds

He and his wife are only two of more than 5,000 missionaries in the United States, Canada and their territories supported by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (AAEO) for North American Missions. They were featured as part of the annual Week of Prayer, March 6–13. The 2011 goal is \$70 million.

“The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering makes everything possible,” Burkhart said. “It puts missionaries on the field, provides ministry funds, provides Bibles, church planter training, support for new churches and allows for special projects that are critical.”

After both graduating from Southern Miss and enrolling at

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, the Burkharts became aware of the huge need for pastors and missionaries to work with deaf people.

He would later become missionary to the deaf in California, where he and his wife have lived and ministered for the last 27 years. From 1988 to 2000, he taught classes through Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary for the hearing-impaired.

“Deafness is its own culture,” he said. “It has its own language, its own grammar, its own social structure. Deaf people tend to marry other deaf people.”

Why do the hearing-impaired need special ministries aimed at them and their needs?

“You’d think they could choose from a hundred different churches but they can’t. They have to go to a church where there’s either a pastor to the deaf or where there’s a competent interpreter,” Burkhart said.

“For hearing-impaired Americans, English is their second language. Sign language is their first language,” he said.

And not only does Burkhart work with hearing-impaired Anglos but he also ministers to the deaf in other people groups. It’s not commonly known that each nationality has its own unique deaf signing language. So signing is different across different cultures and languages.

Burkhart said one of his “joys” is to return to churches he helped start years ago, and one of his favorites is New Hope Community Church, El Monte, Calif. He said the deaf ministry at New Hope is very multi-ethnic, with nine or 10 countries represented. Steve Lucero, pastor to the deaf at New Hope, is the father of a deaf son, Leo, who pulled him

into deaf ministry. “When Leo was born, I asked, ‘Well, Lord, why did you give me a deaf son?’ It was a big question in my heart and mind.”

At the time of Leo’s birth, Lucero and his wife, Linda, already had a hearing son. Lucero was successfully climbing up the career ladder but he would later leave the business world and go into deaf ministry.

### Various people groups

Burkhart’s missions field is also home to some 37 million people. Burkhart strategizes and works with other church planters to start churches in the San Francisco and San Diego metro areas trying to reach a number of people groups — Indonesians, Romanians, Mongolians, Burmese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Russians and Brazilians.

“We would ask Southern Baptists to pray for us because we need to identify a Japanese church planter for San Diego and several Vietnamese church planters for 10 churches that need to be planted in California.”

Miami-born Burkhart and his wife — a Jackson, Miss., native who grew up in Alabama — are the parents of two children, Nathan and Victoria. He also asks Baptists to especially pray for Victoria, only 18, who has been seriously ill with a rare neurological disease.

“I grew up in Miami and if you’d told me growing up that I would be a missionary in California working among the Burmese and Karen, deaf people or the other language groups I work with, I would have said, ‘Never in a million years.’” Burkhart said.

“It’s hard work, it takes people, money, mission teams and partners. It takes a lot of people to reach a community for Christ.” (NAMB)

## Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

### Atheist fights to get ‘In God We Trust’ off currency

WASHINGTON — Atheist Michael Newdow plans to continue his fight to get “In God We Trust” off U.S. currency after the Supreme Court denied a hearing in his case March 7.

“I plan on bringing the lawsuit again on behalf of other Americans who believe they are injured when the government lends its power to one side of the controversy over whether or not God exists,” he said March 8.

Newdow, a doctor in Sacramento, Calif., has filed numerous First Amendment suits concerning government endorsement of religion. He filed the challenge to the national motto in 2005.

A year ago, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against him, citing a 1970 decision that said the use of the motto on U.S. coins and bills is “of a patriotic or ceremonial character and bears no true resemblance to a governmental sponsorship of a religious exercise.”

Newdow sought a rehearing of the case last April, but was denied in October. Two months after he asked the Supreme Court to review the decision, the case was dismissed without comment.

The Obama administration and the Pacific Justice Institute, a Sacramento-based legal defense organization, argued against Newdow, saying court precedent called for the case to be dismissed.

### Minnesota state judge rejects gay ‘marriage’

MINNEAPOLIS — A Minnesota state judge has upheld the state’s traditional marriage law and refused to legalize gay “marriage.”

The ruling by District Judge Mary DuFresne will be appealed but is nevertheless a big win for supporters of the current Minnesota law which defines marriage as between one man and one woman.

DuFresne said the law does not violate the due process, equal protection, religious freedom and freedom of association rights of homosexual couples. A homosexual group called Marry Me Minnesota brought the case.

Significantly DuFresne cited a 1971 case — Baker v. Nelson — that made its way to the Minnesota Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court. Both high courts rejected legal arguments for gay “marriage.”

Traditionalists in the state are pushing the new Republican-controlled legislature to place a constitutional amendment on the ballot defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

“This, coupled with several bills introduced in the Legislature last year to legalize same-sex ‘marriage,’ is why we need to protect marriage with a marriage amendment,” said Chuck Darrell, communications director for the Minnesota Family Council.

### Kansas House passes important pro-life bills

TOPEKA, Kan. — Pro-life advocates in Kansas gained passage of two important bills in hopes of advancing them to new pro-life Republican Gov. Sam Brownback for his signature.

The House voted 91–30 on Feb. 24 for a bill that would prohibit abortions after 22 weeks gestation because of the unborn baby’s apparent ability to feel pain at that stage. Representatives also approved in a 96–25 roll call a measure that includes provisions requiring parental consent for a minor’s abortion, reforming judicial bypass procedures and barring abortion fraud.

“We are ecstatic that the House has acted to pass these bills, which will ensure that the abortion reporting fraud of the past decade is never repeated, will eliminate any rubber-stamp judicial approval of abortion for pregnant teens and will bring updated medical evidence to bear in treating abortion as a barbaric, unacceptable act,” said Kathy Ostrowski, legislative director of Kansans for Life.

Check out

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST ONLINE

a new E-EDITION

http://online.thealabamabaptist.org