

# THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

April 21, 2011  
Vol. 176, No. 16

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## INSIDE



Smartphone, tablet apps provide new Bible study tools

◆ Page 3



Baldwin Association's WMU ministers to women, children in West Virginia

◆ Page 5



90-year-old associate pastor still going strong

◆ Page 11

## 'A bit of a puzzle'

### Chronology of Christ's last days can be confusing

As Christians worldwide prepare to celebrate Easter, they will follow a familiar chronology: Jesus was crucified on Good Friday and rose from the dead on "the third day," in the words of the ancient Nicene Creed.

But if Jesus died at 3 p.m. Friday and vacated His tomb by dawn Sunday morning — about 40 hours later — then how does that make three days? And do Hebrew Scriptures prophesy that timetable?

The chronology conundrum is "a bit of a puzzle," said Marcus Borg, a biblical scholar and co-author of "The Last Week," a book about Holy Week.

But Borg and other experts say the puzzle can be solved if you know how first-century Jews counted time and grant the four Evangelists a little poetic license.

Jews of Jesus' time followed a lunar calendar, meaning that days began

at sunset. For them, Saturday night was actually Sunday, a schedule that still guides Jewish holy days, such as Shabbat (the Hebrew word for Sabbath).

Ancient Jews also used what scholars call "inclusive reckoning," meaning any part of a day is counted as a whole day, said Clinton Wahlen of the Seventh-day Adventist Biblical Research Institute in Silver Spring, Md.

Using these counting methods, a backward calculation from Sunday morning to Friday afternoon makes three days.

Besides, the four Evangelists were likely not counting time literally, according to some scholars.

"Expressions like 'three days' and '40 days' are imprecise in the Bible," Borg said. For the Evangelists, "three

days" means "a short period of time."

Ben Witherington, an evangelical scholar of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Ky., agreed.

The phrase "three days" is a colloquialism comparable to "directly" in Southern-speak, meaning "after a little while," he said. It's anachronistic to expect the Evangelists to monitor time like modern-day men, Witherington said.

"The Gospel writers didn't walk around with sundials on their wrists the way modern scholars walk around with wrist-watches," he said. "They were not dealing with the precision that we do."

But precision, especially when it comes to the Bible, has been a hallmark of faith for many Christians — especially those who equate truth with historical facts.

Most troubling for these believers is Jesus' own prophecy, recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, that He will rise from the dead after "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Trying to reconcile that prophecy with the Holy Week calendar, ancient Christian theologians such as Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Jerusalem counted the eclipse of the sun after Jesus' death as a night, said John Behr, dean of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y.

#### Different calendar

"Didascalia Apostolorum," a third-century Christian treatise, took a more radical approach.

"It proposes that Jesus and His apostles followed a different calendar than other Jews and celebrated the Last Supper on a Tuesday, meaning the crucifixion happened on a Wednesday. Some fringe Christian denominations still promote that theory.

"But the point of Jesus' prophecy is to draw a comparison to Jonah, who was willing to die to save his shipmates (and spent three days in the belly of a big fish), not to set a timetable for the (See 'Never-ending,' page 12)

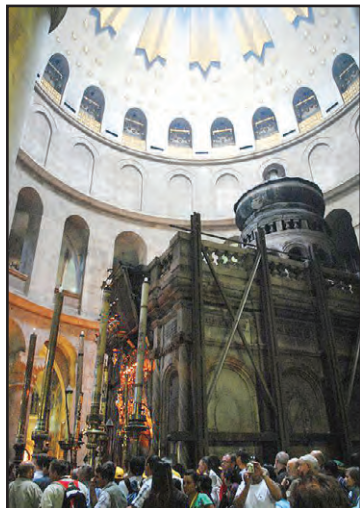
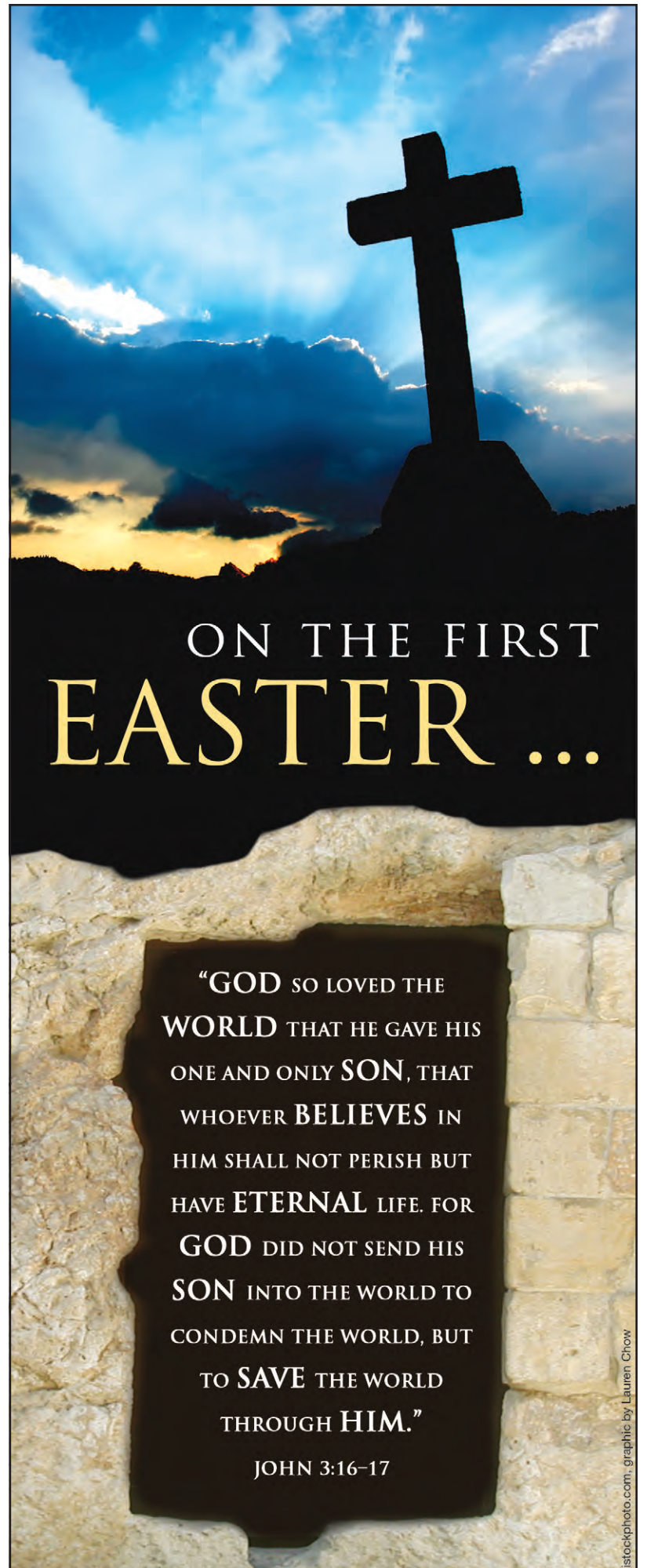


Photo by Ava Thomas

**JESUS' BURIAL** — A shrine marks the traditional site of Jesus' burial, which has been incorporated into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.



ON THE FIRST  
EASTER ...

"GOD SO LOVED THE  
WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS  
ONE AND ONLY SON, THAT  
WHOEVER BELIEVES IN  
HIM SHALL NOT PERISH BUT  
HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. FOR  
GOD DID NOT SEND HIS  
SON INTO THE WORLD TO  
CONDEMN THE WORLD, BUT  
TO SAVE THE WORLD  
THROUGH HIM."

JOHN 3:16-17

# COMMENT

## Arizona Case Is a Peril, Not a Promise

**O**K. On this issue, I am a contrarian. The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) says the April 4 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court protects First Amendment values like governmental neutrality, private choice and free exercise of religion. The National Association of Evangelicals agrees.

The American Association of Christian Schools hails the 5–4 decision in *Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization v. Winn* for helping parents give their children “quality education of their choice.”

Conservative columnist Cal Thomas celebrates the ruling, saying, “Proponents of school choice have been waiting for a ruling like this one.”

Against such unanimous support for the ruling, it is hard to raise a caution flag, but a caution flag is necessary lest the outcome of the Arizona case irreparably harms public education as well as religious liberty.

The Supreme Court did not decide the case on its merits. Instead the court ruled that taxpayers challenging an Arizona law allowing tax credits for scholarships for religiously affiliated schools could not file suit against the state because they lacked “standing.” The taxpayers argued the law violates separation of church and state. The court said the taxpayers had not been injured by the law so they could not file suit against it.

Since taxpayers now lack “standing” to file suit against any tax credit plan that channels money into religiously affiliated schools, the Supreme Court effectively established a plan for government at any level to support religious activities through tax credits.

That point was not lost on the court. The four dissenting justices observed, “The court’s opinion ... offers a road map — more truly, just a one-step instruction — to any government that wishes to insulate its financing of religious activity from legal challenge. ... No taxpayer will have standing to object. However blatantly the government may violate the Establishment Clause, taxpayers cannot gain access to the federal courts.”

The majority opinion argued that tax credits for scholarships to private (mostly religious) schools are not the same as appropriating tax money for scholarships. The scholarships come from private dollars, not public tax dollars, the court said.

That argument is the kind of distinction heard from proponents of parochial aid for generations. During my ministry in Missouri, I was privileged to help lead two statewide efforts that successful-



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

ly prevented public tax dollars from flowing into private and parochial schools.

In those days, the SBC Christian Life Commission (the forerunner of ERLC) argued against vouchers, tax credits and every other form of parochial aid. Generally Baptists scoffed at the argument that tax credits were anything but parochial aid. If one can figure one’s taxes, then give up to \$1,000 of the amount owed to a private (usually religious) organization and deduct that \$1,000 dollar for dollar from what one owes in taxes and that equals indirect government aid, Baptists reasoned.

### Separation of church and state

Such aid violates the U.S. constitutional principle of separation of church and state. Religious liberty for all has long been a hallmark of Baptists.

Unfortunately today many Baptist leaders parrot the arguments made by parochial school advocates of the past. The reason is the growing discontent with public schools and the growing involvement of Baptists and other evangelicals in parochial schools. Christian school advocates among Baptists argue, “It is contrary to our history of liberty that parents should be forced to educate their children in government schools.” That is the exact sentiment heard from parochial school champions a generation ago — a sentiment that Baptists rejected.

The combination of discontent and personal involvement has impacted Baptist understanding of religious liberty. The 2000 Baptist Faith and Message statement of faith says, in part, “The church should not resort to the civil powers to carry on its work.” Yet Baptists are cheering a decision that takes the nation in that direction.

Thomas said in a recent column, “The case is likely to provide a large new revenue stream for private religious schools, especially Catholic institutions.” In Arizona, more than \$350 million has flowed to mostly parochial schools through this program. At one point, 94 percent of the funds went to parochial schools. Now it is a little more than two-thirds.

“The next step should be court approval for school vouchers, which would allow parents com-

plete freedom in choosing their child’s school,” he wrote.

It should be remembered that Baptists never opposed parochial schools. Although few in number, Baptist schools can be found throughout our history. Today Baptists sponsor a number of outstanding parochial schools.

Through the years, Baptists have contended that it is not the government’s role to fund parochial schools through direct aid such as vouchers or indirect aid such as tax credits. When either happens, the church is resorting to using civil power to carry on its work. Government’s role is to fund public schools, and individual citizens are not excused from their civic responsibilities just because they choose not to avail themselves of certain services.

If what Thomas hopes for and four Supreme Court justices fear comes to pass, then Alabama will be among the many states where tax credit plans will be introduced to help parents pay the costs of parochial education for their children. Tax support for public education will fall. Instead those dollars will flow into the private education of parochial schoolchildren.

Once adopted, citizens will be powerless to protest because the April 4 decision prevents them from filing suit against violations of church-state separation. They no longer have “standing” to file suit.

Such an outcome would be disastrous in this writer’s judgment. Public schools in Alabama have enough problems to deal with without exacerbating their financial situation with tax credit plans for parochial schools.

And Baptist commitment to the historical understanding of religious liberty is imperiled every time Baptists support direct or indirect efforts to use civil power to do the church’s work.

That is why it is necessary to raise a caution flag about the Arizona case even if one does appear to be a contrarian.

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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)

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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.

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

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

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



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

**CLEANUP AND RECOVERY** — Joe Mims (driving tractor) of FBC Clanton directs the disaster relief team onsite at Boone's Chapel Baptist Church, Prattville, on April 16.

## FBC Clanton, other disaster relief units ready to respond

By Jennifer Davis Rash  
The Alabama Baptist

Joe Mims, a member of FBC Clanton enjoys tinkering with antique tractors. In fact, that's what he planned to do April 16.

Early that Saturday morning, he loaded up his 1925 McCormick-Deering 10-20 tractor and headed north on I-65 to an antique tractor show. But before he made it to Calera, his "bat phone" of sorts went off and he learned his day would be spent with a different type of tractor.

Making a quick trade of the hobby tractor for his Kubota four-wheel drive tractor, Mims headed to Prattville.

A blue cap for Alabama Baptist disaster relief, Mims takes his role seriously. So when the call came in that a chainsaw team was needed at Boone's Chapel Baptist Church, Prattville (see story, this page), Mims didn't think twice. "This takes precedent," he said.

Rounding up five other disaster relief volunteers from FBC Clanton, Mims and the team cleared all downed trees and debris around the church.

"I'm amazed at the number of people out here working," Mims said. "And everyone's working hard."

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), said, "Disaster relief is something Alabama Baptists do well. They respond 'asap' and are onsite right away.

"This is one of the evidences of Great Commission ministries in Alabama Baptist life," he said. "The Cooperative Program and the special offering for disaster relief are the only dollars we have to do this work. We appreciate Alabama Baptists helping ... in these situations.

"All of the money given to disaster relief is used directly onsite," he added.

Mel Johnson, disaster relief strategist for the SBOM, noted Alabama Baptists would also be around long after the initial cleanup is finished. "Some of our greatest ministry opportunities come in the aftermath," he said.

Others responding to storm cleanup in their areas came out of Tuscaloosa, Bethel, Selma and Elmore associations.



MIMS



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

**'GREAT THINGS ARE AHEAD'** — Church members remain positive despite the chapel (former sanctuary) and children's education building at Boone's Chapel Baptist Church, Prattville, being destroyed by the April 15 tornado.

# Deja Vu moment

## Boone's Chapel pastor weathers second tornado in one year

By Jennifer Davis Rash  
and Gary Hardin  
The Alabama Baptist

One week shy of a year ago, Mike Johnson, pastor of Boone's Chapel Baptist Church, Prattville, was helping his then community of Albertville recover from an EF-3 tornado that devastated parts of Albertville and Geraldine.

And on April 16 this year, he was out cleaning up after another EF-3 tornado hit his community — now Boone's Chapel in Autauga County.

The original brick structure, which is used as a chapel and the children's education area, is a total loss, he said. The newer multipurpose section is damaged but should be repairable, he noted at press time.

Super cell thunderstorms broke out over portions of the South, particularly Alabama and Mississippi, on April 15, according to the national weather service. Ninety-eight tornadoes were reported with a death toll of 17 at press time.

In Alabama, tornadoes touched down in Autauga, Monroe, Greene, Marengo, Sumter, Tuscaloosa, Choctaw and Elmore counties.

The storms killed seven people in Alabama including three family members whose two homes sat on the edge of the property of Boone's Chapel Baptist Church.

"They were really good people," said Chad Underwood, student minister at Boone's Chapel Baptist.

He and his family lived in the church's pastorium (it was damaged by the storm), which sat directly between the church and the home of Willard and Sarah Hollon, members of East Memorial Baptist Church, Prattville.

Willard and his two adult children, Steve Hollon and Cheryl Mitchell, died when the tornado hop scotched from the two homes to the church.

Willard's wife, Sarah, was taken to a Montgomery hospital with lacerations and injuries. Steve's wife, Karen, and his two daughters, Faith and Renee, were also taken

to the hospital with serious injuries. Glenn Graham, pastor of East Memorial Baptist, said, "They were some of the nicest, most gracious, people you would ever meet.

"Our church family ... [is] providing money and temporary places for the family members to live," he said. "All these folks had were the clothes on their back."

Boone's Chapel Baptist church members were also saddened about the deaths and many were out the next morning helping however they could.

"There's nothing like a tornado to change your sermon," said Johnson, as he pulled a file folder from the damaged church building.

His sermon the next day would be from Lamentations 3, "The Unfailing Faithfulness of God." The church planned to meet at Marbury High School on April 17 but expected to be back on property the following Sunday.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

**'DOING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE'** — Pastor Mike Johnson describes church members' reactions after the tornado.



Photo by Courtney Davies

**ONSITE ASSESSMENT** — Gov. Robert Bentley joins state and local officials to survey storm damage at Boone's Chapel Baptist Church, Prattville, and in the surrounding area April 16.

## Alabama Cooperative Program Gifts

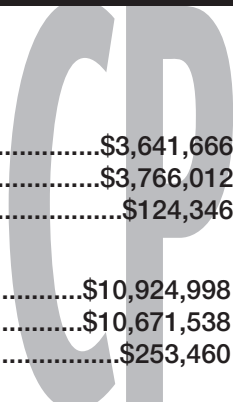
Alabama Baptist Giving  
Year to Date through March 31, 2011

### MARCH

CP Challenge Budget Goal .....	\$3,641,666
CP Challenge Budget Gifts .....	\$3,766,012
Over Goal for Month .....	\$124,346

### YEAR TO DATE

CP Challenge Budget Goal .....	\$10,924,998
CP Challenge Budget Gifts .....	\$10,671,538
Under Goal for Year .....	\$253,460



# 'The choking game'

## Teens die from popular, dangerous dare often ruled as suicide

A dangerous thrill-seeking practice commonly called "the choking game" is claiming hundreds of teenage lives as it crosses the line from dangerous to deadly.

No one knows how many children die from practicing this "game" — which goes by many other names such as tingling, pass out, suffocation roulette, funky chicken, airplaning, blackout and rising sun — because there is no subcode for it on death certificates. Accidental deaths from the choking game often are ruled suicides. Statistics, such as they are, come from media reports and the shared sorrows of suddenly bereft parents who find each other.

The choking game restricts oxygen by strangulation, either self-administered or by another participant, until the player passes out. As the player regains consciousness, he or she experiences a dizzying "high."

The dangerous game can go horribly wrong, as it did for 12-year-old Connor Galloway on Oct. 18, 2007. His mother, Michele, found him hanging by a belt from his loft bed, his feet dangling a quarter-inch from the floor.

As soon as the Galloways gained control of their grief, they created an organization they call Connor's HEART to alert parents, teachers, churches and young people of the game's widespread practice — and its danger. "Heart" stands for Help Eliminate Adolescent Risk Taking.

The Galloways, both teachers, spoke to a Baptist group in Asheville, N.C., on March 26.

### Fourfold goal

The Galloways' fourfold goal is to build an informed community; to educate people who will be "Connor's Coaches" to help young people sort through the flood of information and influences they must process every day; to make Connor's HEART a "respected, independent source of information;" and to find a way to track and connect committed and broken-hearted parents and others who are working for behavioral change.

They also are advocating for better funding for health education. On the annual youth risk behavior survey from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for instance, there is no question about the choking game or about prescription drugs.

The Galloways want to double their efforts to present to 2,000 students this year, to em-

## Watch for 10 dangerous behaviors

A group called Cyberhood Watch has listed what it considers the top 10 dangerous behaviors promoted by teens. Site managers Dave Ballard and Bill Wardell cite the eagerness of teens to share their exploits with others online with exponentially increasing the prevalence of these behaviors.

They include:

- ▶ Anorexia — Sites create competition where people post emaciated pictures of themselves.
- ▶ The choking game.
- ▶ Sexting — Sexting is sending nude photos via cell phones.
- ▶ Beatdowns — Uploading videos of fights or groups of teens beating down another teen.
- ▶ Drinking — It is common for teens to make videos of themselves or their friends

getting drunk to entertain their peers or to impress online friends.

▶ Drug Abuse — There is a culture of drug promotion on the Internet.

▶ Racing — The ability to show off racing exploits to a wide audience creates a whole new level of appeal for racers.

▶ Self-mutilation — Teens with terribly low self-esteem or who feel isolated or depressed may see self-harm as a way to feel like a part of the group promoting this behavior.

▶ Daredevil videos — When teens start trying to outdo one another for a wide video audience, they end up attempting feats that even trained professionals would not.

▶ Sniffing — Kids read accounts of sniffing or huffing online. Kids also post suggestions of chemicals that can be inhaled for others to try. (ABP)

phasize that "your decision making matters" and teach them how to make better decisions.

"There is no end to the conversation with kids about decision making ... about the things out there that can affect their health and their life," said Connor's father, Dale.

Connor was a typical choking game player, the Galloways learned, as police discovered many kids at his school who participated. He was not depressed, was a good student, active in church and an athlete, the kind of kid who demonstrated none of the typical behaviors of a troubled adolescent.

The Galloways — who have met grieved parents from all over the world whose children died similarly — said the choking game is almost a "good kid's way to experience what it's like to get high."

The omni-present video capability via cell phones or pocket-sized cameras to film and post choking events to the Internet accelerates the practice, which has been transferred from a previous generation. One 50-year-old teaching assistant the Galloways met said she did it as a teenager.

"It became clear to us that if we were going to try to make something positive happen as a result of our son's death, the only thing we could do is talk about it," Dale Galloway said.

He knows he is raising awareness but is frustratingly uncertain if behavior changes result.

Michele Galloway, who asked Connor about red marks around his neck just days before his death, said warning signs that a child may be participating in the choking game are bloodshot eyes; marks on the neck; frequent severe headaches; increased irritability or hostility; ropes; scarves or belts tied to bedroom furniture or doorknobs or knotted on the floor; or the presence of dog leashes, choke collars and bungee cords. Connor explained the red marks as irritations from his football pads.

The Galloways, members of Cullowhee Baptist Church in North Carolina, are willing to speak to any group. A DVD they've produced on the choking game and risk behaviors has been distributed more than 1,400 times. Their website is [www.connorsheart.org](http://www.connorsheart.org).

### 'Behind on prevention'

Connor died from the choking game, but his death could have come from any number of risky behaviors teenagers engage in, Dale Galloway said. He said Connor's death was preventable but "until we know what drives the risk behavior, we're constantly behind on prevention." (ABP)

## New UN resolution calls for individuals to be protected

A United Nations body finally disregarded the "defamation of religions" concept March 24, but the assassination of two Pakistani leaders apparently was required to ensure it did so.

The Obama administration and religious freedom advocates applauded the U.N. Human Rights Council's passage of a resolution on religious intolerance that — unlike "defamation of religions" measures approved since 1999 — protects individuals from discrimination or violence based on their beliefs. Those "defamation of religions" resolutions approved for the last 12 years by U.N. bodies have focused on protecting religion, primarily Islam.

The new resolution says the council deplores "any advocacy of discrimination or violence on the basis of religion or belief" and strongly deplores "all acts of violence against persons on the basis of their religion or belief, as well

as any such acts directed against their homes, businesses, properties, schools, cultural [centers] or places of worship."

Opponents have charged the "defamation of religions" resolutions, which have been promoted by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), would harm global religious freedom and provide support for blasphemy laws like those in some Muslim states.

### 'Significant step forward'

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in a written statement the resolution passed March 24 "represents a significant step forward in the global dialogue on countering intolerance, discrimination and violence against persons based upon religion or belief."

The council's vote in Geneva came barely three weeks after Shahbaz Bhatti, the only Christian in Pakistan's government, was assassinated.

Bhatti, Pakistan's federal minister for minorities, had courageously worked for repeal of the country's blasphemy laws, which call for death for those who leave or "insult" Islam. A radical Islamic organization identified with the Taliban took credit for the March 2 killing.

Two months before, Salman Taseer was killed by a bodyguard because the governor of the Punjab province opposed the Muslim-dominated country's blasphemy laws.

Leonard Leo, chairman of the bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, commended the council's decision but said, "Tragically it took the assassinations of two prominent Pakistani officials who opposed that country's draconian blasphemy laws ... to convince the OIC that the annual defamation of religions resolutions embolden extremists rather than bolster religious harmony." (BP)

## WMU to tour WorldCrafts sites in Asia

National Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) is sponsoring a 13-day tour of Thailand and Cambodia featuring visits to four sites of its WorldCrafts ministry. WorldCrafts is a micro-enterprise, fair-trade ministry that empowers people — mostly women — in underdeveloped countries and helps them achieve financial independence while learning of the saving grace of Jesus.

Tour hosts are Kaye Miller, former national WMU president, and Andrea Mullins, WorldCrafts director. The tour is co-sponsored by Dehoney Travel and the WMU Foundation.

"We will visit places where WorldCrafts is assisting women and families to be freed from exploitative conditions," Mullins said. "This is a unique opportunity to see firsthand how God is working around the world as we visit with women who no longer work as prostitutes and families who no longer beg because they are receiving good wages, are treated with dignity and now have money for food, shelter, health care and education."

After a day exploring the Grand Palace and other prominent sites of Bangkok, the group will travel outside the city to Bangkok to visit Thai Country Trim, the original inspiration for the founding of the WorldCrafts ministry. As a child of missionary parents, Miller grew up in Thailand, and Thai Country Trim was begun in the basement of her home.

"Often called the land of smiles, Thailand is a beautiful country, and the Thai people are the most gracious people in the world," Miller explained. "But Thailand is a lost country that needs to hear the gospel, and one of the best ways of hearing is through participating in WorldCrafts. Lives are changed both economically and spiritually, as they are a part of this incredible WMU ministry. I can't wait for everyone on the tour to see what an impact WorldCrafts is making both in Thailand and Cambodia."

### Thailand and Cambodia

In addition to WorldCrafts sites, the tour will visit some of the most notable sites of Thailand and Cambodia, including the floating market at Damnoen Saduak; elephants, orchids and temples of Thailand's northern gateway of Chiang Mai; the Temple of Angkor Wat, the world's largest religious building; sites in Siem Reap; and the capital city of Phnom Penh in Cambodia. The tour also includes other missions efforts like Bangkok Baptist Clinic, Grace International School in Chiang Mai and the rescue organization of the New Life Center Foundation in Chiang Mai.

Dates of the tour, departing from Atlanta, are Oct. 24–Nov. 5.

For more information, contact Russell Cherry at Dehoney Travel at 1-800-325-6708 or [Russell@dehoneytravel.com](mailto:Russell@dehoneytravel.com) or David George, president of the WMU Foundation, at 1-877-482-4483 or [dgeorge@wmu.org](mailto:dgeorge@wmu.org). (WMU)



Photo by Lyle Ratliff

**DOLL DEDICATION** — More than 1,200 dolls were dedicated April 10 during a special service at First Baptist Church, Robertsdale. Each doll has two painted faces — one with the eyes closed and one with the eyes open. ‘The two faces of the dolls signify that we are blind without Christ, but with Him, we can see.’

# ‘All Dolled Up’

## Baldwin Association’s WMU ministers to women, children in West Virginia

By Carrie Brown McWhorter  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Carol Walker can’t stop the tears when she tells her own rag doll story. It was Christmas Eve and Walker’s father, a coal miner in Walker County, was out of work. Times were tough, she said, but her mother was determined to make something special for her children. She worked all night and Walker’s gift that Christmas morning was a simple hand-sewn rag doll.

Some 40 years later, Walker was at a women’s meeting at her home church, First Baptist, Gulf Shores, in Baldwin Baptist Association, when someone passed around a sheet of paper with a rag doll pattern printed on it. When she learned that the dolls would be used to minister to children of coal miners in West Virginia, she felt the Holy Spirit speak to her and knew this was a mission meant for her.

“Those coal miners up there are pretty poor, too,” Walker said. “The rag doll part really touched my heart. Mine had a message that my

mom loved me, and this one has a message that Jesus loves us. That’s what made me want to go.”

The Baldwin Association missions project, WMU (Woman’s Missionary Union) Gets All Dolled Up, and the WMU-led missions trip to West Virginia April 16–22 came about as a result of a conversation between missions volunteers Susan Bartholomew and Bill Barker at the Winter Olympics in Vancouver, British Columbia.

### Specific needs

Bartholomew, Baldwin Association WMU director and a member of Pleasant View Baptist Church, Foley, met Barker, national director of Appalachian Regional Ministry (ARM), and spoke with him about needs in his area, specifically in West Virginia.

From its base in Hurricane, W.Va., ARM works in partnership with 13 Baptist state conventions, the North American Mission Board and WMU. In central Appalachia, which includes West Virginia, poverty is rampant. It has been de-

scribed as the “poverty pocket of America,” in part because 37 of the poorest 100 counties in the country are located in this region. Churches and ministry centers regularly deal with poverty-related issues, including abuse, illiteracy, substandard housing and basic needs like food, medical care and clothing. As a result, missions teams are encouraged to prepare to meet both the physical and spiritual needs of the communities they will serve.

Bartholomew issued her challenge to a group of about 200 women gathered at the WMU Annual Celebration at First Baptist Church, Fairhope, on April 22, 2010.

“That night, I told them that I would like to take 500 salvation dolls to the children of West Virginia in 2011 and that I wanted the WMU leadership team to host a family missions trip to take them,” she said.

Bartholomew continued to share her vision with churches around Baldwin County, and her vision became theirs as well. Churches prayed for the people of West Virginia, and members young and old began to sew simple 12-inch rag dolls of cloth and yarn. Each doll has two painted faces. On one face, the eyes are closed. On the other, the eyes are open.

“The two faces of the dolls signify that we are blind without Christ, but with Him, we can see,” Bartholomew said.

Each doll also wears a salvation necklace, made from beads with colors representing the salvation story. A card attached to the doll tells what the colors mean and provides a Scripture reference for each color. Bartholomew said her hope is that children will come to know Christ as they hear the plan of salvation and wear their doll’s necklace as a bracelet to share with others as well.

Baldwin County Baptists met the goal of 500 — and then some. On April 10, they held a doll dedi-

cation and prayer service at First Baptist Church, Robertsdale. More than 1,200 dolls were dedicated.

“It was simply amazing,” Bartholomew said.

In addition to the dolls, the missions team is carrying 265 backpacks filled with school supplies, as well as hygiene kits to give to the children, and 150 crocheted hats for both children and adults.

“You name it, I have it,” Bartholomew said, noting that even during difficult economic times for the Gulf Coast, “people all over the county have given and given.”

The 34-member missions team represents 15 Baldwin Association churches. Team members range in age from 5 to 78. In addition to Bible study and ministry to women and children and light construction work in the towns of War and Coalwood, they are going to the Greenbrier Birthing Center in Hillsboro, a federal facility for pregnant women who are incarcerated.

### Opportunities to share

According to Bartholomew, the women enter Greenbrier in their third trimester and can stay there with their babies for 15 months. During that time, the center provides food but no other necessities. The women depend on their families and churches to provide diapers, wipes, clothing and other necessary items. Currently the center houses 10 boys and six girls, and the team is taking blankets, booties and hats for each child, all handmade by Baldwin County Baptists.

The team plans to do more than just deliver gifts, however.

“We are taking lotion and we are going to wash the women’s hands to show them that we love them, just as Mary washed the feet of Jesus,” Bartholomew said.

That kind of one-on-one time to talk with each woman and pray for her will be a powerful experience for everyone involved, she said.

Kay Stewart, WMU leader at New Life Baptist Church, Bay Minette, and a member of the Baldwin Association WMU leadership team, is taking two of her grandsons on the trip. It’s the first missions trip for both Adam, 13, and Mason, 15, Boutwell.

Like Walker, Stewart felt a special calling to this

ministry. Three years ago, she lost her husband. After 43 years of marriage, she felt she had “no purpose or direction.” When another widow told her that she needed to find a new “normal,” she sought God’s direction for her life.

“The first thing I knew, this missions trip came into my life, an opportunity to share with others, particularly the women, what it really means to have a new life in Christ,” said Stewart, who will teach women’s Bible study while the team is in War.

The team’s final stop is Beckley. There it gets a small glimpse into a coal miner’s life as it tours a coal mine and feels what it’s like to be 1,500 feet inside a mountain.

On April 28, team members will share their experiences through stories and pictures at the WMU Annual Celebration.



Photo by Lyle Ratliff



Photo by Lyle Ratliff

**‘SIMPLY AMAZING’** — Candace McIntosh, Alabama WMU executive director, and Susan Bartholomew (right), Baldwin Baptist Association’s WMU director, show off the 1,200-plus dolls dedicated for children in West Virginia.

# Across Alabama's Associations

## BIRMINGHAM

► **Adamsville Church** will hold an Easter egg hunt April 24, 9:30–10:45 a.m. The Easter celebration will be at 11 a.m. Michael Hill Sr. is pastor. ► **Eastside Church, Birmingham**, canceled Battle of the Bands scheduled for May 7. Mark Smith is pastor. ► **Hunter Street Church, Hoover**, will hold special Easter services April 24, 7, 8:05, 9:30 and 10:45 a.m. Sunday School will be at 8:05, 9:30 and 10:45 a.m. Buddy Gray is pastor. ► **Liberty Park Church, Vestavia Hills**, will hold an Easter sunrise service April 24, 6 a.m., at the amphitheater. Bring a chair or blanket. Scott Guffin is pastor.

## BLOUNT

► **Pine Grove Church, Rosa**, will hold a 50th wedding anniversary celebration for W.C. and Karen Green May 15, 2–4 p.m. W.C. is pastor of Fellowship Church, Cleveland. He also has served several other Alabama churches. Randy Hale is pastor of Pine Grove.

## CLARKE

► The adult choir of **Evergreen Church, Jackson**, will present the musical "Written in Red" April 24, 11 a.m. Howard Gaston is pastor. ► **Stave Creek Church, Jackson**, will present the musical "In the Presence of Jehovah" April 24, 6 p.m. The choir and live worship band are led by Associate Pastor Bill Weide. Jamie Lay is pastor.

## COFFEE

► **Goodman Church, Enterprise**, will present the Easter musical "Lord of Glory" April 24, 11

a.m. Kaye Clark is music director. Bruce Williams is pastor.

## COVINGTON

► **Rawls Church, Dozier**, will celebrate homecoming and present the Easter cantata "Up From the Grave" April 24, 11 a.m. It will be presented by the choir with narration and drama by the youth. Lunch will follow. Sonny Steele is pastor.

## EAST CULLMAN

► **Randy Mahaffey** is the new pastor of **Hopewell Church, Hanceville**. He previously served as the church's associate pastor. He and his wife, Rita, have three children and three grandchildren.

## MUD CREEK

► **Union Hill Church, Bessemer**, will hold a clothes/food giveaway for the community April 22–23, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. The church also will present its Easter drama April 23, 7 p.m. Mickey Bell is pastor.

## ST. CLAIR

► **Christen Wadsworth** is the new children's minister for **North Valley Church, Margaret**. She will attend the Birmingham Extension Center of New Orleans Seminary at The Church at Brook Hills in the fall. She and her husband, Brock, have one child. Chris Crain is pastor.



WADSWORTH

## SHELBY

► **Mount Zion Church, Westover**, will celebrate homecoming May 1, 11 a.m. A covered-dish lunch will follow at noon. There will be a singing at 1 p.m. Moose Isbell is singing chairman. Delford Isbell is pastor.

## TALLAPOOSA

► **Kathryn Jernigan**, wife of Ralph Jernigan who serves as interim pastor of **Jackson's Gap Church**, died April 1. She was 80. She is survived by her husband of 58 years; a brother, James W. "Jimmy" Orr; three children; eight grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

## TUSCALOOSA

► **Northwood Hills Church, Northport**, will hold a special Easter service April 24, 11 a.m. It will begin with the celebration of the Lord's Supper and proceed with special music and a message through the death, burial, resurrection and return of Jesus Christ. George Shaddix is pastor.

## WASHINGTON

► **Chapel Hill Church, Millry**, will celebrate homecoming May 15. Music led by Mike Roberts will be at 10 a.m. Eric Copeland will speak during the service at 11 a.m. There will be a business meeting at 11:45 a.m. Lunch will follow at noon. Ferrell Mills is pastor.

## WEST CULLMAN

► **New Freedom Church, Cullman**, will hold an Easter sunrise service April 24, 6 a.m., on the Echota/Cherokee tribal lands on Lacon Mountain. David McGowin is pastor.

## Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

### Hamilton named Judson's 2011 outstanding alumna

Frances Dew Hamilton has spent her life serving Samford University in Birmingham.

Hamilton was an assistant professor of history at Samford for 37 years and worked on its campus for 13 years as executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission (ABHC) — the first woman to direct an entity of the state Baptist convention.

And Samford's sister Baptist school, Judson College in Marion, honored her as its 2011 outstanding alumna at the recent J-Day weekend. One of the people who nominated Hamilton, current ABHC Executive Director Lonette Berg, said she "embodies the qualities of a



HAMILTON

Judson graduate — excellent character, determined leadership, willingness to serve, strong Christian values and unflinching loyalty. She is a tireless proponent of Judson College, encouraging all young women she encounters to consider Judson as their college choice."

Hamilton graduated from Judson in 1957 with a bachelor's degree in history and French. In 1959, she earned a master's degree in history from the University of Georgia, where she worked as a graduate teaching assistant. Judson awarded her the doctor of humane letters degree in 1992.

As a historian, Hamilton served Alabama Baptist churches, associations and state convention entities and auxiliaries by encouraging and assisting them in collecting and preserving of their history and heritage. She co-authored "Daughters of the Dream," the history of Judson published in 1989, and currently is updating it for the college's 175th anniversary in 2013. Hamilton also was elected to the Judson board of trustees by the Alabama Baptist State Convention in 2007. She is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, Pi Delta Phi, the Alabama Association of Historians, the Alabama Historical Association, the Baptist History & Heritage Society and the Southern Historical Association. Hamilton previously served as a vocalist and pianist at First Baptist Church, Trussville, and is now a member of First Baptist Church, Montgomery.

She and her late husband, Taylor, are the parents of Col. Charles Hamilton, who currently is serving in the U.S. Air Force in Iraq.

### Alabama's Eason retires after 42 years with NAMB

According to the North American Mission Board (NAMB), only one current employee has served longer than Thomas Eason.

Eason spent 42 years working with the Southern Baptist entity — 35 of them with the Baptist Convention of New Mexico (BCNM). But earlier this year, he bowed out of the friendly competition and retired.

A Goodwater native and graduate of Samford University in Birmingham, Eason spent the first eight years of his ministry as a pastor of Alabama Baptist churches. He went on to graduate from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and the Mexican Baptist Bible Institute in San Antonio.

In 1968, he and his wife, Betty (of Birmingham), were appointed by the Home Mission Board (now NAMB). Eason served three years as a pastor in New Mexico before he and his wife began four years of service as regional missionaries in eastern Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In 1976, Eason began his ministry with the BCNM as a catalytic missionary to Doña Ana County. He retired as language church strategist for all of southern New Mexico. In between, he also taught in the Contextualized Leadership Development program of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.; led missions outreach projects and Vacation Bible schools; developed a chapel on wheels ministry of Bible study after-school programs for children; and served as director of evangelism and president for the Spanish Baptist Convention of New Mexico. Eason said he is thankful for the time he and his wife have been given to serve.

"We are so grateful to the Lord for the opportunity to serve a lifetime with Southern Baptist churches and agencies and for the great experiences He has provided," Eason wrote in his retirement letter.

The Easons now live in Las Cruces, N.M., along with their children and grandchildren, and will continue to work with Golden Gate Seminary and in Hispanic ministry.



EASON



Photo courtesy of Mount Moriah Baptist Church

### PELL CITY'S MOUNT MORIAH HOLDS NOTE BURNING, DEDICATION

Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Pell City, in St. Clair Association held a note-burning ceremony and dedication for its fellowship hall and sanctuary April 3. The loan was paid off in 11 years after the family of Howard Savage, who died March 1 and was a member for nearly 60 years, paid the remaining amount. The church named the fellowship hall The Howard Savage Fellowship Hall. Pictured are (front row, l to r) Jim Bond, Steve Latta, Joan Venerable, Juanita Savage, Wayne Williams and Zane Smith and (back row, l to r) deacons Jimmy McNutt, Dave Disspain, Jackie Gant and Jim King.

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# Chinese government expands persecution tactics, report says

The Chinese government intensified its pressure against Christians in 2010 for a "fifth straight year of escalating persecution," according to ChinaAid Association, a Christian human rights organization based in Washington.

Beatings, torture, arrests, harassment and church demolitions are among the 90 recorded cases of persecution, a nearly 17 percent increase over 2009, according to a report released by ChinaAid on March 31.

The cases "are just the tip of the iceberg," according to a ChinaAid news release.

"The Chinese government's stranglehold on information and the authoritarian regime's other security measures make getting a true picture of the extent of persecution impossible. Nevertheless, the fact that the documented incidences of persecution came from all parts of China and involved people from all levels of society makes the report a useful guide."

The report suggests the increase in persecution may have been triggered by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Chinese dissident Liu Xiabao and the thwarted attendance by more than 200 delegates from Chinese house churches at the Lausanne Congress on Global Evangelization in South Africa.

The report states that Chinese authorities, in addition to continuing to target house churches and

their leaders in urban areas, are adopting three additional tactics of persecution:

▶ The government is severely cracking down on Christian human rights lawyers, who have increasingly defended persecuted Christians in the country's court system.

More than two-thirds of persecution cases in Beijing involved such lawyers, who are subjected to harassment, beating and abduction.

▶ While the government is decreasing official prison sentences against Christians who can defend themselves against such measures in the legal system, mafia-type violence and intimidation (some people have simply disappeared) is being

used, which leaves Christians no legal recourse.

▶ The government is punishing Three-Self Patriotic Movement churches (official churches) that have failed to submit to its complete control.

Congregants are beaten, churches forced to disband and some buildings torn down.

The report documented 3,343 people who were persecuted in 2010, a nearly 14 percent increase from 2009.

Detentions increased by 43 percent, and 336 house church leaders were persecuted. Overall, the report said persecution was more than 193 percent worse in 2010 than 2006. (BP)

*The report documented 3,343 people who were persecuted in 2010, a nearly 14 percent increase from 2009.*

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# 90-year-old associate pastor still going strong

By John Evans  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Earl Hall has been serving in vocational ministry longer than many people even live. But as the 90-year-old associate pastor of Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery, reflects on his 73 years of service, he says it was not a path he ever imagined.

Hall, a Birmingham native, was a 17-year-old employee of Bell South Telephone Company (now AT&T) in Birmingham in 1938; he thought that would be his lifelong career. That changed suddenly.

"I was attending an assembly at Shocco Springs (Baptist Conference Center in Talladega), and during one of the services there, the man who was doing the speaking said, 'I just got the feeling there's somebody here that's being called to ministry,' and all of a sudden, it just sounded like a voice speaking to me saying, 'Earl, that's you,'" Hall recalled.

He shared his new calling with his home church, Mount Calvary Baptist, Tarrant, where his father was pastor. Hall was ordained into the ministry several months later and began serving as the church's associate pastor.

## 'Real deep feeling'

"It was a great sense of satisfaction, because I just had a real deep feeling that's what the Lord wanted me to do," he said.

For more than five years, Hall preached every other Sunday night, learning from his father how to minister. He also met his wife, Ethel, whom he married in 1941.

Afterward Hall began to serve

his own churches (sometimes preaching at two different churches on alternating Sundays) while still working for the telephone company. But he felt that to continue in the ministry, he needed to complete his education. He graduated from Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham and left the phone company to concentrate on full-time ministry.

"It was a great relief to realize I didn't have something over here that was trying to pull me away (from ministry) and I could give my full time to it," Hall said.

He continued to serve as a pastor even while attending classes at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., from which he graduated in 1957.

"The biggest challenge (of being a pastor) was preparing sermons for every week ... and also being responsible for the pastoral ministry, which involved visiting people and ministering to them in times of need, visiting hospitals and performing wedding ceremonies," Hall said. "It just filled your time up."



Photo courtesy of Heritage Baptist Church

**'CALLED TO MINISTRY'** — Earl Hall (left), associate pastor of Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery, has been in the ministry for 73 years. He is pictured with his wife, Ethel.

He said the greatest reward of being a pastor was seeing people come to know the Lord, most notably at a 1961 revival at Winfield Baptist Church, where he baptized 72 people.

"The first man I baptized was a pretty good-sized fellow," Hall said.

"When I laid him in the water, it

splashed around him and all over me, so it just really refreshed me. I was stronger I think when I got through than when I started."

That same year, he moved to Normandale Baptist Church (now Lakeview Baptist Church), leading the congregation through the turmoil of the civil rights movement.

"It kind of put you on edge, because you never knew what was going to happen," Hall said.

He remembers initially there were people who were dead-set against allowing black men and women to worship in the church. Hall struggled to keep peace in the congregation while emphasizing his belief that all people are God's creation and should worship together freely.

"It was my privilege to be able to lead Normandale Baptist Church to accept the black race into our membership before I left that church," he said. "We put it on our church [books] that any person who desires to worship and fellowship is welcome in our church."

Hall retired as pastor of Norman-

dale Baptist in 1986. Two years later, he began serving as associate pastor of Heritage Baptist. His main responsibilities are hospital and home visitations, preparing devotionals for weekly staff meetings and leading the Wednesday night prayer meeting.

"That keeps me studying in the Book," Hall said. "It's very important, because that's how we grow in faith, by studying the Word of God and seeking to apply it to our lives."

## Great impact

Pastor Teman Knight appreciates Hall's impact on the church's mostly young ministry staff, his compassion toward those he visits in hospitals, the encouragement he has given him and his desire to continue serving the Lord as long as possible.

"Most ministers I know would like to minister until they're 73, but to do it for 73 years, that's an incredible thing," Knight said. "If you talk to him, you understand his spirit, how God-honoring of a man he is."

Hall and his wife have three children, seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

To celebrate his 90th birthday March 29, Heritage held a reception March 27.

As he reflects on his life, Hall said the main lesson he's learned is the Lord's power to turn those walking away from Him into powerful proclaimers of His Word.

"He can take the worst person, turn him into a follower and use him for the glory of God and the help of mankind." ❧

## Someone You Should Know

### EILEEN FULTON

Hopewell Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa  
Tuscaloosa Baptist Association



FULTON

**FAVORITE VERSES:** Psalm 103:1-3

**FAVORITE HYMN:** "Amazing Grace"

**HOBBIES:** Playing piano and reading

**FAMILY STATUS:** Widowed after 26 years

**of marriage to Ed; four children, Charlotte, Dianne, Ed and Jimmy; 10 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren**

Eileen Fulton, better known as "Grandarling" by her friends and family, turned 100 April 15.

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

A: I ... had a musical childhood. I started to play piano at 8 years old and then played violin with one of my brothers. I wasn't a natural-born musician. I had to work at it, practicing four hours a day in high school. My wish was to be an evangelical musician.

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

A: I had Christian parents who always had Bible reading and prayer together. ... I saw Jesus guided my parents. ... They had a quiet trust in the Lord. I wanted that. I saw I needed a Savior.

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

A: I taught piano for many years. It was my desire that each of my students would develop their talents and realize God gave them their abilities and gifts. I have been involved in missions

through WMU (Woman's Missionary Union).

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

A: At this season of my life, I'm not able to faithfully attend my church, but I'm connected through praying for my church family.

**Q: What difference has Christ made in your life?**

A: Christ is my daily strength. He is the One who has allowed me to reach this 100th birthday. ❧

## Smaller churches struggling most with continued financial squeeze

Almost all U.S. churches witnessed a change in the financial giving they received in 2010 compared to 2009, with smaller churches feeling the squeeze but larger churches faring relatively better, according to a new report.

Only 12 percent of churches reported unchanged giving from 2009, according to the State of the Plate survey released March 30, while 43 percent of churches experienced a giving increase and 39 percent reported a decrease.

Smaller congregations were more likely to see a decrease in giving, said Matt Branaugh, an editor at Christianity Today International.

"We do see smaller churches continuing to struggle, it seems more so than larger-sized churches," Branaugh said.

The report found that about 40 percent of churches with fewer than 249 attendees experienced a drop in giving. Only 29 percent of megachurches, with an average weekend attendance of more than 2,000, reported a decrease in giving.

Churches that reported an in-

crease in giving rose from 35 percent in 2009 to 43 percent in 2010.

The State of the Plate survey was launched in 2008 when Brian Kluth, founder of Colorado Springs, Colo.-based Maximum Generosity, realized there was minimal solid data on church finances.

The following year, Kluth's financial consulting firm recruited Christianity Today International in compiling the report and The Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability joined both organizations to analyze self-reported 2010 data from churches.

The survey is a constituency survey, based on e-mail responses submitted by 1,507 congregations.

Kluth said the Obama administration's proposal to reduce tax deductions for high-end charitable donors will impact gifts given to churches.

"If the government's plan to change the rules on charitable tax deductions goes through, giving to charities and churches and the help they give to others will likely be negatively impacted at a time it is needed the most," Kluth said. (RNS)

# Child sex trafficking growing issue in US

Commercial sexual exploitation remains a major problem among the young in the United States, with an estimated 100,000 U.S. children trafficked annually, experts say.

"The majority of the victims that we're finding who are child sex trafficking victims are U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents," said Sarah Vardaman, senior director of Shared Hope International.

Vardaman's comment came at a live webcast hosted by Tony Perkins, president of the Family

Research Council in Washington. The event focused on the reasons minors and young adults are sexually exploited in the United States in such great numbers.

"The sexual entertainment and the sexualization of our culture is encouraging a growing number of people who are demanding these services. And so, if we want to look at the factors of supply and demand, then we would say [the sex trafficking industry] is growing," said Vardaman, whose organization seeks to rescue and restore women and

children victimized by trafficking.

The sexual entertainment industry is booming because of greater access to pornography through technology. People are becoming desensitized to what the sex industry offers, Perkins said.

Pat Trueman, chief executive officer of Morality in Media, said the porn industry is a \$12-\$13 billion industry.

Morality in Media, which published a report in February, "Links Between Pornography and Sex Trafficking," created a letter to Congress explaining the harm of pornography and asking Attorney General Eric Holder to enforce obscenity laws.

"There is as much money going under the table as there is above the table," Trueman said. "So this is an industry that some of it's organized crime, some of it's involved in money laundering [and] trafficking."

Organizations are helping children and women get out of the industry and informing the Justice Department of the slavery occurring in America. The key is part-

nerships, said Lisa Thompson, the Salvation Army's liaison for the abolition of sexual trafficking. Thompson works with more than 30 different religious groups to create organized partnerships to stop sex exploitation.

"A lot of our effort is aimed at services at the grass-roots level to actual victims, to outreach in the community, to advocacy and awareness, and education efforts," Thompson said.

Thompson cited the efforts of the Salvation Army in Chicago with the group Partnership to Rescue our Minors from Sexual Exploitation, alongside Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking, a Christian alliance working to eliminate human trafficking and help survivors.

"We have accepted pornography; we have accepted the sexual objectification of women. And this is conditioning girls to look at themselves as sex objects and to think the sex industry doesn't pose any threat or harm to them," Thompson said. (BP)

*"A lot of our effort is aimed at services at the grass-roots level to actual victims."*

Lisa Thompson  
Salvation Army

## 'Never-ending question' continues

(continued from page 1)  
resurrection," Witherington said.

Martin Connell, a scholar at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., calls the chronology conundrum a "never-ending question."

"So unsettled is the evidence, and so elastic, that the debate will likely always continue," Connell said.

The apostle Paul wrote that the third-day resurrection accords with the Hebrew Scriptures.

Some scholars, such as Wahlen, think Paul is pointing to a passage in the Book of Hosea, which says God will "heal" and "restore" Israel after three days.

There may be a very practical reason for the resurrection to have happened in three days after Jesus' death, scholars say.

First-century tradition held that only after three days could you be sure someone was dead; after four days, the spirit was presumed to leave the body.

(RNS)

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

**BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR:** Coldwater Baptist Church is looking for a bivocational pastor. Send resumes to: Richard Walls, 904 Edgewood Drive, Oxford, AL 36203.

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**ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR CHILDREN:** Tabernacle Baptist Church in Carrollton, Ga., is seeking an associate pastor for children. An M.Div. (or equivalent) is required from an accredited seminary. Candidate must have experience in planning, developing, supervising and coordinating a ministry to children from birth to sixth grade. For more information, visit www.tabernacle.org. To apply, submit resume by April 30 to: Tabernacle Baptist Church, Search Committee, 150 Tabernacle Drive, Carrollton, GA 30117, or e-mail: linda.bohannon@tabernacle.org.

**FULL-TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTER:** Harvest Baptist Church seeking full-time children's minister. Seminary degree preferred. E-mail resumes to: ndull@knology.net, or mail to: 8999 Wall Triana Hwy., Harvest, AL 35749.

**PART-TIME CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR:** Send resume to: churchoffice@cottagehillbaptist.org or mail to: Cottage Hill Baptist Church, ATTN: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 515, Pleasant Grove, AL 35127. 205-744-8521.

### OTHER POSITIONS

**PIANIST:** Oak Bowery Baptist Church is accepting applications for the position of pianist. Please contact church office at 256-892-3711, or e-mail at: oakbowerybaptist@att.net.

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## Want to know God?

By Pastor John Nicholson  
Siloam Baptist Church, Marion

We are faced with three big words and one big choice.

Incarnation. It is a Latin word meaning "in the flesh." In Jesus, God became one of us. The Message author Eugene Peterson memorably phrased John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood." Imagine that: God moving in just down the street from you. In Jesus, that is exactly what happened.

There are some who say Jesus was just a man who exhibited godly qualities. Others say He was just God who took on some human qualities. This simply is not an option from the biblical witness. Scripture is abundantly clear that Jesus was God in the flesh.

God did not take on human flesh in order to better understand us. He took on human flesh so we could better understand Him. Our understanding of Him is clarified once and for all at the cross, which leads us to another big word.

Substitution. We all understand the concept of substitution; we've experienced substitute teachers or been a substitute in a ballgame. A substitute takes the place of another, and that is just what Jesus did for us. The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For our sake, He (God) made Him (Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him, we might become the righteousness of God." Jesus took our place. He paid a price He did not owe, the price you and I owe.

Jesus did not take our place because He owed some sort of debt. He took our place because we owed so great a debt we could never pay it. He took our place because He loved us. The Incarnation was necessary for Him to become our substitute. And in His substitutionary death, we discover the third big word.

Salvation. Jesus made it abundantly clear that He was here for one reason: "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). In case you are wondering just who "the lost" are, they are us, every single one of us. Have you been found by Him? He's looking for you.

You might start by praying something like, "Lord Jesus, thank you for coming to take my place. I need you to find me and save me today. Thank you for looking for me! Amen!"

# His prevention programs 'among the best'

## Bill Day retires as ALCAP education director, continues American Character Builders work

By **Sondra Washington**  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**B**ill Day knows the importance of education and Christian character building. After spending almost his entire life in classrooms and congregations learning or teaching — sometimes both — Day has worked with Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP) for the past 15 years to pass these values along to Alabama students.

Although he recently retired as ALCAP's education director, Day is still serving part-time with the ministry to continue its American Character Builders (ACB) program, which he hopes will help students as the state's education environment changes.

"The idea is that if you can prevent something, you have a much better opportunity to have a healthy wholesome life than trying to correct a bad choice," Day said. "When I came in 1995 about all we did was get into the schools and provide pro-

grams about drinking and tobacco. That's why we developed all these other (character building) areas to get in schools and open doors and make our program relevant to the needs of the kids."

To meet these needs, Day has developed brochures and PowerPoint presentations on suicide prevention, character development, violence prevention within the school, gang awareness, bullying and gambling.

Before joining ALCAP, Day was no stranger to the threats to today's children and youth. He had served as executive director of the Iowa Council on Alcohol Problems; was a high school history and Latin teacher as well as a football, basketball and tennis coach; and had served for 43 years as pastor of numerous churches in Kentucky, Indiana, Iowa and California. Day held his first position as pastor at age 17 and then earned a bachelor's degree in history and Latin at Georgetown College in Kentucky in 1960; a master of divinity from Southern Baptist Theo-

logical Seminary in Louisville, Ky., in 1964; a master's degree in history from Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Ky., in 1967; and a doctor of philosophy in social and intellectual history from Vanderbilt University in Nashville in 1971.

Joe Godfrey, who has served as executive director of ALCAP for the past two years, said Day has a "tremendous mind" and working with him has been a pleasure.

"Most of the materials that ALCAP has produced since he's been there, he wrote," Godfrey said of Day. "He has a real love for the young people of our state and their families."

### Instrumental help

ALCAP Director Emeritus Dan Ireland worked with Day from the time Day joined ALCAP's staff until Ireland retired in 2008. According to Ireland, Day was instrumental in helping ALCAP begin educating youth at various stages in their lives.

"At the public school level, every year the NCAA was doing a youth week camp on various colleges in Alabama, and Bill did the drug education series at these meetings every summer reaching right at 16,000 young people from about ages nine to 15," Ireland said.

Ireland, who is now executive director of The American Council on Alcohol Problems, believes Day's

work has also opened many doors in Alabama schools, churches and other organizations interested in dealing with alcohol and drug education in youth.

"As far as we can tell, he has developed one of the best drug education programs in the schools of Alabama than any other state has," Ireland said. "In addition to that, he developed a lot of good, solidly researched information on various aspects of moral and drug education to go into schools. The bullying program is one of those. ... The material he helped develop is being used in other states as well."

In his part-time role, Day hopes to continue producing materials for ACB, which he said has had to change its strategy for reaching students since schools have become so busy with other requirements. He said ALCAP plans to begin offering the information in packages making it easier for schools to use.

"Much of what we were able to do 10 years ago we are not able to do now because of the reading initiative (in schools), the tests they (students) have to do and the stress on academics," Day said, noting that prevention programs in schools are still very necessary.

"We are beginning to see state and national trends where children are beginning to smoke again, alcohol use is rising, methamphetamines are a problem ... because in the school they are not providing times for prevention programs. ... It's like a pendulum swing. ... Every 12 to 15 years, it's a swing one way or the other where people get concerned (about prevention) and you make a difference. Smoking and drinking goes down. Then, they don't emphasize it and the problems come back. We have been on a downward trend of all the emphasis and now we are beginning to turn around, and it's starting in the other direction."

Day, who has served as interim pastor in about 11 Alabama Baptist churches, hopes the faith community will become involved in character building programs to help combat the types of problems and trends he is seeing in today's youth.

"I think it's so very important that somehow we are able to motivate and activate the church to provide after-school programs and opportunities for education," he said.

For more information on American Character Builders, visit [www.alcap.com](http://www.alcap.com) or call 205-985-9062. ☛



DAY

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**15 Days** *Join other Baptists September 27, 2011* from **\$1448\***

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## Retired Alabama pastor Harold Voce dies at 76

**R**etired Alabama Baptist pastor Harold Voce died April 3. He was 76.

Born in Double Springs, Voce was called to the ministry in 1964 while attending Roebuck Park Baptist Church, Birmingham (now

NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville).

He graduated from Samford University in Birmingham and received his master of divinity from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Voce served as pastor of First

Baptist Church, Cowan, Tenn., and First Baptist Church, Pearlinton, Miss., while in seminary.

After seminary, he served for 35 years as pastor of several Alabama churches, including First Baptist Church, Columbiana; Baldwin Heights Baptist Church, Cullman; First Baptist Church, Hanceville; and West Jefferson Baptist Church, Quinton. Voce also was interim pastor of several churches in West Cullman Baptist Association.

In the 1970s, he also worked at Mark's Village in Irondale to minister to underprivileged boys.

Voce was a member of Crossroads Baptist Church, Warrior, at the time of his death.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Billie Ruth; four children; and seven grandchildren. (TAB)



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

### FAITHFUL SERVANT OF THE LORD

Retired pastor Roy Carlton Griggs (right) was named pastor emeritus of Southside Baptist Church, Alabaster, on April 10. Pastor J.D. Davis presents Griggs with the official documentation during the service honoring Griggs and his wife, Dell.

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For April 24

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

### BELIEVING THE TRUTH John 20:1-18

Some say Easter faith does not depend on Easter fact. According to this view, whether Jesus rose is not nearly so important as whether the disciples believed He rose. This is a new theological version of the old question "If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?" Only this time, the question is more like "Does it matter whether the tree falls in the forest so long as you hear the sound?" Its theological counterpart holds that it does not matter whether Jesus rose from the dead so long as His disciples believe and preach that He did.

Whether Jesus rose from the dead may affect some folks' faith very little, but my whole Christian faith stands or falls on it. Take away Jesus' resurrection and my faith falls to the ground entirely.

The text shows Jesus rose from the dead because the tomb was empty and He appeared in person to Mary Magdalene and a group of unnamed disciples on Easter evening. Because Jesus lives:

#### I Believe in the God of the Bible

Christian philosophers have developed seven arguments for God's existence. Some of those arguments go a long way toward demonstrating logically that a God exists. But not one of them can show that the God of the philosophers is the God of Abraham and Moses, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. My belief in the God of the Bible rests on Jesus' resurrection. Because He lives, I believe "in God who raised Him from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:21).

Nature makes no provision for resurrection, so Jesus' resurrection shows there is supernatural power in this universe. Men can build a bomb that can vaporize a million people in a moment and land a lunar vehicle on the moon with accuracy. But no one can raise a man three days dead. Jesus' resurrection points to a supernatural being with incredibly great power. Once more, the resurrection indicates God's involvement in this world. He is not the absentee landlord of deism (the doctrine that God created the world but takes no part in it). If

God stepped into space-time history and made death work backward once — and He did on the first Easter — then the door is open to His repeated involvement in this world.

#### I Believe Jesus of Nazareth Is the True God

What is the real proof that Jesus of Nazareth is God come in the flesh? When skeptics asked for an incontrovertible sign that He was the Son of the living God, Jesus gave them only one: the sign of the resurrection (Matt. 12:38-40). Paul said, "He was declared ('marked out') to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). In raising Jesus from the dead to die no more, God announced to all ages, "This is my beloved Son. Hear ye Him!"

Had Jesus been an imposter and a false prophet, God would never have raised Him from the dead. The resurrection set the divine seal of approval on His testimony about Himself and God, about the state and fate of man, about the way of salvation and about heaven and hell. Because He lives, I believe Jesus Christ is Lord of lords and King of kings, the unique Son of God and the only Savior of the world.

#### I Believe Salvation Is Possible

The New Testament links the resurrection and the cross into one great saving event. Jesus "was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). A dead Savior is no Savior at all. Without the resurrection, there is no forgiveness, no hope, no salvation. Because He lives, however, I believe that Jesus is "able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Heb. 7:25).

#### I Believe in the Life Beyond

My faith in life after life and resurrection at the last day rests on Jesus' resurrection. He who was slain but rose and lives forevermore promised, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). Jesus' resurrection assures the resurrection of all who trust in Him.

Because He lives, I can shout, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Because He lives, someday my tombstone will read, "He is not here. He is risen as the Lord said!"

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

### ENCOUNTER THE RISEN LORD John 20:1-18

Belief in Jesus Christ's resurrection is fundamental to Christian faith. Paul said one of the first tenets of Christian faith he proclaimed to the Corinthians was that of Jesus' death and resurrection: He died for our sins in accordance with Scripture, was buried, was raised on the third day in accordance with Scriptures and appeared to many (1 Cor. 15:3-8). This critical doctrine is not only the tradition that Paul taught all his converts but also one he received from the apostles who were with Jesus (1 Cor. 15:3). And if Jesus has not been raised from the dead, then our faith is futile and all that awaits us is death (1 Cor. 15:32). Jesus' resurrection is not simply Paul's gospel message but is corroborated by all the Gospel writers and Luke in Acts (1:1-5).

#### Death Destroyed (1-10)

In John's account, Mary Magdalene, who was healed from demons (Luke 8:2), went early to the tomb. Although other women may have been with her, Mary plays a critical role in John's account (note "we" in verse 2; see also Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:9-10).

Her discovery of the empty tomb was conveyed to both Peter and John. And both saw firsthand the empty tomb and discarded grave clothes. A simple, but critical, point is made in the story: John saw and believed (8). John believed in spite of the fact that he was not yet able to connect Jesus' resurrection as fulfillment of Scripture (9). God provides salvation even when His people do not fully comprehend His actions or words in Scripture. But precisely, what are the implications of Jesus' resurrection from the dead for His followers?

It means that the last enemy, death, has been destroyed (1 Cor. 15:23). Death, the inevitable fate for all humanity since Adam, finally has been conquered. Jesus is the first-born from the dead (Col. 1:18), and all who belong to Him have hope of resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23). In spite of the fact that we do not have the privilege of "seeing" the empty tomb and grave clothes, we can take comfort in Jesus' words: "Blessed are those who have

not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

#### Mary Magdalene's Grief (11-15)

Turning back to Mary's story in John, she stood weeping outside the tomb. Her grief at the loss of Jesus was profound. And she found two angels inside the tomb. In response to their query "Why are you weeping?," she revealed her emotional connection with Jesus. Yet she was confused by the empty tomb; she believed that someone had taken Jesus' body (13). This confusion is reiterated when she mistakes Jesus as a gardener and, once again, tries to find His body. And in her heart-wrenching grief, she failed to recognize Jesus who stood before her. And although she did not perceive His presence, Jesus had not abandoned her in her sorrow.

#### Source of Joy and Comfort (16-18)

As Jesus called out her name, Mary's vision was clarified; she saw and recognized Him. Her sorrow was transformed to joy instantaneously. In the same way, our sorrow turns to joy in the presence of our resurrected Lord.

He is the true source of joy and comfort for believers. For all who believe, hope is never lost because it is centered on the certainty of God, who brings life even in death (Rom. 4:13-25). And in this joyful scene between Jesus and Mary, He told her, "Do not [continue to] cling to me." Mary, along with the rest of the disciples, now had to relate to Jesus differently than she did during His earthly ministry.

As the resurrected Lord, He must ascend to the Father. And Mary was commanded to tell His disciples of His resurrection and coming ascension. Testimony of Jesus' resurrection is organic to our relationship of faith with Him. Our encounter with Jesus never remains private and merely personal. We become a body of believers by communicating our faith in the resurrected Lord to others. The community of believers is testimonial in nature; we relate our faith and experience to others so that they might believe.

And our testimony is the ultimate source of good news for all; all of humanity lives in fear of death. And Jesus is the only solution for all of humanity.

## Christian Crossword

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#### Across

- Thou shalt \_\_\_\_ coals of fire on his head. (Rom. 12:20)
- I must also see \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 19:21)
- They shall still bring forth fruit in \_\_\_\_ age. (Ps. 92:14)
- Bearing.
- Great god of love.
- Spicknel.
- The kings of Midian ... Evi ... Hur, and \_\_\_\_\_. (Num. 31:8)
- Celebration.
- Had compassion, and \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 15:20)
- West coast state.
- Thou shalt destroy them that speak \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 5:6)
- Howbeit \_\_\_\_ fled. (Judg. 4:17)
- Female saint. (abbr.)
- Explosive initials.
- They could not \_\_\_\_ in because of unbelief. (Heb. 3:19)
- Anglo-Saxon slave.
- Only the gold ... silver ... \_\_\_\_\_. (Num. 31:22)
- The \_\_\_\_ is fulfilled. (Mark 1:15)
- Two hundred shekels of silver, and a \_\_\_\_ of gold. (Josh. 7:21)
- Sun.
- \_\_\_\_ Tin Tin.

#### Down

- Bring them up unto mount \_\_\_\_\_. (Num. 20:25)
- How long will it be \_\_\_\_ thou be quiet? (Jer. 47:6)
- Priestly garment.
- We have \_\_\_\_ with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:1)
- Sports official.
- City in Russia.
- The law was given by \_\_\_\_\_. (John 1:17)
- That he might know your \_\_\_\_, and comfort your hearts. (Col. 4:8)
- \_\_\_\_ the son of Michael. (1 Chron. 27:18)
- Yet will they \_\_\_\_ upon the Lord. (Mic. 3:11)
- Thou shalt bake it with \_\_\_\_\_. (Ezek. 4:12)
- O God, thou \_\_\_\_ my God. (Ps. 63:1)
- He that receiveth me receiveth him that \_\_\_\_ me. (Matt. 10:40)
- I will \_\_\_\_ thee out of my mouth. (Rev. 3:16)
- A foolish man ... built his house upon the \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 7:26)
- Go to the \_\_\_\_, thou sluggard. (Prov. 6:6)
- "\_\_\_\_ the season to be jolly."
- Bind the \_\_\_\_ of thine head upon thee. (Ezek. 24:17)
- Arabian prince.
- For he \_\_\_\_ Israel from the house of David. (2 Kings 17:21)
- Direction. (abbr.)
- Protection.
- Cain went out ... and dwelt in the land of \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen. 4:16)
- Plural suffix.
- Add thou not unto his words, \_\_\_\_ he reprove thee. (Prov. 30:6)
- The coast reacheth to \_\_\_\_\_. (Josh. 19:22)
- Israel sent messengers unto \_\_\_\_\_. (Num. 21:21)
- He sent forth a \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen. 8:8)
- Of bees.
- Into the second went the high priest alone once every \_\_\_\_\_. (Heb. 9:7)
- A small brook.
- Did eat.
- Fruit drink.
- Lincoln.
- Retired. (abbr.)
- Students for a Democratic Society.



# RESOURCES:

Your Guide to Today's New Music and Literature



## Sound Bites

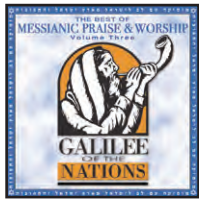
By Rick Sharp

### VARIOUS ARTISTS

*Best of Messianic Praise & Worship*  
— Volume Three

Galilee of the Nations Music and Provident-Integrity Distribution

With the season of Lent and the Passover celebration at hand, a listen to the March 1 release from Galilee of the Nations Music seems appropriate. A genre started in 1998, Messianic praise-and-worship music is bolstered by 34 worldwide releases from various established and upcoming artists “all with a heart toward Israel,” as stated in the McCain and Co. press release.



The album presents a wide range of styles: touching love songs to our Father, powerful anthems praising a conquering God, an unexpected instrumental selection from guitarist Sean Spicer (Spicer's new album, “Olive Tree,” will be reviewed here soon) and even some outstanding blues slide guitar. With a total of 17 songs, both in Yiddish and English, this CD will make a beautiful, powerful and meaningful addition to your family's Passover season.

### DEITRICK HADDON

*Church on the Moon*

Verity

Grammy-nominated artist Deitrick Haddon's 10th album, “Church

on the Moon,” again bends the labels that we might apply to his musical style. Haddon once referred to his music as “gospel soul,” but here we have elements of techno, R&B, soul, hip-hop and funk. None of this gets in the way of the Full Gospel preacher's message. Salvation, right-living, Holy-Ghost filling and God's grace are as out-in-front as a Sunday sermon from the pulpit. If you're a fan of modern music, you're going to love this CD.

I asked my stepson Jeff Bates to give me a younger person's take on this CD. Here's what he wrote: “Deitrick Haddon reinvents what you think of as contemporary Christian music. ‘Church on the Moon’ is a journey from Motown to modern.

“He starts off with techno style — hard-hitting, energetic tracks that must be played loud — then levels out with smooth vocals at a slower tempo that inspire top-down crusin.”



“Through the various musical styles, one common thread remains; the Christian message is undeniable.”

Yeah, what he said!

### KRISTIAN STANFILL

*Mountains Move*

sixstepsrecords

“Let's stop living according to the size of our issues and start living

according to the size of our God. These songs are about having faith in God and believing that God is who He says He is, no matter what our circumstances are.”

That's Kristian Stanfill's description of what his sophomore record release from sixstepsrecords is all about. Many of the songs are co-written with Dove Award-



winning songwriter Jason Ingram, Grammy Award-nominated artist Chris Tomlin and Hillsong's Reuben Morgan. The entire album is well written and produced, and Stanfill's skills as a worship leader come through loud and clear.

The anthemic “Say, Say,” previously released on Passion's “Passion: Awakening” album (which Stanfill headed) is just one of the included rockers that's finding play on Christian radio outlets as well as finding its way into the repertoire of countless church praise bands. Several of the songs, perhaps led by the single releases “Day After Day” and “You Will Reign,” are moving acoustic ballads with powerful Bible-based lyrics.

Stanfill will be touring this summer with Brandon Heath and Dave Barnes on Heath's “Leaving Eden” tour.

music for a long time. Too, we'll soon be hearing these songs in our own churches

as our praise bands integrate these songs that present a strong biblical message wrapped in some of the best contemporary Christian music available today.

Waller is well known for turning God's Word into songs, and this album is again a wellspring of biblical lyrics.

A free music download is offered on his website, [www.johnwallermusic.com](http://www.johnwallermusic.com), for those signing the Joshua 24:15 Declaration indicating their households will serve the Lord.

I almost started this review with “Wow!” Let me end it that way.

“Wow!”



### JOHN WALLER

*As for Me and My House*

Provident-Integrity Distribution

John Waller's new album, “As for Me and My House,” scheduled for release May 3, will be a real treat to his fans. His declarative anthem style of music is again a strong musical current through the CD, as evidenced by the moving “Our God Reigns Here.” However, the title song and several others offer a well-crafted worship feel and touching introspection.

“The Marriage Prayer,” sung with his wife, Josee, is a beautiful and sweet joint promise to God for a biblically sound marriage.

Musically, the new CD is chock-full of strong backbeats, soaring guitars and outstanding vocals.

Waller's gift for producing music that is both traditional in its message and cutting edge in its delivery guarantees that we'll be listening to his vision of Christian

## Christian Marketplace

### Top Ten Best Sellers

#### Fiction

1. **Vicious Cycle**, Terri Blackstock (Zondervan)
2. **Leaving – Bailey Flanigan Series #1**, Karen Kingsbury (Zondervan)
3. **Unlocked**, Karen Kingsbury (Zondervan)
4. **Heart for Home**, Lauraine Snelling (Bethany House)
5. **Redeeming Love**, Francine Rivers (Waterbrook/Multnomah)
6. **Crossing Oceans**, Gina Holmes (Tyndale House)
7. **Hearts Aglow**, Tracie Peterson (Bethany House)
8. **Almost Heaven**, Chris Fabry (Tyndale House)
9. **Breach of Trust**, DiAnn Mills (Tyndale House)
10. **The Shack**, William P. Young (Windblown Media)

#### Nonfiction

1. **Heaven Is for Real**, Todd Burpo and Lynn Vincent (Thomas Nelson)
2. **Jesus Calling**, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
3. **Crazy Love**, Francis Chan (David C Cook)
4. **Love Wins**, Rob Bell (HarperOne)
5. **Radical**, David Platt (Waterbrook/Multnomah)
6. **Jesus Calling – Deluxe Edition**, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
7. **The Five Love Languages**, Gary Chapman (Moody)
8. **Made to Crave**, Lysa TerKeurst (Zondervan)
9. **The Love Dare**, Stephen & Alex Kendrick (B&H)
10. **Love and Respect**, Emerson Eggerichs (Thomas Nelson)

## Book Reviews

By Martine Bates Sharp, Ed.D.

### Sheep in an SUV and Other African Adventures

Suzanne Crocker. Kearney, Neb.: Morris Publishing, 2010. 123 pp. (Paperback).

After Suzanne Crocker's first book, “Pig in a Taxi and Other African Adventures,” it was expected that her new one would be entertaining, enlightening and motivating. It is.

This series of vignettes provides a glimpse into Crocker's life as a missionary to Togo and Benin.

The stories are well told, each one short and followed by a missionary prayer point and a challenge to the reader to consider some aspect of the Christian life.

Crocker grew up as a child of Southern Baptist representatives to Guatemala. After her marriage, she and husband John spent 10 years on the missions field, returning to Huntsville so John could serve as

director of missions at Whitesburg Baptist Church.

### Sweet Baklava

Debby Mayne. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011. 352 pp. (Paperback).

“Sweet Baklava” is a light Christian romance with a strong Greek flavor. Although it follows the age-old romance formula for the basic story, it has enough local color from the Greek community in Tarpon Springs, Fla., to spice it up and make it a good read. If you like romances written from a Christian perspective, this book is a winner.

Unlike most romance novels, “Sweet Baklava” has something for the guys, too. The author has included 20 recipes for Greek dishes, many of which are mentioned in the book such as baklava and spanakopita.

It's worth the price of the book just to get the recipes —

and the book is a nice bonus.

### Life, Death, and After: Why a Biblical Perspective?

Jack M. Hilliard. Longwood, Fla.: Xulon Press, 2010. 148 pp. (Hardback).

In “Life, Death, and After,” Jack Hilliard takes on a number of questions, from the origins of the universe to the age of the earth.

He does so by presenting accepted conservative beliefs on the topics and providing many scriptural references for support.

The book is not an especially easy read, largely because of long paragraphs that often run a page or more. The sections that are broken into smaller portions, read well.

While most conservative Christians will nod in agreement as they read, the author's approach may limit its effectiveness with anyone who is not already convinced.



Photo courtesy of Provident Label Group

**'NEW SEASON OF OPPORTUNITIES'** — Contemporary Christian singer, songwriter and author Rebecca St. James uses her God-given gifts and talents to try to make a difference and change the world.

## 'Use my life'

### Rebecca St. James reflects on music, ministry

By Leann Callaway  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

While other 12-year-old girls wavered between playing with dolls and wearing makeup, the thoughts of Aussie-born Rebecca St. James focused instead on using her abilities for God.

"I had given my heart to God when I was 8 years old and grew up in a wonderful Christian family," St. James said. "When I was 12, I remember a specific prayer where I said, 'God, I want to give you my gifts and talent. They are not mine, but yours. I hope you can use my life to make a difference and change the world.'"

St. James, who now is in her 30s and lives in Los Angeles, grew up attending Thornleigh Community Baptist Church, Australia. Because her father was a Christian concert promoter, she became familiar with the Christian music industry at an early age.

Just a few years after asking God to use her talents, she captured great attention in the contemporary Christian music industry.

"Music has always been a natural part of my life," she said. "I

moved to America with my family when I was 14, and I sang at different youth groups and churches. Some guys from a record label saw me sing when I was 15 and signed me to that label soon after that. So, it was one of those things that God definitely led me to do."

Along the way, she has garnered multiple honors, including a Grammy Award and Dove Awards from the Gospel Music Association.

She also became recognized as one of the most influential young women of her generation.

Through her ministry, St. James has used her influence to try to shape teenagers' attitudes about sexual purity and Christian commitment. She has done this by speaking at a variety of events, writing books and appearing in film projects.

Her leading role in the pro-life movie "Sarah's Choice" prompted

St. James to support the work of crisis pregnancy centers. In fact, she appeared at a pro-life event in Jasper on March 31. In addition, St. James has hosted "SHE" events to challenge girls and women to live godly lives.

During the past few years, St. James has taken time to reflect and renew her commitment to music and ministry, while staying busy with a variety of projects.

St. James' newest album, "I Will Praise You," was released April 5.

Also in April, St. James will wed Jacob Fink, who proposed to her on Christmas Day 2010.

For St. James, the songs on this album express various aspects in the life of a believer, such as praise, surrender and hope.

"When I think of my life today, I have a new appreciation of ministry, music and the new season of opportunities God has for me," St. James said.

"I realize the very threads that run through this album are all very poignant and personal to me through the journey of the last five years of my life.

"In this season of new music, God has been reminding me: 'This is about Jesus. This is about praising Him and inviting other people into that journey with you.'

"My mission statement and focus is, 'Get out of the way, Rebecca, and just let people see Jesus.' It's all about His glory."



## PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



### Christian woman freed from Muslim kidnappers

LAHORE, Pakistan — A Christian mother of seven who last August was kidnapped, raped, sold into marriage and threatened with death if she did not convert to Islam was freed in March.

After she refused to convert and accept the marriage, human traffickers had threatened to kill Shaheen Bibi, 40, if her father, Manna Masih, did not pay a ransom of \$1,170 by March 5, the released woman said.

A member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Lahore, Bibi said she was kidnapped in August 2010 after she met a woman named Parveen on a bus on her way to work. Her father asked police to take action, but they did nothing as her captors had taken her to a remote area between the cities of Rahim Yar Khan and Sadiqabad, considered a "no-go" area ruled by dangerous criminals.

Masih then sought legal assistance from the Community Development Initiative (CDI), a human rights affiliate of the European Center for Law and Justice in Pakistan. CDI Field Officer Haroon Tazeem, Masih and police went to Khan Baila, near Rahim Yar Khan, and at midnight March 6 the rescue team managed to get hold of Bibi, the CDI source said.

The kidnappers handed her over on the condition that they would not be the targets of further legal action, but the team told her captors that those who had sold her in Lahore would be brought to justice.

Chained to a tree outside a house during the week before the rescue, Bibi lifted her eyes in prayer, saw a cross in the sky and was comforted that God's mighty hand would release her even though her father had no money to pay ransom, she said.

### Twenty allegedly linked to Malatya murders arrested

ISTANBUL, Turkey — In simultaneous operations in nine provinces of Turkey, authorities March 17 arrested 20 people suspected of playing a role in the murder of three Christians in Malatya in 2007, according to local news reports. Zekeriya Oz, chief prosecutor overseeing the investigation into a clandestine network known as "Ergenekon" aimed at destabilizing the government, ordered the arrests based on information that linked the suspects to both the network and to the Malatya murders, Turkish press reported after Istanbul police Chief Huseyin Capkin announced the sweep at a press conference.

"This was an operation related to the Malatya Zirve Publishing House murders," Capkin said. "That's the framework." Those apprehended include Ruhi Abat, a Muslim theology professor from Malatya Inonu University; Mehmet Ulger, a retired commander of the Malatya Gendarmerie in service at the time of the murders and other members of the military.

A plaintiff attorney in the Malatya murder case, Orhan Kemal Cengiz, said that the names on the list of those arrested were suspects he and his colleagues have been trying to convince the Malatya prosecutor to pursue since the court received a tip in May 2008. The Istanbul Police Department prepared a report in 2010 revealing links between the Malatya murders and Ergenekon.

### Vietnam's Montagnard repression intensifies

HANOI, Vietnam — The Vietnamese government has intensified repression of indigenous minority Christians from the country's Central Highland provinces who are pressing for religious freedom and land rights, Human Rights Watch said in a report released March 31.

The 46-page report, "Montagnard Christians in Vietnam: A Case Study in Religious Repression," details the latest government crackdowns on these indigenous people, known collectively as Montagnards.

The report documents police sweeps to root out Montagnards in hiding. It details how the authorities have dissolved house church gatherings, orchestrated coerced renunciations of faith and sealed off the border to prevent asylum seekers from fleeing to Cambodia.

Human Rights Watch found that special "political security" units conduct operations with provincial police to capture, detain and interrogate people they identify as political activists or leaders of unregistered house churches.

More than 70 Montagnards were detained or arrested in 2010 alone, and more than 250 are known to be imprisoned on national security charges.

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