

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



May 12, 2011
Vol. 176, No. 19

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BAPTISTS RESPOND

to April 27 tornadoes

Disaster relief results

- 41 of 67 counties declared federal disaster areas
- 29 associations where Alabama Baptist disaster relief efforts are focused
- 15 on-site command centers (including coordination and housing)
- Main command center
- 7 feeding units
- 2 child care units
- 7 Alabama Baptist churches destroyed

All numbers are as of press time May 6.

Graphic by Lauren Chow

COMMENT

‘But Even if He Does Not ...’

I don't understand how God can let something like this happen to such good people," a confused young man said as he picked through the rubble of his friends' home. "They were churchgoing people. This (the destruction of their home and death of the husband) is not supposed to happen to good people like them."

Confusion has been voiced by many in the aftermath of the April 27 tornadoes that struck Alabama. Why was one home spared while another was not? Why did one person live but not another?

Survivors talk about prayers, pleadings and praises to God as the tornadoes passed overhead. Did those who died not pray?

In truth, these questions are voiced every time a tragedy strikes. People struggle, wanting to know why bad things happen to good people.

How easy it is to slip into a cause-and-effect notion about God, to believe that God is like a good luck charm that protects one from evil as long as he or she pays proper homage. It is the charge Satan made against Job — Job honored God only because of the blessings God poured out on him. It is the religion of those who are more interested in the works of God than in God Himself.

Life's storms strike everyone at some point. In such times, events don't make sense. The pounding from the storm leaves one emotionally and spiritually numb. It is as if God is far away.

What does one do? How does one react? The dramatic story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (also Abed-nego) recorded in Daniel 3 provides guidance.

The storm faced by these three took the form of a 90-foot tall statue of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. All the kingdom's leaders were commanded to bow down and worship this idol or face death. But the three Jewish leaders, the administrators of the province of Babylon (Dan. 2:49), would not.

Israel had been commanded to serve God alone. Worship of idols was forbidden (Deut. 5:7-10). Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would not violate the second commandment and commit blasphemy.

Nebuchadnezzar had the three dragged before him and offered them a second chance to bow before the huge statue of him. If they refused, then their fate would be the fiery furnace used to smelt the gold and other metals that composed his likeness. "And what God is there that can deliver you out of my hands?" he mockingly asked.

"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us,"



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

came the immediate retort (v. 17). Years of walking in the teachings of God had caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to have confidence in Him. He was able to deliver them even from the wrath of earth's strongest king. Jeremiah, the last prophet before the Jews' Babylonian Captivity, had taught "nothing is too hard for God" (Jer. 32:17). The apostle Paul later picked up this theme when he wrote that God is able to do "exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

Commitment to God

There was no doubt in the minds of the three that the God who called all things into being could rescue them so not even the threat of imminent death could cause them to turn from their commitment to God.

Most translations of these verses translate the second half of verse 17 to read, "He will deliver us out of your hand, O king." The Hebrew verb is in the imperfect tense, which means it also can read, "He may deliver us."

Given what follows, the second translation may be preferred. While God can deliver, the second translation recognizes that He does not always choose to intervene in miraculous ways in the midst of human circumstances.

Tornadoes strike. Death happens. Businesses fail. Sicknesses attack. Frustration and defeat stalk. Rain falls on the just and unjust alike.

Hebrews 11 says some of God's saints were mocked, scourged, placed in chains and imprisoned, stoned, sawed in two, put to death by the sword, destitute, afflicted and ill-treated. Some wandered in the desert, while others lived in caves or holes in the ground (vv. 36-38).

Even today, faithful followers of the risen Lord are regularly beaten and killed in various parts of the world.

While there is no doubt that God can, He does not always save His children from the pain of life's storms.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego understood this. That is why their declaration in verse 18 is the key to the story. "But even if He does not ... we are not going to worship the golden image that you have set up," they said.

Faith was not conditioned on what God did or

did not do for them. The three would not seek some other god because the "God of their fathers" let them get in a jam. Theirs was not a "feel-good religion" that did not know how to support in the "but even if He does not" times of life.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego evidenced a commitment to God no matter the circumstances. Their goal was faithfulness to a relationship, a relationship to God so important that they would cling to it even into death if necessary.

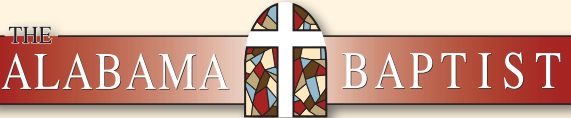
Some attribute this commitment to the promise of eternal life. God would deliver them from the fire or into His eternal presence. Certainly, on this side of the cross, Christians heed Jesus' words not to "fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). Believers eagerly await the time when we shall be with Jesus in that place He is preparing for us (John 14:3).

Between now and then, Christians have God's promise that He is with us. Jesus said, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). His Holy Spirit guides, strengthens and encourages. God never abandons us, not even in the midst of life's storms.

W.A. Criswell, a late honored Baptist leader, wrote while reflecting on this passage, "My brother, I have learned something both from reading and from experience. If you cling to God and have faith in God, when the hour of trial comes, God will give you grace for that providence. I don't care what it is."

Experience proves that observation true: the experience of the three Jewish leaders of Daniel 3, the saints of Hebrews 11 and countless Christians today.

Why bad things happen to good people remains unanswered. It is a mystery met with the echoing response of "why not?" What is clear is that God asks His children to trust Him, even in the "but even if He does not" times of life.



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

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

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

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.

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Meals prepared, served by disaster relief volunteers near 100,000

Photo by Doug Rogers

'SHARING THE LOVE OF CHRIST' — Joyce Trent of Madison Baptist Association advertises free hot food at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' main feeding unit, currently stationed at Broadway Baptist Church, Rainsville. The unit is a 53-foot semitruck trailer that has the capacity to serve 20,000–25,000 meals daily.



Photo by Rick Sharp

HOT MEALS — Lindsay Lane Baptist, Athens, is one of many churches serving food.

Churches help feed communities

While the larger Southern Baptist disaster relief feeding units must be deployed strategically to areas needing massive amounts of meals prepared daily, those areas needing smaller amounts of meals are not left to fend for themselves.

Countless Alabama Baptist churches and associations moved into action immediately following the April 27 storms to help as needed.

For example, members of Calvary Baptist Church, Russellville, were in Hackleburg delivering food almost immediately, serving about 2,400 meals in a four-day period.

"[Calvary's] just trying to be a Great Commission church ... thinking of what God wants us to do," Pastor Wade Wallace said. "We want to be a servant at this time and let people see the love of Christ in us."

A team from First Baptist Church, Sulligent, also provided food and drinks, while another team from the church helped in cleanup efforts in Hackleburg. (TAB)

Some 180 trained Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers are stirring, baking and packaging more than 30,000 meals a day at feeding units across Alabama.

With an estimated 65,000 homes and businesses still without electricity at press time, April 27 storm survivors — those with homes and those without — need a place to find a hot meal. And those hot meals neared 100,000 at press time.

Four Alabama Baptist feeding units were deployed immediately after deadly tornadoes ravaged the state: three associational units and the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' (SBOM) main unit.

Tuscaloosa Baptist Association deployed its unit to Tuscaloosa and set up at Belk Activity Center. The feeding unit worked until May 4, when the disaster relief feeding unit from the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention began feeding at North River Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa. The Texas unit was still operating at press time.

Helping locally

Birmingham Baptist Association's unit was at the Birmingham Fire Department's Drills and Training West field, while Limestone Baptist Association's unit is at Capshaw Baptist Church in Limestone County.

Charlotte Jeffreys, a member of Faith Baptist Church, Athens, and disaster relief volunteer since 1996, is heading up the 17-member feeding team in Capshaw.

This team has a different opportunity than others preparing meals for the American Red Cross to deliver — it is serving breakfast, lunch and dinner directly to 1,200 people. Its audience includes the local community, disaster relief chain saw teams and utility workers.

With items like chicken fajitas and strawberry shortcake on the May 4 menu, the team is feeding the community well, Jeffreys said, noting the fresh and frozen food it is using is coming from the community.

"The community has been so wonderful,"

she said. "Many businesses and schools have donated their frozen foods to [the feeding unit] before they go bad (since the community does not have electricity)."

The SBOM's unit is set up at Broadway Baptist Church, Rainsville.

The newest addition to the Alabama Baptist disaster relief family, the main unit is a 53-foot semitruck trailer that serves as a feeding/communications unit. It has the capacity for serving 20,000–25,000 meals daily. It is fully self-contained with ham radio, a computer bank with Internet connection, water purification, propane for food preparation and a diesel generator. Between disasters, the unit is stored in the SBOM's parking lot. When deployed, it is driven by a disaster relief volunteer who is a commercial truck driver.

Larry Murphy, a member of Hillcrest Baptist Church, Enterprise, led the team in to set up the unit, and Charles McGhee, a member of Journey Church, Valley, was leading the team at press time. Volunteers from Broadway Baptist and the Rainsville community as well as Louisiana and Mississippi are working together to serve up to 3,000 meals a day. These meals are delivered throughout DeKalb County.

Other state conventions are sending feeding units as well.

At press time, the Florida Baptist Convention had units in Double Springs and Snead.

The South Carolina Baptist Convention's unit was scheduled to be stationed at Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville, until May

10. With the unit were 17 South Carolina volunteers and 24 Mount Zion Baptist members, cooking 5,400 meals a day. They served chicken and dumplings, ham, corn, peas, pears, cookies and tea.

The food at the Huntsville site was provided by the Red Cross, prepared by Baptist volunteers and then transported by Red Cross Emergency Response Vehicles (ERVs) to Marshall, Madison, Jackson and Limestone counties.

Lercy Bourgue of Hillcrest Baptist Church, North Charleston, S.C., led the feeding team stationed in Huntsville. He made the trek to Alabama "to share the love of Christ with the people in need."

While the feeding team volunteers were focused on preparing the food and didn't have contact with the people receiving it, Bourgue said, "[The ERV drivers] have told us that people are very appreciative."

Billie Raney, a disaster relief volunteer from New Market Baptist Church began serving during Hurricane Katrina in 2005. She has

served in many places around the United States since then, but "this time, it was home," she said.

"The devastation (from the storm) just took my breath away," Raney recalled. And she also could see the shock on the faces of those coming to the feeding unit for meals.

But amid the shock, volunteers like Raney keep serving. "This is just what I do," she said. "I enjoy helping people." (TAB)



Photo by Doug Rogers

FEEDING THE MASSES — Larry Fuller of Morgan Baptist Association helps with the state's main unit, currently located in Rainsville.

Piercing roar of chain saws

Cleanup crews often first response to ravaged areas

By Julie Moore
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The piercing roar of a chain saw is typically nothing more than loud racket to most people. But to those who suffered the horrific devastation from the April 27 tornadoes that ripped through Alabama, this sound couldn't be sweeter when heard from Southern Baptist disaster relief teams aiding in needed cleanup efforts.

Pulling into storm-ravaged areas, these caravans of cleanup/recovery volunteers arrive eager to help. Sporting bright yellow disaster relief t-shirts, they bring with them loads of their own heavy equipment packed into trailers and trucks.

These particular crews work alongside other emergency personnel to aid communities during the aftermath of mass destruction as first responders in the rebuilding process.

Each team is usually comprised of 10–12 volunteers from either a particular Baptist church or association and dispatched through the state organization.

Ron Warren serves as state coordinator of cleanup, recovery and chain saw for Alabama Baptist disaster relief.

The crews labor fervently — up to 10 or 12 hours a day — by assisting in a number of cleanup duties that include cutting downed trees and heavy limbs and removing debris from yards.

'Intensive work'

"It's pretty intensive work," said Larry Teel, director of the Rapid Response Assessment Team (RRAT) and command center team leader in Tuscaloosa. With wind speeds estimated by the National Weather Service (NWS) of



Photo by Doug Rogers

'JUST UNREAL' — A trained Alabama Baptist cleanup/recovery volunteer helps clear trees after the April 27 tornadoes that ripped through the state. Trained cleanup/recovery volunteers are also prepped for chainsaw safety.

more than 200 mph in some areas on April 27, entire neighborhoods were left with hardly a tree standing.

According to Teel, generally half of a team's members are trained in chain saw safety.

The others work to remove fallen or cut tree limbs from the property they are serving. "All the people on the team are trained in cleanup/recovery and a limited number are trained in chain saw safety," he said.

Teel said they began an initial drive-through assessment in Tuscaloosa on April 28, the day after the storms hit, to determine how extensive the damage was. By the next morning, there were teams on the ground working with chain saws, removing debris and cutting

trees that had landed on residents' houses, cars and driveways.

"I've been involved in disaster relief since 1979. ... I've not seen devastation as concentrated as this was, as severe as it was," Teel said. "The devastation in the impact area is worse than I have ever seen; it is just unreal.

'Long-term recovery'

"It's going to be a real long-term recovery, even from our aspect of getting trees removed from properties," he added.

There are five teams on the ground in the Tuscaloosa area with approximately 70–80 volunteers assisting in cleanup/recovery efforts.

Teel said they continue to pick up new jobs every day and had completed more than 60 jobs at press time.

Cottdale Baptist Church, a Tuscaloosa Baptist Association church, has been the team's host church. Teel said the church has been a "wonderful host" by feeding and housing the disaster relief workers.

More than 40 other cleanup/recovery teams were serving in nine other areas across the state at press time.

Tom Cole, leader of the Manatee Southern Baptist Association disaster relief cleanup/recovery team from Florida, traveled with his team to serve in Jasper. They arrived in town May 2 and began work the next morning.

When asked what he deemed the most rewarding aspect of serving on a cleanup/recovery team, Cole

answered, "The help, healing and hope."

He said helping people to secure their homes and clear debris and helping them heal by listening to what they've been through are both extremely important. "But the most important thing is the hope, and the hope that we can bring the salvation of Jesus Christ to their lives."

Teel said the most significant thing everyone in the state can do for these teams is pray. "We need prayer for safety (physical and emotional)," he said.

Training is required for those interested in joining Alabama Baptist disaster relief teams, and specific training that pertains to chain saw safety is offered through the Alabama Baptist Chain Saw School. Its purpose is to teach disaster relief personnel "a consistent and safe method of chain saw operation."

Those who pass the course receive a chain saw patch that is worn on the right sleeve. For additional information and details on upcoming training courses, visit www.sbdr.org.

Help from other states

There are 43 Alabama Baptist disaster relief teams working in cleanup/recovery throughout the state. In addition, several other states with cleanup/recovery teams, from as far as Oklahoma and Michigan, have traveled to Alabama to work in the following areas:

Texas (both conventions) — Tuscaloosa
Arkansas — Pleasant Grove
Oklahoma — Russellville
Mississippi — Phil Campbell
Florida — Jasper/Cullman
South Carolina — Huntsville
Michigan — North Huntsville
Louisiana — Rainsville
Kentucky — Henagar

Numbers of teams, locations and state conventions listed are changing daily. This list was what was known at press time. (TAB)



Photo by Rick Sharp

SERVING AS A TEAM — Members of Highland Baptist Church, Florence, volunteer to help with cleanup in Phil Campbell.

Disaster relief training

If an individual or church is interested in receiving disaster relief training, go to www.sbdr.org, create a new account and obtain a background check (compliant with Homeland Security).

Training options include mass feeding, chain saw/cleanup/recovery, child care, administration, communications, international airlift kitchen, shower trailer support, laundry units and chaplaincy.

Financial donations needed to support tornado relief efforts

The immense outpouring of compassion across the state, nation and world for the devastated areas in Alabama continually touches those trying to pick up the pieces following the deadly tornado outbreak April 27. And as Alabama Baptist disaster relief attempts to help churches and communities in the recovery effort, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) officials know just how important giving is to the overall picture.

Currently disaster relief volunteers are at work across the northern part of the state providing practical needs as well as spiritual encouragement, said Bobby DuBois, SBOM associate executive director. The monies donated to the disaster relief effort allow for a multitude of ministry opportunities.

"We are in the process of placing equipment all over Alabama. The cost of transporting that equipment is significant," he said, noting the current price of gasoline impacts those costs. "We are also assuming responsibility of feeding thousands in the affected areas and assisting those who are providing meals for both volunteers and victims.

"We support the needs of disaster relief incident command center personnel and their efforts to place thousands of trained volunteers," he added. "We also respond to specific needs for emergency items as field personnel report those needs."

State disaster relief funds also are needed to assist the churches that were damaged or destroyed, DuBois said.

Getting churches on their feet

"More than 40 churches received some degree of damage," he said. "Our best strategy for doing ministry is getting these churches back up and operational. That may require mobile chapels or assistance with insurance deductibles. It could mean financial assistance in renting or leasing space until the church can get back on its feet."

While the general disaster relief fund had a small balance prior to the tornado outbreak, it was only enough to provide some immediate response, DuBois said.

"The tendency is for people to give to specific events such as Katrina, Haiti earthquake, or, in this case, Alabama Tornado Relief," he said. "When gifts are specified in that manner, we distribute all of those funds for the disaster to which it was given.

"The general disaster relief fund balance gives us the ability to respond immediately when a disaster happens," he said. "It never carries a large enough balance to sustain on-going relief efforts.

"The sacrificial giving of Alabama Baptists will determine just how far our relief efforts will go following the most recent tornadoes," DuBois said. More money will be spent on disaster relief efforts than comes in, and the extra money spent beyond what is given for any disaster comes from Cooperative Program giving, he explained.

All contributions (100 percent) go straight to the front lines of the disaster to assist storm victims and churches with damaged facilities.

To donate to Alabama Baptist disaster relief efforts, pay with a credit card online at www.alsbom.org/tornadorelief or mail checks payable to State Board of Missions, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111-0870; and note "Alabama tornado relief" on the check. (SBOM)

Baptist command centers coordinate army of volunteers across Alabama

By David Roach
Special to The Alabama Baptist

In the wake of killer tornadoes that struck Alabama on April 27, hundreds of Southern Baptist disaster relief workers have mobilized to help with cleanup, feeding victims and meeting other physical needs.

But who coordinates this army of volunteers?

That is the job of 15 on-site command centers around the state, where incident commanders organize workers, gather reports of people in need and dispatch teams to meet those needs in the name of Christ. These command centers work under the direction of the main command center in Montgomery. The main command center is housed away from the destruction areas and is known as the off-site incident command center (more on this center coming in next week's issue).

The on-site command centers are located in Birmingham (two), Huntsville, Tuscaloosa (three), Cullman, Geraldine, Jasper, Russellville, Double Springs, Snead, Capshaw, Henagar and Rainsville.

Geraldine

First Baptist Church, Geraldine, was serving as a command center for about 75 chain saw team volunteers and site assessors as well as eight chaplains, according to Larry Cupper, incident command leader for DeKalb and Marshall counties.

Much of the chain saw work involved removing trees from homes, Cupper said. But along with the physical labor, his teams addressed spiritual needs, seeing several people make professions of faith in Christ.

When Cupper shared Jesus with one young man, he learned that the man was already a Christian but felt discouraged by the destruction around him.

"I tried to encourage him, and we prayed a long time," Cupper said. "He wanted to show me around, so I stopped what I was doing and put him in the vehicle with me and just rode around for a little bit. He knew all the neighbors, and it helped him just to get away for a little bit. I hope we made a little difference there."

Birmingham

A command center at Birmingham Baptist Association was coordinating the distribution of 8,000 meals per day and dispatching chain saw teams to clear debris, according to incident commander John Hayes. Though the center had other ministries available, he said food and chain saw teams were the primary needs.

Often the chain saw teams were able to provide friendship and a kind word to people with high stress levels, Hayes said. On one occasion, a team helped calm a woman who was extremely upset because of the destruction. By meeting her physical needs, the team opened a door to address her spiritual needs, he said.

"They were able to call one of the local



Photo by Doug Rogers

DISPATCHING TEAMS — Robert Causey (center) and Mary Causey (left), of Charleston, run the command center at Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville. Pictured with them is Charles Bodie of Ridge Association in South Carolina.

pastors to come in, and she made a profession of faith," Hayes added.

Huntsville

Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville, housed a command center coordinating chain saw crews, shower units, a feeding unit, assessment teams and a chaplain unit. At least 132 volunteers have worked at the center, including many from South Carolina and Michigan.

Among the people served by volunteers in Huntsville was a 71-year-old woman whose house was covered by pine trees but who had been overlooked by local officials. Teams worked for two days to get the trees off her house, site commander David Carver said.

Henagar

Seven chain saw teams from Kentucky and four from Alabama worked out of the command center at Happy Home Baptist Church, Henagar. The church provided sleeping accommodations for 75 Kentucky volunteers.

Incident commander David Patty said a unique bond existed between some of the Kentucky and Alabama workers because Alabama Baptists did disaster relief work in Kentucky two years ago following a severe ice storm.

"In fact, we stayed in the church of one of the teams that's here now helping us," Patty, director of missions for Sand Mountain Baptist Association, said. "So my guys and their guys recognized each other."

Tuscaloosa

About 130 cleanup and recovery volunteers have worked since April 29 from the command center at Cottdale Baptist Church near Tuscaloosa. Team leader

Larry Teel said every night, there were reports of spiritual conversations between workers and those they served.

One worker had an "extensive conversation with a Hindu gentleman who was convinced that he was OK" and thought he "would be reincarnated not as a snake but maybe as a bird," Teel said.

Cullman

At Cullman's Northbrook Baptist Church, dozens of chain saw cleanup volunteers coordinated their efforts and were fed their meals. On May 2, 92 workers were based at the congregation's command center.

Gary Nunn, director of discipleship ministries at Northbrook Baptist, said disaster relief is a way to introduce lost people in the community to Christ.

"Being able to provide a place where these folks can come in from different states and be able to go out from here for the Kingdom cause is just invaluable," Nunn said. "The Lord has blessed us with a great facility, so we're just using it to honor Him."

Moulton

Pastor Jesse Reeder of Moulton Baptist Church said chain saw crews based at his church have made an impact in the community and unchurched families have attended worship in the wake of the tornadoes. Though the congregation was without electricity May 1, four or five new families from the community visited the morning worship service during which they heard a gospel presentation, Reeder said.

In addition to about 30 chain saw volunteers from Oklahoma, church members volunteered to help with relief ministries, he said. One deacon used a bulldozer to clean particularly hard-hit sites.

"Some of the families have expressed a lot of gratitude for what we've been able to do, and we've been able to talk with them some about their spiritual needs," Reeder said.

"The Lord has blessed us with a great facility, so we're just using it to honor Him."

Gary Nunn
Northbrook Baptist Church
Cullman

'A very important ministry' to children

Alabama Woman's Missionary Union, volunteers team up to serve the 'sometimes

By Leigh Pritchett
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

While some volunteers are busy with visible relief efforts, others are assisting behind the scenes, caring for small and vulnerable disaster victims — the children.

The disaster relief child care team members operate units that provide a safe and loving place for the children to stay as their parents apply for assistance or clean up their home site.

"Sometimes I think we are the best-kept secret in Southern Baptist disaster relief," said Donna Swarts, of Magee, Miss., national child care coordinator for Southern Baptist disaster relief, as well as a member of the disaster relief task forces of the Mississippi Baptist Convention and the North American Mission Board.

Alabama has two disaster relief child care units: one that is operated by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) and one that is a ministry of Tuscaloosa Baptist Association.

At press time, the SBOM unit was stationed in Rainsville, where an average of 30 children a day received the care of volunteers, said Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) President Becky Luther, who serves as the state disaster relief coordinator for child care.

The unit was set up at a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) service center. People go to a FEMA service center to

complete forms necessary for applying for government aid. Going through this process can take hours, said Luther, a member of East Gadsden Baptist Church in Etowah Baptist Association.

During their time in the child care unit, the children sing songs, play games, enjoy a meal and do crafts.

They also hear stories about God and Jesus, a very important component of the care because "the majority are unchurched," Luther added.

As a means to help the children feel better, they were given a toy, blanket and health kit as they left the Rainsville site, she said, noting the parents of babies were given diapers and wipes.

Opportunity to talk

One important aspect of the disaster relief child care is that the volunteers give the children the opportunity to talk about their experience.

"They will talk to us about what happened and we listen," Luther said. In fact, the children sometimes sense their parents' distress and will not tell them how they are feeling.

On May 3, the volunteers were caring for a 7-year-old girl who had not spoken since a tornado ripped through DeKalb County on April 27. One volunteer gave her some paper so that she could draw a picture. When the worker asked her what color crayon she would like to have, the girl replied, "Green."



Photo by Doug Rogers

CRAFTY DISTRACTION — Diana Hall, a member of Glynwood Baptist Church, Prattville, volunteers through Alabama Baptist disaster relief at the child care unit in Rainsville.

After that, she began to communicate with the volunteers. Her mother cried when she came to get her and heard her speak, Luther said.

That behavior is not uncommon among children who have experienced a disaster, she said. The children have lost their

homes, their toys, their security base. "They just don't understand," Luther said.

The volunteers try to help the children by assuring them that everything will be all right and possessions can be replaced. They also explain that situations happen that people do not understand. Sometimes the children have lost a

COMPASSION

Chaplain Leon White comforts a woman outside East Side Baptist Church, Cullman, reduced to rubble by a tornado.

Gifts through the Cooperative Program help provide a way for Alabama Baptists to minister to victims of disasters, by becoming the hands and feet of Christ in times of need.

For more information and resources about the Cooperative Program, please contact State Missionary Jim Swedenburg, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 283, jswedenburg@alsbom.org.

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

who have survived the storm

forgotten victims' across Alabama in disaster relief child care units

family member and just need to hear that God is love.

On May 5, five volunteers were in Phil Campbell, another area of the state devastated by the April 27 storms. One of the four second-grade teachers at Phil Campbell Elementary School was among the more than 20 people killed in the town. The volunteers were available to allow students to talk through their feelings and thoughts, Luther said.

The primary reason for disaster relief child care is to "provide a safe, loving environment for children who have gone through incredible circumstances" and assist parents in crisis, said Candace McIntosh, executive director of Alabama WMU.

McIntosh explained that WMU facilitates training and provides volunteers for disaster relief child care. The child care component for disaster relief receives funding through the Cooperative Program and the Kathleen Malory State Missions Offering for state WMU ministries.

McIntosh described disaster relief child care as a "niche" ministry that meets a need that often is overlooked.

"This is a very important ministry," she said.

After Hurricane Katrina, McIntosh read in an article that the way in which a child is treated in the aftermath of a disaster influences the adult that he or she will become.

For this reason, it is crucial for children who have experienced a disaster to receive the love and care of someone who knows Jesus, officials say. The children — sometimes the forgotten victims — get from child care vol-

History of disaster relief child care

► 1979 — Texas Baptist men went to Wichita Falls, Texas, in response to a tornado. Four teams of volunteers went to help care for children.

► 1994 — Alabama Baptist child care volunteers were among the responders to help victims of a flood in Albany, Ga. This was the Alabama child care unit's first call-out.

► 1997 — Child care teams from eight states responded after floods in Minnesota and North Dakota. From that effort, a national child care response manual was developed.

► 2010 — Child care team members helped in American Samoa following a tsunami. It is believed to be the first time that Southern Baptist disaster relief child care volunteers traveled beyond the 50 U.S. states to assist after a disaster.

► 2010 — Donna Swarts was asked by the North American Mission Board (NAMB) to represent Southern Baptist disaster relief child care interests at a national meeting in Washington.

From this meeting of various groups, guidelines for crisis response child care were drawn up to be presented to the president and Congress.

The guidelines were completed in October 2010.

Sources: Donna Swarts, of Magee, Miss., national child care coordinator for Southern Baptist disaster relief, as well as a member of the disaster relief task forces of the Mississippi Baptist Convention and NAMB, and Becky Luther, of Gadsden, president of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union and state child care coordinator for disaster relief

unteers the attention and security that their parents may be too grieved, busy or distracted to provide at that time, McIntosh said.

Bebe Barnett added that the volunteers help to create some normalcy in the lives of children who have seen their "world" torn up.

Barnett, director of Tuscaloosa Association's child care unit and a member of Northport Baptist Church, worked with Hurricane

Katrina evacuees who came to Tuscaloosa in 2005.

She and the other volunteers found that the children looked forward to returning to the unit stationed at Skyland Boulevard Baptist Church each day.

They just needed someone to love them at that particular time in their lives, Barnett observed. ❧

150 Alabama child care volunteers ready to help

By Leigh Pritchett
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

When disaster strikes, there are about 150 child care volunteers in Alabama who are ready to open a center with little notice.

"We can set up a full day care in three hours," said Becky Luther, state disaster relief coordinator for child care and a member of East Gadsden Baptist Church in Etowah Baptist Association.

Such a feat is accomplished with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' child care trailer. It contains rockers, walkers, televisions, DVD players, microwaves, cribs, blankets, card tables, chairs, sleeping mats, modules that can be used to form walls between different age groups, toys, coloring books, crayons, craft kits, glue, construction paper and other supplies and equipment.

The state's second child care unit — operated by Tuscaloosa Baptist Association — also has a trailer with some of the same amenities, said Bebe Barnett, director of the Tuscaloosa Association unit.

Donna Swarts, national child care coordinator for Southern Baptist disaster relief, said both Alabama units also are equipped for "low-volume" response. That means they have some necessary supplies in boxes that can be transported quicker and more economically than a full trailer.

Whether taking the full trailer or low-volume option into a disaster area, volunteers assess

what the needs are and inform nearby associational Woman's Missionary Union groups of additional resources needed. Though the volunteers' primary purpose is to minister directly to affected children and indirectly to their parents, Swarts said some of the 18 equipped disaster relief child care units across the nation also may provide care for the children of first responders or National Guard members who have been called to serve in a disaster area.

Volunteers have to be at least 18 years old and must undergo six to eight hours of special training. Plus each person undergoes a national background check and must be certified in CPR and first aid.

Some volunteers also complete chaplain training so that they can help children talk through their feelings. The volunteers who ministered to students at Phil Campbell Elementary School had undergone this extra training, Luther said (see story, page 6). Even though the child care units are not licensed by the state to be day-care providers, volunteers do try to address child care requirements, Swarts

here to state said.

"Actually our [children-to-teacher] ratios are smaller than DHR's (Department of Human Resources) because [the children] have been traumatized" and, thus, need more individual attention, Luther said.

And while normally the maximum age allowed for child care is 8 years old, the unit in



Photo by Doug Rogers

SPENDING TIME — Jacquelyn McDaniel, a member of Broadway Baptist Church, works in the child care unit in Rainsville.



A child may do the following during a crisis or disaster:

- Start to experience fear
- Become afraid of being separated from his or her parents or being left alone
- Fear the danger that struck once will happen again
- Become fixated on the traumatic event and think about nothing else

sxc.hu, graphic by Lauren Chow

Children's needs differ from adults

Children are impacted by profound loss and confusion," said Donna Swarts, national child care coordinator for Southern Baptist disaster relief.

When a crisis or disaster occurs, children often are treated as adults. However, "children's needs are different from adults' needs," she said.

For instance, children are comforted by routine. But when their "world" is torn apart by disaster, that routine is broken, their toys are gone and their surroundings are different.

They may

- start to experience fear,
- become afraid of being separated from their parents or being left alone,
- fear the danger that struck once will happen again and
- become fixated on the traumatic event and think about nothing else.

"A child's fears are serious," Swarts said.

If children are not able to talk through or deal with their thoughts and feelings, then they may regress, express anger and experience hyperactivity or sleep disturbances. They may even complain of physical ailments, such as a stomachache.

Southern Baptist disaster relief child care volunteers, who are trained to assist in different crisis situations, try to get children to talk about their feelings or draw pictures about their experiences and discuss them.

"We want to be there for the children," Swarts said. (TAB)

'Strict security code'

"We have to follow a strict security code," Luther said. In general, the child care units are set up at Federal Emergency Management Agency or Red Cross service centers and are open the same hours as the service centers. In Rainsville, for example, volunteers were available from 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

Swarts said the child care aspect of disaster relief demonstrates how diverse and immense disaster relief is. The average Southern Baptist may not know all that disaster relief efforts encompass, she said. But everyone who gives to his or her local church or association or contributes to state missions offerings is part of disaster relief. The volunteers who go and serve are able to do so because of the people who give money.

"They are part of this," Swarts said of the givers. "Without them, we couldn't do it." ❧

'Hands and feet'

Alabama Baptists open facilities for drop-off locations statewide

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

You may not expect to see a tangible representation of Jesus in a bottle of water or bag of hygiene items — that is, unless the group offering them is seeking to be the “hands and feet” of Christ.

Now every day since the record-setting surge of tornadoes and severe weather wreaked havoc on the state April 27, Alabama Baptist churches have teamed with other denominations and community residents to show the love of Christ and meet the physical needs of those most affected by the storms.

Within hours of the destruction, Alabama Baptist congregations began opening their facilities to collect items they knew victims would need to recover. Not expecting the massive outpouring of donations that followed, many leaders have been overwhelmed and encouraged by the response they've received in their communities.

“There are a lot of passionate people across Alabama who really have a heart for other people and who are doing what they can to help,” said Bobby DuBois, associate executive director of Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

“This is an extremely difficult time for thousands across Alabama. Alabama Baptists are continuing to do what they are called upon to do which is help people that are hurting.”

DuBois said the churches have been responsible for collecting and organizing donated items and get-

ting the items to the areas of greatest need.

“This is a moving target,” he said. “What was needed on the ground last Friday may not be needed today. We are trying to stay in touch with churches across affected areas who are helping make sure supplies get to the front lines. It's an ongoing challenge. To get what's coming in from donations from local individuals through these drop points to the time we get it delivered, we may have moved on to some other needs.”

At press time, 46 Alabama Baptist churches were known to be serving as drop-off sites for donations. DuBois said there is currently a drop site in every district.

“We feel comfortable that we can get what's needed to the affected areas as soon as possible,” he said.

NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville, in Birmingham Baptist Association was the first to respond when the SBOM began asking for churches to assist in this effort.

Rus Goodwin, who is coordinating the church's disaster relief efforts through Serving You Ministries, said he has been talking to people all over Alabama and across America who want to send supplies for the tornado victims.

“It's just amazing,” he said. “I believe when people see the images of that and hear of the devastation they want to do something to help and as believers offer hope to those individuals and let them know that they have community to support and love them as they go through this. They may not be able to go but

they can collect from among their community and drive or have someone ship a truck over.”

In addition to collecting the essentials like snacks, water, sports drinks, hygiene products and other supplies, Goodwin said NorthPark collected prom dresses for teens in Pratt City whose prom had been scheduled two weeks after the storms hit.

“Someone else had that idea and we heard about it and said we can help, too,” he said. “We are the hands and feet of Jesus. I believe in times of tragedy that shines forth more than any other time.”



Photo by Rick Sharp

STOCKED AND READY — First Baptist Church, Tanner, in Limestone Baptist Association has supplies and nonperishable items on hand for those in need.

“There are a lot of passionate people across Alabama who really have a heart for other people.”

Bobby DuBois
State Board of Missions

and Hackleburg. Director of Missions Larry Dover said the churches had such an outpouring of donations that a local company and the City of Russellville allowed them to store donations in their facilities.

“We've gotten calls from people in Kentucky saying, ‘We are bringing stuff; where do we bring it?’” he said. “We've received so much that we are only taking new clothing. We'll have weeks of work just sorting through what's left.”

Dover added that other distribution sites are calling Franklin Association for specific items they can't find anywhere else. He said Baptist families from Mississippi, Oklahoma, West Virginia and Louisiana have worked in their drop-off sites.

“I have always been on the other end of that,” Dover said. “We, in our community, are disaster relief folks and we go somewhere else to help other folks, and now our communities are on the receiving end of that. It's overwhelming to be in that part of it. It reinforces what we already know about Alabama Baptists — that they are generous and loving. At the same time, it's expanded that. It's not just something that is theoretical and possible. It's become actual. ... People loving on people and meeting their needs. That's what's happening at the distribution centers. ... Some of them, for the first time in their lives, are having their spiritual needs met.”

“It's made people more aware of how God blesses us every day and not taking things for granted,” he noted. “They are very eager and willing to do whatever. People are jumping right in and it's like they are desperate for something to do. ... There is an over abundance of volunteers in every area which is a good thing.”

Franklin Baptist Association churches are also working together with others in their communities to gather items needed for North Alabama storm victims after a deadly tornado tore through Phil Campbell

and Hackleburg. Director of Missions Larry Dover said the churches had such an outpouring of donations that a local company and the City of Russellville allowed them to store donations in their facilities.

“I think it really kind of solidified

what I already understood about Baptists and Christians in general,” he said. “It's just a great outpouring of ministry in the community.”

Jason Green, associate pastor and student minister at Cross Road Baptist Church, Hueytown, in Mud Creek Baptist Association said he has seen needs at the church drop-off center met before a request is even made.

“There has been an overwhelming movement since this past Wednesday (April 27),” Green said. “We ran out of ice this morning (May 5) and a truck showed up with 100 bags of ice. Then FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) showed up with 380 bags of ice. Not only is the need met, but God blesses in abundance. ... We are wondering what happens next.”

Green believes the way churches of all denominations have pulled together in his area shows the characteristics of Christ modeled out at a time when it “desperately needs to see Jesus in His people.”

“I think people are seeing Jesus portrayed as our Heavenly Father would want Himself to be seen,” he said, noting there have been eight salvations at Cross Road Baptist. “We are humbled that the Creator of the universe would allow us to be able to be a part of His plan to comfort and love this community. ... We have seen people that have said they might not ever walk in a church door again come in and recommit their lives to Christ. ... Whether people realize what they are experiencing right now or not, it is the presence of God coming down and wrapping His arms around them.”

Ronnie Knight, pastor of Seman Baptist Church, Eclectic, in Elmore Baptist Association agreed. His church has also been serving as a drop-off center for donations.

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Photo courtesy of Sixth Street Baptist Church

SERVING — Volunteers from Sixth Street Baptist Church, Alexander City, take part in the relief effort.



Photo by Jim Rooks

REACHING TO OTHER COMMUNITIES — A volunteer team of 30 from First Baptist Church, Sulligent, took food and water to Hackleburg and assisted the community in clean up.

Donation drop-off centers located across Alabama

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

Being a tornado relief donations drop-off center has been a simple undertaking for many Alabama Baptist churches. Most just opened their doors, informed the community they would be accepting items for storm victims and enlisted a few volunteers to sort donations and deliver them to areas where they are needed most. Still, several have found ways to make their work more efficient.

Pastor Ronnie Knight and the staff at Seman Baptist Church, Eclectic, in Elmore Baptist Association are bivocational and could not always be present at the church building. But, they still wanted to help other churches in the area accept donations for storm victims while making it more convenient for the donors. So, Knight has asked donors to call ahead before bringing their contributions, which will then be delivered to the much larger donations warehouse set up by First Baptist Church, Eclectic.

"We've got people that live in the area, and there's no one at the church all the time," Knight said, noting the church is only three miles away from the Mount Hebron disaster area. "We wanted to make it more convenient for people who want to donate. ... Then, we'll get it to the appropriate place."

Instead of requiring tornado victims receiving donations to come to the church to get dona-

tions, some churches like Northport Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa Baptist Association have made it more convenient for those who have lost so much. At times church volunteers take their contact information and call them back when their box of items is assembled.

"If you have a need we want to fulfill that need," said Kenyon Hamner, children's minister at Northport Baptist.

Other churches are using social media networks to communicate with those wanting to donate and people needing the relief items.

Ken Maddox, director of missions for Mud Creek Baptist Association, said Crossroad Baptist Church, Hueytown, has successfully used Facebook as a communications tool.

"When they have had a need come up, they put it on Facebook," he said. "Facebook has been really effective for [volunteers] to meet those needs."

Jason Green, associate pastor and student minister at Crossroad Baptist said, "Facebook and Twitter (has given us) access to thousands of people to let them know what we need."

The State Board of Missions is also using social media including Facebook and Twitter to find out where needs are and to pass that information along to churches housing the resources.

For more information on Alabama Baptist disaster relief efforts, visit www.alsbom.org/tornadorelief.

Well-oiled machine

Associations focus, organize, shine during disaster

When Baptists in Etowah and Calhoun counties emerged after the deadly outbreak of tornadoes April 27, one set began assessing the damage and the other started gathering tools to go help.

There were really no reports of damage in Etowah County, said Gary Cardwell, director of missions for Etowah Baptist Association. But neighboring Calhoun County was hit pretty hard in two major areas.

As far as churches, Wellington First Baptist Church was severely damaged while Mamre Baptist Church, Gadsden, was destroyed.

"We are partnering with Sid Nichols and Calhoun Baptist Association to do whatever they need in their area," Cardwell said.

Nichols, director of missions for Calhoun Association, said the resources coming from Etowah Association have been a major help. Cardwell has sent tarps, food, chain saw teams and other resources, Nichols explained.

Working together

And while it might seem normal for neighboring DOMs to work this way, this is not an unusual sight in moments of disaster all across the state. In fact, the recent tornado devastation demonstrated just how well greased the associational missions disaster relief effort is.

Many of the associational disaster relief units are deployed and working before the disaster has actually passed, an official with Alabama Baptist disaster relief noted.

Cleanup and recovery teams, including chain saw teams are typically in their vehicles headed to the disaster locations within hours of the destruction taking place.

And feeding units begin rolling out by the next day.

Other trained disaster relief volunteers are moving just as quickly.

Nichols said there was "a tremendous amount of volunteers pitching in at various sites. They've since addressed most issues with trees on houses and placing tarps on damaged roofs."

In Marshall Baptist Association, Director of Missions Randall Stoner also reported a unified effort among churches and individuals as they worked to dig out from the storm damage.

"Chaplains are stationed at various sites," Stoner said, noting cleanup efforts were still quite involved and some areas remained without power at press time.

David Patty, director of missions for Sand Mountain Baptist Association, had a lot to do in his area but the disaster relief system was working like it was supposed to work.

"Churches are helping churches and neighbors are helping neighbors," said Michelle Stiefel, ministry assistant at Sand Mountain Association.

In Pickens Baptist Association, DOM Gary Farley said churches were working hard in cleanup efforts. Most of their efforts were focused on rural parts of the Pickens County, he added.

The associational office also col-

lected donated items and organized a system to distribute them.

In Madison Baptist Association, disaster relief workers were being assisted by volunteers from Michigan and South Carolina. Huntsville-area churches were helping feed workers and have been collecting and distributing supplies.

Church connection

"First Baptist Church, Huntsville, has also been a tremendous help, serving as a center taking donations and walk-in volunteers," said Ron Lynch, church ministry director for Madison Association.

Whitesburg Baptist Church also has been active, serving as a Red Cross shelter and opening its The Place up to serve as a collection center for supplies.

In Franklin Baptist Association, First Baptist Church, Russellville, also served as a Red Cross shelter.

Barry Holcomb, pastor of First, Russellville, reached out to the nearby hurting communities of Phil Campbell and Hackleburg right away and has been active in helping.

"We volunteered to be a Red Cross shelter by calling and letting them know we were available. They then sent a representative out to evaluate our facilities and formulate an agreement," he said. "We have signed a two-year agreement so we can be activated more quickly in the future."

"Our folks at FBC have worked night and day serving food and providing hospitality," he said. "It has been amazing to watch." (TAB)

DROP-OFF LOCATIONS FOR DONATIONS

Limestone, Madison, Morgan and West and East Cullman associations

- The Place Distribution Center; 3911 Pulaski Pike, Huntsville; 256-783-6058; john.crocker@wbccares.org
- FBC Decatur Warehouse; 1905 Central Parkway; Decatur; 256-606-0066 or 256-345-5635

Tennessee River, Sand Mountain, Marshall, DeKalb, Etowah, Friendship, Blount, Lookout Mountain and Cherokee associations

- FBC Onenota; 300 3rd Ave East; Oneonta; 205-353-6425
- Pleasant Mount Baptist Church; 250 Pine Mountain Circle; Replam; 205-527-1186
- CrossPoint Community Church; 2730 Wills Creek Road; Gadsden; 256-282-3858
- FBC Hokes Bluff; 5052 Main St.; Hokes Bluff; 256-458-4587

Calhoun, Coosa River, Cleburne, Clay, Carey and Randolph associations

- Ten Island Baptist Church; 9150 Highway 77; Ohatchee; 256-892-4645
- FBC Sylacauga; 10 Broadway Avenue South, Sylacauga

Tallapoosa, East Liberty, Tuskegee-Lee, Russell and Bullock-Centennial associations

- Sixth Street Baptist Church; 2324 6th Street Extension; Alexander City; 256-794-3074
- FBC Opelika; 301 S. 8th Street, Opelika; 334-745-5715

Salem-Troy, Barbour, Coffee, Dale, Judson, Geneva and Columbia associations

- Hartford Baptist Church; 105 East Burch St., Hartford; 334-449-0205

Choctaw, Clarke, Washington, Mobile and Baldwin associations

- Highpoint Community Church; 185 Morris-Cobb Road, Empire; 205-837-1134
- Shiloh Baptist Church; 717 Cleveland Road, Saraland; 251-675-3587
- FBC Leroy; 24957 County Road 34, Leroy; 251-246-3739

Bigbee, Hale, Bibb, Bethel, Cahaba and Selma associations

- Pineview Baptist Church; 10291 Highway 5; Brent; 205-926-9280

Lamar, Fayette, Walker, Sipsey, Pickens, Tuscaloosa and Pleasant Grove associations

- Northport Baptist Church; 1004 Main Ave., Northport; 205-345-0100
- FBC Fayette; 432 Temple Ave North, Fayette; 205-932-5562
- Snowtown Baptist Church; 6000 Flat Top Road, Dora; 205-436-3305
- Forest Lake Baptist Church; 107 18th St., Tuscaloosa; 205-759-1569
- New Prospect Baptist Church; 770 Highway 5 North, Jasper; 205-384-4808 or 205-300-5530
- GG Hardin Community Center; 15689 Hwy 216; Brookwood; 205-792-5105
- Gordo Baptist Church; 311 2nd Street NW, Gordo; 205-310-7838
- Pisgah Baptist Church; 5306 3rd St. Sipsey, Jasper; 205-275-7909

Colbert-Lauderdale, Franklin, Muscle Shoals, Marion and Winston associations

- FBC Russellville; 213 N Jackson Ave., Russellville; 256-332-2065
- Highland Park Baptist Church; 501 W. Sixth St., Muscle Shoals; 256-412-5125
- FBC Winfield; 830 US Highway 43 South, Winfield; 205-487-3257
- Southside Baptist Church; 12215 Highway 43, Russellville; 256-332-0911

Mud Creek, Sulphur Springs, North Jefferson, St. Clair, Birmingham, Shelby and Bessemer associations

- NorthPark Baptist Church; 5700 Deerfoot Parkway, Trussville; 205-908-7985
- North Jefferson Association; 3396 Mt Olive Road, Mt Olive; 205-631-4126
- Canaan Baptist Church; 2543 Morgan Road, Bessemer; 205-425-4381
- FBC Pelham; 2867 Pelham Parkway, Pelham; 205-664-0237
- The Church at Brook Hills; www.brookhills.org
- Union Hill Baptist Church; 7049 Taylors Ferry Rd., Bessemer; 205-305-3240
- Cross Road Baptist Church; 744 Bee Hendrix Rd., Hueytown; 205-389-2160
- Hillview Baptist Church; 800 E. Heflin Ave., Birmingham; 205-798-0340
- New Temple Baptist Church; 4501 Greathouse Rd., Dora; 205-648-4141
- FBC Pleasant Grove; 724 4th St., Pleasant Grove; 205-744-7061
- Bethel Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove; 635 Ninth Way, Pleasant Grove; 205-744-6711
- Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Hueytown; 1343 Hueytown Rd., Hueytown; 205-491-3771
- Greensport Baptist Church, Ashville; 9260 Shoal Creek Rd., Ashville; 205-594-5610

Chilton, Central, Autauga, Elmore and Montgomery associations

- FBC Montgomery Caring Center; 52 Adams Ave., Montgomery; 334-241-5140
- Liberty Hill Baptist Church; 5800 Co. Rd 37; Clanton; 205-299-2318
- Bethsalem Baptist Church; 2990 County Rd 24; Billingsley; 205-755-1413
- Seman Baptist Church; 11380 Grier Road, Wetumpka; 334-315-2720
- FBC Eclectic, Eclectic; P.O. Box 240400, Eclectic; 334-541-4444

Source: www.alsbom.org/tornadorelief and TAB



Baptist chaplains encounter 'emotional injuries' as they assist tornado survivors in recovery process

By Lindsey Robinson
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Since 4 p.m. April 27, just after an EF-5 tornado hit Lawrence County, Chaplain Mark Wakefield has been on-site at Lawrence County Medical Center in Moulton and out in the community, counseling people with both physical and emotional injuries.

"They need to tell their story and chaplains are listening," said Wakefield, who also serves as associate pastor of Moulton Baptist Church.

About 20 chaplains — some from as far away as Dothan — are serving with him.

After the tornado, they set up a table with a sign that said "Crisis Counseling" but soon realized most victims were too embarrassed, proud or distracted to approach. In the first few days, people walked around their demolished neighborhoods in a daze, unable to sleep, Wakefield said.

"People who have never been scared of anything in their lives are scared," he said. "They're scared to go outside, scared to open the door. The security has been ripped out from under them."

So the chaplains walked from house to house, door to door — even if there were no house and no door — to offer prayers and listening ears.

"If you just walk up and start talking to them, they'll tell you their story," Wakefield said.

The chaplains also will be visiting area schools to help students cope with the loss of loved ones and homes.

The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions has sent out more than 50 disaster relief chap-



Photo by Doug Rogers

'EMOTIONAL INJURIES' — Richard Hebert, a chaplain with the Baldwin Baptist Association team, consoles a homeowner in Smithville.

lains in groups of seven to 12 to the most devastated areas in the state, including Lawrence County, said Joe Bob Mizzell, director of the office of Christian ethics and chaplaincy ministries.

About 30 more chaplains have accompanied chain saw teams, cleanup crews and feeding units, he added.

"Basically we have a chaplain for every (disaster relief) team that goes out," Mizzell said.

All chaplains undergo Critical Incident Stress Management training, during which they learn how to talk to disaster victims and listen as they open new wounds and share traumatic experiences.

"The No. 1 priority is to listen," Mizzell said. "And whenever the opportunity arises, they share the gospel."

But along with counseling survivors, disaster relief chaplains counsel law enforcement, firefighter volunteers and even National Guard troops. They also counsel each other, Mizzell said.

In times like this, ministers have to support each other so they don't become overwhelmed with the suffering of others, he explained.

Protection from trauma

Chaplains usually stay in the field for just a few days at a time, then they're sent home for a period of rest and reflection while other chaplains take their places. Mizzell said chaplains rarely stay at a disaster site longer than a week.

Much like chaplains at war, the disaster relief chaplains have to protect themselves from being

traumatized as they help traumatized survivors, he said.

Bill Morgan, a disaster relief chaplain and director of missions for Autauga Baptist Association, is one chaplain who has been in the field a lot lately.

He responded when an EF-3 tornado hit the Boone's Chapel area of Prattville on April 15, destroying the sanctuary of Boone's Chapel Baptist Church in Autauga Association. Most recently, he accompanied a team of seven chaplains to Pratt City after it was hit by an EF-2 tornado April 27.

A war film buff, Morgan said he felt as if he was in a movie as he watched families in the Jefferson County community rifle through the wreckage of their homes looking for mementos.

"It really reminded me of the scenes from old war movies of people going through their homes after they were bombed," Morgan said.

His role is to help them work through the natural stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Sometimes victims can shift back and forth between stages and even repeat stages until they reach a point of healing, he added.

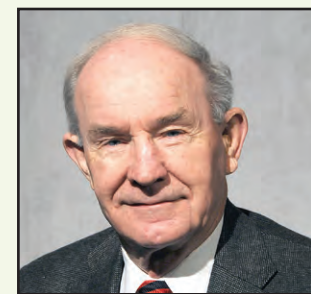
"It's an ongoing type of ministry," Morgan said of chaplaincy.

Wakefield said he is already noticing some signs of healing in north Alabama, thanks to an outpouring of support from across the state and country.

As the daze and fear starts to wear off, people begin to see themselves as survivors, not victims, Wakefield said. They want to crack jokes and show off their scars like wounds earned in battle.

"People want to show and tell you things you don't really need to see or hear," Wakefield said with a laugh.

"People have been really scared and exhausted, but now they're starting to laugh a little bit." ❧



MIZZELL

Encouraging one another

Joe Bob Mizzell wasn't sure how the people of Alberta Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, would react when they saw him.

Mizzell, director of the office of Christian ethics and chaplaincy ministries for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, had been pastor of Alberta Baptist for 17 years. But that was 20 years ago, and he'd only visited a few times since.

When Pastor Larry Corder led the congregation in a different facility — Open Door Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa — May 1, Mizzell attended. It was the Sunday after Alberta Baptist was devastated by the April 27 tornado outbreak in the state.

"It is a total loss," Mizzell said of the church building. "The complete community is wiped out. 'It's like a combat zone,' he said. "This is as bad as anything I've ever seen."

Mizzell's presence was a welcome sight for church members. "I think everybody in the building came and hugged me," he said. "It was a somber experience." (TAB)

"The No. 1 priority is to listen. And whenever the opportunity arises, they share the gospel."

Joe Bob Mizzell
State Board of Missions



Photo by Doug Rogers

E-MAILS, PHONE CALLS, FAXES — James Brucke, a member of Wadsworth Baptist Church, Deatsville, volunteers on the disaster relief communications team with the SBOM feeding unit at Broadway Baptist Church, Rainsville.

Frontline communications

Power or no power, trained Alabama Baptist disaster relief volunteers are always able to communicate with the main command center at any point, even if it means using a ham radio.

And with situations like the massive amount of cell towers and landlines down following the April 27 tornado outbreak in the state, this type of communication definitely comes in handy.

Once all forms of communication are back functioning again, the communications resources connected to disaster relief include the more routine e-mailing, faxing and Internet use.

In most cases, a communications unit is deployed separately from the other units but the volunteers in this role are trained to

handle the appropriate equipment needed to provide whatever communication is needed during a disaster and the following relief response.

The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions is unique, however, because it has a 53-foot semitruck trailer that serves as a feeding/communications unit all in one.

It is fully self-contained with ham radio, a computer bank with Internet connection, water purification, propane for food preparation and a diesel generator.

The unit is currently deployed to Broadway Baptist Church, Rainsville, as part of the disaster relief efforts following the tornado devastation in the state. (TAB)

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Photo courtesy of Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism

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Fishing in streams

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(continued on page 14)



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In fact, Pigeon Forge is much like its visitors—family focused and faith based—which could be why people get that “coming home” feeling when they travel to the East Tennessee town. That feeling extends from



one attraction to the next and starts with the outstanding theater community in Pigeon Forge.

With more than a dozen theaters, including a number that offer dinner and a show, visitors find a variety of live entertainment from which to choose. Many shows include gospel music segments,

in addition to bluegrass, rock ‘n’ roll, country and Broadway tunes.

Two shows are in their final year of production. “The Miracle” and “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” will close their successful runs in October. Both currently are performed at The Miracle Theater and have been fan favorites for several years.

Along the Parkway, Pigeon Forge’s main street, visitors will find dozens of attractions, restaurants, outlet stores and specialty shops. In addition to a number of churches and chapels, opportunities for Sunday worship also are available at some theaters and lodging venues.

Speaking of lodging, there’s a seemingly endless selection—from hotels and motels, to cabins, condos and campgrounds. In all, there are more than 12,000 rooms available in Pigeon Forge, and 16 hotels with meeting space to accommodate church groups and family reunions.

Pigeon Forge is home to Dollywood, one of the world’s top theme parks. There are memories of Dolly Parton’s life integrated into every area of the park, keeping it true to the country superstar’s mountain heritage.

The Titanic Museum Attraction, which opened in 2010, is filled with stories, photographs, artifacts from and re-creations of the magnificent, but doomed,



ship. The 100-year anniversary of the Titanic’s fateful journey will be noted in 2012, with a number of special events planned at the Pigeon Forge museum.

Keeping things fresh can be a challenge, but the folks in Pigeon Forge seem to have it down to an art. In 2011 alone, visitors will have three new, major shows from which to choose: Hatfield & McCoy Dinner Show, Smoky Mountain Lumberjack Feud and Christmas at the Smoky Mountain Opry, the precursor to Smoky Mountain Opry, which opens in early 2012.

Pigeon Forge is just south of Knoxville off I-40 at exit 407. Visitor information is available at MyPigeonForge.com and 1-800-251-9100. Resources for meeting planners are available at PigeonForgeMeeting.com and 1-800-285-7557.

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Where time is not measured with a clock.

Cades Cove, golf, fireworks popular attractions during summer



Fourth of July Fireworks Show

(continued from page 11)
bicycle excursion around the area. This activity provides an excellent chance to be directly in the great outdoors while viewing wildlife and the pioneer homesteads preserved throughout the area. According to Cades Cove's website, visitors can rent bicycles and helmets from the Cades Cove Campground Store. For those interested in commit-

ting to a long bike excursion, there are 11 miles on Cades Cove Loop Road. For a less rigorous bike ride, shortcuts are provided. Bicycles can only be used on the Cades Cove Loop Road or other paved areas of the tour.

Take a drive.

Some visitors may prefer to tour Cades Cove from the comfort of their automobile, particularly during the warm-

est summer months. Be sure to check with the park before you visit about the certain days and times Cades Cove Loop Road is closed for driving. It's worth mentioning that the area boasts many vivid wildflower varieties, and if the flowers are in bloom, then you may spot Queen Ann's Lace, daisies and yellow fringed orchids.



Photos courtesy of Gatlinburg Department of Tourism

Smoky Mountains

Gatlinburg

Gatlinburg, Tenn., is widely known for the abundant shops, restaurants and tourist attractions that line its bustling streets, but the city also offers outdoor activities perfect for the summer months.

Play a round of golf.

Gatlinburg Golf Course is located five miles from downtown Gatlinburg and lies adjacent to Dollywood. The 18-hole course underwent major renovations in 2007. According to its website, the course is open year-round with a fully equipped pro shop and food services area.

Watch the fireworks.

If you plan to be in Gatlinburg during the July Fourth weekend, then don't miss the Fourth of July Fireworks Show. This patriotic celebration lights up the mountain skyline downtown at 10 p.m. with a magnificent fireworks display.



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'Much more refreshed ... when you are clean'

Disaster relief laundry, shower units deploy for tornado survivors, relief volunteers

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

In the wake of damaged homes and power and water outages, clean clothes may seem like a small thing. But Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers whose ministry focus revolves around laundry beg to differ.

"After a good, hot shower, there's nothing like having clean clothes to put on for the next day, especially when you've been working three or four days in the hot sun," said Gary Green, shower and laundry unit coordinator for Alabama Baptist disaster relief.

"The feel and smell of clean clothes help your morale and you just rest better," he said. "You are much more refreshed for work the next day when you are clean."

As of May 4, at least 23 mobile shower and/or laundry units were in place around Alabama for use by tornado survivors and disaster relief volunteers. Facebook posts offered help for those in need as well. In Calhoun County, where several communities were hard hit, First Baptist Church, Williams, in Jacksonville, posted that First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, in Calhoun Baptist Association, and local businesses Salon Alon and Suds & Hugs had volunteered to help with laundry. In Athens, Clements Baptist Church in Limestone Baptist Association also offered shower and laundry facilities.

Mobile shower/laundry units are in place in Pleasant Grove, Vance, Moulton, Coker, Russellville, Hoover, Wellington, Ashville, Rainsville, Montgomery, Cotton-

dale, Bessemer, Ider, Tuscaloosa, Huntsville, Henagar and Double Springs. The primary role of these facilities, according to Green, has been to provide laundry services for volunteers assisting in cleanup efforts, as well as for National Guard troops and Red Cross workers.

The laundry ministry is actually quite simple. Individuals put their dirty clothes into a bag and drop the bag at one of the mobile units. Volunteers then tag a "clean" bag with the individual's name, and the clean bag follows the laundry through the process. Laundry volunteers wash, dry and fold the clothes, then put them in the tagged clean bag for pickup.

Generally two volunteers are assigned to each laundry trailer, which have two to four washers and dryers each. Green said two training sessions are now held annually at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center for laundry volunteers. A two-day training session in the spring covers the hitching and towing requirements for actually pulling a trailer, as well as delivery and setup/breakdown of a shower/laundry trailer. The spring session includes laundry and sanitation instructions as well.

Learning the basics

This fall, a one-day class will be offered at Shocco covering the basics of handling and cleaning the laundry and cleaning and sanitizing the showers.

Alabama Baptist disaster relief currently owns two shower/laundry units, Green said, and several associations have their own, with a

combined total of 14 units available throughout the state. The training is standard, Green said, so that everyone is prepared to staff a trailer regardless of its origin.

At press time, two dedicated laundry trailers were in operation. The first, a laundry unit from Texas Baptist disaster relief, was put into operation May 2 at North River Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, in Tuscaloosa Baptist Association. The second was en route May 4 to Harvest House Restaurant in Harvest in northwestern Madison County.

Washing around the clock

Butch Roshto, associate pastor of pastoral care at North River Baptist, said the laundry facilities were initially being used only by the volunteers from Texas who are headquartered at the church, including several chainsaw crews and a kitchen crew. However, once the church put out the word through a local radio station that the facility was available, more dirty laundry started coming in.

"We had a huge pile Tuesday night, and volunteers washed throughout the night," Roshto said.

And, at press time, one person had been led to the Lord in front of the laundry trailer, he noted.

"The volunteers out here tell everyone that their goal is to help the displaced but also to share Christ, which is what they are doing," Roshto said.

Tuscaloosa residents have been helped as well by the Tide Loads of Hope program, sponsored by Tide detergent and set up at University Mall. According to the company's



Photo by Doug Rogers

CLEAN CLOTHES — Daniel Bowers (left) and Leroy Cole volunteer to wash clothes of relief workers at the Covington Baptist Association laundry unit located in Rainsville.

website, Tide's mobile laundromat is capable of cleaning more than 300 loads of laundry every day. Volunteers at the site wash, dry and fold clothes for free.

In Harvest, a team from South Carolina is helping coordinate relief efforts, which include shower and laundry facilities from both South Carolina and Michigan. The team is headquartered at Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville, in Madison Baptist Association, and coordina-

tor David Carver of South Carolina disaster relief said the church has offered to do laundry for volunteers.

Bob Norris, also of South Carolina, is the coordinator for laundry for the South Carolina team, and he said that like other sites, the Harvest House shower and laundry units are being utilized primarily by Baptist volunteers and Red Cross workers.

"We're happy to be here," Norris said. "It's a blessing to be able to help people."

Pleasant Grove unit provides hot showers to state troopers, National Guardsmen



Photo by Rick Sharp

UNIT IN DOUBLE SPRINGS — Coosa River Baptist Association's shower unit is set up for the feeding team at FBC Double Springs.

By John Evans
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

After 20 hours buried alive, he needed a shower.

The Pleasant Grove resident stopped by the Southern Baptist disaster relief mobile shower unit at Bethel Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove, to clean up after enduring a jarring ordeal. When the April 27 tornadoes tore through his town, he hid in his bathroom with his family as the twister lifted the house more than a foot from its foundation and slammed it back down several times.

The house's interior imploded, trapping him beneath the rubble but sparing his family. After daylight broke, rescuers found the man and dug him from the house. He escaped serious injury.

"He said he got closer to God ... than he had been in a long time," said Jim Jones, a disaster relief volunteer from Christ Point Community Church, Sylacauga, who along with his wife, Linda, operates the mobile shower unit in Pleasant Grove.

The Joneses arrived in Pleasant Grove April 29 to start a weeklong shift operating the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' (SBOM) shower unit. Since

then, they have seen everyone from National Guard soldiers to Amish volunteers from Pennsylvania. An average of 25-30 people per day shower at the unit.

The shower unit includes six curtained shower stalls (three for men, three for women) housed in a large trailer stocked with donated toiletries. A gas water heater keeps the water warm, a generator can keep the lights on if power isn't available, and water flows from the town's supply. Stalls and towels are washed after each use, and some units have laundry services (see story, this page).

'Great morale booster'

"It's a great morale booster, and it also provides a way for people to get a much more restful night of sleep, to be clean and relaxed," said Gary Green, shower and laundry unit coordinator for Alabama Baptist disaster relief.

Of the currently 27 shower units deployed around the state (13 of which were driven in by other state Baptist conventions through coordination with the North American Mission Board), Green said about half are open to the public. The rest (like the Pleasant Grove unit) are restricted to volunteer workers

and local authorities such as state troopers and National Guard soldiers. Most of Alabama's shower units are owned and managed by individual Baptist associations, and all are funded through the Cooperative Program.

Volunteers need official disaster relief credentials to operate shower units. The Joneses earned theirs after the Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake in Haiti, taking SBOM courses at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega.

People who stop by the Pleasant Grove unit get more than a shower, thanks to the urgency the Joneses feel to share Christ with others.

"It is a personal responsibility of mine and my wife, Linda, to tell people about Jesus as we go," Jim Jones said. "There may not be another chance, and they may not hear it from somebody else."

Linda Jones strives to help others as Christ commanded His followers to do.

"The first thing (Jesus told us to do) is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and body, and then He said to love others," she said. "That's what were doing, loving others by providing cleanliness, giving them clean clothes, giving them a shower."

Want to know God?

By Pastor Mike Shaw
First Baptist Church, Pelham

Do you want to know God in a personal way and know absolutely that when you die, you'll go to heaven? The good news is that God wants to have a personal and meaningful relationship with you.

The Bible says, "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

Many people sincerely think that you have to be real good to go to heaven. They are wrong.

To go to heaven, you have to be forgiven.

All of us are sinners by birth and choice. "There is no one righteous, not even one; ... there is no one who does good, not even one" (Rom. 3:10a, 12b).

When Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, went to Calvary's cross, He became sin for us.

On the cross, He suffered agony, darkness, thirst and separation from God the Father — all the things that we will suffer if we do not repent of our sins and trust Jesus for salvation.

On Calvary, one thief rejected Jesus and died unrepentant, while the other thief acknowledged his guilt and said to Him, "Remember me when you come into your Kingdom." Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:42-43).

The thief on the cross was not baptized and never went to Sunday School or church but he was saved.

Today repent of your sins and trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior, and then find a church where you can learn more about God.

Don't wait. The greatest danger for those who don't know God is procrastination.

Today call on Jesus and He will answer you.

Weather wreaks havoc in Southeast

Although Alabama took the brunt of the late April deadly tornadoes, other states in the Southeast experienced devastation as well, and Southern Baptists from several neighboring state conventions are partnering together to respond to the widespread need.

Florida Baptist Convention

Unscathed by the late April tornadoes, Florida Baptists are eager to return the favor Alabama Baptists showed the Sunshine State during the past decade with numerous weather events of disastrous proportions. Within a week of the tornadoes' devastation, Florida Baptists had disaster relief teams in four locations throughout Alabama. The teams included chain-saw crews and feeding units. Alabama native Fritz Wilson, Florida Baptists' director of disaster relief and recovery, vowed, "We're here

to bring help, healing and hope to people who are hurting and so we will stay as long as we need to stay."

Georgia Baptist Convention

Sixteen counties across Georgia were devastated and at least 15 people were killed by vicious storms April 27. Georgia Baptist disaster relief teams fanned out across the state to respond to needs, with several disaster relief teams from South Carolina enroute to Georgia to lend a hand in recovery efforts. "Any loss of life is horrific," said Georgia Baptist disaster relief director Stuart Lang. "But in the scope of things we were blessed to not have more damage." A chaplain team from Georgia Baptist disaster relief is currently traveling to Geraldine, Ala., to help respond to needs there.

Tennessee Baptist Convention

A series of deadly thunderstorms, tornadoes and floods April 25-27 took the lives of 36 people in Tennessee, and numerous residences, businesses and churches reported damage. Several Tennessee Baptist disaster relief teams have been dispatched throughout the state, responding to hundreds of requests for assistance in heavily impacted areas. Additionally some Tennessee Baptist churches have sent disaster relief teams to Alabama to assist with recovery efforts.

South Carolina Baptist Convention

Spared the wrath of the latest outbreak of stormy weather, South Carolina Baptists are helping their neighboring states in need.

Twenty-one South Carolina disaster relief teams are currently working in Alabama, with additional teams working in other affected states.

"We will be in Alabama until they tell us they don't need us any longer," said Cliff Satterwhite, who directs disaster relief efforts for the South Carolina convention.

"It's a partnership. We all work together."

Baptist State Convention of North Carolina

Still reeling from a series of devastating tornadoes that hit many areas of central and eastern North Carolina on April 16, North Carolina Baptists are in the process of continuing disaster relief throughout their home state. North Carolina Baptists have assessed ongoing needs in Alabama and stand ready to help as needed, according to Richard Brunson, director of Baptist Men for North Carolina Baptists.

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

Storms have taken their toll in Arkansas, with at least 12 Arkansans killed this year as a result of severe weather. With some disaster relief efforts coming to a close in

their home state, Arkansas Baptists are directing their resources to relief efforts in Alabama, sending two recovery units to Hueytown and a shower unit to Tuscaloosa. Disasters give "Christians a great opportunity to demonstrate the compassion of Christ in a very difficult time,"

said Robby Tingle, missions ministries team leader for Arkansas Baptists.

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Following a barrage of severe weather this spring, Mississippi Baptist disaster relief task force volunteers remain on active duty around the state, according to Don Gann, consultant in men's ministry for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Relief efforts include feeding units, chain saw teams and chaplaincy visits in the hardest hit areas of the state.

(Compiled by Margaret Dempsey-Colson)

"We will be in Alabama until they tell us they don't need us any longer."

Cliff Satterwhite
Disaster relief director
South Carolina Baptist Convention

CORRECTION

The article "St. Clair County churches survive storm, reach out to neighbors" printed in the May 5, 2011, issue of *The Alabama Baptist* had the incorrect church name in the photo outline. The church is Bethany Baptist Church, Ashville, not Greensport Baptist Church, Shoal Creek Valley.

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CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR: East Hill Baptist Church, located in the city of Pensacola, Fla., is seeking a pastor to lead the church. The church currently has 570 members. The successful candidate must meet the biblical qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4. The church membership expects the successful candidate to have a minimum of 6 years of successful pastoral experience, a bachelor's degree from an accredited college plus seminary master's degree. Resumes will be accepted until June 30. Resumes including educational information, pastoral experience, personal skills and at least three professional references are to be mailed or delivered to: Pastor Search Team Chair, East Hill Baptist Church, 3960 Spanish Trail, Pensacola, FL 32504.

MINISTER OF MUSIC/WORSHIP: Central Baptist Church of Bearden, Knoxville, Tenn., is seeking a full-time minister of music and worship following the retirement of Dr. Wendell Boertje, who served faithfully in this position for 27 years. Qualified candidates should have a minimum of five years experience as a minister of worship and music, a music degree from an accredited college or university, seminary degree preferred, along with other qualifications. Information including our church profile and the job description may be viewed at www.cbcbeardean.org under "resources" then "employment." Interested individuals may forward a resume to: Search Committee for Minister of Music and Worship, P.O. Box 51348,

Knoxville, TN 37950-1348, or contact by e-mail to: musicsearch@cbcbeardean.org.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC: Ebenezer Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational minister of music. P.O. Box 56, Stanton, AL 36790. Ebc1819@gmail.com.

MINISTER OF MUSIC/YOUTH: Fairfax First Baptist Church, Valley, Ala., is prayerfully seeking a full-time minister of music and youth. If interested, please send resume to: scgarnett@gmail.com or you may mail your resume to: Fairfax FBC, 510 Denson Street, Valley, AL 36854.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER TO STUDENTS: New Beginning Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational minister to students grades 1-12. Send resume to: New Beginning Baptist Church, 1076 Coley Creek Road, Alexander City, AL 35010, or e-mail: jpate@newbeginningsbc.net.

OTHER POSITIONS

ADMINISTRATOR/VERITAS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY: Veritas Christian Academy, a ministry of Lakewood Baptist Church in Phenix City, Ala., is seeking resumes for an administrator (K5-8th grade). Candidates should have a bachelor's degree plus 3 years related experience. Must also be or become a member of Lakewood Baptist Church. A job description is available in the church office at 4011 Lakewood Drive, Phenix City, AL 36867. 334-298-6433. Sub-

mit resume before May 20 to: Pastor@LBCPC.org.

PIANIST: Oak Bowery Baptist Church, Ohatchee, Ala., 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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About Alabama

Revising the Alabama Constitution

By **Jim Williams**
Special to The Alabama Baptist

The state Legislature has developed a plan for revising the Alabama Constitution, which was adopted in 1901 and is widely held to have major flaws and omissions. A shaky foundation for state law, it has been amended more than 850 times in the past 110 years. Many amendments are local "patches" that work around the constitution's problems without fixing them.

The Legislature plans to revise the document article by article. Its plan is explained in Senate Joint Resolution 82, which has been approved by both houses. The idea is for the Legislature to adopt a series of proposed constitutional amendments for voters to approve. This approach was used in the 1970s to revise the article that governs Alabama's courts and the 1990s to revise the article that governs voting and elections.

Under the plan, the Legislature intends in 2011 to bring voters proposals for revising the articles dealing with private corporations and banking and removing inactive, unconstitutional language on school segregation and poll taxes.

The Legislature has created the Constitutional Revision Commission to develop proposed revisions for nine more articles over the next three years. The commission will include the governor and top legislative officials, plus their appointees; its products will be presented to the Legislature and, if approved, to voters for adoption.

In 2012, the commission will focus on constitutional articles dealing with the Legislature and the separation of powers. Key subjects will include provisions for local government and economic development. Flaws in these sections of the current document have led to hundreds of local amendments. The

Legislature's plan doesn't say how it will handle these local amendments, but revising them is critical to improving the constitution.

In 2013, the commission will tackle articles dealing with the executive department, education and the declaration of rights. Key subjects will include the governor's veto power, local school taxes and individual rights.

In 2014, the commission will work on articles related to impeachments, tax exemptions and miscellaneous provisions such as pay raises for public officials. The plan excludes the taxation article, which is left to a future time.

This is an ambitious plan. The route it takes will not be agreeable to everyone, but it creates an opportunity to make long-sought improvements in state government. We should all hope that is the result.

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

To the best of our knowledge, all of the ads in *The Alabama Baptist* represent legitimate companies and offerings. However, one should always exercise normal business caution in responding to ads.



Photo courtesy of Indian Lake Baptist Church

AUCTION RAISES \$4,000 FOR ANNIE ARMSTRONG

The Woman's Missionary Union and Girls in Action of Indian Lake Baptist Church, Northport, raised \$4,000 during their third annual cake and art auction for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. This year, there were 46 cakes and several pieces of artwork up for auction.



I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

John 16:33

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Free medical clinics

Baptist Health System 'answers the call' with help for tornado survivors

By Jen Jackson
Special to The Alabama Baptist

As Alabamians rushed to help those in need following the frenzy of violent tornadoes that shredded parts of the state April 27, Baptist Health System (BHS) employees were on the front lines putting into action the BHS mission to "answer the call."

Within a few days free first aid clinics were set up and functioning in four devastated communities in the state. And it started with an April 28 e-mail sent to employees by BHS president Shane Spees.

"There are no words to describe the losses of yesterday. And there are no words to describe the emptiness we feel today when looking for answers to the question 'why?'" he wrote. "But our faith and the mission to serve others will always endure. And I hope you will join me in praying and reaching out with service and support for those who grieve today."

Inspired and empowered by the message to serve, a few proactive staff members knew just what to do.

Juanita Williams in particular had the exact plan in mind, said Mark Belcher, vice president and chief development officer of the Baptist Health Foundation.

The physician marketing liaison for Princeton Baptist Medical Center, Williams suggested setting up a free first aid clinic at a former Baptist Health Center building in Pleasant Grove that had survived the storm.

"Over the years, [BHS] has had an enormous number of employees who have lived in or grown up in [the Pleasant Grove] area," Belcher said. "We bought generators, filled our trucks and cars with medical supplies, antibiotics, tetanus shots and bottled water. Incredibly, by 1 p.m. on Friday (April 29) we were out there in Pleasant Grove with Dr. Vera Soong and volunteer nurses



Photo courtesy of Baptist Health System

KEEPING WATCH — A National guardsman stands near the Baptist Health System first aid station in Concord. The free clinic 'has been a place of healing — body and soul.'

seeing patients."

The clinic originated as a place to treat minor, residual injuries like cuts, burns and surface wounds. However, practitioners quickly realized they were caring for patients' emotional and spiritual needs as well.

'People helping people'

When one patient entered the clinic because he had stepped on a nail, it was the first opportunity he had to sit still, Belcher noted. From there he began to "process the nightmare he had been living for the past three days. Then, his emotional resolve began to unravel."

"We came into this clinic as medical practitioners, but our role shifted," Belcher said. "The clinic is really about people helping people. It's been an amazing conglomerate

of skills and talents, hearts and desire. There's a cooperative spirit unlike anything I've ever seen. ... Everyone has just jumped in to do whatever is needed. It's been a place of healing — body and soul."

The Pleasant Grove clinic demonstrated what needs could be filled, which led to more free clinics being quickly established in Cordova, Concord and Pratt City.

Gary Fisher, Baptist Health System's director of church and faith relations, led the charge to get the supplies secured and clinics established.

"We started in Pleasant Grove specifically because we had a building there that could be used immediately for the clinic. In the other communities, we knew we'd have to go more mobile.

"Luckily, prior to the storms, we

had scheduled a HealthFair mobile unit for this week," he said. "We dispatched that mobile van to become the clinic in Pratt City. Then M-POWER ministries partnered with us to ensure we had the supplies we needed to get up and running," he said. "We are seeing a lot of people in need of maintenance medications, so pharmacy needs are also being covered from the mobile unit."

Emotional stress

Fisher also noted that trained professional counselors were brought in to address the emotional stress victims are facing.

Cordova and Concord followed with mobile units of their own, and Williams was on the ground in Concord putting her idea to work just as she did at the Pleasant Grove clinic.

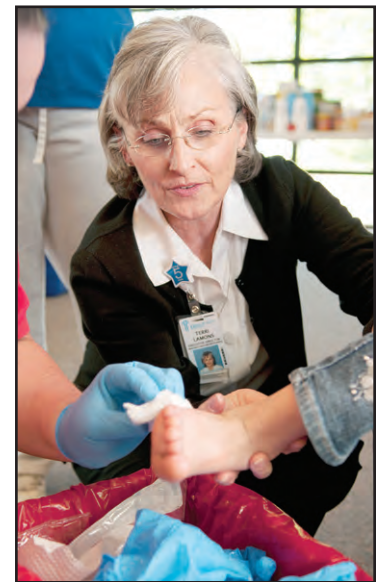


Photo courtesy of Baptist Health System

FIRST AID — Terri Lamons, executive director of imaging services at Princeton Baptist Medical Center, helps treat a cut on the foot of a young patient at the first aid station in Pleasant Grove.

Along with setting up the clinic, she is taking nurses door-to-door to care for those who are unable to come to the mobile unit.

At press time, more than 900 patients had been seen at the four clinics and more than 150 people had volunteered at the clinics.

Back at BHS headquarters in Birmingham, Tracy Hill, BHS' human resources director, is working around the clock to keep volunteer staffing flowing seamlessly.

"Many, many folks at [BHS] have worked hard to staff the clinics and ensure they are stocked with all needed supplies," she said. "Rarely have I seen a group work together so smoothly and efficiently to provide compassionate care to those who are hurting. What a wonderful witness to the love of God."

Samford houses hundreds of Red Cross volunteers

Samford University in Birmingham is playing host to hundreds of American Red Cross volunteers who are in the Birmingham area to assist with tornado recovery efforts.

Since April 30, folding cots have dotted the floors of Bashinsky Field House, Pete Hanna Center and Cooney Family Field House to accommodate a total of about 700 volunteers.

On May 4, Samford officials received an e-mail from Dottie Dreyer, a volunteer from Gainesville, Fla., expressing appreciation for the hospitality that has been extended to her and her fellow American Red Cross volunteers.

Her note reads, in part:

"Your generosity has made it possible

for us to have a place to stay while working to help the people affected by the terrible disaster that took place with the recent tornadoes. ... I was especially touched by your willingness to share not only the gymnasium for sheltering the past four nights, but opening up the locker rooms and laundry as well.

'Staying in touch with loved ones'

"While sleeping with 200 other folks on cots in the gym is not the most desirable place to be, your granting of guest Internet privileges has also been most helpful to us in staying in touch with our loved ones at home.

"I had dinner at your cafeteria tonight and was amazed at the great selections of food

and the friendliness of the students and staff there. Thank you for all your efforts in this time where we all must pull together to help those most in need."

Samford campus recreation director Nick Madsen, who oversees Bashinsky Field House, has been touched by kind words from other volunteers.

"They are easy to work with, and very appreciative of everything Samford is doing," said Madsen, who noted at press time that the campus expected to host its hard-working and tired guests at least through May 9.

In addition to Florida, volunteers housed at Samford have come from several other states, including South Carolina, Michigan and California. (SU)

Disaster Relief Efforts

Meals prepared
Nearing 100,000

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517

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1,894

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All numbers are at press time.
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ALABAMA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES & FAMILY MINISTRIES

Legacy

MAY 2011

The Four Types



By Bob Dewhurst,
ABCHVP, Ministry Development

It is a beautiful Sunday morning. Your mind is still processing the words of the sermon on how Jesus touched "least of these." As you leave the church, you see more than 300 children lined up. They are arranged from smallest to tallest; newborn to high school. Some are sleeping or fidgeting, while others just look bored.

As you take in the scene, your pastor announces that you have been selected for an important assignment. He hands you four equal stacks of small cards made from red, yellow, blue and green construction paper. He then tells you to place a card on each child with a small piece of tape. At first, you have to bend over to place the card on the strollers of the babies. As you continue this unusual task, some of the children smile and talk with you. Others seem frightened and sad. A few flinch as you reach toward them, as if they were afraid that you were going to hurt them. By the time you reach the end of the line, you are standing on your tip-toes to reach a 6-foot, 3-inch, 17-year-old.

As you finish, the pastor asks you which color is your favorite. You respond, "Yellow." The pastor then smiles and announces: "Children, I know that many of you have traveled from all over Alabama to be here. But you share one thing in common. You are all being cared for by the Children's Homes."

He continues with a quiver in his voice. "If you have a yellow card, you will have a loving Christian home to live in until you are old enough to take care of yourselves. For more than 100 years, people who care about children in need have set aside money to help take care of you,

even after they leave this earth. These compassionate people made plans to have money, property or other valuables placed in a will, a charitable trust or other legal document in order to leave a Legacy of Love that will help many for years.

"Why did only one out of four of you receive a yellow card? Well, about one-fourth of the money received by the Children's Homes each year comes this way. This is sometimes called 'planned giving.'"

The pastor continues, "Don't worry if you received a blue, green or red card. Every day the Children's Homes receives gifts from individuals and church congregations all over Alabama and beyond. If these kind people and others regularly make gifts for your care, you will be well cared for too."

Suddenly you wake up! As you think about all the faces you saw in the dream, you realize that there are real children with needs all over the state. You also remember seeing a pie chart showing that one-fourth of the income for the care of children at the Children's Homes does come from wills, estates, trusts and endowments. As you think about the death and destruction from the recent tornadoes, you begin to wonder, "If I were to die tonight, would God be pleased with what will happen with all that He has entrusted to me?"

What is God calling you to do? How can you leave a Legacy of Love? We can help in finding the answers. Contact us at 1-888-720-8805 or info@abchome.org for a free guide that will help you as you plan.

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(Memorialized person's name is bolded.)

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Nancy Andrews, Camden: County Line BC of Arlington
Hybart Bohannon, Sr., Frisco City: Velma House
Richard Bragdon, Birmingham: Marjorie Kay Nix
Dale Brown, Bay Minette: Durant Chapel BC of Bay Minette
Neal Brown, Bay Minette: Durant Chapel BC of Bay Minette
Butch Collum, Pelham: Charity SS of Center Hill BC of Jemison
Harry C. Darden, Billingsley: C.H. Beadlescomb
Rev. Thomas Dobbs, Salem: John W. & Evelyn Gullatte, Pleasant Grove BC of Salem
Edith Doggette, Gilbertown: Sarah Gibson
Don Ward Drennen, Birmingham: Roy & Bebe Costner
Murdock Goodman, Linden: Providence BC of Gallion
Latha Gray: Concord BC of Bessemer
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Edna Earle Jackson, Andalusia: Mr. & Mrs. John Hogg

Robert Jaques, Jr., Gallatin, TN: West Hartselle BC
James Johnson, Birmingham: Marjorie Kay Nix
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W. D. Lambert, Sr., Uriah: Velma House, Justin & Gary
Tyson Lewis, Jr., Birmingham: Margaret Carter
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James Charles Madison, Gulf Shores: Mr. & Mrs. James Ash
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Gertrude Nelson, Andalusia: Mr. & Mrs. Ottis Reynolds
Neal Pittman: Frances C. Ryles
Gladys Reid Pope, Thomasville: Senior Adult SS of Elam BC of Thomasville
Trula Vee Quinney, Gallion: James & Arlene Barnes, Steve & Terry Miller, Providence BC of Gallion
Mary Rice: Marjorie Kay Nix
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J.W. "Dooley" Shope, Bessemer: Concord BC of Bessemer

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Prayer vital following death of Osama bin Laden

Rallies against the killing of Osama bin Laden flared up in several traditionally Muslim countries following noon prayers May 6. In Abbottabad, Pakistan, where bin Laden was finally tracked down after a years-long manhunt, police struggled to control a rally of about 1,000 men who set fire to tires and blocked main roads. The demonstrators chanted "Terrorists, terrorist, USA terrorist."

In Cairo, Egypt, soldiers prevented a rally from storming the U.S. embassy. The Islamists shouted "leave, leave" as they neared the embassy.

In Indonesia, about 200 members of a group calling itself Al Kaida Solo vowed, "His fight will not be ending."

In Nigeria, police deployed in the north states of that country hoping to prevent Islamists from attacking churches.

Al Qaeda issued a public statement May 6 acknowledging the death of bin Laden and urging Muslims to rise up against the United States to "cleanse the shame" of his death.

Architect of attacks

Bin Laden was the architect of a number of terrorist attacks including the attacks on New York and Washington on Sept. 11, 2001. To many in the West, bin Laden was the embodiment of global terrorism. He was shot dead in a commando style raid by U.S. military forces on May 1.

Still, to many in South Asia, bin Laden was revered as one who fought world powers in the name of Muslim jihad (holy war).



BP photo

For Southern Baptist representatives living in South Asia, bin Laden's death and the subsequent calls for retaliation have been reasons to pray. They pray for safety of Americans living through the Muslim world. They pray for local Christians who might be subjected to persecution. And they pray for the doors to open in the Muslim world to the gospel.

Deanna Cassmore, who lives in South Asia, said, "Praying immediately for peace to prevail is the only thing that can keep things under control."

"There is a very real mob mentality that takes over in situations like this, so praying for believers and Americans [in these areas] can save lives."

Cassmore once visited the area where bin Laden and his colleagues hid out, just outside of Islamabad. She described it as a beautiful city near the mountains.

"I was surprised when they said

that was where bin Laden stayed," she said. "I could picture in my mind many, many places in the tribal areas where he might have hid — mountains, caves, deserted valley — but I never dreamed he would be in the city."

Goldie Francis said she was "weirdly sad" to receive the news. The American Christian who has lived in South Asia for years had been praying for bin Laden's salvation.

Cade Rutledge, another American living in South Asia, said he first heard about the death over the loudspeakers at his neighborhood mosque.

"They weren't talking in an angry way," Rutledge said. "It feels like a calm before a storm. You just don't know how people are going to react."

Retaliation coming?

Those living in Pakistan warned that while the average Pakistani does not support al-Qaida or bin Laden, many in the country were not happy that American soldiers were on Pakistani soil. They fear retaliation will be taken out on local Christians.

Any conflict involving America often implicates local believers. Christianity is associated with America.

"Pray for strength to stand firm in persecution," Leigh Weil, a

Christian who lives in South Asia said. "People are kidnapped and killed every day. Pray that [Christians] will stand firm in their faith."

A senior U.S. official warned U.S. citizens living abroad to take extra safety precautions this week. Rutledge and other foreign Christians said their national friends often warn them when trouble is brewing.

The International Mission Board urged its representatives to be cautious in their actions and movements.

Darren Cantwell, a Christian leader in South Asia, said when he lived in Pakistan his landlord would tell his family not to go out when unrest was possible. The landlord was so protective that he would even go get groceries or whatever the family needed in an effort to keep them safe.

Rutledge and Weil said it's often hard for Americans to think of Muslims in this area of the world as "people."

"Everybody here does not support the Taliban [or al-Qaida]," Weil said. "They're people. They want peace. They are in a struggle for freedom."

"These are real people, with real issues. Moms. Dads. Looking for jobs. Looking for peace. It's this internal struggle that everyone has until they find that freedom in Christ," she continued.

"They're not all scary terrorists."

Cantwell said now is the time to pray for doors to open in the Muslim world. With the death of bin Laden, the Christian worker asks Christians to pray for Muslims — in America and the rest of the world — to seek truth in a fresh way.

Prayer requests

Among the prayer requests of Christian workers in South Asia:

► Pray for security and peace to reign in the hearts of those in countries where demonstrations due to bin Laden's death are possible.

► Pray for opportunities for Christian workers and local Christians to share their faith with their friends.

► Pray for all, that their hearts be open to the gospel as they contemplate their eternal destination.

► Pray for those who are tired of radical reactions to world events that have led to the death of thousands. Pray that they find peace and the strength to change their communities for the better.

► Pray that national Christians will respond in love and compassion to their Muslim neighbors, no matter what their reaction may be to bin Laden's death.

Editor's Note — Names have been changed for security reasons. (BP, TAB)

Across Alabama's Associations

BIRMINGHAM

► **Birmingham Association** will hold Senior Adult Fun Day May 26 at Huffman Church. There will be a Chick-fil-A lunch at 11:30 a.m. Gold City will be in concert at 12:15 p.m. For lunch reservations call 205-599-3245 by noon May 19. Ronald Ethridge is pastor of Huffman. Mike McLemore is executive director of Birmingham Association.

BLOUNT

► **Pleasant View Church, Holy Pond**, will hold its third Sunday night singing May 15, 6 p.m., with Canaan's Crossing. For information call 256-796-5986. Randy Burtram is pastor.

CHILTON

► **Ebenezer Church, Stanton**, will celebrate homecoming May 15. There will be singing from 10:30 to 11 a.m. Worship will be at 11 a.m. Lunch will follow. Singing will follow lunch. Danny Raspberry is pastor.

EAST CULLMAN

► The Brotherhood Ministry of **First Church, Fairview**, in Cullman, will host the seventh annual Kris Banister Memorial Golf Tournament June 4 at Chesley Oaks Golf Club in Cullman to benefit the Decatur campus of the Alabama Baptist

Children's Homes & Family Ministries. Registration and warm-up will be at 6:30 a.m., and the shotgun start will be at 7:30 a.m. The format will be a four-person scramble. There also will be competitions for closest to the hole, long drive and hole-in-one. For sponsorship or team information or to sign up visit www.krisbanistermemorial.yolasite.com. David Chambers is pastor.

ELMORE

► Shoal Creek Outdoors, the men's ministry of **Shoal Creek Church, Deatsville**, will host a disaster relief bass tournament May 21, from safe light to 3 p.m., at Alabama River/Cooter's Pond. Money will be taken the morning of the tournament only. It is first come, first serve. Top five boats will pay out. Money will go to Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Fund to help tornado victims. For information call Ashley Miller at 334-612-9745. Shane Russell is pastor.

MONTGOMERY

► **Hunter Station Church, Montgomery**, will hold a benefit concert for tornado victims May 14, 6 p.m., with To the End, of Sylacauga; Alleluia, of Marbury; and The Larch Family, of Wetumpka. Food and fellowship will follow. Donald Goble is pastor.

NORTH JEFFERSON

► **David Little** is the new student minister of **Enon Church, Morris**. He previously served as student pastor of First Church, Boaz, for four years. Little also has served Sardis Springs Church, Athens, and First Church, Decatur. He is a graduate of Samford University in Birmingham and is currently attending New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Paula, have two children. ► **Westside Church, Warrior**, will celebrate homecoming May 15, 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow the service. The Dotson Family Quartet will sing at 1:30 p.m. Fred Chapman is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Lakewood Church, Northport**, will celebrate its 30th anniversary May 22, 11 a.m. Clarke Skelton, the church's first pastor, will speak. Former staff will be acknowledged. There will be a special breakfast at 8:30 a.m. Scott McQueen is pastor. ► **Skyland Boulevard Church, Tuscaloosa**, will hold Revival of Restoring Our Joy in Christ May 15-18 with Evangelist Bob Pitman. Services will be Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Jimmy Garner is pastor.

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

BE FOCUSED

Colossians 3:1-17

In the last two chapters, Paul spelled out the gospel's practical implications.

Principle of the Christian Life (1-4)

Not only had the Colossian Christians "died with Christ" (Col. 2:20), but they also had "risen with Him." If "death and resurrection with Christ" are facts of life for a believer — and they are — then they are THE facts of life.

The safeguard against seeking things below, i.e., earthly things, is to seek things above, i.e., heavenly things. To "set the mind" on things above does not mean a Christian should become so heavenly minded that he or she is of no earthly good. Rather it means a Christian will no longer live as if this world was all that mattered but will see this world in the light of and against the backdrop of the world to come, i.e., eternity, and live accordingly. To make material wealth, earthly power, human pleasure and so on the goals of life and the stuff that occupies the mind is unworthy of a person "in Christ" who has died with Him, risen with Him, is hidden with Him in God and will be gloriously revealed with Him.

Practice of the Christian Life (5-17)

How is this principle lived out? The passage's main message centers on two appeals: Abandon the old life's vices and cultivate the new life's virtues.

The thoughts in the passage hang on three commands.

"Put to death," the "members which are upon the earth." These "members" Paul defined with a list of sins. It is not the physical body that must be slain but the passions and evil desires that make use of the body for sin. "Fornication" is a broad term for sexual immorality of any and every kind, including adultery, homosexual activity and sex with animals. "Uncleanness" here refers to sexual impurity, even "dirty-mindedness." "Passion" means uncontrolled desire of all kinds, even so-called "good" things; "evil desire" is similar but specifically indicates strong desire for wrong things. "Covetousness" is just the desire to have more, a greed that puts lust for

material things in God's place. These things bring a person under God's judgment. Also they mark a part of life that, for a Christian, should be done with.

"Put away" sins of attitude and speech. If there is a difference in the first two terms, then "anger" is the settled feeling of anger, while "rage" is a sudden outburst of anger. "Malice" is ill will, a hateful disposition. The fourth term in the list means "slander." "Shameful speaking" may be either filthy or abusive speech or both. "Do not lie." In the original language, this verb form forbids an action in progress, i.e., "Stop lying!"

The Christian has "taken off" (like dirty, worn-out garments) the "old man," i.e., inappropriate behavior, and "put on" (like fresh, clean clothes) the "new man," i.e., behavior consistent with knowing Christ and becoming like Him. In the realm of the new man, distinctions of race, class and culture no longer matter.

Paul based his appeal on a threefold fact: The Colossian believers were "chosen" of God, "set apart" by and for Him and "loved" by Him.

"Put on" "a heart of compassion," i.e., pity and tenderness for the miserable. "Lowliness" and "meekness" are humility and gentle submissiveness. These were not considered virtues in the ancient world — nor in the present world outside Christian circles. "Longsuffering" means patience or restraint. "Forbearing" involves putting up with things one dislikes in others; "forgiving" carries the idea of freely and eagerly giving up the right to get even with an offender and getting rid of the bad feelings the offense provoked. Like a belt over these new clothes, believers must put on "love" (agape).

"Let the peace of Christ rule" probably means something like "let a peace-loving Christian temperament govern actions and words." The Christian message must be so deeply implanted in a Christian's consciousness that it controls all thinking. In all of life's relationships, a Christian must act "in the name of Jesus," i.e., with an awareness that he or she represents Christ.

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

WALK WITH GOD

Ezra 7:1a, 6-10, 25-28; 9:4-6; 10:10-12

Contemporary Christianity, along with Christian colleges and universities, places a heavy emphasis on encouraging and educating future leaders. Indeed the slogan for many Christian higher education institutions, including seminaries, reads, "Come to our school and we will make you a leader." But specifically what qualities make a person a leader? Are these qualities for leadership different for believers as opposed to the secular world? A winsome personality, charismatic presence, good head for marketing/business, fund-raising skills, a pinch of humor and a pinch of good looks are too often seen as a recipe for a good Christian leader. None of these traits is listed as a requirement for leadership among God's people in Scripture. And in Ezra, we find that God's Word plays a critical role in determining leadership.

Have a Heart for God (7:1a, 6-10)

The momentous task of leading the Israelites in captivity back to Jerusalem with the approval of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, (7:11-26) was given to Ezra. According to modern-day sensibilities, one might speculate that in order to be successful, Ezra would require knowledge of the terrain from Persia to Jerusalem, a map or a travel guide. Perhaps Ezra would need administrative skills or the ability to delegate tasks. And most certainly, some military skill to ward off unfriendly intruders along the way was needed. But Scripture points to one central qualification for leadership: thorough knowledge of and devotion to Scripture. Becoming a student of Scripture precedes all acts of leadership. But Christian leadership also requires something beyond the clinical knowledge of biblical data — obedience to God's Word is non-negotiable. And Ezra's commitment to God's Word was not simply for personal edification but that of others; his goal was to teach God's Word to the people.

Build a Reputation of Integrity (7:25-28)

Because of Ezra's commitment to Scripture, he earned Artaxerxes' respect. Contrary

to modern-day belief that Christian leaders can procure the secular world's respect by excelling in secular criteria for leadership, Artaxerxes' estimation of Ezra was based on his commitment to Scripture. Because Ezra's devotion to God's Word was demonstrated through his character, he gained a secular ruler's respect and endorsement. Integrity is the result of holding on to God's Word above all else.

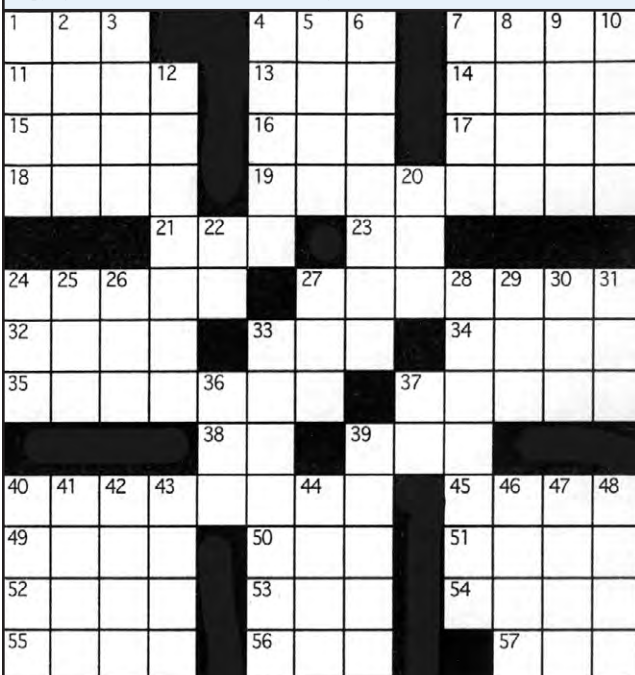
When Ezra and Israel's remnant arrived in Jerusalem, all was not well. They found that many of the Israelites, including priests and Levites, had intermarried with Gentile women (Ezra 9:1). The problem was not so much inclusion of Gentiles among Israel; Rahab, the Canaanite prostitute (Josh. 2); Ruth the Moabite; and Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam. 11:3), were not only incorporated into Israel but also counted among Abraham and David as progenitors of Jesus Christ, the Messiah (Matt. 1:1-11). Rather the difficulty with these intermarriages lay in the fact that Israel's belief and devotion to Yahweh is compromised, as these marriages led to syncretism of Israel's faith with idolatry. And idolatry was the primary reason behind Israel's exile.

Identify With the People You Lead (9:4-6; 10:10-12)

In light of this grave issue, Ezra's response was not to avoid confrontation or diminish the gravity of the situation. Although Ezra had no part in the sin of idolatry, he took it upon himself to repent and fast on the people's behalf. A leader of God's people spearheads the way for communal repentance and submission before Him. The leader is neither exempt from nor unsullied by the people's sins; he identifies himself with the people and leads them in the proper response of repentance before God when sin is revealed. The leader stands accountable to God for those under his authority. And as confirmed in Ezra, people willingly follow the leader who identifies with them and is able to stand in accountability on their behalf before God.

Christian Crossword

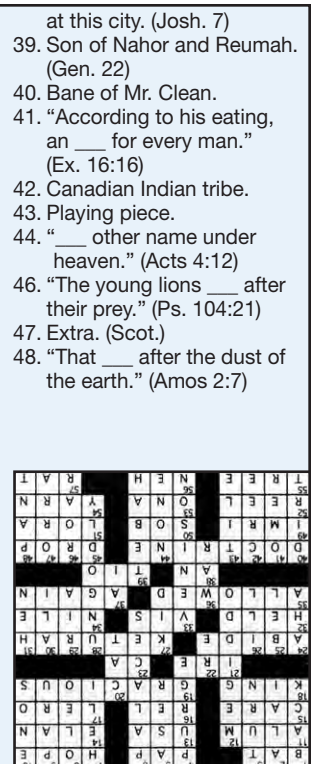
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Across

1. Fowl that is unclean. (Deut. 14)
4. Baby food.
7. "Faith, ____, and charity." (1 Cor. 13:13)
11. College grad.
13. Patriotic initials.
14. Zest.
15. "Casting all your ____ upon him." (1 Pet. 5:7)
16. Kin. (abbr.)
17. Dodecanese island.
18. "Fear God. Honour the ____." (1 Pet. 2:17)
19. "The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be ____ unto thee." (Num. 6:25)
21. Wrath.
23. West. state.
24. "Let thy servant ____ instead of the lad." (Gen. 44:33)
27. Abraham's second wife. (Gen. 25)
32. Kept from falling.
33. ____-a-vis.
34. Blue ____.
35. "We were ____ of God to be put in trust with the

- gospel." (1 Thess. 2:4)
37. "And ____ the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel." (2 Sam. 24:1)
38. Article.
39. Aunt's mate in Matanzas.
40. "They will not endure sound ____." (2 Tim. 4:3)
45. Dew ____.
49. "Next to them builded Zaccur, the son of ____." (Neh. 3:2)
50. Weep.
51. Feminine name.
52. "The earth shall ____ to and fro." (Isa. 24:20)
53. ____ limb.
54. Tale.
55. "Be like a ____ planted by the rivers of waters." (Ps. 1:3)
56. He follows Ezra. (abbr.)
57. King ____, Clavell work. (Ps. 51:7)
5. Tribe of Israel (var., Luke 2)
6. "Peace ... within thy walls, and prosperity within thy ____." (Ps. 122:7)
7. Radiant. (comb. form)
8. Tastes like butter.
9. Butterfly fish.
10. Son of Seth. (Gen. 5)
12. Where Ahaziah and Josiah were slain. (2 Kings 9, 23)
20. Tractor.
22. Back. (prefix)
24. Exclamation of surprise.
25. ____ canto.
26. "Love worketh no ____." (Rom. 13:20)
27. Leather.
28. "The floods of ____ men made me afraid." (2 Sam. 22:5)
29. Stream.
30. Feminine nickname.
31. "As a ____ gathereth her chicks under her wings." (Matt. 23:37)
33. Prepared by Esau. (Gen. 25)
36. "And there was ____ in heaven." (Rev. 12:7)
37. Achan's sin caused defeat



Book Reviews

By Martine Bates Sharp, Ed.D.

The Questions Christians Hope No one Will Ask (With Answers)

Mark Mittelberg. *Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2010. 352 pp. (Paperback).*

The thickness of this book hints that many questions will be dealt with by the author. The Table of Contents quickly banishes that idea; there are only 10 chapters, each dealing with one question. Wait — the last chapter doesn't even answer a question but gives advice on turning the tables to help the questioners "examine and reassess their own beliefs."

The initial disappointment soon fades, replaced by delight at the depth and the thoroughness of the answers. To questions on creation, abortion, homosexuality, the existence of God and others, the author responds with a richness of information, covering a wide range of issues in each answer and leaving the reader satisfied.

The author repeatedly emphasizes the need to focus on the "life-giving message of the gospel" instead of focusing on "God's laws about this or that sin."

The author emphasizes the need to communicate love and the message of salvation rather than trying to "wield Bible truth as a weapon."

The 11 Be Attitudes of Prosperity: God Given Guidelines to Be Blessed Beyond Belief

David B. White. *Longwood, Fla.: Xulon Press, 2010. 226 pp. (Paperback).*

The author describes his book as

"simple" and he is right. One might expect a book by a tax attorney and financial planner to be complicated and full of technical, hard-to-understand language, but "The 11 Be Attitudes of Prosperity" is neither. The language is clear, the illustrations entertaining and even the more technical advice is easily understood.

White points out that his Be Attitudes "are modeled after Jesus' Beatitudes in that, in each one, someone is blessed with a ... reward because of an attribute, action or attitude." The Be Attitudes begin with, "Blessed are the grateful, for theirs is a life of joy," and include, "Blessed are the cheerful givers, for God will outgive them," "Blessed are the debt free, for theirs is a life full of comfort and peace," and several more.

The book relies heavily on Scripture as the basis for the financial and life principles it presents. Easy to read, scriptural, sound financial advice — what's not to like about this book?

Great Commission

Ron Travis Sr. *Bloomington, Ind.: AuthorHouse, 2010. 187 pp. (Paperback).*

Just reading the title of this book, the reader might assume the subject to be the quotation from Jesus in Matthew 28:19–20 when He was commissioning the apostles. As it turns out, though, the book is a defense of congregationalism in church governance, specifically in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). The author takes issue with the tendency of churches, particularly megachurches, to adopt the CEO system of self governance. Travis makes the argument that congrega-

tionalism more closely resembles the New Testament Church and should therefore be the model used in all SBC churches today.

While Travis makes many solid points, the book at times takes on a strident tone when addressing aspects of church organization that he disagrees with. Ranging from his assertion that monthly, not quarterly, business meetings are necessary for a healthy church to the indictment of a large church in the state for discontinuing a specific fall outreach presentation, the book gives instruction in great detail about how the author believes an SBC church should be run.

I Will Speak Using Stories: A 31 Day Devotional

Bobby Hopper. *Bloomington, Ind.: Authorhouse. 140 pp. (Hardback).*

Acting on his professor's admonition that it is a sin to preach boring sermons, Bobby Hopper, now director of missions for Bethel Baptist Association, became an accomplished storyteller. "I Will Speak Using Stories," a phrase taken from Psalm 78, is a collection of Hopper's stories, intended not just to alleviate boredom, but also to communicate spiritual truths. The author insists that the stories are all true, but reserves his "artistic" right, as all good storytellers worth their salt do.

The book is presented as a devotional, with 31 stories included — some funny, some heart-tugging, but all well told. Each story is followed by a related Scripture, some thought-provoking questions and a prayer. At the end, the reader is left hoping the author has more stories and plans for more books.

Father, daughter flee Egypt after 2 years in hiding

A father and daughter who fled Egypt for Syria after spending two-and-a-half years in hiding for becoming Christians have arrived in France and applied for asylum there April 20, human rights advocates said.

Maher Ahmad El-Mo'otahssem Bellah El-Gohary, 58, had become the target of Islamic ill will in Egypt after he tried to change the religious affiliation on his national identification card from Muslim to Christian.

Arrive in Paris

He and his daughter, 17-year-old Dina Mo'otahssem, arrived in Paris from Syria on March 30 after having fled to Damascus on Feb. 22 in the wake of the revolution in Egypt that deposed then-President Hosni Mubarak. The Jan. 25–Feb. 11 protests in Egypt also weakened the Ministry of the Interior, an agency that had harassed El-Gohary and prevented him from leaving the country.

El-Gohary had fled to Syria be-



CDN photo

SAFE HAVEN — Maher Ahmad El-Mo'otahssem Bellah El-Gohary (right) sits safely with his daughter, Dina, 17, in one of their Egyptian safe houses. They had to flee their home after becoming Christians.

cause it was both the fastest and the easiest way to get out of Egypt, but he said he also feared Islamic opposition to converts in Syria and growing political unrest in Damascus. "When we got to the French

embassy in Syria, we were so scared because of what was happening in Syria at the time," he said. Eventually El-Gohary and his daughter hope to gain a visa to the United States and then immigrate. (CDN)

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services

Nepali Christians begin legal battle for burial ground

KATHMANDU, Nepal — With the government refusing to listen to their three-year plea for an official cemetery and ignoring a protracted hunger strike, Nepal's Christians are now seeking redress from the Supreme Court.

"Every day, there are two to three deaths in the community, and with each death, we face a hard time with the burial," said Chari Bahadur Gahatraj, a pastor who filed a petition in the high court March 13 asking it to intervene as authorities of Nepal's oldest Hindu temple had begun demolishing the graves of Christians. The Pashupati Area Development Trust (PADT), which runs the Pashupatinath temple, said it would no longer allow non-Hindus to use the temple's forested land.

Judge Awadhesh Kumar Yadav has since ordered the government and PADT not to prevent Christians from using the forest for burials until the dispute is resolved. But Hindu activist Bharat Jangam filed a second writ March 20, saying since the forest was the property of a Hindu temple, non-Hindus should not be allowed to bury their dead there just as churches do not allow Hindu burials. The court decided to hear the two petitions together, and the hearings began April 18.

While two lawyers argued on behalf of the Christians, a cohort of 15 lawyers spoke against their petition. In the face of Christian protests, the government has formed a committee to look into the demand. Christians are asking for cemetery land in all 75 districts of Nepal. "This could be a ploy to buy time and bury the issue," said a member of the Christian committee formed to advise parliament on drafting the new constitution, who requested anonymity.

Suspected Islamists burn down 2 homes in Ethiopia

TUKA, Ethiopia — A Christian near Ethiopia's southern town of Moyale said suspected Islamic extremists burned down his two thatched-grass homes March 29. Evangelist Wako Hanake of the Mekane Yesus Church said he had been receiving anonymous messages warning him to stop converting Muslims to Christ.

The Muslims who became Christians included several children. The incident in Tuka, nearly three miles from Moyale in southern Ethiopia's Oromia region, happened while Hanake was away on an evangelistic trip. A neighbor said he and others rescued Hanake's wife and children ages 8, 6 and 2. Church leaders said neighbors are still housing Hanake and his family. An area church leader who requested anonymity said Christians in Moyale are concerned that those in Tuka are especially vulnerable to a harsh environment in which religious rights are routinely violated.

"The Ethiopian constitution allows for religious tolerance," said another area church leader, also under condition of anonymity, "but we are concerned that such ugly incidents like this might go unpunished. To date no action has been taken."

Tuka village, on Ethiopia's border with Kenya, is populated mainly by ethnic Oromo who are predominantly Muslim. Hostility toward those spreading faiths different from Islam is a common occurrence in predominantly Muslim areas of Ethiopia and neighboring countries, area Christians said, adding that they are often subject to harassment and intimidation.

New Christian convert from Islam murdered in Somalia

SHALAMBOD, Somalia — Two Muslim extremists in Somalia on April 18 murdered a member of a secret Christian community in Lower Shabele region as part of a campaign to rid the country of Christianity, sources said.

An area source said two al-Shabaab militants shot 21-year-old Hassan Adawe Adan in Shalambod town after entering his house at 7:30 p.m. "Two al-Shabaab members dragged him out of his house, and after 10 minutes, they fired several shots on him," said an area source who requested anonymity. "He then died immediately." The two militants then shouted "Allahu akbar," the Arabic phrase meaning "God is great" before fleeing, he said. Adan, unmarried and living with his Muslim family, was said to have secretly converted to Christianity several months ago.

Area Christians said they suspected someone had informed the Islamic militants of his new faith. One source said a relative who belonged to al-Shabaab had told Adan's mother that he suspected her son was a Christian. "This incident is making other converts live in extreme fear, as the militants always keep an open eye to anyone professing the Christian faith," the source said.

NFL coach encourages students

Dungy addresses Union Univ. on faith, NFL career

Today's youth need adults to be actively involved in their lives to encourage them to be "uncommon," former NFL coach Tony Dungy said. "You never know what small step can make a big difference in young people's lives."

Dungy, keynote speaker for an April 18 banquet in behalf of Union University in Jackson, Tenn., underscored the importance of children and teenagers being true to themselves and not simply following the crowd.

Too often, youth are bombarded with the messages that drugs and alcohol are OK, that education is not important and that sexual promiscuity is acceptable, Dungy said.

"Our young people aren't getting the whole truth," he stated.

That's why they need adults who are concerned about the welfare of society to invest themselves in young people's lives by volunteering for community organizations. "We're going to need some faith in action," Dungy said.

Following his remarks, Dungy answered questions from Union University President David S. Dockery, who asked how the coach managed to be successful at the NFL level while still being a "nice guy."

"I believe that Christ was really a nice guy and He didn't finish last," Dungy said. "I felt that I could use God's principles and He would allow me to succeed."

NFL labor dispute

Dungy also fielded a question about the current NFL labor dispute, saying he thinks the matter will be resolved prior to the scheduled start of the 2011 season.

Dungy's wife Lauren, in comments prior to her husband's address, talked about the importance of supporting Christian education in today's society.

She described the United States as being at a crossroads and said Americans may have to do things that make them uncomfortable as they seek to make a difference in the lives of others.

"We have to trust God and let Him help us through the doubts and fears that we may have," she said.

Dungy, in an interview during his visit to the Union campus, said he wishes men took fatherhood more seriously.

"I think men really have to understand what our role is," said

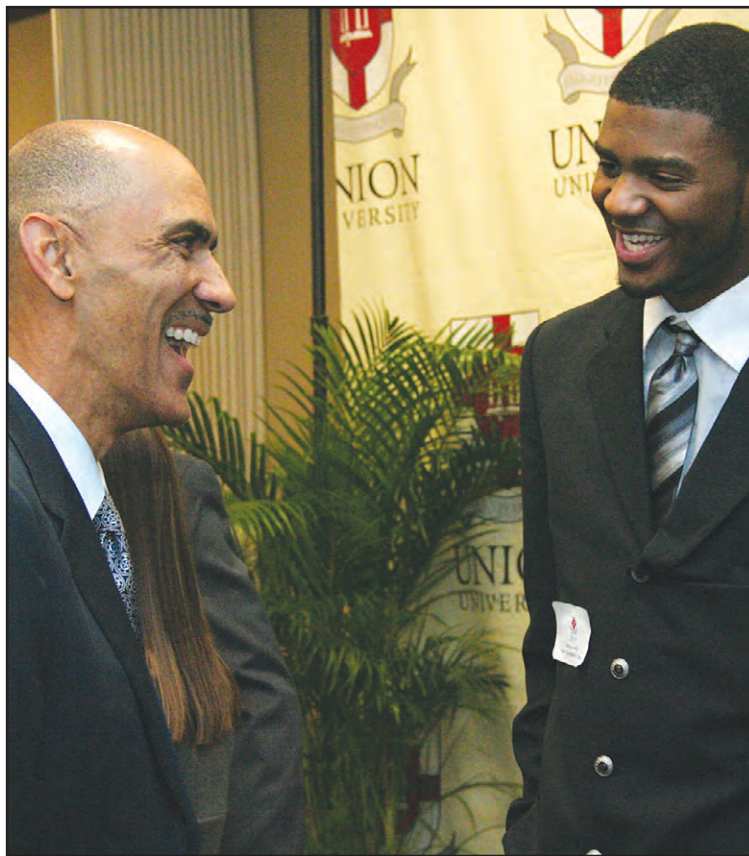


Photo by Deanna Santangelo

COACH AND PLAYERS — Tony Dungy (left) visits with Union University basketball player Antoine Hall (right) prior to an address at the Jackson, Tenn., Baptist school.

Dungy, father of seven. "We haven't done a great job of that. I think we've kind of bought into the misconception that if we just provide financially, that's all that's important."

Too many men mistakenly believe that mothers are the primary ones to nurture and raise children, Dungy said.

"God didn't really intend it that way," he said. "Husband and wife, that's the way the family was set up to function the best. We've got to get back to that. There's so much that the dads bring to the table in terms of not just stability, but teaching and role modeling, for not only boys, but also for the daughters to see what their future husband should look like."

For Dungy, part of responsible fatherhood means making sure his family is actively involved in a local church. Families make friends and build relationships in a number of places — such as school, work and the local community, Dungy said.

"For us, those community relationships really do stem from the church," he said. "Growing, learning, but also just enjoying the com-

pany of other people, especially believers."

The Dungys are members of Central Tampa Baptist Church, which began as a mission of Idlewild Baptist Church in Tampa, Fla.

Dungy became the first black coach to win the Super Bowl when he led the Indianapolis Colts to victory in 2007.

He played three seasons in the NFL and held assistant coaching positions with the University of Minnesota, Pittsburgh Steelers, Kansas City Chiefs and Minnesota Vikings before taking the head coaching job with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 1996 and then the Colts in 2002.

NBC analyst

He retired from coaching in 2008 and now serves as an analyst for NBC's "Football Night in America." He is also the author of the New York Times best-selling books "Quiet Strength" and "Uncommon."

Dungy was the keynote speaker at Union University's third annual Roy L. White Legacy Golf and Gala at the Carl Perkins Civic Center in Jackson.

The banquet drew about 1,500 people, raising \$375,000 for the university, and completed a day that began with a golf tournament at the Jackson Country Club. (BP)

"You never know what small step can make a big difference in young people's lives."

Tony Dungy
Former NFL coach

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

FBI shuts down poker websites for illegal acts

NEW YORK — More than four years after Congress passed legislation to criminalize Internet gambling in the United States, the three largest poker websites have been shut down by the FBI.

Eleven executives at PokerStars, Full Tilt Poker and Absolute Poker, along with others, were charged with bank fraud and money laundering. The 2006 Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act (UIGEA) — which finally took effect last summer — bans online gambling and prohibits U.S. financial institutions from processing transactions related to it.

"These defendants concocted an elaborate criminal fraud scheme, alternately tricking some U.S. banks and effectively bribing others to assure the continued flow of billions in illegal gambling profits," Preet Bharara, the U.S. attorney in Manhattan, said in a statement.

Barrett Duke, vice president for public policy and research with the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, applauded the government's move.

"People's lives are being destroyed by the thousands in this country because of gambling," Duke said during an interview on CNN on April 18. "The last thing we need is for that to be streamed into their homes 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is just a bad policy to have that, and I think that the federal government has made the right decision on this."

Evangelist David Wilkerson dies in car accident

DALLAS — Evangelist David Wilkerson, who wrote the popular book "The Cross and the Switchblade" and founded New York's Times Square Church, died in a traffic accident April 27.

Wilkerson, 79, died after his car slammed into a tractor-trailer on a highway about 95 miles southeast of Dallas. His wife, Gwen, was also injured but is expected to recover.

Wilkerson was known most for his outreach to street gangs, which he started after viewing a photo in *Life* magazine of New York City teens charged with murder.

He founded Teen Challenge, a ministry to young gang members and drug addicts, in New York in 1958. In 1963, he co-authored his best-selling story, which *Christianity Today* magazine listed in 2006 in the No. 32 spot on its "Top 50 Books That Have Shaped Evangelicals."

Wilkerson was an Assemblies of God pastor in rural Pennsylvania before starting his New York ministries, including the non-denominational Times Square Church that meets in a converted Broadway theater.

United Methodist Church continues 'make-good' acts

NEW YORK — The United Methodist Church (UMC) is making good on a pledge to support a learning center at the site of an 1864 massacre of American Indians led by a Methodist minister.

The UMC's General Commission on Christian Unity and Inter-religious Concerns announced a \$50,000 donation to the National Park Service for developing a center at the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, near Eads, Colo.

The donation will be used to fund research materials and other public education initiatives.

The donation is the latest in a series of acts by which Methodists have apologized for the actions of Col. John Chivington, a Methodist minister who led an 1864 attack against members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes along the banks of Sand Creek.

Some 165 people — mostly women, children and the elderly — were killed in the attack.

Top R.I. democrat settles for civil union bill

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Rhode Island Democratic House Speaker Gordon Fox has abandoned his plans to push same-sex "marriage" legislation during this session, which ends in June. Instead, Fox, who is openly gay, said he will support civil union legislation that. Civil unions provide the benefits of marriage to same-sex couples without using the word "marriage."

"Civil unions are a judicial stepping stone to same-sex 'marriage,'" Chris Plante, director of the Rhode Island chapter of the National Organization for Marriage, told *The Associated Press*. "We'll see what [Fox] comes up with, but we have grave misgivings."

In at least three states, civil unions have been used as a stepping stone to gay "marriage."