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# 'God's in the work'

## Iron City Church 'angels' minister to community, beyond by sewing

By Neisha Fuson  
The Alabama Baptist

The little girl had only sadness in her eyes and no smile to lift her rosy cheeks. She sat by the Mexican hut with a roof made of leaves and branches, her eyes focused on her toes. Slowly, a fuzzy, white teddy bear was laid in her lap, and the edges of her little mouth gave way to the first glimpse of joy.

Stories like this make Angel Mission Ministry (AMM) worthwhile.

In 2005, four women from Iron City Baptist Church, Anniston, first put their sewing skills to work with truckloads of fabric donated by fellow church member Frank Mitchell after his wife, Erma, who owned a sewing business, passed away.

Joyce Vaughn, Sylvia Brooks, Ethelyn Lester and Lucille Bussey had the material in their hands and a mission in their hearts. They decided to start their own form of Woman's Missionary Union at the Calhoun Baptist Association church and call it AMM.

In the beginning, the women made lap blankets for homebound members of their church.

"Because we started with a little and were faithful with what we could do with it, God has blessed and added to [the ministry] and is still adding to it," Lester said.

Today nine women make blankets, quilts, tote bags, soft turbans for cancer patients, large adult bibs, wall hangings, teddy bears, baby clothes and more from donated materials. They attach a small angel intricately made of yarn, lace and a cotton ball and wrapped in sheer material to each item.

AMM outgrew its space in Iron City Baptist's old fellowship hall, so early this year, the church bought a small empty church building across the street to house the ministry.

And even though the women work every Monday from 11 a.m.-5 p.m., that is not enough time for them.

"We wish we could be here more, even every day," said Vaughn, AMM leader.



Photo by Neisha Fuson

**BUZZING AWAY AT WORK** — Joyce Vaughn, Angel Mission Ministry (AMM) leader and co-founder, sets up the embroidery machine in AMM's work space at Iron City Baptist Church, Anniston.

Rosa Pickard, the "angel-making queen," agreed. "We have a wonderful time down here. It's the [light] of all our lives."

Brooks has gotten to enjoy a wonderful time in many countries, delivering AMM products. She said every time, she returns with "renewed strength and energy" to do what she does.

But it's not just Iron City members who get in on the fun. Neva Gault, a member of Bethel United Methodist Church in Ohatchee, contributes her quilting skills and does whatever else needs to be done.

"I just look forward to going [to] (See 'Homebound,' page 17)



Photo by Neisha Fuson

**A TEAM OF CRAFTERS** — (L to r) Ethelyn Lester, Joyce Vaughn, Sylvia Brooks, Neva Gault and Lillian Taylor use their sewing skills for God's glory as they work on a quilt for a missionary's home.

## House Speaker calls session 'most productive'

By Sondra Washington  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Alabama lawmakers recently wrapped what House Speaker Mike Hubbard is calling the "most productive legislative session in decades." Standouts among the more than 100 bills passed this year address the state's immigration, abortion and alcohol laws.

On June 9, Gov. Robert Bentley signed into law House Bill (HB) 56, which transforms the way the state deals with illegal immigrants. Sponsored by Rep. Micky Hammon, R-Decatur, and co-sponsored by 24 other representatives, the bill requires proof of citizenship and residency before voting, prohibits giving illegal immigrants public education benefits

and penalizes employers who hire "unauthorized aliens." The law also criminalizes "concealing, harboring [and] shielding" unauthorized aliens who are required to "possess certain documents" at all times and requires law enforcement to verify this under "certain circumstances."

The new law is causing major con- (See 'Hispanic,' page 13)

# COMMENT

## Tornado Relief — ‘A Ministry to the Saints’

Nothing in recent years has demonstrated the fellowship of Alabama Baptists as clearly as their response to the April 27 tornadoes. And that response resembles the response of first-century Christians to the apostle Paul’s urging as he attempted to gather an offering for the starving believers in Jerusalem.

Paul emphasized the fellowship that existed between believers in Jerusalem and believers spread throughout what we today call the Middle East. Alabama Baptists recognize that fellow believers suffered immense loss as their homes and churches were damaged and destroyed by tornadoes. And even though many of these Alabama Baptists have never met each other, the bond of being Alabama Baptists causes a generous response.

As of this writing, Alabama Baptists have given \$1,921,396.46 to Alabama tornado relief through the Alabama Baptist State Convention, according to figures released by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. More has been given to relief efforts sponsored by churches and associations, which is not included in the \$1.9 million. And the figure does not count relief efforts done by individuals in the immediate aftermath of the storms. Only God knows how much Alabama Baptists have given to date, and much more will be needed.

The response of Alabama Baptists is not the result of a high-pressure campaign. It is voluntary. Giving in the New Testament is never done grudgingly or as a result of manipulation or guilt. New Testament giving is done because one recognizes the sovereignty of God over all that he or she has. God is the owner. We are the stewards.

The tornadoes have provided opportunity for Alabama Baptists to use what they have for the benefit of others. To do less turns possessions into selfish greed, which the Bible always condemns.

Alabama Baptist giving has been generous. Like the Macedonians, whom Paul commended, Alabama Baptists have given liberally. Despite high unemployment and an eroding economic base that began as one of the nation’s lowest, Alabama Baptists have made it possible for mobile chapels to be made available to 13 Alabama Baptist churches damaged by the tornadoes. That project is estimated to claim about 40 percent of what has been given. State convention officials also are working with directors of missions in various parts of the state to respond to local needs. The promise is that every dollar given to the tor-



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

nado relief fund will be used for that purpose.

In 1 Corinthians 8:4, Paul referred to the offering he was raising as “a ministry to the saints.” That is exactly what the Alabama tornado relief fund is. It is a ministry to the “saints” in damaged and destroyed churches across the state.

#### ‘Blessing of God’

That Alabama Baptists have an avenue of ministry and cooperation to coordinate this statewide effort is a blessing of God and an unexpected demonstration of the important role state conventions and associations play. It shows again that Baptists can do more working together than any one can do alone.

Amid the thankfulness for all that Alabama Baptists have done in responding to the tornadoes, there is one nagging concern. Regular giving to missions causes through the Cooperative Program (CP) dropped almost 18 percent in May compared to the amount received in April. May CP receipts were \$2,805,322. In April, the total was \$3,417,233, which was the lowest amount given this calendar year.

Obviously with the devastation that hit Alabama the last week of April, a drop in giving was anticipated. It also may be that some Alabama Baptists determined to channel their regular tithes and offerings to disaster relief rather than supporting the ongoing missions work through the CP.

Such a decision may reflect a lack of understanding of the difference between a tithe and an offering.

In a Baptist church in London where my family worshiped recently, the pastor invited all the church members to bring their tithes and present them to God on the altar. He pointed out that it was the members’ responsibility to give their

tithes (which he described as 10 percent of their earnings) through the church.

Only after the tithes had been presented were those of us visiting the church offered the opportunity to present offerings to God. Offerings were described as above the tithe.

The experience reminded me of a Baptist worship service in one of South Africa’s homelands some years earlier in which the congregation first brought its tithes and later gave its offerings.

Baptists in many parts of the world regularly make this distinction between tithes and offerings. Baptists in the United States seldom make this distinction even though it is biblically based.

Malachi 3:10 commands tithes be brought to the “storehouse.” Today the church serves that role. According to the Bible, tithes are to be given through the church to support its work at home and around the world.

Offerings are above and beyond the tithe. Offerings are a spontaneous expression of love. They evidence the genuineness of faith as one gives out of concern for others. Offerings never replace faith. They simply demonstrate faith.

Offerings are not about mathematical calculations. They are about reflecting the mind of Christ in one’s use of what he or she has.

It may be good for Alabama Baptists to remember the difference between tithes and offerings in the days ahead.

Generous, voluntary giving for Baptist disaster relief efforts will continue to be needed. And so will faithful giving of tithes through the regular channels of churches and the CP. Through both, Alabama Baptists will continue ministering to the saints during this unusual time.

## Letters to the Editor

### REMEMBERING THE MILITARY

Great editorial, “Not Just Another Three-day Weekend,” in the May 26 issue.

We have a veteran’s organization at Dauphin Way Baptist Church. We have about 50 members. We were talking

about supporting the Memorial Day services at the veteran’s cemetery in Mobile. Only two couples showed up. The head of our organization said, “Everybody had other weekend plans; we will try to ‘push’ it better next year.” By the way, I was a Marine pilot during the

Korean War, and that war was not mentioned in your editorial. How soon we forget.

William E. Whitfield  
Minister to pastoral care  
Dauphin Way Baptist Church  
Mobile, Ala.

**THE ALABAMA BAPTIST**

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

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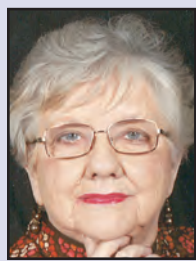
## Someone You Should Know

By Courtney Searcy, The Alabama Baptist

### Opal Givens

First Baptist Church, Jackson  
Clarke Baptist Association

**FAVORITE BIBLE VERSE:** John 3:16  
**FAVORITE HYMN:** "How Great Thou Art"  
**HOBBIES:** Reading the Bible, playing bridge and church activities  
**FAMILY STATUS:** Widowed after 34 years of marriage to Vernon; three children, Abby, Debby and Larry; seven grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren



At 79, Opal Givens, a retired banker of 45 years, is active in many ministries at First Baptist Church, Jackson. She has served in the senior adult choir for 10 years and is the missions action coordinator for her church's Woman's Missionary Union.

#### GIVENS

She has served in the senior adult choir for 10 years and is the missions action coordinator for her church's Woman's Missionary Union.

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

**A:** I had a wonderful childhood. My daddy was an engineer on the railroad until he retired. My mother was a wonderful homemaker, and she handled the money in the family and made us proud.

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

**A:** I was 10 or 11 years old, and I was playing the piano at a small church in Yellow Pine. [During a revival], a preacher [gave the invitation] and I got up and he prayed with me — since then I have been blessed with serving the Lord.

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

**A:** At my first church, I served as the Sunday School secretary when I was about 8 years old. I played the piano, but I was not playing it well — it was all we had, so they thought it was pretty good. I sang in the choir and attended Sunday School, and I've always gone to prayer meeting. Now I visit the homebound and take them church literature. I just like serving the Lord.

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

**A:** I just pray that I can continue to serve on the committees that I need to and continue to do the work that I've been doing.

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

**A:** I love studying the Bible and want to learn all I can so I can share it with the people that I am with daily.



Photo by Lindsey Robinson

**PREPARING FOR FATHERHOOD** — Fatherhood Ministry coordinator Russell Worrell (left) and Scott Jones (right) lead dad-to-be Geo Miranda through a 24/7 Dad lesson. Miranda, 30, is expecting his first baby, Isabel Hope, in August.

# Fatherhood training

## Vestavia ministry strives to change absent father statistics

By Lindsey Robinson  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

It's almost Father's Day — do you know where your dad is?

About 24 million children in the United States — one in three — don't. They have an absent father, according to information from the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI).

But at Sav-a-Life Vestavia, Russell Worrell and his Fatherhood Ministry are aiming to change those statistics.

In 2010, Worrell, the fatherhood ministry coordinator at Sav-a-Life, received a grant to begin an extensive ministry to educate both new and experienced dads.

Using the Bible and literature from NFI, he leads classes ranging from four to six weeks about everything from how to take a child's temperature to how to control a hot temper and medical facts on sexually transmitted diseases and shaken baby syndrome to courses on marriage and parenting responsibilities.

"We work from a stance that there's a crisis in fatherhood," Worrell said.

Father absenteeism can lead to increased rates of crime, poverty, drug abuse and health and behavioral problems among the children left behind, NFI reports. Worrell added that these rates lead to increased jail populations and government spending for remediation programs.

"We as a society pay literally billions of dollars for father absence," he said.

#### Focusing on Dr. Dad, 24/7 Dad

In 2010, 170 dads graduated from the Fatherhood Ministry and from January to May this year, it has seen 102 more dads complete fatherhood training, Worrell said.

The ministry includes a program called Dr. Dad, a four-week course that teaches fathers about infant care, and 24/7 Dad, an introspec-

tive six-week course on a father's role with lessons on communication and co-parenting.

It also provides one-on-one counseling, a five-week marriage course called Why Knot, a Dad's Night Out every Thursday and a variety of workshops in which course material is condensed into intense one-day seminars.

Like many of the fathers who come to his classes, Worrell grew up without a dad, and despite numerous father figures and a supportive grandfather, he still feels the hole his father left in his life.

The absence of a father makes it difficult for new dads to raise their children, said Worrell, who has three sons.

He said the ministry has made him more thoughtful and intentional in his time with his children, especially when it comes to discipline.

In his classes, Worrell teaches that discipline is about discipleship, not punishment.

But an absent father can make some men less trusting toward their heavenly Father, he noted.

"The fact that God revealed Himself as a Father — there's a profound impact in that," Worrell said.

Scott Jones participated in the ministry and moderates the fatherhood program at The Foundry Rescue Mission and Recovery Center in Bessemer. Jones said the Foundry program is "helping guys knock off the

rough edges, smooth things out and be better fathers."

He added that fatherhood training helps mothers by allowing them to share parenting responsibilities — when anyone plays both parenting roles, it can be a strain on both the parent and the child.

Jones stressed that fatherhood classes aren't for "bad dads" or absentee dads but those who want practical advice for having more fulfilling relationships with their children.

"This isn't saying you're a bad father or that you're broken," he said. "This is a tool."

It's a tool Jones recommended to his 21-year-old son. He attended Fatherhood Ministry classes, and Worrell's one-day seminar in child care helped him realize the responsibility of fatherhood and reconsider some of his habits, Jones said.

"He didn't understand the work aspect of being a father," Jones added.

Though his son is an adult, Jones is still learning fatherhood lessons, like how to control his temper, and passing them on.

Some of the seminars have been offered at Canaan Baptist Church, Bessemer, and plans are to work with more churches and associations.

For more information, contact Worrell at 205-979-0302 or russellworrell@savalife.org.



# Been there, done that

## Jasper native returns to help clean up Alabama after another 'Super Outbreak'

By **Joni Hannigan**  
Florida Baptist Witness

It was a sight 13-year-old Fritz Wilson never forgot.

It was 1974 and downed trees and power lines battled for attention across tornado-ravaged Walker County. Rain and wind pelted the area that Wednesday night as Fritz and his father, James, gathered people inside the church hallways. An entire Jasper fire station disappeared under a funnel cloud, and the top level of the courthouse shifted. The "Super Outbreak" was considered the worst in U.S. history.

Some 37 years later leading Florida Baptist disaster relief volunteers to his home state after the deadly April 27 tornado outbreak, Wilson looked at toppled trees, downed power lines, mangled homes, ravished neighborhoods and broken faces and saw the same thing.

But this time — instead of riding along with his dad, a cable-repair man, to check on things — Wilson, director of disaster relief for the Florida Baptist Convention, anticipated much of the need as a leader with years of experience and resources to direct.

"I can look at a disaster and have a quick sense of how a disaster will unfold," he said. "God has given me the ability to look at it and make a strategic plan about what to do."

At the annual National Southern Baptist Disaster Relief Roundtable in Lynchburg, Va., Wilson took a rare phone call from his mom, Bobbie, alerting him that straight-line winds had hit Alabama hard the morning of April 27 and things were going to get worse.

"It's never a good morning when you answer the phone and your mom starts out with, 'Everything's OK but,'" he said. "I was sitting

with Mel Johnson (Alabama's head of disaster relief) and jokingly told him he had a tornado and to go home."

By the next morning, Wilson said things moved into fast forward and Florida Baptist disaster relief was asked to serve in his home base — Walker County.

By April 29, Wilson; his wife, Alabama-native Deborah Watson Wilson; and two sons were on their way to Jasper. Stopping by the Alabama Baptist State Convention headquarters in Montgomery, he didn't flinch when plans changed on a dime. He grabbed a bag he had packed separately for himself in anticipation of being asked to stay. He spent the next 10 days or so sleeping in the building's basement with other volunteers.

"I sensed something like that might happen," Wilson said. In Montgomery, he served as the disaster relief planning officer, coordinating the activation of out of state units to Alabama.

Deborah Wilson headed 120 miles north to First Baptist Church, Jasper, where teams from Florida began to arrive early the next morning. Assessment teams from the National Weather Service had evaluated only a handful of the tornadoes that tore through the area, and by that afternoon, the Hackleburg tornado, 64 miles away, was rated an EF-5. The next day, they determined the Cordova tornado, 15 miles away, was an EF-4.

In Jasper, Deborah was assisted at times by her younger sister, while she served as the administration officer, took care of daily reports, coordinated communication between the disaster relief leaders and tracked Florida teams as they traveled.

"This was a different feeling for

*"Fritz is a valuable leader in Southern Baptist Convention life as a disaster relief coordinator."*

Rick Lance  
Alabama Baptist State Board  
of Missions



Photo courtesy of Florida Baptist Witness

**LISTENING EAR** — Fritz Wilson (right) comforts Iyrese Haughton as Florida Baptist disaster relief volunteers use a chain saw to remove a fallen tree in her front yard. As a teen, Wilson and other youth played ball in Haughton's yard, across the street from where he grew up.

me," Deborah said. "It's just like old home week," being home where family members and longtime friends stopped by to check in and thank her on behalf of the community.

And when the long days finally wound down, she went home to stay with her mom.

### Good to be home

"Mom has been fighting ovarian cancer for so long it's just good for me to be able to check on her a little bit," Deborah said emotionally.

For Ina Watson, having her daughter and grandchildren in Jasper was a special treat.

"I am very proud of her; when she does a job, she wants to do it right. Her dad was so proud of her, too," she said.

There was a lot of pride going around Walker County as the buzz spread about Florida Baptists. "My hometown has stepped up to the plate, basically," Deborah said. "They've showed their good side."

On Mother's Day, Fritz finally made his way to Jasper to join the family and surprised his parents at Providence Baptist Church.

Bobbie said he drew her a Mother's Day card on a table napkin at a local restaurant as a gift. "We always do different things," she laughed.

His parents understand the nature of his work, Fritz said, and although seven of nine large trees in their yard were uprooted by the storm, they didn't have any expectations of teams heading their way to help. In fact, Bobbie said repeatedly they needed to help those with more pressing needs.

Fritz said hearing about Cordova and seeing pictures of Tusca-

loosa and other heavily damaged areas of Alabama, he immediately flashed back to the 1974 tornado outbreak and knew what it would be like for Alabamians — especially those in the rural areas away from the glare of the TV cameras.

"I think this is the heart of the ministry, when we look at this and we think about how devastating this is," Fritz said.

"I've had a ringside seat to numerous national and international disasters over the last 12 years," Fritz said. "For a guy from Jasper, Ala., who graduated in 1979, I wouldn't have imagined I would be doing this today. I am greatly and humbly honored to do what I do and that God put Deborah with me to encourage me and empower me and walk beside me."

James, he said, taught him in the manner of the apostle Paul to be courageous.

"[My dad] wasn't afraid to work on things, to take things apart," Fritz said.

James said he believes Fritz is right where he belongs in disaster relief. "I think it was meant for him to be in DR," James said. "He's seen it and was involved after Hurricane Frederic at Mobile College (now the University of Mobile)."

Although Fritz never did become a "preacher," James said he is a minister and a missionary "because he's certainly doing mission work because he's ministering to people in the name of the Lord."

Noting Fritz was responsible for Haiti's Buckets of Hope, James said it makes him "proud and humble" when he considers his son's accomplishments.

Fritz is uncomfortable about the

accolades he receives, preferring at times to sit at the piano to calm inner storms, James said.

"I just want to serve God the best I can as a husband, as a leader within the Florida Baptist Convention disaster relief ministry," Fritz said.

In Florida and Alabama, there is a lot of love and trust extended to Fritz and Deborah — and appreciation for what they contribute to Southern Baptist disaster relief.

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said Fritz provided "experienced assistance" following the April 27 outbreak.

### Helpful background

"As a former Alabama Baptist, he knows our state well, and his disaster relief background in Florida was immensely helpful. Fritz is a valuable leader in Southern Baptist Convention life as a disaster relief coordinator," Lance said. "Florida Baptists can and should be proud of his valuable ministry. Alabama Baptists are grateful for his assistance during this historic disaster relief response."

Cecil Seagle, interim director of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana and former director of the missions division for the Florida convention, said he believes the Wilsons are a great resource.

"Fritz and Deborah Wilson are among God's most gifted disaster relief leaders," Seagle said. "Going home was more than a homecoming; it was our Father's way of using a native son and daughter for His purpose in Alabama. They are simply the best of the best."



Photo by Joni Hannigan

**DEDICATED** — Alabama native Deborah Wilson (left) serves as volunteer coordinator and while assisting Terry Ryan (right) as the administrative officer at First Baptist Church, Jasper.



# BAPTISTS RESPOND

to areas devastated by April tornadoes

On April 27, the town I call home, Phil Campbell, was struck by a severe tornado. What the relief teams brought to our town and gave to us, collectively and individually, is almost unbelievable. Yes, the work performed saved many homeowners thousands of dollars but the hope, strength and faith they shared means even more. If there is a bright side to all of this it has been the opportunity to be a witness to Christian love in action. Not the least of those contributions were made by the workers of the Alabama Baptist disaster relief and recovery teams. When we were too weak to stand their strength and faith helped us find ours. God bless you all! Thank you for all you have done and for all you do.

Susan Johnson  
Phil Campbell, Ala.

To the men, women and children of First Baptist Church, Prattville, I would first like to extend my deepest and heart-felt thanks to those giving souls that took time out of their day May 14-15. My home was hit by the tornado that ripped through our community April 15. Just a little over a week later, my daughter, who attends the University of Alabama, was involved with the one that hit Tuscaloosa on April 27. Having gone through this type of experience for the first time, it has been quite a chapter in our lives. There are so many other people who have gone through so much worse than we have and we hope to return as much as possible to those in need.

I consider ourselves so lucky to be living in such a noble and giving community. Thanks to the youth group who came out May 14 and helped with the glass removal from our yard. "I don't hear the crunch anymore!" Thanks to the Sunday School class that came May 15 to help fell the dangerous leaning trees that had been blown down. Also, a very special thanks to Eric Hyde. Thank you for your kindness and commitment and making this all happen through your organization.

Chris, Margaret and Kasey Tackett  
Prattville, Ala.

Concord Highland Baptist Church, Hueytown, meets at River Road Baptist Church, Hueytown, for Sunday morning and Wednesday evening services after Concord Highland was severely damaged in the April 27 torna-

does. Concord Highland Pastor Richard Larson and church leaders hope to begin construction on a new building in four months or less, depending on insurance processes, Larson said. For now, the attendance is good, even slightly higher with an extra 10-12 people who attend each service with the congregation that is holding together and encouraging one another, Larson said. A disaster relief mobile unit should arrive within 10 days for the church to use on its own property.

Saint Green, servant mobilization pastor for Valleydale Baptist Church, Birmingham, began service June 6 as the disaster recovery coordinator for Birmingham Baptist Association (BBA). Green will serve in the new position for one year while continuing limited duties at Valleydale Baptist and retaining full-time employment. In his temporary assignment with BBA, Green will be the point person for all continued disaster recovery efforts by coordinating work with churches, neighborhoods, communities, government entities, volunteer groups and nonprofits. A staff member at Valleydale since 2003, Green has served as the church's point person for disaster relief since April 28.

A mobile chapel provided by Alabama Baptist disaster relief has been set up at Emmanuel Baptist Church, Hackleburg, in Marion Baptist Association.

The next two mobile chapels will be placed at Mountain View Baptist Church, Phil Campbell, in Franklin Baptist Association. With the first mobile chapel already in place at Mount Hebron East Baptist Church, Eclectic, in Elmore Baptist Association, the first four of 13 orders have been placed, according to state Baptist leaders.

While there are variables involved in the price of each, such as unit size and distance to move it, the average mobile chapel costs about \$65,000. One existing unit was relocated and the others are being leased for 30 months, said Bobby DuBois, associate executive director for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

The 13 units will claim about 40 percent of what has given so far to the Alabama Tornado Relief fund. At press time, that amount was \$1,921,396.46.

To donate to the fund or find out more about existing needs, visit [www.sldr.org](http://www.sldr.org).

## Cullman's Seventh Street stands tall after tornado

By Julie Moore  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Eleven majestic oak trees that once towered over Seventh Street Baptist Church, Cullman, are no more. Entire areas of Cullman that were not long ago teeming with massive oaks now display a significantly altered, sparser landscape.

"The whole skyline has changed," said Debi Brannan, secretary for Seventh Street Baptist.

Brannan and another church member were in the building April 27 as one of the many Alabama tornadoes barreled through the city. Thankfully both women remained unharmed as they waited out the storm.

"God was looking out for us here," Brannan said.

While the West Cullman Baptist Association church was established in the late 1800s, its current building was constructed in the early 1950s. It received extensive structural damage — though not as extensive as the damage suffered at some other area Baptist churches — totaling somewhere between \$200,000 and \$250,000 based on State Farm estimates. In spite of that, Brannan reported it is still "business as usual" at the church and the congregation is able to continue weekly worship.

According to Pastor Kerry Clegghorn, one of the hardest hit sections of the building was the gym-

nasium. He said the roof must now be replaced. The gym will not be used for several more months until all needed testing and repairs are complete.

The sanctuary roof also was damaged, and some of the sanctuary's stained glass windows were cracked.

The outdoor playground was heavily damaged and littered by storm debris, but it was repaired in time for the early June Vacation Bible School.

### 'Gifts of God'

Clegghorn said since the trees all fell northward, they did not harm the building. The obliteration of the beautiful oaks on campus was a loss to the congregation and touched many, including Minister of Music Jethro Harbison, who penned a remembrance, "Good Bye, Mighty Oaks, Gifts of God."

"You who have been not fleeting friends but who have stood tall and strong through many storms and recovered to take on life anew, providing a lesson to us who have gathered here through the years to worship and fellowship, sometimes to face our own storms and challenges ... May we be inspired to seek lives of grace and strength and service, standing tall and strong to face life's storms and to fulfill God's purpose as you did. We are grateful to Him for sharing you with us for so many years."



Photos courtesy of Seventh Street Baptist Church

**SPARSER LANDSCAPE** — Seventh Street Baptist Church, Cullman, suffered extensive damage to its playground and building from an April 27 tornado. Eleven oak trees that once adorned the church's campus are no longer there.



# Making history

## City of Dora votes to go wet; area pastors concerned

By Courtney Searcy  
The Alabama Baptist

The historically dry city of Dora has voted to go wet and allow alcohol sales following a June 7 special referendum.

More than 600 of the city's 3,000 residents turned out to the polls, with 323 (56 percent) voters in favor of the referendum, while 254 (44 percent) voted against it. At press time, there were still provisional ballots out. The official vote count was to be finalized by June 13.

Mayor Chris Edwards told the *Daily Mountain Eagle* the voter turnout showed the people of Dora wanted their voice to be heard. The change could bring "positive economic developments" such as new businesses and jobs, he told the *Eagle*.

However, area pastors opposed to the referendum are concerned about the negative effect it could have on the community.

"It's going to cost Dora financially as well as in other ways ... I fear that it will make alcohol more

readily available to people, possibly including underage drinkers," said Lee Taylor, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dora.

Taylor is a part of the Dora Ministerial Alliance, a group formed after a petition to hold the vote began within the city.

The group, made up of about eight pastors, met regularly to pray for the city and its government leaders, as well as to try to stop the petition.

When the petition received enough signatures to hold the vote, they used church marquees and purchased signs to inform the community about the vote, encouraging them to cast a "no" ballot.

Taylor said that although the vote did not turn out in their favor, they will continue to support their community and its officials.

"We're not going to pull away

and disown our city just because we stand on a different side with a different view," Taylor said.

Taylor called the mayor the morning after the results were announced.

"I told him, 'I do not like the way that this vote turned out,' but if he or the city needs anything from me or the church, we would be there for him or the city to meet any need we are able to meet," Taylor said.

The vote can be appealed, but Tay-

lor said the group has no plans for challenging it.

"We have not lost the war, but we have lost this particular battle," he said.

"There is a time and season for everything. Christians must learn a time to lose with grace. We fought a good fight and I think we fought it in an honorable way." ❏

*"We fought a good fight and I think we fought it in an honorable way."*

Pastor Lee Taylor  
FBC Dora



### Grove Hill marks 150 years with 2-day celebration

Grove Hill Baptist Church in Clarke Baptist Association celebrated its 150-year anniversary June 4-5, packing several special events into the two-day celebration.

Among the June 4 events were a PowerPoint presentation of the church history, as well as a video including interviews of 51 church members who described highlights from their involvement in the church's past and their hopes for the future of the church.

They concluded the day with an old-fashioned ice cream supper, which was a staple in raising funds for a new building after the church burned down in 1996.

During the June 5 worship service, Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission (ABHC), and Jack Wright, district 7 commissioner with the ABHC, presented a framed certificate commemorating the anniversary.

The bulletin that morning mapped out several areas of the church where displays of historical information or artifacts were located. This included a curio cabinet filled with historical items, collages with pictures of church members and framed pictures of past pastors and music ministers in the newly remodeled conference room.

Wright, who was a member of the church for 40 years, was also on their historical committee. The committee worked for five months to gather information, prepare for and plan the event.

"Everything went off like clockwork. I have never in my entire life done anything where the pieces fell together like that," Wright said.

When the church burned down, Wright and several others collected pieces of the stained glass windows. Attendants received bags containing a piece of the stained glass, a snow globe with a picture of the current church building and the first church building in it and a 43-page booklet of church history compiled by the committee.

"It was a good day. It was a very good day," Wright said. "Everybody was excited."

### Chilton Association's FBC Lomax celebrates 50 years

April 17 was a "blessed day" for First Baptist Church, Lomax, in Clanton as about 80 people gathered to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

The first pastor, Ronald Euler, shared from the Old Testament on "remembering." Lonette Berg of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented the church with a plaque, and state Rep. Kurt Wallace presented a certificate of recognition.

David G. Askins, the pastor of First, Lomax, while it was still a mission of First Baptist Church, Clanton, and Larry Felkins, director of missions for Chilton Baptist Association, also attended the celebration service.

The church recognized long-time members like Chester Jones, a member from the beginning, and Sue Porter, the church clerk since 1961.

Current Pastor Jim Otts hopes the future brings growth and younger generations to carry on the work of First, Lomax.

"We've reached a plateau (in growth), and now it's time to move on up the hill," he told the congregation, which usually is composed of only 15. ❏

## Across Alabama's Associations

### EAST LIBERTY

► **Jackson Memorial Church, LaFayette**, will celebrate its 62nd homecoming June 26, 10 a.m. Lunch will be served at noon. To the End, of Birmingham, will sing in the afternoon. Al Cougill is pastor.

### ELMORE

► **Tunnell Chapel Church, Wetumpka**, will celebrate Pastor Heath F. Flowers' first anniversary of ministry at the church July 10, 11 a.m. A covered-dish lunch will follow.

### ESCAMBIA

► **Brooks Memorial Church, Atmore**, will hold a special note-burning service for its education building June 26, 10:30 a.m. The

building was completed in 2006. Dale Huff, director of the office of LeaderCare and church administration for the State Board of Missions, will speak. Former Minister of Music Doug Wood will lead the music. Jerry Caylor is interim pastor.

### MONTGOMERY

► The JOY Singers senior adult choir of **First Church, Montgomery**, will present its 11th annual patriotic celebration "Salute to America" June 26, 6:15 p.m. Veterans, active military personnel and disaster relief volunteers will be honored. Theresa Gordon is director. Julie McDougal and Sara Jo Bagley are accompanists. Kenny Hoomes is minister to senior adults. For information call

334-834-6310. Jay Wolf is pastor.

### PICKENS

► **Pleasant Hill Church, Aliceville**, in the Sapps community, will celebrate homecoming June 26, 10:30 a.m. Nelda Lee will speak. Lunch and a time of fellowship will follow at 11:30 a.m. There will be a singing at 1 p.m. Pauline Hall will serve as moderator. Billy Little is pastor.

### TUSCALOOSA

► **Steven Langford** is the new student minister for **Circlewood Church, Tuscaloosa**. He previously served as minister of youth and children for First Church, Centre. He is a graduate of the University of Alabama and Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Herbert Thomas is pastor.

### TUSKEGEE LEE

► **Wallace Chapel Church, Cusseta**, will host Christian humorist/musician Brother Billy Bob Bohannon June 26, 11 a.m. Lee Pike is pastor. ❏

## Alabama Cooperative Program Gifts

Alabama Baptist Giving  
Year to Date through May 31, 2011

May

CP Challenge Budget Goal .....	\$3,641,666
CP Challenge Budget Gifts .....	\$2,820,868
Under Goal for Month .....	\$820,798

YEAR TO DATE

CP Challenge Budget Goal .....	\$18,208,330
CP Challenge Budget Gifts .....	\$16,909,639
Under Goal for Year .....	\$1,298,691

**The Alabama Baptist will not publish an issue July 7. Please submit announcements for the June 30 issue by June 21.**

A full report of the  
**Southern Baptist Convention**  
annual meeting in Phoenix will be in next week's issue.

June 14-15 • Phoenix Convention Center

# 'Love unconditionally'

## Prayer, support important when dealing with prodigal adult children

By Judy Woodward Bates  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

When adult children turn away from all their Christian parents believe and have taught them, relationships can be completely severed, leaving parents in agony and with no idea of where to turn for help. While many churches offer support groups for parents of prodigal teens, the issue of prodigal adult children is one that is often neglected.

Phil Waldrep, a Trinity-based evangelist, Christian radio show host and author of "Parenting Prodigals," said the need for such support is there. "I believe as many as 50 percent of all senior adults have at least one child they would consider a prodigal," he said without hesitation.

Prodigal is used in reference to the biblical story of The Prodigal Son in Luke 15.

Janet Baker, an Alabama Baptist, agreed.

"The first time I publicly asked for prayer for us and our prodigal, I was in a seminary class with over 20 other women. It was like a floodgate opened. Six other ladies in that classroom — including our instructor — shared that they, too, had prodigals."

Her husband, Lonnie, recalls how hard it was to begin requesting prayer for their wayward son.

"When Micah first broke com-

munication with us, we were crushed and embarrassed. We didn't think any of our fellow church members could relate to what we were going through. Now I know close to a dozen men in our church who are also fathers of prodigals."

With such a high percentage of parents dealing with adult prodigals, why do so few churches offer support groups?

Fair Brocard, co-founder of Prodigal Child Ministries (PCM), is certain it's because they don't see the need.

"People put up a façade. They hide behind their smiles," she said.

Many parents blame themselves. They believe there had to be some mistake in their parenting that led their child to become a prodigal.

David, a member of an Alabama Baptist church and the father of three adult prodigals, maintains that his divorce was the trigger for his children's break with him.

"It's been over two years since I've heard from either of my sons, and my daughter only contacts me sporadically."

Waldrep has witnessed this type of thinking countless times, which is why the first of the six principles in his book is to learn to live guilt-free.

"Your prodigal has choices. ... He is responsible for his own behavior. ... Even if we had been per-

fect parents, we couldn't guarantee a child's godliness," he wrote.

Irene Bennett, president of www.TheParentsGroup.com, concurred.

"Ninety-nine percent of the parents didn't do anything intentionally to push their prodigals away from the Lord. They did the best they could," she said.

### Staying in touch

Four years ago, Trish and her pastor husband, Mitch, were bowled over when their 18-year-old son Kyle confessed a same-sex attraction. He ended up leaving home and refraining from contact for about a year but now stays in touch and returns home for occasional visits.

Many factors contributed to his decision to walk away. For one, Trish said, "the church's silence on the issue of homosexuality other than to condemn it gave Kyle nowhere else to discuss his very real feelings."

While keeping their focus on God, Trish and Mitch have found a local chapter of Exodus International, the world's largest Christian organization dedicated to helping families and individuals impacted by homosexuality, to help them in their relationship with Kyle.

"We're staying loaded up on reading materials about grace and God's unconditional love — things that help us see our prodigal through His eyes," Trish said.

And there is more help for parents of adult prodigals.

PCM offers online help at www.prodigalchildministries.org, as well as a 10-week Bible study, during which up to 20 participants learn how God wants parents to react when their child is a prodigal.

"We have a waiting list of parents wanting to be a part of the study," Brocard said. "In all churches, there are parents of prodigals, and the prevalence is increasing by the day. That's why we encourage people who've gone through our study to take it back to their home churches."

Bennett's website hosts an online prayer conference call every Tuesday night at 9 p.m. EST.

Brocard pointed out that even though parents aren't responsible for their child's choice to take the prodigal pathway, they oftentimes are enablers.

"When we ask a former prodigal what finally got his attention, we often hear, 'My parents stopped enabling me,'" she said.

Linda Randow, founder of www.ParentsOfProdigals.com, echoed her words.

"We have to be so careful not to enable a prodigal," Randow said. "The main thing is to love unconditionally and pray continually."

Chris Adams, senior lead women's ministry specialist with Life-

## Parents have hope, author says

By Courtney Searcy  
The Alabama Baptist

In 11 years of traveling with her husband's ministry, Irene Bennett has met many parents of adult children who were raised in a Christian home but are now living outside the tenets of that faith. Again and again, those parents have voiced the same concern — a lack of resources for the struggling parents of these prodigal children.

After praying about this need, Bennett said the Lord laid it on her heart to write a book, "Until Your Prodigal Comes Home: Encouragement Along the Way."

"The book is about how to live in peace day by day with all the ups and downs that the (prodigal) child may bring," she said.

Bennett said the book is built around Scripture and the testimonies she and her husband, Stephen, have heard as they have met parents dealing with the fact that their child is involved in a sinful lifestyle.

### 'Not following Christ'

"The most difficult thing for a parent is to find out that their child — who they raised in church and did the best they could to raise — is not following Christ," Bennett said. "It comes as a shock."

But her husband, who was once homosexual, bulimic and addicted to drugs, is proof that parents of prodigals are not left without hope, she said.

When he became a Christian, he left his male partner. He began dating Irene later that year, and in 1993, they were married.

Since 2000, the Bennetts have been working "to reach the homosexual man and woman with the gospel of Jesus Christ and to share the unwavering truth that complete change is completely possible for those individuals desiring such," according to the Stephen Bennett Ministries website, www.sbministries.org.

She wants those who read her book to have the same confidence that "the power of Christ is enough to deliver anybody of anything."

She said there are two things that are important for parents to take away from the book: They cannot change their child no matter how hard they try, and the Lord will deliver in His perfect timing.

"Many parents try and orchestrate different scenarios and plans. It's only fruitful if it is led by the Holy Spirit," she said. "If they follow His plan, it is a great burden lifted off of a parent's shoulder."

A website also will be launched with the book's release near the end of this year, providing another resource for parents to connect with and encourage each other and share prayer requests.

The book will be available on www.amazon.com as well as in local Christian bookstores.

Way Christian Resources, has similar advice after going through her own prodigal experience with her daughter Alycia.

"Release the prodigal to a God who loves her (or him) more than we do. Pray for Him to put Christian influences in her life who will nudge her back to Him and to her family," said Adams, whose daughter has been reunited with her family and now shares her testimony.

Janet Baker said it is also important to remember you're not alone. "When you're courageous

enough to open up and admit that prayer need, you'll find that there are many more parents within your own church who are struggling with the very same issue.

"Don't do anything to publicly embarrass your prodigal, but enlist the help of trustworthy believers to pray for you and your prodigal, and if the Holy Spirit leads, approach your church staff about beginning a support group."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Some names have been changed.

### Helpful websites

- ▶ www.ExodusInternational.org
- ▶ www.Parents-Of-Prodigals.com
- ▶ www.ParentsOfProdigals.com
- ▶ www.ProdigalChildMinistries.org
- ▶ www.TheParentsGroup.com



### Resource books

- ▶ "A Long Way Off" by Kitti Murray
- ▶ "Bringing Home the Prodigals" by Rob Parsons
- ▶ "Encouragement for the Broken-hearted Parent" by Leslie J. Barner
- ▶ "Parenting Prodigals" by Phil Waldrep
- ▶ "Praying for Your Prodigal Daughter: Hope, Help & Encouragement for Hurting Parents" by Janet Thompson
- ▶ "Prodigals and Those Who Love Them: Words of Encouragement for Those Who Wait" by Ruth Bell Graham
- ▶ "Setting Boundaries With Your Adult Children: Six Steps to Hope and Healing for Struggling Parents" by Allison Bottke
- ▶ "The Hope of a Homecoming: Entrusting Your Prodigal to a Sovereign God" by Brendan O'Rourke & DeEtte Sauer
- ▶ "The Hurting Parent" by Margie M. & Gregg Lewis
- ▶ "Until Your Prodigal Comes Home: Encouragement Along the Way" by Irene Bennett (to be released later this year)
- ▶ "Will Your Prodigal Come Home? An Honest Discussion of Struggle & Hope" by Jeff Lucas

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THE

# ALABAMA BAPTIST

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<http://online.thealabamabaptist.org>

# Dawson: Many congregations, one faith family

By Anna Swindle  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The campus of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, is a place many call home — even if they don't necessarily call themselves Dawson members.

In addition to members and visitors who attend three morning worship services at the Birmingham Baptist Association church, three other groups gather there to worship God each Sunday. At 9:40 a.m., the church's minister of spiritual formation, Todd Harrington, delivers a message to a group called Journey.

Starting at 11 a.m., Dawson's Hispanic Pastor Byron Mosquera and his congregation praise the Lord, and then at 5 p.m., John Constantine leads a service for his Arabic church.

"The thing that sort of ties it all together — the DNA of our church — is service," Senior Pastor Gary Fenton said. "Our shared vision is to become faithful and help others become faithful as well."

One notable way this situation differs from many others in which congregations share a single worship space is the fact that it is far from temporary. Instead of using another church's building while raising funds to build their own, the Arabic church and Hispanic congregation have been meeting on Dawson's campus for more than two decades.

"We thought, 'Rather than going out and finding a new location and going through the

cost and energy involved, why don't we just have them under our umbrella and provide space for a new group that fits within us?'" Fenton said. "We have found with Journey and (the) Hispanic congregation that really works well. Our relationship with the Arabic Christian congregation is also very effective but the way we are connected to them is slightly different."

It's different in that it is an autonomous congregation that meets on the Dawson campus.

"We have created a 'church within a church' model," said Ben Hale, Dawson's minister of evangelism and missions.

"There are differences in language, culture, style of worship and dress, but (they) are still members of the Dawson family of faith. We strive to have as many open doors as possible for people to come into the church."

And the open doors go both ways, Mosquera said.

The Spanish-speaking members of his congregation spend much of their time at church interacting with the Anglo members, and the Anglo members are able to develop friendships with the Hispanic members.

"We have two VBS (Vacation Bible School) weeks here — one in English and one in

Spanish — and often our kids go to both," Mosquera said. "We baptize from both congregations. We go on a beach trip together with both congregations every year called (Beach) Breakaway. When we can collaborate, we do, anytime we see the opportunity."



Photo by Neisha Fuson

**COMMUNITY OF FAITH** — A group called Journey meets at 9:40 a.m. in the chapel at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham.



Photo by Neisha Fuson

**TEAM OF PASTORS** — (L to r) Todd Harrington, Gary Fenton and Byron Mosquera serve as pastors for Journey, Dawson Memorial and Dawson Hispanic congregation, respectively, each a part of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham.

And according to Fenton, this consistent interaction and sharing of culture, language and tradition have made Dawson members better missionaries.

"In some ways, this diversity, this wide expression of faith, has been an impetus to our desire to do missions, because we're used to working with people who have accents and who have a different approach to things," he said.

"I don't think people are really intimidated by interacting with (other) people."

Fenton said the church hopes to continue its collaborative, inclusive model for years to come.

"We recognize that the basic need of humanity is Christ and that it's not style of worship or language that matter but rather the commitment to Jesus Christ and the church," he said.

## The Amazing Race: Extreme Faith Edition to be held in Etowah County

Need a little extra challenging experience for your youth ministry this summer?

Check out The Amazing Race: Extreme Faith Edition. Hosted by Embark Ministries, the July 16 event will challenge students spiritually, mentally and physically as they race throughout Etowah County.

The event is modeled after the TV show "The Amazing Race" and will begin at a location announced two weeks prior to the event.

There, teams will receive their first clue, leading them to their next stop in the race.

Each stop will include some type of challenge that must be completed before teams receive their next clue.

The youth group that reaches the final stop will receive a \$500 gift card for an outdoor activity such as rafting or skiing.

The winner will be announced at a rally at Bellevue Baptist Church, Gadsden, during which The Advice will be leading worship, and Vista McDuffie, director of Embark, will deliver a message.

Other churches helping sponsor the event include College Heights Baptist Church, Glencoe, and Fairview Baptist Church, Gadsden.

McDuffie, who expects a turnout of anywhere between eight and 15 groups, said he hopes the event will touch as many students' lives for Christ as possible.

"That's the point. If I see just one student come to Christ, it will be worth everything we've done," McDuffie said.

Groups from across the state are welcome and can register for the event at [www.embarkministries.com](http://www.embarkministries.com). (TAB)

## 'Bingo' corruption trial under way in Montgomery

The federal corruption trial revolving around electronic bingo in Alabama commenced with opening remarks by defense lawyers and prosecutors June 10 in Montgomery. At press time, opening statements were expected to fill most of the afternoon.

According to reports from the *Press-Register*, U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson reserved more than six hours for the prosecution and defense teams to make their opening statements.

### Lobbying

"Folks, this was not politics as usual," Justin Shur, a prosecutor with the U.S. Justice Department's Public Integrity Section, said in opening statements according to the *Press-Register*. "It was not legitimate lobbying."

Joe Espy, attorney for Victory-Land owner Milton McGregor, said, "This man (McGregor) did not cross the line. This man did not bribe anyone."

The case stems from charges that votes on an electronic bingo bill were bought and sold in the Ala-

bama Legislature and involves McGregor and eight other defendants, including four legislators.

Casino owner Ronnie Gilley, developer of Country Crossing entertainment center in Dothan, pleaded guilty in April to 11 counts of conspiracy, bribery and money laundering. Lobbyists Jarrod Massey and Jennifer Pouncey pleaded guilty earlier in the process.

In 2009 and 2010, Gilley promoted legislation that would have legalized and expanded slot ma-

chine-style gambling. The public corruption investigation stemmed from gambling supporters' attempts to illegally influence legislators to pass the bill.

Gilley is expected to be a key prosecution witness.

The jury was selected June 9. According to news reports, the panel consists of 10 women, two men and five alternates. According to *The Birmingham News*, lawyers have projected the trial may take up to four months. (TAB)

## NewHopeDigital.com launched

New Hope Publishers announced June 6 the official launch of NewHopeDigital.com, that will provide readers and retailers with fresh content in multiple digital formats.

NewHopeDigital.com will offer regularly updated magazine-style content including articles, columns, feature stories, podcasts and videos from New Hope authors and other contributors.

Each month the site will have a specific theme, such as orphan

care, human exploitation, the persecuted church, prayer and making disciples, in order to foster focused thought and interaction on major issues facing Christians today. New book releases on a variety of topics will be prominently featured as well.

New Hope Publishers, the general trade publishing imprint for national Woman's Missionary Union, represents more than 80 authors and more than 130 individual works. (BP)

## Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

### Millennials shaping American culture, Rainer says

NASHVILLE — 78 million Americans born between 1980 and 2000, arguably the largest generation in the nation's history — are shaping the American culture of the first half of the 21st century.

A free digital copy of "The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation" (B&H Publishing Group) by Thom and Jess Rainer can be downloaded through Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, iBookstore and Christian Book Distributor.

Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, and his son Jess, a banking professional and Millennial born in 1985, worked together on the comprehensive research project.

The free download will be available through noon, June 20. B&H is in the process of launching a free Millennials app.

Research for the Rainers' Millennials project began in June 2009, encompassing 1,200 interviews of older Millennials born between 1980 and 1991. Among their findings:

▶ Millennials and marriage: They are marrying much later, if at all. In 1970, about 44 percent of 18–25-year-old Boomers were married. Today only 15 percent of Millennials in that age group are married.

▶ Millennials and the workplace: 84 percent of Millennials say that job success is important. However, they want to have fun with their coworkers on the job, and they see the need for balance between work and life.

▶ Millennials and money: The Boomers indulged. Gen X went over their heads in debt. The Millennials might be the first generation to have a balanced view of money since the United States became an economic power. But many of them are confused about their finances.

▶ Millennials and religion: They are the least religious generation in American history. Only 13 percent of Millennials considered any type of spirituality to be important in their lives; most don't think about religion at all.

### LifeWay announces VBS theme for 2012

NASHVILLE — "Amazing Wonders Aviation: Encountering God's Awesome Power" will be the 2012 Vacation Bible School (VBS) theme for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

A LifeWay news release June 6 noted, "Think vintage aviation from the 1930s and '40s: biplanes and bomber jackets."

"Children, students and adult VBS participants will fly to some of the world's greatest natural wonders as they encounter an awesome God and His amazing power. They will take off each day from the Amazing Wonders Aviation airstrip and visit some of the world's most beautiful and marvelous God-made creations: Victoria Falls, the Northern Lights, Paricutin Volcano, the Great Barrier Reef, the Grand Canyon and the Matterhorn." The theme is taken from Psalm 147:5: "Our Lord is great, vast in power; His understanding is infinite" (HCSB).

The June 6 announcement coincided with a live online VBS announcement event from Nashville featuring Jeff Slaughter, creator of all things musical for LifeWay VBS; Jerry Wooley, LifeWay's VBS specialist; and others who introduced the theme from a vintage airstrip/hangar.

"In the past, the VBS theme has been based on one location or idea. This year, the theme is based on six beautiful God-made natural wonders," Wooley said.

"We want everyone who attends VBS to know the power of our awesome God."

### Chitwood named Kentucky Baptist executive director

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Paul Chitwood was elected as executive director-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC) by the KBC Mission Board June 2 by an 88–7 ballot vote.

Chitwood, 41, pastor of First Baptist Church, Mount Washington, Ky., since 2003, was presented to the mission board by search committee chairman Paul Badgett, of Pikeville. The committee, he said, sought a candidate with the right character and chemistry as well as competence.

Chitwood has been a trustee of the International Mission Board, an assistant professor of evangelism and church growth at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and an adjunct professor at University of the Cumberlands.

A native of Jellico, Tenn., Chitwood has served as pastor of four Kentucky congregations and has been a convention president and first vice president. He has served as president of the KBC Pastors Conference.

## Needs of retired ministers, widows focus of Mission:Dignity Sunday

The story is told of thousands of European children who were left without homes and families following extensive bombing raids during World War II. These orphans were gathered up and taken to camps where they were cared for by Allied Forces personnel. There they had plenty to eat during the day and were safe from the trauma, death and destruction that had once surrounded them.

Still the children could not sleep. The thought of once again being left homeless and without food gripped them with uncertainty and terror.

It was suggested that the children be given a slice of bread to hold once they were put to bed at night. Amazingly that worked. Just knowing that they had something in hand was enough to overcome their fears and provide the comfort necessary for a good night's rest.

Decades later and an ocean away, a similar scenario is being played out.

Today many retired Southern Baptist ministers and their wives or widows face uncertainties as to how they will pay their bills, if they will get their medicines or

what they will eat. It can be a traumatic time that takes its toll in lots of ways, including being unable to sleep well.

Norma Jo Karnes and her husband, William, were in ministry for 37 years as he served in the pastorate of smaller churches in Kentucky. After learning they had been approved for assistance from GuideStone Financial Resources' Mission:Dignity ministry, she sent in a word of thanks.

"There aren't words to express what your help has meant to us. We have gone from just getting by to being able to sleep at night, knowing that we will be able to pay our bills. May God bless all of you," she wrote. "I was able to buy me a new pair of shoes that I really needed. First pair in four years. Thanks from the bottom of my heart. Please pray for us."

### Biblical promise

Psalm 3:24 has a promise for those who live righteous lives: "When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet."

That's a tremendous assurance

that comes from a godly life. But it's also the result of the care and compassion shared by those whose Mission:Dignity gifts provide daily bread and so much more each month to God's faithful servants.

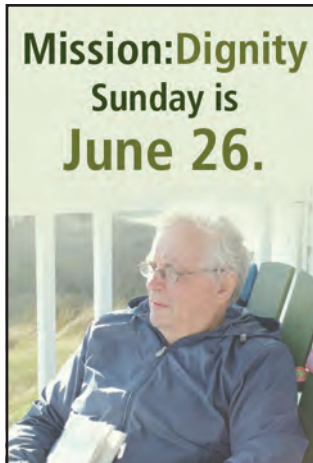
Through Mission:Dignity, GuideStone assists approximately 2,000 retired Southern Baptist ministers and their wives or widows who have critical financial needs. Most of these served small congregations in decades past with little, if any, contributions toward a retirement plan. Sixty percent of Mission:Dignity recipients are widows. One out of every four recipients is a pastor's widow age 85 or older. Qualified recipients are eligible for grants of \$200 to \$530 each month.

The Mission:Dignity program is funded by the generous support of individuals, Sunday School classes and churches across the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Gifts of any size are welcome, and 100 percent of contributions are paid out in grants with nothing taken out for administrative expenses.

Mission:Dignity Sunday is June 26 on the SBC calendar, and churches can learn more about this important ministry.

To order bulletin inserts and a DVD for use in worship services, Sunday School departments or missions-oriented organizations, visit [www.MissionDignitySBC.org/ORDER](http://www.MissionDignitySBC.org/ORDER) or call 1-888-984-8433. (GuideStone)



## Summer in full swing at Shocco Springs

By Kate Scarbrough  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Friendship Baptist Church, Aberdeen, Miss., brought its yearlong family discipleship program to a close at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega in May.

The goal of the program, which was filled with intense Bible study and personal reflection, was to encourage parents to be the primary spiritual mentors for their children.

"I was excited and pleased that our families stayed together, ate together, played together and prayed together. Much of church programming separates families in discipleship, but Shocco gave us the opportunity to worship and celebrate God together as families," Pastor Mark Thornton said. "The ropes course perfectly fit into the goal to challenge families to work together, communicate effectively, solve problems together and to submit to God-ordained authority."

The families worked together and enjoyed themselves, but Thornton said they also "had an opportunity to be challenged to take the next step of obedience to our Lord and to live a life of holi-



Photo courtesy of Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center

**FAMILY TIME** — Members of Friendship Baptist Church, Aberdeen, Miss., work together on the ropes course at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega.

ness and to uphold God's standard of excellence."

"The facilities and staff at Shocco were great partners," he said. "Everything reflected a standard of excellence and a genuine desire to serve us as we tried to serve our families."

The group from Friendship Baptist was one of more than 40 to uti-

lize the center's conference rooms, dining hall and various recreation activities in May, which also marked the beginning of Student Life camps this summer. Student Life, which partners with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions for its camps, will have several thousand students visit Shocco through late June.

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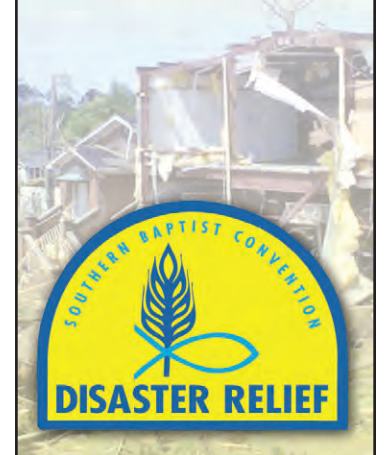
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# 'New' altar call

## Churches explore various ways to give invitation

By Grace Thornton  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

It's rare that you'll see someone walk the aisle at CrossPoint Church, Trussville. And when you do, it's a spontaneous anomaly — it's not because he or she was asked to.

But Senior Pastor Ryan Whitley says there's always an invitation.

"I'm in the middle of an invitation right now," Whitley said on a recent Wednesday morning sitting in his office sorting through a stack of cards.

The cards are written responses from Easter services. Eighty-five people noted on their "connection cards" that day that they had no relationship with Christ or weren't sure if they had one.

None of them walked the aisle.

But in the days following, Whitley and other CrossPoint staff members have followed up with each

of those 85 people. Not all have been interested in talking, but many have welcomed staff members into their homes or agreed to meet them for coffee and talk about the gospel.

"There were 2,009 people who came to our church on Easter Sunday, and for our church, this (making personal contacts) is a far better way to offer a personal invitation to Christ," Whitley said.

### Traditional altar call

He's not knocking the traditional public altar call, but he said in his church with multiple services each Sunday, the two and a half minutes at the end of a service just wouldn't do much to ensure people were adequately followed up with and disciplined.

The card idea is nothing new, Whitley said, but it's worked well for his church.

Instead of walking the aisle for membership, newcomers attend a new members class, during which church staff shares the gospel with them personally.

"We are available at any time to talk with someone about their relationship with the Lord. To us, that serves as an ongoing invitation," Whitley said.

But his church isn't the first not to have a public invitation. In fact, it's only been a fairly recent development in Christian history that churches do have altar calls, according to *Christianity Today* writers Douglas A. Sweeney and Mark C. Rogers.

"Successful evangelists such as George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley never gave an altar call. In fact, they did not even know what it was. They in-

vited their hearers passionately to come to Christ by faith and regularly counseled anxious sinners after their services. But they did not call sinners to make a public, physical response after evangelistic appeals," Sweeney and Rogers wrote.

A few ministers began to use altar calls in the 1700s, but they didn't really catch on until the Second Great Awakening in the early 1800s, according to *Christianity Today*.

Harold Fanning, interim pastor of Mays Memorial Baptist Church, Toney, said he thinks its popularity spread because of its use in Billy Graham crusades.

"Dr. Graham used to always conclude his message with an invitation by saying, 'Every person Jesus called to follow Him. He called them publicly,'" Fanning said.

The traditional altar call still takes place at Mays Memorial Baptist, but Fanning said much

of the reason it works there is because of what happens right after it's over.

"I intentionally am one of the last to leave (after the service), and you would be surprised the number of people I have privately led to Christ following a service," he said.

"Without exception, they tell me they are intimidated walking down the aisle in front of a crowd."

While Fanning said Graham is correct, he feels a person's baptism is his or her public statement of a new life.

Whether there's an altar call or not, Fanning said the most important thing is to "make sure that people understand that the invitation to Christ is not closed simply because we do a benediction. I make sure the congregation understands that I will be available after church if they need to talk."

But at Trinity Baptist Church,

Roanoke, where Pastor Richard Richie served for 10 years until recently becoming pastor of Flint Baptist Church, Decatur, nothing works like an old-fashioned altar call, he said.

"Though I have tried having people fill out a card or bulletin insert ... I have not been too successful in these approaches for leading souls to the Lord," Richie said. "[The Trinity] congregation is a more traditional church and has not embraced these methods."

### Feel the Spirit move

And he said he's seen God really work through the music and message to draw people to the Lord and propel them toward the altar when they feel the Spirit moving in their heart.

"It's like they can't get there fast enough," Richie said.

"I still believe there is something special about encouraging people to stand up and step forward to make a public profession of faith for Jesus."

But Richie also said much like Whitley and Fanning, he's seen more professions of faith outside of the worship hour than inside it so that most of the time, the responses to the altar call are folks he or others have talked with previously.

"I think what is key is spending time to get to know the individual in a comfortable, nonthreatening environment outside the church where one can take their time in developing and nurturing that relationship and eventually earning the right to share Jesus with that person," Richie said.

"After helping lead a person to the Lord, then I always encourage them to follow this up with a public proclamation by coming up at the end of the service to request baptism and membership," Richie said.

"It makes things much easier and helps later in the assimilation process to ensure that the new convert is properly followed up on and plugged into the life of the church."

**"[People] tell me they are intimidated walking down the aisle."**

Harold Fanning  
Mays Memorial Baptist



## State budgets complete but what's the plan?

By Jim Williams  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

On its last session day, the Alabama Legislature completed work on the two large state budgets for the coming fiscal year. These were hard budgets to put together. Gone are the millions of federal stimulus dollars that propped up state finances for the past three years, and state revenues in 2012 are expected to be lower than in fiscal 2008.

The 2012 Education Trust Fund budget of \$5.6 billion is 17 percent below the amount spent four years earlier. In the \$1.8 billion General Fund budget, prisons and Medicaid consume 23 percent more than they did in 2008, but the remaining general government programs were allocated 28 percent less than in 2008. Tax dollars and spending programs had to be moved around to make the budgets balance.

### Providing services

The Legislature deserves credit for finishing these difficult budgets on time and setting an example with a budget 36 percent lower than 2008's. However, Alabama law calls for the governor and Legislature to develop the budget as a plan for providing state services. What is the plan contained in the 2012 budget?

As yet, we know little about it. Only an expert could follow

the 187 pages of appropriation decisions itemized in the budget bills or even add up the money invested in some services because agencies receive funding in multiple ways. Nor do the budget bills tell us what the state expects to accomplish with the billions of taxpayer dollars it is investing.

For example, the 2012 budgets of education agencies are about a billion dollars below 2008 spending. How will this affect test scores and graduation rates in public schools or tuition levels in colleges and universities? More than \$63 million of highway revenues are being transferred to fund the court system and the Department of Public Safety. What will this mean for the maintenance of roads and bridges? What are the state's strategies for controlling Medicaid and prison costs, which are almost \$200 million higher in 2012 than in 2008?

The governor should provide answers early next year when he presents a four-year state plan as required by law. That plan ought to help us understand how our tax dollars are being used to make Alabama a better place to live, work and do business.

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — Jim Williams is executive director for the nonprofit, nonpartisan Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama. Jim may be contacted at [jwilliam@samford.edu](mailto:jwilliam@samford.edu).

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# Hispanic missionaries disappointed

## 'I'm willing to go to jail to do my ministry,' declares Carlos Lemus

(continued from page 1)

cerns among the Hispanic community and the churches reaching out to it. Carlos Lemus, who has served as Hispanic missionary to Autauga and Chilton Baptist associations for the past eight years, is concerned about the future of his church, in which he says 90-95 percent of the members are undocumented.

"This will affect ministry in a negative way, no doubt about it," Lemus said. "I believe the only intention is targeting Hispanics, not any other groups, regardless of what these representatives are saying. ... I have families who have been here for 10-15 years, and these families are kind of scared because it's uncertain for the future."

Believing that police officers will enforce this new law "in their own way," Lemus is also concerned about how

he will be treated in Alabama while trying to do his ministry work even though he is an American citizen.

"I will be afraid to drive a church bus with some children for Vacation Bible School right now or in the future for any other event we have together," he said.

Disappointed that only non-Christian organizations have reached out to ministries like his around the state, Lemus said Christians need to consider how God's Word addresses issues like these.

"We are not a pest," he said. "We are human beings. Even though we

are legal here, this situation looks like we are not welcome. It looks like we are second-class members of the convention even though we are giving our contributions to the Cooperative Program. On this issue, we are standing alone."

Certain parts of the law are to be enforced immediately, while other sections will be enacted as late as next April. But Lemus plans to continue his ministry no matter what happens.

"I'm willing to go to jail to do my ministry," he said, referring to the story of Paul and John in Acts 4:18-20. "I will obey God's Word before man's laws. It's what the Bible teaches."

Another bill that passed and caused a stir in the Alabama Statehouse was HB 18, sponsored by Rep. Kerry Rich, R-Albertville. Known as the Alabama Pain-Capable

Unborn Child Protection Act, this law prevents abortions at or after 20 weeks since scientific research has proven that "an unborn child is capable of feeling pain" at that point.

Several other pro-life bills seemed to have promising futures with lawmakers this year, but only HB 18 passed. Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP) executive director Joe Godfrey said he is excited about the success of HB 18, but he feels some of the other pro-life bills could have passed if they had not been "placed on the backburner."

*"We are human beings. Even though we are legal here, this situation looks like we are not welcome."*

**Carlos Lemus**  
Hispanic missionary



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

"This is the first time that many pro-life bills have gone through committee and passed at least one house," Godfrey said. "That was encouraging, but we are hoping that next year we can see more and stronger pro-life bills come through."

### Alcohol bills

Godfrey was also disappointed in the number of alcohol bills that passed into law during this session.

"In the name of business and economic development, the conservative leaders in both houses felt the need to pass bills that liberalize alcohol sales," he said.

Although Godfrey said several Sunday alcohol sales and draft beer bills passed, he believes the most significant was a brew pub bill that

allows any wet county or municipality to build a brew pub, which only large cities could do previously.

"The whole idea is that it expands alcohol sales in Alabama," Godfrey said.

"There is this constant barrage of more and more alcohol bills."

Another bill Godfrey praised legislators for passing is HB 361, sponsored by Rep. Mike Hill, R-Columbiana.

This law allows an "ignition interlock device" to be installed in the vehicles of people convicted of driving under the influence. With this system in place, drivers can not crank their cars until they breathe into a device which checks their blood alcohol levels.

"In states where (similar laws) have been enacted, it has been

shown to reduce alcohol-related accidents and fatalities," Godfrey said.

Religious organizations providing substance abuse treatment also celebrated this session when HB 513, sponsored by Rep. Blaine Gallier, R-Gadsden, passed exempting churches and ministries from Alabama Department of Mental Health certification if they offer only religious services.

Alabama Teen Challenge, a faith-based organization, which helps people overcome addiction, shared excitement on its Facebook page.

"Thank you to everyone who contacted your elected representative on our behalf, to Sen. Greg Reed and Rep. Gallier for sponsoring our bill, and attorney Eric Johnston."

## Brook Hills Pastor of Prayer Charles K. Card dies at 78

Charles K. Card, pastor of prayer for The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, died May 13. He was 78.

Birmingham-born and -raised Card was in the last graduating class of Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham, where he sang in the a cappella choir. He went on to earn a master of divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Card served several Alabama Baptist churches as pastor: Calvary Baptist Church, Vincent; Siloam Baptist Church, York; First Baptist Church, Roebuck Plaza; and two churches in the Braggs area.

He also served Smithville Baptist Church in Kentucky while in seminary.

Card was certified as a machinist apprentice before attending seminary in 1965.

Donnie Arrant, associate pastor/administrator for Brook Hills, worked with Card for 17 years and called him a faithful prayer warrior who did an exemplary job leading the church's prayer ministry. Arrant added that Card "had a tremendous, humble servant heart and would do anything he needed to do and would serve in any way that he felt he could help the cause of Christ."

He was preceded in death by a daughter, Eugenia Ann.

Card is survived by his wife of almost 58 years, Marjolene "Margie;" three children; three grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. (TAB)



CARD



Photo courtesy of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church

### LINEVILLE'S PLEASANT GROVE DEBUTS NEW DRAMA TEAM

Youth of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Lineville, in Clay Baptist Association practice for its first performance in July. Pictured are (back row, l to r) Micah Harris, Makayla Harris, Abbey Cantrell, (front row, l to r) Libby Horn, Mackenzie Sims and Carson Pate. David Harris is pastor.

# Alabama Baptists earn seminary degrees

The following are Alabama Baptists who graduated with degrees at the master's level or above from Southern Baptist seminaries and Alabama Baptists' divinity school during the spring 2011 semester.

The list was provided by the schools:

## ► Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Master of arts in counseling — Steven Robert William Worstell, Huntsville

## ► New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Master of arts in Christian education — Alisha Kay Vice, Grand Bay

Master of divinity — Kenneth Ray Harrison, Deer Park; Jason Andrew Rothe, Pleasant Grove; Brandon Ray Scroggins, Wetumpka; Greg Willis, Huntsville; Derrick Austin Wilson, Douglas; James Edward Wolfe, Tuscaloosa; and Matthew "Matt" P. Zwiitt, Mobile

Master of divinity in Christian apologetics — Ben Andrew Hicks, Montgomery

Master of divinity in Christian thought — Patricia "Pat" F. Sanders, Helena, and Lloyd

Beaudoin Waldrep, Tusculmbia

## ► Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Doctor of philosophy — Matthew Yates Emerson, Huntsville

Master of arts in Christian studies — William Stephen Grubbs, Lanett

Master of arts in intercultural studies — Marshall Lynn Mitchell Jr., Athens

Master of divinity with advanced biblical studies — Jordan Grant Haupt, Mobile

Master of divinity with Christian ministry — David Aaron Bradshaw, Hartford; Mitford Anthony Fontaine Jr., Tuscaloosa; Jeffrey K. Smitherman, Satsuma; Eric Springer, Haleyville; and Thomas Andrew West, Montgomery

Master of theology — Catherine C. Garrison, Gadsden

## ► Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Doctor of educational ministry — Sarah Elizabeth Mielke, Huntsville

Doctor of philosophy — Julia Elizabeth Bickley, Tusculmbia

Master of arts in biblical counseling — Kristen Leigh Brannon, Huntsville

Master of arts in Christian education — Charles Theodore Mielke, Huntsville

Master of divinity — John Raymond Armstrong, Auburn; Mark Alan Davis, Mobile; Jaime Fernando Del Castillo, Hoover; Raymond Michael Johnson, Chunchula; Timothy L. Mullet, Birmingham; Joshua Robert Price, Auburn; Matthew Roy Simmons, Opp; Kenneth Wayne Vickery, Andalusia; and Richard David Vining, Winfield

Master of theology — Thomas Christopher Kynard, Grove Hill

## ► Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Master of arts in Christian edu-

cation — Ronald Andrew Carroll, Birmingham

Master of arts in Christian education with counseling — Sarah Laverle Lanier, Eclectic

## ► Beeson Divinity School

Master of divinity — Kenneth Chase Armstrong, Birmingham; Calvin L. Bell, Bessemer; Edward Lewis Colf, Birmingham; William David Currie Jr., Alabaster; Jeremy Daniel Huff, Fairfield; Thad Lee Key, Parrish; Judd Eliah Spencer, Birmingham; Benjamin Keen Talmadge, Birmingham; and Benjamin M. Wages, Dothan

Master of theological studies — James C. Davidson, Morris (TAB)

## Want to know God?

By Pastor Bryan Wagner  
Shiloh Baptist Church, Hartford

God planned salvation. Jesus Christ purchased it with His blood and death on the cross. You and I must accept it by faith.

As a sinner, your life is in the midst of tragedy and despair. You are incomplete because God has a purpose for you, but without salvation, that purpose is not fulfilled. Without Christ, you are lost, and in that lost condition, you can't know true peace, joy and contentment.

God's Word also says without Christ, you are condemned, which simply means that you are held accountable for your sin. Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death."

God cares deeply about your sinful condition, and He loves you enough to offer you the gift of salvation through His Son, Jesus.

Jesus is God's love gift to you and me. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the sin debt for us. The rest of Romans 6:23 says, "The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We receive the gift by claiming Jesus as our Lord. Because salvation is a gift, there is nothing we can do to earn or purchase it. The only way to be saved is by faith in Jesus.

The moment we turn from our sin and believe on Jesus, God promises we will get a new life: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). In John 3, Jesus referred to this as being born again.

Do you want to know God? You must realize that you are a lost sinner and believe that Jesus died for your sin and rose from the grave. Ask for His forgiveness, ask Him to change your heart and ask Him to give you everlasting life. Confess Jesus as your Savior and claim Him as your Lord. Let Jesus be the Master of your whole life and rely on Him day by day.

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**SENIOR PASTOR:** Tate Springs Baptist Church, located in Arlington, Texas, is a multi-generational, conservative Southern Baptist church looking for a senior pastor who can operate in a team approach with pastoral staff. Our total Sunday morning attendance is 600-650. Please forward resume to: Terry Jeffries, Pastor of Administration, at terry@tatesprings.com or directly to the pulpit committee at pastorsearch@tatesprings.com.

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**BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER:** Edgewater Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational music minister. Please send resume to: 800 Galveston Street, Birmingham, AL 35244.

**PART-TIME INTERIM MINISTER OF WORSHIP:** Clearview Baptist Church in Pinson, Ala., is seeking a part-time

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**MUSIC & YOUTH OR MUSIC & CHILDREN:** We are interested in someone to help full-time with music and youth or music and children. Send resumes to: Forest Avenue Baptist Church, P.O. Box 611, Jackson, AL 36545, or fabc7637@att.net.

**YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTER:** Central Park Baptist Church is accepting resumes for this full-time position. Mail resumes to: Central Park Baptist Church Search Committee, 2020 Westmeade Street SW, Decatur, AL 35601.

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

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## World Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

### Egyptians want advice, not theocracy, survey says

WASHINGTON — Four months after the fall of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, a new Gallup survey says a majority of Egyptians want religious leaders to advise the nation's officials but they do not want a theocracy.

About seven in 10 Egyptians said clerics should advise national leaders on legislation. In comparison, 14 percent said religious leaders should have full authority in creating laws and 9 percent said they should have no authority.

The findings, announced June 7, come from the United Arab Emirates-based Abu Dhabi Gallup Center, which monitors attitudes of Muslims worldwide.

Even as they seek a limited advisory role for clergy, most Egyptians (67 percent) want religious freedom as a provision in a new constitution.

A much higher percentage (92 percent) say freedom of speech should be included, and slightly more than half want a new constitution to include freedom of assembly.

The report, titled "Egypt From Tahrir to Transition," notes that despite sectarian violence in the country following Mubarak's resignation, Egyptians are among the most religiously tolerant in Gallup's ranking of populations in the Middle East and North Africa.

"Two-thirds of Egyptians say they would have no objections if someone of another faith moved in next door to them, second only to Lebanon in the region," the report states.

The findings are based on in-person interviews with about 1,000 people ages 15 and older in late March and early April, and have a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 to 3.5 percentage points.

### Vatican Bank's financial integrity improves

VATICAN CITY — Prosecutors in Rome released \$33 million in Vatican funds June 1 that had been frozen last September pending an investigation for possible money laundering.

The prosecutors had charged the Institute for Religious Works, commonly known as the Vatican Bank, with violating Italian law by attempting to transfer funds from one of its accounts in an Italian bank to two other banks, one of them in Germany, without supplying the required information to Italian authorities.

Federico Lombardi, director of the Holy See Press Office, said the prosecutors' decision was an acknowledgment of the "seriousness" of the Vatican's commitment to "adhere fully to international standards for preventing and resisting illegal activities in the field of finance."

Since the start of the investigation, the Vatican has brought its banking laws in line with international norms intended to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing, and has set up an oversight body called the Financial Information Authority.

The official Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, quoted a statement from prosecutors citing recent "normative and institutional changes" at the Vatican as the basis for the decision to unfreeze the funds.

According to the Italian news agency ANSA, the prosecutors said they were satisfied that the Vatican's new financial regime would "prevent any repetition of the (bank's) omissions."

### Pakistan's blasphemy laws call for Bible ban

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Adam and Eve sans fig leaves, Lot getting drunk, Jesus stopping a stoning — this is all too much for Muslims represented in Pakistan's parliament by the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam party.

In their view, Bible stories such as these amount to "pornographic" slurs against the biblical figures whom they claim as their holy prophets. They are now demanding that the country ban the Bible because of such "blasphemy" and exact a "punishment."

A Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam party leader, Maulana Abdul Rauf Farooqi, informally petitioned the Supreme Court at a press conference May 30 in Lahore, complaining that the Bible includes stories about some of the biblical prophets that include "a variety of moral crimes, which undermine the sanctity of the holy figures."

A newspaper reported: "Farooqi cited a number of [supposedly pornographic] scriptures from the Bible, saying such 'insertions' strongly offend the Muslims, who hold all prophets and holy books in high esteem, as part of religious belief and never even think of committing any blasphemy against them."

The verses in question are: Genesis 19:33-36; 29: 23, 32-35; 38:18; Exodus 32:2-6; 1 Kings 13:2-29; 2 Samuel 11:2-27, 13:1-22; Matthew 1:13, 16:23, 26:14-47.

# Crisis at Shocco Springs

## Bottled water a blessing when water service lost

Plenty of clean and clear bottled water was delivered to Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega following the early June water crisis in the city.

The water came thanks to Alabama Baptist disaster relief; First Baptist Church, Sylacauga; and Shocco Springs' food supplier, Wood Fruitticher.

While a major water line break in Talladega caused water outages and unsafe water concerns throughout the city, Shocco faced a crisis of its own — 1,000 campers onsite with potentially no clean water.

All citizens were advised to boil water before consuming it until the situation is under control. But that was not a feasible option for Shocco.

"When I got word they needed water, we knew we had water to spare," said Kyle Jeffreys, state disaster relief coordinator for feeding units and a member of Faith Baptist Church, Athens.

Jeffreys also is coordinating feeding units at Ragland High School near Pell City to feed volunteers helping with cleanup efforts following the April 27 tornadoes.

### Disaster relief effort

Mel Johnson, disaster relief strategist for Alabama Baptists, learned of the need and contacted Jeffreys to help with the water situation.

Jeffreys and Gordan Raney, disaster relief volunteer and member of New Market Baptist Church, delivered the first load of water — about 500 cases — June 7.



Photo courtesy of Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center

**GRATEFUL** — Buster Taylor (left), executive director of Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega, welcomes the delivery of disaster relief bottled water by Gordon Raney, a disaster relief volunteer and member of New Market Baptist Church.

Shocco executive director Buster Taylor said the donation of drinking water helped to serve the many guests on campus.

He added that guests have been "most understanding" about the water crisis.

"We were able to continue our ministry by providing safe drinking water to guests," Taylor reported. First Baptist, Sylacauga, sent 65 cases of bottled water and Wood Fruitticher sent a special truck with 500 cases.

Shocco was using approximately 45 cases per meal.

"This crisis reminds us not to take anything for granted, especially essentials like water," Taylor added.

At press time, Shocco's current water donations were expected to last until June 13.

If needed after that date, they planned to seek donations so ministry could continue as 1,400 campers were set to check in that day.

At press time, an "all-clear" had not been issued and results from water samples were not known.

(TAB, Laura Goldman of Shocco Springs contributed to this report)

## 2010 Lottie Moon down 2.2 percent

Doubts about the strength of America's economic recovery and rumors of a double-dip recession didn't stop Southern Baptists from giving \$145,662,925 million in 2010 to tell the world about Jesus Christ. The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering supports the nearly 5,000 Southern Baptist missionaries serving around the world through the International Mission Board (IMB), providing housing, salaries, medical care and children's education. The cost averages \$46,700 annually per individual missionary.

In 2009, that support enabled missionaries and their national partners to baptize more than 360,000 people and start more than 29,000 churches.

The 2010 offering is \$3 million less than the \$148.9 million Southern Baptists gave in 2009, a 2.2 percent decrease, and \$8.3 million less than IMB needs to meet its 2011 operating budget. Offering receipts also fell well below the national goal of \$175 million. (BP)

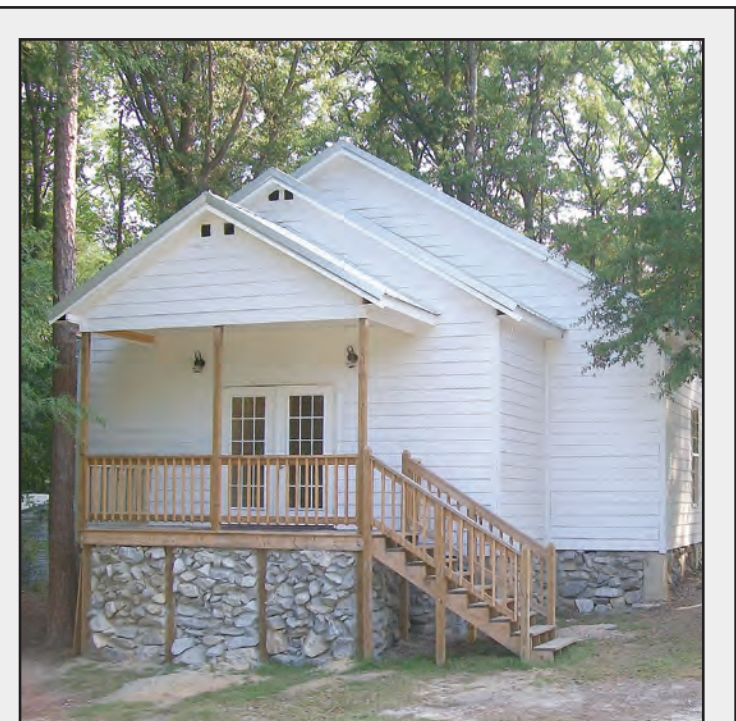


Photo courtesy of Coffee Baptist Association

### COFFEE ASSOCIATION CAMP GETS NEW CHAPEL

The Vineyard Christian Retreat, Camp and Conference Center located near Arton, dedicated its new chapel June 4. The center is a ministry of Coffee Baptist Association. John Granger is director of missions.

# CAMPUS News

## UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **UMobile Business Students Earn Awards for Community Service Projects:** Eight University of Mobile (UMobile) students were recognized for community service efforts at the Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) USA Regional Competition. The UMobile SIFE chapter received first runner-up and rookie of the year in its category at the competition in April.

The students organized several community service projects including The Dumas Wesley Center Street Fests. Twelve local vendors participated in the events, and future biannual street fests will be planned to continue to stimulate the local economy. UMobile SIFE established a partnership with 15 Place, a downtown Mobile homeless shelter. It held a clothing drive that collected more than \$3,000 worth of clothing in exchange for Goodwill vouchers for 15 Place residents to redeem for professional attire. UMobile SIFE plans to continue the partnership with 15 Place year-round.

The chapter also wrote and submitted a grant proposal to build a low ropes course for Camp Grace, a local camp built to accommodate handicapped campers. It won the \$1,200 Lowe's Community Improvement Challenge Grant and used the funds to construct the climbing wall course.

Members of UMobile SIFE are

Morgan Carnley, of Enterprise; Jami Carter, of Mobile; Russell Grant, of West Lafayette, Ind.; Elizabeth Hill, of Mobile; Epsie Long, of Grove Hill; Davis Pilot, of Mobile; Ruth Smith, of Mobile; and Jason Williams, of Asheboro, N.C.

► **UMobile Holds Registration for New, Transfer Students for Fall Term:** The University of Mobile will host registration days for new and transfer students June 17 and July 11 from 12:45-4 p.m.

Check-in will be in the lobby of Weaver Hall. Students will have the opportunity to meet with an adviser, register for fall classes, get a student ID, talk with financial aid representatives and receive their student gift. Fall classes begin Aug. 22. For more information about registration or admission, call 1-800-WIN-RAMS or 251-442-2222 to speak with an enrollment counselor and RSVP to attend registration day.

## SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Cumberland Students Learn, Serve in Public Interest Program:** A record 100 Samford University's Cumberland School of Law students are volunteering part of their summer vacation to work at a public interest entity.

The students are serving judges, state and federal prosecutors, state and federal public defenders, environmental and public policy groups

and volunteer lawyer programs at 59 sites throughout Alabama, seven other states and D.C. The fellowship program, a part of Cumberland's Public Interest Project, provides a stipend of about \$1,500 to each student. Stipends are awarded based on the educational benefit of the proposed work experience, the benefit to the community and the student's expressed interest in pursuing public interest work. The fellowships are made possible through the generosity of Cumberland alumni, the Henry G. Sims and Henry Upson Sims Foundation, Beasley Allen law firm and Miles McGrane, J.D., '75.

## JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson Student to Serve as Equest Physical Therapy Intern in Texas:** Judson college equine student Jordyn Blackwell, of Grand Bay,



**BLACKWELL**

will serve as an intern this summer in Wylie, Texas, at the Equest Physical Therapy and Rehab Center where she will complete work toward certification in the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association.

# HEART OF MISSIONS ...

Twenty-two volunteers from nine churches in **Judson Baptist Association** will serve in Rogersville, Tenn., with Of One Accord Ministry in July.

The team, led by Director of Missions George Thompson, will be divided into five groups to serve as three home repair teams, a Vacation Bible School team and a backyard Bible club team to reach the Appalachian people in the eastern part of the state.

For more information about serving on the team, call Thompson at 334-585-3274.

Stephen Hall, minister to students at **NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville**, led a team of 35 students and adults to Ciudad Victoria, Mexico, May 27-June 2.

The team partnered with Mega Mission to build a church for a congregation in a small village, which had been meeting in a shack-type building without lights or power.

They visited several impoverished areas, bringing lunches and items such as sunglasses and hats.

A doctor, a pediatrician and a nurse on the team also helped host a clinic two evenings during the trip.

Some of the students on the team, speaking broken Spanish, had the opportunity to lead a few people to the Lord, Hall said.

The annual trip sets out the Saturday after high school graduation each year. This year, three graduates chose to go on the trip instead of a traditional senior trip. "I was encouraged to see our students and adults working together in the hot sun ... and to see the church being proactive to share the gospel," Hall said.

A team from **Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills**, in Birmingham Baptist Association, went to the island of Terceira (Portugal) in May as part of a new partnership with Azorean Baptist Church, Lajes.

The team helped with general repair work, facility updating, painting and construction on a children's camp that will serve both Air Force families at Lajes Field (Air Force Base) and Azorean children.



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# Homebound remain focus of Angel Mission Ministry

(continued from page 1)  
 AMM] every week. ... I think God's using the ministry," said Gault, who got involved a year ago.

While AMM donates its products to Baptist representatives, the American Cancer Society, Sav-A-Life in Anniston and really anyone in need, the people who were the reason it started are still its main focus.

"We try to get [homebound] gifts completed if we don't get anything else done," Vaughn said.

Although the women visit the homebound to take them a blessing, they all agree they are the ones being blessed.

"Seeing those smiles and doing God's work is just tremendous," Vaughn said.

AMM visits 60 homebound people in the Anniston area, all of whom are church members, their family members or people who were referred to the ministry, on their birthdays and at Christmas.

Of course, the women are not alone in this huge task. Several



Photo by Neisha Fuson

**LITTLE ANGEL** — Angel Mission Ministry volunteers put together small angels to place on each product they make.

men from the church help move material and build shelves to make the task easier and more organized. Larry and Mary Ann Sprinkle have taken over the delivery aspect of the ministry.

And Senior Pastor Mike Holcomb tries to encourage

the women any way he can.

"They do such good work," Holcomb said. "They call themselves senior citizens, but [AMM] keeps them young and vital. ... They listen to announcements at church, and all of the sudden, they are in my office and saying, 'We would like to do this or send this.' ... I just wish all ministries were like that."

He was on a trip to Swaziland in February with 18 Iron City members, some of whom are part of AMM. They taught beginner sewing classes.

"The classes packed every day with men and women," Holcomb said. "That was the highlight of the trip to see that."

That's just another example of why the hard work and long hours put in by AMM will continue.

"God's in [the work] and it's worth it," Vaughn said. "He's blessed too much for it not to be."

For more information, contact Vaughn at 256-831-0149 or Brooks at ICBCAngelMinistry@yahoo.com.



Photo by Neisha Fuson

**ROWS OF FABRIC** — Joyce Vaughn, Angel Mission Ministry (AMM) leader, stands next to a row of fabric in the AMM work area. Vaughn is one of AMM's founding members.

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 19

## Explore the Bible By Douglas K. Wilson Professor of Christian Studies, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

### LIVE ABOVE BOARD Jeremiah 7:1-15

Judgment is coming! Jeremiah's pronouncements were as popular in his time as the street preacher's warnings are today. This priest was not crying out a message to a multicultural community with multiple religious backgrounds but to a monolithic group of related tribes whose heritage traced back to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The problem was not strangers in its midst but a family who forgot that God had set it apart to reflect His glory to the nations.

### Be Listening (1-2)

Jeremiah cried out to the people coming through the Temple gates to worship Yahweh, "Hear the word of the Lord." This is reminiscent of Deuteronomy, in which Israel is instructed to listen. Deuteronomy 6:4 is sometimes referred to as the Shema, the Hebrew verb translated "hear." Recipients of the message understand that the announcer conveys more than new information; he calls them to listen and live according to the message. Judah was to hear and heed Jeremiah's warning.

In our news-driven culture, we suffer from information overload. Had it not been for various modern innovators, we would live in the tranquility of an Amish farm. Perhaps then we would be able to discover again how to listen to, learn from and live according to every word that proceeds from God's mouth.

### Be Behaving (3-8)

Yahweh, the Lord of Hosts, reigns over the angelic armies and all creation. When Babylon's army overran Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple, it would serve as God's judgment (see Hab. 1).

Judah made a mockery its covenant position with God and treated one another with disrespect. Repeating the mantra "this is the temple of the Lord" did nothing to transform its attitudes toward God or behavior toward those in the greatest need. It was so caught up in chasing after the "Jerusalem dream" that it failed to live in faithful obedience to the sovereign King of the universe.

Change your ways: This was God's mes-

sage. In accordance with Mosaic law, Judah was to care for those in the greatest need: the foreigner who knows no one locally, the fatherless and widows who have no one to provide for them and the innocent child who has no advocate against parents who sacrifice him or her to false gods.

### Be Authentic (9-11)

The people of Jerusalem went through the motions Sabbath after Sabbath, sacrifice after sacrifice, festival after festival, year after year. Knowing the right religious words to say, they repeated liturgies and Scripture mindlessly and without conviction. Claiming covenant privilege with God, they blasphemed Him with their theft, murder, adultery and idolatry.

They stole the nation from God when they rejected Him as king (1 Sam. 8:7). They stole the first fruits and tithes from God in order to support the monarchy (1 Sam. 8:14-18). They stole God's glory and gave it to false gods, man-made idols and undeserving demigods. Such a description was true in Jeremiah's lifetime. Jesus quoted from this last verse to describe what was happening on the Temple Mount with the trading of currency and the selling of animals (Matt. 21:13). Are we guilty of going through the motions?

### Be Learning (12-15)

From the time of Joshua, the tabernacle resided at Shiloh, where faithful Israelites traveled to offer sacrifice (Josh. 18:1). In the days of the judges, Elkanah made his annual pilgrimage here with his wives. Hannah prayed here that God would grant her a son. Samuel grew up here. Eli died here after receiving the news that his sons died in a battle in which they lost the Ark of the Covenant. What happened to Shiloh? Ichabod — God's glory — departed from Shiloh (1 Sam. 4:21-22).

How does Shiloh relate to Jerusalem? Jeremiah announced that the capital city also would become a byword, a place of former glory when God used to speak and where worship used to take place and His people used to dwell. He was speaking of the coming Babylonian exile and judgment. Learn the lesson of Shiloh: Remember and repent!

## Bible Studies for Life By James R. Strange Assistant Professor of Religion, Department of Religion, Samford University

### HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

#### Philippians 4:10-20; 1 Timothy 6:1-19

Sometimes great abundance and convenience lead to great discontentment. I am writing these June lessons from Israel because I am here on an archaeological expedition with students. For three weeks, I am away from my wife and can only speak to her at odd hours and over spotty connections. I have few sets of clothes with me. The street outside our Nazareth hotel is noisy. I cannot open a fridge and prepare myself a snack. There is no computer printer or scanner at hand. Every day, I spend hours hiking through kilometers of thistles in the hot sun, hunting for archaeological remains. And worst of all, the TV in my room has not worked since I arrived. Yet I feel great contentment here. I suppose the reduced conditions lead me to reduce my expectations, to be happy with what I have.

On the other hand, the hotel staff spoils us as if we were royalty. Every morning at 5, Atef prepares cappuccinos for all who want them. For the past four days, he has been on vacation, and I find myself irate that no one is serving me a cappuccino at 5 in the morning! Perhaps abundance and convenience are not the gifts I thought they were. Any good thing — any thing at all (object, condition or person) — is a temporary gift and can be gone tomorrow. True contentment lies not in the thing but in the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17).

### Godliness — Companion of Contentment (1 Tim. 6:1-8)

Despite the history of the abuse of verses 1-2 (they were once used to construct biblical defenses for slavery in America), the passage still teaches a powerful lesson through the admonishment to Timothy that godliness is its own reward. What? Since when? I rejoice in sumptuous meals and fine, new, fashionable clothing. Contrary to our cultural training, from these verses, we learn that we rejoice in (insert "enough") food and clothing.

We never hear what exactly "the teaching that is in accord with godliness" (3) means, but from the list of vices in verses 4-5, we

can surmise that it brings about the opposing virtues: humility, wisdom, pursuit of peace, satisfaction, unity, telling the truth, trust and so on. Notice how seamlessly contentment fits into this list. Godliness and contentment, therefore, go hand in hand. The person who is godly is content with God's gifts. The person who is content is grateful for all that God has done. I think we can safely say although we do not pursue godliness in order to gain contentment (for contentment would then become the goal, not God, and paradoxically we would remain discontent), godliness is the true route to contentment.

### Greed — Enemy of Contentment (1 Tim. 6:9-19)

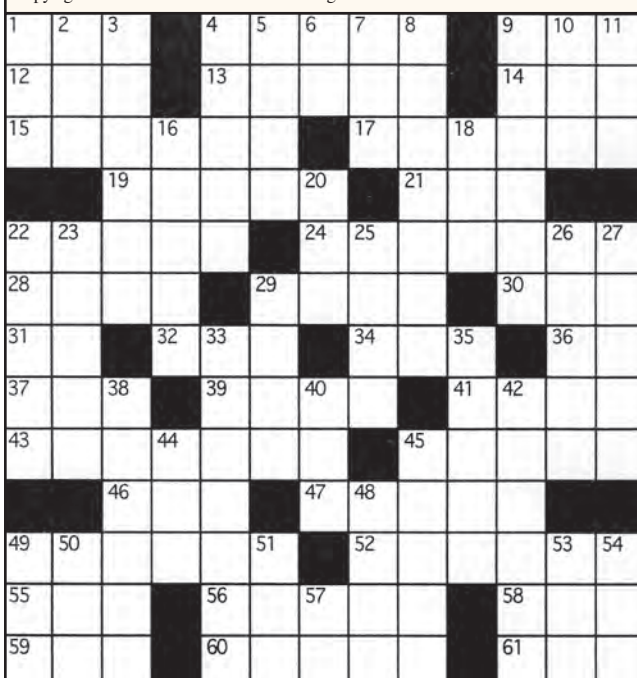
Greed is the very opposite of contentment. Can you be grateful to God and regard His graciousness as deficient at the same time? Greed destroys contentment. Notice that the things that Timothy is to pursue have nothing to do with personal gain of any type. Even "eternal" life is not the goal (or he would be pursuing eternal life rather than God). Eternal life is offered now and is to be grasped now. It is yet another of God's unmerited gifts. How then can there be any room for greed?

### Faith — Key to Contentment (Phil. 4:10-20)

These verses are some of the best-known and most-beloved in all of Scripture and for good reason. Could Paul have given us any better gift than this encomium (word of praise) on contentment? It is because of Paul that we know that contentment can come in any circumstance — indeed contentment is independent of circumstance. Did you notice the paradox in this passage? Paul said he learned how to be content even when he was hungry and in need, and then he said God will supply all believers' needs. What are we to make of this seeming contradiction? As I read things, Paul could be saying when one's life is in God's hands, everything but Him — even food, shelter, dare I say life itself — becomes a want. When all is taken from us, as it eventually will be, it is revealed that God is the only thing we truly need.

## Christian Crossword

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### Across

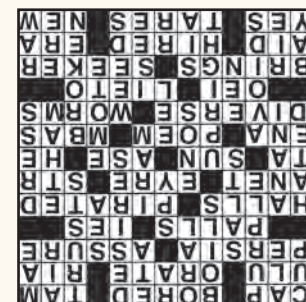
- Spending limit.
- Drilled.
- Scottish topper.
- Eskimo knife.
- Speak pompously.
- Stream.
- Cyrus, king of \_\_\_\_ (2 Chron. 36)
- "We are of the truth, and shall \_\_\_\_ our hearts before him." (1 John 3:19)
- Becomes boring.
- Small. (suffix, pl.)
- Passageways.
- Stolen.
- Dill herb.
- C. Bronte heroine.
- Steamer. (abbr.)
- British 'bye.
- "And he said in the sight of Israel, \_\_\_\_, stand thou still." (Josh. 10:12)
- Of vegetable origin. (suffix)
- Pronoun.
- Alphonso's queen.
- No coins are needed to operate its meter.
- Grad. degrees.
- "Their laws are \_\_\_\_ from

- all people; neither keep they the king's laws." (Esther 3:8)
- "And though ... \_\_\_\_ destroy this body." (Job 19:26)
- Some vowels.
- To be stationary with the head of the wind, as a ship.
- Carries.
- Explorer.
- Assist.
- "Thou shall not oppress an \_\_\_\_ servant." (Deut. 24:14)
- Historical period.
- Affirmative answer.
- "The enemy ... sowed \_\_\_\_ among the wheat." (Matt. 13:25)
- "He is a \_\_\_\_ creature." (2 Cor. 5:17)

### Down

- "Let this \_\_\_\_ pass." (Luke 22:42)
- Ginger \_\_\_\_.
- Lydia's color.
- "Job was covered with \_\_\_\_." (Job 2:7)
- Spoken.
- Egyptian sun god.
- Greek letter.
- "He shall give thee the \_\_\_\_ of thine heart." (Ps. 37:4)
- Has faith.
- \_\_\_\_ mail.
- First name of life preserver vest.
- Carries.
- "Siddim, which is the salt \_\_\_\_." (Gen. 14:3)
- Case out, clandestinely.
- "The Lord saw that Leah was \_\_\_\_." (Gen. 29:31)
- Seventh son of Elioenai. (1 Chron. 3:24)
- One of the dukes of Edom. (Gen. 36:43)
- City just across the Red Sea. (Ex. 13)
- Attire.
- Son of Seth.
- "Stand \_\_\_\_ on thy feet." (Acts 14:10)
- Describe dramatically.
- Eludes.

- Slippery one.
- "I have \_\_\_\_ the bands of your yoke." (Lev. 26:13)
- Poetic p.m.
- "The \_\_\_\_ were wrapped about my head." (Jon. 2:5)
- Words of understanding.
- \_\_\_\_ of Fundy.
- Primitive species of wheat. (KJV)
- Assembly. (Heb.)
- Before. (poet.)
- Harsh.
- Union Pac. was one.



# RESOURCES:

Your Guide to Today's New Music and Literature



## Sound Bites

By Rick Sharp and Adam Borden

### KATELYNNE COX

*One Girl*  
Red Hammer Records

Pop-rock vocalist Katelynne Cox's debut record, "One Girl," serves up enough song writing and producing talent to be taken seriously, and Cox's voice and delivery add to the professional tone of the CD. Produced by Aaron Rice, with songwriting by Rice, Sam Mizell, Chris Sligh, Joy Williams and Jamie Moore, the album is chock-full of hooky pop-rock sounds. The record is sure to please the teen girl crowd, yet has enough sophistication to broaden its appeal.

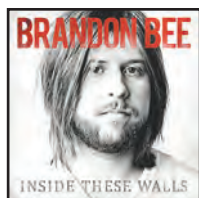


"Me," the project's first single release, continues the record's theme of standing up and out in a crowd, not blending in and being proud of one's uniqueness. (Sharp)

### BRANDON BEE

*Inside These Walls*  
Save the City Records

Brandon Bee's second full-length release, "Inside These Walls," further bolsters Bee's reputation as a performer in the pop-rock Christian music scene.



While best known as a Christian music producer and worship leader, this CD as well as his 2009 release, "This Is the Revolution," has won Bee critical acclaim and recognition

as a rising star in Christian music.

Several of the songs, such as "Majesty Reigns" and "Everlasting Song," have a congregational sound and appeal, but Bee can rock with the best, as evidenced by songs like "Helpless" and "Stones on Bones."

Even the more ethereal and introspective songs often surprise with sudden stabs of grittiness, just as his rockers surprise with unexpected melodic complexity.

As expected, given Bee's reputation as a producer, this record is intricate, beautifully layered and masterfully recorded, but the songs and music stand on their own. (Sharp)

### LUMINATE

*Come Home*  
Sparrow Records

Tyler, Texas' ambient pop-rockers Luminate have made their first full-length national debut with "Come Home." Produced by Dove Award



winner Ed Cash (Chris Tomlin, Third Day), the album presents a collection of anthemic Christian rock that's already starting to get lots of attention. The band's sound is big and rich, thanks to huge drums and soaring synth strings. This isn't your typical guitar-heavy rock band, and their big sound is enhanced by frontman Sam Hancock's expressive voice. One single from the album, "Healing in Your Arms," became even more poignant after the band's guitarist Cody Clark was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, giving the band's faith in God's

healing a full test. Other standout cuts include "Come Home," "Hope Is Rising" and "This Is Love."

Luminate is currently touring with Big Daddy Weave and Chris Sligh in the "Love Come to Life" tour. (Sharp)

### MARK BISHOP

*I Still Need Him*  
Sonlite/Crossroads

Mark Bishop, the storyteller extraordinaire, has brought us a record that shows his unmatched ability to tell a life story in the span of three



minutes of music. Mark is very much in the tradition of tunesmiths like Tom T. Hall and Roger Miller. One might describe Mark's writing as coming from a life observer's point of view, as Mark places himself inside biblical stories. This in turn makes the listener say, "I've never thought of it that way."

When I asked Mark about his songwriting process, he was quick to point out the importance of a cold Mountain Dew and a Snickers Almond candy bar! Beyond Mark's snack of choice, however, the keys to the creation of a Mark Bishop song are time in the Word and time alone with the Savior.

For "I Still Need Him," Mark again relied on the Crossroads A-team of players anchored by producer/pianist Jeff Collins. The rhythm section of drummer Tony Creasman and Jeremy Medkiff on bass and electric guitars have something

called the "pocket." It's a safe and secure place for all musicians to live, work and play, and it only comes from the unselfish attitude of being servant to the song. Master musician David Johnson covers all things acoustic as well as his signature steel guitar. Another tip of the hat goes to the background vocalists, a "who's who" of southern gospel singers.

For context for the song "I'm Listening for the Call," see Matthew 24:42. This sets the tone for an out-of-the-ordinary listening experience. (Borden)

### KAREN PECK & NEW RIVER

*Reach Out*  
Daywind Records

When I popped the new Karen Peck & New River (KP&NR) CD, "Reach Out," in my CD player, it made me want to hop in the truck with the windows down and ride through the country. Karen has remained true to the flavor that brought New River to the dance with hits like "Bend in the River of Life" and "Ten

Thousand Angels Cried." You don't switch partners with 31 Top 40 hits, including 10 No.1 songs under your belt.

The music tracks keep a current collection of country players and instrumentation. The piano and orchestrations are not prominent but give more of a subtle nuance on most tunes. For the most part, guitar



drives the bus on this record, with great compliments from the steel guitar and hook-driven banjo. You'll even get goose bumps from the black gospel choir on the title track, "Reach Out." Producer Wayne Haun gets a gold star for not overprocessing the singers. In other words, you won't be tilting your head like my rat terrier when you hear KP&NR live in concert. They can really sing and it shows on "Reach Out." (Borden)

## Book Reviews

By Martine Bates Sharp, Ed.D.

### It's Time

Mark Foley. *Mobile: University of Mobile Press, 2011. 84 pp. (Paperback).*

Looking at the cover of a book usually reveals a solid glimpse of what is inside. The first impression is of another (yawn) politically driven call to support one party or candidate and defeat another.

The first impression, in this case, falls far short of what is inside the book. It is a call to action, but instead of the expected political rhetoric, the reader is treated to piercing spiritual insights that offer a compelling personal challenge.

Author Mark Foley, president of the University of Mobile, wrote the book as part of the Twelve23 Movement, which is an organization de-

signed to call Christians to be who we are meant to be and save a nation from its downward spiral. Foley pulls from 2 Chronicles 7:14 to illustrate what is needed for healing our land: to humble ourselves, pray, seek God's face and turn from sin.

At only 84 pages, "It's Time" can be read through in one sitting, but you'll want to go through it slowly to fully absorb the message.

### Answers in a Time of Miscarriage

Bethany Kerr. *Cullman, Ala.: Silver Trumpet Publishing, 2011. 214 pp. (Paperback).*

After experiencing two miscarriages, author Bethany Kerr began posting about her losses on her

website in the hope of helping others who might be going through the same thing. The response convinced her to write a book answering questions women might have about miscarriage.

The answers, which range from spiritual to emotional to physical, are thorough and appear well researched. They only constitute a portion of the book, however; other chapters share the stories of parents who've lost a baby to miscarriage and provide resources for grieving parents and guidance for what to say and what not to say to a person who has miscarried. Finally, the book presents the author's own story in surprising detail, including a graphic description of the process of miscarriage.

### Christian Marketplace

## Top Ten Best Sellers

#### Fiction

1. **Leaving** — Bailey Flanigan Series #1, Karen Kingsbury (Zondervan)
2. **The Judgment**, Beverly Lewis (Bethany House)
3. **The Journey**, Wanda Brunstetter (Barbour)
4. **The Priest's Graveyard**, Ted Dekker (FaithWords)
5. **Unlocked**, Karen Kingsbury (Zondervan)
6. **Redeeming Love**, Francine Rivers (Waterbrook/Multnomah)
7. **Her Mother's Hope**, Francine Rivers (Tyndale)
8. **Lineage of Grace**, Francine Rivers (Tyndale)
9. **Vicious Cycle**, Terri Blackstock (Zondervan)
10. **The Thorn**, Beverly Lewis (Bethany House)

#### Nonfiction

1. **Heaven Is for Real**, Todd Burpo and Lynn Vincent (Thomas Nelson)
2. **Jesus Calling**, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
3. **Jesus Calling — Deluxe Edition**, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
4. **Crazy Love**, Francis Chan (David C Cook)
5. **Battlefield of the Mind**, Joyce Meyer (FaithWords)
6. **Radical**, David Platt (Waterbrook/Multnomah)
7. **One Thousand Gifts**, Ann Voskamp (Zondervan)
8. **The Five Love Languages**, Gary Chapman (Moody)
9. **Throw It Down**, Jud Wilhite (Zondervan)
10. **Made to Crave**, Lysa TerKeurst (Zondervan)

# 'A real person'

## Broncos Tebow shares testimony in new memoir

Tim Tebow is a 23-year-old second-year, second-string quarterback on a so-so NFL team. So who's going to buy his memoirs?

What's to remember?

Only ...

▶ The play-by-play of his life from conception (his missionary dad, Bob, prayed for a son and promised God to raise him to preach) to birth (a "miracle" tale told in a Super Bowl commercial).

▶ High school gridiron statistics that made college recruiters pant (he had 80 scholarship offers). An ESPN documentary called him "The Chosen One" when he was just 17.

▶ A Heisman Trophy and college championships at the University of Florida, where Tebow is already immortalized in a bronze statue on campus.

▶ His selection in the first round of last year's NFL draft by the Denver Broncos, along with a *GQ* profile that praised his physique in prose that read like a romance novel.

Woven throughout Tebow's new memoir, "Through My Eyes," is the bone-deep religious side of the evangelical young player who writes Bible verses beneath the play codes on his wristbands, just as he once inscribed them in his eye black for his college games.

The book, written with co-author Nathan Whitaker, starts each chapter with a Bible verse and is laced as much with "glory to God" as it is with pages of grit-and-grunt details of Tebow's trademark punishing workouts. He trains relentlessly, determined to confound everyone who has questioned whether he can make it as an NFL quarterback.

So "Eyes" is for anyone who ever felt a sense of defiant determination in the face of skeptics. And, it's aimed at anyone who finds Tebow's story just a bit insufferable.

### No-drinks player

It's the memoir of a no-drugs, no-drinks, no-arrests player whose idea of swearing is "Holy sweet cheese-and-crackers!" Even so, there are some smudges on Tebow's Jockey-endorsed T-shirt. He admits to crying so often he could compete with weepy House Speaker John Boehner in a Kleenex Bowl. During his college years, a Facebook page called "I saw Tim Tebow Cry and Loved it" had 23,000 fans.

He laughs off the anti-Tebow legions.



RNS photo

**ATHLETE FOR CHRIST** — Heisman-winning quarterback Tim Tebow, who played for the University of Florida, has been one of the most outspoken Christian athletes to take the field.

"If those people got to know who I really am as a person, we'd get along. Holier than thou? That's not me. I'm a real person. I fail and then I try to keep improving and enjoying life," Tebow said in an interview with *USA TODAY*. "I'm a people pleaser. I would love everyone to love me but they're not, and I'm just not going to worry about it."

*"Holier than thou?  
That's not me. ... I  
fail and then I try to  
keep improving."*

Tim Tebow  
Denver Broncos

Tebow seems happy, excited, eager and upbeat as he talks about faith, football and a future he says he never worries about.

The NFL lockout that threatens the 2011 season? Beyond his control.

Questions of whether he'll start for the Broncos in 2011? Keep training.

Romance? Ha! No one special — not yet anyway, he said, laughing.

Tebow's agenda: Live pure. Work hard. Leave the rest to God.

Tebow's father got the preacher he promised his Lord. Tebow said football is "absolutely" his pulpit.

"As a player, especially as a quarterback, you are blessed with so many things you can do with that platform," Tebow said. "You can help a lot of kids."

In the off-season, he has raised funds for orphanages through his Tim Tebow Foundation, running a celebrity pro-am golf tournament and tithing from his \$8.7 million Broncos contract to the foundation

and other causes such as Wounded Warriors.

He supports his father's efforts in the Philippines, where Tim was born after his mother Pam's difficult pregnancy. She rejected doctor's advice to abort their fifth child and toughed it out, as she recounts in a Focus on the Family-sponsored commercial that broke through the NFL's ban on issue-oriented ads during the 2010 Super Bowl.

Groups objected in advance of the ad, expecting a diatribe from Tim and Pam. Instead, it was a sweet, short, funny spot in which Pam shakes off a Tebow tackle and viewers were invited to the Focus website — where the heavy-duty tales are posted.

### Listen and follow

History doesn't count for much in the NFL, where Tebow knows he's just another young player expected to listen and follow, not lead.

There's still time for hanging out with his older brothers, Robby and Peter, who live and work with him, to play Madden football video games, and to croon ("very badly!") along with country music favorites such as Kenny Chesney.

Tebow wants his teammates to see that improving his play and getting to know them on and off the field is his top priority.

"I'm with veterans who have played 10 to 15 years," he said. "But as quarterback, you have to have everyone looking at you. You have to earn respect. Show up first. Be last to leave. After that they begin to like you and play for you. Ultimate goal is fellows who will lay it on the line for you." (RNS)

## Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

### Assisted-suicide movement leader Kevorkian dies

ROYAL OAK, Mich. — Jack Kevorkian, who became the face of the assisted-suicide movement while helping a self-estimated 130 people kill themselves in the 1990s, died June 3.

Kevorkian, 83, passed away in a Royal Oak, Mich., hospital, where he was being treated for heart and kidney problems, according to the *Detroit Free Press*.

"Dr. Death," as Kevorkian was known, became famous as an assisted-suicide advocate and practitioner. A pathologist, Kevorkian flaunted Michigan law but managed to escape murder convictions in four trials, the *Free Press* reported. He was convicted of second-degree murder for his part in a 1998 euthanasia death and served eight years and a month before being paroled in 2007.

In a 2006 interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Kevorkian said he still supported assisted suicide but thought he should have tried to change the law rather than assist illegally in people's deaths.

While Kevorkian gained widespread media attention and a number of supporters as an advocate for so-called "death with dignity," about 70 percent of those he helped die were not terminally ill, said pro-life, bioethics specialist Wesley Smith in a 2006 article for *The Weekly Standard*. "Most were disabled and depressed," Smith wrote. "At least five had no discernible illnesses upon autopsy."

Upon learning of Kevorkian's death, Smith wrote on his blog, "Kevorkian was a disturbed man who, I fear, understood his society — and the media — all too well. And that may be his legacy. He perceived how far some will bend to rationalize even the most egregious wrongdoing or advocacy if the excuse is relieving suffering. Time will tell if he was also a prophet of a dark utilitarian society to come."

### International religious freedom ambassador sworn in

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton defended her new ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom June 2, calling Suzan Johnson Cook a bridge-builder who is right for the job.

Speaking at Cook's ceremonial swearing-in, Clinton cited Cook's firsts as a black Baptist minister and New York police chaplain, as well as her involvement in international activities.

"She is going to demonstrate every single day why she is the person for this job at this time," Clinton said. "To many, she is more than a minister, more than a spiritual leader, although she is certainly that. She is a passionate advocate for the God-given rights of people everywhere, no matter which god they believe gave them those rights in the first place."

Clinton called Cook's swearing-in "a long time coming" after a lengthy confirmation process as some critics questioned Cook's qualifications. Her nomination a year ago stalled in the Senate; she was renominated in February and confirmed in April.

The Baptist minister known as "Dr. Sujay" was cheered by an interfaith crowd of about 300 inside the State Department's ornate Benjamin Franklin Room, including Jewish and Muslim leaders and members from the Bronx Christian Fellowship Church that she founded in 1996.

"In this era of globalization and democratic uprisings, the values of religious freedom and respect are more important than ever, because religious freedom provides a cornerstone for every healthy society," Cook said.

### Civil union law leads Ill. agency to stop adoptions

ROCKFORD, Ill. — Catholic Charities of Rockford, Ill. — which works with 11 counties — has decided to stop offering foster care and adoption services rather than violate its religious beliefs in light of Illinois' new civil unions law.

The law, which took effect June 1, would have forced adoption agencies that receive state aid to place some children in homes with same-sex couples. The Legislature failed to pass an amendment to the law that would have protected faith-based groups from being forced to violate their deeply held beliefs about which homes are best for children.

"The law of our land has always guaranteed its people freedom of religion," said Penny Wiegert, the Rockford Diocese's director of communication. "Denying this exemption to faith-based agencies leads one to believe that our lawmakers prefer laws that guarantee freedom from religion. We simply cannot compromise the spirit that motivates us to deliver quality professional services to families by letting our state define our religious teachings."

Catholic Charities of Boston also chose to drop its adoption services when Massachusetts legalized same-sex "marriage." ☐

# Father's Day Extra

exclusively for the e-edition

## A tale of two young fathers holding onto faith while fearing the worst

*EDITOR'S NOTE — This story was featured in 2010 as the Father's Day emphasis. An update on the two girls is below.*

By Jennifer Davis Rash  
The Alabama Baptist

In less than two weeks' time in 2009, two student ministers in different states began an eerily similar journey that makes this Father's Day extra special for them.

You see both of them still have their youngest daughters, something neither takes for granted.

First, there's Stephen Hall, minister to students for NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville.

His 11-month-old daughter, Sadie, has multifocal lymphoendotheliomatosis with thrombocytopenia. This rare disease leaves her with skin lesions that are also on her gastrointestinal tract. These lesions cause bleeding and dangerously low blood levels. She is currently rotating between various procedures, blood transfusions and several medications.

Then there's David Mitchell, minister to students for First Baptist Church, Rock Hill, S.C. His 3-year-old daughter, Belle, had a rare tumor called choroid plexus carcinoma removed from her head. It had metastasized to her spine before the first tumor was found. She is currently undergoing chemotherapy.

Both prognoses are uncertain.

Hall's journey began just after Sadie was born July 12. Mitchell's started in late July after Belle had surgery for a broken finger and her tremors were noticed.

Hall and his wife, Kelly, made their first [www.CaringBridge.org](http://www.CaringBridge.org) (a free website to connect family and friends during a serious health event) blog entry Sept. 23. Mitchell and his wife, Kelley, made their first entry Sept. 29. Did you notice Hall's and Mitchell's wives' names?

The Halls have three children. The Mitchells have four.

Sadie's full name is Sadie Annabelle, and she is sometimes called Sadie Belle. Belle's full name is Susanna Belle.

Both Hall and Mitchell have strong support from their respective church families. Both work with middle and high school students and have divinity degrees from Southern Baptist seminaries.

And while the two have never met, they know about each other's story and agreed to share their thoughts on this year's Father's Day.

### From Stephen Hall ...

Father's Day is coming soon. More than anything else, I am thankful that God has allowed me to be a dad to my three kids. He has given me the strength to stay faithful during the toughest year of my life. As a father, I would love to take on myself the pain my children feel. However, that is not possible in this case. I am grateful to God for allowing Sadie to live. I have learned to cherish the good moments God gives. I have also learned to be a father in the tough moments. In a phone call with a church member during one of the dark hours of this past year, he commented that my strong faith inspired him. I remembered thanking him while not understanding how in the world he saw my wreck of a life to be a strong faith. In the midst of the storm, I was doing the only thing I could do. I was putting one foot in front of the other and continuing on the path to which God called me. I had no option other than to trust God's guidance and rely on Him. Throughout the year, a lyric from a song written from a good friend has resonated through my mind: "Though my heart and flesh may fail, Your Truth abideth still. Great is Your faithfulness to me." Before this year, I taught of God's abiding presence found in Jesus. As a father of a child struggling with a disease, I have experienced the abiding presence of God. His presence provides strength, joy and peace. Although I still have no ability to comprehend

the greatest love act of all — God's turning away as His Son faced the wrath for my sin — Sadie, along with her struggles, has drawn this father closer to the Father than I could ever have been.

the greatest love act of all — God's turning away as His Son faced the wrath for my sin — Sadie, along with her struggles, has drawn this father closer to the Father than I could ever have been.

### From David Mitchell ...

Father's Day has always been one of those forced holidays that meant very little except the occasional crayon-drawn card that is somewhere between a drawing of an elephant and a picture of daddy. Just one of those days where mommy is forced to feel guilty enough for her flowers at Mother's Day to do some small token for the father. If I am to be completely honest, it never really meant much to me.

But all of a sudden, you hear the words "baby" and "cancer" in the same sentence and your perspective changes. What you previously viewed as a sad attempt to make dads feel important takes on a whole new meaning.

Father's Day is not a day for others to lift you up and pat you on the back, but it is a day to be reminded how precious a gift you were given as a man when God allowed you the title of "daddy."

Isn't it funny how we view the world through the eyes of a narcissist and make self the center of the universe? I now know that I need to cherish every moment I can with my precious children, knowing that tomorrow is not promised nor guaranteed.

I love my babies and it is time for me to see how many smiles and laughs I can create with my children while I have them with me.

Thanks for a day like Father's Day to remind me that I am blessed beyond measure to have an opportunity to show the love of God to some small versions of myself. 🙏



## Update on Belle Mitchell

Belle turned four in May and continues to capture everyone's heart she meets. She is approaching year two of her fight against cancer.

She underwent six months of intravenous chemotherapy at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital after the first brain tumor was removed in late 2009, then six months of oral chemotherapy at home in 2010.

In early 2011, a second brain tumor was discovered and removed, then another six- to 12-month regiment of chemotherapy started in April.

Belle remains tumor-free in the head area.

The tumor on her spine is still present, but it has not increased in size.

The journey is long for Belle, but she has an amazing spirit and is just stubborn enough to be a tough fighter. 🙏



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

**PARALLEL LIVES** — Belle and her mommy, Kelley Mitchell, (left) meet Sadie and her mommy, Kelly Hall, for the first time June 5 at NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville, where the Halls are members. 🙏

## Update on Sadie Hall

Sadie is about to turn two and is a fun-loving, little girl. She has battled her condition since birth.

But she has shown improvement over the last year and not had a blood transfusion since July 21, 2010. The lesions in her GI tract still bleed on a daily basis. The amazing thing about Sadie is that she makes her own blood. This is no small feat for a MLT kid because most of them don't make blood and end up having hundreds of blood transfusions.

She still has all of her external lesions and will have them until she is old enough to make the decision if she would like them surgically removed.

Sadie is behind on her vaccinations due to the inflammation and hemorrhaging the vaccines seem to cause her. Because of this she can't be around other small children and can't be a "normal" kid in that way. 🙏