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INSIDE



Sanctuary lighting could affect attendance, attention span

◆ Page 3



Baptists Respond: First church to receive mobile chapel holds initial service

◆ Page 4



Inflatable bounce houses bring fun but can be dangerous

◆ Page 16



Photo by Neisha Fuson

SUMMERTIME SERVICE — Middle school students from West Side Baptist Church, Greenwood, S.C., and Mansfield Baptist Church, near Covington, Ga., spend one week working on a home in Birmingham's Sherman Heights neighborhood in cooperation with World Changers.

'It's a blessing'

World Changers serves Alabama

By Courtney Searcy
The Alabama Baptist

The hot summer sun beats down on a young man's forehead as he drives another nail into a roof. Usually he'd be reclining in an air-conditioned room playing video games, but instead his shirt is soaked with sweat from working in the humid air.

He doesn't mind. He's making a difference.

A young woman is giving a home a much-needed fresh coat of paint. She is missing an important week of cheerleading practice, but she knows she made the right decision.

Their stories mirror those of about 2,000 students and adults from across the country who will serve in Alabama this summer with World Changers, an initiative of the

North American Mission Board.

World Changers volunteers have worked or will work in Anniston, Birmingham, Florence, Huntsville and Tuscaloosa. Another 20,000 "world changers" are serving in 85 other cities across the United States.

For 21 years, individuals from churches and schools have raised their own funds (averaging \$250 a person) to take part in a week with World Changers, working on projects aimed at improving substandard housing.

The purpose is to give them a "venue in which to live out the faith they have in a loving God," according to the World Changers website.

Once all the groups arrive in their host city, they are divided into crews and given their project assignment. They kick off each morning with a devotion before heading out to work sites for a full day of work. Each evening, they gather for worship and then rest for their next day of hard work.

In Birmingham, more than 750 students and adults will work more than five weeks, partnering with Birmingham Baptist Association (BBA); Metro Changers, a year-round home



Photo by Neisha Fuson

NAILS WITH A PURPOSE — Brittany Isbell of New Church, Memphis, Tenn., graduated from high school this spring and decided to spend a part of her summer serving in Birmingham with World Changers.

rehabilitation ministry of BBA; and the city to complete various roofing, painting, landscaping and other home improvement projects.

This was the third year Conor Martin, a high school senior from Fairview Church, Lebanon, Tenn., has participated in World Changers. It was his first time to serve in Birmingham. He was part of a June 11-18 crew responsible for putting a new roof on an elderly woman's home in the Sherman Heights neighborhood.

"This is what God calls us to do. He calls us to be missionaries, and we're being missionaries by put-

ting a roof on a house," Martin said.

But as fellow Fairview team member Austin Kemp pointed out, they weren't just completing projects.

"It's a big part of it, but the bigger part of it is Jesus," he said.

The first Birmingham group reported 108 gospel presentations made in the community, with several people requesting more information or prayer.

World Changers teams have worked in the city since 1992, making a difference in the lives of hundreds of homeowners.

(See 'Students,' page 5)

COMMENT

Churches Caught in a Dilemma

Since Gov. Robert Bentley signed House Bill 56 on June 9, the debate over the impact of Alabama's new immigration law has been widespread and the emotions high, especially the debate over illegal immigration.

True to their promise, state legislative leaders did not wait for the federal government to deal with the illegal immigration issue. Instead the Alabama Legislature passed a law that is acknowledged by most people involved in the debate to be the most restrictive immigration law in the nation.

Caught in the middle of the argument are the state's churches. In light of the new law, what should churches do related to illegal immigrants?

Some contend the responsibility of churches is to obey the law of the land. Thus churches that knowingly provide assistance, transportation or shelter to an illegal immigrant could find their pastors and other church leaders in jail.

Others argue churches should always be open to ministering "to the least of these," including illegal immigrants.

That same tension was illustrated recently when messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting adopted a resolution titled On Immigration and the Gospel. The resolution recognizes that Romans 13:1-7 teaches that "the rule of law is an indispensable part of civil society and that Christians are under biblical mandate to respect the divinely ordained institution of government and its just laws."

The resolution also outlines the biblical commands to "show compassion and justice for the sojourner and alien among us," take the gospel to all nations and care for the most vulnerable as Jesus cared for them.

But the resolution is unambiguous when it comes to the ministry of the Church. In its first resolve clause, the resolution says, "The messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Phoenix, Ariz., June 14-15, 2011, call on our churches to be the presence of Christ, in both proclamation and ministry, to all persons, regardless of country of origin or immigration status."

Do not miss the last phrase: "regardless of country of origin or immigration status."

This is not the pronouncement of some left-leaning political group. Few national gatherings are more politically conservative than the SBC's annual meetings. It also should be remembered that Richard Land, president of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, played a guiding role in crafting the resolution. Land is a nationally



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

recognized conservative leader both religiously and politically.

Yet if Alabama Baptist churches follow the resolution's guidance, then they could find their pastors and other leaders arrested and jailed. That may say something about where the new law falls on the political spectrum.

Debate at annual meeting

Some may try to discredit the resolution by pointing to the debate it generated at the annual meeting. But that debate was about whether one paragraph advocated amnesty for illegal immigrants. Messengers opposed amnesty.

Messengers were equally clear that they recognized and supported the responsibility of churches to share the gospel in word and deed with everyone regardless of immigration status.

At its best, the Christian church has never allowed the government to dictate to whom its message and ministry may be directed. Baptists, especially, have championed the separation of church and state. Anytime the government attempts to tell the Church with whom it may share the gospel, that government is out of bounds. Baptists have bled and died to keep the government from ruling the Church. The government may not use its power to control the Church's ministry.

It is unfortunate and unnecessary that Alabama churches have been drawn into this debate. The state Senate adopted an amendment to this bill that would have allowed churches to minister to illegal immigrants without fear of government reprisals. But that amendment was purposefully removed during conference committee considerations between Senate and House members.

The Alabama Legislature knowingly attempted to insert itself into the sacred space reserved for God alone in dictating to churches to whom and how they might minister in Jesus' name.

Now churches find themselves in that untenable position of facing the possibility that a youth director could be jailed because he allowed an immigrant child without proper papers to ride in the church van to Vacation Bible School. That should not be.

It is no wonder the immigration law has evoked the ire of most of the state's major denominations.

The Roman Catholic statement says the law violates the First Amendment to the Constitution, "in particular by criminalizing our Gospel imperative of serving the poor." The Episcopal bishop said the law "will make it impossible to love and be hospitable to our neighbors as we ought to do." The United Methodist statement reads, in part, "We also believe it (the law) contradicts the essential tenets of the Christian faith."

It should not be surprising that an Alabama Baptist missionary declared he is willing to go to jail, if necessary, in order to continue ministering to Hispanics.

Whether the law will be good for Alabama, no one knows. Whether the law will have the intended economic impact is unclear. A *Birmingham News* story quoted Samford University economics professor Jeremy Thornton, saying, "It is probably a fallacy for people to believe cracking down on immigrants will create that many jobs for Alabamians."

Eagle Forum of Alabama President Eunie Smith countered that lots of state residents who are unemployed or underemployed will be eager to claim those jobs.

As the SBC resolution says, "Southern Baptists, like other Americans, might disagree on how to achieve just and humane public policy objectives related to immigration."

Where we must be united is that Alabama Baptists will share the gospel with all whom the Lord allows, regardless of the cost. How can we say we are willing to share the gospel to the ends of the earth, even if it costs us our lives, if we refuse to share the gospel with those in our own communities because they do not have the right papers? 🏠



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

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DR. BOBBY S. TERRY, EDITOR

Jennifer Davis Rash, Managing Editor

Neisha Fuson, News Writer Kathleen Penton, Copy Editor
Lauren Chow, Designer Wanda Bergeron, Local Editions
Linda Harrison, Financial Admin. Brian Giles, Advertising Director
Debbie Campbell, Director of Circulation and Public Relations

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Someone You Should Know

By Julie Moore, Correspondent, TAB

Bertha Pearce

Bynum Baptist Church
Calhoun Baptist Association

FAVORITE HYMN: "I love them all."

HOBBIES: Enjoyed playing tennis

FAMILY STATUS: Widowed after 35 years of marriage to Pete Davis and six and a half years of marriage to Buddy Pearce



PEARCE

The Lord has been good to me," said 93-year-old Bertha Pearce, who has spent much of her life serving the church, hardly ever missing a church service.

She has served on many church committees, sung in the choir and taught Sunday School and continues to serve as Bynum Baptist Church's Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) facilitator.

Q: What was your childhood like?

A: [My] father and mother were both Christians, as well as [my] six siblings.

Q: What led you to serve as WMU facilitator?

A: I feel like the Lord led me to do it. When I moved to this church, we didn't have a WMU. I told the preacher I'd start [it]. We organized WMU at our church in 1978. We had 13 ladies who joined.

Q: What other ministries have you been involved in?

A: I sing in the choir. I taught Sunday School for years, up until about two years ago. I taught Sunday School practically all my life.

Q: What do you get from ministry?

A: The Lord blesses me and He takes care of me.

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

A: (Continuing a ministry) we do ... every year. [We] fix food and take it to Jacksonville State University to feed the college students. They pay for the meal and we furnish the food. The money goes to students [for summer missions]. We enjoy that. There are usually about 10 to 12 of us that go.

If you know someone who should be featured as "Someone You Should Know," send his or her name, a contact number and the reason you think he or she should be featured to Someone You Should Know, c/o The Alabama Baptist, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209.

Light causes 'good things'

Sanctuary lighting could affect attendance, attention span

Revamping your church's lighting system might seem daunting but it's worth considering, Michael Thompson said.

A little different lighting can change the whole mood of the place, said Thompson, president of Thompson Sound Inc. in Trinity. And changing the mood for the better can change the potential for ministry for the better, too.

Lighting "can cause good things to happen if used wisely — attention goes up and attendance can go up due to the service 'looking' better," Thompson said.

All of this can lead to more people in the pews hearing the gospel, he explained.

In the 1970s, the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission analyzed churches to study the relationship between lighting and attention span, he said.

"Churches with the better lighting systems kept the attention of the audience focused on the stage much longer than churches with average/standard lighting systems with no real attention to proper stage lighting techniques," Thompson said.

He offered some things for churches to think about when deciding whether to consider new or updated lighting systems.

► Focus

"Whatever is happening on stage — whether preaching, piano offertory music, choir special, etc. — that action should have the brightest lighting on it," Thompson said. "The eyes and attention follow the brightest spot in the room."

If the brightest spot in the room is the preacher, then people will focus there, but if it's the stained glass, then people will eventually be looking at the windows, he said.

"And if the stage lighting is all bright all the time, then the attention falls off again due to no specific point of focus."

The lighting should help direct people to what's most important and help keep their focus there, Thompson noted.

Beatrice Barnett agreed.

"When a sanctuary is darkened and the preacher preaches in a spotlight, it pulls all the attention to the preacher and tells the congregation that since the preacher is highlighted, the message needs to be paid attention to," said Barnett, rental project manager for Theatrical Lighting Systems Inc. in Huntsville.

► Mood

"The mood of a service can be directly related to the lighting as well as the sound and overall look of the church worship space — paint color, fixtures, wall treatments, etc.," Thompson said.

A bright room is cheerful but a dark room creates a gloomy atmosphere not friendly to visitors, he explained.

Different lighting options can not only focus the congregation but also add variety and excitement.

"Lower the room lighting level to candlelight levels while creating a focus point on stage with proper production lighting, and we have the setting for a great sermon or an exciting wedding or a moving solo,"



Photo by Chris Rudd

FOLLOWING THE BRIGHTEST SPOT — Stage lighting helps direct people's attention to what is most important and keep their focus there. For example, Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, uses a spotlight to highlight Pastor Jimmy Jackson as he takes time during a service to speak to the children.

Thompson said. "If the room has recessed lighting fixtures in the ceiling plus chandeliers and wall sconces, even more can be achieved through the lighting."

For example, visible lighting, like chandeliers and wall sconces, can be dimmed to a low setting with the center of the stage lit for preaching, he said. But the recessed ceiling lighting can be left on so that people's Bibles are easy to read.

"The room looks dimmed but (it) is still bright enough to read, and the proper stage lighting creates interest focused on the center of the stage," Thompson said.

And with LED lights, churches can easily impact mood by changing colors and brightness, Barnett said.

"Lighting is really the biggest factor when changing the mood or upping the level of excitement," she said, and it can help churches create an inviting mood "especially if they are trying to get younger members to join."

► Savings

Some lighting systems just cost a lot of money, Thompson said. Not buying new ones — powering the old ones.

"Older systems utilized large lighting in-

struments lit by large incandescent lamps or bulbs of up to thousands of watts each," he said.

"These systems' cost was very high."

The wattage ran the bills up, but so did the heat these systems produced — the air conditioners had to work extra hard to compensate. Some churches are still fighting this battle, Thompson said.

"Now we have high-output halogen lighting lamps, which reduce the wattage required to achieve the brightness needed," he said.

"These halogen lamps can also be used in many of the audience lighting fixtures to increase the brightness of the audience without increasing the amount of power used and air conditioning costs."

Benefits of LED lighting

LED lighting cuts the extra heat to nearly nothing, too, which keeps the preacher lit without being "cooked up," Thompson said. "The LED lighting fixtures have a higher initial cost versus standard stage lighting fixtures, but when their other benefits are considered, the price quickly drops," he explained.

"They have a bulb life of approximately 50,000 hours or more for the good units — most stage lighting lamps have a 2,000 hour life."

For more information, visit thompson-sound.com or tlsinc.com. (TAB)

"Lighting is really the biggest factor when changing the mood or upping the level of excitement."

Beatrice Barnett
Theatrical Lighting Systems Inc.

The Alabama Baptist will not publish an issue July 7. The next issue will be July 14.



What does separation of church, state really mean?

By Brent Walker
Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty

Myth: The separation of church and state has resulted in God being kicked out of the public schools and banished from the public square.

What a thing to say — to presume that God can be kicked out of anywhere. No, as James Dunn has said, “God Almighty has a perfect attendance record.” It is only state-sponsored religion that has been banned from the public schools. Voluntary student religious expression is not only not prohibited, it is protected — as long as it does not disrupt the educational process and respects other students’ rights not to participate.

A partial listing of the religious activities that are permitted in the public schools — voluntary prayer, teaching about religion, studying religious holidays, Bible clubs before and after school, wearing religious garb — proves the point. There are numerous national consensus statements by religious and education organizations that outline the avenues of permissible religious expression.

Yes, educators still get it wrong sometimes. Some principals want to return to the “sacred public schools” of yesteryear and others are ready to overreact and create “naked public schools” where every vestige of religion is stripped away. But the model that most are using, consistent with constitutional standards, is the “civil public schools” where the government does not promote religion but takes religion seriously in the curriculum and, where possible, accommodates the free exercise needs of students.

Misconception

To say God has been banished from the public square is also a huge misconception. The institutional separation of church and state does not mean the segregation of religion from politics or God from government or strip the right of people of faith to speak forcefully in the public square. It only means government cannot pass laws that have the primary purpose or effect that advances religion.

Religious speech in public places is commonplace. From bumper stickers, to billboards, to post-football-game prayer huddles and on and on. It seems like every month new cover stories on religion and religious themes appear in national news magazines in ad-

dition to religious programming on television, radio and the Internet. Religious themes pervade movies. Some seminaries nowadays even have courses on theology in the cinema. John Grisham’s new novel, “The Confession,” has religion in it at every twist and turn. (He is a Baptist, you know.) “God Bless America” is sung during the seventh inning stretch in almost every major league baseball park and is an obligatory conclusion to the speeches of every politician who wants to keep on being a politician.

“Civil religion” in public places is alive and well.

In a culture as religious as ours, we should not be surprised that references to God pop up in our pledge, our mottos, our songs and our civil ceremonies and public rituals. These brief governmental expressions of religion (sometimes called “ceremonial deism”) will usually pass constitutional muster as long as they do not mandate religious worship, single out a particular religion for favored treatment or compel religious conformity. Some of us may have theological concerns about civil religion because it can be abused for political gain, morph into an idolatry of nationalism or result in the trivialization of religion. But the constitutional doctrine of church-state separation does not prohibit various expressions of civil religion.

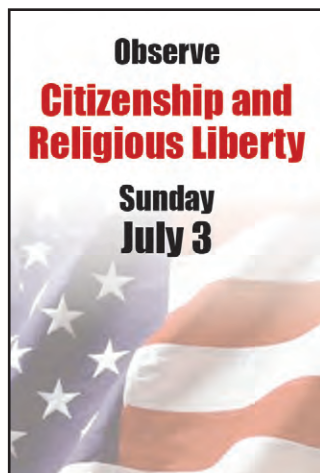
Before retiring, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor’s last church-state opinion reminds us why we should defeat the myths:

“[T]he goal of the [Religion] Clauses is clear: to carry out the Founders’ plan of preserving religious liberty to the fullest extent possible in a pluralistic society. By enforcing the Clauses, we have kept religion a matter for the individual conscience, not for the prosecutor or bureaucrat. At a time when we see around the world the violent consequences of the assumption of religious authority by government, Americans may count themselves fortunate: Our regard for constitutional boundaries has protected us from similar travails, while allowing private religious exercise to flourish. ... Those who would renegotiate the boundaries between church and state must therefore answer a difficult question: Why would we trade a system that has served us so well for one that has served others so poorly?”

Justice O’Connor is right. The separation of church and state is good for both. (ABP)

Observe
**Citizenship and
Religious Liberty**

Sunday
July 3



BAPTISTS RESPOND

to areas devastated by April tornadoes

Mount Hebron East Baptist Church, Meclitic, has something to celebrate. It received a call from Mary Terry, who lives near the Georgia-Alabama line, about its church sign. Her father found it while plowing nearly 100 miles away from the church. She planned to bring it to the first service in the mobile chapel June 26.

But Pastor Bob Williamson said there are many people to thank for getting the **Elmore Baptist Association** church to this point:

I want to thank the many Alabama Baptists who have prayed for us and contributed to our recovery. The people of **First Baptist Church, Montgomery**, and **Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Montgomery**, were on the job cleaning the church site for us to worship that Sunday after the tornado destroyed the buildings. Except for a few metal chairs, everything was a total loss. But characteristic of Alabama Baptists, God’s people have been so gracious. So far, \$30,000 has been given to our building fund. Donations came from as far as Venice, Fla., and Nebraska. Offers for help in labor rebuilding the buildings have been forthcoming from many sources. First, Montgomery, is partnering with us in this.

What a blessing to be a part of so great a Baptist family. The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions was so quick to get us a worship facility and have it installed on the church site. Ron Parnell (coordinator of facility services) gave us priority and had us a new trailer for worship ministry. **Harvest Fields Community Church**, our newest Baptist church, built the steps and the wheelchair ramp at no cost to us. Brother Jim Jackson, our director of missions, has been the catalyst for much of this help. We are especially grateful to him and his leadership. Again we as a church are grateful to all involved as a part of the help we are receiving. It reminds us of God’s promise: “Now unto Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen” (Eph. 3:20–21).

It has been two months since the April 27 storms unleashed their fury throughout Alabama. But the lapse of time has not affected people like Chris Giles, senior pastor of **Cullomburg Baptist Church, Silas**, in **Choctaw Baptist Association**.

Giles continues to faithfully lead a group of disaster relief volunteers from various denominations to Hackleburg.

After he realized the intensity of the storm damage there, Giles contacted other churches in his area and spoke to several pastors with congregations who desired to help. The team, comprised of approximately 40 volunteers from **Cullomburg Baptist, Chappell Hill Baptist Church, Gilbertown; Gilbertown Baptist Church; Mosley Bridge Church and Grace Chapel Assembly of God, Gilbertown; and First Baptist Church, Silas**, made its first trip to Hackleburg on May 6 and cleared storm debris at six homes.

“We wanted to take as many [people] as we possibly could,” Giles said. Those who wanted to help but could not physically make the trip assisted financially.

“The pictures you see on TV don’t do it justice,” Giles said, adding the team has a deep desire to continue reaching out to help storm survivors get back on their feet. “It’s definitely been a blessing to [see the volunteers] pour out and help the way they have.”

Some team members returned to Hackleburg on June 24 to deliver and distribute a large supply of Gatorade powder packets and identify additional needs at particular homes.

Michael Elliott, pastor of **Mosley Bridge** and a disaster relief veteran from Hurricane Katrina in 2005, acknowledged the mass volunteer support that rushes in after a disaster hits but noted that weeks or months later, that support begins to naturally wane. “But there are still needs,” he said of the Hackleburg area.

Giles stressed the immediacy of the situation and said “right now” is when pastors and Christians should be doing all they can to spread the Word of God to those who are still hurting.

As for Giles and his team, they are planning a three- or four-day trip in early July to implement plans derived from the June 24 home assessments.

Because of repairs being made to its building, **First Baptist Church, Cullman**, held Vacation Bible School (VBS) at West Elementary School in Cullman June 13–17. The theme was “Big Apple Adventure.” The **West Cullman Baptist Association** church was aided by six people from **Tabernacle Baptist Church, Macon, Ga.**, and 60 people from **First Baptist Church, Somerset, Ky.**, who did VBS in the mornings and tornado cleanup in the afternoons.



Students 'live out faith' as they work on homes

(continued from page 1)

"It's neat because people see the work we do and make comments that they see that we really are changing the city," said Hannah Berry, a senior at Judah Christian School in Champaign, Ill.

The April 27 tornado left an out-of-the-ordinary opportunity for the 199 students working in Tuscaloosa June 13-18. The city was scheduled to be a World Changers location for the second year before the tornado hit, but obviously the projects there focused on disaster relief.

Seventeen crews partnered with Samaritan's Purse to work on debris cleanup projects across Tuscaloosa.

Project coordinator Mark Matson, who has been involved with World Changers for 15 years, said this situation provided an even greater opportunity for students to present the gospel and speak to people about why they were there.

The students made 425 gospel presentations, resulting in 60 professions of faith. Matson said the crews were able to share the hope of the gospel with many who were devastated after the tornado took their homes.

The disaster relief aspect of the projects brought unprecedented media coverage.

"It's no doubt that a lot of Tuscaloosa has known that World Changers has been here," Matson said, noting he hopes the attention it received will lead to more fund-

ing in the future so more people can be helped.

The city is on the schedule for next year, and Matson hopes to assist in rebuilding the areas cleaned up this year.

For the fifth year, World Changers came to Florence with almost 130 students participating in 11 projects June 20-25.

"Every year, I'm amazed how God matches the talents and abilities of the team members with the needs of the homeowners," said Tim Ray, who has served as the city's project coordinator all five years.

Ray called the projects a "team effort," as homeowners apply through the city and are then screened and chosen for projects based on their need. Churches in Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association assist in providing meals, and the city's board of education allows students to stay in schools.

"Our goal in Florence is to continue this project as long as the Lord wants us to continue to do so. We consider this an indefinite endeavor," Ray said.

Huntsville is hosting 270 students June 25-July 2, and Anniston will host 170 July 18-23.

Most students say the World Changers experience changes them as much as it changes the face of the city in which they serve.

Allison Leflie, a student from First Baptist Church, Woodlawn, Tenn., participated for the first time this year. She said initially



Photo by Neisha Fuson

FRESH PAINT — Carlee Hayes of Holston Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tenn., cleans paintbrushes.



Photo by Neisha Fuson

TEAMWORK — A World Changers crew from six churches across the South works on a home in the Sherman Heights neighborhood of Birmingham.

she wasn't looking forward to the week in Birmingham but when she saw the difference her team was making, it changed her attitude.

"I'm going to have to change my whole lifestyle. It's going to be hard but it's worth it," Leflie said.

Although the event is primarily for students, they aren't the only ones impacted by the trip, said Derrick Cronk, the high school director for First, Woodlawn, who served as a chaperone for the group.

"When you serve others and are being obedient, it's always a blessing. ... I would encourage even adults to get involved in it," he said. "If they've never experienced it, it's a blessing. If they get involved, they'll never quit."

For more information, visit www.world-changers.net.



Photo by Neisha Fuson

REPLACING A ROOF — Conor Martin (left) and Austin Kemp (right) of Fairview Church, Lebanon, Tenn., remove pieces of rotten wood on a house World Changers is repairing.



Photo courtesy of Marshal Worthington

AL WORTHINGTON INDUCTED INTO SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Al Worthington (second from left), former Major League Baseball pitcher and retired Liberty University baseball coach, is inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame on May 21. Worthington is a member of Beulah Baptist Church, Sterrett.

Latinos commend SBC on immigration stance

A national Latino group has commended the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) for its recent resolution backing a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants. The resolution, which does not support amnesty, was passed at the SBC annual meeting June 14-15 in Phoenix (visit www.thealabamabaptist.org for details).

Gabriel Salguero, president of the National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NaLEC), said, "We believe the Southern Baptist Convention's resolution on immigration is headed in the right direction. Evangelicals everywhere affirm that we can balance the rule of law with compassion."

"The National Latino Evangelical Coalition stands behind all those Christians who advocate for common sense and humane immigration laws," he said. "Evangelicals

and people of good will should press the Congress to move on legislation now." Marcos Rivera, president of COMPAS and chairman of the NaLEC, said, "We applaud the Southern Baptists for asserting that at the center of Christianity is love of neighbor and stranger. We've now seen support for immigration reform from every corner of the Christian community. It's time for our politicians to follow suit."

Border security

The Southern Baptists' resolution does not endorse amnesty for undocumented immigrants and calls for border security as a top priority. The SBC resolution also emphasizes that "any form of nativism, mistreatment or exploitation is inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Salguero met earlier this year

with President Obama, senior White House officials and key members of Congress to press for a "just and compassionate" immigration reform solution. The NaLEC also has worked with members from all sides of the political spectrum to offer "just alternatives" to the current system. "This country cannot afford immigration laws like those attempted in Arizona and Alabama," Salguero said. "We need solutions, not political pandering and divisive rhetoric. We need a just and moral way forward."

"We have no doubt that just immigration reform will win the day. It's what Americans need and want," he added. "With resolutions similar to those of years past by the National Association of Evangelicals and now the Southern Baptist Convention, this moral cause is sure to triumph." (NaLEC)

Question facing Christians is to accumulate or share food

People of faith are in a food fight — a conflict between two narratives about food, Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann said.

Brueggemann labeled one narrative “aggressive accumulation” and the other “shared, grateful abundance.” The conflict centers on three key questions about food: Who gets it? How much do they get? Who decides?

The two narratives do not break down along Roman Catholic-Protestant lines or conservative-liberal lines, he said. They are at war in the lives of individual Christians who struggle to sort them out.

Brueggemann laid out this struggle during a recent conference titled, “Our Abundant Communities: Neighborly Nourishment in the Wilderness,” at Trinity University in San Antonio.

The metaphor for aggressive accumulation is found in the story of Pharaoh during the time of Joseph, and it is based on a fear of scarcity, he asserted.

With a scarcity mindset, the more you have, the more you worry about running out, he explained.

Pharaoh’s anxiety over scarcity led to accumulation, which eventually led to a monopoly of the food supply. That monopoly by Pharaoh

provided food for the people during the famine, but it also led to enslavement of the Israelites and violence.

Later Solomon became the king of ancient Israel. He was an accumulator — not just of food, but also of weapons, wives and wisdom sayings, Brueggemann said.

Anxiety over scarcity

The scarcity narrative dominates modern culture, Brueggemann said. But biblical faith imagines a second alternative narrative — shared, grateful abundance.

He outlined three preconditions for abundance:

► **Creation.** Abundance narratives demand a firm grounding in a conviction about the reliability of God’s generous creation. God intended the world to produce abundance. The opposite of creation faith is to imagine one can be self-sufficient.

► **Doxology.** The total sense of self-abandonment leads back to the goodness of God and to praise. The more we accumulate, the less we have freedom to abandon it to God. The desire to accumulate evaporates in wonder and awe before God.

► **Sabbath.** In Exodus 31, God tells Moses to keep the Sabbath. He said to keep the Sabbath as God kept the Sabbath and was refreshed.

The text really means God was “re-souled,” Brueggemann explained. Sabbath is a cessation from production and consumption in order to get depleted life back. The scarcity system wants exhausted people. Exhausted people do not change systems.

The exodus from Egypt was a departure from Pharaoh’s system. In Exodus 16, the Israelites said, “Let’s go back.” It takes enormous intentionality to step outside that narrative. But the coming of manna in the wilderness introduces the narrative of abundance. In the deepest wilderness, the creative God provides sustenance for the day.

Jesus embraced the narrative of shared abundance, Brueggemann emphasized.

In Mark 6, there is a hungry crowd in the wilderness. Jesus took, blessed, broke and gave. Jesus fed 5,000 people, and there were leftovers.

In Mark 8:14, Brueggemann explained, Jesus says, in effect, “Do you not yet understand that the scarcity system has been defeated?”

In Mark 6:52, the disciples did not understand about the bread because their hearts were hard. The disciples couldn’t get abundance because they were situated in Pharaoh’s narrative of scarcity. (ABP)

Across Alabama’s Associations

AUTAUGA

► **Russell Gregory Platt**, son of Pastor Greg Platt of **Glynwood Church, Prattville**, earned a master of divinity from New Orleans Seminary May 14. His information was not provided by the seminary for the full listing that ran June 16.

BESSEMER

► **Canaan Church, Bessemer**, will host the adult choir and music ministry of First Church, Columbiana, in concert July 10, 5 p.m., prior to the mission men’s cake auction. They will present a patriotic musical selection as their weeklong tour ends. On July 17, Canaan will feature local talent from the church during its evening service at 6 p.m. The church also will hold its Summer Singers Children’s Music Camp July 18–22, 8:30 a.m.–noon, for first–sixth grade. The children will present “God of This City” July 24, 6 p.m. There will be a dress rehearsal July 22, 1–4 p.m. Lunch will be provided. Morgan Bailey is pastor. ► **Southeast Church**, will host 4-Given and New Vision for a night of music that will benefit the Honor Flight July 1, 7:30 p.m. Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. Scott Bush is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Robinwood Church, Birmingham**, will hold an Independence Day celebration July 3, 6 p.m., with the Royal Masters Quartet. Dale Creel is pastor.

CLEBURNE

► **Heflin Church** will hold Terrific Tuesdays in July at 6 p.m. John Killian will speak July 5, John Howell July 12, Sammy Gilbreath at a wild game supper at the Heflin Rec. Center July 19 and Anthony Puckett July 26. For information call 256-463-2576 or visit www.heflinbaptist.org. Philip R. Morris is pastor.

COLBERT-LAUDERDALE

► Wilburn & Wilburn (Jonathan and Jordan Wilburn) will be in concert at **CrossRoads Church, Rogersville**, July 10, 10:15 a.m., and **First Church, Killen**, July 10, 6 p.m. Jonathan is the former lead singer of Gold City. For information call CrossRoads at 256-247-6336 or First, Killen, at 256-757-5334. David O. Cofield is pastor of CrossRoads. David McKelvey is pastor of First, Killen.

MUD CREEK

► **Union Hill Church, Bessemer**, will hold a tornado relief concert for survivors in Concord and

Pleasant Grove July 2, 6 p.m., with New Ground and Gold City. For information call 205-491-1103 or visit www.unionhillbc.com. Mickey Bell is pastor. ► **Chris Whitaker** is the



WHITAKER

new minister of worship for **Union Hill Church, Bessemer**. He comes from First Church, Gordo. He also spent several years traveling with southern gospel artists. He is married to Tara. Mickey Bell is pastor.

PLEASANT GROVE

► The Waylighters will sponsor a benefit singing for ongoing relief efforts for **Pleasant Grove Association’s** Christian Ministries Center in Brookwood July 9, 6 p.m., at Hepzibah Church, McCalla. Joining the Waylighters will be Mercy Revealed, the Maharry Family singers and Brother Kyle Dunnam. Daniel B. Wiggins Jr. is director of missions for Pleasant Grove Association. Larry Sumrall is pastor of Hepzibah.

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

Alabama pastor Collins retires after 40 years in ministry

At the age of 30, Lee Collins became a pastor for the first time. His first pastorate was Big Hurricane Baptist Church, Brookwood — a church of only 18 members. When he left seven years later, there were more than 90 members and about 100 attending Sunday School.

Now, at the age of 70, Collins has retired from full-time ministry. He spent the last 17 years at Enon Baptist Church, Centreville, in Bibb Baptist Association. In between his first and last pastorates, Collins served Underwood Baptist Church, Montevallo, and Liberty Baptist Church, Duncanville.

In his ministry, he had a desire “to see churches grow and people be saved.”

And while he is moving into a new phase of service, Collins said that desire has not changed. He is available to serve as interim pastor or supply or revival preacher in Cahaba, Hale, Selma and Bigbee Baptist associations.

To contact him, call 334-683-9923.

Millport’s Springhill Baptist celebrates 175 years

A crowd of nearly 150 people gathered June 5 at Springhill Baptist Church, Millport, to celebrate its 175th anniversary.

During the service, Gary Farley, a commissioner with the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented a certificate commemorating the day.

Pastor Matthew Fancher delivered a message titled “In All Things” from Colossians 1:15–20.

Following the service, Terry Fields, who served on the anniversary committee, officiated a luncheon, during which several honored guests and former pastors shared about the rich history of the Lamar Baptist Association church.

WMU in Sardis Baptist Association alive, active

Sardis Baptist Association, although small in size, is mighty in its Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) ministry. With only 11 churches, Director of Missions James Preachers encourages the women to be faithful WMU supporters and participants.

At New Chapel Baptist Church, Kinston, an average of 15 women gather for WMU meetings, which include prayer, Bible study, serving where needed and missions projects, said Donna Jones, New Chapel Baptist member and Sardis Association clerk.

Wanda Landry is the association’s WMU leader.



Photo courtesy of Fairview Baptist Church

INSTRUMENTALIST, TREASURER RECOGNIZED FOR SERVICE
Fairview Baptist Church, Athens, honors Jane Bates (center) and Jerry Greer (right) for their service for 50 years as pianist/organist and 35 years as treasurer and financial secretary, respectively. George Whitten (left) is pastor.

FOCUS on One Mission

Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions

ONE MISSION:
The Great Commission

ONE PROGRAM:
The Cooperative Program

MANY MINISTRIES:
Great Commission Ministries



ONE MISSION

news and features about missions and ministries from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (800) 264-1225 □ www.alsbom.org

A Marathon not a Sprint

Your state missionaries continue to pray and minister in the wake of last April's tornadoes. We are working in partnership with local churches and associations and appreciate all who seek to help those who were impacted by the unprecedented storms of April 27.

Recovery from tornadoes of this destructive magnitude is requiring long-term commitment to meet the challenge. Indeed, the scope of destruction guarantees that this ministry effort will be a marathon not a sprint.

Already Alabama Baptists are rising to meet the challenge as are Baptists from numerous other state conventions. Many church buildings were damaged and although temporary meeting spaces are already in use, congregations are looking for volunteers to assist with rebuilding and repairing damaged facilities.

Your State Board of Missions recently debuted a new website at www.SBDR.org. This site is designed to provide information about the rebuilding needs of churches and how volunteers can plug in as individuals and as part of teams. I commend the site to you as a valuable resource and urge you to pray about how you and your church might be involved in this

truly hands-on ministry.

During the past few years, I and other state missionaries have networked with numerous fellow Alabama Baptists through what is known as social media. My two primary avenues have been Twitter and Facebook, and I have enjoyed the contacts and relationships that have been established and nurtured in part because of these tech-type environments.

In the two months that have passed since the tornadoes, some of my own tweets have centered around thoughts about the storms, how we as God's people ought to respond, and related ponderings about the Christian life in general. Here are some examples, even maintaining the shorthand common in Twitter:

- In AL Bapt life, church replanting/rebuilding will be the norm for months/ yrs to come. New ch plants will be priority too. Must have both.
- Summing up last month, since tornado rampage, I have seen both teary-eyed realism and wide-eyed hope.
- AL Bapts, may we b faithful 2 cause, despite situations, fruitful 4 Christ, even n lean times, full of hope, knowing end of story!

• I am praying for pastors/other church leaders under severe stress. I am comforted that the God of John 16:33 is with them.

- Met with campus ministers. Proud of this group of state missionaries, especially during this time of disaster relief response.
- Praying for people in Joplin, Mo. Have some idea of their loss. May our God of grace be realized in their lives!
- Can't say enough about how state missionaries are responding to our disaster relief

make it w/o them.

• "Nothing can stop the growth of the Kingdom of God, not even an EF5 tornado." -Devan Watkins/FBC Pleasant Grove

• Had conf call w/many AL Bapt DOMs today. Blessed by their partnership/leadership. Standing in the gap in times of crisis.

• Proud of AL Bapts responding so well in this time of need. We have a long road to travel together. Praying...

• I have learned more about prayer in the past few days than any other time in my life. Not an overstatement, a confession.

• Put my head on pillow last nite w/faith in the Lord: our Refuge/Resource/Renewal.

Focused on Ps. 46: Be still/know I am God.

• Today some of us feel like psalmist in Psalm 42-43, but follow God of Psalm 46: our Refuge/Strength/Help in times of trouble!
To connect with State Missionary Rick Lance: www.Twitter.com/ricklance or www.Facebook.com/r lance. Also check his blog at www.RickLance.com.

By Rick Lance
State Missionary
Executive Director-Treasurer



work. 2nd-mile discipleship personified.

- So grateful 4 St Bd of Missions trustees' support during very challenging time in our history. Wouldn't want 2 face it w/o them.
- Can't express enough gratitude 2 state conventions, larger/smaller, who've sent workers 2 help AL!
- Thankful 4 colleagues in st convs who contacted me abt tornado outbreak. Appreciate their commitment 2 DR in N.Amer. Can't

Want to help?

Visit www.SBDR.org to find out how.
Southern Baptist Disaster Relief



Why I Believe in the Cooperative Program

BY RONNIE BOULWARE
Pastor, Antioch East Baptist Church, Greenville



I will never forget the first moment my eyes caught the devastation caused by the tornado in Pleasant Grove. I was with a group of high school students offering to help in any way we could.

I saw two astounding sights. One was the horrendous destruction that affected so many lives. The other was the beautiful cooperation among so many. From trucks hauling debris, churches providing food, groups organizing cleanup and neighbors helping each other, cooperation was key.

We Alabama Baptists were there along with other state convention Disaster Relief teams, and it is a great testimony to the fact we believe in "cooperation."

Our church continues to give in the name of Jesus to support the relief efforts in all the affected areas. Every meal provided, shower made possible, piece of debris removed or soul saved is possible because of "cooperation."

Thousands of people's lives have been touched for Jesus because of "cooperation." What a joy it is to give a practical hand of help to those in such great need.



I believe in the Cooperative Program because I believe in cooperation. We can do so much more together than we can do alone, and so we join hands, hearts, and resources to minister in the name of Jesus beginning here at home and going to the whole world! The Cooperative Program is a distinctive to Southern Baptists and is a proven way of helping carry out the Great Commission."

The plain fact is that we need each other. None of us can carry the load alone. No church can do it all. Every local church has a role to play in the Great Commission and that role must go beyond our local community.

We must have the world on our heart because the world is on God's heart. What are you doing to reach the whole world? If your church gives through the Cooperative Program you are doing much. In fact, I don't know where more can be done through a dollar bill.

I am proud to be part of a church that puts its money where its mouth is. We believe in "cooperation." Do you?

Summer Missions Camps at WorldSong Missions Place

Summer Missions Camps at WorldSong Missions Place Cook Springs, Alabama

For girls in grades K-12 and boys in grades 2-6

High-adventure camping with a missions emphasis featuring:

- Bible study and worship experiences
- Spending time with missionaries
- Crafts and cultural activities
- Ropes course for older campers
- Canoeing/kayaking
- Zip lines for those completing 4th grade and above
- Swimming
- Hiking

Children's Missions Mini Camp
(for coeds completing grades 2-6)
• July 11-14

Girls' Missions Mini Camp
(for girls completing grades 2-6)
• July 18-20

Mom & Daughter Missions Camp
(for girls completing grades K-3)
• July 15-16

Mom & Me Mini Camp
(for girls completing grades 2-6)
• July 21-23

For more information, visit www.worldsongretreat.com, or contact Kathryn Helms at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 325, khelms@alsbom.org.

2011 AREA ROYAL AMBASSADOR CAMPS

A BOY DOES NOT HAVE TO BE IN RAs TO ATTEND

- Archery • Air Rifles • Making & Cooking on a Buddy Burner • Compass Course • Water Balloon Fort
- Mission Classes
- Outdoor Worship • Hiking
- Swimming • Patriotic Flag Service • Bible Study •

- Canoeing • Ropes Course • Frisbee • Football
- Shocco Springs RA Camp*** Talladega
- July 14-16,** **1st-6th grade boys and Dad or 4th-6th grade boys and Dad Ropes Course Camp



- Cost:** \$180/pair
- July 18-21,** **4th-12th grade boys
- Cost:** \$180
- July 21-23,** **1st-6th grade boy & Dad or Mom
- Cost:** \$180
- 4th-6th grade boy & Dad Ropes Course Camp
- Cost:** \$180 pair
- **Boys must have attended a

previous boy & Dad/Mom Camp
Contact: 1-800-264-1225, ext. 227,
gburlingame@alsbom.org
*State RA Camp staff will provide chaperones for every six campers at these camps. Church chaperones are not required at these camps, but they are welcome.
www.alsbom.org/ra

FOCUS on One Mission

MUSIC/WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES: COMING

Alabama Singing Men and Alabama Singing Women Retreats

Friday and Saturday, September 8-9, at Shocco Springs
 Registration: 1-800-280-1105
www.alsbom.org/asm-asw

Fall Student Choir Kick-Off

September 25 at First Baptist Church, Montgomery
 Information: State Missionary Keith Hibbs, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 217, khibbs@alsbom.org

Senior Adult Choir Festivals

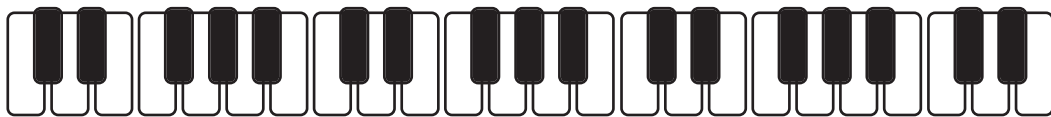
October 20: Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, and Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery
 October 21: First Baptist Church, Bay Minette, and Lakewood Baptist Church, Phenix City
 Registration Form:
www.alsbom.org/seniorfest



Keyboard Festivals (November)

To register online and get dates, times and locations go to www.alsbom.org/keyfest

For more information on these events, please contact Ministry Assistant Susan Corley at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 279, scorley@alsbom.org



UPCOMING AT SHOCCO SPRINGS

Hurry! It's not too late to come to these exciting events beginning next week at Shocco Springs!

Ooh la la...ti do! Children's Choir Summit

A motivating and interactive learning conference for all children's choir leadership.
 July 8-9 at Shocco Springs
www.alsbom.org/children-summit

- Opportunity for individual as well as group performance.
- Swimming, mini golf, aqua jump, field games and more.

ReMix... a MORE challenging, MORE hands-on experience

For those who have completed 7th, 8th and 9th grades.
 July 11-15 at Shocco Springs
www.alsbom.org/remix

- Includes:
- Variety of music training in voice, praise teams, media, instruments.
 - Team challenges.
 - Night swimming, bazooka ball, ropes course and more.



MIX456...a challenging, hands-on, fun-filled worship arts camp experience

For those who have completed 4th-6th grade.
 July 11-15 at Shocco Springs
www.alsbom.org/mix456
 Includes:

- Musical learning through games and singing.

For more information on how to register for any of these events, please call 1-800-264-1225: Ministry Assistants Cindy Parrish, ext. 230, cparrish@alsbom.org or Susan Corley, ext. 279, scorley@alsbom.org.



Baptist Men's State Softball Tournament

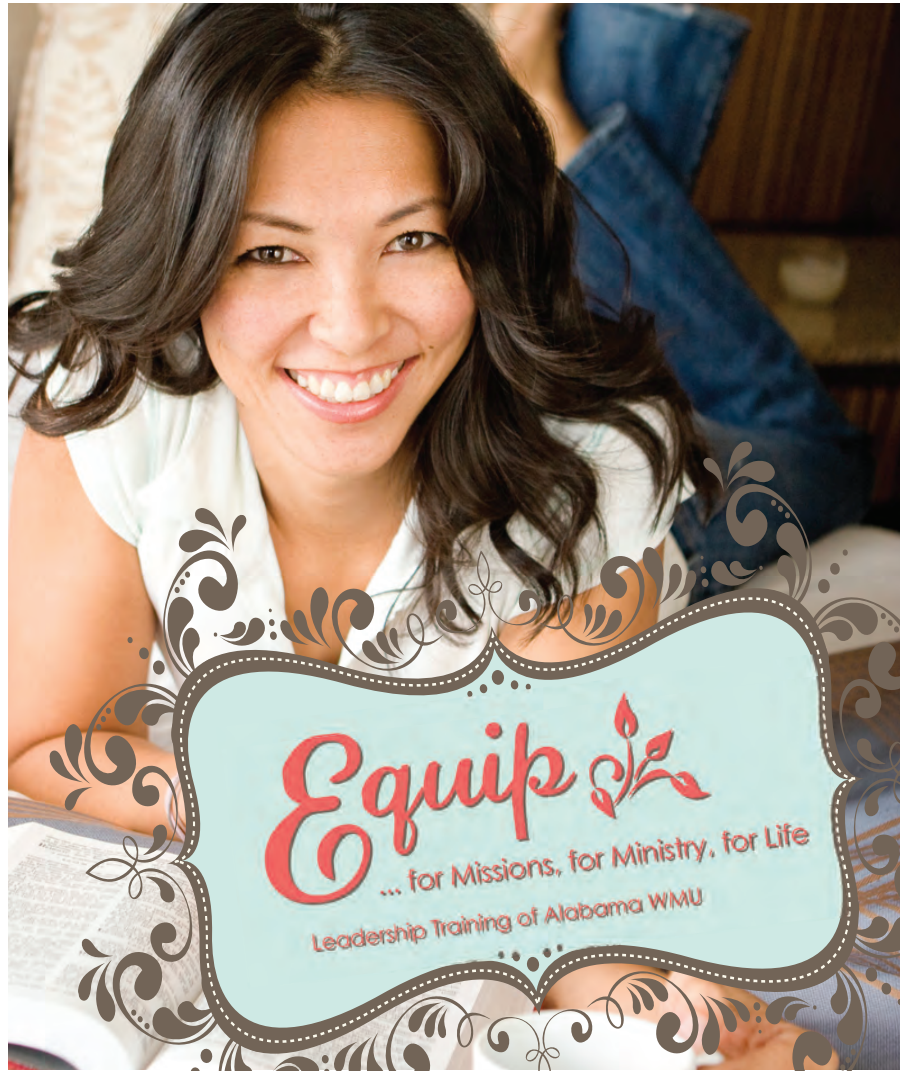
**FRIDAY AND SATURDAY,
 AUGUST 12-13, 2011
 LAGOON PARK & FAIN PARK,
 MONTGOMERY**

- 40 TEAM MAXIMUM • ROUND ROBIN TOURNAMENT
- 8 DIVISIONS WITH 5 TEAMS EACH • ASA-SANCTIONED TOURNAMENT • SINGLE ELIMINATION IN CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND OF 16 TEAMS: EVERY TEAM WILL PLAY AT LEAST FOUR GAMES.

ENTRY FEE: \$135

FOR A LIST OF ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO PARTICIPATE AND AN INFORMATION PACKET, PLEASE CONTACT MINISTRY ASSISTANT MONDENE COKER AT 1-800-264-1225, EXT. 273, MCOKER@ALSBOM.ORG.

FOCUS on One Mission



Shocco Springs Friday and Saturday, July 22-23, 2011

FEATURING:

- worship
- missionary testimonies
- leadership, missions and personal enrichment conferences
- Alabama WMU Biennial Meeting

For all church and associational directors, coordinators, facilitators, leaders and other team members of Women's Ministry, WMU, Women on Mission, Adults on Mission, Acteens, Youth on Mission, Girls Ministry, Girls in Action, Children in Action, Mission Friends

To register, contact Shocco Springs at **1.800.280.1105** or **www.shocco.org**

For more information, visit www.alabamawmu.org or call 1.800.264.1225. ext. 223.

This event is funded by gifts of Alabama Baptists given through the Kathleen Mallory Mission Offering and the Cooperative Program.

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

**JULY
11-15
2011**

**SUPER
SUMMER
ALABAMA
2011**

**WORSHIP LEADER
CHUCK HOOTEN
BIRMINGHAM**

**CAMP PASTOR
CHAD NORRIS
GREENVILLE, SC**

**LOCATION
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OR DENIS TANNER AT 205-531-7361 OR REGISTER ONLINE WWW.SUPERSUMMERALABAMA.COM**




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 THE OFFICE OF COLLEGIATE AND STUDENT MINISTRIES
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 OR VISIT WWW.THESTUDENTHUB.ORG/YEC

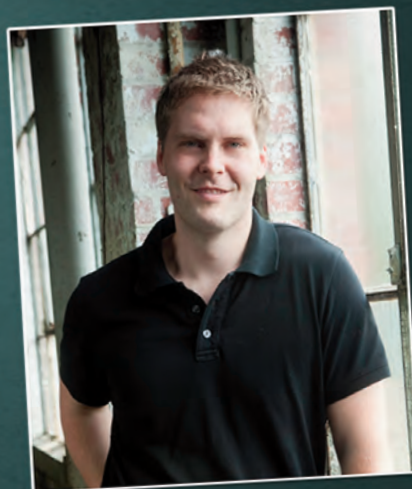
JULY 22-23, 2011
 \$20 PER PERSON



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DAVE RHODES
 -SPEAKER



MICHAEL KELLEY
 -SPEAKER



AARON KEYES
 -WORSHIP



MISSIONS UNIVERSITY



Thursday – Saturday, August 25-27 Shocco Springs

BASIC TRAINING FOR CHURCH PLANTERS

Starting a new church is a great challenge and a great blessing. It is often the most difficult yet rewarding experience that a Christian leader will ever face. Some leaders will refuse the challenge and the blessing as well, believing that they are not equipped to plant a new church.

Your State Board of Missions believes that God doesn't just call the equipped but that He equips the called. That's why we are inviting church planters and their mentors to the Basic Training for Church Planters workshop, August 25-27, at Shocco Springs.

During this workshop, church planting teams are helped to explore the spiritual foundations for church planting, to cast a vision for the congregational identity of the new church, and to discover how to actually launch and grow a new church plant.

Basic Training for Church Planters is a chance to learn about the nuts and bolts of planting a new church. Even more, it is a time for church planters and their mentors to pray and think about the details of how this new congregation will reach new people for Christ's kingdom. It is also an opportunity to network with other church planting teams and discover how they have overcome similar challenges in their settings.

Because this event is supported by gifts of Alabama churches to missions through the Cooperative Program, the cost for this challenging training event is only \$25 per person.

For reservations, please call Shocco Springs at 1-800-280-1105 to pay the \$25 fee. Double-occupancy rooms are included in the fee. For a single room, you will be charged the difference.

To register for this event, go online to www.alsbom.org/basictraining. For other information, please contact Ministry Assistant Brenda Niblett at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 244,

bniblett@alsbom.org.

For more information about training for church planters, please contact State Missionary Otis Corbitt at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 332, ocorbitt@alsbom.org.

LITERACY MISSIONS

Literacy Missions ministries involve Southern Baptist churches and associations meeting the needs of people who are adult nonreaders, low-level readers, adult non-English speakers, or children and youth who are at-risk of failing in school, both English and non-English speakers.

Discover opportunities for intentional evangelism through Literacy Missions ministries. Explore ministries that teach Adult Reading and Writing, English as a Second Language, Tutoring Children and Youth, and Bible Storytelling. Learn how to:

- Organize a church or associational-based literacy missions outreach ministry.
- Understand students' needs and perspectives.
- Use language teaching techniques and resources.
- Share the Gospel with your students.
- Pray effectively for your students and yourself.

We will be offering workshops in:

ARW — Adult Reading and Writing
ESL — English as a Second Language
TCY — Tutoring Children and Youth
Bible Storytelling
Each course is 14 hours in length.

To register, go online to www.alsbom.org/literacymissions or contact Kristy Kennedy at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 311, kkennedy@alsbom.org

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

PASTOR, DEACON/ SPOUSE

THEME: Take Up
Your Towel

RETREAT

Shocco Springs, Friday and Saturday, September 23-24, 2011

Begins with dinner on Friday and ends with lunch on Saturday.

RETREAT LEADERS: Steve & Diana Davis from Indiana. Steve is NAMB Vice President-Midwest Region. Diana is an author and speaker.

COST: \$69 per person (double occupancy)

RESERVATIONS: www.shocco.org/reser or 1-800-280-1105

For other information, please call 1-800-264-1225: State Missionary Mike Jackson, ext. 210, mjackson@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Judy Duncan, ext. 218, jduncan@alsbom.org.

LEADER



Lab

Tuesday through Thursday, July 19 - 21, Baptist Building, Montgomery

Cost:

Double-Occupancy Room: \$149

Single-Occupancy Room: \$249

Couples: \$249

Day Rates:

Tuesday Only: \$40

Thursday Only: \$35

Both Tuesday and Thursday: \$60

Guest Speakers:

Tuesday — **John Shepherd** - *Church Unique*:

Church Unique is a visioning process to help churches develop a stunningly unique model of ministry that leads to a redemptive movement. It guides churches away from an internal focus to emphasize participation in their community and surrounding culture. An approach for rethinking what it means to lead with clarity as a visionary is presented. Each church has a culture that reflects its particular values, thoughts, attitudes and actions and shows how church leaders can unlock their church's individual DNA and unleash their congregation's one-of-a-kind potential.

John Shepherd serves as executive pastor of spiritual formation at Mountain Lake Church

in North Atlanta. Additionally, he serves as a Lead Navigator with Auxano Church Consulting Group. He has planted and served as pastor of innovative, missional churches in Florida and Tennessee, as well as served as a church planting missionary in Philadelphia.

Thursday — **Eric Geiger** - *Identity, Who You Are in Christ*.

Identity: Everyone searches for a clear identity and craves to be known for something. Some find identity in a career that offers status and significance. Others define themselves by their relationships, hobbies or possessions. While careers, relationships and possessions are important aspects of our lives, they do not last forever. If we find our identity in places other than Christ, we always find ourselves empty.

In Identity, you will discover or rediscover who you really are in Christ. Scripture is filled with phenomenal imagery describing the true you. And when you understand who you really are, your life will be transformed and you will live the reality of your true identity. Understand what it means to live as His child, a priest, His bride, a servant, His friend, an alien and ambassador.

Eric frequently consults with and speaks to church leaders. He is the author/co-author of *Simple Church, Identity and Simple Student Ministry*. He received a doctorate in leadership and church ministry from Southern Seminary and is currently executive pastor of Christ Fellowship in Miami.

Labs:

YEAR ONE: Lead Like Jesus

YEAR TWO: Leadership Greatness

YEAR THREE: Coaching on the Run

YEAR FOUR: Conflict Management, Turning Strife into Synergy

Leader Lab check-in will begin at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, July 19, with the conference beginning at 11 a.m. and will end at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 21.

For day guests only:

To register, please contact Ministry Assistant Jamie Allen at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 256, jallen@alsbom.org. For other information, or visit www.alsbom.org/leaderlab.

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

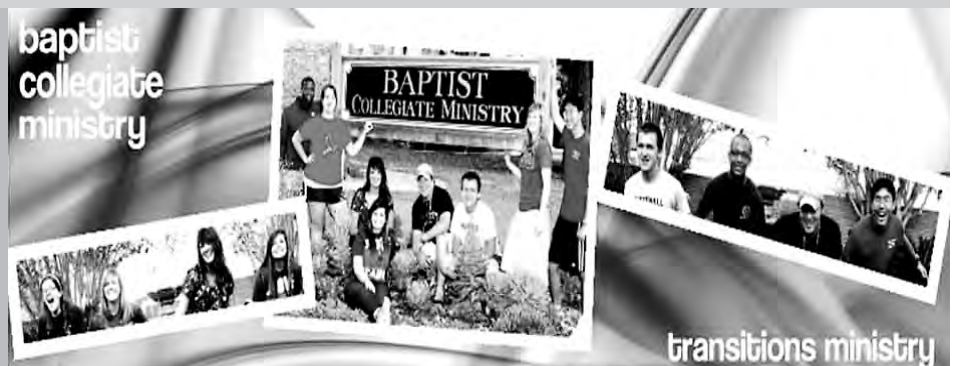
Transitions | Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions | **Collegiate and Student Ministries Office**
1.800.264.1225, ext. 275 | www.thestudenthub.org

What a student does during their first three weeks of college sets the pattern for their whole college career in the relationships they establish and the patterns they develop.

Help lay the groundwork for Christlike college experiences by connecting yourself or your students with collegiate ministers through this site.

Once you go to the web page, enter contact information for yourself or your student. It takes less than three minutes and it will be networked to the campus of your choice!

www.sbccampusconnect.net



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COMMISSION
POSSIBLE**

**THROUGH
MOBILIZING
LEADERS**

REACHING, TEACHING
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MAKING

**SUMMIT 1
SUMMIT 2**

**TRAINING
LEADERS
FOR
TODAY'S
CHURCH**

**LEADER
TRAINING**

**AUGUST 5-6,
AUGUST 12-13**
SHOCCO SPRINGS
BAPTIST CONFERENCE
CENTER, TALLADEGA

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BAPTISTS THROUGH THE
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1-800-280-1105



Want to know God?

By Pastor Tim Childers
First Baptist Church, Sylacauga

God wants you to know Him personally. But you cannot have a personal relationship with Him until a spiritual exchange takes place. You must exchange your sinful life of death for His righteousness and eternal life, something made possible by the crucifixion and resurrection of His Son, Jesus. Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

This spiritual exchange also is spoken of in Colossians 2:13: "And you, being dead in your trespasses and [sins], He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

In John 10:10, Jesus stated, "I have come that they may have life and that they may have it abundantly."

A dead person needs life (Col. 2:13) and Jesus gives life (John 10:10), not just eternal life but abundant life today and as long as you live. Jesus came for the express purpose of giving you an abundant, over the top life.

Do you have that kind of life? You can have it only by turning to Jesus. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

"Believe" in this verse means to have faith in who Jesus was and is. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins. Believe that Jesus was raised from the dead so you could have His life.

Romans 10:9-10 states, "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

All you have to do is come to God in prayer and ask Him to give you this life. John 6:37 is Jesus' promise to us: "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out."

Jesus said if you come to Him, then He will not turn you down. What a great promise. Will you trust Him for life today? Pray right now and ask Him to give you what He promised — life.

Historical Highlights

from previous issues of *The Alabama Baptist*

Compiled by Kathleen Prude

50 Years Ago June 1961

Site Selected for Mobile College: A site north-northwest of the Eight Mile community and east of Highway 45 has been selected for the campus of the new Mobile College to be established under the auspices of the Alabama Baptist State Convention. Selection of the site was announced by William K. Weaver Jr., president of the new college and chair of the state steering committee for the project. Serving on the committee with

Weaver are Maj. Harwell Davis, chancellor and former president of Howard College; T.T. Martin, a Mobile railroad executive; Edgar M. Arendall, a Birmingham pastor; J.L. Bedsole, a Mobile businessman; I.J. Browder, a Gadsden educator; Norman Cox, a retired minister; Howard M. Reaves, pastor of First Baptist Church, Mobile; and Yetta G. Samford, an Opelika attorney.

40 Years Ago June 1971

Sesquicentennial Celebrated: Fairmount Baptist Church, Red Level, celebrated its sesquicentennial June 27.

The church was organized in 1821 and is the oldest church in Covington County. The first building, erected about 1828, was made of logs and was used not only as a place of worship but also as a fortress against Indians. The first service was held under a brush ar-

bor and led by Brother Simmons from Georgia. Written records, which began in 1870, show that L.T. Thompson was an early pastor. During the years, the church has had 33 pastors including the present pastor, A.W. Safford. Fairmount Baptist is the mother of five other churches: Red Level, Pigeon Creek, Bush Creek, Bay Springs and Midway.

30 Years Ago June 1981

Judson Bestows Honorary Degrees: Kirby Godsey, president of Mercer University in Macon, Ga., delivered the commencement address at Judson College. During the 1960s, Godsey was assistant professor of religion and philosophy and his wife, Joan Stockstill Godsey, was assistant professor of music. L. Earl Tew, of Dothan, delivered the baccalaureate sermon and received the doctor of divinity degree. Honorary degrees also were bestowed upon Judson

alumna Camilla Hamilton Lowry, of Auburn, and former trustee Ralph Daniel Higginbotham, of Anniston.

20 Years Ago June 1991

Alabamian Elected National WMU President: Carolyn Downes Miller, of Huntsville, has been elected national president of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). She was elected to a one-year term during the meeting of national WMU in Atlanta.

Miller succeeds Marjorie J. McCullough as president. She is the 15th woman to hold the office since WMU was organized in 1888. Miller is a member of First Baptist Church, Huntsville.

10 Years Ago June 2001


Samford Names Associate Provost: J. Bradley Creed, former dean and current professor of Christian history at Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary in Waco, Texas, has been named associate provost at Samford University in Birmingham.

As associate provost, Creed will assist with curriculum, faculty and academic matters.

CORRECTION

The Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, missions trip to Terceira, Azores Islands, mentioned in the Heart of Missions column in the June 16 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* has been rescheduled for July.

The synopsis of the resolution On the Reality of Hell printed in the June 23 issue should have read, "Affirmed belief in the eternal and conscious punishment of the unregenerate in hell," instead of "regenerate."



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CHURCH POSITIONS

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 resumé to: Terry Jeffries, Pastor of Administration, at terry@tatesprings.com or directly to the pulpit committee at pastorsearch@tatesprings.com.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC: Good Hope Baptist Church, Purvis, Miss., in Lamar County is accepting resumé for a full-time minister of music. Resumé may be submitted to: kristi@goodhopepurvis.com or mailed to: P.O. Box 1117, Purvis, MS 39475.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC: Dora First Baptist Church is accepting resumé for this position. Please send resumé to: The Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 357, Dora, AL 35062.

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

MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT: Grace Life Baptist Church is seeking a full-time minister to provide leadership toward the spiritual growth of our children and families. Send resumé to: Grace Life Baptist Church, 6200 Lou George Loop, Bessemer, AL 35022, or Lkitch73@att.net.

FULL-TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTER: Brookwood Baptist Church, Birmingham, seeks a full-time Children's Min-

ister who is passionate about leading children to a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Send resumé to: timc@brookwood.org.

CHILDREN'S MINISTER: Hillcrest Baptist Church, Franklinton, La., is currently seeking a Children's Minister. Please send resumé with references to: childrenresumes@hbcfranklinton.com.

BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTRY LEADER: Growing church in North Alabama is prayerfully seeking a bivocational music ministry leader. Please send resumé to: Brindlee Mountain Baptist Church, 3422 Hwy. 231, Lacey's Spring, AL 35754 or bmbchurch@otelco.net.

MUSIC PASTOR, STUDENT PASTOR: We are seeking two part-time positions. They can be separate or combined. You may email resumé to: fpbcpastor@bellsouth.net or mail to pastor Tommy Strickland at Five Points Baptist Church 267 Odens Mill Rd., Sylacauga, AL 35150

PASTOR: McClendon Baptist Church of West Monroe, Louisiana is seeking a pastor. We desire a man of God to lead our church and give spiritual and administrative leadership. Resumé can be sent to: McClendon Baptist Church, attention Pastor Search Committee, 206 Downing Pines Road, West Monroe, La 71292 or jrgardner@me.com.

OTHER POSITIONS
LICENSED CERTIFIED SOCIAL WORKER — MONTGOMERY: Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries is seeking a licensed certified social worker to serve the Montgomery area. Responsibilities include conducting foster home studies, training and approving foster parents and working with foster children. Experience a plus.

Contact Louise Green, 205-945-0037, lgreen@abchome.org.

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

BUSINESS

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HOME IN MOODY, AL: Nice 2007 4/bedroom, 2/bath, 1/level, 1/car garage garden home for rent. \$975/month, not including utilities. 334-695-3899.

'Not kid sitters'

Inflatable bounce houses bring fun but can be dangerous

By Anna Swindle
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

With summer — and Vacation Bible School season — in full swing, inflatable bounce houses are a common sight on church lawns. They can be a fun addition to a church activity.

However, proper safety precautions should be taken to ensure that the fun doesn't turn into an injury. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 4,000 emergency room visits a year in the United States are linked to these inflatable structures.

Jim Swendenburg, director of the office of Cooperative Program and stewardship development for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, has seen several articles recently that drew his attention to the potential safety risks of inflatables.

Legal issue

"They've just popped up as a large blip on the radar within the past three to four months," Swendenburg said.

"I haven't heard much concern yet from churches, but they're probably not aware of the risks."

He's aware because part of his job is to monitor legal issues that could affect Alabama Baptists.

Brotherhood Mutual, a company that insures churches and related ministries, recently posted an article on its website (www.brotherhoodmutual.com) that highlights risks associated with these structures as well as tips to keep users safe.

It advises churches planning to use an inflatable to

▶ Contact your insurance company prior to renting the structure to learn about your church's liability policy.

▶ Rent equipment from a reputable company with experienced workers, and get written instructions on how to operate it as well as written proof of the company's liability insurance.

▶ If possible, have the rental company handle the set up and operation of the equipment.

▶ Ask an attorney to review any contract before you sign on behalf of your church.

Chris Thompson of Daphne-based Eastern Shore Inflatables added a few more tips: Avoid placing the inflatable near trees or

electrical wires, secure the anchors according to the instructions and don't allow people to use it during bad weather or strong wind.

"Also try to employ the two-person rule, if possible," Swendenburg added.

"When you're working with minors, it's best to have at least two people supervising an event at any given time."

Thompson echoed his sentiments about adult supervision.

"Inflatables are not kid sitters," Thompson said. "It is not good enough to simply have adults present."

"They should be actively monitoring kids while they play on the inflatables."

Church Mutual Insurance Company, which has received claims over the years involving injuries from inflatables used at church functions, recommends being careful of the age and number of children allowed in a structure.

"Church Mutual recommends that rules be established and followed to address bounce houses that are age appropriate for children using them," Risk Control Manager Ed Steele said.

"Also a rule should be established to limit the maximum number of children allowed within or on a bounce device during a play session."

"[Adults] should be actively monitoring kids while they play on the inflatables."

Chris Thompson
Eastern Shore Inflatables



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An Evening with **Chuck Colson**

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Samford University, Wright Center
Free event
For more information, go to www.samford.edu/chuck-colson.aspx

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RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

by Jennifer Davis Rash • managing editor • jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

One step forward, two steps back

So this was the column in which I should be sharing all the great progress I've made on my new and improved balanced self. You know, the plan I announced got under way in January.

But you didn't think I really meant I was starting in January, did you? I was merely thinking about it (wink, wink). Just teasing. I really did begin in January and in March and now again in June.

It seems the only thing I have done consistently is think about how to pull life together, achieve balance and maintain freshness every day. I've had moments of success in every area, and I've made progress in many ways, but actually attaining those goals hasn't happened. Not yet anyway.

Still I press on, determined not to give up and to figure this out. Sure there are moments of discouragement when I think, "What's the use? Why worry with it at all if it takes so much energy to achieve?"

But isn't that so much of life? So many things don't work out as we have planned or would like but we can't give up. We, as believers, exist to glorify God and enjoy Him forever (1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 5:9). We also have been commanded to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, minds and souls (Matt. 22:37); love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:39); and share Him with all peoples (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; 2 Cor. 5:20).

How can we do any of these things if we are overwhelmed and wrapped up in our own complicated lives? And how can we do these things if we are

exhausted,
light in the
Word and
undisciplined
in life's
"als"?



The "als" — spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, relational — round out our overall existence. They need to be in balance for us to be at our best. But this is where it gets difficult.

While I wish I were the only one struggling, I don't think I'm alone in this battle. Friends tell me they struggle on even the best days to stay consistent in these areas as much as I do. And then when a string of bad days comes, it gets even harder.

What I'm realizing is that we must figure this out during the good days, so when the bad days hit, we have a foundation on which to build.

Pulling from reserves

During the bad days, we may not get to follow our normal time spent in the Word or prayer but we can pull from what we received all the other days we did. During the bad days, we may not get to exercise and eat right but our strength and energy will hold up better if we are fit and healthy. During the bad days, we may have nothing to give our friends and family and need them to give all the energy but we can draw from the reserve of energy we invested earlier.

When the bad days aren't as bad anymore, then we can start rebuilding the "als" again. The difference is a little rebuilding versus starting from scratch even farther back than before.

Getting ourselves balanced and in order also means that when one of our family members or friends lands in the "bad days" period (and they will), we will be able to help pull him or her through that time because we will be healthy, strong and available.

And so, I begin again. Seeking more thorough and consistent time with the Lord, finding the motivation to exercise and eat right, making more time for family and friends, expanding my knowledge base at work and in general and caring for myself emotionally.

It seems like one step forward and two steps back most days, but I'm staying focused on each step forward and working hard not to get discouraged when the steps go backward. 🙏

Rashional EXTRAS ...

What topics are on your mind?

E-mail jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

An excerpt from Elizabeth Gregory's 'Seeking Simplicity: A Woman's Guide to a Balanced Life'

"What is it that keeps us from being able to prioritize? ... Our time is not our own. If we want to surrender our lives to God and serve Him, our time ... is His. We need to think twice before we frivolously give away God's time that He created in our lives to serve Him. ...

"Acts 11:23 says, 'When he came, and had seen the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.'

"The key words here are 'with purpose.' When we get honest with ourselves, we will see that much of our activity lacks purpose. It isn't just any activity that drains us of creative energy and robs us of our enthusiasm. It is purposeless activity. Activity with meaning increases our zest and joy for living. If we seek God's will in our lives above all else, then anything He wants us to do will have real meaning in our life or the lives of others."

From the Twitterverse

Jack Graham (pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church near Dallas) — Vital to your walk with Christ is balance. Stay steady. Keep your pace. Don't get blown off your feet with fads. Blessed are the balanced.

Thom Rainer (president of LifeWay Christian Resources) — The simple life demands that you focus. You must eliminate much of your busyness.

Lessons learned over the past 70 years

Jane Bellew, chairwoman of the board of directors for *The Alabama Baptist* and a member of Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Hueytown, turned 70 earlier this year. She shared the following things she has learned over the past 70 years:

The most important thing I have learned is the three F's: faith, family and friends. Without these, I could not make it through a day.

Faith will help you weather all the storms in life.

Family surrounds you with love and support.

Friends keep you grounded in morals, manners and meaning.

I have learned that mistakes in life are good if you use them as steppingstones to grow.

Parents today need to get back to the basic rules our parents taught us. Respect others if you want to be respected. Sometimes a child needs to hear the word "no" and learn to say please and thank you.

Life gives us choices. It is up to us to choose wisely. My choice has been to choose service. I choose to serve God and in all things, give thanks.

I use this phrase every day: Nothing lasts forever so make it right the first time.

And finally I live by this saying: If the Lord came today, would I be happy with whom I was with, doing what I was doing and being where I was? If I could not answer yes to all three, I was with the wrong person, doing the wrong thing, at the wrong place. That keeps me grounded with people, places and things.

From the readers

I am so happy to see your articles in *The Alabama Baptist*. I have been blogging and writing articles on Ezine (EzineArticles.com) promoting weight loss and healthy living for more than a year now.

I published a book a couple of year back promoting the idea that we Christians should be in the forefront of the obesity battle in our country. I do a lot of research and more than half of the medical expense in our country is related to overweight health issues like heart attack, strokes and diabetes.

Thank you for what you are doing. If you have people who say they are too old to start a weight loss and healthy lifestyle, they should read "Younger Next Year," by Christopher Crowley and Dr. Henry Lodge. They show you are never too old to improve and how to do it.

Sue Dowlin

<http://joyduf.blogspot.com>

<http://www.weightlift-off.com>

In February:

I hear you! I really do need to quit making excuses.

I remember when I really enjoyed exercising, and I know if I can just get past the first three weeks, I will enjoy that feeling once again. I think the hardest part about exercising and eating properly is winning the mind battle.

At the moment, I am losing the battle, but I am going to follow your column and take the first step, which I hope will lead to others.

In June:

I am now in Week 4 of a healthy

low-carb diet and walking

45 minutes on the

treadmill four to five

days a week. After the

first week I started feeling

stronger and am actually

looking forward to

exercising each day.

I must go to bed earlier

now to get enough rest

because I am doing

this before work, but

I'm finding it easier

to do in the mornings

when I have a lot of

energy.

Kathy Dean

University

of Mobile

UPCOMING TOPICS

include healthy eating. Send us your experiences with and suggestions on this topic. E-mail jrash@thealabamabaptist.org or comment on our blog at thealabamabaptist.wordpress.com.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For July 3

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

NEVER SAY IT'S HOPELESS Jeremiah 18:1-15

From Jeremiah's perspective, he was living in a hopeless situation. The king and his counselors deluded themselves into thinking that God would not allow Judah to fail. Priests allowed idols to be erected in the Temple. The nation's leaders were leading the people to destruction.

God's people are never without hope. Leaders may fail them and circumstances may seem overwhelming but their hope rests in the God who accomplishes the impossible. As Christians, our "hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness."

Appreciate God's Patience (1-4)

In this passage, God uses a visit to the potter's house as an object lesson to convey truth about Himself and His people. He is shaping them for His purposes and plan. Since Genesis, there has been a connection between God as Creator and the art of making pottery. The Hebrew verbal root used to describe the creation of Adam (Gen. 2:7) is the basis for the term "yotzer," meaning "potter."

The potter demonstrates his patience as he works the clay until it suits his desire. Clay must remain moist, pliable and in the potter's hand in order to be useful for his design. Following this analogy, we must appreciate and accept God's patient shaping of our lives, which includes the painful process of being reshaped according to His plan and purposes.

Acknowledge God's Power (5-10)

God is unchanging (immutable) in His nature, character and power. Throughout the Old Testament, Yahweh reveals Himself to Israel and its enemies as the Creator God who demonstrates both grace and justice, who blesses and curses (Jer. 17:5, 7). Probably the most significant self-revelation by God is recorded in Exodus 34:6-7. This unchanging dual reality of God's mercy and His wrath is referenced in every subsequent period of biblical history.

God is not a man and has no need to repent as humanity does. This unchanging nature of God is stated in the Law (Num. 23:19), the Prophets (1 Sam. 15:29) and the Writings (Ps.

110:4). Why then does this passage state that God will repent (8, 10 KJV)? Four-hundred-year-old English is distinct from present usage. Relenting, rather than repenting, is today a more apt rendering of the Hebrew verb "nacham." It conveys a course of action here, more than a state of mind. God's response to a person or nation is not based on arbitrary whims but rather on His unchanging character.

When believers submit themselves as clay in the Potter's hands, they experience God's blessing. God clearly states in this passage that a nation who hears of His impending judgment and turns from its wickedness will be spared. At this time, Jeremiah would have been well aware of the events recorded in Jonah. By contrast, when a nation that previously experienced God's favor becomes hardened against its Maker, the inhabitants become objects of His wrath and judgment.

Amend Your Perspective (11-15)

Scholars differ in their understanding of this passage. Some are of the opinion that Jeremiah is giving up hope that God will deliver them (12), while others see him stating an undeniable truth — there is no hope that Judah will repent. Indications from the previous section indicate that Jeremiah was giving up on the nation, not God.

With natural disasters becoming commonplace today, relationships experiencing greater strain and political corruption seeming to be a rule rather than an exception, we may be tempted to give up hope in God's deliverance. If so, then we need to change our perspective. This world is not our home. Nations rise and fall. On this Independence Day weekend, it is time to take stock in where we are as citizens in our relationship with God.

The nation lost its way. It wandered from the ancient path that had been marked for it by God's covenants. When it no longer experienced God's blessings, it turned to gods of its own design. It blamed God for its dissatisfaction, yet He remained faithful and unchanging. Until it returned to the road, there was no hope for it. What would it take for the nation to return to the ancient path? ❏

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

PERSONAL RIGHTS

2 Peter 2:10b-20; Philippians 3:17-21

English may be the only modern language to have two words to describe the opposite of slavery (see David Hackett Fisher's "Liberty and Freedom: A Visual History of America's Founding Ideas"). The first, "liberty," derives from Latin and describes release from bondage. Liberty has been used to talk about the American colonies' emancipation from English rule, which was often understood as slavery. The idea behind liberty is to be unlike a slave through being "unbounded, unrestricted and released from restraint"; it shows up in our Pledge of Allegiance. The second, "freedom," comes from an old Anglo-Saxon root meaning "beloved," the same root from which we get "friend." The idea behind freedom is to be unlike a slave by truly belonging, by being granted full participation in a family or clan (today we say in a government). The metaphor is of connection rather than separation. You can understand why freedom continues to be such a controlling idea in America's civil rights movement.

Greek did not have two words for these ideas, but the New Testament's authors knew about both release from bondage (liberty) and full belonging (freedom). Just as we do today, they had to deal with corruptions of these ideas in the Roman Empire, because just like Christians today, first-century Christians were not immune to the problem of self-indulgence.

Self-indulgence Described (2 Pet. 2:10b-14)

It is sometimes difficult to bring passages like this to bear on our own lives because of the extreme language the author used. Readers might say, "I have never slandered angels; I'm not an irrational animal; I am not an adulterer; my heart is not trained in greed." It is important to note that the author painted such people as unaware of their vices, as even "unafraid" to engage in these behaviors. What we must do, therefore, is adjust the list so that it pertains to us. We must ask, "Where are my blind spots? In what ways do I slander God's 'glories' (what the Greek actually says), act

irrationally, revel in sexual immorality (in a novel, movie, song) or feed my own greed?" If we are serious about introspection and ask God to help, then I'll bet we can come up with some answers.

Self-indulgence Rebuked (2 Pet. 2:15-20)

In these passages, the author got to the crux of the matter. The people he was talking about thought they were living as free people. The author talked about escaping "the defilements of the world." Perhaps these followers of Jesus Christ thought defilement could be separated from the defiling act. Apparently they were of the opinion that because Jesus removed the effects of sin, they were free to do as they desired, without fear of further repercussions. They were living with a corrupted understanding of true liberty: They thought they were living unconstrained, but they had merely enslaved themselves to the "licentious desires of the flesh."

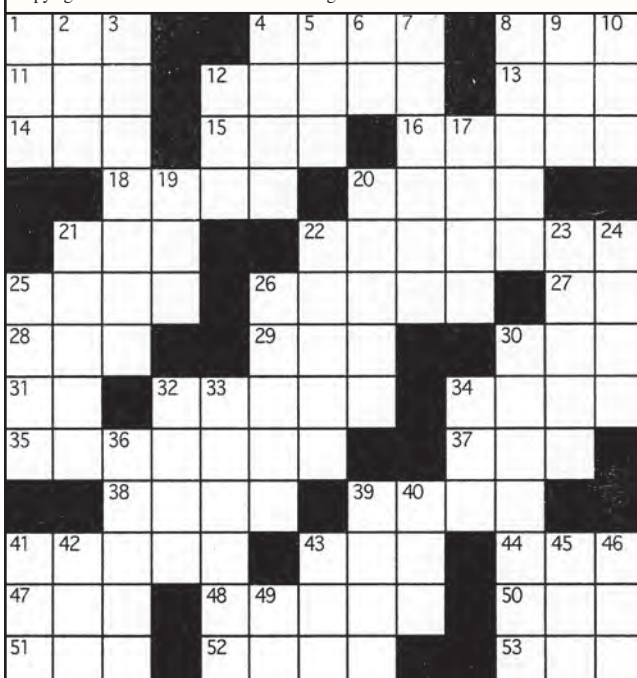
We should spend just a moment here, because we are almost always tempted to understand this language as referring to sexual promiscuity. But remember, for many New Testament authors, "flesh" referred to not only the human body but also the entire current existence — the world as we know it before God's Kingdom comes fully. Now it becomes clear that if it takes God's place in our lives, then anything of this world (security, peace of mind, happiness, recognition) can become a licentious desire that enslaves us.

Self-indulgence Rejected (Phil. 3:17-21)

Paul expressed many of these same ideas in his quintessentially Pauline way. Those who "live as enemies of the cross of Christ" are not nonbelievers but believers who have turned away from the true God to idols of their own making. "Belly," "shame" and "earthly things" again should not be restricted to appetites for food, sex and money but anything that is not of God or can even appear to be godly on its face. Remember, nothing at all, even a seemingly good thing, ought to take God's place. ❏

Christian Crossword

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Across

- "There is a way which seemeth right unto ____." (Prov. 14:12)
- "Whereby we cry ____, Father." (Rom. 8:15)
- Harness part.
- "Why make ye this ____ and weep?" (Mark 5:39)
- "____ down all thy strong holds." (Mic. 5:11)
- Alphonso's queen.
- Still.
- Trav. org.
- Mother of Ishmael.
- The month of April. (Ex. 13)
- Telegram.
- Grad. degree.
- "____ cumi." (Mark 5:41)
- "Thou shalt lay up ____ as dust." (Job 22:24)
- "A great gulf ____ between us." (Luke 16:26)
- Printer's measure.
- One. (Scot.)
- Before. (poet.)
- "Will do all that thou shalt ____ us." (2 Kings 10:5)

Down

- Pronoun.
- Planted.
- Complete.
- "For by him were all things created, ... whether they be ____." (Col. 1:16)
- Office holders.
- Camel's ____.
- "In ____ will I call them my people." (Rom. 9:25)
- Fire. (Sp.)
- Egg. (comb. form)
- "Thou shalt put ____ away iniquity." (Job 22:23)
- Reply. (syn.)
- Not in your wildest dreams.
- A son of Caleb. (1 Chron. 4)
- Earl Grey, for example.
- Wither.
- Number of Joseph's brothers who went to buy corn in Egypt. (Gen. 45)
- Barabbas." (Matt. 27:16)
- An evil king of Israel.
- S.A. country.
- "First" name of nursery rhyme character.
- Short time.
- "Take ye wives, ____ sons and daughters." (Jer. 29:6)
- Actress Claire.
- ____ paper.
- A group of Asian languages. (var.)
- Parched.
- Good. (colloq.)
- "For this people's heart is ____ gross." (Matt. 13:15)
- Sivan, the third ____ (Esther 8)
- Bores.
- "And if children, then ____ of God." (Rom. 8:17)
- Aunt Bea's nephew.
- Manner of walking.
- "To the ____, ye shall give the less inheritance." (Num. 33:54)
- "That ye might have a second ____." (2 Cor. 1:15)
- Rise above.
- "Melons, leeks, and the ____." (Num. 11:5)
- Compete.
- Son of Zorobabel. (Luke 3:27)
- Preposition.
- Term of address.
- Physical trait of Mrs. Sprat.
- Chemical suffix.
- Female cell. (pl.)
- Linking verb.
- "Rejoiceth as a strong man to ____ a race." (Ps. 19:5)
- Shoe width.



Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

American Indians finding 'voice' with SBC

PHOENIX — Members of the Fellowship of Native American Christians (FoNAC) voted at their annual meeting to hire a self-funded, full-time executive director to help bring a "voice" to American Indians across the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

"We're here to unite us together to train Native People," Emerson Falls said in his president's address. "We need a unified voice."

The North American Mission Board has invited FoNAC, which was organized in 2008, to "sit at the table with everyone else" in the SBC, Falls said.

It's a "total new day" for American Indians, Falls said. He noted that 150 years of sending non-Native pastors to reach American Indians and of non-American Indian church construction missions teams perpetuated a dependency that has been broken as American Indians have begun saying to themselves, "We can do this!"

The four-part motion contained the executive director's position description; directed FoNAC officers to serve as a search committee, with authority to call an executive director; authorized the officers to revise the organization's constitution and bylaws as needed to reflect having an executive director rather than part-time president and called for the current officers to serve until the constitution and bylaws are approved. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Fifty people participated in FoNAC's annual meeting — a record number for the group, reported FoNAC treasurer Tim Chavis of North Carolina.

Chinese churches hope to plant 800 churches by 2020

PHOENIX — Pastors and deacons from Chinese churches across the United States and Canada discussed a goal of planting 800 Chinese churches by 2020 during a June 14 meeting in Phoenix.

The Chinese Baptist Fellowship, which recently celebrated its 30th anniversary, has 260 member churches, said Peter Leong, president and interim executive director of the fellowship.

"If every state planted one church a year, then we can do it," said Leong, who has served 23 years as pastor of Southwest Chinese Baptist Church, Houston.

Leong noted that the effort coincides with North American Mission Board's (NAMB) new strategy, Send North America, which focuses on mobilizing missionaries and churches to plant churches across the United States and Canada.

Jeremy Sin, NAMB's multiethnic team coordinator for Asian people groups, said the Chinese population in North America has increased dramatically. In 1980, there were 1 million Chinese in the United States, compared to the 4 million who now reside within the United States.

Prior to 1985, most Chinese immigrated from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Now, most come from mainland China, Sin noted.

SBC offers Hispanic leaders training in Spanish

PHOENIX — More than 120 Hispanic Southern Baptists pastors and leaders participated in a joint training session in Spanish on June 13 in Phoenix.

The Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) "SBC Avanza Hispano" (SBC Hispanic Advance) was coordinated by Hispanic liaison staff of the International Mission Board, North American Mission Board (NAMB) and LifeWay Christian Resources.

Hispanic leaders presented two conferences for men and two for women on the topic of church transformation.

Arturo Nuñez, a NAMB church planter from Joplin, Mo., closed the training with a personal testimony.

The love of God has been made manifest in that community struck by disaster, Nuñez said. "The church plant is still going on." ❏

Disaster relief chaplaincy 'extension of being Christ,' Eutaw pastor says

By Julie Moore
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The way Eutaw Baptist Church Pastor Rick Williams views it his work as a disaster relief chaplain "is simply an extension" of what the Lord has called him to do as a pastor.

Williams, who has served as pastor of the Bigbee Baptist Association church since January 2007 and previously led churches in several other states, attended disaster relief basic training after the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti. He later realized his training and background as a pastor could be a springboard for serving in a chaplaincy capacity.

Williams' chaplain training was greatly needed after the April 27 tornadoes struck Alabama and he headed to Tuscaloosa.

During his first full day of service there, Williams joined a chain saw team from another association. The group helped clear trees off houses and talk to survivors.

The next day, Williams was asked to join a relief team serving in the hard-hit Forest Lake community. He met survivors where they were, offered to pray with them and listened to them share their stories.

Williams was then tasked to assist a Federal Emergency Management Agency site to counsel those dealing with a roller coaster of emotions.

He discovered that one man had just lost his daughter in the storm, and the next couple he talked with

had lost a son. "I was just privileged to share a little bit with them and know that the God of all comfort was comforting them," Williams said.

"You let people tell you their story," Williams said of a chaplain's role. He explained that as chaplains listen to people, they are also in prayer and seeking what the Lord would have them share.

"Sometimes Scripture comes to mind," he divulged, and added that occasionally even just a small joke or a laugh can provide needed relief to hurting people. During his recent service in Tuscaloosa, he observed many people of faith who were comforting others in midst of their own loss and grief.

Williams said that when he aids the chain saw

and cleanup crews, that very act of physical labor will sometimes open the door for spiritual conversations.

Williams heartily recommends chaplain training for anyone going through Baptist disaster relief training. Chaplain trainees are

"I was just privileged to share a little bit with them and know that the God of all comfort was comforting them."

Pastor Rick Williams
Eutaw Baptist Church

told to always have their badges on hand in case they are called upon at a moment's notice. "We stand ready," he remarked.

For pastors or seminary students who are considering becoming a chaplain, Williams said the two-day course is "well worth the training" and many of the skills they have already developed will

serve them well in a chaplain role. "[It's] one more extension of being Christ in the world," he said.

According to the Alabama Baptist disaster relief website, disaster relief chaplains "do not have to be ordained; they just need to be called by the Lord to minister." In addition, there is currently a need for more Christian women to be involved in this ministry. For additional details on chaplain training, visit online at www.sldr.org and click on the Find Your Ministry box. ❏

HEART OF MISSIONS ...

Stanley Kilgore, pastor of **Center Grove Baptist Church, Cullman**, in East Cullman Baptist Association, led a team of 14 volunteers to San Jose village in the Toledo district of Belize June 6-14. The team — 10 members of Center Grove Baptist and four members of **Greater Vision Baptist Church, Cullman** — ministered to the Maya and Ketchi by teaching Vacation Bible School (VBS) and a four-day seminar for pastors and leaders in the area and doing construction on a ministry center in Pueblo Viejo village. It was Center Grove's second trip to the area. In 2004, the VBS ministry started with only 30 children but expanded to 1,084 children this year, said Kilgore, who began ministering in Belize 21 years ago. At this year's VBS, the team saw 42 decisions for Christ: 28 older children, six youth and eight

adults. Center Grove plans to return in December for another VBS.

A group of 22 construction and medical team workers from **Calvary Baptist Church, Russellville**, in Franklin Baptist Association traveled to Uganda June 2-10 to work with Life in Christ orphanage in Kampala.

The medical team treated almost 500 people, while the construction team began building a shelter to be

used for worship and meal times on the grounds of the orphanage.

Pastor Wade Wallace preached at a crusade in Kampala, and around 200 people responded to the invitation. At 80 years old, the eldest member of the team distributed about 200 Bibles to members of a new church and residents of the orphanage. Team members also provided blankets collected by church members to each orphan and teacher and support personnel. ❏



May the Lord, my rock, be praised, who trains my hands for battle and my fingers for warfare. He is my faithful love and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer.

Psalm 144:1-2a

Do YOU or YOUR church have a **missions** heart?

Where has the Lord led this summer?

Let *The Alabama Baptist* know and share your story.

E-mail missions trip dates and basic information

to news@thealabamabaptist.org.

'Intentional disciples'

N.C. church buys apartment complex to reach community

While some churches try to figure out how to gain access for ministry in neighboring apartment complexes, Oakmont Baptist Church, Greenville, N.C., just bought the place.

Now the new landlord is moving forward to establish ministry with, to and among residents of Oakmont Square, a 112-unit complex that borders the church.

Pastor Greg Rogers says his growing congregation first cast eyes at the adjacent 10-acre complex in 2005 because its own 7-acre campus was landlocked.

The church already maxes out two worship services and three Sunday Schools. But it still had significant debt from sanctuary construction and didn't feel it prudent to take on the project.

When the previous owners came back in August 2007 with another offer, the church was ready to buy the 14 buildings with eight apartments each, plus a community center, for \$1.5 million.

"We want to explore ministry for residents and collaborate with others on doing ministry in this part of Greenville," said Rogers, who is in his 28th year as Oakmont pastor.

Eddie Hammett of the North Carolina Cooperative Baptist Fellowship coached the congregation to self-discover three clear ministry uses for the complex: affordable housing for the working poor; as a ministry to students who crowd the Pitt County Community College and East Carolina University (ECU) campuses; and among senior adults.

Coaching sessions

With monthly rent at about \$485, quality housing at Oakmont Square is within reach of the working poor. The church started mentoring, tutoring and Bible study ministry for children there more than a year ago.

The coaching sessions helped Oakmont embrace a "go to" mis-



Photo courtesy of Oakmont Baptist Church

FACE PAINTING — A member of Oakmont Baptist Church, Greenville, N.C., paints a little girl's face at the Missions Blitz Day on May 21 at Oakmont Square apartment complex.

sions mentality rather than waiting on the unchurched to come to them.

"We began to see God was already doing some things in that complex, with some residents and with our people," Rogers said.

A first move was to form an Oakmont Square Apartment Vision Team. A special Easter offering raised \$57,000 to fund renovations for 15 "unrentable" units and church volunteers blitzed the complex May 21 to get those units into shape.

The project paired Sunday School classes which helped unify members who sometimes exist in different planes because of multiple church services.

The blitz provided a one-day medical clinic, a children's program and lunch for every resident to encourage fellowship among them and church members.

Two hundred fifty-one members showed up for what Rogers called "a day that in many ways revolutionized and cemented the shift" of his congregation's focus from attracting to going.

A ministry intern is being placed in the complex who will work with ECU and Pitt students and will plant and nurture an intentional Christian community of college students.

The intern and church staff like student worker Amy Andrews and Rogers will offer the students "nurture and training to be Christian leaders, offering acts of service in the name of Christ for the good of the world," Rogers said.

He believes the apartments can offer a place for students who are tired of dorm living and who "want to be informed and intentional disciples of Jesus."

He said church members are now talking about building a community center "for everybody else" rather than a traditional Christian life center for members.

About 90 of the complex's 112 units are occupied and the complex is self-sustaining.

A volunteer team works with an on-site manager and the church administrator to manage the facilities. (ABP)

Filipino SBC leaders urge church-planting fervor

Filipino Southern Baptist leaders met June 14 in Phoenix to ramp up church-planting efforts among the 3.2 million Filipinos living in the United States and Canada.

"We want to see the number of Filipino churches double," said Roger Manao, president of the Filipino Southern Baptist Fellowship

of North America and pastor of Philadelphia Bible Church International. "We have 200 churches, and we are not doing enough. We have to do more."

The Filipino fellowship, during its June 14 session at North Phoenix Baptist Church, reported on its own church-planting project, the Asian Multiplication

Evangelical Network (AMEN).

"The aim of this year's meeting is to educate and mobilize our Filipino pastors and church members regarding AMEN," said Manao, chairman of the initiative which operates under the fellowship's umbrella. "I'm praying everyone will be challenged to get on board our Filipino church-planting movement."

Created in 2010 by Filipino Southern Baptist pastors and the North American Mission Board, AMEN is focused on nine of the most populated regions in the United States, with "the objective to create church-planting and multiplication awareness, and with a goal of planting 30 churches by 2021," Manao said. (BP)

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Muslims take over 2 Christian villages in Nigeria

TAFAWA BALEWA, Nigeria — In two villages in Bauchi state's Tafawa Balewa local government area in predominantly Muslim northern Nigeria, most area Christians have been displaced. In Mdandi village, scores of armed, hard-line Islamists — avoiding the surrounding Muslim villages — descended on Mdandi on March 27, destroyed the Christians' homes and drove them out, former residents said.

The attack on Mdandi was preceded by an assault Feb. 10. "On their first attack, we fought back, defending ourselves and our families," said Luka Zafi, pastor of the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) congregation in the village. "They left and returned the second time with more of them, and all armed with guns. We ran out of the village, and they destroyed our two church buildings and our houses." Muslim Fulani nomads took over the village and were using it to graze their cattle.

The marauders were believed to have been Islamists from other parts of Bauchi state collaborating with local Muslims and Fulani herdsmen. Muslim extremists also attacked Gumel, another Christian village in the Tafawa Balewa local government area, in February, leaving two Christians dead, destroying three church buildings, burning more than 50 houses and displacing more than 300 residents. COCIN church elder Mallam Riga Ubandoma was killed in the Feb. 5 attack. A 14-year-old girl, Numkwi William, died from a snake bite while fleeing from the assailants.

Ishaya Magaji, 65, pastor of the displaced Gumel COCIN church, said that all 166 members of his church have been displaced. "We cannot return to the village — not only because our houses have been destroyed, but because the Muslims have taken over the village and are using the place as a grazing field for the Fulani Muslims in the area," Magaji said.

Nigerian pastor, church secretary shot dead

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria — Muslim extremists from the Boko Haram sect shot and killed a Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) pastor and his church secretary June 7 in Maiduguri, in northeastern Nigeria's Borno state.

Pastor David Usman, 45, and church secretary Hamman Andrew are the latest casualties in an upsurge of Islamic militancy that has engulfed northern Nigeria this year. Titus Dama Pona, pastor of the Evangelical Church Winning All in Maiduguri, said Usman was shot and killed by members of the Boko Haram near an area of Maiduguri called the Railway Quarters, where the slain pastor's church is located.

Pona said Christians in Maiduguri have become full of dread over the violence of Boko Haram, which seeks to impose Shariah (Islamic law) on northern Nigeria. "Christians have become the targets of these Muslim militants. We no longer feel free moving around the city, and most churches no longer carry out worship services for fear of becoming targets of these unprovoked attacks," Pona said.

Pastor Logan Gongchi of COCIN's Kerang congregation in Jos, Plateau state, said that area Christians were shocked at the news. "We knew [Usman] to be very gentle, an introvert who was always silent in the class and only spoke while answering questions from our teachers," Gongchi said.

"He had a simple lifestyle and was easygoing with other students. He was very accommodating and ready at all times to withstand life's pressures — this is in addition to being very jovial."

Azerbaijan: 'I'm the permission and the warrant'

SUMGAIT, Azerbaijan — The state religious affairs official who led the police raid on a Baptist congregation in Sumgait during morning worship June 12 explained away the lack of a warrant. "I'm the permission and the warrant," local Baptists quoted him as telling them.

A Jehovah's Witness meeting in Ganja was also raided the same day. Both were raided because they do not have the compulsory state registration and in both cases fines are expected. An official of the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations defended its officials' participation in the raids, claiming they were "in accordance with the law."

The raids came two days after Parliament approved yet further restrictive amendments to the Religion Law. (BP)

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