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'Model Christian'

Wilsonville's Larry Gibson remembered for his all-consuming love of Jesus

By Jennifer Davis Rash
and Karen L. Willoughby
The Alabama Baptist

If Larry Gibson could see what has happened in the immediate aftermath of his tragic death, then he would surely be flashing that signature smile familiar to all who knew him.

His wife, Anita, making and posting an evangelistic YouTube video within hours after he was killed in a motorcycle accident; at least three people choosing to follow Jesus after hearing his story and watching the video; a nation of F.A.I.T.H. Riders finding a new level of motivation to share Christ; a church and community rallying around his wife and five children to celebrate his life and finding their own renewed energy to live each day to the fullest and keep Jesus as the top priority — the stories are endless.

But all this doesn't surprise Steve Thomas, pastor of Wilsonville Baptist Church, where Larry was a deacon, Sunday School director and member of the F.A.I.T.H. Riders chapter.

"The work that he did, the time he spent, the love he shared, the example he put before us and even his death — I think in his death, he taught us as much as we saw in his life," Thomas said. "He died serving the Lord, died doing what he was supposed to be doing."

The Gibsons were among about 160 volunteers from across the nation who participated in the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in South Dakota Aug. 4-11. More than 4,800 motorcycle enthusiasts attended the rally, and 539 made professions of faith.

It was the sixth year for the annual ministry to bikers, biker-wannabes and onlookers organized by the Dakota Baptist Convention (DBC) and supported by the participation of short-term missions volunteers.

Those volunteers are drawn by word-of-mouth and www.sturgis-bikegiveaway.com. Motorcycle enthusiasts make up one of the nation's largest affinity groups, and the rally is the largest sporting event in North America, drawing about a half-

million participants each August.

This was the second year the Gibsons volunteered. Larry shared the gospel in his routine enthusiastic fashion all week and got to leave on a high note as he led the last person he talked with at the rally to the Lord, said Garvon Golden, DBC interim executive director and coordinator of the ministry.

A YouTube video follows Larry as he walks down Main Street in Sturgis, wearing his F.A.I.T.H. Riders "colors," smiling, joking, passing out "poker" tokens and evangelistic "playing cards" — both give a Christian witness — and jovially sharing his faith at every opportunity.

Sharing via video

A second video posted the night of the accident — and within hours of the Gibsons leaving Sturgis — shows Anita in a hospital bed in Newcastle, Wyo., sharing her faith and her husband's faith. (Do an Internet search for "Sturgis seed sower extraordinaire" to see both videos.)

Larry died Aug. 12 after the Harley-Davidson they were riding left the road just over the South Dakota state line into Wyoming.

"Our prayers go with the Gibson family, the Wilsonville (Baptist) Church family and the Alabama F.A.I.T.H. Riders family," Golden said. "We're just really saddened by the accident, but we know where Larry is today. Something like this helps us see the urgency of what we do at Sturgis."

Buddy Newsome, national director of F.A.I.T.H. Riders and a minister on staff at First Baptist Church at the Mall, Lakeland, Fla., showed the

(See 'Gibson,' page 4)



(Top left) One of the last photos of Larry and Anita Gibson hours before the motorcycle accident that took Larry's life Aug. 12.
(Top right) YouTube videos show Larry ministering at the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally and Anita in the hospital following the accident.

First Priority Greater Birmingham marks 20 years

By Julie Payne
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

We've watched [First Priority] grow from a dream inside of us ... to a plan that was launched ... to a very reproducible strategy that is touching kids around the world," said Benny Proffitt, founder of First Priority of America.

While some may not be familiar with all its ministry facets, many have at least heard of — if not participated in — First Priority's annual See You at the Pole (SYATP) rally that draws students across the nation to pray around

their school's flagpole each September.

While First Priority Greater Birmingham is celebrating 20 years of ministry, the seeds of First Priority go back to 1982, when Proffitt was in his 10th year as a bivocational teacher and youth pastor in Irving, Texas.

"I saw the great challenge that was going on in the schools with the separation of church and state issues," he explained. "Our Christian heritage began to be

threatened." And Proffitt realized he was "sitting in the middle of a crisis."

"Usually visions and plans and dreams come out of crisis," Proffitt noted.

So he began to examine ways to send youth from the church into their schools as missionaries. Protected under the Equal Access Act, Proffitt and others shared with young people how they could go into their schools as messengers of the good news. (See 'First,' page 3)



COMMENT

Is Congregational Polity of the Devil?

It is of the devil." That is how one obviously frustrated Baptist pastor loudly described congregational polity through which local churches govern themselves by democratic vote of members.

Doubtless all of us have seen times when the actions of church members or the action of a congregation seemed more like the devil than Christ. In one church I served as interim pastor, a fight broke out between two men who disagreed about the benefits to be offered a new pastor. In the church where I grew up, a new pastor surprised a business meeting crowd with a motion to dismiss all the deacons and elect new ones. When the motion failed by one vote, a deacon offered a motion to dismiss the pastor, which carried by one vote. You can add your own examples.

But the sinfulness of church members does not invalidate the legitimacy of congregational government. Democratic church government, like every other form of church government ever practiced, has been subject to abuses. More important than the practice is the guidance the Bible offers about how Christians should work together as they make decisions and conduct the work of the church. Each of the four most common forms of church government appeals to the Bible to support its legitimacy.

Roman Catholics interpret Matthew 16:18–19 to mean the authority of the church was given to the apostle Peter and is handed down to his successors who serve as bishop of Rome and head of the Roman Catholic church. Those who practice an episcopal polity point to the appointment of elders in each church as outlined in Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5. Today diocesan bishops, generally speaking, exercise the authority of these first elders in directing the affairs of the church. Christians coming out of the believing church tradition (only believers can be baptized members of the church) largely reject those forms of church government. Instead some practice a presbyterian, or representative, form of government whereby authority rests in elected and representative members who constitute the ruling body. Others, like Baptists, practice congregational polity whereby all church members work together in democratic processes.

W.T. Conner, perhaps Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's most influential theologian, wrote in his book "Christian Doctrine" that Baptists practice congregational polity because "the New Testament churches were organized on this plan." He added, "There is no evidence that



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

there were any 'ruling elders' or 'bishops' or any other official class in the New Testament that managed the affairs of the churches." Baptists point to Matthew 18:15–17 as one passage supporting congregational polity. There the whole church body was the court of last appeal in cases of church discipline. In Acts 6, deacons were selected by the congregation after the apostles' request pleased the "whole multitude" (v. 5).

'The whole church'

Paul and Barnabas were commissioned for their first missions trip by "the whole church," who acted with the apostles and elders according to Acts 15:22.

In 1 Corinthians 5:2 and 2 Corinthians 2:6, it was the whole congregation who was admonished to remove the offending brothers. All of these passages reflect congregational polity. Conner pointed out that Paul often admonished and advised churches but he never exercised "coercion in dealing with a church." Therefore every church is autonomous and no church is subject to outside rule.

In addition to biblical guidance, congregational polity is supported by doctrinal convictions most Baptists share. The lordship of Jesus Christ in the spiritual realm, the focal point of Baptist theology, is inconsistent with recognizing the authority of priest, bishop or pope in the religious realm, Conner argued.

The doctrine of salvation by grace through faith eliminates artificial distinctions between people, not only Jew and Gentile, bond and free, but also clergy and laity. The presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in every Christian means that God speaks to all, not simply an official class of leaders. The priesthood of all believers means that responsibility for the congregation is shared by all, not just those in official positions.

The first English Baptist confession of faith — the 1644 London Confession — recognized the unique role of the pastor to "oversee, visit and watch" after the congregation. Article 44 added, "So likewise for the better keeping thereof in all places, by the members, He hath given authority and laid [duty] upon all, to watch over one another."

W.A. Criswell, longtime pastor of First Baptist

Church, Dallas, made the same point in his book "The Doctrine of the Church." There he wrote, "Every member shares in the formulation of policies for the local church so that it is not subject to the authority of any external body."

The 2000 Baptist Faith and Message declares in Article VI The Church, "Each congregation operates under the lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation, each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord."

Congregational polity does not mean the will of the majority is lord. It is Christ alone who is Lord. The church's goal is to live under Christ's will through democratic processes. Some call that a "Christocracy." Sometimes it may mean that the individual must submit to God's will spoken through the congregation in majority vote. Sometimes it may mean the majority must attentively listen to see if it is God's voice speaking through the dissenters. After all, Baptists began as dissenters. This heritage reminds us that humility is a Christian virtue for all.

Conner wrote that congregational polity is "essential to a true church." He added, "To the extent that the church departs from a democratic organization and government, to that extent does it cease to be Christian in its principles and life."

If Conner is right, then it is imperative not to confuse the way church members allow the devil to express sinfulness through their actions with the sinfulness of the system Baptists use for church governance.

Congregational polity may be of God and not of the devil as the frustrated pastor so loudly declared.



"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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Letters to the Editor

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Someone You Should Know

By Julie Payne, Correspondent, TAB

Lilly Claude Rooks

First Baptist Church, Russellville
Franklin Baptist Association

FAVORITE BIBLE VERSE: Psalm 46:1

FAVORITE HYMNS: "It Is Well With My Soul" and "How Great Thou Art"

HOBBIES: Reading and cross-stitching

FAMILY STATUS: Widowed after 63 years of marriage to W.C.; one daughter, Amanda; and one grandson



ROOKS

Lilly Claude Rooks has been both a faithful member of and women's Sunday School teacher at First Baptist Church, Russellville, for 42 years. One of the women in Rooks' class has attended since she began teaching.

ed since she began teaching.

Q: How did you come to know the Lord?

A: I was always taken to church and Sunday School. During a revival — I was about 11 — I had a sense of knowing I needed to do something. I felt the Lord leading me to become His child.

Q: What led you to teach Sunday School?

A: I taught eight years in Albertville, Ala., before I came here (First, Russellville). My first class was a young couples class. I started out in Woman's Missionary Union work ... and I just felt the need when they asked me [to teach Sunday School] to try it. And I've been teaching ever since.

Q: What difference has Christ made in your life?

A: He's made all the difference that can be made.

Q: How do you see yourself involved in teaching Sunday School in the future?

A: As long as the Lord gives me strength to get there, I'll try.

Q: Why have you continued serving in this ministry through the years?

A: It's been a joy to serve — my joy.

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.



To read comments from Alabama student ministers about First Priority, visit www.thealabamabaptist.org and search for "First Priority Greater Birmingham."

Photo courtesy of First Priority Greater Birmingham

UNITED VISION — Students at Moody High School participate in 2010's See You at the Pole. The event draws students from preschool to college around the world to pray around their school's flagpole each September.

First Priority reaches students worldwide

(continued from page 1)

By 1985, he was among a group of Irving youth pastors spreading the First Priority vision. When Proffitt was called as youth pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, in 1990, he brought the vision to the Birmingham area.

Between 1994 and 1996, First Priority clubs exploded in central Alabama, said Greg Davis, president of First Priority Greater Birmingham and part of the staff since 1996.

While Davis was a youth pastor at Glenwood Baptist Church, Morris, a First Priority club was started at a local school, and students in his youth group encouraged him to visit.

"There would be 200 students there just worshipping and sharing the gospel, encouraging one another and praying," he recalled.

Davis quickly identified with First Priority's mission. He became more involved and eventually helped schools in north Jefferson County begin clubs.

"It was really exciting to me to see such cooperation, to see such a city vision," Davis said.

Now there are clubs in 150 schools in the Greater Birmingham area and approximately 200 more clubs across the state. First Priority has a strong presence and defined leadership in Decatur/Huntsville, Mobile, Gadsden, Elmore County and Tuscaloosa.

Matt Wilson, executive director of First Priority Greater Birmingham, helped initiate clubs in the southern tip of the state while a student at the University of Mobile.

"I think one of the neatest things is that it has become an international [ministry] now," Wilson said.

First Priority operates in Europe, South America and Africa as well as the 3,000 schools across the United States.

On Sept. 28, millions of students worldwide will gather for the 21st annual SYATP. This year's theme is "Converge," based on Matthew 18:20.

"We don't find any less student participation in it now than we had 15 years ago," Davis said, noting it has remained a "distinctly Christian event" with prayer to "the God of the Bible."

Originally designed for middle and high



Photo courtesy of First Priority Greater Birmingham

CELEBRATION — (L to r) First Priority of America's director of ministry Mark Roberts, First Priority Greater Birmingham (FPGB) board member Roger Chambers, First Priority founder Benny Proffitt and FPGB president Greg Davis celebrate at the 20th anniversary reunion dinner.

school students, the age for SYATP participants has expanded from preschool to college.

To recognize First Priority Greater Birmingham's 20th anniversary, a reunion dinner was held Aug. 11 at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, the site of the organization's initial offices. Supporters, also known as Priority Partners; students; and others enjoyed a dinner and awards presentation.

Former staff members were recognized, and Proffitt and Mark Roberts, director of ministry for First Priority who was part of the team that developed the ministry in Birmingham, spoke to the audience in a time of reflection.

"More than anything, [it was] just celebrating what God has done in this city and what God has done through this city on a national and international level," Wilson said.

To learn more, visit www.fpoa.org.

Valleydale recreational ministry director Murray dies at 56

Robert Frederick "Rob" Murray, recreational ministry director for Valleydale Baptist Church, Birmingham, died Aug. 13. He was 56.

Murray graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg and was a member of Valleydale Baptist for 10 years before joining the staff.

According to Senior Pastor Calvin Kelly, Murray's "temporary position" at the church quickly became permanent. After giving up a career in sales with the goal of returning to school to be a teacher, he took the recreational ministry position while he prepared for his new career. However, his love for the church spurred him to continue in the staff position.



MURRAY

Kelly said Murray easily won the hearts of everyone at Valleydale, working with all ages through the recreation ministry.

"He was a valued leader in our drama ministry, resident comedian and team player," Kelly said.

"I've never had a staff member more beloved by the whole church, more encouraging to me personally or more devoted to the entire ministry and vision of Valleydale.

"He has left a huge gaping hole, not only in our church family but also in our hearts," Kelly added.

"He will be missed more than I can describe."

Murray is survived by his wife of 28 years, Diane, and one son. (TAB)

Rioters in England, Somalia show scope of human hunger

By Charles Braddix
International Mission Board

Please, sir, I want some more."

Who can forget these haunting words of a desperately hungry 9-year-old boy in Charles Dickens' novel "Oliver Twist"?

The story is a powerful condemnation of 19th-century England's social and economic injustices, London in particular, including child labor and the cruel treatment of children. Children of the day often were put in workhouses, abused and starved. The novel provides a graphic description of what it's like to be hungry.

Hunger is awful and starvation is even worse, often ending in a slow and painful death.

People hunger for different things. On one side, it could be for social justice and equal opportunity. On the other, it could be for the smallest morsel of food, followed by a precious sip of water.

The effects of either can lead to panic. The desire for "more" can be fatal.

Having recently moved from Africa to the United Kingdom, I saw both happening at the same time. While tens of thousands of young Brits rioted in the streets of England's cities, thousands of refugees at a camp in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, rioted, fearing food



BP photo

SOCIAL UNREST — A car is set ablaze by rioters on Clarence Road in the Hackney area of London.

meant for distribution was being stolen by government troops.

In England, rioters escaped with looted computers and large-screen, high-definition televisions. In Mogadishu, seven refugees on the verge of starvation died trying to safeguard food that would save their lives.

Images of both crises are etched in my mind. Hooded youth pelting armored policemen while cars and buildings burn in the background. Emaciated children and dead cattle

on the dusty roads of Somalia.

Is one situation more urgent, more critical, than the other, I wonder? Some would scoff that I even ask the question.

Twisted perspective

"There is no comparison," said Tim Costello, CEO of World Vision Australia. What he sees is a generation of youth in a first-world country who have a warped sense of entitlement while, in the Horn of Africa where Somalia is located,

millions literally face starvation if something isn't done immediately.

Costello said, "You just want to shake [the rioters in England] and say, 'Get some perspective!'"

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that 13 million people in the Horn of Africa are hungry and undernourished, while 3.5 million face starvation in Somalia. The WHO calls it the region's worst drought-related famine in 60 years.

At the same time, Sky News analyst Ed Conway said in economic and social terms, "London has been a tinderbox for some time." Of course "London" can be broadened to include multiple urban centers of the U.K.

"There's no one root cause for the riots across the country," Conway said, "but a range of economic indicators often associated with social unrest have been on the rise."

News articles identify youth unemployment, income disparity and lack of education opportunities as some of the catalysts behind the rioting in England.

One thing is certain: Both the U.K. and Somalia face long-term problems with no easy solutions. There is hunger in London and there is hunger in Mogadishu. Both are wanting, if not desperately needing, "more."

Jesus, noting a hunger and a

thirst that only He can satisfy, calls His followers to action.

Jesus indicates that to go about His Father's business is to share living bread and living water that satisfies a spiritual hunger that is deep within all humanity. At the same time, He demands that we offer a cup of water to the thirsty and provide clothing to the naked.

'Real change'

Thirty-three-year-old Zimbabwean immigrant Paul Machaka, who came to England in 2001, said, "People can try to take the situation into their own hands, but at the end of the day they can't create real change. Real change comes from God. Answers are found in Him."

So is the "more" they are looking for. (BP)

Gibson 'died serving the Lord'; wife 'has amazing strength'

(continued from page 1)
two videos to about 85 people during his chapter's Aug. 18 "bike night."

"It was powerful to see [Larry's] passion for sharing Christ," he said. "He never missed an opportunity to share the gospel, and his wife was mature enough and confident enough in her salvation that she could use that as an opportunity to share the gospel."

"He is still sharing the gospel through his life," Newsome said. "That is extraordinarily powerful to me."

Jeff Smith, F.A.I.T.H. Riders chapter director at Wilsonville Baptist, said the group's members are working through their grief and holding each other up.

Used by God

"It really hit me because we all went to Sturgis together last year," he said. "Larry was so instrumental and ... let the Lord use him."

"At Sturgis and home he got up every day willing to serve," Smith said. "He was a model for all of us to go by. He was kind, compassionate and had the biggest heart. Whether it was the children's work he did in Ukraine (with orphans) or day-to-day stuff, his heart and pocket book were always open."

Thomas, who helped lead the

Gibsons to the Lord about 12 years ago, said, "His life was about Jesus. That's who he was."

"He knew what he was living for and he lived. ... He was on mission for God. He loved life and loved to live life."

And Anita was always right there with him.

"She is strong in the Lord and loves the Lord," Thomas noted. "It has been amazing to watch her."

But Anita merely sees it as living the life she's supposed to live.

"It's not my strength I stand on but the strength that God gives me," she said. "When we are not telling people about the love of Jesus, we are losing precious minutes."

And so she determined she would not waste one minute to tell people about Jesus, shooting the YouTube video on her iPhone alone in her hospital room.

"I couldn't imagine being in such a tender place again in my life. God can better use me broken than He can use me fixed," she explained.

"The reason I'm making this video is to tell you how short life is and how important it is to get your life right with the Lord," she says on the video.

To read more about the Gibsons, the rally and F.A.I.T.H. Riders, visit www.thealabamabaptist.org and search for "Larry Gibson."

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Want to know God?

By Pastor Terry Birdsong
Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Eufaula

There are so many people hungry in the world today. If a man is physically hungry, then a meal is provided to ease his need. If a man is spiritually hungry, then a loving Savior has been provided to ease his need.

The only problem is an unsaved person does not understand how to be fed spiritually.

It takes a saved person to set the table and serve the "meal."

Being fed spiritually is somewhat like eating salted peanuts. You can't stop after you begin!

The need to know God grows so strong that you must constantly be fed in order to be content. Of course, we will never be satisfied as long as we are here on this earth.

Total satisfaction will come on the day of the Second Advent of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

An unsaved person also does not understand how to experience the grace and mercy that are abundantly available to those saved by Christ.

The saved must be ready to act as "servers" to friends, family and others who long to know God's grace and mercy and find themselves sitting at the table of need. They provide a wholesome meal that includes a large serving of the Truth and lovingkindness and then follow with a dessert of support that never ends.



BAPTISTS RESPOND

to areas devastated by April tornadoes

The disaster relief team of **Community Baptist Church, Maylene**, in Shelby Baptist Association has aided tornado survivors since April 27. We chose to stay local for our **mini-missions week July 28-31** to help out a family in need. We partnered with Toomer's for Tuscaloosa to help rebuild and decorate a trailer for the Lester family in Cordova.

James Lester is a Jasper police officer, and he and his wife, Misty, have four children. They lost everything in the tornado, but the Federal Emergency Management Agency denied their claims numerous times. We finished up the week with a housewarming party and worship service July 31 at 5:45 p.m. at the Lesters' home.

I hope this story will remind people of the numerous needs that so many in our state still have, and while the government may take credit for the aid given, it is truly God's flock tending to others.

Mandy Hays
Community Baptist Church, Maylene

The Day of Hope for Marion County (previously called the Day of Hope for Hackleburg) was Aug. 6 at **First Baptist Church, Hackleburg**.

Sponsored by **Marion and Morgan Baptist associations** and **Friendship Baptist Church, Grand Bay**,

the block party hosted more than 170 people in the Hackleburg area and gave away several prizes, including more than \$2,000 in gift cards, two 32-inch televisions and more than 500 packets of school supplies.

Jack Bailey, pastor of Danville Baptist Church, said the people who won the prizes were very deserving since they lost everything they owned in the April 27 tornado.

Around 75 volunteers from Danville Baptist

cooked the food — hot dogs and hamburgers — and set up the stage for their Interim Music Minister Doug Seaver, who performed during the event. Volunteers from the church also set up the inflatables and game booths.

Nine Marion Association churches volunteered at the event: Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Hamilton; Kemp Chapel Baptist Church, Hamilton; Hines Memorial Baptist Church, Bear Creek; First, Hackleburg; Mount Olive Baptist Church, Hackleburg; Mount Zion Baptist Church, Hamilton; Shiloh Baptist Church, Hamilton; Antioch Baptist Church, Phil Campbell; and New Hope Baptist Church, Guin.

Although church members were the ones to go and serve people in need, they were the ones blessed in the process, Bailey said.

Mobile chapels being distributed by Alabama Baptist disaster relief following damage done by the April 27 tornadoes have been placed at the following church sites:

- ▶ Boone's Chapel Baptist Church, Prattville, Autauga Baptist Association (following an April 15 tornado) — one unit
- ▶ Mount Hebron East Baptist Church, Eclectic, Elmore Baptist Association — one unit
- ▶ Mountain View Baptist Church, Phil Campbell, Franklin Baptist Association — two units
- ▶ Emmanuel Baptist Church, Hackleburg, Marion Baptist Association — one unit
- ▶ Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, Spring Garden, Cherokee Baptist Association — one unit
- ▶ Concord Highland Baptist Church, Hueytown, Bessemer Baptist Association — two units
- ▶ First Baptist Church, Wellington, Calhoun Baptist Association — two units

Filled with school supplies, 230 backpacks were delivered Aug. 16 to **Mountain View Baptist Church, Phil Campbell**, in Franklin Baptist Association and **Mount Olive Baptist Church, Hackleburg**, in Marion Baptist Association. The backpacks and supplies were donated by several churches in Michigan.

The supplies were delivered to the two churches who then distributed to schools in Hackleburg and Phil Campbell. Pastor Elton Spurgeon and his wife of Thornhill Baptist Church, Hudson, Mich., brought some of the supplies, which included items for teachers.



Decatur's Central Baptist choir 'blesses' recovering churches

By Martine Bates Sharp
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The lights went out, causing a scramble for candles and flashlights as the musicians prepared to play and sing. Power was finally restored but the thunder was loud and the lightning was constant. For those who experienced this year's tornadoes in Alabama, the night brought back memories of April 27.

The night had been planned not to bring back memories but to provide some relief and comfort. That Sunday night, the choir and band from Central Baptist Church, Decatur, traveled to Calvary Baptist Church, Russellville, to do a benefit concert for two Phil Campbell churches.

Chason Farris, minister of worship and music at Central Baptist, is from the area and began looking for a way to help soon after the tornadoes hit.

"I saw all of the response right after the tornadoes," Farris said. "I knew that after a few weeks or months, the cameras would be gone, the money would run out and the attention would be somewhere else but the people would still have needs."

He started talking to Wade Wallace, pastor of Calvary Baptist — his home church — about doing something for local churches affected by the tornadoes. Wallace was enthusiastic and suggested that they target Mountain View Baptist Church and First Baptist Church, both in Phil Campbell.

'Take it on the road'

In late summer, Central's music ministry hosts An Evening of Praise, a Sunday night service in which the choir, band and praise team perform some of their favorite songs from the past year. But this year, Farris decided to "take it on the road" to reach others.

"I wanted to make the choir a missions group — to go bless someone else," he said.

In all, 46 church members and eight musicians made the trip from Decatur to Russellville Aug. 7. They were joined on the last two

songs by Calvary choir members.

The church was filled nearly to capacity with members of the four churches involved. Audience members were demonstrative in their appreciation of the music; they participated enthusiastically in the congregational singing, clapping and raising their hands and even spontaneously rising to their feet at one point.

Farris was pleased with the outcome of the concert, which brought in a love offering of just more than \$5,700.

"There was a sweet spirit there," he said. "People had to relive that day. Some were crying, having a

hard time, but they were there. The main reaction was gratitude. In spite of what they had gone through, they were thankful."

The members of Central's music ministry were thankful, too.

Farris said, "Our choir felt like God was using them; they felt blessed. We all learned a lesson about how we

can use our gifts to be an influence."

Tim Haney, pastor of First, Phil Campbell, said his church has received an outpouring of support since the devastating storm.

"By the second day (after the tornado), supplies began flowing in. We sit in our Sunday School classes and talk about missions and give to missions. When your whole town is destroyed — it was an opportunity for the church to shine," Haney said.

Sammy Taylor, pastor of Mountain View Baptist, pointed out that it was also an opportunity to educate people about what the church really is. He recalled someone telling him after the storm had passed that his church was gone.

"That's just the building," Taylor replied. "The church is still here."

But not everyone.

"We had four fatalities in our church," he said.

Still the church presses onward.

"We went from a 450-seat sanctuary to a parking lot. It's not what you hold in your hand but what you hold in your heart. We're trying to follow the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire," Taylor said.

"When your whole town is destroyed — [it's] an opportunity for the church to shine."

Pastor Tim Haney
FBC Phil Campbell

Interested in assisting
with the Alabama rebuild effort?



Visit

www.sbdr.org
to find areas of need.

Across Alabama's Associations

BIRMINGHAM

► **Mountain Brook Church, Birmingham**, will hold a reception Sept. 11, 11 a.m., honoring Senior Minister **James D. Moebes** as he retires after 38 years of service at the church. The worship service will be at 10 a.m. ► **Shades Mountain Church, Vestavia Hills**, will celebrate its 100th anniversary Sept. 18. The celebration service will be at 9:30 a.m. There will be a New Wind reunion from 4:30 to 5:45 p.m. in the 4th floor concourse. A Century of Song will be at 6 p.m. in the worship center. A fellowship featuring 100 Cakes for 100 Years will follow. Everyone is invited to tour the Centennial Center, a collection of exhibits, films and memorabilia, which retrace the church's 100-year journey. The Center will be open before and after the celebration service and A Century of Song, as well as from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 19–22, including late hours from 4 to 8 p.m. Sept. 21. For information, call 205-822-1670 or visit www.shades.org/legacy. Danny Wood is pastor.

CHEROKEE

► **Shiloh Church, Pollard's Bend, in Leesburg**, will host Kathy Sosebee Nunley in concert Sept. 4, 11 a.m. Danny Farley is pastor.

COLUMBIA

► **Bay Springs Church, Dothan**, will hold a LifeSouth blood drive Aug. 31, 3:30–8 p.m., in the fellowship hall. Scott E. Wyatt is pastor.

COOSA RIVER

► **Kasey Littleton** is the new minister of music for **Five Points Church, Sylacauga**. She previously served as minister of music for Cragdale Church, Talladega, for six years. Littleton holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Montevallo. She is married to Chad. Tommy Strickland is pastor.

DALE

► **Steve King** is the new pastor of **Ozark Church**. He comes from Mount Hebron West Church, Elmore. He has served other churches in Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi for 21 years. King and his wife, Donna, have two children.

DEKALB

► **Ruhamma Church, Dogtown**, is hosting a Patriots' Day motorcycle rally and memorial service Sept. 11, 10:30 a.m., to mark the 10th anniversary of 9/11. A replica of the World Trade Center towers will be on display along with 2,977 miniature American flags —

one for each person who perished that day. Sammy Gilbreath, director of the office of evangelism for the State Board of Missions, will speak. Veterans will be recognized during the posting of the colors by the Fort Payne JROTC. Several Christian motorcycle clubs will be represented. A cookout and ride through areas destroyed in DeKalb County by the April 27 tornado will follow the service. For information call 256-997-0142. Chris Murdock is pastor.

EAST CULLMAN



WILLIAMS

► **Derik Williams** is the new associate pastor for **Anon Church, Vinemont**. He and his wife, Erica, have three children. J.W. Hicks is pastor of the church.

ESCAMBIA

► **Alco Church, Brewton**, will host Christian humorist/musician Brother Billy Bob Bohannon Aug. 28, 11 a.m. Steve Yuhasz is pastor.

GENEVA

► The 39er's C.L.U.B. of **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will hold a luncheon meeting Sept. 13, 11 a.m. Ann Varnum, author and television personality for WTVY in Dothan, will speak. For reservations call 334-684-9617 by Sept. 6. Mike Shirah is pastor.

MADISON

► The choir and orchestra of **First Church, Huntsville**, and the Huntsville Community Chorus will hold a special 9/11 memorial concert Sept. 11, 5 p.m., at First, Huntsville. Mayor Tommy Battle, representatives of Huntsville's first responders and other civic and state leaders will be present. Billy Orton is minister of music for First, Huntsville, and director of the Huntsville Community Chorus. David Hull is pastor.

MONTGOMERY

► **Bruce Moulton** is the new pastor of **Eastdale Church, Montgomery**. He previously served as pastor of Berean Church, Charlottesville, Va. He holds bachelor's degrees from the University of Maryland in College Park and Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., and a master of divinity in church ministries and doctor of ministry from Liberty Baptist Theological



MOULTON

Seminary at Liberty University. Moulton and his wife, Teresa, have two children. ► The Alabama Senior Citizens Hall of Fame honored **A. Ray Foreman**, of Leeds, for his ministry to senior citizens Aug. 21, 2 p.m., at **First Church, Montgomery**. Foreman received the religious award. A reception was held following the ceremony. Jay Wolf is pastor.

RANDOLPH

► **Cade Farris** is the new pastor of **First Church, Wedowee**. He comes from First Church, Opelika, where he served as minister to adults. He also has served as minister for college and singles at First, Opelika, and as minister of music for First Church, Cherokee, and First Church, Charlestown, Ind. Farris holds a bachelor's degree in music from the University of North Alabama in Florence and master of divinity in theology from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He and his wife, Jennifer, have two children.



FARRIS

RUSSELL

► **Bethany Church, Phenix City**, will hold revival Sept. 11–14 with Brian Fossett, of Dayton, Ga. Mark Helms will lead the music. Services will be Sunday at 6 p.m. EST and weeknights at 6:30 EST. Jimmie Hobbs is pastor.

SHELBY

► **Oak Mountain Church, Pelham**, will celebrate homecoming Sept. 11. The Hoggle Family will sing at 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow at noon. For information call Jim Martin at 205-567-5684. Wayne Williams is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Northridge Church, Northport**, will host a Back to School Extravaganza Aug. 27, 6:30 p.m. The event will be presented by Moody Radio South in cooperation with Northridge; Safe Haven Church, Tuscaloosa; and TCBY. There will be puppets, TCBY frozen yogurt and refreshments. Churches bring your children's groups. Parents are welcome. For information call 205-758-5599. Brad Smith is pastor.

WEST CULLMAN

► **Ryans Creek Church, Bremen**, will hold a Revelation Unveiled seminar with Jim Britt Aug. 28–31. The event will be Sunday at 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Keith Gambill is pastor.

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

Midway's Wilkerson releases devotional book

Robert Wilkerson, pastor of Midway Baptist Church, Trussville, has released a new devotional book, "Characters of the Crucifixion." Published by WinePress Publishing, the book examines the lives of those who were integral to the betrayal, trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ — people like Pilate, Herod and Judas — and then applies principles from their stories to today's challenges.



WILKERSON

Wilkerson, who has served as a pastor and evangelist for 50 years, said "Characters of the Crucifixion" was "20 years in the making." He described his book as one designed to help readers move closer to Christ.

"If you tried to identify the need that most Christians say is greatest in their life, [it's that] they desire a greater Christian walk," Wilkerson said. "Even though they may go to church regularly and try their best to live the Christian life, they still feel like there's a gap between where they are and where they need to be spiritually. And so this book is written to help them close that gap."

The first chapter is "Caiaphas: The Priest Who Conspired to Murder." Wilkerson explains that Caiaphas developed a plot to kill Jesus very early in His ministry. "It talks about corruption in public office," he said. "What we find out as we study all these characters is they may have lived a long time ago, but we're very much like them and we face many of the same problems they do."

Another chapter delves into the life lessons from Peter. Wilkerson explains that Peter was an energetic disciple, but despite his enthusiasm, he eventually denied the Lord. Yet Peter didn't let his fall be his finish. God used him mightily to spread the gospel in the ancient world.

While not every chapter provides "warm and sweet" content typical of many devotionals, Wilkerson believes the messages are both challenging and life-changing.

"My desire is that God would use this book to bless them," he said of readers. "And if they don't know Christ, that it might cause them to pause ... and lead them to accept Christ."

For more information, visit www.winepressbooks.com.

Pastor McNiel retires from Springdale Church

His plan was to become a comedian and make people laugh, but God called Winston McNiel to preach shortly after he was saved while watching a "Billy Graham Crusade" on television in September 1963. He answered the call and has preached faithfully for many years.

But after 17 years, McNiel retired as pastor of Springdale Baptist Church, Birmingham, on July 31. His sons planned a retirement program to celebrate the occasion.

McNiel received his master of theology from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and first served as a pastor at Philadelphia Baptist Church, Peterman. He then served on the missions field in Colombia with his wife, the late Pat McNiel.

McNiel held pastorates in Florida before moving to Springdale Baptist in 1994.

"My greatest memories (in ministry) are all the people that I've had a part in their lives and leading them to Christ and the joy of being a pastor. The greatest joy is just being a part of the family of God," he said.

McNiel said he is looking forward to continuing that fellowship and continuing to preach at revivals or as a supply preacher. He can be contacted at 205-305-2192.



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

Remember to:

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

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

The Ministry of Appreciation

“Pastor, I just want you to know that I love and appreciate you.” This elderly lady was smiling as she made this declaration. She was holding a favorite dessert dish as she expressed this statement. “I hope you like chocolate pie,” she said. I told her that I like almost anything chocolate.

Was her chocolate pie the best I have ever eaten? Truthfully, no, it wasn't. But the fact that the pie was a gift from a grateful heart made it very tasty indeed.

This little lady was one of the many “ministers of appreciation”

who have crossed my path. Like all pastors, I needed to hear those affirming words of appreciation from time to time.

October is Minister Appreciation Month. This will be the ideal occasion for you to practice the ministry of appreciation with the ministers at your church. Take time to write an encouraging note or provide some tangible gift for them as individuals. This will help them in more ways than you ever know.

The writer of Hebrews declares, “Remember your leaders, who spoke the Word of

God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” (Hebrews 13:7, NIV).

By Rick Lance
State Missionary
Executive Director-Treasurer



Remember to appreciate your ministers as they labor for Christ. It may make them better at what God called them to do.

For ideas on how to celebrate Minister Appreciation Month, please contact Ministry Assistant

Linda Hicks at lhicks@alsbom.org or 1-800-264-1225, ext. 263. Book reviews and other writings by State Missionary Rick Lance may be found on his blog at www.RickLance.com

II Peter 3:18

Connect with Rick Lance online by visiting www.facebook.com/rlance or www.twitter.com/ricklance.

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

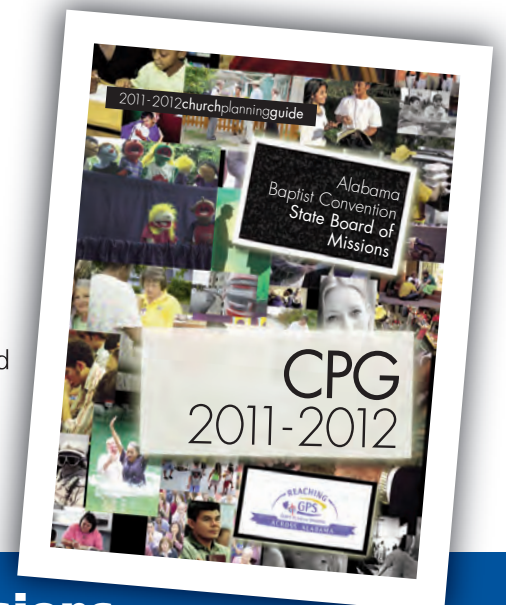


order your 2011-2012
church planning guide

This 16-month calendar (Sept. 2011–Dec. 2012) has State Board of Missions events and emphases already printed with plenty of room for you to add your church's events.

Limit **TWELVE COPIES** per church. To order, please **call**, **fax** or **e-mail** your request to Charleen Hobbs at 1.800.264.1225, ext. 231; 334.288.2693 (fax); chobbs@alsbom.org; or **order online** at www.alsbom.org/cpg.

Be sure to **include** your name, church name, mailing address and number of church planning guides needed (up to twelve).



Alabama Baptist Convention **State Board of Missions**

Why I Believe in the Cooperative Program



BY WADE RIALS

Pastor, Thorington Road Baptist Church, Montgomery

As a young Southern Baptist evolving out of a mainline denominational upbringing, I remember vividly being introduced to the "Southern Baptist way" while attending the University of Mobile and later New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (with Cooperative Program money subsidizing my educational endeavors).

It was during these formative years that I not only firmly entrenched myself in Southern Baptist thinking but also became thoroughly convinced of the incredible power of a simple structure created in 1925 which allows all Southern Baptists to do more for the glory of God together than we could ever do alone. I would argue that no mission structure has had a greater impact on the global spread of the Gospel than the Cooperative Program.

As a teenager growing up in rural southern Alabama, I owned a truck, like every other boy it seemed. It was a great day when a thunderstorm came through and we all got our trucks out and headed for the mud. For those of you reading this that don't understand the story, ask a native Alabamian to explain it to you. One particular afternoon, I took my little Chevy S-10 4x4 out and decided to take on the massive mud hole ahead of me. Of all the things that could happen, I managed to get stuck with



no wheels at all touching the ground, just the axle sitting on dirt. This was quite a feat!

For most this would be a serious dilemma – for me, not so much. Fortunately, surrounding me were a group of friends who all took their shoes off, got behind the little pickup and pushed, allowing my tires to gain traction and come out victoriously on the other side.

Now I admit, the illustration has holes, but I often use this story with my congregation to champion our participation in the Cooperative Program. We have been given a commission. We are responsible to take the message of the Gospel to the nations. This is no easy challenge.

To use a south Alabama expression, it is high time for us to once again champion and restore the prominent place of the Cooperative Program within Southern Baptist life. Accept the 1% challenge and increase your CP gifts by one percent in the upcoming year. We need to take off our shoes and push this program out of the proverbial mud. It will gain traction! It will gain momentum! The Gospel will spread!

We as Southern Baptists have many ministries: Great Commission Ministries! We have one mission: The Great Commission. And we have one program: The Cooperative Program! We can do this together!

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

MUSIC & WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES: COMING SOON



Alabama Singing Men and Alabama Singing Women Retreats
Friday and Saturday, September 8-9,
at Shocco Springs

Clinicians: ASM - Tom Smith, minister of music, Providence Baptist Church, Opelika. ASW - Gayle Smith, Auburn City Schools. **Cost:** \$72 per person (double occupancy) or \$92 per person (single occupancy). \$20 deposit with reservation. Begins at 4 p.m.

Thursday, ends with lunch Friday.

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, khbbs@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:

www.alsbom.org/seniorfest

Children's Honor Choir

COMING SOON: 150 voices singing beautiful harmony in a fun and exciting way. Tour will include a trip to the northern part of the state with activities and your new friends you will make from all over Alabama.

Who can audition: Children who are actively involved in children's choir and currently in grades 4-6

How to audition: Submit audition

CD by November 1, 2011. **For complete details:**

www.alsbom.org/chc-tour

Keyboard Festivals (November)

For any age! Provides a chance to work with a qualified adjudicator who will encourage you in your skills.

Locations include Huntsville, Gadsden, Enterprise, Mobile, Gordo, Birmingham. **To register online or for information on dates, times and locations:**

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.





Get Acquainted Day

At the Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd. in Montgomery

Thursday, September 8, 10 am - 3:30 pm
9:30 - 10 a.m. Check-in and refreshments

° Meet your state missionaries ° Discover how we can partner together to fulfill the Great Commission ° Tour the Baptist Building ° Spouses welcome ° Lunch provided

Ideal for pastors, church staff, secretaries or associational staff who are new to Alabama, new to their position, or who have never attended a Get Acquainted Day

Register by calling or emailing Charleen Hobbs, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 231, chobbs@alsbom.org, or go online to www.alsbom.org/gad.

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

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:
www.sbccampusconnect.net

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!



IMPACT:
to have an
immediate
and powerful
effect on
something or
someone

october
7-9, 2011

MPACT
ALABAMA:
to have an
immediate and
powerful
effect on *your*
community for
the cause of
CHRIST!

When a blacksmith pounds a piece of heated iron on his anvil, the force of the impact shapes the metal into a useful object and changes it forever. As Christians, we have the opportunity to have the same kind of transforming impact on the lives of those around us.

MPACT Alabama is a weekend designated for students, student ministry groups, BCM groups, churches and associations all across Alabama to focus on the ministry needs of their local community and share a Gospel witness.

Some ideas might include caring for the elderly, sharing the Gospel door to door, holding a fifth quarter rally for local school students, raking leaves for homebound church members, holding an evangelistic block party, organizing or restocking a local food pantry, ministering to international families in your community, painting or fixing up a neighbor's home, serving your community by volunteering for the job nobody else wants to do... it's all up to you!

There are hundreds of thousands of students across Alabama who can make a powerful, positive and eternal **MPACT** on their local mission field. Will you and your students join that force of Great Commission Christians and make an **MPACT** this year?

For more information, contact your local Baptist association or the Office of Collegiate and Student Ministries, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, **1800.264.1225**, ext. **276**.

www.thestudenthub.org

This resource is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

The Troy L. Morrison Leadership/Church Health Award will be given to individuals who have demonstrated evidence of leadership that has advanced the church in four key areas of kingdom growth-spiritual growth, ministry advancement, missions involvement and numerical growth. The award is given to

TROY L. MORRISON LEADERSHIP/CHURCH HEALTH AWARD

three different pastors, one from each of the following categories: New Work, Established Work and Bivocational.

To nominate a pastor whom you feel has demonstrated Kingdom leadership, please contact Ministry Assistant Jamie Allen at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 256, jallen@alsbom.org. Nomination forms must be received (not postmarked) by September 30, 2011.

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

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

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

PASTOR, DEACON/ SPOUSE RETREAT

THEME:
Take Up
Your
Towel



RETREAT LEADERS: Steve & Diana Davis. Steve is NAMB

Vice President-Midwest Region. Diana is an author and speaker.

ENTERTAINMENT: Mr. Dynamic (Lanny Moody, Christain Comedian)

COST: \$69 per person (double occupancy)

RESERVATIONS: 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.

Monday - Wednesday, September 19-21
Shocco Springs

State Church LIBRARY WORKSHOP

Henry Ward Beecher noted, "Books are the windows through which the soul looks out. A home without books," Beecher used to say, "is like a room without windows."

Libraries: Windows to the Soul

Make plans now to attend. Watch for more information about conference topics and a visiting author in the upcoming "Monitor" newsletter and on the web page at www.alsbom.org/churchlibrary.

If you are currently not receiving the "Monitor" and would like to be on our email list, please contact us at jallen@alsbom.org.

Overnight (includes registration, lodging and meals): \$140 per person (double-occupancy) or \$180 per person (private room)

Deposit: \$40 per person

Day Only: \$6 registration per day + \$6.50 each meal per day, per person. (Prices may change. Please check with Shocco for the most current cost.)

Day only/Tuesday Luncheon: \$15.50

To make reservations call Shocco Springs Conference Center at 1-800-280-1105 or 256-761-1100.

Online Information:
www.alsbom.org/churchlibrary

For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Jamie Allen at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 256, jallen@alsbom.org.

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

Rescheduled: LEADERS OF PROMISE FORUM

October 4, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Baptist Building, 2001 E.
South Blvd., Montgomery

You will gain insights about the way Jesus related to a wide variety of individuals. A fresh perspective on the people you lead and your leadership style will be discovered. As you grow in understanding, clear choices of response with wisdom and courage will emerge. You will be able to apply these concepts in your relationships in every sphere of life: with fellow ministers, employees, clients and vendors; with spouse and children; with parents and extended family; and with neighbors and friends.

LEADING BY DESIGN

In all of our relationships, our goal is to honor God by treating individuals with love, integrity and respect. God's wisdom is needed to discern who and how much to trust. We need courage to speak the truth in love.

Sometimes we need to be a lamb, sometimes we need to be a lion.

Guest Speaker: Jay Vineyard, Georgia Baptist Convention

Cost: \$20 (includes lunch and materials). Pre-registration is requested by contacting Ministry Assistant Jamie Allen at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 256, jallen@alsbom.org.

FOCUS on One Mission



ROYAL AMBASSADOR SOAPBOX DERBY

OCTOBER 15, 2011, IN MONTGOMERY
DOWN DEXTER AVENUE IN FRONT OF THE STATE CAPITOL

Registration begins at 9 a.m. and race begins at 10 a.m.

Make your own soapbox derby racer, or order a frame and go from there. A starter kit is available for \$130 and includes rear axle, front axle, steering linkage, braking system, plywood chassis. The starter kit is not shipped but if ordered must be picked up in Montgomery, or meet someone for delivery.

Complete rules are on the www.alsbom.org/ra website.

For other information, please contact State Missionary Steve Stephens at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 268, sstephens@alsbom.org.

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

**Friday through Sunday,
September 21-24**

**River Country Campground,
Gadsden**

Campers On Mission Fall Rally

Campers on Mission (COM) is a national fellowship of Christian campers who share their faith while they camp. Though sponsored by Southern Baptists, membership is open to Christian campers of all denominations.

The Alabama Chapter of COM sponsors fall and spring rallies and more than 20 mission projects a year. Visitors who are interested in possible membership are welcome to attend the rally, Friday at 6:30 p.m., which is a time of



project reports — an ideal time to visit.

Projects include state fairs, motor speedways, sewing, nursing home ministry, puppets, prayer walks, Seaman Center, associational camps, church construction and disaster relief.

Who can join Campers on Mission? Any adult: single or family, young or older. COM is family friendly and provides a great way to experience the relaxation of vacation with the satisfaction of a mission project. It is a great pathway to become an on-mission family.

To become a member, download an enrollment form from www.alabamacampersonmission.org.

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR THE OUTSTANDING 2011 MISSION VOLUNTEER

The Office of Global Missions of the State Board of Missions would like to honor an Outstanding 2011 Mission Volunteer. Your help is needed.

Please think about laypeople you know who you feel are worthy of such recognition, and let us hear from you. We realize that there are many who could fit this requirement. However, for this purpose only one individual (or couple) will be selected.

Your recommendation will make a difference! The following information is required if a person (or couple) is to be considered:

1. The name, address, and phone number of the person (or couple) being nominated.
2. The name of the pastor, church and association with address, and phone number to which he/she/they belong.

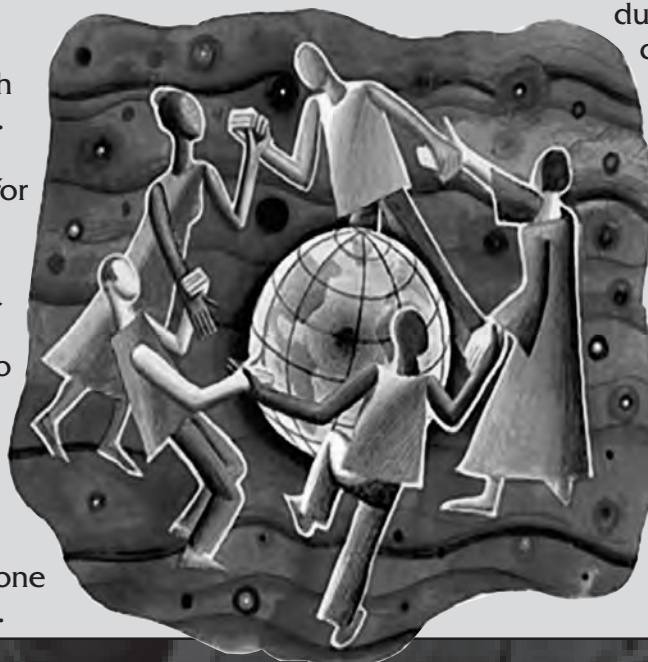
3. A list of volunteer mission service: their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and Uttermost that he/she/they have participated in during the past five years, including locations and dates. (Please don't nominate someone who hasn't served in at least three of the Acts 1:8 areas.)

4. Statements supporting your nomination as Outstanding 2011 Mission Volunteer (why you feel he/she/they should be recognized in this manner).

5. Your signature with address, phone, church, and association.

To request your Information Sheet and Nomination Application, please contact Ministry Assistant Virginia Gardner at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 238, vgardner@alsbom.org or write to: Office of Global Missions, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111-0870.

Nominations must be received, not postmarked, no later than September 23, 2011.



2011 TRAINING CONFERENCE FOR MEN'S MINISTRIES/BROTHERHOOD & ROYAL AMBASSADOR LEADERS

NORTHEAST ALABAMA — Marshall Bapt. Retreat, Guntersville — Thursday, Oct. 20, 6:00 p.m. — Conferences: 1, 5, 9 — **Reservations (for a light meal) call 1-800-264-1225, ext. 227.**

SOUTHWEST ALABAMA — Gallion BC, Gallion — Thursday, Oct. 27 — 6:30 p.m. — Conferences: 1- 7 — **No reservations needed.**

EAST ALABAMA — Parkway BC, Auburn — Tuesday, Nov. 1 — 6:30 p.m. — Conferences: 1-7 — **No reservations needed.**

SOUTH ALABAMA — Evergreen BC, Evergreen — Tuesday, Nov. 8 — 6:30 p.m. — Conferences: 1-7 — **No reservations needed.**

CENTRAL ALABAMA — Jemison FBC — Thursday, Sept. 22 — 7:00 p.m. — Conferences: 1, 5, 9 — **No reservations needed.**

Conference Titles:

1. Starting or Revamping Your "Ministry to Men" Organization (small or medium to large size church)
2. Moving Beyond the Breakfast or Meal Gathering — Men's Ministry/Brotherhood
3. Developing a Risk Attitude in Mission Opportunities
4. Hosting a "Built for Significance" Retreat for Men
5. Starting "Men's Fraternity" Groups
6. Royal Ambassadors — How Interest Activities Draw Kids
7. Royal Ambassadors — Going Beyond the Basics
8. Men's Ministry/Brotherhood Director Training
9. Royal Ambassadors Leader Training

For more information, please contact State Missionary Steve Stephens at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 268, sstephens@alsbom.org

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

Fall Senior Adult Retreat October 17 - 19

Come together with senior adults from across the state at Shocco Springs! For three days, we can worship together and enjoy laughter and fellowship. State Missionary Dale Huff will deliver a message from God's Word each day. Mickey Dalrymple from Fairview Baptist Church, Columbus, Miss., will inspire as well as entertain. John Hall, minister of music from Parkview Baptist Church, Eufaula, will lead in music. There will be multiple breakout sessions each day led by Henry and Sara Jane Lyon, Montgomery; Tim and Debbie Childers, Sylacauga; and several state missionaries, including Jamie Baldwin, James Blakeney, Daniel Edmonds, Eileen Mitchell and Sonya Tucker.

THEME: Love Lifted Me

"Attending the Senior Adult Retreat each year brings me to a closer relationship with God. I always feel fresh and renewed and ready to serve Him more."
— Barbara Rushton, Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery

Registration: call 1-800-280-1105

For more information, please contact Eileen Mitchell at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 221, emitchell@alsbom.org.

Letters to the Editor

CONCERN FOR SBC

I find the comments of John Piper disturbing at the recent Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual convention (see "Paranoia or Vigilance?," Aug. 4 issue). Piper's warning to the SBC to guard against "unintentional drift" into heresy and to be vigilant to ensure that "content matters more than motive" is almost laughable, considering 70 percent or more of SBC members, according to LifeWay Research, find his doctrine (Calvinism) in error, if not heretical. Yet most of the panel he was on adhered to his doctrine. The divide in the convention

is only going to grow as long as the SBC keeps bringing these men in to speak whose doctrine is well in the minority. I see no compromise as the nature and character of God is so differently interpreted from these men.

My prayer is for unity in the convention, but I do not see how that can happen when there are two different gospels being preached! That might be why we see the decline in SBC membership!

Shannon Dillard
Decatur, Ala.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

I would like to say a hearty

"amen" to Ms. Selman's letter in the Aug. 4, 2011, edition of *The Alabama Baptist*. If we can't enforce the law in the case of illegal immigrants, why enforce any law — tax laws, laws against murder, rape, theft, etc.?

If the pastors, bishops, et al. are so enamored with having these immigrants in this country, then let the pastors and bishops support them out of their pockets, not the taxpayers' dime, and in addition to this, present the government of Mexico with an invoice for services rendered to its citizens.

Sam Yates
Hayden, Ala.

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CHURCH POSITIONS

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PART-TIME WORSHIP LEADER: FBC Gordo is accepting resumé for part-time worship leader. GFBC has a 2-service, traditional/contemporary format. The ability to play an instrument preferred. Send resumé to: dsingleton@gordofbc.org.

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Historical Highlights

from previous issues of *The Alabama Baptist*
Compiled by Kathleen Prude

50 Years Ago August 1961

Radio Program Celebrates Anniversary: *The Alabama Baptist* news radio program, produced by the Alabama Baptist Executive Board, is observing its second anniversary.

With nearly 40 Alabama radio stations using the program each week, 3,848 tapes have been used during the two years the program has been running. If all the tapes were tied together end to end, then they would stretch for more than 305 miles. The radio program is produced and recorded by David K. Morris, state Baptist public relations director, and is made up of general Alabama Baptist news, news from around the Southern Baptist Convention and other general religious items, which include events from other denominational groups.

40 Years Ago August 1971

Library Dedicated: Dedication of the new J.L. Bedsole Library at Mobile College was held Aug. 8. The library is valued at \$650,000 and is entirely debt-free.

Bedsole donated \$400,000 to the library; Baptists of Alabama, through the state convention, provided another \$180,000; and the remaining \$70,000 came from numerous individuals who were interested in seeing the college have a library building around which its academic program could be further developed and strengthened.

30 Years Ago August 1981

Alabamian Named Editor: Judy Rice was named editor of the *Alaska Baptist Messenger* during the annual meeting of the Alaska Baptist Convention Aug. 11-13. Rice, who has been interim editor since May 1980, is the second woman to edit one of the 34 state Baptist newspapers.

The first was Sue Saito Nishikawa of Hawaii, who retired this year.

A native of Birmingham and a graduate of Samford University in Birmingham and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., Rice has been an em-

ployee of the Alaska convention since December 1968.

20 Years Ago August 1991

Choir Sings in Unified Germany: L. Gene Black has led 15 performance tours of Europe during his 25 years as director of Samford University's A Cappella Choir. Nothing, however, prepared the veteran choirmaster for the reception he and his singers received this summer from the people in the former East Germany. The 45-member choir sang in churches and tents throughout a unified Germany. The repertoire of American Christian choral music and spirituals met with the enthusiastic approval of old and young alike. Some of the older East Germans had not heard music like the choir sang in 50 years.

The young people had never been exposed to Christian music or Christianity before. A crowd of 3,500 attended one outdoor service at Mannheim.

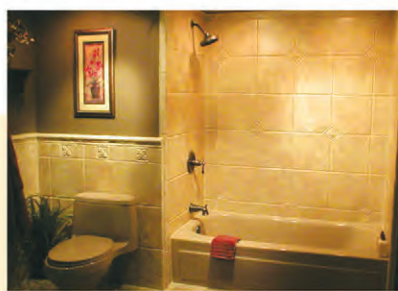
10 Years Ago August 2001

A Birmingham native and graduate of Samford University was elected by trustees of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) to serve as IMB executive vice president, during a July 31-Aug. 2 meeting at Glorietta, a LifeWay conference center in New Mexico.

John W. White III will serve as IMB executive vice president following the Sept. 30 retirement of current executive vice president Don Kammerdiener. In his new role, White will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Southern Baptist agency.

"John White is a person who can step into this very strategic role and fulfill its responsibilities without the organization losing any momentum," IMB President Jerry Rankin said.

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RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

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

'What should we do for dinner?'

Each day on my way to and from work, I pass a large sign advertising a farmers market that has taken place each Saturday all summer. I'm within a few miles of a variety of farmers markets around town. And I'm only two hours from my absolute favorite farmers market — my dad's garden.

I really have no excuse not to eat fresh, whole fruits and vegetables all summer. They are easily accessible and affordable.

But as summer is coming to a close, I realize I have only stopped at one farmers market this year and enjoyed one Sunday dinner straight from the garden at mom and dad's.

So many opportunities to eat healthy, fresh food from local farmers wasted — all because I didn't take the time to do it.

How many times do we let life's rapid pace prevent us from eating properly?

Planning meals means sitting down to think through what we know how to cook by heart versus what we need a recipe for — and then finding the recipes we need.

From there, we decide what will be the main dish and side dishes and how much to prepare. And what to have for dessert, of course!

Finding the time

Next come the grocery list, the trip to the grocery store and preparation for cooking the meal. Oh yes, and then we actually have to cook the meal and sit down to eat it. Whew! That takes a lot of time.

Even eating healthy snacks takes time because there is typically some type of preparation involved, especially with fruit.

I have tried to find ways around actually making the time to do what

needs to be done, but there's really no substitute for properly planning, preparing and enjoying meals and snacks. Otherwise we end up eating easy-to-grab processed foods, which have little to no nutritional value, or filling ourselves with fast food, which is pretty much all bad news. We also routinely eat high-calorie and high-fat foods as we rush around, consuming more than we should because we are eating too fast.

Simplifying the effort

Taking time out to focus on eating properly must become a priority if eating properly is going to be a priority, but it doesn't have to be overwhelming.

Some experts suggest once a month cooking, preparing a month's worth of meals and freezing them. Each night, you pull tomorrow's meal out of the freezer and put it in the refrigerator so it is ready to heat up.

Others say to sit down once a week and plan each day's menu, developing a grocery list as meals are decided. Make one grocery store run, and then all you have to do is follow the schedule for the week.

Still others say not to spend time worrying about a variety of meals. Instead develop a simple (even boring) plan for eating that fulfills health goals and stick with a strict set of meals that you eat over and over. This simplifies everything because you only have to plan once, you aren't running all over the grocery store looking for various ingredients and preparation will be speedy. This method also helps move people from "living to eat" to "eating to live" because meals become functional, not so much enjoyable, some fitness experts say.

I'm not sure I'm ready to fully commit to any of these yet, but I have already started carving out time to plan and prepare healthier meals and snacks. And I'm working really hard to get out of the daily "what should we do for dinner?" discussion.

In just a few weeks' time, this little bit of focus has brought about an amazing transformation in the Rash household's pantry and refrigerator.



Rashional EXTRAS ...

What topics are on your mind?

E-mail jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

An App a Day

By Bryan Gill

A little over a month ago, I had two seemingly unrelated epiphanies: one — I am so undisciplined when it comes to eating right and working out regularly and two — I needed a smart phone. One of the first apps I downloaded was a calorie counter. I picked MyFitnessPal but there are other options (see listing below).

"Maybe this will help," I thought. "If not, then at least it gives me something else to play with on my phone."

I typed in my height and weight and how active my lifestyle was, and then it asked me for my goals. I didn't have to think hard about this one. I wanted to lose 20 pounds. The app then gave me a target calorie count of 1,500 each day. I started inputting what I ate for each meal. In an instant, I was well over 1,500 for the day and it was only lunchtime. In addition to inputting my meals, I could input my exercise. So I went for a walk with my dog. I came back and input my 30-minute walk and presto — I got back some of the calories I'd eaten.

Day two was much better than the first. I knew how many calories a bowl of cereal and a turkey sandwich contained and that if I wanted a decent dinner that consisted of more than a sugar packet, I'd better save some calories. I walked again that afternoon and finished the day below my 1,500 goal. I've logged in now for 40 days straight and lost 10 pounds.

Knowing how many calories were in what I ate was half the battle. I now actually enjoy logging my meals and exercise each day. Thanks to the convenience of an app, I've developed a healthier lifestyle rather than failing at a crash diet or weight loss scheme.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Bryan Gill, 29, is the Baptist campus minister at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis. An Alabama native, Bryan grew up in Eufaula and was involved in Alabama Baptist church life until he moved to Memphis in 2009. He is a graduate of Auburn University and Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham.

"A common mistake people make when trying to live better or turn their life around is to set goals that are either unobtainable or simply too long term, and so frustration can easily set in. Rather than set a goal to lose 50 pounds, most people would be more successful if they chose to lose 10 pounds five different times."

Dr. Scott Morris

**Founder of the Church Health Center, Memphis, Tenn.
Author of "40 Days to Better Living: Optimal Health"**

Health tip for the grocery store

Do as much shopping around the walls of the grocery store as you can. That's where most of the whole foods are placed.

Rondie Wilks

**Owner of Living Fit: Body, Mind, & Spirit
www.livingfitonline.com**

ABC News rated the top five fitness apps for Smartphones as:

1. Lose It! (iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad, coming soon to Android)
2. CardioTrainer (Android)
3. IMapMy (Apple products, Android phones and BlackBerrys)
4. Daily Burn (iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch)
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Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

SBTC gives \$1M in reserve funds to Lottie Moon

GRAPEVINE, Texas — The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention's (SBTC) Executive Board has granted \$1 million from reserve funds to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and encouraged Southern Baptist churches in Texas to "embrace" 1,000 of the 3,800 unengaged people groups identified by the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

The unanimous actions of the SBTC board came in response to the challenge of IMB President Tom Elliff at the SBC's annual meeting in Phoenix to "embrace" the ends of the earth.

Concern over the reduction in Southern Baptist representative deployments due to shortages of funds led SBTC Executive Director Jim Richards to suggest sharing a portion of reserve funds.

Designating the million-dollar gift to the Lottie Moon offering will help put more representatives on the field and support those already deployed. SBTC's board agreed to reduce operating reserves from six months to just under five months in order to provide the grant.

Rankin to lead center for Muslim studies at S.C. school

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Jerry Rankin, retired president of the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention, has agreed to direct the Zwemer Center for Muslim Studies at Columbia International University.

Rankin succeeds current director Warren Larson, who will retire in 2012 but continue to serve in a teaching and writing role, according to a new release from the university.

Rankin retired July 31, 2010, after 17 years as IMB president and 23 years as a Southern Baptist representative in Asia, initially in Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population in the world.

The Zwemer Center offers a curriculum on Muslim studies, including a master's degree, and sponsors research, seminars, dialogues and training conferences.

Rankin will continue to live at his home in Mississippi while giving direction to planning, administration and implementation of the Columbia International program, the news release noted.

Former Ore. senator remembered for religious liberty work

SALEM, Ore. — Former Sen. Mark Hatfield — an Oregon Republican whose Baptist faith helped shape his political views during nearly half a century in public office — died Aug. 7 after several years of declining health.

A five-term senator who retired in 1997, Hatfield remained a staunch advocate of the separation of church and state.

"A lifelong Baptist, Mark Hatfield took his faith seriously," recalled Brent Walker, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. "He integrated his Christianity into his public life, but without judging or coercing others to do the same."

Walker cited Hatfield's "stellar record on religious liberty issues." He co-sponsored the landmark Equal Access Act of 1984, upholding the right of religion clubs to meet in public secondary schools.

In 1993, he helped pass the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, aimed at protecting religious freedom for all Americans.

Black Baptists decry 'disrespect' shown to Obama

WASHINGTON — A black denomination that began 50 years ago in support of Pastor Martin Luther King Jr. has decried the "disrespect" shown to President Obama since he took office.

Citing slurs and remarks such as "you lie," "boy" and "tar baby," the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC) called for the ouster of elected officials who have made such statements about the nation's first black president and his family.

"Conventional wisdom suggests if comments like these were targeted to past holders of this nation's highest office of another/preferred hue, serious repercussive actions would have immediately followed those making said comments," reads a resolution passed during the PNBC's annual meeting that concluded Aug. 12 in Washington.

As PNBC leaders celebrated their denomination's 50th anniversary, they launched an effort to reach out to other black Christian groups, including Pentecostals, with the new Faith United Action Fellowship.



BP photo

MISSIONS EDUCATION — Acteens explore ways they can share God's love with other cultures during an interactive experience at Blume through Disney's Youth Education Series program at Epcot.

'Living a legacy'

Blume challenges teen girls to consider missions heritage

More than 160 Alabamians were among the nearly 2,350 girls in grades 7-12 and their leaders, along with some collegiate young women, who gathered for the opening session of Blume.

Blume, a missions event for teen girls sponsored by national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), opened July 13 at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., with high-energy music led by Christian recording artist Cindy Johnson and her band from Winston-Salem, N.C.

During the week, participants were encouraged to appreciate their spiritual and missions heritage and consider ways they could begin living a legacy of faith ... even now in their high school and college years.

A focus on "living a legacy" was introduced by the 2011 National Acteens Panelists as they talked about the beginnings of WMU and the legacy of missions they enjoy today thanks to missions advocates in WMU who came before them. They also each thanked a special woman who personally invested in her and taught her the importance of serving others and sharing Jesus.

For panelist Andrea Niles, that special woman is Suzette Gibson, her Acteens leader at Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, Key West, Fla.

"I know the Lord put [Suzette] in my life to show me what a servant heart is," Niles shared. "Because of her, I have developed a relationship with God that has led me to make missions my lifestyle. She has supported and educated me to be a part of the bigger picture — God's pic-

ture. I'm thankful someone passed on her passion for missions to me."

Chandra Peele, nationally known speaker, author and founder of GAB (Godly and Beautiful) Ministries, referenced 2 Timothy 1:3-14, the Scripture of focus for Blume. Taking a closer look at verses 3-5, Peele related how Timothy benefited from the spiritual legacy passed on to him by his grandmother Lois and mother, Eunice, as well as being mentored by Paul.

"Lois and Eunice were living out the Christian life, teaching young Timothy," Peele said, "never imagining that he would become one of the most famous missionaries of all time."

"You just never know what God has planned," she continued. "Years from now, we will see how the teaching and legacy of others shaped your life and prepared you for what God has called you to do."

'Who is your Paul?'

Peele told the girls that Paul and Timothy traveled together in their missionary journey and had such a strong relationship that Paul referred to Timothy as his son. Even when they were apart, their prayers kept them close, the kindred

spirit of two Christian brothers.

"Your spiritual heritage is so valuable and worth so much," Peele asserted. "Who do you need to say thank you to? Who is your 'Paul?'"

Peele also challenged the girls to consider ways they are leaving a spiritual legacy today.

"People are always watching. ... Do they see the character of Jesus in you?" she challenged.

For the next several days, Blume attendees interacted with a host of international and North American missionaries; participated in hands-on ministry projects, dynamic worship, breakout sessions and Bible

studies; and experienced a unique and interactive cultural activity in Epcot customized just for Blume through Disney's Youth Education Series program.

Held every four to five years, Blume began in 1972 as the National Acteens Convention (NAC). Since then, thousands of young women have gathered together from all across the United States and have felt God's call on their lives to a greater understanding, awareness and support of the worldwide mission of Jesus Christ. NAC was re-envisioned as Blume in 2007.

(BP)



BP photo

HANDS-ON MINISTRY — Rachel Hudspeth, a seventh-grader from First Baptist Church, South Houston, helps sort hygiene items donated by Blume participants.

Jesus in the real moments

FFH releases new album after 'life-changing' time in Africa

Despite enormous popularity and success on the touring circuit for more than a decade, the musical group FFH felt the Lord leading them to explore new territory — literally.

After much prayer and consideration, Jeromy Deibler and his wife, Jennifer, took a hiatus from performing concerts in 2006. During this time, they moved to South Africa to train musicians and mentor worship leaders at a small church south of Cape Town.

"Our time in Africa was a major life change and a huge personal shift," Jeromy Deibler said. "It was an amazing time of drawing near to the Lord and leading others into His presence."

When the couple returned to the United States six months later, they could not have imagined how their lives were about to change. Shortly before the birth of their second child, Jeromy Deibler was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

"After the initial diagnosis wore off, the heaviness of the reality of the disease began to set in," he said. "We realize now that joy and sorrow can coexist together at the same time and that's where Jesus is — in the realness of those moments. We've learned not to just put on a happy face but to be honest and real with each other."

Although the diagnosis has filled the Deiblers' lives with many uncertainties, they have remained committed to sharing their story as a way to encourage others who are dealing with personal struggles.



Photo courtesy of Jeromy and Jennifer Deibler

CHANGED — Jeromy Deibler and his wife, Jennifer, of FFH moved to South Africa for six months and returned changed.

They recently resumed their touring schedule and have released a new album, "Wide Open Spaces," which chronicles their emotional journey.

"Several of the songs were written during a time of great pain, both physical and emotional," Jeromy Deibler said. "We're finding that the songs about brokenness really seem to

have struck a nerve with people.

"We have gotten so many e-mails from people who have been introduced to Jesus for the first time at our concerts and that's really exciting. I hope people leave our concerts being encouraged, and I hope they leave with deeper and bigger things to think about."

For more information, visit ffh.net. (TAB)

Plans underway to plant St. Louis churches

Unity of mobilization was the theme of the Send St. Louis meeting held July 21 at the St. Louis Metro Baptist Association. Steve Davis, Midwest director of the North American Mission Board (NAMB), and Aaron Coe, vice president of NAMB, led discussions on the strategy and plans for Send St. Louis.

Send St. Louis is NAMB's effort to aggressively plant evangelistic Southern Baptist churches in the St. Louis area.

"Aaron discussed the support and mobilization plans as we identified partners in ministry," Davis said. "We had new people at the table as the coalition is developing. We have a couple more pastors to join from the metropolitan area, one from Illinois and one from the Missouri side of the river."

Recruiting partners

"Our next step will be to recruit key out-of-state partners," Davis said. "We will also want to have a training meeting for the greatest impact on planting churches in St. Louis."

Jim Breeden, director of missions for the St. Louis Metro Baptist Association, agreed that the meeting was productive. "We are beginning to see a template or skeleton of how NAMB and Send St. Louis will focus on our city. We are coming together to develop a structure of healthy cooperation for what God has called us to do as Southern Baptists."

Breeden also sees this effort of cooperation as positive. "In the past," he said, "the NAMB would come in with package deals, but in this case, we are having indigenous decisions developed by a local group. It may be slower on the front end with talking and planning, but it is healthier and broader in the cooperation."

Prayer is the backbone of this effort. "Prayer is our starting point," Davis said. "We want to bathe the entire city in prayer. We want to pray for every household and pray against every stronghold."

According to Davis, the need in the St. Louis area is great. "We looked at the number of churches per population in various cities and

states. In the entire state of Missouri, we have one Southern Baptist church for 3,000 people while in St. Louis, we have one Southern Baptist church for 7,500 people. That's what lostness looks like."

Partnering with NAMB

Davis said Coe's group for mobilization will help the Send St. Louis coalition match resources to needs. "His group is working to develop partners to help. At the recent Southern Baptist Convention, more than 500 pastors expressed an interest in partnering with NAMB to reach major cities in North America. The mobilization group will match those pastors with specific needs in St. Louis."

Plans are being made for the launching of Send St. Louis in the fall. An official date for the launch has not been set because of the growing coalition.

The meeting encouraged Davis. "There was lots of excitement in the room," he said. "There was a real spirit of unity and a desire to have an impact on the St. Louis area for Christ." (BP)

Chinese baby corpses reportedly cannibalized for 'stamina' pills

Chinese pharmaceutical companies are grinding up dead babies into stamina-enhancing pills, according to a South Korean television network.

A documentary team from SBS TV, formerly known as Seoul Broadcasting Station, reported on the gruesome practice, according to the International Business Times (IBT), an online business newspaper published in 10 languages.

Hospitals and abortion clinics in China cooperating in the trade quickly contact drug firms when a baby dies. The deaths normally are by still birth or abortion. The companies reportedly buy the corpses, store them secretly in refrigerators, place them in medical drying microwaves and grind them into powder. The powder is placed in capsules for sale as stamina boosters, it was reported.

"These babies deserve a decent burial; instead they are ground up for someone's fountain-of-life elixir," said ethicist Ben Mitchell, who added that there have been other cases of people using embryonic or fetal tissue for cosmetic purposes.

"It's barbaric. Not only is this the logical conclusion of forfeiting the sanctity of human life," said Mitchell, professor of moral philosophy at Union University in Jackson, Tenn., and a consultant to Southern Baptists' Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, "but it is also why we ought always to require pharmaceuticals to be produced in the light of day where everyone can see the source of their drugs."

The *Global Times*, a Chinese English-language newspaper, reported that an undercover SBS TV team followed a source to a house in China where a woman said she had stored dead babies in her refrigerator as ingredients for the

pills. The team purchased some pills directly from the woman and sent one to South Korea's National Forensic Service, where DNA tests showed they were 99.7 percent human. IBT reported that even the baby's gender could be identified and that the tests also revealed hair and nail particles in the powder.

The *Global Times* reported Aug. 10 that China's Ministry of Health said it has launched an investigation into SBS' claims.

"China has strict regulations on disposing of the remains of infants, fetuses and placentas," health ministry spokesman Deng Haihua said at a news conference, according to the *Global Times*. "We are firmly against the trading of human bodies or organs."

While the *Global Times* says Chinese

laws and regulations prohibit human corpses from being traded or treated as medical waste, the paper also reported that the remains of infants have been mishandled in the past, citing 21 corpses dumped in a river by hospital workers in 2010.

Satisfying demands

IBT reported that SBS also alleged there is a business network between China and South Korea to satisfy demand for the baby capsules in the South Korean market.

A South Korean embassy official told the *Global Times* on condition of anonymity that the South Korean government is aware of the baby capsule reports and is investigating.

"South Korean customs are trying to track down any buyers or sellers," the official said. "The authorities do not have any evidence so far that supports the documentary's allegation, but human ingredients would certainly be considered illegal in South Korea — if it is really happening." (BP)

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Ben Mitchell
Union University

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