

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

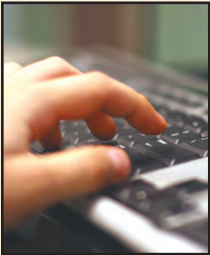


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INSIDE



How to make the most of your church website

◆ Page 4



Baptists continue assisting areas devastated by April tornadoes

◆ Page 5



Alabama Baptists help plant church in New York City

◆ Page 5



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile

'CHANGING LIVES' — The University of Mobile Center for Leadership, assisted by students in the school's Bunker Hill Society and RamKids programs, holds a family fun afternoon for children in Prichard. The Pack the Pack day included giving away thousands of donated book bags filled with school supplies to elementary schoolchildren.

'Real example'

UMobile celebrates 50th anniversary by serving community

By Joseph Rhea
The Alabama Baptist

At 9 a.m. Sept. 16, the University of Mobile's (UMobile) campus was surprisingly empty. No professors' voices rolled from classrooms; no students chatted over morning coffee from Java City. It was the university's 50th anniversary, but where were the people commemorating it?

They were out fulfilling UMobile's philosophy: "changing lives to change the world."

To celebrate the university's golden anniversary, students, faculty, staff, alumni and trustees went out into Mobile and Baldwin counties to serve the community.

At 7:30 a.m., more than 1,000 participants gathered in front of Weaver Hall for breakfast and a speech by President Mark Foley before leaving for their various projects.

Each school developed a service project based on its area of study. Music faculty and students held a choir rehearsal at a nursing home. Education students helped teachers in their classrooms. Nursing students taught schoolchildren about hand-washing and other hygiene tips to help avoid catching the flu.

But why would a university choose to celebrate its 50th anniversary with community service projects?

University culture

"I believe it is reminiscent of the initial mission and ministry that Dr. (William) Weaver and the other founders [found] so compelling in the early days of Mobile College (now UMobile)," said Bill Hart, senior development officer of charitable estate planning.

In fact, Project Serve has been a part of the university culture for years.

In the past, it was facilitated through individual departments on campus, but some university staff thought it would be worthwhile for the entire university to celebrate its anniversary with a campuswide Project Serve. So they proposed their idea to the administrative council.

"[When we heard this], we

said, 'Absolutely,'" Foley said. Of course, Project Serve's ultimate goal was to open doors to share Christ's love with people.

Katie Allred, a senior computer information systems major, enjoyed getting to know the director of transportation at Dumas Wesley Community Center in Mobile while troubleshooting her computer issues.

"We were able to talk about Dumas Wesley's programs and services that they provide for the community. She told me about their women's housing for unwed mothers, which I found very interesting and helpful for other ministry work," Allred said.

"I was able to share Christ's love with her through my technical abilities, and I learned how much non-profits need information technology work."

Foley's vision for Project Serve looks beyond one day of service. He hopes that participants deepen their connections with the area around UMobile and their service paves the way for evangelistic opportunities.

"We want to saturate this city with a very real example of how you transform a nation," Foley said. "You do it by investing in someone's life and allowing that experience to touch your own life."

Wolf named to task force to consider SBC name change

Jay Wolf, pastor of First Baptist Church, Montgomery, has been named to a new task force to consider changing the name of the 166-year-old Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

SBC President Bryant Wright announced the new task force during the opening session of the Sept. 19–20 SBC Executive Committee meeting in Nashville.

Wright, who was re-elected to a second one-year term during the SBC annual meeting in Phoenix this past June, said he believes the study will be helpful for two main reasons.

"First the convention's name is so regional," he said. "With our focus on church planting, it is challenging in many parts of the country to lead churches to want to be part of a convention with such a regional name. Second a name change could position us to maximize our effectiveness in reaching North America for Jesus Christ in the 21st century."

Wright said Jimmy Draper, retired president of LifeWay Christian Resources and a former SBC president, has agreed to serve as chairman of the task force. Wright will serve as an ex officio member.

Rejected attempts

In 2004, then-SBC President Jack Graham made a similar argument when he proposed a committee to study a new name to better reflect the convention's scope as a national rather than regional body. Messengers at the 2004 annual meeting in Indianapolis debated the idea vigorously before voting 55 percent to 45 percent against the name-change study.

Southern Baptists have rejected attempts to rename the denomination eight times since 1965. Presented in 1999 with a motion by Executive Committee member Blaine Barber of Michigan to become the "International Baptist Convention," the Executive Committee decided a new name was neither warranted nor desired.

Wright said he believes Southern Baptists would benefit from another look at the question, noting, "I am going to ask this task force to consider four questions: 1) Is it a good idea, that is, is there value in considering a name change? 2) If so, what would be a good name to suggest? 3) What would be the potential legal ramifications of a name change? 4) What would be the potential financial implications?"

(See 'Task,' page 3)

COMMENT

What Others Are Saying About Us

In an Aug. 4 joint letter to Alabama Baptist pastors, Executive Director Rick Lance and President Mike Shaw wrote, "As your leadership prepares the church budget for the coming year, we would like to encourage you to make sure that *The Alabama Baptist* is included in it for your resident family members."

Thank you, Mr. Executive Director. Thank you, Mr. President.

Often when those of us privileged to serve the Lord through the ministry of the state Baptist paper talk about the important role it fulfills, some people just yawn. Of course, those involved in a ministry think their work important, they reason. What else would you expect?

That is why the words of these two state convention leaders are important and instructive. Their request comes from acknowledged Baptist leaders who see the big picture of Baptist work and are willing to publicly urge churches to provide the weekly state Baptist paper to active resident families.

Lance and Shaw wrote, "We highly recommend it (*The Alabama Baptist*) to you as a valuable resource of information and inspiration."

The letter cited some of the important contributions the paper makes to a reader's life. First the state Baptist paper "continues to be an essential channel of communication for Alabama Baptists concerning the ministries supported through the Cooperative Program (CP)."

Every Alabama Baptist entity regularly uses the paper to share news and information about what God is doing through its ministry. Every program of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions regularly promotes its work through the state Baptist paper.

Every Southern Baptist Convention ministry reports to Baptists through news stories, feature articles, opinion pieces and more, which are printed in the paper.

The Alabama Baptist is the only informational source dedicated to what God is doing through Baptists in Alabama, in North America and around the world.

It is well known that Baptists only give financial, prayer and personal support to what they care about. But they can care about only what they know about. The state Baptist paper has the privilege of sharing trustworthy information that allows them to know, care and support.



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Each week as the paper tells the story of what God is doing through Baptists, it is helping make cooperation possible. It promotes the "Program" part of the CP as well as the channel of giving that makes the program possible.

Referring to the reporting role of *The Alabama Baptist*, Lance and Shaw wrote, "You will be able to stay apprised of information about missions." They referenced stories about Alabama Baptist partnerships in Guatemala, Ukraine, Haiti, the Appalachian region and Michigan as examples of this missions emphasis.

Tornado coverage

Readers also could point to the reporting done by the state Baptist paper following the April 27 tornadoes. Working almost around the clock, staff members had comprehensive coverage of the storms' impact on Baptist churches across the state by press time. At a time when Baptists could have felt alone in their troubles, the paper helped tie churches together by sharing stories from across the state. There is no denying the impact of its reporting during that crisis.

Whether it is missions news or news about ministry needs or news from churches or news from the world of religion, regular reading of *The Alabama Baptist* is the way to stay informed about what God is doing in the world.

Lance and Shaw told pastors, "Regular reading of *The Alabama Baptist* by your people will strengthen your church family." They added that regular reading "will make them not only better Baptists but better church members as well."

News stories, feature articles and editorials capture readers' hearts. They lift the spirit with inspiration. They challenge the mind with new under-

standings and reinforce traditional Baptist teachings. They build up the body of Christ. They not only tell what Baptists are doing together but they also share what Baptists believe and how Baptists work together.

The Alabama Baptist is a religious newspaper in the best sense of the term. For 15 consecutive years, it has been selected as one of the top three regional religious papers in the nation. And it is more. It is part of a church's educational emphasis on what it means to be Baptist. It is a trusted, welcome and accountable voice to the state convention through its 16-member board of directors.


The Alabama Baptist State Convention believes in *The Alabama Baptist*. Each year, the state Baptist paper receives an appropriation from the state portion of the CP to help keep it affordable for churches.

That is why the two leaders could write with integrity as they urged pastors to provide the paper to their active resident families. They called it "an inexpensive investment." It is. A weekly issue costs only 25 cents through the church budget. That is less than the cost of a postcard. And the returns regular reading makes to the church and the lives of members mean the cost is not an expense but an investment, just as the letter said.

Many churches will finalize their 2012 budgets in the next few weeks. Funds are tight for practically everyone. Some well-meaning committees will be tempted to be "penny-wise and pound-foolish." They will consider cutting ministries that undergird the effective functioning of the church — including *The Alabama Baptist*.

To do so would be a mistake.

Hear again the words of Lance and Shaw as they describe the importance of the state Baptist paper as "an essential channel of communication" for church members, churches and Alabama Baptists.

Please join me in praying that your church will provide the paper to active resident families through the church budget in 2012. 

Letters to the Editor

PRIVATE OR PUBLIC DECISION?


A recent *Alabama Baptist* article related how in some churches, at invitation time, decisions were not being made public. Instead of walking down the aisle to the front, decisions were written down and placed in an offering

plate. This way is any church's prerogative but falls far short of what, in my opinion, is best.

Making a decision publicly helps the congregation with "name-face" recognition and can be useful in encouraging new converts to become familiar with the church's program and

activities. Moreover, when decisions are made public, others will likely be inspired and encouraged to do likewise.

Jesus called His disciples as well as others publicly, which should serve as our example. Further think of the (See 'Letters,' page 17)



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

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Someone You Should Know

By Joseph Rhea, *The Alabama Baptist*

Richard East

Mount Zion Baptist Church, Ashland
Carey Baptist Association

FAVORITE BIBLE VERSES: Psalm 47:1;
Philippians 4:13

FAVORITE HYMNS: "Amazing Grace"
and "Go Tell the World"

HOBBIES: Gardening and building
FAMILY STATUS: Married to Esther for
50 years; two children, Kevin and
Tracy; and four grandchildren



Richard East is the pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Ashland. He will celebrate his 25th anniversary with the church this November.

EAST

Q: How did you come to know the Lord?

A: One Sunday in July 1956, the Holy Spirit began to convict me; I was just 12 but I felt a burden on me. For two days, my grandmother would read me some Bible verses, and the burden would seem to lift for a while. That Wednesday, the Lord allowed me to see what was going on and why the Bible was having a soothing effect, and that night, I went down and was baptized.

Q: When and how were you led into the ministry?

A: At the age of 18, I felt called but I didn't surrender. I wasn't willing and so I stopped going to church because it bothered me too much. At the age of 33, my daughter climbed up in my lap and asked why we couldn't go to church like everyone else. That cut me deep and we started going again. Pretty soon after that, I surrendered to the call.

Q: What does the ministry demand?

A: It's demanding on your time; if you don't discipline yourself, you'll find that you do not spend time with the Lord and study as you should. I have my times of study and prayer and meditation, but other than that, I'm out around the sheep.

Q: How do family members support you?

A: My wife is very supportive; she's a prayer warrior. My children support me physically. My grandson is a great inspiration to me. And my granddaughters love spending time with me.

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

A: I do not plan to retire; I'll let the Lord retire me. I'm active in associational work and chaplain of the hospice here.

'Wedge issue'

SBC name change study sparks debate at Executive Committee meeting

The announcement from Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Bryant Wright of a presidential task force to study the prospect of changing the convention's name sparked a lively debate during the SBC Executive Committee meeting Sept. 19 in Nashville.

Executive Committee member Darrell P. Orman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Stuart, Fla., offered a motion that convention attorneys study the issue for one year "before we take any action" on possibly changing the name. The motion later failed on a 39-20 vote.

"Every man here wants to do something significant in his life for Christ and His Kingdom," Orman said. "A name change could be a future necessity for our convention but it should start from the bottom up, not the top down."

The Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) Task Force's 2010 proposals for dramatically reorganizing the Southern Baptist Convention and reallocating missions dollars had caused a "tug of war" and left "a lot of conflicted feelings ... across our nation," Orman said. "We don't need another wedge issue at this time."

An Executive Committee member from Ohio echoed Orman's concerns.

"If you get outside of Georgia, Florida and Tennessee, GCR is still very, very divisive among Southern Baptists," said Charles Chambers, a layman from Toledo, Ohio. "Don't divide us again."

Another Executive Committee member suggested a better approach would be to let messengers to the SBC annual meeting bring up the subject themselves.

"I would counsel us to be very thoughtful and prayerful before we open a can of worms that the convention has not said on the front end they want to open. [Messengers] have said in years past that this is not something we want to do," said Ron Madison, senior pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville. "It may be time to consider it again, but if it is time to consider it

Task force members selected

(continued from page 1)

Wright, pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga., emphasized the task force's role is to advise him on the questions he has given it to consider.

- Other members of the task force are
- ▶ Michael Allen, senior pastor of Uptown Baptist Church, Chicago.
 - ▶ Marshall Blaylock, pastor of First Baptist Church, Charleston, S.C.
 - ▶ David Dockery, president of Union University in Jackson, Tenn.
 - ▶ Tom Elliff, president of the International Mission Board.
 - ▶ Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB).
 - ▶ Ken Fentress, senior pastor of Montrose Baptist Church, Rockwell, Md.
 - ▶ Micah Fries, senior pastor of Frederick Boulevard Baptist Church, St. Joseph, Mo.
 - ▶ Aaron Harvie, lead pastor of Riverside Community Church, Philadelphia.
 - ▶ Susie Hawkins, speaker, Bible study

teacher and missions volunteer from Dallas.

- ▶ Fred Hewitt, executive director of the Montana Southern Baptist Convention.
- ▶ Cathy Horner, Bible teacher and pastor's wife from Providence Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C.
- ▶ Benjamin Jo, pastor of Hana Korean Baptist Church, Las Vegas.
- ▶ R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.
- ▶ Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.
- ▶ Bob Sena, retired director of Hispanic resource development and equipping in NAMB's church-planting group.
- ▶ Roger Spradlin, co-pastor of Valley Baptist Church, Bakersfield, Calif., and chairman of the SBC Executive Committee.
- ▶ John Sullivan, executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention. (BP)

again, isn't there wisdom in letting the messengers generate that request, rather than putting something out here ... that is almost guaranteed to become a focus of, at very best, a spirited discussion?"

'Can of worms'

Executive Committee chairman Roger Spradlin reminded the group that the wisdom of discussing a name change was not the issue before them.

"If this is a can of worms — [if] that's how you would want to characterize it — we, meaning the Executive Committee, are not opening that," said Spradlin, co-pastor of Valley Baptist Church, Bakersfield, Ca-

lif., and a member of Wright's task force. "The president has made an announcement. ... We can't take action on whether a group of volunteers is appointed by the president. That's under his purview."

After Orman's motion was defeated, Executive Committee member Bill Whittaker, a retired college president and retired pastor from Glasgow, Ky., offered a motion "that the Executive Committee respectfully request President Wright to share his concerns for a convention name change with the 2012 Southern Baptist Convention meeting and request the convention approve the task force." That motion was defeated by a large margin on a show of hands. (BP)

Southern Seminary honors former president McCall

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary honored former president Duke K. McCall on the 60th anniversary of his election as president of the seminary. Current Southern Seminary president R. Albert Mohler Jr. led Alumni Chapel in celebrating McCall's more than 30 years as president of the school. McCall, who served at Southern Seminary from 1951 to 1982 as the institution's seventh president. He turned 97 on Sept. 1.

'Moment of God's grace'

"Moments of grace are often rare. And this was an incredible moment of God's grace and mercy to be able to welcome back a patriarch, Dr. Duke K. McCall, whose involvement with Southern Seminary spans more than half of its 152-year history," Mohler said at the Sept. 6 event. "It was a very rare and singularly important occasion for Southern Seminary to honor Dr. McCall for the 60th anniversary of his election as president of this institution."

McCall, whose contributions to the Southern Baptist Convention cover most of the 20th century, massively shaped both Southern Seminary and the convention in

ways that continue to define them today.

The celebration took place the same day as the inaugural address in the Duke K. McCall Lectures on Christian Leadership series, which was endowed by the McCall Family Foundation, an endowment that includes the establishment of the Duke K. McCall Chair of Christian Leadership.

"Dr. Duke McCall is representative of a generation of Southern Baptists who served and built this denomination, its churches and institutions," Mohler said. "We need to remember that we are living in houses we did not build and we are drinking from wells we did not dig. And, as God's people are warned not to take these things for granted, we must live in constant appreciation to those who helped to build all that we build upon."

"At the same time, it is very important to be able to articulate what has taken place in the life of the Southern Baptist Convention and why it's so important to affirm the inerrancy of Scripture, the faith once-for-all delivered to the saints and all that Southern Baptists believe and expect their institutions to believe and teach," Mohler continued. "To have Dr.

McCall come back, given his own lifespan and role in the Southern Baptist Convention and see him received with honor by a chapel filled with people, most of whom were not alive when he was elected as president, and many of whom were not alive when he retired as president of Southern Seminary was something that was really, really important."

After Mohler's remarks, McCall had the opportunity to respond, and he did so with his characteristic wit.

"The only appropriate response to all of this is silence," McCall said. "But that's one quality I've never had."

Allow God to shape your life

McCall went on to encourage those in attendance to give themselves fully to God and to allow Him to shape the course of their lives. Attending the event with McCall were his wife, their four sons and daughters-in-law and members of their extended family.

"The McCall family," Mohler said, "has meant so much to the history of the Southern Baptist Convention and to Southern Seminary." (BP)

PROVIDE RELEVANT CONTENT

KEEP IT SIMPLE

KEEP IT CURRENT

BE SOCIABLE

HOW TO make the most OF YOUR CHURCH WEBSITE

By Kristen Hiller
Special to The Alabama Baptist

It's no secret printed Yellow Pages are quickly becoming a thing of the past. In fact, an article published by Simba Information in April noted that the Yellow Pages market actually shrank by 25.2 percent over the last seven years and is only expected to stabilize in 2013 as the organization continues to adapt new digital forms.

Make it personal

The fact of the matter is whether we're using laptops, desktops or mobile devices, our first stop for information is the Internet. So whether we're trying to sell a product or offer the gospel, we need to be present where people are searching. As a web designer for ministries and nonprofit organizations, I've come up with four simple tips for church websites.

1. Provide relevant content. While your location and service times are critical and should be prominent on your site, don't shy away from offering more.

► Consider welcoming guests with a video message from your pastor. A personalized welcome message gives visitors a feel for your church, provides them with information about your ministry and

lets them know you care enough to address them directly. You also can cut back on costs and expand your networks by hosting your video with YouTube or Vimeo. These sites have not only perfected the art of streaming video on the web but they also offer exposure to millions of viewers who may not typically visit your site. They also provide a simple embed code to seamlessly integrate your published videos into your own web pages.

► Offer your messages online. Maybe a volunteer in your church missed the worship service because he or she was serving in another capacity on a given Sunday. Maybe a visitor wants to hear more. Whatever the reason, people look for your sermons. So take advantage of the opportunity you have to make them immediately available.

► Provide profiles of the missionaries your church supports. Your website is a great place to connect churchgoers to the international and local missionaries you support. Provide your members with an opportunity to connect with these missionaries directly by providing contact and bio information, as well as links to missionary blogs.

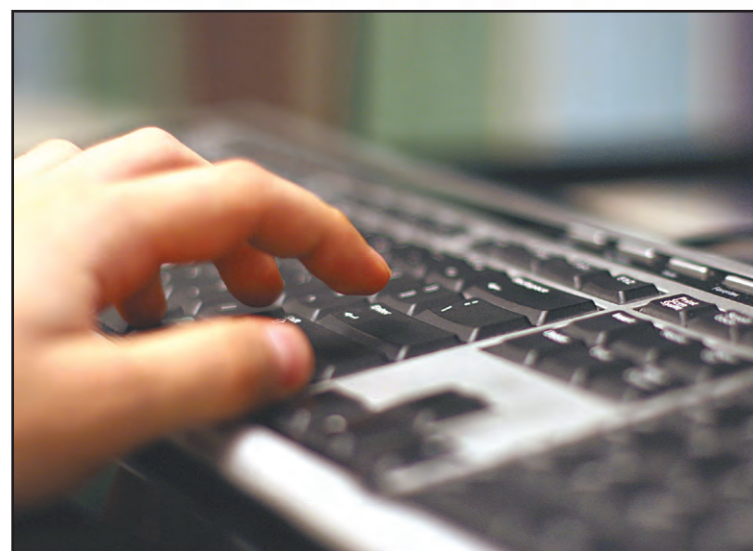
2. Keep it simple. In 2000, Steve Krug came out with an interesting read called "Don't Make Me Think!" The book is based on the

premise that it is not the end user's responsibility to figure out how to navigate your website. Rather it's the designer's responsibility to make the site so intuitive that the user shouldn't have to think to find the information he or she is looking for. More than a decade later, this concept is just as valuable as ever before. If site visitors have to spend time searching for your service times, then you may lose them before they ever reach the church doors. Make sure the most important information is front and center and your navigation is clean and intuitive.

3. Keep it current. Are you using an events calendar? Not only could this information boost attendance at events and cut down your administrative staff's time fielding calls but an up-to-date events calendar also shows visitors your church is alive and active.

Avoid a static site

If your calendar has not been updated in a few months, then I would recommend removing it from your site altogether. If you leave your site unattended and fail to provide guests with pertinent information, then they'll begin to wonder if the church simply does not have any new events or, worse, why it is not making use of a valuable resource.



sxc.hu

Furthermore leaving your site static for long periods of time will ultimately hurt your rankings in search engines.

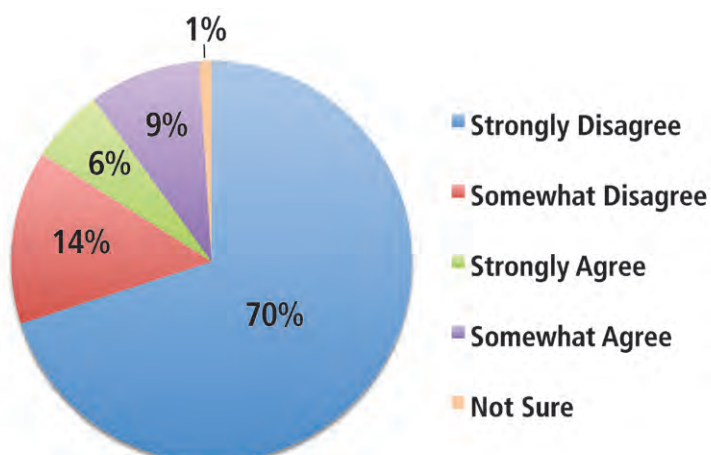
4. Be sociable. By incorporating social networking components on your site, you allow church members to participate in the conversation and encourage one another. Setting up a church Facebook page is also a great way to reach those who don't regularly attend. With more than 750 million active users on Facebook alone, your presence

on this network gives you an opportunity to rub shoulders with those who may never attend your church as a result of the "likes" and status updates of those who do.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Kristen Hiller is a web designer at Servan-Tek Inc. in Wappingers Falls, N.Y. ServanTek aims to empower ministries and nonprofit organizations through the effective use of technology. For more information, visit www.servantek.org.

Politics and the Pulpit

An October 2010 LifeWay Research survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors found 84 percent disagrees — 70 percent strongly and 14 percent somewhat — with the statement "I believe pastors should endorse candidates for public office from the pulpit." The sample of 1,000 provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed +3.2 percent for the total sample.



BWA, EBF promote Uzbek religious freedom

The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) and the European Baptist Federation (EBF) conducted a joint human rights visit to Uzbekistan from Sept. 8–12 to promote religious freedom in Uzbekistan and to strengthen the relationship between the Baptist Union of Uzbekistan and the larger Baptist family.

The Central Asian country, a republic of the former Soviet Union, has had a checkered human rights record despite being a signatory to several United Nations treaties and charters, including the International Convention of Cultural and Political Rights, a multilateral treaty adopted by the U.N. General Assembly. Signers of the treaty agree to respect the civil and political rights of individuals, including the right to life, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, electoral rights, and rights to due process and a fair trial.

Religious freedom concerns in

Uzbekistan include a law against proselytism, tough conditions and the long process required for churches to be registered, and actions against congregations and individual Christians by state authorities.

Violations reported

Religious liberty violations reported to the BWA/EBF team included the detention of a Sunday School teacher at Third Baptist Church, Tashkent, and the April 2011 police raid of Second Baptist Church, Tashkent, for allegedly running an unauthorized Bible school and for illegally printing and selling Christian literature. An estimated 53,000 books and brochures, along with computers and a printer, were confiscated in the raid.

The Baptist delegation, comprising Raimundo Barreto, BWA director for the division of freedom and justice; Christer Daelander, EBF religious freedom representative; and

Pavlo Unguryan, a Baptist youth leader from Ukraine and a member of the Parliament of Ukraine, met with Baptist leaders and pastors; leaders from the Orthodox Church in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kirgizstan and Tajikistan; leaders of the Pentecostal church; and leaders of the Bible society.

Meetings were also held with Jurij Savchenko, the ambassador of Ukraine to Uzbekistan and Behzod Kadyrov, chief expert of the state committee of religious affairs, as well as with the project coordinator for the organization for security and cooperation in Europe. The Baptist delegation raised issues of concern on religious freedom in Uzbekistan.

Baptists in Uzbekistan are primarily Russian speakers who are a small ethnic minority in the Muslim majority country. The Baptist union comprises 20 registered and 30 unregistered congregations with a total of 5,500 members. (BWA)



BAPTISTS RESPOND

to areas devastated by April tornadoes

On April 27, the third of four tornadoes that struck Cullman County took dead aim at downtown Cullman at 2:55 p.m. Tornado No. 3 left a devastating trail from Jasper to Cullman to Arab and beyond.

Tornado No. 3 caused more than \$3 million in damages to **First Baptist Church, Cullman**, and completely destroyed the northeast corner of the education building. More than 70 biblical costumes that had been stored in the building vanished with the tornado, gone with the wind.

On April 28, the aunt of one of the members of First, Cullman, found a copy of The Baptist Hymnal 1991 lying in her front yard in Knoxville, Tenn. That hymnal had been transported by tornado No. 3 and carried 206 miles before landing in Tennessee.

The thought that the hymnal had flown more than 200 miles caused Holly Hirsbrunner, a member of First, Cullman, to wonder what really had happened to those costumes. If tornado No. 3 could take a hymnal from First, Cullman, and deposit it in Knoxville, Tenn., then where in the world did those costumes go?

On her Facebook page, Hirsbrunner posted, "Has anyone in the Knoxville area seen any angel costumes in the trees?," not really expecting an answer. She knew that the same tornado that had gone through Cullman had blown through Ringgold, Ga., and Apison, Tenn., before going on through the Knoxville area.

Jackie Caruso, a member of Christ United Methodist Church in Chattanooga, Tenn., and Hirsbrunner's longtime friend, read her question on Facebook and things began to click. Caruso thought, "I can't use a chain saw. And I can't haul off logs but I can sew."

Caruso soon called Hirsbrunner, began to inquire about the number and type of costumes that had been destroyed and then volunteered to organize an army of seamstresses to make 70 new costumes to replace the ones that had been taken by the tornado.

Caruso's daughter donated all of the outdated bridal gowns in her bridal shop so that her mother could use that material to make the costumes. Caruso rounded up sewing friends in four different states, told them about the project and asked for a commitment. All of them agreed to help Caruso complete the costume project.

On Sept. 1, Caruso drove from Ooltewah, Tenn., to Cullman to hand-deliver the 70 new costumes and all the trimmings — sashes, belts, headbands — to Joey Orr, minister of preschoolers and children at First, Cullman. Hirsbrunner and myself, minister of education and outreach at First, Cullman, joined with Orr to receive the costumes. It was an emotional time as everyone involved in the whole story realized that what had been done was a microcosm of how God intends for His people to work together to build His Kingdom. Everyone at First, Cullman, can hardly wait for Christmas to come this year but not for the usual reasons. This year, they are excited because they want to see the new costumes in use.

Jim O'Dillon
First Baptist Church, Cullman



Photo by Doug Rogers

PROVIDING ASSISTANCE — Scotty Goldman (left), an associate in the office of global missions for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, hands out invitations to Cornerstone Church at Bay Ridge's first weekly service.

'Sowing the gospel seed' Alabama Baptists help plant church in Brooklyn

Planting a church, like planting a tree, takes time and effort. Just ask Nathan and Lesley Tubbs.

Nathan grew up in First Baptist Church, Clanton, where the first seeds of missions awareness were planted in his life weekly through Royal Ambassadors. He went on to attend Auburn University where he met and married Lesley who had also experienced a call to missions.

While in college they took part in a missions conference, then, while attending Southern Baptist Theological Seminary extension courses, they had the opportunity to participate in a missions internship in New York City in 2006. The experience changed their lives.

"God just laid it on our hearts that 'I've been raising you up to be called to missions and New York City is the place where I'm sending you,'" Nathan said.

Two years later, they were back in New York as North American Mission Board (NAMB) church planters with the goal of starting a new church in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn. Nathan took a job as a science teacher in a local public school, and they began planting themselves in the community.

97 percent lost

The 2-square-mile area that makes up Bay Ridge has a population of 70,000 and is considered 97 percent lost, Nathan said.

Working in cooperation with Metro New York Baptist Association and the Baptist Convention of New York, Nathan and Lesley spent three years "plowing the ground and sowing the gospel seed" in preparation for the launch of Cornerstone Church at Bay Ridge. They held their

first monthly worship service on Easter at a hotel in Bay Ridge. Then, on Sept. 11, they began meeting weekly.

Many Alabama Baptists have stepped alongside Nathan and Lesley to help plant and water those seeds. In September 2010, Reggie Quimby, director of global missions for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), connected with the couple at a Send New York conference sponsored by NAMB. Upon learning that Nathan was an Alabama native, Quimby organized a vision team to return to New York in January 2011, to discuss ways Alabama Baptists could partner with Nathan and Lesley in planting the church.

Then in July, more than 200 volunteers from Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills — which has been at work in New York for the past 10 years — spent several days helping Cornerstone clean up a park in Bay Ridge and visiting with community members. They concluded the week with a picnic which drew 150 people. In addition, First, Clanton, and Lakeview Baptist Church, Auburn, sent missions teams during the summer.

Now fast forward to the Friday and Saturday leading up to Sept. 11, when a team of state missionaries — Executive Direc-

tor Rick Lance and his wife, Pam; global missions personnel Reggie Quimby and Scotty Goldman; and communications coordinator Doug Rogers — traveled to Brooklyn to provide encouragement and assistance for the first weekly service.

While there, they prayer walked the Bay Ridge area, handed out invitations, put up posters, engaged area residents in conversation about the church and attended the Sept. 11 service. Lance also presented Tubbs with a check, a tangible investment of Alabama Baptists in the young church.

Anthony Bright was one of the visitors on Sept. 11. He first heard about the church when he stopped by the picnic that Shades Mountain helped with, and was impressed that a church would invest in their community in that way.

Lance said, "Ten years after the towers came down, a church was born not far from the scene of devastation. It is an example of the beauty of God's grace at work in lives of people in the Big Apple."

Nathan is grateful for what Alabama Baptists are doing. "Because of your prayers, your giving and your going, we're able to work and see the glory of God here in New York City," he said.

For more information, visit www.cornerstonebayridge.org. (SBOM)



Photo by Doug Rogers

'CALLED' — Nathan Tubbs, church planter and pastor of Cornerstone, uses a map to show the Bay Ridge area to a group of volunteers.

Across Alabama's Associations

BESSEMER

► **Grace Life Church, Bessemer**, will hold Pumpkin Patch at Shadow Lake in McCalla Oct. 21–30, Mondays–Thursdays, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.; Fridays–Saturdays, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.; and Sundays, 1–5 p.m. There will be inflatables, hay rides, scarecrow building, train rides, story time and games, face painting and pumpkins. There will be baked goods and concessions on Saturdays and Sundays. To schedule a birthday party call Jenny Mizell at 205-477-3342. The church will hold trunk or treat at Shadow Lake Oct. 31, 5:30 p.m. There will be candy, hot dogs, drinks and inflatables. For information visit www.yourgracelife.com or call Kim LaVercombe at 205-915-8395. Joel Frederick is pastor.

BETHLEHEM

► **Mexia Church** will celebrate its 100th anniversary Oct. 15–16. There will be a cookout Saturday at 3 p.m. The Sunday service will be at 10 a.m. Former Pastor Q.T. Curtis will speak. Lunch will follow. David Wayne McMillian is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Hillview Church, Birmingham**, will host Squire Parsons in concert Sept. 30, 7 p.m. Mark Barber is pastor. ► **First Church, Thomas**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 2, 11 a.m., with special singers the Dotson Family. Lunch and singing will follow. Bud Thomson is pastor.

CLARKE

► **Clarke Association** will hold a senior adult revival Oct. 3–4, 11 a.m., with Lucky Teague, director of missions for Walker Association, at Stave Creek Church, Jackson. Brunch will be served at 10:30 a.m. The theme will be “It Starts Here.” Soul harvest night will be Monday at 7 p.m. For information call 251-246-2701. Jamie Lay is pastor of Stave Creek. Chris Baker is director of missions. ► **Stave Creek Church, Jackson**, will host southern gospel group Southern Image Oct. 2, 6 p.m. For information call 251-246-2701. Jamie Lay is pastor.

COVINGTON

► **Southside Church, Opp**, will hold Judgement House Oct. 26–27 and 29, 6–10 p.m. The true-to-life drama played out in a series of rooms tells the story of the lives of several teenagers. See what happens after death to those who accepted Christ and those who rejected Him. The presentation will take about one hour. Reservations are recommended; call 334-493-6340. Stewart Young is pastor.

ETOWAH

► **Sibertson Church, Attalla**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 2, 10:30 a.m. Chip Smith, an associate in the office of LeaderCare and

church administration for the State Board of Missions, will speak. The Debonaires will sing. Lunch will follow. There will be an afternoon song service featuring Mercy's Gift. Gary Webb is pastor.

FRANKLIN

► **Gary Guth** is the new pastor of **Belgreen Church, Russellville**. A Mississippi native, he has served as a pastor for 21 years, most recently at Ebenezer Church, Vina. He attended The Stephen Olford Center at Union University in Memphis, Tenn. He and his wife, Susie, have four children and six grandchildren.



GUTH

GENEVA

► The 39er's C.L.U.B. of **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will hold a luncheon meeting Oct. 11, 11 a.m. Dewayne Sims, of Hillcrest Church, Enterprise, will speak about his recent missions trip to Costa Rica. For reservations call 334-684-9617 by Oct. 4. Mike Shirah is pastor.

NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Kent McClendon** is the new pastor of **Clay Church**. He has served as pastor of Beechwood Church, Mount Olive. He and his wife, Denise, have one child. ► **Glenn's Chapel Church, Gardendale**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 2, 10:45 a.m., with The Unity Quartet. Lunch will follow at noon. The quartet also will sing from 1:30–3 p.m. Thomas Perkins is pastor.

PLEASANT GROVE

► **Pleasant Grove Association** will hold revival Oct. 2–5 at Evergreen Church, Vance. Services will be Sunday at 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Kevin Hamm, pastor of Gardendale First Church, will speak Sunday; Danny Lanier, pastor of Northcrest Church, Meridian, Miss., Monday and Tuesday; and Evangelist Junior Hill Wednesday. For information call Mike Bell at 205-938-0740. Jack Clary Jr. is pastor of Evergreen. Daniel B. Wiggins Jr. is director of missions.

RUSSELL

► Another Day Closer to Heaven Ministry's first Saturday night of the month gospel sing will celebrate its third anniversary Oct. 1, 6 p.m. EST, at **Ladonia Church, Phenix City**. Featured artists will be Young Spirit, One Accord, Faith-Walk, Sharyn Kay Graham, Clyde Brooks, Bobby Ellis, Betty Ellis, Larry Brown, Sandy Puckett, Phil Grimes and Sounds Of Glory. Hosted by gospel singer/songwriter

Denny Grimes and female gospel artist CJ. There will be giveaways from local businesses and eateries. David Howle is pastor. ► **Seale Church** will celebrate homecoming Oct. 2, 10:30 a.m. EST. Former Pastor Dan Deliz will speak. Members of the church will provide special music. Lunch will follow. For information call Debby Taylor at 334-614-0183. Homer Frasure is pastor.

SIPSEY

► **Arbor Springs Church, Northport; New Hope Church, Berry**; and another area church will sponsor a communitywide tent revival Oct. 2–3 with Tim Tindle. Services will be Sunday at 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. and Monday at 7. The Stephens Family will sing Sunday and Redeemed Monday. The tent will be set up at old store six miles north of Northside Middle School on U.S. 43. Ted Sessoms is pastor of Arbor Springs. Ed Steelman is pastor of New Hope.

TALLAPOOSA

► **Wayside Church, Alexander City**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 9, 11 a.m. Tommy Strickland will speak. Baylie Kizziah will provide special music. A covered-dish lunch will follow. Jason S. Rodgers is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► The H.O.L.T. women's ministry of **Holt Church** will hold its ninth annual fall bazaar Oct. 1, 9 a.m.–1 p.m., at the Holt High School auditorium. Rick Mitchell is pastor.

WASHINGTON

► **First Church, McIntosh**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 2. Singing will begin at 10:30 a.m. The worship service will be at 11 a.m. Ed Howard will speak. The choir and guests will provide music. Lunch will follow. There will be more singing in the afternoon. John Stone is pastor.

OTHER

► **First Church, Mobile**, will serve as host congregation for Family Promise of Coastal Alabama Oct. 2–8. The nonprofit group works to address the problems of poverty and homelessness in the Mobile and Baldwin county communities. To help call 251-432-6513. Sign-up sheets are available on Wednesday nights, on Sunday mornings and in the church office. The church also will hold its divinity school Oct. 5–Nov. 9. The three courses available are A Case for Responsible Engagement with Creation, Hallelujah: Handel's “Messiah” and God's People and Comfort for God's People: Then and Now: Isaiah's God and God's Mission Servant. Activities will be available for younger children. Chris George is pastor.



Rock Hill marks 100 years with 'house full'

Rock Hill Baptist Church, Honorville, celebrated its 100th anniversary Aug. 21, the same day it celebrated its annual homecoming. “We had a house full,” event organizer Brenda Mathews said. “We had to add chairs.”

Festivities began promptly at 10:30 a.m., with a registration book available for attendees to sign as they arrived.

A special display was set up, detailing the Alabama-Crenshaw Baptist Association church's pastors and a variety of church members through the years. The display also included information regarding deacons from 1911 to the present.

The service included a special singing and a reading of the church's history.

Don Yancey, director of missions for Alabama-Crenshaw Association, spoke to the crowd, and Don Donald made a presentation on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.

Church member Ed Butts welcomed and recognized the descendants of Rock Hill Baptist's charter members.

Following lunch on the church grounds, a horse and buggy was available for rides. Mathews said it gave children the opportunity to experience what it was like to ride to church in 1911.

Sibling musical group Broken Strings performed toe-tapping bluegrass and gospel tunes for the crowd.

Pastor Hugh Sikes said he was very impressed by all the people who attended the service and all the memories that were shared.

“We were doing all of this for the honor and glory of God,” Sikes said.

Vinemont's Enon celebrates 150th anniversary

Enon Baptist Church, Vinemont, marked a special milestone Aug. 21: its 150th anniversary.

Event organizer Mary Ellen Holmes said the East Cullman Baptist Association church had a significant showing with more than 100 attendees, some of whom had not been to the church in more than 40 years. “We were really ... pleased with the number that came,” she said.

Five former pastors spoke for 10 minutes each during the special morning worship service: Frank McKenzie, Lynn Perkins, Ronnie Jetton, Wintford Haynes and Perry Brown.

Other highlights included a special song and a slideshow comprised of photos of church members, pastors and church events spanning the years.

Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, and Randy Makemson, director of missions for East Cullman Association, both presented plaques to the church.

Following the service, a covered-dish dinner was offered in the fellowship hall, providing a time of further reflection and fellowship.

“We had many who came for it (the celebration) from out of state [and] around the state,” Holmes said, adding that everyone seemed to “really enjoy themselves.”

Daniel Lee is pastor.

Cyclists sought for benefit ride

You can help the world's displaced, vulnerable and exploited people by riding your bicycle, thanks to Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham.

The Birmingham Baptist Association church is hosting Birmingham's first Ride for Refuge on Oct. 23. Rider registration/check-in will be at noon, and the ride will start at 1. Riders will have a choice of a five-, 15- or 30-mile route.

The ride is a multisite fundraising event in cities across the United States and Canada. The

Birmingham event will provide five of the church's ministry partners an opportunity to raise funds for their work with refugees, internally displaced people, migrant families, widows and orphans, the homeless, the abused, victims of human trafficking and children. Proceeds will go to the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, Lifesong for Orphans, M-POWER Ministries, Make Way Partners and Children's HopeChest.

For more information, visit rideforrefuge.org. (TAB)

FOCUS on One Mission

Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions

ONE MISSION:
The Great Commission

ONE PROGRAM:
The Cooperative Program

MANY MINISTRIES:
Great Commission Ministries



ONE MISSION

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

Leadership Lessons

Books and articles on the subject of leadership are plentiful. A trip to the bookstore or shopping online for e-books will verify this assertion. Sometimes, I am stunned by the titles of such books.

A few years ago, I saw one titled *Leadership Principles of Attila the Hun*. In all honesty, I must say I bought it. Well, I bought the book -- not all the content.

For a Sunday School Leadership Conference held in one of our associations, I was asked to speak on the subject of leadership. This is not the first time I have been requested to make such a presentation, but for some reason I had a mental block. I could not discern a direction to take with the assignment.

One late afternoon in the office, I settled down in my chair and asked, "What have I learned about leadership over the years?" I took out a pen and a pad and scribbled down some notes the old-fashioned way.

What you are about to read, if

you choose to do so, represents the musings of a minister seeking to be on mission for the Master. These are the simple thoughts of a fellow-laborer who has sought to make a difference for Christ. If they help you in any way, I am grateful.

For most of you, these are just reflective reminders of truths you already know. It is not meant to be exhaustive or comprehensive, just illustrative and perhaps instructive. Thanks for taking a moment and reflecting with me concerning an elusive subject we call leadership.

LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM A FELLOW LABORER
1 Corinthians 3:9

1. Define reality as you see it, but offer hope for the future. Be hopeful!
2. Trying to imitate someone else in leadership is not effective. Be yourself!
3. Nurture and develop the best

gifts/qualities in your life, and do the same in others. Be a developer not a dictator!

always present, and significant conflict is always a possibility. Be as prepared as you can be!

By Rick Lance
State Missionary
Executive Director-Treasurer



4. Learn to stay in the moment as you look to the future. Be focused!
5. People will follow a vision with a strategy. Be a strategic thinker, not just a visionary!
6. When dealing with people, follow the principle of good news in print and bad news in person. Be willing to have face time with others!
7. Conflict, in some form, is

8. Change is a constant, but for most churches evolutionary change is better than a revolutionary one. Be reasonable and realistic about it!

9. Ministry is not a sprint, but rather it is a marathon. Be one who can pace himself!

10. Remember that our goal in life is to please God, not ourselves or others. Be faithful!

Rick Lance 2 Peter 3:8
Connect with Rick Lance online by visiting www.facebook.com/rllance or www.twitter.com/ricklance.

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

January 27-28, 2012
Bible Drill Retreat
Shocco Springs

Check in begins at 4 p.m. Friday at Bagley, dinner at 5 p.m., worship for children and first conference for youth/high school at 6 p.m. **Guest Speaker:** Phil Winningham. **Worship Leader:** David Crain. **Retreat features:** conferences and activities designed for the Bible Drill leaders and for children, youth and high school Bible Drill participants. This is an opportunity to learn about Bible Drills and how to have an effective ministry at your church! **Theme:** "Rounding Up God's Word." It's important for participants to see how God's Word relates to their lives now and in the future. **Preregistration is required online at www.alsbom.org/bibledrills.** For help or other information, contact Ministry Assistant Debbie Dickey at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 313, ddickey@alsbom.org. Also you must make reservations by calling Shocco at 1-800-280-1105.

Why I Believe in the Cooperative Program



BY GREGORY T. POUNCEY
Senior Pastor, First Baptist
Tillman's Corner, Mobile

We can do more together than I can do by myself. That is a principle of cooperation. In 1925, Southern Baptists made that statement a reality by adopting the Cooperative Program as the primary means of supporting Great Commission work among our churches. To support the work of seminaries, Christian education, missions and the ministries of our state conventions, churches gave one offering to the Cooperative Program rather than having representatives come from these various entities to raise their own funds. People forget that, before that time, the societal method of raising funds was a failure. Some purposes of our convention received adequate funding, while others were woefully inadequate. People embraced causes rather than the overall purposes of the convention. While embracing causes is a way to raise big money for an individual cause, it also leaves important work undone.

I thank God that men had the wisdom to see how consistent, proportional support for all the work of the convention would be better than people competing for the same dollar in churches. I can't imagine as a pastor having to entertain an IMB representative this week, a NAMB



representative next week and a seminary president the next one, all wanting an offering to cover their budgets. By giving a percentage of our church's income through the Cooperative Program, we are supporting the total ministry of Southern Baptists, including the ministries of our own State Convention.

With an increased emphasis on mission involvement around the world by local churches, I hope we never return to a societal method of giving. I hope that churches do not sacrifice Cooperative Program receipts to do their own missions. Last year, our church took ten mission trips to various places—from China to Colorado. However, we did not do this at the expense of the Cooperative Program. I am so grateful that, through CP gifts, when we left China our SBC missionary was still there. Long after we left Colorado, a NAMB church planter can remain on the field. We could return to the societal method of supporting these missionaries, but it is cumbersome. Half of the missionary's time and effort is spent recruiting and maintaining their support. Praise the Lord that our missionaries can concentrate on the task at hand—reaching people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

But some say: The problem is that we have many qualified missionaries who are

ready to go but unable because of lack of funding to the IMB. This is a real problem. Part of the answer to this is to examine the percentages that go to various entities (which has been done recently as the IMB percentage was raised) and increase giving through the Cooperative Program. Our church gives 10 percent of undesignated receipts through the CP. This is not because we believe it is a Biblical mandate or "our church's tithe." We want to give more. In the future, I hope we will. I am grateful for churches that still believe in the Cooperative Program but also believe in going and doing missions as well.

In 1978, churches averaged giving 11 percent through the CP. By 1988, that number dropped to 10 percent. The trend continued in 1998 with a drop to 8 percent. In 2008, the average church gave 5.8 percent of its undesignated receipts through the CP. Have we now decided we can do more individually than we can together? Are our local ministries now eating 96 percent of our funds? I do not claim to know all the reasons that these percentages are dropping so rapidly, but I know that they are contributing to the problem of funding missionaries, educating our pastors and funding the Great Commission ministries of our state. *Source: <http://sbcvoices.com/dropping-like-a-rock-the-cooperative-program-by-william-thornton/>*

I know churches are doing more on a

national scale and internationally than they used to do in the 1970's. Missions involvement is high as it should be. As a pastor, I lead our people to give, pray and go. But decreasing CP giving in our churches is at least one of the factors of why it is not doing all that it should do. It's unfair to say the CP is not working while also decreasing our giving to record lows. Of course it won't work without cooperation.

I believe in the Cooperative Program, because it funds people who reach others with the gospel. I believe in it because it funds the education of those who have felt the call of God on their lives to serve Him in missions or local churches. I believe in the Cooperative Program because what we do as Southern Baptists is so much more than what my church can do by itself. I believe in the Cooperative Program, because the societal method of missions failed miserably and will again. The Cooperative Program is not above examination. If we need to adjust percentages or tweak it to better fulfill the Great Commission, then that is what we need to do. What we cannot do is abandon a useful tool for organizing our Great Commission ministries with nothing better to replace it. The Cooperative Program is a tool that has served the SBC well, and I encourage pastors and churches to examine their own hearts to see if we can do more through this tool.

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

STATE RACE SOAPBOX DERBY SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15

In front of the State Capitol down Dexter Avenue

Registration: 9 a.m.

Race: 10 a.m.

Bring a car and race* or just come to watch.

*Rules of the race and car specifications are available by contacting State Missionary Steve Stephens at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 268, sstephens@alsbom.org, or visit www.alsbom.org/ra



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

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.

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.**

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.

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

Fall Senior Adult Retreat October 17 - 19

Don't Miss This! If you haven't made your plans to come to the Fall Senior Adult Retreat at Shocco, please call Shocco at **1-800-280-1105** to make reservations! **Cost:** \$148 (per person, double-occupancy). Begins with lunch Monday, ends with lunch Wednesday.

Retreat Pastor: State Missionary Dale Huff; **Celebration Leader:** Mickey Dalrymple, Fairview Baptist Church, Columbus, Miss.; **Worship Leader:** John Hall, Minister of Music, Parkview Baptist Church, Eufaula. **Leaders of multiple breakout sessions:** Henry and Sara Jane Lyon, Tim and Debbie Childers, Jamie Baldwin,

THEME: Love Lifted Me

James Blakeney, Daniel Edmonds, Eileen Mitchell, Sonya Tucker.

Special Feature: Wayne Clements, the Gospel Whistler, on Monday. **Senior Showcase:** Be prepared with your own special talents for Tuesday evening's Senior Showcase!

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

2011 Alabama Baptist State Convention Annual Meeting

November 15-16, 2011

Dauphin Way Baptist Church, 3661 Dauphin St., Mobile, AL 36608

Dauphin Way is located off I-65, exit 4 (Dauphin St.) in Mobile, just west of the interstate.



CONVENTION HOTEL: (EXIT 4)

Holiday Inn Mobile - Airport
3630 Springhill Memorial Drive South (off I-65 Service Rd.)
(251) 344-7446
Rate: \$119

EXIT 4 (DAUPHIN ST.)

Quality Inn & Suites Springhill
150 W. I-65 Service Rd.
(251) 343-4949
Rate: \$79.99

Ashbury Hotel & Suites
600 W. I-65 Service Rd.
(251) 344-8030
Rate: \$70 (king or two full)/\$83 (one bedroom suite)

EXIT 5A (SPRING HILL AVE.)

Wingate by Wyndham
516 Spring Hill Plaza Court
(251) 441-1979
Rate: \$79

EXIT 3 (AIRPORT BLVD.)

Hilton Garden Inn Mobile West
828 West I-65 Service Road South
(251) 544-6000
Rate: \$129 (king or doubles)

Residence Inn & Suites
950 West I-65 Service Road South
(251) 304-0570
Rate: \$129

Fairfield Inn by Marriott
950A West I-65 Service Road South
(251) 316-0029
Rate: \$89

Courtyard by Marriott
1000 West I-65 Service Road South
(251) 344-5200
Rate: \$119

Hampton Inn and Suites
1028 West I-65 Service Road South
(251) 343-4007
Rate: \$129

Mobile Marriott
3101 Airport Boulevard
1-800-380-7971 Rate: \$119

Hampton Inn & Suites Providence Park/Airport
525 Providence Park Dr. East
(251) 776-5866
Rate: \$109 (king or two queens or one-room king suite)

Homewood Suites by Hilton Mobile
530 Providence Park Drive East
(251) 634-8664
Rate: \$119

DOWNTOWN

Holiday Inn Downtown
251 Government St.
(877) 859-5095
Rate: \$99 (Group Code: ABC)

Admiral Semmes Hotel
301 Government St.
(251) 432-8000
Rate: \$89

Hampton Inn & Suites Mobile/Downtown Historic District:
62 S. Royal Street
(251) 436-8787 or 1-800-HAMPTON (Group Code: URO)
Rate: \$94 (king or two queens) or \$109 (king suite or two queens suite)

Candlewood Suites Mobile/Downtown Historic District
121 North Royal Street
(251) 690-7818 (Group Code: BAP)
Rate: \$95 (queen studio suite) or \$105 (king studio suite)

TILLMAN'S CORNER (I-10, EXIT 15B)

Wyndham Bellingrath Gardens
5190 Motel Court, Tillman's Corner
(251) 661-9099
Rate: \$79

DAPHNE/SPANISH FORT

Homewood Suites Mobile East Bay/Daphne
29474 North Main St., Daphne
(251) 621-0100
Rate: \$129 (studio king suite or one bedroom king suite)

Hilton Garden Inn Mobile East Bay/Daphne
29546 North Main St., Daphne
(251) 625-0020
Rate: \$119 (king) or \$109 (two queens)

Hampton Inn Nature on the Bay
29451 Hwy. 98, Daphne
(251) 626-2220
Rate: \$129 (bay side) or \$119 (city side)

Courtyard by Marriott
13000 Cypress Way, Spanish Fort
Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott
13000 Cypress Way, Spanish Fort
(251) 370-1160
Rate: \$79 (Sunday night), \$89 (Monday-Wednesday)

The preceding hotels have offered special rates to those attending the State Convention Annual Meeting. Unless otherwise noted, request the Alabama Baptist Convention group rate. Rates listed do not include taxes. This information is provided as a service and not intended to be a recommendation of any kind. If you have problems making a reservation or securing the posted rate at any of these hotels, please contact Charleen Hobbs at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 231, or chobbs@alsbom.org.

FOCUS on One Mission

**2011 ALABAMA
BAPTIST STATE
CONVENTION
ANNUAL MEETING**

**TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 15-16
DAUPHIN WAY BAPTIST
CHURCH, MOBILE**

Begins at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday
and concludes at 11:55 a.m.
Wednesday

**Don't miss the special time of worship
Tuesday evening,
November 15, at 6:45 p.m.** (Presession
music at 6:40 p.m.)

Message by Fred Luter



Fred Luter is pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, and second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

**Special Music by Voices,
University of Mobile**

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Pastor, First Baptist Church, Pelham
(president's address)



Rick Evans
Pastor, Dalraida Baptist Church,
Montgomery (convention sermon)

Theme Interpretation Speakers

Adam Dooley
Pastor, Dauphin Way
Baptist Church, Mobile



Charles T. Carter
Chapman Fellow of Pastoral Ministry,
Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham



Rob Jackson
Pastor, Central
Baptist Church,
Decatur



For more information about the State Convention meeting, visit www.alsbom.org/convention or scan this QR code on your smartphone.



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in partnership with the Alabama State Board of Missions



The Youth Ministry Academy at Samford University is designed to equip youth ministers and youth volunteers with essential information for effectively leading youth groups.

Sessions will be held at Samford University each Saturday in January 2012, 9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. The last session will be held at Conclave 2012 in Chattanooga, Tenn.

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For more information, contact Chris McCaghren at 205-726-4065 or cjmccagh@samford.edu

YMA@Samford is a partnership between Samford University and the Office of Collegiate and Student Ministries at the Alabama State Board of Missions.

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Thursday and Friday, October 20 & 21, 2011
Beginning at 10 a.m.

Senior Adult Choir Festivals

"Sing to the Lord a new song..." Psalm 96:1

October 20: Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham
Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery

October 21: First Baptist Church, Bay Minette
Lakewood Baptist Church, Phenix City

Be prepared to sing two songs.

For more information, please call 1-800-264-1225:
State Missionary Keith Hibbs, ext. 217, khibbs@alsbom.org or
Ministry Assistant Susan Corley, ext. 279, scorley@alsbom.org.

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New Songs 2012 Tour

7th & 8th Grade
Honor Choir

Friday through Sunday, January 6-8, 2012
Shocco Springs, Talladega and Albertville
Featuring Ed Cleveland, guest clinician.

Cost is \$225 due by December 12. Includes music, shirt, local bus transportation, meals and activity. Students must arrange transportation to Shocco Springs and from Albertville. Audition forms and CDs are due by November 11. Notifications will be sent out by November 18.

Event Updates: www.alsbom.org/newsong

For a detailed tentative schedule and other information, please call 1-800-264-1225: State Missionary Keith Hibbs, ext. 217, khibbs@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Susan Corley, ext. 279, scorley@alsbom.org.

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CHILDREN'S HONOR CHOR

TOUR DATES: FRIDAY THROUGH SUNDAY, MARCH 2-4, 2012

150 children will be chosen from 4th-6th graders from all over Alabama. (Must be actively involved in their church's choir program.) Two required area rehearsals (one in January and one in February).

Includes rehearsals, activities, fun time and great swimming in great hotel.

Cost: tentatively set at \$200 (due February 1, 2012). Includes bus transportation at site, meals/lodging, music, concert t-shirts and activity.

Audition Deadline: November 1

For more information, please call 1-800-264-1225: State Missionary Keith Hibbs, ext. 217, khibbs@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Susan Corley, ext. 279, scorley@alsbom.org.

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



October
7-9, 2011

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!

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

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, **1.800.264.1225**, ext. **276**.

www.thestudenthub.org

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

Want to know God?

By Pastor Jamey Williams
Rock Springs Baptist Church, Jacksons Gap

Romans 3:23 says all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. That means that whoever you are you are a sinner in need of salvation.

A preacher was walking down the road one day when he saw a group of young boys surrounding a dog. "What are you boys doing with that dog?" he asked. Well whoever told the biggest lie would win the dog. "When I was your age, I never told a lie," the preacher said. There were a few moments of silence and then one boy said, "Here, mister, you win the dog."

Romans 6:23 says the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A woman was walking down a residential street and noticed a little old man rocking in a chair on his porch. She called to him, "Hello there! I couldn't help but notice how happy you look. What's your secret for a long, happy life?" "I smoke three packs of cigarettes a day," he said. "I also drink a case of whiskey a week, eat nothing but fast food and never exercise." "Wow!" the woman said. "How old are you?" "Twenty-six," he replied.

Romans 10:9 says if we confess with our mouths and believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead, then we will be saved. That sounds simple enough, right? Then why don't more people do it? The answer is that the passage is often misunderstood and misquoted to mean that we just make confession with our mouths and then we are saved. But we must not leave out the "believe in our hearts" part.

A huge crowd was watching the famous tightrope walker Blondin cross Niagara Falls one day in 1860. He crossed it many times — a 1,100-foot trip, 160 feet above the raging waters. He asked if the crowd believed he could take someone across with him. The people clapped and said yes. Then he approached one man and asked him to get on his back and go with him. The man refused.

You see you have to do more than just say, "I believe." You must take it in your heart. If you don't know Jesus as Savior, then please ask Him to come into your heart and forgive you of your sins and then stand on that and begin living the life He intends for you to live.

Historical Highlights

from previous issues of *The Alabama Baptist*

Compiled by Kathleen Prude

50 Years Ago September 1961

Building Dedication: Recently First Baptist Church, New Hope, held a service dedicating its new building. The service was led by J.E. Jones, pastor, and W.L. Lasseater, chairman of the building committee and the board of deacons. Harry Blackburn, in whose home First, New Hope, was organized in 1935, gave the dedication prayer. The new building was financed through a recent bond drive in which all bonds were sold within 24 hours. Every person present at the dedication service took part.

40 Years Ago September 1971

70th Anniversary Observance:

Members of First Baptist Church, Slocomb, observed the 70th anniversary of the church Aug. 29 with special services, a fellowship hour and open house. Under the direction of Pastor Jack Drinkwater and Interim Minister of Music Lyn Bartlow, head of the music department of the Baptist Bible Institute in Graceville, Fla., the program featured music, worship and history. J.A. Hardwick, a deacon and former trustee, was given an award for having the longest continuous membership — 1908 to present.

30 Years Ago September 1981

150 Years of Service: On Sept. 20, Concord Baptist Church observed its 150 years of continu-

ous service to the people of Buena Vista, Monroe County and the surrounding areas. The speaker for the anniversary program was John Henry Finklea, a native of Buena Vista, who joined Concord Baptist as a child. He is now a member of First Baptist Church, Monroeville. Stephen Brooks Knight, son of A.H. and Julia Finklea Knight (a native of Buena Vista), of Samford University's music school faculty directed the music for the session. The church was established in 1831 and has been entered in the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage. This places the church's history in the prestigious listing of historic landmarks.

20 Years Ago September 1991

Sesquicentennial Anniversary: Eutaw Baptist Church, organized in 1841, recently celebrated its sesquicentennial anniversary. C.C. Randall, who is presently serving as Eutaw Baptist's interim pas-

tor, preached the sermon. Titus Aldridge, former pastor of Eutaw Baptist who now serves as senior adult pastor of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, gave a brief history of Eutaw Baptist. More than 200 members and guests celebrated this important occasion.

10 Years Ago September 2001

Missions Trip: When members of Valley View Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, visited San Vicente, Honduras, recently, the entire congregation was involved. Pastor Mike Hall said 23 church members traveled to Honduras, along with 23 missions workers from other area churches. But other Valley View Baptist members were involved in preparation for the trip. "They helped through funding, packing supplies and donating eyeglasses and clothes," Hall said. "Our senior adult ladies made 300 dolls for the children and prayed and encouraged team members."

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CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR: Larkinsville Baptist Church, Scottsboro, Ala., is now accepting resumes for a pastor. All full-time and bivocational resumes are desired. Please mail resumes to: Larkinsville Baptist Church, c/o Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 517, Scottsboro, AL 35768.

PASTOR: Central Heights Baptist Church in Florence, Ala., is now accepting resumes for pastor. All full-time and bivocational resumes are desired. Please mail all resumes to: Central Heights Baptist Church, c/o Pastor Search Committee, 10090 Co. Rd. 15, Florence, AL 35633. 256-764-4869.

SENIOR PASTOR: Church prayerfully seeking God's leadership in search for senior pastor. Please mail resumés to: First Baptist Church of Rogersville, 222 College Street, Rogersville, AL 35652.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Bivocational pastor needed at County Line Baptist Church, a church that finds joy in the Lord, located seven miles east of Warrior. Please send resumés to: colinebaptist@bellsouth.net or P.O. Box 605, Warrior, AL 35180.

FULL-TIME MUSIC MINISTER/WORSHIP LEADER: FBC Ashland. Blended worship. For more information: Pastor Ross Kilpatrick, 334-402-0028, or Mike Coleman, 256-276-0081. Submit resumés: wrosskilpatrick@yahoo.com.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF WORSHIP/FAMILY MINISTRIES: Ridgecrest Baptist Church is currently accepting resumés for a full-time minister of worship/family ministries. Submit resumés to: Worship Search Team, 5260 Vaughn Road, Montgomery, AL 36116, or email: Michael@

rbcmontgomery.com.

PART-TIME OR BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER: Ashby Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking someone to come and lead our worship. Experienced in contemporary and blended worship services. Please send resumés to: Bob Hodges at eleinspector@yahoo.com, or P.O. Box 22, Brierfield AL 35035.

WORSHIP LEADER: Pisgah Baptist Church is now accepting resumés for part-time worship leader. Please mail resumés to: P.O. Box 10, Pisgah, AL 35765. You may contact the church office at 256-451-3044 or via email from www.pisgahbaptist.com.

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

STUDENT MINISTER: Southside Baptist Church, Andalusia, Ala., is currently seeking a full-time student minister to work with 6th grade through college age students. Please send resumés to: Student Minister Search Committee, Southside Baptist Church, 1213 W. Bypass, Andalusia, AL 36420, 334-222-4300.

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER: Grades 7-12 for Hillwood Baptist Church. Send resumés to: Personnel, Hillwood Baptist Church, 305 Kohler Road, Huntsville, AL 35803, or to: hbcpersonnel@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL OR PART-TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTER: For Baptist church in Eclectic. Seminary degree or academic degree of childhood development nature is desired. Submit resumés to: dmcghee@neptunetg.com or call 334-799-2034.

OTHER POSITIONS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS: Madison Baptist Association is receiving resumés for the position of executive director of missions. If interested, send resumés to: Whitesburg Baptist Church, 6806 Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville, AL 35802, or email to: terry.herald@wbccares.org.

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

BUSINESS

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1 in 5 Americans see God actively involved in daily workings of nation's economy

The way you see God tells a lot about how you see the U.S. economy, according to a new national survey.

About one in five Americans combine a view of God as actively engaged in daily workings of the world with an economic conservative view that opposes government regulation and champions the free market as a matter of faith.

"They say the invisible hand of the free market is really God at work," said sociologist Paul Froese, co-author of the Baylor Religion Survey, released Sept. 20 by Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

'Economic idealism'

"They think the economy works because God wants it to work. It's a new religious economic idealism," with politicians "invoking God while chanting 'less government.'"

Most (81 percent) political conservatives say there is one "ultimate truth in the world, and new economic information of cost-benefit analysis is not going to change their mind about how the economy should work," Froese said.

At the opposite pole, another one in five Americans don't see God stepping in to their daily lives and favor reducing wealth and inequality through taxation.

"So they're less likely to see God controlling the economy. Liberal economic perspectives are synonymous with the belief that there is no one 'ultimate truth,'" Froese said.

This is a distinctly American cultural finding and specific to this point in history.

It was different in the past, it might be different in the future and it's different now in Western Europe, Froese said.

The survey of 1,714 U.S. adults, conducted by Gallup in fall 2010, was funded by Baylor, the National Science Foundation and the John Templeton Foundation. The

margin of error is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

It finds nearly three in four Americans (73 percent) say "I know God has a plan for me." Within this group:

► 49 percent say "the government in Washington is trying to do too many things that should be left to individuals and private businesses."

► 79 percent say "able-bodied people who are out of work shouldn't receive unemployment checks if they are passing up jobs they can do."

► 92 percent say "anything is possible for those who work hard."

But people who weren't working (one-third of those surveyed) answer differently, said another Baylor co-author, sociologist Kevin Dougherty.

Working people, paid or vol-

unteer, were more likely (45 percent) to say the government does too much than those who weren't working (37 percent).

They were also more likely (81 percent to 72 percent) to say healthy people don't deserve unemployment benefits.

Dating back decades

The idea of interwoven religious and economic views dates back decades to sociologist and economist Max Weber, said Chris Christopher, a principal economist with IHS Global Insight, an economic forecasting firm.

"Weber's classic work, 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,' explores this. I'm not saying everything Weber says is correct. But there's a correlation — and a big debate over which causes which." (RNS)

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Letters

(continued from page 2)
 thousands who have responded publicly to the preaching of Billy Graham. Accepting Christ as Savior is the most important decision a person can make, and it should be made publicly and shared with others.

George C. Bannister
 Vestavia Hills, Ala.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

The readers of *The Alabama Baptist* have, through the years, been so good to help with Christmas cards for the inmates at Limestone Correctional Facility who are affected by HIV/AIDS. It is that time of year again.

Collect Christmas cards that have a sweet message. Sign them with your name or the name of your group that is getting the cards together. Do not seal the envelopes, and do not put postage on the cards. Mail them to MAC D Ministries, 4030 Sixth St. E., Tuscaloosa, AL 35404. They need

to be in Tuscaloosa by Dec. 5. This ministry is in memory of my son Mac, who died of AIDS in 1994. For more information, call 205-553-1592 or email adunnam4030@comcast.net.

Thank you for caring and helping with this special ministry to a group that is forgotten so much of the time. I look forward to hearing from many of you again this year along with some new participants. Merry Christmas and may God bless you.

Scarlett Dunnam
 Tuscaloosa, Ala.

DENOMINATIONS

I continue to be amazed every time I read a George Barna study or article about how denominational affiliation is decreasing (Sept. 22 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*). The problem appears so very simple to me. The Southern Baptist Convention leaders and seminary presidents need to return their focus to a positive promotion of the uniqueness and positive

elements of the Baptist Faith and Message, including congregational polity.

Pastors should teach their congregations that they have a responsibility to speak to God as individuals and then collectively rule the local churches.

The trend over the past 15 years for pastors to move toward centralizing power to themselves and a few elders or deacons has placed many great lay leaders on the shelf. When Baptist individuals do not feel they are an integral part of finding and performing God's will in the local church, they tend to drift from church to church, looking for a place to serve and connect to God. They are discouraged when the unspoken message is to give their money and attend and don't worry about talking to God; the senior pastor and elders will do that and tell them what God says.

Ron Travis Sr.
 Birmingham, Ala.

Fl. appeals court says it cannot resolve church governance matters

An appeals court has refused to nullify a Florida Baptist church's decision to switch from congregational to elder rule, saying courts can resolve disputes over church property but not matters of church governance.

Several former members of First Baptist Church, Micanopy, Fla., claimed in a lawsuit that leaders of the congregation violated articles of incorporation filed with the secretary of state when they terminated membership of members who opposed views of two pastors that congregation-led church governance is unbiblical. Later the church amended those documents to assign governance to a three-member board of elders.

The lawsuit claimed breach of "fiduciary duty," arguing that as an incorporated nonprofit entity, the church was required to take corporate action in accordance with its articles of incorporation or bylaws. A circuit court sided with the church, saying it lacked jurisdiction over what it deemed to be an "ecclesiastical dispute." Florida's 1st District Court of Appeal upheld the lower court's ruling Sept. 16. Unlike other cases involving disputes over corporate assets, the appellate court said the controversy is "solely over how the church should govern itself — an essentially religious matter" and that exercising jurisdiction would be tantamount to "intervening on behalf of a group espousing particular doctrinal beliefs." (ABP)

Christians in India arrested after complaint

On Aug. 27 in Jashpur, police arrested eight Christians after Hindu extremists filed a police complaint against them of forceful conversion.

A source reported that Nevanti Bhagat, a widow, invited Pastor Jaikant Badiak from Jharkhand and other local pastors and Christians to her house for supper and a prayer meeting. At about 9 p.m., when the Christians were about to leave, the extremists suddenly stormed the house, along with media representa-

tives, and forcibly took Badiak and seven Christians to the police station. Officers registered a case against the Christians based on the extremists' complaint for criminal conspiracy, promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion and forcible conversion.

Of the Christians, six men went to Jashpur jail and two women to Raigarh jail. The men were released on bail Aug. 30, and the two women the next day. (CDN)

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 2

Explore the Bible By Robert Olsen Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

IT'S ALL ABOUT NEW LIFE Romans 6:1-16, 22-23

Living a New Identity (1-4)

Salvation by grace is a wonderful thing. We do nothing to earn our salvation — it is a free gift from God. But since salvation is free, does this mean that we ought to live anyway we want, since our works do not merit eternal life? Paul, suspecting that some believers might make this assumption, emphatically answered, “By no means!” Paul used the picture of baptism to demonstrate that Christians are now dead to sin. Baptism is a picture of our identification with Christ’s death and resurrection. We have died to self and now have new life in Christ. This is one of the main verses that indicates that baptism ought to be done by immersion in order to properly reflect Christ’s death, burial and resurrection. Instead of living life where we sin casually because we are forgiven of our sins, we strive to live life as Christ did. Christ was sinless and perfect, and while we are not either of these, we are being sanctified and made more like Him through the Holy Spirit’s power. God abhors sin; therefore, in seeking to please Him, we seek to avoid sin. This is one way that others can see that Christ has made a difference in our lives, and it helps our witness to unbelievers.

Living With Christ (5-11)

Christ died for our sins and freed us from the bondage of sin. Since Christ freed us from the chains of sin, we no longer live by satisfying our sinful desires. If we continue to sin without remorse or concern, then this shows a lack of gratitude for the work that Christ did. Surely if someone died to save us — and this is what Christ did — then we ought to demonstrate proper gratitude and love by not obeying our sinful desires.

We have been crucified with Christ. Obviously no one reading this has actually experienced a physical crucifixion, but we experience new life because our old bondage to sin has been destroyed. The new life we have is not only a future eternal life after our

bodily resurrection but also a new life now, one in which we are not slaves to sin. We have the Holy Spirit’s power living within us, which gives us the ability to say no to sin. The more we live with Christ and obey God, the more we are being sanctified, that is, being more and more Christlike.

Furthermore Christ’s death was a death to sin, a perfect sacrifice, once for all. This demonstrates the end to the sacrificial system that was prevalent in the Old Testament, which was God’s way of atoning for sin.

Living As God Wants (12-14)

Paul emphasized to his readers that Christians need to avoid sin and live for Christ. Serving a holy God, we need to live in a holy fashion. There is no excuse for tolerating sin in our lives, even though we are still sinners. Sin is not our master. We are no longer slaves to sin because we no longer live under the law. The Old Testament law brought about fear and judgment. Grace motivates us out of a sense of love. If God died for us and saved us, then out of love, we seek to be obedient and serve Him.

Living for a New Lord (15-16, 22-23)

If a Christian persists in living in a sinful fashion, then this is problematic. Paul said we are slaves to whom we obey. This means there are two choices: one, we are slaves to sin, which is evident if we live a life of willful disobedience to God’s commands, or two, we are slaves to righteousness, which is evident in our actions and how we perceive sin. If we have a hatred for sin and repent of our sin, then this demonstrates our love of Christ. If we persist in sinning with no remorse, then this suggests an unrepentant heart, which is antithetical to the Christian life and requires serious introspection. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 13:5 that we are to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith. Being a Christian is not a matter of saying a prayer and living like our former selves. Being a Christian means following Christ and His commands. We have been set free from sin, which should be evident in our lifestyle and attitude toward sin.

Bible Studies for Life By Eric Mathis Instructor of Church Music and Worship Leadership, School of the Arts, Samford University

GLORY REVEALED

John 1:14, 18; 2:1-11

This month’s studies will direct our attention to different miracles of Jesus Christ, what they reveal about the promised Messiah and the hope they offer us in our pursuit of God’s Kingdom. As we begin to examine these accounts of Christ’s work in Scripture, may we gain a deeper assurance and trust of Him and the good gifts He continues to offer us today.

Understand the Mission of Jesus (2:1-5)

In John’s account of the wedding at Cana, Christ executed His first miracle by turning water into wine, and it must be said that John wasted no time emphasizing Christ’s work in the world. John’s Gospel skips the birth, infancy and childhood narratives of Christ and immediately begins with signs that the long-awaited Messiah has come into the world. After the testimony of John the Baptist and the calling of the disciples in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 begins with Christ’s initial fulfillment of promised “greater things” (see John 1:50).

Cana is the setting for a wedding to which Jesus and His disciples had been invited (1-2). It is a small village or town north of Nazareth. The wedding hosts ran out of wine, a sure embarrassment in the midst of an otherwise festive occasion. When asked by His mother to help, Jesus responded, “My hour has not yet come” (4). In this statement, He was referring to the glory of His hour on the cross (see John 12:23).

Jesus’ response illustrates the primacy of His mission on earth — not to give gifts like Santa Claus but to provide salvation for the world. Moreover this response illustrates that even Christ’s family did not receive priority over God’s work and Christ’s mission in the world. God’s timing and ways are not secondary thoughts and determinations; they are intentional.

Experience the Power of Jesus (2:6-10)

Jesus did turn a large amount of water into wine (6-10). One scholar estimates the total capacity of the six stone jars may have

been between 96 and 144 gallons. In doing this, Jesus may have been fulfilling His obligation to provide a gift as a wedding guest. Another possibility is that the presence of Jesus and the disciples had been the cause of the wine shortage and He wanted to rectify the complication they had caused.

Both wine and the abundance of wine bore significance in the Jewish culture. Large amounts of wine (and oil and milk) represented the age of salvation and even foreshadowed the arrival of the Messianic age (see Amos 9:13-14 and Genesis 49:10-11). Not only was Christ providing immediate assistance to the wedding feast but He also was announcing that God’s Kingdom had arrived in Christ.

See the Glory of Jesus (2:11; 1:14, 18)

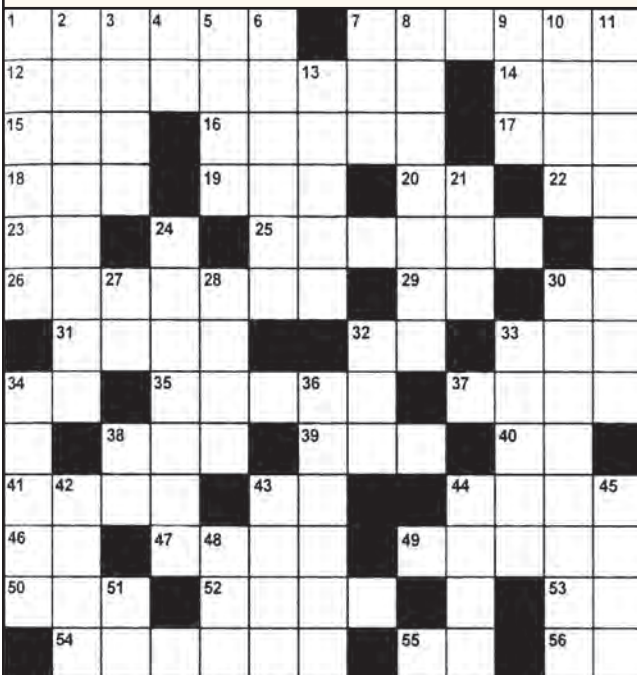
To fully understand this passage, it is necessary to examine the background of glory in the Old Testament. Glory (“doxa”) was frequently associated with God’s majesty and radiance. Although God could not be seen, His glory often shown forth in the form of a visible light or fire (Ex. 16:7; Deut. 5:24). God’s glory could also be lost (as in 1 Samuel 4:21-22), but prophecy proclaimed that His glory would come to earth and convert the Gentiles (Ezek. 39:21). In the signs of Christ, of which the miracle at Cana was one, the glory of the Lord had come as promised.

John’s Gospel is unique from the other three Gospels. Matthew, Mark and Luke often associate Christ’s glory with the future, but John always associates glory with Christ’s present actions and words. God’s glory is always something that is seen and not hidden.

As we study Christ’s life, we, too, must deepen our trust that Christ the Messiah, the Word who became flesh and lived among us, was indeed the Son of God in whom we are to place our lives. When we do this, we will experience the glory of God, the long-awaited Messiah whose provisions for us exist in abundance.

Christian Crossword

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- Across**
- Principles.
 - The sword of _____. (Judg. 7:14)
 - A horn of _____ for us. (Luke 1:69)
 - But _____ mightier than I cometh. (Luke 3:16)
 - Consumed.
 - Nor hear your _____. (Matt. 10:14)
 - He is cast into a _____. (Job 18:8)
 - International Cooperative Alliance. (abbr.)
 - Standing Room Only. (abbr.)
 - A disease of the lungs. (abbr.)
 - Wind direction.
 - Exclamation of satisfaction.
 - To impose a necessary accompaniment or result.
 - Batters.
 - Negative.
 - Either/_____.
 - Lamech ... begat _____. (Gen. 5:30)
 - Saint. (abbr.)

- A large long-haired Asian animal.
- The kingdom of _____ in Bashan. (Josh. 13:31)
- To take _____.
- Oriental cooking pans.
- Very wet dirt.
- I _____ no pleasant bread. (Dan. 10:3)
- Left Tackle. (abbr.)
- Shalt thou find no _____. (Deut. 28:65)
- _____, I come to do thy will. (Heb. 10:7)
- Hairy Southern vegetable.
- Roman numeral for 550.
- Lest any of them should _____ out. (Acts 27:42)
- For I trust _____ you. (Rom. 15:24; 2 words)
- Lay not this _____ to their charge. (Acts 7:60)
- In the middle of.
- Emergency Room. (abbr.)
- Throws.
- Made ... the sea, and all that in them _____. (Acts 4:24)
- _____ Abram departed. (Gen. 12:4)

- Down**
- A prophet.
 - Identical.
 - Request.
 - Audiovisual. (abbr.)
 - Abraham ... kept ... my statutes and my _____. (Gen. 26:5)
 - A person who saves things.
 - They were both righteous before _____. (Luke 1:6)
 - Continuing _____ in prayer. (Rom. 12:12)
 - Long period of time.
 - I have commanded my sanctified _____. (Isa. 13:3)
 - NBC, CBS, ABC.
 - Fill his skin with barbed _____. (Job 41:7)
 - Having to do with a natural science. (prefix)
 - Idols.
 - Christ went up _____ Jerusalem.
 - The son of Gera. (Judg. 3:15)
 - A strong wood comes from these.
 - Supersonic Transport. (abbr.)

- Part of an egg. (plural)
- Belonging to the son of Ephal. (1 Chron. 2:37)
- Belonging to Ruth’s mother-in-law. (Ruth 1:2)
- Used instead of “Miss” today.
- _____ lamp. (2 words)
- Citrus fruit.
- Expression of regret after a mistake.
- Having to do with airplanes or space.
- God _____ with the lad. (Gen. 21:20)
- Yes or _____.



Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Religious liberty report gets 'disappointing reviews'

WASHINGTON — The U.S. State Department's first list under the Obama administration of the worst violators of overseas religious freedom received disappointing reviews from some advocates on the issue.

A bipartisan panel and a veteran congressman expressed displeasure with the State Department's designation of the same eight "countries of particular concern" (CPCs) last cited more than two and a half years ago. The secretary of state is expected under federal law to name CPCs each year, but the list announced Sept. 13 was the first since the Bush administration's final designations only days before President Obama took office in January 2009.

The CPC list, which was released with the State Department's annual report on global religious liberty, continues to consist of Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Uzbekistan.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom had urged the State Department in May to redesignate those eight regimes as CPCs and to add six others: Egypt, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Vietnam.

In introducing the latest report, Hillary Clinton said the State Department reaffirmed the vital role religious liberty and tolerance have in establishing strong and peaceful societies.

The United States "will speak out against efforts to curtail religious freedom, because it is our core conviction that religious tolerance is one of the essential elements not only of a sustainable democracy but of a peaceful society that respects the rights and dignity of each individual," Clinton said. "People who have a voice in how they are governed — no matter what their identity or ethnicity or religion — are more likely to have a stake in both their government's and their society's success. That is good for stability, for American national security and for global security."

Clinton cited a United Nations Human Rights Council resolution approved in March as an advance for religious liberty. Unlike "defamation of religions" measures approved by U.N. bodies since 1999, the latest resolution protects individuals from discrimination or violence based on their beliefs. The "defamation of religions" resolutions have focused on protecting religion, primarily Islam.

Among types of religious freedom violations cited in the State Department report:

- ▶ Government repression of religion or refusal to stop societal acts against religious adherents, with Eritrea, Iran, North Korea and Pakistan as examples.
- ▶ Extremist violence against religious minorities in such countries as Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Pakistan.
- ▶ Pro-Islam apostasy and blasphemy laws in such countries as Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.
- ▶ Harassment of religious minorities in such countries as Afghanistan, China, Egypt, Sudan and Vietnam.

The State Department report may be accessed online at http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010_5/index.htm.

Wisconsin foundation opposes tax breaks for clergy

MADISON, Wis. — A group of nonbelievers opposed to government preference and favoritism toward religion has filed a lawsuit seeking to have a federal law that allows clergy members tax breaks on living expenses declared unconstitutional.

The Wisconsin-based Freedom From Religion Foundation sued Sept. 13 in federal court in Madison, alleging that allowing ministers to receive tax breaks unavailable to other taxpayers violates both the establishment and equal protection clauses of the United States Constitution.

A federal law passed in 1954 exempts clergy from paying taxes on portions of their income designated as a ministerial housing allowance. It covers the amount actually used to purchase or rent a home, including furnishings and utilities.

The lawsuit claims that in order to enforce the tax law the IRS and Treasury Department must "make sensitive, fact intensive, intrusive and subjective determinations" on religious issues like which activities constitute "religious worship" and whether a member of the clergy is "duly ordained, commissioned or licensed." Those and other determinations result in "excessive entanglement" between church and state contrary to the Establishment Clause.

Congress passed a law in 2002 to protect and clarify the clergy housing allowance, following a high-profile legal battle between the IRS and "Purpose Driven Life" author Rick Warren.



SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

▶ Samford's Beta Alpha Psi Chapter Receives International Superior Chapter Recognition:

The board of directors of the national Beta Alpha Psi recently announced that Samford University's Brock School of Business Kappa Psi chapter has received international recognition as a Superior Chapter.

The faculty adviser is professor Sharon Jackson.

The organization's national President Mary Stone of the University of Alabama noted that the Samford chapter has excelled in the areas of academics, professionalism and leadership.

Beta Alpha Psi is an honorary organization for financial information students and professionals.

Its primary objective is to encourage and give recognition to scholastic and professional excellence in the business information field.

▶ Samford to Hold Preview Day for Prospective Students: Samford University invites prospective students to learn about the school at a preview day Oct. 15.

The event will provide a glimpse of the campus experience and information on the admission process, scholarships and financial aid, academic offerings and activities. Campus tours will be included. Registration check-in will begin at 8 a.m. in the Wright Center.

The program will conclude with a noon lunch on the campus quad-range.

The Samford Bulldogs will play the Elon Phoenix at 2 p.m. in Seibert Stadium.

For football game tickets, visit

<http://samfordsports.com/tickets>. Type in "Preview Day" for access to discounted tickets.

For information and online registration, visit <http://admission.samford.edu> or call the office of admission at 205-726-3673 or 1-800-888-7218.

▶ Samford's Wright Center to Open New Series With The Midtown Men:

The Midtown Men will bring their musical salute to the 1960s to Samford University's Wright Center Concert Hall on Oct. 21. The foursome will sing hits of The Beatles, The Beach Boys, The Jackson Five, The Mamas and the Papas, the Four Seasons and others in a 7:30 p.m. concert.

The concert is the inaugural performance in a new Wright Center Presents series that celebrates the 35th anniversary of the concert hall.

The Midtown Men — Christian Hoff, Michael Longoria, Daniel Reichard and J. Robert Spencer — first starred together in the original cast of Broadway's "Jersey Boys."

The Wright Center Presents 2011-12 series also will offer living gospel legends Blind Boys of Alabama with special guest Sara Watkins on Nov. 18, the spellbinding Peking Acrobats on March 27 and the internationally acclaimed Ballet Hispanico on March 30.

Tickets are available now through www.samford.edu/wrightcenter or the Samford box office at 205-726-2853.

▶ Fouse to Lead Samford's Division of Music: Samford University has announced that Kathryn Fouse, professor of music, will serve as associate dean for the division of music in Samford's school of the arts, starting with the fall semester.

Fouse holds bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in piano performance from Baylor University in Waco, Texas; Southern Illinois University in Carbondale; and the University of North Texas (UNT) in Denton. Before joining Samford's faculty in 2002, she served on the faculties of UNT; Texas Wesleyan University in Fort Worth; Collin County Community College in Texas; and Lon Morris College in Jacksonville, Texas.

JUDSON COLLEGE

▶ New Faculty, Staff Welcomed at Judson: Judson College welcomed new faculty and staff in August during orientation sessions.

New faculty are Kandace Shoultz, director of nursing; Karol Purdie, assistant professor of nursing; Regina Golar, assistant professor of English; John Hall, associate professor of Spanish; Sara Kiser, vice president for academic affairs; and Rachel Whitaker, assistant professor of biology. New staff are Vanessa Nicholson, library assistant; Sunny Terry, administrative assistant in nursing; Sarah Fowler, director of Residence Life; Mary Amelia Taylor, marketing and web communication specialist; and Laura Leavell, interim director of distance learning.

▶ Judson Soccer Team Wins 4 Straight Games: The Judson College soccer team is on a roll after its fourth straight victory Sept. 21. The Eagles have wins over LaGrange College (2-1), Wesleyan College (6-0), Tennessee Temple University (4-1) and Oxford and Emory College (10-0). This brings the team record to 6-3 overall.

Christians in Mexico threatened, forced from village

About 70 Protestant Christians lived in the village of San Rafael Tlanalapan, Puebla state, until Sept. 12, when they faced a frightening ultimatum — leave immediately or be "crucified or lynched."

Traditionalist Catholics in the village, near the municipality of San Martín Texmelucan about 60 miles from Mexico City, reportedly threatened to burn down or otherwise destroy their homes.

The Protestants left. The traditionalist Catholics, who practice a blend of indigenous and Catholic rituals, reportedly asserted that 20 years ago, an assistant village president had vowed that no temple of any non-Catholic faith would ever be permitted in San Rafael Tlanalapan.

On Sept. 7, the village assistant

president, Antonio Garcia Ovalle, reportedly met with the Protestants. The evangelicals promised to leave, though the 200 traditionalist Catholics present sought to beat them and expel them right then. The evangelicals' departure date was set for Sept. 12.

In a newscast two days later on TV Azteca of Puebla, area traditionalist Catholic Irma Diaz Perez rejoiced, saying, "They will never return, because we have drawn up a document wherein they have no permission to come back now or ever." (CDN)

Want to see your news in
The Alabama Baptist?

E-mail your information to news@thealabamabaptist.org;
fax it to 205-870-8957 or call 1-800-803-5201. Church
announcements should arrive three weeks prior to the event.



Photo courtesy of Jill Cacic/Huntsville Stars

MAN OF GOD — Daniel Meadows pitches during a Huntsville Stars game. He was promoted to the Nashville Sounds in June. Meadows strives to reach out to fellow players by leading by example.

Most important save

Former Huntsville Stars pitcher keeps focus on God

By Bill Sorrell
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Both saves. Both reliefs. Both different. After being promoted to the Nashville Sounds from the Huntsville Stars in June, left-handed pitcher Daniel Meadows got his first save July 18 in a relief effort against the Iowa Cubs.

Meadows was a Southern League all-star at midseason while going 6-2 in Huntsville, a Double-A affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers.

He had one of the lowest ERAs in the league (1.51) and held opposing batters to a .192 batting average, the league's fifth lowest. He also allowed the second fewest base runners per nine innings (8.42) and was third in walks per nine innings (1.94).

"One thing is his numbers. He had an outstanding year already," said Huntsville pitcher Lucas Luetge of Meadows' ascension to Triple-A. Meadows missed the all-star game because of the call-up.

But the most important save of Meadows' life came in the seventh grade. At a church camp, he prayed to receive Christ.

'Sink in'

While Meadows had attended church in his hometown of Katy, Texas, with his parents, both strong spiritual influences, it was something about that camp sermon that resonated with him.

"You listen but you never really have it sink in until you get that moment where you realize that you have to give your life fully to Christ," Meadows, 23, said. "I understand that I am here for a bigger purpose than just playing baseball."

Drafted out of Temple College in Texas in the first-year player draft

in 2008, he signed with the Helena (Mont.) Brewers instead of accepting a scholarship offer from Texas Tech University in Lubbock.

"I had to grow up quick and understand that life comes a lot quicker (in pro baseball). It's a completely different lifestyle. People get the wrong idea. It's not all flashy money and cars."

Temptations, doubts and "tons of stuff that could challenge your faith" were striking around him.

"I was putting trust in everything other than Jesus Christ. ... Everybody turns to something or someone."

Things changed during spring training in 2009. Meadows became more committed to Christ.

"In times of adversity, in times of failure, you know that it is not over. Faith is a marathon. You've got to stay strong."

Meadows had a strong 2009 season. Playing for the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers in the Single-A Midwestern League, he posted a 13-6 record with a 4.01 ERA and 108 strikeouts.

Meadows played last season with the Brevard County Manatees in the A+ Florida State League and began this season in Huntsville.

"His playing ability is outstanding. He's got a really good change-up and works both sides of the plate," Huntsville pitcher Robert Hinton said.

His strength is throwing strikes. He had 39 strikeouts in Huntsville and 28 by mid-August in Nashville.

Meadows' fastest pitch reaches the mid-to-upper 80s.

"There are some high opportunities where I have been able to get the job done, and that has built some confidence."

He has seen his share of players

who put their whole lives into baseball, failing "to understand the bigger meaning of why we are here," he said.

"You are here to serve God. The ultimate goal is to get to heaven. I am a firm believer that you follow stuff, whether it's baseball; you have got to find the right things to follow, and Christ is the one thing."

A godly example

Meadows studies his Bible to "listen to what God is saying." When he signs an autograph, he adds Colossians 3:23, his favorite verse.

Meadows tries to get other players involved in baseball chapel and Bible study.

"He is always leading, trying to set an example for everybody to spread the word," Luetge said.

Meadows' words and "the way he lives his life, doing the right things, not putting himself in bad situations" are ways he displays his faith, Luetge said.

"You are put on the platform. Everybody is a sinner. Everybody falls short of the glory of God. Nobody is going to be perfect all the time. To tell these guys about the Lord is tough if you are not acting the right way."

For Hinton, it was an encouragement to have a "Christian brother" on the team.

"You hold each other accountable," he said.

When Meadows is at home, he golfs, hunts and fishes.

The youngest player on Huntsville's team to be married, Meadows and his high school sweetheart, Angela, married Dec. 11, 2010.

"I want to be a disciple," Meadows said. "I am not working to be the best baseball player but being the best man of God."

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Muslim extremists to target Christians in Sudan

KHARTOUM, Sudan — Muslim extremists have sent text messages to at least 10 church leaders in Khartoum saying they are planning to target Christian leaders, buildings and institutions, Christian sources in Khartoum said.

"We want this country to be purely an Islamic state, so we must kill the infidels and destroy their churches all over Sudan," said one text message circulating in Khartoum in August. The text messages were sent in July and August. Church leaders said they fear more persecution as they and their flocks become targets of local Islamists.

In addition, Muslim extremists from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh arrive in Sudan every two weeks to undergo training in secret camps in Khartoum before they are sent to various parts of Sudan to preach Islam and demolish church buildings, according to a Christian source in Khartoum.

On July 18, a group of Muslim extremists attacked the home of Anglican Church of Sudan Bishop Andudu Adam Elnail in an attempt to kill him and two other pastors, Luka Bulus and Thomas Youhana, who all happened to be out of the house at the time, sources said. No one was hurt, but the assailants left a threatening letter warning them of similar attacks.

The letter left on the gate of the bishop's house asserts that Sudan is an Islamic land, and that the authors secretly plan to carry out a series of attacks to destroy church buildings across "Sudan," which denotes the north following the secession of Southern Sudan on July 9. Christian sources in Khartoum said they take the threats seriously.

"These people are not joking — they can kill any Christian," said a church leader who requested anonymity for security reasons.

Somali Christian convert kidnapped, beheaded

HUDUR, Somalia — A kidnapped Christian convert from Islam was found decapitated Sept. 2 on the outskirts of Hudur in Bakool region in southwestern Somalia. Juma Nuradin Kamil was forced into a car by three suspected Islamic extremists from the al-Shabaab terrorist group Aug. 21, area sources said.

The kidnapping and subsequent manner of murder suggests that al-Shabaab militants had been monitoring him, Christian leaders said.

A Christian who saw Kamil's body said it bore the marks of an al-Shabaab killing, according to a leader in Somalia's underground church who lives in another city.

"Our brother accepted the Christian faith three years ago and was determined in his faith in God. We greatly miss him." A Christian said the area community initially did not bury the body out of fear of al-Shabaab extremists seeing them associated with a newly discovered convert to Christianity. "The community feared burying him, and his body lay in the open for two days before unknown people buried him secretly," the Christian said. Another Christian convert who lives in another city said Kamil had become a Christian three years ago. "This is very sad news for the community," he said.

Christians on Tanzanian island fear for their lives

ZANZIBAR, Tanzania — On Tanzania's semiautonomous island of Zanzibar, Christians live in a climate of fear.

Yusuf Abdalla, 23, fled to Moshi, mainland Tanzania, after a beating from family members left him with injuries to his head, hand and torso, as well as a serious mouth wound and substantial loss of blood, said an area pastor who requested anonymity.

In Kiembesamaki, near Zanzibar city's airport, area pastors said 28-year-old Ramadhan Hunda Tuma earlier this year entered a guilty plea to charges that he burned the Quran rather than face an enraged mob calling for his death. More than 50 Muslims had packed into the courtroom to hear the judge's Feb. 21 ruling on Tuma, whose landlady had ordered him to burn his trash after evicting him for his conversion to Christianity; he was not aware that among the trash was a small copy of the Quran used by beginning students in madrassas, or Islamic schools, area pastors said.

"Due to the conditions prevailing then, Tuma pleaded guilty because he feared for his life," said another pastor, who requested anonymity. "He chose to go to jail rather than to be released only to be killed."