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INSIDE



FBC Meridianville youth challenged to provide clean water in other countries

◆ Page 3



Alabama brothers produce pro-life movie

◆ Page 4



Meetings related to state convention annual meeting set for Nov. 14-15

◆ Page 5



Annual race run for fun, to bring boys to RAs

By Neisha Fuson
The Alabama Baptist

Start your engines! Or in this case, pull your feet off your brakes.

The 11th Royal Ambassador (RA) Soapbox Derby, sponsored by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' (SBOM) office of global missions and men's ministries, was held Oct. 15 in front of the Capitol building in Montgomery.

Forty-two cars representing 17 churches raced, two at a time, down the two-block track for the "fastest car" title and a trophy for their church. The "most unique design," "best of race (sportsmanship)" and "obstacle course" trophies were also up for grabs.

The preliminary races allow every boy with driving experience to race down the track. The final race allows each car to race two times, once on each side of the track. Boys compete

in divisions based on age (Lads, grades 1-3; Crusaders, grades 4-6; and youth) and wheel size (small, under 10 inches; medium, 10 inches to 14 inches; and large, over 14 inches).

This year, one car sped down the track at 22 mph and the fastest track completion time was 33.38 seconds. The Montgomery Police Department lent a speed gun to derby officials to clock each car's speed, and officers attended the event to provide security and set up barricades at the end of the track.

Working as a team

The push car obstacle course allows the boys to team up with one driver and one "pusher" as they weave in and out of cones, trade places at the bottom of the hill and race back to the starting line. They use the small-wheeled cars for this course, Tyler Jacobs, 10, of Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery, explained. "The small wheels are better for moving around the cones," he said.

While soapbox cars were first "discovered" by an Ohio journalist in the 1930s, it wasn't until the 1990s that Alabama RAs started racing them.

Max and Alice Dempsey, members of Coosada Baptist Church, saw a soapbox derby while watching "The

Little Rascals" with their grandchildren and thought, "This would be a great idea for our Alabama RAs." So they organized the first RA soapbox derby with Steve Stephens, RA consultant for the SBOM, in 1999. It was held in Prattville, but for the past 10 years, the derby has been held in Montgomery.

And the RAs return each year because "they really enjoy it," said Stephens, who serves as derby director.

What they don't realize is the goal of the event isn't crowning a champion.

"The point is to bring in the boys to get involved with RAs, not necessarily the big race," Stephens said.

"We want to encourage the churches to do races in their own neighborhood and outside their church to attract boys in their area (to participate in RAs)," he added.

RA leader Jeremy Birchfield of Cedar Grove Baptist Church, Leeds, continues to return to the derby because his

RAs want to and he sees it as a ministry opportunity.

"Some of these boys don't have a dad at home, so it's good to be with them and set an example," he said.

Others view the derby the same way.

This year, a Bikers for Christ chapter and two chapters of Wheels of Faith attended the event to encourage the RAs and allow spectators to enjoy their motorcycles.

"[The boys] come and look at our bikes, and we come to look at their cars," Tony Newman, vice president of the Montgomery chapter of Wheels

of Faith, said with a smile. At the end of the finals, trophies were handed out to smiling RAs and their leaders.

But that's not really what it's all about.

"[The boys] really aren't interested in the trophies," Stephens said with a laugh. "They just want to race down the hill."



Photos by Neisha Fuson

COMMENT

God Takes All Our 'Yuck'!

It is not a dramatic story unless you lived it. I did and it changed me forever.

It was the summer before my last year of seminary. My wife, Eleanor, and I were expecting our first child. She was five months pregnant and as excited as a human being could be. Because she was tiny, Eleanor was already in maternity clothes.

When she went for her monthly checkup, the doctor said something was wrong. The next day, Eleanor miscarried at almost six months. That was the beginning of a bitter journey. Tears flowed. Our baby was gone — one we had never known except in our hopes and prayers. Dreams were shattered, as a life we longed to share would never be.

The miscarriage occurred on a Saturday. I called the chairman of deacons of the church I served as pastor and told him that I would not be able to preach the next day. When I told him what had happened, he was relieved. He told me he feared that someone had died. Many of our church members never understood that for Eleanor and me, someone had died. Our promised child was no more.

'God works for the good ...'

We grieved the loss of our baby. We had already picked out names, depending on the child's gender. Those names would never be used. We questioned whether something was physically wrong with one or both of us. Eleanor struggled with a sense of failure because of the miscarriage. I remember when she was dismissed from the hospital, she cried about other women going home with a new baby while all she was taking home was a plant. You can imagine the variety of emotions we both experienced but especially her. It took time to regain a sense of balance.

About 15 months later, we left that same hospital with a baby boy. Later Eleanor would say she could not imagine life without Brent and without the miscarriage, we would not have been blessed with such a wonderful son.

Still the miscarriage had a lifelong impact on her. Eleanor developed a great sensitivity to other young women who experienced miscarriages. She identified with the loss of a hoped-for child. She wanted to protect young women from careless comments like that one made by the deacon chairman. She encouraged their sense of worth. She helped them express emotions that those who had not experienced a miscarriage might



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

not understand. And, always, she pointed them toward hope.

My role became talking to husbands, helping them understand some of the emotions and issues with which their wives dealt following a miscarriage as well as getting them to own their own emotions about losing a longed-for child. It is sad but true that men can sometimes be afraid to acknowledge their pain.

For most of the next 30 years, Eleanor taught young adults in Sunday School. At times, she had more than 50 young adult couples in her class. Frequently we got out of bed to go to a class member's home or a hospital room where Eleanor could help a young woman walk the journey of loss because of a miscarriage.

God took our bitter and broken experience and used it for good. As one young woman said, "God takes all our 'yuck.'"

Why that surprises us, I do not know. That is what God promises to do.

Romans 8:28 declares, "And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him."

God moves over the chaos

The apostle Paul, in writing this verse, did not say God causes all things. God is not the author of evil. The Bible clearly describes sin's power in the world, including sin's power to corrupt the natural order. Miscarriages are not in God's perfect will.

Sin's purpose is to undermine God's perfect will in the believer's life and His world. Sin wants to create chaos out of God's perfect order.

But God moves as mysteriously over the chaos of life's experiences as He did over the chaos of creation. From both, He brings order. From both, He creates and calls the results good.

Good is not a forgone conclusion imposed on the believer, however. Good is available to the believer who opens to the work and will of God in the midst of a chaotic situation. For Eleanor and me, it was taking our experience in the miscarriage and making us sensitive to others with similar experiences. For a friend, it was walking with people who lost a child with whom they were privileged to live and love for a time.

Have you ever noticed how many evangelical believers who minister to alcoholics or drug addicts first had experiences similar to those they now serve?

For a time, I was privileged to know a woman who was a bold Christian witness. She would go anywhere to witness for the Lord and talk to anybody. Later I learned she developed those traits working the seamier side of life in bars and other such places.

Another friend ministers to prostitutes by providing a sandwich or a cup of coffee. She is a friend who listens and points them toward a new type of life. In this friend, the prostitutes see one in whom God worked the miracle of bringing order out of chaos, good out of evil, one who understands from experience some of the issues with which they deal.

Bringing out the good

God takes all our "yuck," and He alone can bring good out of the ugly, broken, bitter situations in which we find ourselves.

What is your story? Have you allowed God to take your "yuck" and bring about good? That kind of creative power is available to those who love God through faith in Jesus Christ and allow God to work His creative power in their lives in order to bring order out of the chaos created by sin.



"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

Jim Griffin

First Baptist Church, Centre
Cherokee Baptist Association

FAVORITE BIBLE VERSE: Romans 8:28

HOBBY: Reading

FAMILY STATUS: Married to Etta for 71 years; two daughters, Sue and Jenny; and four grandchildren



GRIFFIN

Jim Griffin served as pastor of churches around north Alabama for 32 years. After retiring in 1986, he worked as a letter carrier and has continued to serve in interim positions as needed.

Q: How did you come to know the Lord?

A: One night in 1935, I went to Mount Zion Methodist Church (in the Rhinehart community in Cherokee County) with my friends, and I really felt like I needed to do something that night but I didn't. I went back home with a heavy burden on my heart. A revival started a little later, and I went down to give my life to the Lord.

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

A: I was about 34. I had been thinking for quite some time that I was called to preach. One night, a sermon got to me in a particular way, and I knew I had to go forward and acknowledge the call.

Q: What did the ministry demand?

A: I think it demands, first of all, a total commitment to the Lord. We need to have Isaiah's attitude of "Here am I; send me." We need to be focused on the main thing, which is reaching the lost for Christ and helping them to grow and preaching the Word.

Q: What did you get from the ministry?

A: There are so many things. The Lord has really been good to my wife and me. He's blessed us with many friends through the years, and that means a lot to us.

Q: How did family members support you?

A: My wife was willing to quit her work whenever we moved to a new church, which I appreciated. My daughters played the organ and piano for me when we needed it.

Q: What difference has Christ made in your life?

A: He's been the center of it; my life has been about seeking to please Him and to do His will.

'Got pure water?'

FBC Meridianville youth challenged to provide clean water in other countries

By John Evans

Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

In parts of Guatemala, luxuries are measured in ice instead of iPods. Simple concrete-block homes are vast improvements. And in the village of San Antonio, clean drinking water was unheard of until recently, a deficiency that hurt the children the most.

"The adults in the village sort of know that they're (supposed) to boil their drinking water, but that doesn't really keep a child, when they're thirsty, (from) drinking anything that they think is water," said David Hutto, associate pastor and minister to students at First Baptist Church, Meridianville.

Members of the Madison Baptist Association church visited San Antonio with the missions organization Mission Firefly in the summer of 2008 to see what could be done to help a place Hutto described as "sort of forgotten by the government and kind of off the beaten path." The villagers asked for clean drinking water to replace the bacteria-infested source they drew from 200 yards down a mountain. A partnership between First, Meridianville, and Mission Firefly made that wish a reality with a \$10,000 water purification system installed this summer.

"When we saw what a difference that pure water made in one village, we got to thinking and said, 'Well, if our church and Mission Firefly can do one, why can't we shoot big and try to do five?'" Hutto said.

One Wednesday night, he laid out his challenge to the church's students: Raise \$50,000 over a year for five water purification systems to go to developing countries.

"We have been teaching and preaching and talking about doing something or allowing God to use us to make an impact on eternity here and beyond ... and I said, 'We've talked long enough,'" Hutto said.

Two weeks later, the students and adults who worship with them on Wednesday nights pledged \$8,000 out of their own pockets.

Missions partnership

Involvement in missions is not new for First, Meridianville, which partners with Mission Firefly for continuing ministry in San Antonio.

But to some, the price tag of Hutto's challenge seems steep for a student ministry with



Photo courtesy of FBC Meridianville

'A GOOD CAUSE' — Members of FBC Meridianville install a water purification system in the village of San Antonio in Guatemala.

about 50 regular participants — a sum of money only God can raise.

"It would be hard, impossible for us to raise \$50,000," said Abby Stallings, a youth Sunday School and discipleship teacher. "But if we are willing to be God's hands and feet in this ... then I think that [our youth will] understand that God is a big God."

To bridge the gap between pledged funds and the projects' cost, the students are embarking on fundraisers such as car washes, southern gospel singings and selling T-shirts. The effort is stretching some students.

"Really the thing that I've noticed is I've kind of stepped outside of my comfort zone in asking people that I don't know to help with this cause," said Ethan Stallings, Abby Stallings' son who is a freshman at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. "I've never really been big on just going up to somebody that I don't know and just starting a conversation."

A major part of getting the word out is selling silicone wristbands that say, "Got pure water?," on one side and "Matthew 10:42" on the other. Roughly 1,000 have been sold so far.

Planting seeds

"Some people just see the bracelets and they just ask what that's about, so I have a chance to kind of plant that seed on what we're doing and tell them what it's all about," Ethan Stallings said. "They seem really interested. Even people that I don't think are Christians will buy them if they know that it's for a good cause."

Abby Stallings said a new boldness is surging through the students; they are willing to share with others not only their mission to help provide clean water but also their faith in Jesus. That kind of active following of Jesus is what Hutto has been striving for in the student ministry.

"That's what I want our students to be, and that's what I will always challenge them to be: Christians on the go for the Kingdom," he said. "Because they don't need a youth group that's full of activities to keep them off the street. What we need is a strong dose of the gospel that puts us on the street, out in the world."

First, Meridianville, and Mission Firefly will be busy in San Antonio for a while. They've committed to rebuild every home in the village and construct a church building, and through their support, a pastor from Guatemala City is now ministering full time there. In the meantime, the students continue working toward their \$50,000 goal, which Hutto hopes they will reach by Aug. 31, 2012. It's a challenge but one Abby Stallings knows is not impossible.

"Let's step out of the boat here and kind of walk on the water and see what God can do," she said.

"I think He would love for us to take that leap of faith and just to trust Him for it."



Photo courtesy of FBC Meridianville

DRINKING WATER — Children in the village of San Antonio in Guatemala see how the water purification system, provided by FBC Meridianville, works.



Photo courtesy of Joshua Walsh

FEATURE FILM — Cast and crew members of the movie 'October Baby' work on the film's set. The movie was almost entirely produced in Alabama. Its special limited release is set for Oct. 28.

Saving lives

Alabama brothers produce pro-life movie

By Joseph Rhea
The Alabama Baptist

Spring 2012 could see the nationwide screening of a film almost entirely produced in Alabama.

"Andy and I were born and raised in Alabama. We love living here. So we also love working here," said Jon Erwin, who wrote and directed "October Baby" with his brother Andy.

The movie tells the story of Hannah, a 19-year-old girl who discovers that she is the survivor of an attempted abortion. In her journey to find her biological mother, Hannah struggles with love, forgiveness and her view of her own life.

"October Baby" was filmed in Shelby and Jefferson counties. The lead actress, Rachel Hendrix, is a Dothan native.

Beginning Oct. 28, the film will be released in theaters around Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee. It is set for national release in early 2012.

The Erwins grew up in Birmingham. They began their cinematic careers as sports cameramen for ESPN. In 2005, they began creating music videos for Christian art-

ists. Michael W. Smith's "How to Say Goodbye" was their first video, and they won their first Gospel Music Association Dove Award for Casting Crowns' "Slow Fade" in 2009.

The brothers also have two documentaries under their belts: "The Mysterious Islands" and "The Cross and the Towers," which won awards at the Heartland Film Festival and the Palm Beach International Film Festival.



"October Baby" is the Erwins' first foray into feature films. Jon Erwin expressed excitement about their new project.

"I directed second unit on 'Courageous' and caught their vision and heartbeat," he said. "I felt that I was on the sidelines of the Christian film movement."

Appeals to all audiences

While the brothers made "October Baby" as Christians, they hope to present its message in a story that can appeal to all audiences.

"Great films don't give answers as much as they ask penetrating questions," said Jon Erwin, who attends The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham. (Andy Erwin attends

Oak Mountain Church in Birmingham.) "I hope this would cause lots of discussion and make people ask questions."

The Erwins hope that the style and story of "October Baby" will appeal to secular audiences and, at the same time, force viewers to consider how they think about abortion.

"[We hope that] people would be entertained, no matter their stance on the issue, to see a coming-of-age drama and a love story," Jon Erwin said. "But if we can have people see life as beautiful, worth sacrificing for — that life is worth it, I think this movie can save lives."

And the brothers' hopes for the film's national screening are being realized with the help of the American Family Association and private donors.

"We've definitely suffered rejection from the Hollywood system," Jon Erwin said. "There's no funding available for the subject matter."

But more and more people have committed to helping him and his brother produce and market "October Baby," making this "a movie by the people, of the people and from the people," he said. The success of the film's limited release will help determine how widely theaters across the nation distribute it.

A list of theaters participating in the limited release can be found at www.octoberbabymovie.net/theaters.

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

Baptist agency closes retirement home after 57 years

DALLAS — A Texas Baptist multiservice benevolence agency announced Oct. 12 it will close a 75-bed facility Dec. 1 that offers assisted living, Alzheimer's and hospice care, citing regulatory requirements for campus improvements administrators say they cannot afford.

After 57 years, the Mary E. Trew Home at Buckner Retirement Village will close doors to its assisted living, memory care and congregate living apartments. An independent-living facility on site will continue to operate. The announcement sends 51 current residents packing. Also affected are nearly 50 employees.

Affected families voiced disappointment about the closing, which was originally scheduled Nov. 9 but pushed back, in interviews with local media.

"It just seems incredibly insensitive, the timing and the callous way that it's been prosecuted," Brad Riza, who resides in the independent-living section 50 yards away from the Trew Home, told Dallas/Fort Worth TV station WFAA. "Does that sound angry? Well, maybe so. Am I emotionally involved? Darn right, I am. You are talking about my mom and dad."

An inspection Aug. 11 by the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) found five violations at Trew Home, including the door-locking arrangement in the memory-care unit and the lack of sprinkler systems in the facility. Affected families said they wonder why they weren't informed at the time.

Buckner officials said the state has granted waivers in the past but this time ordered the problems fixed immediately, and that they had been working with the DADS for 30 to 45 days hoping to get the matter resolved.

Woman admits embezzling funds from nursing school

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — A Missouri woman pleaded guilty in federal court Oct. 11 to embezzling more than \$717,000 from a nursing school operated jointly by a Baptist university and a Catholic hospital.

Amy Phillips, 39, waived her right to a grand jury before confessing to charges of theft and tax evasion, Beth Phillips, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced in a press release.

Amy Phillips worked as administrative assistant for the College of Nursing, a division of St. John's Mercy Health System run jointly with Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo.

Amy Phillips admitted to stealing funds through two separate embezzlement schemes. Between 2004 and 2007 she intercepted checks intended for the hospital and school and deposited them in her personal account. After that she took the bulk of the money from an employee credit union owned and funded by students of the College of Nursing.

Amy Phillips also admitted she did not claim the embezzled funds as taxable income on her federal tax returns, pleading guilty to one count of tax evasion regarding her federal income tax for 2008. As part of her guilty plea, she agreed to pay \$717,999 in restitution to St. John's and \$115,117 plus interest that St. John's reimbursed Southwest Baptist University for funds that she embezzled from university activities and functions.

Under federal law, she faces sentencing of up to 15 years in prison and a fine of up to \$500,000. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after completion of a pre-sentence investigation.

Leaders of major Christian bodies gather with BWA

WASHINGTON — Leaders of the major Christian bodies met at the international offices of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) on Oct. 19.

The Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions, comprising mainly general secretaries and other chief executive officers of the major Christian bodies around the world, together with other leaders of global church fellowships, were guests of BWA General Secretary Neville Callam. Callam made a brief presentation on Baptist life and witness and provided information on the major values that form the focus and drive the ministry of the BWA. The delegation of 28 people is holding its annual meetings at the offices of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Md., close to Washington.

Meetings of the Conference of Secretaries are held in a different part of the world each year. The secretaries share practical and common concerns, including issues surrounding the planning of international conferences, such as visa restrictions, as well as evangelism, religious freedom, justice and peace issues.

Annual Church Profile benefits churches, associations

It isn't just a numbers thing, Chris Kynard said. "Behind every number is a person."

And that's why he believes it's important for Alabama Baptist churches to fill out the Annual Church Profile (ACP). The ACP is a survey conducted each year that collects each church's number of baptisms, offering totals, leadership information, number of members and other data.

"I know that some churches feel that the ACP is not a priority because they feel it focuses too much on numbers, the implication being that such an emphasis somehow detracts from the ministry of the church," said Kynard, senior pastor of Pine Hill Baptist Church in Bethel Baptist Association. "But as a local body, we have a limited amount of resources, and we must make decisions on how to utilize the resources we have been given."

The ACP helps with that and a host of other things, he and others say.

Every year, Alabama Baptist churches are asked to participate in the survey, due usually no later

than two weeks before associational meetings every fall.

"A paper workbook is sent to each association each spring to be given to their churches," said Mickey Crawford, associate in computer services for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. "The churches may fill out the workbook and send a copy back to the association, or they may fill it out online and keep the workbook for their own files."

The state convention then reports the information to Life-Way Christian Resources, which reports it to the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Executive Committee.

Some of the results are published the following March in *The Alabama Baptist*.

'Historical trend'

"The ACP acts as a snapshot in time of the work of the local church, and as such, it gives a historical trend that can be used by ministries to see where we as Christians are doing well and where we need more resources," Crawford said. "It is useful at all levels of denomina-

tional work for assisting in accurate budget projections."

Kynard said it's helped his congregation know what's working and what's not.

"It helps identify trends in attendance, giving and ministry participation that sometimes tell an important, larger story," he said. "And by reporting and having those reports compiled and shared throughout our state and national agencies, it helps us see what the bigger issues are that we should be attempting to address as a local association and a national convention."

Crawford said the results also are used for

- ▶ program expansion and finding new ministries,
- ▶ pastor and staff search committees,
- ▶ associational budget preparation and ministry evaluations,
- ▶ determining representation on various boards and committees,
- ▶ determining the number of messengers allowed from each church to the SBC and state convention annual meetings,
- ▶ religious research publications such as "Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches" and
- ▶ keeping a database of leadership information, such as the names and addresses of church staff and leaders.

As a church, "the best and prima-

ry way to improve the process is by participating in it," Crawford said. "Help the church clerk to report accurately and timely to the association. Make use of the ACP in your church committees and programs."

Valuable research tool

Roger Willmore, pastor of Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville, in Birmingham Baptist Association, said the ACP has been a valuable research tool for him and his church.

"I have easy access to vital church information for each church I have served over the past 41 years. This historical record is helpful to current and future members and leaders of the church," Willmore said.

The accountability aspect is invaluable, too, he noted.

"It is important for churches and church leaders to have some form of

accountability regarding the ministry to which they have been entrusted. This accountability is, I believe, ultimately to God, but the Annual Church Profile also provides a means for the local church pastor, leaders and members to ex-

ercise some accountability among themselves," Willmore said.

Al Hood, director of missions for Winston Baptist Association, agreed, saying the ACP helps Southern Baptists gauge effectiveness in evangelism, Sunday School and discipleship.

"It can tell us as an association what areas that we can better help our churches with," he said.

Thomas Wright, executive director of missions for Mobile Baptist Association, said it's a useful tool for the denomination as well.

"Cooperation can be cumbersome but providing data provides essential tools to understand trends, strengths and weaknesses. The numbers represent people and people are why the church exists," Wright said.

While it's too late to get this year's numbers in for the associational meetings, it's not too late to be included in the state totals. But those will need to be submitted soon.

For more information about the ACP, contact Crawford at mcrawford@alsbom.org or 1-800-264-1225, Ext. 281. (TAB)

"It is useful at all levels of denominational work for assisting in accurate budget projections."

Mickey Crawford
Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

"It can tell us as an association what areas that we can better help our churches with."

DOM Al Hood
Winston Baptist Association

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Faith-strengthening.

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— Alabama Baptist State Convention Annual Meeting —

Meetings related to state convention annual meeting set for Nov. 14-15

MONDAY

Alabama Network of Christian Community Ministers: Nov. 14, Mobile Baptist Association building, 9 a.m. Pastor Rick Hagans, of Opelika, will speak. Following lunch, the group will take a tour of Mobile Association's International Ministries Center. For more information, email Karen Lee at ebmckaren@bellsouth.net.

Directors of Missions: Nov. 14, University of Mobile, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. This meeting includes lunch and worship. Stan Albright, national director of associations for the North American Mission Board, will speak. For more information, call Jim Jackson at 334-567-7321.

Education/Music Association (EMA): Nov. 14, Moffett Road Baptist Church, Mobile. Registration at 3 p.m. Conferences at 3:30 p.m. with Mark Foley on Leadership Trends for the Future and 4:30 p.m. with

Lee Wright and Miguel Perez on Retirement Trends for the Future. Banquet at 5:45 p.m. with the musical theater department and the SOUNDS of Mobile of the University of Mobile. For program details and banquet information, call Sandra Lewandowski at 1-800-264-1225, Ext. 316.

Alabama Singing Men and Alabama Singing Women: Nov. 14, Moffett Road Baptist Church, Mobile. Rehearsal will follow the EMA banquet.

TUESDAY

Missions Fellowship: Nov. 15, Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mo-

bile, 5 p.m. Anyone who has participated in a missions trip with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions or served as a volunteer is invited to attend dinner. For reservations or more information, call Virginia Gardner at 1-800-264-1225, Ext. 238.

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary: Nov. 15, gym of Moffett Road Baptist Church, Mobile, 5:30 p.m. Alumni are invited to a reunion. For reservations or more information, contact Franklin Kirksey at 251-626-6210 or fkirksey@bellsouth.net.

**To request messenger cards for the
Alabama Baptist State Convention
annual meeting Nov. 15-16:**

- ▶ Call Traci Jackson: 1-800-264-1225, Ext. 266
- ▶ Email: tjackson@alsbom.org
- ▶ Visit website: www.alsbom.org

Across Alabama's Associations

BESSEMER

► **Seventh Street Church, Bessemer**, will celebrate its 89th year as part of the Jonesboro community with homecoming Oct. 30, 10:30 a.m. Bill Goodwin, pastor of First Church, Lincoln, will speak. A covered-dish lunch will follow. Sam Davidson is pastor.

BETHLEHEM

► **Old Salem Church, Frisco City**, will celebrate its 194th homecoming Nov. 20, 10:15 a.m. Q.T. Curtis will speak. Juniper Creek will sing. Lunch will follow. There will be no evening service. Tom Lindsey is pastor.

BIBB

► **Johntown Church, West Blocton**, will celebrate its 100th anniversary Nov. 13, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. A covered-dish lunch will be around noon. Former pastors will be guest speakers. Former and current members will be guest singers. Ray Jones is pastor.

CLARKE

► The children's ministry of **Evergreen Church, Jackson**, will host a Fabulos Fall Festival Oct. 29, 5 p.m. There will be games and food. John Kinman is children's director. Howard Gaston is pastor.

ETOWAH

► **Twelfth Street Church, Rainbow City**, is presenting its 18th judgment presentation called "FOOLed" Oct. 27 and 30, 6-9 p.m. The eight-scene walk through focuses on the issue of bullying. For information call 256-546-0471, email zacc@12thstreetbaptist.org or type in Judgment 18:Foolled on Facebook. Craig Carlisle is pastor.

GENEVA

► The 39er's C.L.U.B. of **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will hold a luncheon meeting Nov. 8, 11 a.m. Jerry and Lisa Gay and their family will present the program. For reservations call 334-684-9617 by Nov. 1. Mike Shirah is pastor.

LIMESTONE

► **Clements Church, Athens**, will hold Slime Time, a Halloween alternative for children, Oct. 30, 5-7 p.m. There will be games and candy. Costumes are welcome. For information call 256-729-1328 or visit www.clements baptist.org. Tim Anderson is pastor.

MADISON

► **Murphy Hill Church, Toney**, will hold revival Nov. 13-16 with Terry Wilkerson. Services will be Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. and weeknights at 6:30. Mike McFarlen is pastor.

MONTGOMERY

► **Catoma Church, Montgomery**, will host The Kempter Family in concert Oct. 30, 5:30 p.m. Chad Underwood is pastor. ► **Open Acres Church, Montgomery**, will hold a fall festival Oct. 29, 6-8 p.m. There will be games, hot dogs and a cake walk. For information call 334-263-6215. Ron Davis is pastor.

MUD CREEK

► **Sparks Gap Church, Bessemer**, in the Eastern Valley area, will hold its regular fifth Sunday singing Oct. 30, 1:30 p.m., with 4given Quartet. Johnny Thacker is pastor.

SHELBY

► **First Church, Pelham**, will host concert artist Michael Fac-

ciani, of Waterloo, Iowa, during its monthly senior adult meeting Nov. 8, 11 a.m., at the annex building. Mike Shaw is pastor. ► **Southside Church, Montevallo**, will host SonRise, a Christian vocal band from Hueytown, in concert Oct. 30, 1:30 p.m. E.J. Chandler is interim pastor.

ST. CLAIR

► **Jacque Snow** is the new associate pastor/student minister for **New Hope Church, Pell City**. He and his wife, Meredith, have one child. Paul Brasher is pastor.

TALLAPOOSA

► **Wayside Church, Alexander City**, will hold revival Nov. 6-9, 6 p.m., with Josh Sammons. Jason S. Rodgers is pastor.

WINSTON

► **Winston Association** will host The Parent Adventure with Eileen Mitchell, an associate in the office of Sunday School and discipleship of the State Board of Missions, Nov. 7, 7 p.m., at the associational office. This practical approach will teach moms and dads how to prepare their children for a meaningful lifetime with God. Reservations are requested by calling 205-489-5137 by Nov. 2. The association also will hold a January Bible study preview for pastors or teachers who will be leading the Bible study in churches Nov. 28, 7 p.m., at the associational office. Director of Missions Al Hood will lead. ► **First Church, Arley**, will hold an evangelism celebration Nov. 13, 5 p.m. Mike Montgomery, of Bowling Green, Ky., will speak. There will be special music. Roger Houston is pastor.

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

Covington director of missions announces retirement

Larry Cummings, director of missions (DOM) for Covington Baptist Association, recently announced plans to retire at the end of 2011. But don't expect Cummings' fervor for ministry to change.

"Retirement for us does not mean sitting down," he said of himself and wife Genia. "We're still going to be involved in ministry — however the Lord chooses for that to happen. We're just going to be available, and we're excited about the next chapter, not only in life but in our spiritual journey as well."

Cummings has served in Covington Association for 23 years. He served as pastor of Westview Baptist Church, Opp, before becoming DOM 11 years ago.

Throughout his tenure as DOM, Cummings has been a part of many exciting missions endeavors.

"Covington Association has a strong history in being involved in Christian social ministries," he said. "The last few years, we've become more involved in missions beyond the local area."

A highlight of his tenure was establishing the Missions and Ministry Scholarship Program.

"Our desire and our goal is to be able to provide up to 50 percent of the cost of the missions trip for members of our churches in the Covington Baptist Association," Cummings explained.

"We've had a number of people who have shared with us that they would not have been able to participate in a missions trip ... except they were able to get that scholarship."

He added the association is now approaching the \$100,000 mark of scholarship funds given to people for missions opportunities.

After the April 27 tornadoes, Covington Association's laundry unit was deployed to DeKalb Baptist Association. "We try to maintain a high level of preparedness when disaster comes," Cummings noted.

Next year, Covington Association plans to send missions teams to Ecuador, Haiti, Michigan and New York.

As for future plans for Cummings, he divulged that he and his wife plan to relocate to be closer to their children and grandchildren.

Beyond that, he said they don't have specific plans aside from "just making ourselves available for however God wants to use us."

"It's been a pleasure to serve with these churches in the Covington Baptist Association, and it's been a wonderful experience for me," Cummings said.

"It's also been a great learning experience and joy working with our partners at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions."

Gardendale FBC sees 50 baptisms in single week

The week of Oct. 2, Gardendale First Baptist Church saw 50 people pass through the baptismal waters: 30 during the two Sunday morning services and another 20 Wednesday evening. Another 27 people are scheduled for baptism in early November.

"We baptized people from young children to retirees. I recall a husband and wife being baptized together as well as a father and son. And we're reaching diverse ethnicities," said Mark Harrison, executive pastor of ministries for the North Jefferson Baptist Association church.

What triggered such a response? On Sept. 25, Senior Pastor Kevin Hamm concluded a three-part sermon series on Christ's Second Coming.

"The idea began as we were planning to honor 9/11 respondents. America wasn't prepared for that attack; we must be ready for Christ's return," Hamm explained.

He followed the series with an Oct. 2 sermon titled "I'm Saved and I Know It."

"It began out of my concern that most people don't know how to share the gospel. The message then turned from one of teaching how to witness to warning that a person can't give away what he doesn't have," Hamm said.

"One reason there's so much conflict in some churches ... is that there are so many lost people on church membership rolls. If you've got a lot of conflict, you've got a lot of lost people. We want our church members to be sure of their salvation, and we want them inviting and reaching the lost."



Photo courtesy of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church

PLEASANT GROVE ORGANIST, PIANIST RETIRE

Terrill Murphree (left) and Pam Cross retired Sept. 25 after serving 54 years as organist and 36 years as pianist, respectively, for Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Moulton. Pictured with them is Minister of Music Tommy Whitlow, who has served alongside them for the past 30 years.

Seminar to train in tragedy relief

A neighbor's son died in a car accident. Last week, a friend lost his job. Every day, a person can face some kind of tragedy. So how can the body of Christ be prepared to share hope in the midst of tragedy?

The Billy Graham Rapid Response Team, part of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, will host Sharing Hope in Crisis, a one-day seminar Nov. 5 from 8:30 a.m.-4:15 p.m. at Mable Hill Baptist Church, Ardmore.

The seminar will train attendees (anyone 14 years old and over) in emotional/spiritual care, ministry skills in sharing God's love and how to develop a crisis ministry team at a church or organization.

For more information, call Mike Clark at 256-420-8172 or email mhbc@ardmore.net. Register online at mablehillbaptist.org or at the door. (TAB)

Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions

ONE MISSION:
The Great Commission

ONE PROGRAM:
The Cooperative Program

MANY MINISTRIES:
Great Commission Ministries

FOCUS on ONE Mission

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

A Baby Is Born in Bay Bridge



birthing of a new church for a highly populated area of people.

Days before this inaugural service, we prayerwalked the area, we passed out invitations to the worship

service and we engaged people in conversations about the new congregation. This was a good exercise for us in many ways. We were able to get a feel for the situation and to get to know some of the diverse people groups in the Bay Ridge community.

The first service for the church was a true celebration. The small but committed number of believers joined in singing praises to our God. Pastor Nathan Tubbs, an Alabama native, presented a

message centered on the mission of the church. We were all enriched by the

experience of being a part of this birthing process.

One added treat was our spontaneous attendance at a Sunday afternoon service at the Brooklyn Tabernacle.

By Rick Lance
State Missionary
Executive Director-Treasurer

This was something Pam has wanted to do for years. The worship service was a celebration of life. The last survivor pulled from the rubble of the World Trade Center, Genelle Guzman-McMillan, offered her riveting testimony of how she came to Christ amidst the ruins of the Twin Towers. Her book, *Angel in the Rubble*, chronicles that story for all to experience.

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 the lives of people in the Big Apple. Pray for Nathan and Lesley Tubbs, and

their daughter Sophia, as well as soon-to-be-born son, Caleb. Pray they will be encouraged, even in times of

discouragement. Pray for victories for God's glory, small and big ones. Pray for the seed planting taking place in this strategic urban area. Pray for this new baby church as she grows in grace and knowledge of our

Lord Jesus Christ. Pray that Alabama Baptists and others will be good prayer partners with them in the future.

For more information about SEND NYC and other global partnerships, please contact State Missionary Reggie Quimby at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 239, rquimby@alsbom.org.



During the weekend of 9/11, several state missionary colleagues along with Pam and I were on hand in New York City to see a baby born in Bay Ridge. I am speaking metaphorically of the Cornerstone Church at Bay Ridge in the Brooklyn area. This was a blessed experience for us as we participated in the beginning of a new congregation of believers in metro NYC.

Obviously, we relived the pain of seeing the visual reminders of that infamous day 10 years ago when our nation was attacked by terrorists. Yet Reggie Quimby, Scotty Goldman, Doug Rogers, Pam and I rejoiced in the



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

Why I Believe in the Cooperative Program



BY RICK PATRICK

In 1988, when Kentucky Fried Chicken said, “We do chicken right,” who could argue? They were not trash talking. They were speaking the truth in love – with generous amounts of grease and sodium thrown in as well.

One may reasonably wonder what it is that we as Southern Baptists “do right.” It is NOT congregational clapping. In 1980, the Go-Go’s recorded “We Got the Beat,” but they clearly never bothered giving it to any of the Southern Baptist congregations where I have ever been privileged to worship and serve!

It is NOT bungee jumping. We may be among the most risk-averse people on the face of the earth. And it is NOT the ability to stay quiet. I know one Southern Baptist who will strike up a conversation with anything that moves.

But there is ONE THING that we as Southern Baptists most definitely “do right.” We do missions right!

In 1925, the Cooperative Program was a stroke of organizational genius mixed with good, old-fashioned sense.

It still is today.

When we give through the Cooperative Program, we do it out of the conviction that there is absolutely no other exercise of Christian stewardship that results in a greater promotion of the Great Commission.

Why is the Cooperative Program the right way to do missions?

1. Churches of all sizes are able to participate. While the largest of our churches

can afford to send out missionaries all over the world using their own resources, such an undertaking is beyond the reach of the typical Southern Baptist church. However, through the Cooperative Program, we can send them out together.



2. We are able to broaden our Great Commission focus. Yes, we send missionaries to reach North America and

the world for Christ, but the Great Commission also mentions “teaching them to observe all things.” This requires seminaries for the training of ministers and state missionaries to equip and assist pastors and staff members in their work.

3. We learn from the experiences of others. I personally rely on the expertise and experience of missionaries with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions several times a year for a variety of purposes: evangelistic tools, administrative advice, stewardship resources, leadership ideas and inspiring stories of excellent work.

Our heritage as Baptists is one of autonomy. Our churches make their own decisions and are free to choose the mission strategies they prefer. But we are at our best when we freely choose to work together and generously support the missions mutual fund that is our Cooperative Program. In doing so, we do missions right!

Rick Patrick is senior pastor of Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Hueytown.



Experience the celebration of Christmas in Ukraine, Guatemala and Haiti (Alabama Baptist partnership countries):

- Meet missions partners from the featured countries.
- Learn about ways the Christmas message is taken to areas of darkness.
- Taste unique, indigenous foods.
- Enjoy the lights adorning the campus.
- See nativities from around the world.
- Shop at the “Market.”
- Hear the Christmas story read in multiple languages.

Senior Adult Days:

December 6, 8, 13 or 15; 10 a.m.-1 p.m. or 3-6 p.m. \$20 per person (includes meal).

Reservations required. Register online at www.worldsongretreat.com.

Family Nights:

OPEN TO ALL AGES/GROUPS

December 9 or 10; 6-9:30 p.m.; \$10 per person (includes food voucher); \$5 per child age 3 to 5 (includes food voucher); FREE for children age 2 and under. No reservations required. Purchase tickets at the gate or group tickets available online at www.worldsongretreat.com.

NOT A DRIVING TOUR



For more information, visit

www.worldsongretreat.com or call 1-800-264-1225, ext. 223.

CALLED TO COMMUNICATE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3
9 A.M.—4 P.M.
 BAPTIST BUILDING,
 2001 E. SOUTH BLVD, MONTGOMERY

Dennis Phelps



Michael Sharp



Roger Willmore



Registration Fee: \$20 (includes materials and lunch), preregistration required.

Our annual Called to Communicate conference focuses on developing leaders as communicators of God's Word. Whether you are a pastor, staff minister, lay speaker or Sunday School teacher, you have been called to communicate the message of God. The Called to Communicate conference each year focuses generally around the following different aspects of communication: sermons/lesson preparation, spiritual preparation, techniques to communicating effectively, content of your message and the relevance of God's Word for today's people.

LEADERS:

Dennis Phelps

Director of Alumni Relations and Church-Minister Relations
 J.D. Grey Chair of Preaching
 New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Michael Sharp

Professor of Worship Studies
 New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
 North Georgia Hub

Roger Willmore

Pastor, Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville
 Past President, Alabama Baptist State Convention

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

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries



Worship Leaders: State Missionary **Phil Winningham** and **David Crain**, speaker/musician, Saline, Texas

Theme: "Roundin' Up God's Word."

Retreat features: conferences and activities designed for the Bible Drill leaders and for children, youth and high school Bible Drill participants. Participants will learn how God's Word relates to their lives now and for the future; they will also be better prepared for upcoming Bible drills. Leaders will learn how to have a more exciting, effective church Bible Drill Ministry. Preregistration is required online at www.alsbom.org/bibledrillregistration.

Also you must make reservations by calling Shocco at 1-800-280-1105.

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.

For help or other information, please contact Ministry Assistant Debbie Dickey at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 313, ddickey@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

301 Government St.
(877) 859-5095
Rate: \$99 (Group Code: ABC)

Admiral Semmes Hotel

251 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 Bellingsrath 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.

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

Great Commission Ministries...

Together
I Corinthians 3:9

Other
speakers include

**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 first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Special Music by Voices, University of Mobile

VOICES of Mobile is a highly versatile, auditioned vocal ensemble consisting of 16 singers. VOICES has performed in the White House and toured extensively throughout the Southeastern United States and abroad.



Mike Shaw

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.

YMA@SAMFORD

in partnership with the Alabama State Board of Missions



Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions



CONCLAVE 2012
Chattanooga, TN

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.

The entire program costs only \$499 and includes lunch each week, classroom materials, books and registration at Conclave 2012. Graduates receive a certificate from Samford University to be presented at your church.

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.

Produced by Samford Office of Marketing and Communication
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ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

February 10-11, 2012
Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery

Cost: \$20 per person

(includes conference registration and Saturday Chick-Fil-A lunch)

THE GOSPEL

For schedule, hotel and registration info go to: www.thestudenthub.org
or call 1.800.264.1225, ext. 262.

Registration deadline is February 3.

Mike Satterfield | speaker



Michael Kelley | speaker



Shane & Shane | worship



2012
Collegiate
Evangelism
Conference

THIS CONFERENCE IS SPONSORED BY THE OFFICE OF COLLEGIATE & STUDENT MINISTRIES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS AND MADE POSSIBLE BY GIFTS OF ALABAMA BAPTISTS THROUGH THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM.

New Song 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.

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

CHILDREN'S HONOR CHOIR

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.

FREE

order your 2011-2012
church **planning** guide

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

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

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



Alabama Baptist Convention **State Board of Missions**



Alabama Association of Baptist Secretaries Conference

50TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Sunday through Wednesday, March 4-7, 2012
Shocco Springs

Theme: "Celebrate Your Calling"

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28

Join us as we celebrate our 50th year of AABS! Whether you have never been to one of our conferences, have not attended in a while or are a member of AABS, now is the perfect time to make plans to be at Shocco. Secretaries and ministry assistants are a vital part in all Baptist churches, associations and other Baptist organizations. Often we lose contact with the reality that our job is an essential ministry. Let's come together and "Celebrate Your Calling"!

General Conference Leader: RoseAnne Coleman, Brentwood, Tennessee

Devotional Leader: Nathan Carroll

Worship Leader: Wason Carroll

Sample of Breakout Sessions Being Offered:

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION MODULES: God's Call and My Character; Are We Different or What?; The Potter's Wheel; Finances and Taxes; Media Shout; Publisher; Excel; Photoshop; ACS, the Essentials; Making Time for Prayer and Devotion; All Things Work to Good; The Different Hats We Wear; After the Storm; Postal Regulations; Hospitality; Social Media and Facebook Etiquette; Website Design; Proof Reading; Essentials: Phone Etiquette, Filing; Jewelry Making; Let's Get Together and Share Ideas; and much more!

www.alabamabaptistsecretaries.com

Look us up on Facebook.

For more information, please contact Martha Herring, AABS President,
(334) 684-9910 or
(334) 464-2016,
m.herring@fbcgeneva.org



Alabama Baptist All-State Youth Choir Tour



April 20-22, 2012

One Voice is a group of auditioned singers and instrumentalists chosen from 9th-12th graders from across Alabama. (Must actively participate in their local church youth music ministry.)

Rehearsals at Shocco Springs/Sunday morning concert at First Baptist Church, Albertville.

Cost of the tour: \$225.00 (includes lodging, meals, local transportation, music and shirt).

Students must provide their own transportation to Shocco (Friday) and from the concert at First Baptist Albertville (tentative) on Sunday.

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS:

Submit a CD of an unaccompanied vocal or instrumental selection (a hymn or praise song) of your choice that will demonstrate your ability in the following areas: pitch memory, vocal or instrumental range, vocal or tonal quality, musical interpretation; a letter of recommendation from your minister of music or pastor; a brief statement concerning your walk with Christ; a completed application form.

Deadline for returning the application information and audition CD is March 12, 2012. You will be notified of selection by March 26, 2011. Those who were members of the Alabama Baptist Children's Honor Choir, NewSong or OneVoice are automatically selected. No audition CD is necessary, but a completed application is still required.

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

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Robertson bows out of politics as CBN turns 50

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. — Marking the 50th anniversary of the first broadcast of his Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), Pat Robertson said he will no longer make political endorsements.

"When I was in charge of the Christian Coalition I was available to mobilize grassroots support for somebody," Robertson told The Associated Press in an interview. "I don't have any army right now. It's just an opinion, and that isn't quite as good as it used to be."

Fifty years to the day after his first broadcast on Oct. 1, 1961, Robertson recalled his network's humble beginnings in an address to a crowd gathered outside CBN's headquarters in Virginia Beach, Va.

"I came down here to buy a television station and I didn't even own a television set," he said.

Robertson said his first deposit in the network's corporate account was \$3.

"You take what God has and you praise Him for it," he said. "Now at the end of 50 years, I can look back, and I said it's all God."

Robertson's network now produces programming in dozens of languages across about 200 countries. Robertson ran as a Republican for president in 1988 and later channeled his supporters into the Christian Coalition.

Town clerk refuses to license same-sex 'marriages'

LEDYARD, N.Y. — A conservative Christian group is behind a new YouTube video that features a town clerk explaining why she believes she should not have to comply with a state law and issue same-sex "marriage" licenses.

Ledyard Town Clerk Rose Marie Belforti's position has drawn heavy criticism, a possible lawsuit and an opponent to her re-election bid.

"I am a Christian. The Bible tells me that marriage is between a man and a woman so I don't feel I can endorse the new (state) law. I don't feel it is right," Belforti said on the video.

The Courage Fund, an offshoot of the Christian lobbying group New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms, produced the video, according to Jason McGuire, executive director of the state lobbying organization. His group represents about 5,000 evangelical churches in the state and opposes New York's same-sex "marriage" law.

"We wanted to raise awareness about what's going on, and we wanted to let the clerks tell their stories in their own words," McGuire said.

Belforti told town officials that she would not grant same-sex "marriage" licenses because of her religious beliefs. The town has since assigned that duty to a deputy clerk.

Post-Gaddafi Libya could have 'more freedom of conscience, choice'

By Ava Thomas
International Mission Board

The Libya that David Garrison has known for years is gone.

It ended Oct. 20 when Col. Muammar Gaddafi, leader of the North African nation, was killed by a gunshot wound to the head — a lightning-fast finish to a 42-year reign.

"The people of Libya have lived in fear for a long time," said Garrison, who formerly worked in Northern Africa and the Middle East. "They always knew Gaddafi and his government were watching closely and they had to live accordingly."

Ever since Gaddafi came to power in 1969 at age 27, he has invented his own governmental systems and tested them on the people. He created a Libya with little freedom, even instating a "cultural revolution" in the 1980s that banned personal enterprise and called for questionable books to be burned, according to BBC News.

He oppressed the people with violence and took away their freedom of speech. He aligned himself with extremists groups in other countries. He led what one BBC correspondent said "may have been North Africa's most totalitarian, arbitrary and brutal regime."

When Libyans rose up to overthrow Gaddafi in February, following the lead of Egypt's successful revolution, he slaughtered them by the thousands in five months of brutal battle.

And then it was over.

News sources debate whether or not Gaddafi was deliberately killed after National Transitional Council (NTC) forces captured him in his birthplace of Sirte, or whether he was just killed in the crossfire when the town was overthrown.

Senior NTC member Mohamed Sayeh told the BBC he doubted Gaddafi was killed intentionally, but he added, "Even if he was killed intentionally, I think he deserves this."



GADDAFI

Nato Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said the "rule of fear" is now over, and he asked Libyans to "build a brighter future."

Garrison said he's waiting to see if that brighter future will bring religious freedom.

"I hope they (NTC) follow through on some of their earlier promises for more freedom," he

said. "Libya has been a pariah in relation to the broader international community. It's got a real chance now to open its doors and hopefully have much more freedom of conscience and freedom of choice."

In the past, there hasn't been much freedom for believers to share their faith in Libya — the government would oftentimes crack down on those who did.

But Garrison hopes with a new government will come an open, free market of ideas for Libya's people in which people can share the gospel in a natural way. It's an important time for Southern Baptists to "pray Libya through this period of birthing," Garrison said.

"When a new life is being born, it is at its most vulnerable state," he said.

"It's the same for Libya right now. It's a whole new nation with a whole new relationship with the world, and Satan will try everything he can to turn that in the wrong direction."

Twists and turns lie ahead, but it could be a new day, Garrison said. "We could see stunning change."

(IMB)

Court drops charges against religious, civic leaders arrested at prayer vigil

A Washington city court on Oct. 11 dropped charges against a group of religious and civic leaders who were arrested in July during a prayer vigil for the poor in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda.

The vigil, held at the height of the summer's debt ceiling debate, aimed to stop Congress from cutting funding to programs that benefit the most needy in the U.S. and abroad.

"We are guilty of one charge: the promotion of social righteousness," said J. Herbert Nelson, director of public witness for the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Nelson, one of the 11 people

arrested for refusing to leave the rotunda, called the vigil an act of "civil disobedience."

The court-approved settlement dismissed misdemeanor charges of "intention to disrupt Congress" as long as the group stays out of the Capitol for six months and submits to a drug screening.

"While we accept the agreement to resolve the charges against us, we do not regret or apologize for our actions," said Bob Edgar, president of the advocacy organization Common Cause, and a former general secretary of the National Council of Churches.

(RNS)

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Historical Highlights

from previous issues of *The Alabama Baptist*

Compiled by Kathleen Prude

50 Years Ago October 1961

'Mr. Baptist': James R. Swedenburg, a veteran pastor in Pickens Baptist Association, was honored during the recent annual meeting of the association at West End Baptist Church, Aliceville.

Upon a motion by Dr. Lon Alexander, a longtime leader in Baptist work in the association, the messengers approved a resolution recognizing Swedenburg as "Mr. Baptist of Pickens County," paying tribute to his more than 30 years of activity in the association. During this extended period of service, Swedenburg has served 12 of the 32 churches in the association, having just completed 25 consecutive years of service as pastor of Cross Roads Baptist Church, Carrollton.

40 Years Ago October 1971

Successful Ministry: DeKalb Baptist Association's first attempt at a summer resort ministry has ended in success, according to

Milton Pope, director of missions for the association. The association also had a successful ministry to migrant workers.

Sponsored by the special ministries division of the Alabama Baptist State Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board, Deborah Wyatt, of Paducah, Ky., and Joyce Hiott, of Pickens, S.C., headed the work.

They were assisted by Lynda Gravett of Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Fort Payne, and college students in the area.

Twenty-nine babies were taken care of while their mothers worked with the potato harvest on Sand Mountain.

30 Years Ago October 1981

Student Center: George E. Bagley, executive secretary of the Baptist State Executive Board, delivered the address at the dedication service of the new Baptist Student Center on the campus of the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

The center is located in the former Powell Medical Clinic building, which the Alabama Baptist State Convention purchased for \$350,000, less a charitable contribution from Mrs. Clifford Powell, widow of Dr. Powell and a member of Mountain Brook Baptist Church.

Following the dedication service, a reception was held honoring Gerald Stevens and Stephen Hollaway, campus ministers to the university.

20 Years Ago October 1991

New Chair: Bill J. Leonard, professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., since 1975, has been named chair of the Samford University department of religion and philosophy.

He succeeds W.T. Edwards Jr., who will continue to teach full time in the religion department. Ordained as a Southern Baptist minister in 1971, Leonard has served as pastor of churches in Texas and Massachusetts.

10 Years Ago October 2001

Distinguished Service: Joe Bob Mizzell has been named recipient of the 2001 Distinguished Service Award by the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, recognizing his commitment to keeping Alabama Baptists aware of moral and ethical issues. Mizzell, director of the office of Christian ethics and chaplaincy for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, earned the award, in part, for his efforts galvanizing resistance to proposed statewide lottery gambling in 1999.

He helped with the defeat of proposed statewide lottery gambling by providing information to pastors, who, in turn, educated their congregations.

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CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR: First Baptist Church of Centre is now accepting resumés for a full-time pastor. We are a conservative, evangelistic, missions-minded congregation of about 900 members with an average attendance of 350, with a contemporary and traditional worship service. Send resumés to: 300 East Bypass, Centre, AL 35960, or email to: fbc_centre@yahoo.com. Our website is www.fbc-centre.org.

PASTOR: First Baptist Church, Williamsburg, Ky. Beautiful, small town located near University of the Cumberland. Diverse membership with an average Sunday attendance of 140. Missions-minded, dually-aligned church actively participating in local missions and supporting missions around the world. Must have a minimum of M.Div degree and pastoral experience. Send resumé to: First Baptist Church, 230 S. 5th Street, Williamsburg, KY 40769, or email to: fbcwoffice@gmail.com.

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

PASTOR: First Baptist Church of Bridgeport is now receiving applications for a pastor. Please send resumés to: FBC of Bridgeport, ATTN: Pastor Search Team, P.O. Box 277, Bridgeport, AL 35740. Deadline for receiving resumés is Nov. 30.

SENIOR PASTOR: First Baptist Church of Red Bay, Ala., is seeking a full-time senior pastor. We are a conservative, evangelistic, missions-minded congregation of about 600 members with an average attendance of over 200. Send resumé to: Search Committee, P.O. Box 616, Red Bay, AL 35582, or email: firstbaptistc110@bellsouth.net.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Southside Baptist Church of Montevallo, Ala., is

seeking a bivocational pastor. Submit inquiries and resumés to: sbcmontevallo@charter.net, or mail to: P.O. Box 654, Montevallo, AL 35115.

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR: Lakeland Baptist Church is seeking a full-time church administrator. Lakeland is located in the heart of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Those considered will have a strong, successful background in finance, leadership, property management and staff relations. Seminary degree is preferred but not required. Please email resumé to: Dr. Ron Osborne, rosborne@lakelandbaptist.org.

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BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC: Cahaba View Baptist Church, Leeds, is seeking a bivocational minister of music and choir director. Send resumés to: nbruce88@att.net, or call the church office at 205-956-9114.

BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER: Southcrest Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a bivocational worship leader with a passion for worship. Send resumés to: 4317 South Shades Crest Road, Bessemer, AL 35022, or office@southcrestchurch.net.

MINISTER OF MUSIC & YOUTH: Carrollton Baptist Church, Carrollton, Ala., is now accepting resumés for a minister of music and youth. Please submit resumés to: Carrollton Baptist Church, P.O. Box 457, Carrollton, AL 35447, call/fax 205-367-8577 or email: cbc01@centurytel.net.

YOUTH PASTOR: Underwood Baptist Church in Montevallo is currently seeking a part-time youth pastor to work with our 7th through 12th grade students. Please email resumés to: info@underwoodbaptist.com.

CHILDREN/STUDENT MINISTER: Meadowbrook Baptist Church, Oxford, Ala., seeking full-time children/student minister. Send resumé to: Pastor, Meadowbrook Baptist Church, 1125 Meadowbrook Court, Oxford, AL 36203. 256-831-1811.

CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR: Underwood Baptist Church in Montevallo is currently seeking a part-time children's director to work with our 1st through 6th grade students. Please email resumés to: info@underwoodbaptist.com.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS: Tuscaloosa County Baptist Association is now accepting resumés. Please mail resumés to: Tuscaloosa County Baptist Association, c/o DOM Search Committee, 4300 Highway 69 North, Northport, AL 35473. Deadline for resumés: Nov. 21.

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Want to know God?

By Pastor Jerry Hood
Mount Enon Baptist Church, Dothan

The Bible, written over a period of 1,500 years by 40 different authors, is the only true written authoritative source to know God.

Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning, God created." After God created the earth and all that is, He created Adam. He breathed into Adam's body, which He had created from the dust of the earth, and Adam became a living soul. Then God created Eve to be Adam's helpmate. They rebelled, breaking their relationship with God. Through Adam's sin, sin entered every human soul and caused us to be separated from God.

Because of sin, the body will die but the soul will exist forever in heaven or hell. God so loved mankind that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the price of sin on the cross so that we can be forgiven and brought back into right relationship with God. God has provided a Savior, but we must take action to receive God's gracious gift of salvation.

We must agree with God that we are sinners as Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." We must repent, turn away from sin and ask God to forgive us because Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." We must believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and commit our life to Him, because Romans 10:9 says, "That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

We must pray something like this, meaning every word from the depth of our heart: Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I know that you died and rose again to save me. I turn away from my sin and ask you now to forgive my sins and save my soul. I want you to save me and be the Lord of my life. Amen!

Then you need to follow Christ in baptism and join a Bible-teaching, -preaching and -worshiping church.

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'Faith and Money'

Evangelicals, black Protestants give more but struggle financially

Religion may not only save your soul, according to a new book, but also could have a real impact on your financial well-being.

New research from "Faith and Money: How Religion Contributes to Wealth and Poverty" suggests that mainline Protestants, white Catholics and Jews are more likely to have high levels of financial wealth.

Evangelicals and black Protestants, meanwhile, and Hispanic Catholics are generally below the nation's median net worth but are more inclined to donate money to religious causes.

The bottom line: Access to education, higher paying jobs and marital status all make a difference and vary tremendously across faith groups.

Jews' median net worth was \$423,500 according to a 2004 U.S. Department of Labor survey analyzed in the book, nearly five times

higher than the population's median net worth of \$86,000, and nearly 19 times higher than black Protestants' median net worth of \$22,800.

Only 4 percent of mainline Protestants and white Catholics live below the federal poverty line, compared with 26 percent of black Protestants, 18.8 percent of Hispanic Catholics and 8.7 percent of evangelicals.

Why? According to the study, Jews and mainline Protestants are most likely to have earlier access to financial assets, while black and evangelical Protestants are most likely to be permanently asset-poor.

Author Lisa A. Keister, a sociologist at Duke University in Durham,

N.C., and director of the school's Markets and Management Studies program, said "religion is the key factor" impacting financial wealth because it influences life opportunities and decisions that impact wealth.

Approximately one in five mainline Protestants and one in three Jews have advanced degrees, compared with just 4.2 percent of black Protestants and 6.4 percent of Hispanic Catholics, according to 2004 Department of Labor data. About

a quarter (26.3 percent) of mainline Protestants held managerial or administrative positions, compared with 16.1 percent of evangelical Protestants.

Marital status also makes a difference: Only 2.2 percent of Jews are divorced, compared with 17.2 percent of evangelicals, according to the 2004 survey. On average, black Protestants have their first baby at age 22, while Jews are 30 when they first become parents.

Keister also found that religious groups that are more inclined to let spiritual convictions directly affect their careers and spending habits are less likely to be financially wealthy.

Evangelicals, for example, are nine times more likely to let religion influence their career choices than Jews, according to data collected from Gallup's Economic Val-

ues Survey (EVS). Evangelical and black Protestants were more likely to pray about financial decisions and find financial teachings in the Bible than mainline Protestants and Jews.

Evangelicals and black Protestants were most likely to say the church was the most important charity and that they should give money to religious causes. Evangelicals gave the most to religious causes, according to EVS data, followed by Jews.

Among evangelicals and black Protestants especially, "there's a strong belief that their money is God's money," Keister said. Bob Louder, founder of Christian Financial Ministries in Marietta, Ga., said that's a common perception among his evangelical clientele.

"The Bible says that wealth is

so much more than just money," he said.

But Bob Barber, CEO of the Christian Financial Association of America in New Braunfels, Texas, disputes Keister's claim that evangelical Protestants are generally more financially challenged.

"What world is (she) hanging out in?" he asked. "Eighty percent of (my prospects) are totally debt-free, their finances are in great order and they have good cash reserves."

Keister said the book isn't meant to be critical.

"(Evangelical and black) Protestants say they are giving money to their church and friends in need rather than keeping it in their own bank accounts," Keister said. "You might ask, 'Is that really such a bad thing?'" (RNS)

"The Bible says that wealth is ... more than just money."

Bob Louder
Christian Financial Ministries

Tithing, church spending hit record low, report shows

Tithing to U.S. Protestant churches as a percentage of income is at its lowest level in at least 41 years, according to a new report, and churches are keeping a greater share of those donations for their own needs.

Parishioners gave about 2.38 percent of their income to their church, according to "The State of Church Giving through 2009," a new report being released Oct. 14 by Empty Tomb, inc., a Christian research agency in Champaign, Ill.

Just over 2 percent of income

went toward congregational finances, such as operating costs and building expenses.

Only 0.34 percent of parishioner income went to what Empty Tomb calls "benevolences," such as charities and seminary training beyond the four walls of the church. Those are new lows, at least going back to the first report in 1968. If the percentage of income for benevolences in 2009 had been at the 1968 level, 0.66 percent, U.S. churches would have seen an additional \$3.1 billion in benevolence spending. (RNS)

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- Psalm 85:6

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 30

Explore the Bible

By Robert Olsen

Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

DOES YOUR LIFE PLEASE GOD?
Romans 12:1-21

Give Yourself in Worship (1-2)

In Chapter 12, Paul moved from his doctrinal beliefs to practical application of those beliefs. He addressed all of the believers as brothers; this obviously included the Jewish readers as well as the Gentiles. Paul had already spent time explaining how Christians are not to offer their bodies over to sin (see Chapter 6). Their entire existence is to be for God's glory; by living for Him in all areas of life, they are worshipping Him. This means that the way Christians approach their jobs, families, church, etc., needs to be with God in mind. Paul then turned to their minds and emphasized that believers must have their minds transformed so that they can know what God wants them to do in every situation. Christians are supposed to live, act and think differently than the world. This means, at times, making decisions that will not be popular. It might mean refraining from watching certain TV shows or listening to certain types of music. It might mean deciding to leave a good job to go work in a foreign country as a missionary. Of course, if we are not spending time in prayer, reading God's Word and spending time in corporate worship, then we will be at a disadvantage when it comes to discerning God's will. We need to realize that following God means making Him Lord of every area of life. It is not just a matter of going to church. God expects obedience and we show our obedience by becoming living sacrifices.

Use Your Gifts (3-8)

Paul began this section with an encouragement for each Christian to have a humble attitude. If Christians exemplify this attitude, then the body of Christ will be unified and show the world the love that Christians have. This also helps Christians to recognize each human being's inherent value. Furthermore, in order to ensure unity among the body of believers, Paul stressed that there are many gifts of the Spirit given to Christians and each gift is important. In fact, each gift is valuable for the church and needs to be used in order

for the church to flourish. The list that Paul gave is not likely to be exhaustive. This helps the church to recognize each member as significant, since each Christian will have one or more gifts of the Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 12).

Love Your Fellow Christians (9-16)

It is unfortunate that Christians often do not get along, especially within the context of church. Church splits have sadly become a common event in 20th- and 21st-century churches. When church splits happen due to petty differences, God is not glorified. Furthermore, when non-Christians see this, they see no difference between the body of Christ and a bunch of quarrelers. Paul emphasized that the sign of true Christians is that they love one another. This should be demonstrated in taking care of Christians in need. The church is to care for members who are sick or hungry as well as extending outward to the world.

Treat Enemies With Kindness (17-21)

Paul said instead of trying to avenge injustices that have been perpetrated upon us, we should care for our enemy. If our enemy is hungry, then we should feed him. If he is injured, then we should care for him. In this way, Paul said we heap burning coals on his head, which likely is an expression that means it will bring him shame. In treating others in this way, others will see God in us, and this is one of the strongest witnesses for Christianity. When Christ went to the cross, He did not seek revenge or curse those who persecuted Him; rather He asked God to forgive them. Since we are called to be like Christ, we need to act in like manner. Through the centuries, one of the main ways that Christianity has spread is through the living testimony of men and women who were persecuted for their faith in Christ. To not strike back is so counterintuitive that it must come from God. When people see that we are looking forward to eternal life with God, they are forced to wonder why they do not share in this hope, which many times leads to conversions. Christians need to be known for being different from the world, and loving our enemies is one of the greatest ways to demonstrate this.

Bible Studies for Life

By Eric Mathis

Instructor of Church Music and Worship Leadership, School of the Arts, Samford University

SATISFACTION FOUND
John 6:5-13, 35-40

This month, we have examined accounts of the miracles Jesus Christ enacted during His earthly ministry, including turning water into wine, the healing of the paralyzed man, the raising of the centurion's servant and the widow's son and the restoration of the Gerasene demoniac. Our attention now turns to a familiar story: Jesus feeding the 5,000 and the teaching that Christ is the Bread of Life who alone can satisfy our spiritual hunger.

This story is the only one found in all four Gospel accounts, but we will examine the miracle from John's Gospel. John described the miracle in the first verses of Chapter 6 (vv. 5-13), but he separated the miracle account from Christ's discourse on the miracle (vv. 35-40). Between the miracle and the discourse is John's account of yet another miracle: Jesus walking on water to the disciples (vv. 16-21).

Jesus Provides (5-13)

John 6:1-13 can be divided into three sections: the introduction to the miracle (vv. 1-9), the performance of the miracle (vv. 10-11) and the results from the miracle (vv. 12-15). In the other miracle stories we have examined, individuals petitioned Jesus to do something miraculous. John's account of this miracle differs from those stories. Here it is Jesus who initiated the feeding of the 5,000. He saw the crowd of people and suspected it was hungry (5), knowing His intent to provide food (6). However, He tested whether Philip fully recognized His capacity to feed the crowd (6). Neither Philip nor Andrew fully comprehended what Christ could provide. Each responded to Christ on a surface level, concerned with the practicality of purchasing food (7-9).

After hearing their unsuspecting thoughts, Jesus asked the disciples to prepare the crowd for the miracle (10). He took the loaves and fish, gave thanks for them and distributed them among the people until all their physical needs for food were met (11). While other Gospels record the disciples distributing the food, John records that Christ distributed the

food (11). This was perhaps John's way of illustrating what will be made more clear soon, that Jesus is the Bread of Life. In the miracle's aftermath (12-15), Christ instructed the disciples to gather the leftovers and they followed His instructions (12-13).

This miracle is one of gigantic proportions. Though John described a crowd of 5,000, it is worth noting the number probably referred to men only. With women and children, the crowd could have been three or four times that size. We are reminded that we should not place limits on God, and contrary to Philip and Andrew's expectations, we can expect Him to act in unconventional ways. It is also important to note that Christ met the people's physical needs first. Thus, before Christ identified Himself as the Bread of Life, He gave them physical food to eat. This calls us to consider how well we help meet others' physical needs, and it suggests we meet physical needs before spiritual needs.

Jesus Satisfies (35-36)

After time away with the disciples (vv. 16-24), Jesus delivered the first of His seven "I AM" statements. In this first statement, Christ identified Himself as the Bread of Life, returning to the common symbol used in the miraculous feeding. Once Christ had used bread to meet a physical hunger, He extended the analogy to describe a spiritual hunger that He also can fulfill. He then critiqued the crowd for seeing but not believing, and like many other places in John's Gospel, we are reminded that faith is required to understand Christ's work in our midst. Christ satisfies our physical and spiritual condition, but we must be willing to trust His ability to meet our needs.

Jesus Secures (37-40)

Christ called attention to God's redemptive purpose in the world. He assured the crowd that those who come to Him will never be lost and that salvation is not exclusive but inclusive. He gives spiritual food in abundance, and as we grow in our capacity to see and have faith, we will receive more than we can possibly comprehend.

Christian Crossword

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Across

1. Expression of satisfaction.

3. Stayed.

8. God heard the voice of the _____. (Gen. 21:17)

9. A prohibition.

10. Mom.

11. One _____ the other.

12. Joseph ... entered into his _____. (Gen. 43:30)

15. The child Jesus tarried _____. (Luke 2:43)

18. Drink originally from China.

19. Compass direction.

20. _____ not this folly. (Judg. 19:23)

22. The people sin against _____ Lord. (1 Sam. 14:33)

23. As they that must give _____. (Heb. 13:17)

26. _____ and good. (Gen. 41:5)

27. And they did eat of the _____ corn. (Josh. 5:11)

28. I am. (contraction)

32. Set your _____ on things above. (Col. 3:2)

36. Let not the sun _____

down on your wrath. (Eph. 4:26)

37. Deliver thyself as a _____ from the ... hunter. (Prov. 6:5)

38. Ribonucleic acid.

39. 2,000 pounds.

40. Larry, Curley, and _____. (Gen. 46:32)

42. Their _____ hath been to feed cattle. (Gen. 46:32)

44. That all men through him might _____. (John 1:7)

46. What a boat needs if it has no motor.

47. Estimated Time of Arrival. (abbr.)

48. Of your daily _____. (Ex. 5:19)

49. Added to a word to make it an adverb.

Down

1. Rabbits.

2. Not B.C.

3. The _____ of their joy. (2 Cor. 8:2)

4. What a sheep says.

5. Incorporated. (abbr.)

6. English noblewoman.

7. 3 measures of _____ for a penny. (Rev. 6:6)

8. Part of the ear or brain.

10. He walked with _____. (Mal. 2:6)

13. In a certain place.

14. When kings go forth to _____. (2 Sam. 11:1)

16. Ye therefore _____ them not. (John 8:47)

17. A place to tie a boat.

21. He that is of _____ heareth. (John 8:47)

24. There had been _____ rain. (1 Kings 17:7)

25. Hello!

29. Former Chinese leader.

30. Take ye a kid of the _____ for a sin offering. (Lev. 9:3)

31. Full of dead men's _____. (Matt. 23:27)

33. Guy, pal, a good _____. (Joel 1:12)

34. All the _____ of the field are withered. (Joel 1:12)

35. Not out.

36. Reverence and _____ fear. (Heb. 12:28)

37. They put on Jesus a scarlet _____. (Matt. 27:28)

39. Take it by the _____. (Ex. 4:4)

40. Martha ... went and _____ him. (John 11:20)

41. Eggs.

43. Egyptian god.

45. "Entertainment Tonight." (abbr.)

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Pakistani Christians injured, killed during land grab

KHANEWAL, Pakistan — Muslims in Pakistan's Mian Channu area in southern Punjab province shot dead an unarmed Christian and injured 21 others, six of them critically, during an attempted land grab Oct. 5. Residents of the area said 40 to 45 heavily armed Muslims on 10 to 12 motorcycles, two tractor-trolleys and in a car reached a village in Khanewal district and forcibly entered the home of Adeel Kashif, a Christian carpenter who was living on a government-owned piece of land.

"The attackers forced their way into Kashif's house and started throwing the family's belongings onto the street," Wazir Masih, a Christian elder in the area, said. "They also tore the clothes off Kashif's three female family members — Violet, 40; Parveen, 35; and Esther, 17, and tortured the family." Masih said the Muslims wanted to take illegal possession of the 18-marla piece of land (in Pakistan, one marla equals 30.25 square yards), which the government makes available to laborers or craftsmen in exchange for the help they can offer to villagers.

Muslims suddenly began firing indiscriminately on the Christians, killing 25-year-old Sajid Bashir Masih and seriously injuring 21 others, including women and children. Six of the injured were in critical condition, one of them Sajid Bashir Masih's younger brother, Haroon. "The Christians had done nothing to provoke the Muslims into employing such brute force," Masih said. "They just opened fire on the defenseless people with their automatic rifles and shotguns."

Sudanese authorities threaten to destroy churches

OMDURMAN, Sudan — Local authorities have threatened to demolish three church buildings in Omdurman as part of a long-standing bid to rid Sudan of Christianity, Christian sources said. Church leaders from the three churches in the Madinat al-Fath area of Omdurman — the Sudanese Church of Christ, the Episcopal Church of Sudan and the Roman Catholic Church — said they were surprised to see government officials come to their church premises Sept. 11, accusing them of operating churches on government land without permission.

The church leaders said the buildings were not located on government land and required no permission. Officials from the Ministry of Physical Planning and Public Utilities-Khartoum State appeared and asked church leaders who gave them permission to build on government land, the church leaders said.

Jaafer al Sudani, manager of church affairs in the Ministry of Guidance and Religious Endowment (MGRE), said officials there had no knowledge of church buildings to be demolished. At the same time, area Christians said they believe the government is quietly carrying out surveys on Christians and church programs as part of a broader effort to make Islam the official state religion; officials from MGRE have called church leaders asking them to reveal information about their church members and activities of the churches, they said.

Islamic extremist group kills evangelist in Nigeria

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria — Violence-weary Christians in Borno state have been further upset to learn of the murder of a Nigerian evangelist by Boko Haram less than three months after the Islamic extremist group killed a Maiduguri pastor.

Mark Ojunta, a 36-year-old evangelist from southern Nigeria who was ministering amid the Kotoko people of Nigeria's northeastern state with Calvary Ministries (CAPRO), was shot Aug. 27 in Maiduguri. In a press statement, CAPRO international director Amos Aderonmu said Ojunta died "as a martyr on his field among the Kotokos." CAPRO had learned that all its staff members working among the Shuwa Arab, Kotoko and Kanuri peoples were on a Boko Haram list of people to be killed and had evacuated them, Aderonmu said. Ojunta had returned to teach a class after the evacuation of his family.

In his statement, Aderonmu said four days before his death, Ojunta had received an invitation to leave work among the Kotoko people to take a position at CAPRO's international office in London. He declined. Ojunta is survived by his wife, Ema, and two children, 3-year-old Kambe and 9-month-old Akira, besides his parents and sisters. The killing came less than three months after the June 7 murder of a Church of Christ in Nigeria pastor David Usman, 45, and church secretary Hamman Andrew, who were shot by members of Boko Haram in Maiduguri.

CAMPUS News

JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson to Host French Film Festival:** The Judson College Art Club and departments of art and English received a nationally competitive collegiate grant from the French American Cultural Exchange for the acquisition and screening of five recent French-language films on campus.

Various Judson faculty members will lead post-screening discussions of the first four films. Carmen Mayer-Robin, assistant professor of French at the University of Alabama, will be a guest speaker and discussion leader at the final screening. All screenings will take place in the Adams-Armstrong Lecture Hall of the Lowder Science Building.

The screening schedule is as follows:

► "L'illusionniste" ("The Illusionist"), Oct. 26, 7 p.m.

► "La fille du RER" ("The Girl on the Train"), Nov. 1, 2:30 p.m.

► "Entre les murs" ("The Class"), Nov. 2, 7 p.m.

► "Le père de mes enfants" ("Father of My Children"), Nov. 8, 7 p.m.

► " Lourdes," Nov. 9, 7 p.m.

For more information, contact Chris Hokanson at 334-683-5124.

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Journalism Scholarships Available at Samford:** Samford University's department of journalism and mass communication (JMC) has partial scholarships available for freshmen who enroll in the fall of 2012.

The scholarships, worth \$1,800 per year, will be awarded based on

ACT scores, high school grades, participation in media-related clubs and volunteer work. The scholarships can be renewed each year that the student maintains a 3.5 GPA.

Samford offers programs in print and broadcast journalism, public relations and advertising. The JMC department also houses an interdisciplinary film production minor and offers courses in Web and visual communication.

For more information, call 205-726-2948 or email rnankney@samford.edu. Applications are also available at <http://howard.samford.edu/jmc/content.aspx?id=2147490241>.

► **Beeson to Host Reformation Spirituality Conference:** Samford University's Beeson Divinity School will present a Reformation Spirituality Conference Nov. 1-2.

Topics will focus on themes of 16th-century Reformation spirituality: prayer, worship, spiritual formation, preaching, Bible reading, death and dying, and new developments of hymnody and congregational singing introduced by the reformers.

Guest presenters include Refo500 Director Herman Selderhuis, who will speak on "A New Way of Dying." Breakout session topics are Learning From Calvin and Bucer About Ministry and Spiritual Growth, Bible Reading and Hearing Through the Work and Ministry of Cranmer and more. A 7 p.m. vespers service on Nov. 1 will feature a Samford School of the Arts ensemble presentation of J.S. Bach's cantata "Ein Feste Burg," based on the hymn "A Mighty Fortress."

For information and online registration, visit www.beesondivinity.com/reformation or call 205-726-2731 or 1-800-888-8266.

► **Sharp Crowned Miss Samford University 2012:** Sarah Kathryn Sharp, a junior family studies

major from Vestavia Hills, was crowned Miss Samford University 2012 on Oct. 15.

Sharp, 20, will represent Samford in the Miss Alabama scholarship pageant in June. Her pageant platform is Dysautonomia Youth Network of America., which focuses on an autonomic nervous system disorder, which Sharp was diagnosed with her junior year of high school.

Sharp also won the talent competition for her bass clarinet performance of "Blue Monk" by Thelonious



SHARP

Monk, and the Miss Congeniality award. The Vestavia Hills High School graduate is the daughter of Sally and Allen Sharp. She is a member of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **Acclaimed Pianist Constance Carroll Featured:** The University of Mobile Center for Performing Arts will present Constance Carroll in the UMobile Master Series piano recital Nov. 11 at 7 p.m. in Moor Auditorium on campus. Carroll will give a master class workshop the same day at noon.

Carroll is a recitalist, chamber musician and orchestral soloist. She has recently performed with the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra, the Shreveport Symphony Orchestra, the Acadiana Symphony Orchestra and the Louisiana Sinfonietta.

To purchase tickets or for information, call 251-442-2420.

Parents of Down syndrome children: No regrets

Children with Down syndrome not only are valuable to God as human beings made in His image but their family members also report they are great blessings.

About 96 percent of parents said they have no regrets about having a child with Down syndrome, according to a new survey. The survey results come at a time when an estimated 90 percent of unborn children in the United States diagnosed with Down syndrome are aborted.

The findings, reported Sept. 30 by HealthDay News, also showed almost 80 percent of parents said their child with Down syndrome has improved their lives.

In addition, 94 percent of siblings said they felt "pride" in their brother or sister and 88 percent said their sibling had made them a "better person."

Virtually all of those with Down

syndrome said they were happy and liked who they are, HealthDay News reported.

"The voices we heard were very satisfied and very positive about their lives despite the fact that they have real challenges," said Brian Skotko, who conducted the surveys, which appear in the October issue of the American Journal of Medical Genetics, according to HealthDay.

Medical facts

"People with Down syndrome should be able to describe for Americans what it means to have the condition," Skotko said.

A prenatal blood test announced in August will make it possible for many more parents to learn if their children test positive for Down syndrome or other conditions. In performing the surveys, Skotko wanted to make sure parents who receive

such a diagnosis have good information.

Louise Borke's life with a 22-year-old son with Down syndrome has been rewarding, according to HealthDay. "It's been fun," she said. "It's had its challenges — I won't deny that — but it's been fun. It's been rewarding and I have no regrets."

Her son, Louis Sciuto, works at a Target store and is socially active, playing sports and going on double dates with friends.

HealthDay asked her what she would tell parents who have learned their child may have Down syndrome. "I would tell them don't be afraid," she said. "It's different but it's not worse. Louis has had friends whose parents have told me that they believe their children are better people for having known Louis."

(BP)



Photo courtesy of Inpop Records

MUSIC AND MESSAGE — When Tricia Brock isn't touring with the Christian rock group Superchick, she often leads worship at churches around the country. She recently released a solo worship project, 'The Road,' which reflects on a personal journey of finding strength and refuge in the Lord.

'A greater cause'

Superchick concerts benefit missions, point teen girls to Christ

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

While sharing testimonies of painful life lessons and experiences during its concerts, the Christian rock group Superchick desires to point teenage girls to Christ as their ultimate source of love, hope and trust.

As lead singer Tricia Brock encourages teenage girls to take a bold stand for Christ, along with making positive choices and committing to purity, young girls and their parents are being impacted by both the music and message.

"We really want our songs to make teenagers think about their life, their choices and the consequences of their actions," Brock said. "I love when fathers and their daughters attend our concerts together. After a recent concert, a dad came up and shared that our songs about purity had really impacted his daughter to set standards and boundaries for dating. It's so encouraging to hear that teenagers are responding by making positive life choices while drawing closer to Christ and His Word."

"It's really inspiring when families bring their non-Christian friends to our concerts. To see

them connect with the songs are the most amazing moments for me. I love interacting with people after each show and hearing how the songs are impacting them."

More than having a passion for music, the group has a calling to touch lives.

Its concerts benefit missions organizations, such as Compassion International, a child-sponsorship organization dedicated to meeting the physical and spiritual needs of children living in poverty around the world. Brock recently had the opportunity to travel to Uganda with Compassion International and witnessed the impact of these sponsorships.

"Our concert is never just a concert — it's part of a greater cause," Brock said.

Leading worship

When Brock isn't performing with the Grammy-nominated group, she often leads worship for churches around the country. This summer, she released her first solo worship album, "The Road."

While recording songs for the album, Brock suffered a miscarriage and took some time away from the project to reflect and regroup. As God provided hope, strength and comfort during this time, Brock was inspired to return to the recording studio with a renewed purpose — to encourage

others to worship God during every season.

"I can honestly say that I wrestled with God during that time and questioned Him," Brock said.

"But as God provided healing through the songs that were written months earlier, I was reminded about His great love and care for each of His children, just like a Shepherd caring for each one of His sheep and making sure one doesn't go astray."

"I think we so often forget that we daily need to take our problems to God and lay them down at His feet. As the Lord provided comfort and drew me closer to his Word each day, I was once again reminded of His faithfulness."

"It has been a really up-and-down couple of years, and I felt like this was my way of saying that we have to choose to worship God when our circumstances aren't what we want, when things don't make sense and it seems like prayers aren't being answered. God is worthy to be worshiped even when we're weak, tired and feel like we're at the end of our rope. I want to encourage others to keep pressing on and cling to God's truths in difficult times. Because of God's faithfulness and grace during those times, we can look back and realize how great, loving and compassionate He is."

"I love interacting with people after each show and hearing how the songs are impacting them."

Tricia Brock
Superchick

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World of Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Imprisoned Iranian pastor experiences 'minor victory'

TEHRAN, Iran — The attorney for imprisoned Iranian pastor Youcef Nadarkhani has confirmed that Iran's Supreme Court will review his case if the appeals court returns it, CNN reported Oct. 13.

"The reversal is a minor victory for the two-year-old legal battle; the Supreme Court passed on hearing the case in 2010," the news network said after speaking with Nadarkhani's lawyer, Mohammad Dadkash. Todd Nettleton, a spokesman for Voice of the Martyrs, told CNN the ongoing international conversation has helped his case.

"I think in terms of people praying for Pastor Youcef, that has had an effect, and I think we are seeing the results of that," Nettleton said. "Iran is a bit hesitant to put this man to death, and I think that is a result of international pressure."

Harris Zafar, a spokesman for Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA, told CNN he is surprised that more Muslims aren't speaking up in Nadarkhani's defense, and he believes Iran hopes to delay the case long enough that the international community will forget about it and move on to the next story.

Nettleton said Voice of the Martyrs will be sure to keep shining light on the pastor's plight. The American Center for Law and Justice said Oct. 13 that 89 members of Congress, including 21 Democrats, have signed a letter asking Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to pressure Iran to release Nadarkhani.

Nadarkhani, 32, was arrested in 2009 and charged with apostasy. A lower court found that while he had never been Muslim, he was guilty of apostasy because he came from a Muslim family.

New Kazakh laws to further restrict freedom of religion

ASTANA, Kazakhstan — Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev signed two new laws Oct. 13 imposing severe restrictions on freedom of religion or belief.

The two laws have attracted strong criticism from civil society organizations, human rights defenders and many religious communities in Kazakhstan, as well as from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which the country chaired in 2010.

Both new laws were expected to come into force Oct. 24. OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) spokesman Jens Eschenbacher said the ODIHR was disappointed that the laws were signed into force.

"The legislation appears to unnecessarily restrict the freedom of religion or belief and is poised to limit the exercise of this freedom in Kazakhstan," he said. Nazgul Yergaliev of the Almaty-based Legal Policy Research Center said that "strict regulation and limitation of fundamental rights, such as freedom of religion, by governments has already proved to be a dangerous path, leading to social tension and resentment."

Rabbis worldwide denounce burning of Israeli mosque

WASHINGTON — More than 1,000 rabbis from around the world have signed a statement denouncing the burning of an Israeli mosque as police arrested a suspect who is alleged to be a Jewish extremist.

"We condemn those in Israel who exacerbate conflict and strife, and who insist that only one people or religion belongs to this land," said the statement, which organizers say was overwhelmingly signed by U.S. rabbis. The statement was presented Oct. 6 by a delegation of dozens of rabbis and peace activists to the imam of Tuba-Zangria, the Galilean village where the mosque was torched.

The statement was initiated by the New Israel Fund, an organization that promotes human rights and religious pluralism in Israel.

Israeli officials have arrested a suspect in the arson, described by The Associated Press as an "18-year-old seminary student with ties to one of the most hardline Jewish settlements in the West Bank."

'Temporary' marriages a possibility in Mexico City

MEXICO CITY — If leaders of Mexico City's socialist democrat Party of the Democratic Revolution have their way, then the city's 2009 law legalizing gay "marriage" will be followed this year with temporary marriage licenses. The minimum marriage contract would be for two years and could be renewed if the couple is happy, the bill's co-author, Leonel Luna, told the *Guardian* newspaper.

The licenses would include a pre-divorce agreement on the disposition of children and property if the couple decides to terminate the marriage. "The proposal is, when the two-year period is up, if the relationship is not stable or harmonious, the contract simply ends," Luna told the *Guardian*. "You wouldn't have to go through the tortuous process of divorce."