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Emotional, spiritual healing

Tuscaloosa conference focuses on 'compassion fatigue' from April tornadoes

By Lindsey Robinson
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

It's been six months since tornadoes struck Alabama and the Southeast, killing hundreds and destroying homes, businesses, schools and churches.

Some of the physical damage remains, but the battle for emotional and spiritual healing is only half over, according to Chuck Register, executive leader of church planning and missions development for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

In a presentation called Adjusting to the New Normal, during the Oct. 30 After the Storm conference in Tuscaloosa, Register explained to about 100 members of Forest Lake Baptist Church, Alberta Baptist Church and New Eastern Hills Baptist Church, all in Tuscaloosa, that it will take at least a year for the healing process to run its course of highs and lows for the people of Alabama.

"If you thought the worst was over and it's sunshine from here on out, you can just call me the prophet of doom," he said.

Register wasn't just quoting facts and figures. As the pastor of First Baptist Church, Gulfport, Miss., he witnessed Hurricane Katrina's devastation firsthand. His church was gutted by the storm, and a photograph of it ran in national publications as an icon of the storm damage, he said.

At the time, Register believed he could handle the death and destruction without any help. Help was for the weak, he thought.

Before long, Register was burned out emotionally and only vented his feelings after his children were asleep.

"I didn't want them to see Daddy cry," he said. After he left Gulfport and it took a year for him to feel comfortable returning. Three years after Katrina, he was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

And if tornado survivors — especially pastors in Tuscaloosa and throughout the state — don't address their emotional and spiritual needs, then they will suffer too, he said. "We want to be fixers. We burn the candle



Photos by Lindsey Robinson

HEALING PROCESS — Members of Forest Lake Baptist Church, Alberta Baptist Church and New Eastern Hills Baptist Church, all in Tuscaloosa, participate in the After the Storm conference on Oct. 30.

at all the ends, not just two ends, and we end up burned," Register said in an interview before the presentation.

After helping so many and dealing with their own concerns, people experience "compassion fatigue." The condition, Register explained, occurs when people in emotionally draining situations, including natural disasters, become burned out after trying to be heroes to others in need. The symptoms of burnout include trouble sleeping, emotional sensitivity, short-term memory loss, appetite changes, challenged decision-making, irritability and depression.

'None [are] superhuman'

"None of us, when we face what you faced on April 27, become superhuman," he said.

After his presentation, Pastor Jay Wolf of First Baptist Church, Montgomery, delivered a sermon. Chip Colee, minister of music at First Montgomery, provided the evening music, and Tuscaloosa Baptist Association provided a disaster relief team to cook for the event.

In his presentation, Register showed a graph depicting the emotional highs and lows of people in disaster situations from the initial preparations to the feelings of heroism and cooperation after the event to deep disil-

lusionment later, all the way to the event's one-year anniversary. He then asked attendees to divide into groups of three or four to discuss where on the graph they believed they were.

Not everyone was in the same place. Charlotte Payne, the wife of Forest Lake Baptist Pastor Donald Payne, said she had felt disillusioned in previous months but is now on the upswing. "I'm not at the top yet but I'm still climbing," she said.

In contrast, Forest Lake college minister Aaron Barnes said he is coming off the honeymoon phase and dipping into disillusionment.

Barnes and his wife, Leesa, live outside of Tuscaloosa and volunteered from sunup to sundown for months after the storm hit.

"I would come home and just stare at the wall," Barnes said.

Pastor Travis Coleman of First Baptist Church, Prattville, brought a team from his church to help with child care during the event held at Forest Lake.

"They just need that extra boost spiritually," Coleman said.

He added that help from other churches, even if it's just other members to cry with, is vital for the spiritual healing of tornado survivors.

"Jesus at Lazarus' tomb — He cried, too," Coleman said.

Tips to overcome stress, fatigue

In his presentation, Chuck Register of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina explained that over time, a person's serotonin, or "feel-good hormone," can be depleted by extreme stress and compassion fatigue.

But he said tornado survivors can battle compassion fatigue and serotonin loss by maximizing their levels of serotonin by doing things like

- ▶ relaxing,
- ▶ carving out time for enjoyable activities,
- ▶ prioritizing personal devotional time,
- ▶ prioritizing family life,
- ▶ considering counseling,
- ▶ joining a support group,
- ▶ creating opportunities to talk about loss within their church and
- ▶ preparing emotionally and spiritually for future disasters.

(TAB)

COMMENT

Time for a Name Change?

Most Southern Baptists were stunned by the headlines announcing a possible name change for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). After SBC President Bryant Wright announced he had appointed a task force to study a name change, it took a reminder by the chairman of the SBC Executive Committee that Wright had the authority to appoint the task force without approval by the Executive Committee before that group let the topic go.

Thankfully Wright recruited volunteers for the task force who would pay their own expenses as well as the committee's expenses so the SBC's already strained budget will not have to underwrite another unplanned presidential project.

In making the announcement, Wright said a new name was needed to "maximize our effectiveness in reaching North America." The problem with the current name? "The convention's name is so regional ... it is challenging in many parts of the country to lead churches to want to be a part of a convention with such a regional name," he continued.

Those words do not sound like calling for a study. They do not form questions. They make statements. That makes the effort look more like putting machinery in place to accomplish something on which a decision has already been made. That is unfortunate.

Some writings that have appeared in the past six weeks advocating a convention name change seem to support that conclusion as they demonize those who question the action. If one is for church planting in the Northeast, far West or other areas underserved by Southern Baptists, then one favors a name change. Only those who are against church planting are against a new name, the writings imply.

A regional name

If one favors the SBC being a national body embracing all areas of the nation, then one is for a name change. Only those who want the SBC to be a regional body with a regional vision reflecting a regional culture are against a name change.

If one is for a denomination that includes multiethnic congregations and leaders, then one is for a name change. Only those who want to remain a denomination with a history of segregation led by Anglos are opposed to a name change.

If one wants to prove the negative impressions people have about Southern Baptists wrong, then one is for a name change. Only those who embrace



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

all the negative stereotypes are opposed to a name change.

Such charges are untrue and unfounded. They do not further serious, dispassionate discussion. They only inflame emotions. That is not supposed to be the result of a "study."

One of the first questions that should be asked is whether "Southern" is a descriptive word or part of a brand name. In 1976, a seven-member committee appointed to study a possible name change for the SBC reported, "The name Southern Baptist has become identified and associated with certain doctrinal positions, traditions and other emphases." Is that still true in 2011?

Does "Southern Baptist" cause one to think of those from a certain region of the nation? If so, then it is a description.

Does "Southern Baptist" cause one to think of those who believe the Bible and are committed to evangelism and missions? If so, then it is a brand.

The 1976 committee wrote, "A name change would be interpreted by some as abandoning this heritage and these invaluable traits." Would that be an issue today if the convention's name were changed?

Not every word that describes a region of the nation has a negative connotation. "Southwest" is a regionally descriptive word, yet Southwest Airlines did not change its name when it began serving Chicago, Baltimore or Providence, R.I., because the word relayed a brand that was valuable to the company. The word spoke of value, service and convenience. Is a similar thing true of the SBC?

One poll found that more than 40 percent of 18-24-year-olds said knowing a church was a Southern Baptist church would negatively affect their decision to visit or join that church. The finding was based on what respondents described as judgmental, mean-spirited and politically partisan actions.

At the same time, the disaster relief efforts by Southern Baptists in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina have reportedly resulted in great opportunities in areas of evangelism and missions in a region that was once very difficult for Southern Baptists.

It is not the convention's name that makes a difference to most people. It is the "content of its

character," to paraphrase a great Baptist preacher. Simply changing our name will not change our character nor help us overcome those things that have resulted in some people's negative image of Southern Baptists.

But "Southern" is not the only word that some find objectionable in the SBC's name.

Some object to the word "Baptist." A growing number of churches are dropping "Baptist" from their names in order to be more appealing to non-Christians. Instead of "Baptist," one finds such phrases as "Christ-followers." Is the word "Baptist" to be up for grabs as well in a possible name change?

If Southern Baptists needed a new name, then the best opportunity was missed in 1995 when the denomination was restructured in the Covenant for a New Century. Since that time, little has demonstrated that Southern Baptists are interested in considering a name change. In 2005, when then-SBC President Jack Graham proposed a name change study, messengers refused to even consider the recommendation and voted against a study by a 55 to 44 percent margin.

A divisive issue

There is little indication that the opinion of Southern Baptists has changed since that time. To many, the study of a possible name change is just another issue that stands to divide Southern Baptists, not an issue that can help heal the rifts in the fellowship that have emerged in the last few years. That makes the whole study idea ill-timed.

But the study is being done, and its findings will be reported. Maybe throughout the process Southern Baptists will be able to acknowledge that those on both sides of the name change issue are motivated by high and noble reasons. All want to reach the world for Christ.

Differences exist about how best to accomplish that goal.



"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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Halloween Options

What people are saying on

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Did your church have a fall festival or trunk or treat?



Larry Roberts

Had a great turnout at our Fall Festival at Raleigh Avenue Baptist Church, Homewood, last night. Wonderful neighborhood awareness, meeting new people, asking, "What can our church do for you?", and encouraging guests to come to church.



Donna Wright

At West Mobile, we had our annual Fall Festival. We make everything, including food, free. We always have a great turnout both of our own people and people in the community. It gives us a chance to "rub shoulders" with folks who wouldn't have otherwise entered our building.



Jan Benton Scott Spring Arbor (brand new to the East Cullman Baptist Assoc) of Cullman, AL had a fantastic Trunk or Treat last night. Saw lots of folks that are not in our church family! We offered puppet skit that included the Biblical story of Jesus walking on the water and comforting his disciples (a true ghost story), face painting, hayride, hot apple cider, candy, and door prizes for those who registered. A wonderful time!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Tommy Strickland

Five Points, Sylacauga held our Fall Festival on Sunday evening. Great turnout from the community! We hosted games, face painting, pumpkin decorating, made bracelets/necklaces, and served delicious treats/food. We picked up several great prospective families! Now for follow-up



Rebekah Cole Cornelison

Mt. Pleasant Baptist in Uriah took a load of kids on a hayride and Reverse Trick or Treating on Sat. night. We took treats and tracts and other gifts to un-churched neighbors. Then back to the church for a fall festival for the kids. We had a great time and had one couple on Sunday morning that we had visited the night before. Glory to God.



Brad Campbell

Siloam Baptist in Bigbee Assoc. (near York in Sumter Co.) had our fall festival on Saturday night. For a small church in a small community, there were 73 of us, with 26 of those being visitors! It was wonderful!



Carol Miller

Ist Baptist Trussville had a great Trunk or Treat with tons of kids and parents.... many who are not members.

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Working together

Alexander City churches reach community through fall festival

By Julie Payne
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Three Baptist churches in Alexander City recently united to bring a fall festival to their community, and the results were beyond what many imagined.

The idea to go outside the church's walls and present a community-wide fall festival was initially sparked last fall by Matt Haines, pastor of Sixth Street Baptist Church, Alexander City.

When the idea again resurfaced in August, Haines reached out to several local churches, as well as the city's Parks and Recreation Department to inquire about using the Alexander City Sportsplex facility for the event.

The two other Alexander City churches involved with the festival, Orr Street Baptist Church and Hillabee Baptist Church, began working with Sixth Street Baptist to implement plans.

"We just all worked together, bringing all of our different [festival] games together," said Vince Lee, pastor of Hillabee Baptist.

They each promoted the event within their churches and also set up a Facebook page.

The festival, dubbed Alexander City Community Fall Fest, was held on the Sportsplex softball fields Oct. 31.

Each church was responsible for various games and activities. For example, Sixth Street Baptist was responsible for eight games with one or two church volunteers assisting each one.

The event was slated to begin at 6 p.m., but Lee said crowds began pouring in just after 5 p.m. "We went ahead and started letting them in," he said.

Community Fall Fest was a free event, aside from concessions, and offered a variety of activities for families: hayrides, train rides, pony rides, a petting zoo, photo

booths, inflatables, a cake walk and many other games. One field was designated for children up to age 7, and another field for children above age 7.

The churches set up a prayer tent where visitors had the opportunity to stop in and be prayed for.

In all, Lee said approximately 2,500 people came through the festival, a number he certainly wasn't anticipating. "We're blown away by the success of it," he reported. "It was amazing."

Haines echoed the same sentiment

Judgement House-type setup in Gordo provides seasonal evangelistic event

The scenes depicted by members of Zion Community Baptist Church, Gordo, were like scenes directly out of the man's life.

And before he could leave the church that night he had to settle things with God.

Pastor Mike Skelton said the man told him that he had experienced every scene, right down to a family member being killed in a car accident. Six children also accepted Christ during the two-day evangelistic event.

It was the church's version of a Judgement House, and it took place Oct. 30-31 in the Sipsey Baptist Association church's sanctuary and two adjoining houses. Close to 400 people attended.

As attendees stepped into the "party house," they were thrown into a world of sex, alcohol and drugs depicted by actors at a high school graduation party. One room had a brother forcing his younger

sister to drink alcohol. The girl ended up intoxicated and as they sped away in their car for the hospital, the brother and sister were in a fatal car accident where the sister was killed. The wreck was staged outside the house with actors from the Gordo and Zion volunteer fire departments "on the scene."

Attendees then made their way into the church sanctuary where they saw one room depicting hell and another heaven. In the church sanctuary, a funeral service was acted out for the girl who was killed in the car accident. Skelton "presided" over the service and shared the gospel all while staying in character.

"I have found that the Judgement House presentations reach people that would normally never go to a church service," Skelton said. "We saw seven decisions (for Christ) made but we don't know how many more may come (to accept Christ) down the road." (TAB)

and added that each church involved typically has between 300-500 participants at individual fall festival events.

Now that the dust has settled, the churches will conduct a period of follow up with those who registered. Lee explained the goal is ultimately connecting them to Jesus and encouraging them to be in a local church. "It's all about the Kingdom," he said.

Reflecting on the evening, Lee shared that Community Fall Fest is a snapshot of what three small churches can do when they cooperatively work together.

Haines said the festival enabled the churches to conduct an event that had a much bigger impact than if they had planned events individually. He added they want to try to expand and have more churches involved for next year.

"It was affordable, it was safe, it was positive," Lee explained. He added that on a night (Halloween) that places a lot of emphasis on the dark, this event turned it into an evening with light.

Opp's Southside Baptist sees 97 people saved at Judgement House

Just because you're a good person doesn't mean you'll go to heaven. That was a main theme of Judgement House at Southside Baptist Church, Opp, Oct. 26, 27 and 29.

During the event, groups wove through rooms of the Covington Baptist Association church as they were taken scene by scene through a tale known as "Invasion," in which a fictional family experiences a home invasion.

The walk-through drama ended with a judgment scene, a scene in hell and a scene in heaven.

According to Nitaya Stanley,

Southside Baptist secretary and co-director of Judgement House, there were 97 professions of faith and 117 rededications. In all, 1,040 people attended the event.

Stanley reported that the church is now in the process of following up with attendees. Senior Pastor Stewart Young is following up with adults, while his wife, Carol, is following up with children and Worship/Youth Pastor J.T. Jordan is following up with youth. The goal is to help them connect with a church in the area where they live.

"It was awesome to be a part of it," Stanley said of the event. (TAB)

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Denominations losing members, resources

1 in 5 Protestant churches in America independent of denomination, study shows

About one in five Protestant churches in America is now independent of any denomination and about one in five Protestants attends those independent churches, Duke sociologist Mark Chaves says in his new book "American Religion: Contemporary Trends."

Chaves, professor of sociology, religion and divinity at Duke University in Durham, N.C., and director of the National Congregations Study, said the number of Protestants attending independent churches increased from 14 percent in 1998 to 19 percent in 2006.

"If the unaffiliated congregations were all in one denomination, they would constitute the second largest

in number of participants (behind only the Roman Catholic Church) and the largest number of congregations," Chaves wrote. "Although most Protestant churches are denominational, a noticeable and growing minority are not formally affiliated with any denomination."

Chaves said an increase of 5 percentage points in the number of people attending independent churches may not seem like much, but he noted that growth occurred over a period of just eight years. He added that those numbers probably understate the cultural significance of the trend, because denominational affiliations seem to be decreasingly important to congregations and their members even when they do exist.

Nearly two-thirds of Protestant megachurches formally belong to a denomination, Chaves said, but many hide or downplay those connections. Even though the annual income of denominationally affiliated congregations increased faster than inflation between 1998 and 2006 in real dollars, the amount of money those congregations passed on to their denominational office declined from about 5 percent of their income in 1998 to 4 percent in 2006.

While some congregations reduced contributions to their denomination to protest its policies or priorities, Chaves said the decline in denominational giving is "a longer-term trend driven mainly by the rising costs of running a local congregation."

Chaves said 16 percent of people born before 1950 and raised in a

mainline denomination shifted to a more conservative denomination as adults, but beginning with those born in the 1960s more raised in a mainline church became religiously unaffiliated than became evangelical.

"A noticeable and growing minority (of churches) are not ... affiliated with any denomination."

Mark Chaves
Duke University

"The most important trend is not an increased flow from liberal to conservative churches," he writes. "Rather the most important change is decreased flow of people in the other direction. In the not too distant past, conservative denominations lost many more people to liberal denominations than

they do now."

Chaves said upward social mobility was a big reason people formerly flocked to the mainline churches. Among upwardly mobile people who were raised as conservative Protestants, 28 percent of those born before 1931 switched to a more

liberal denomination as an adult.

By 2008, twice as many people claimed affiliation with conservative denominations as with theologically more liberal ones: 28 percent compared to 14 percent.

Weakened infrastructure

As denominations lose members or resources, Chaves said, cuts to national and regional staffs often follow, resulting in a weakened denominational infrastructure. Many people don't seem bothered by that, perhaps because they think of waste and inefficiency in denominational agencies, they disapprove with some of the initiatives pursued by denominational agencies or they think congregations can find materials and services that denominational agencies traditionally provided somewhere else. Given that, Chaves said, "it may be surprising" how often congregations turn to their denomination for help and resources.

More than 90 percent of the outside help that congregations received on personnel or staff issues came from denominational sources, Chaves reported. (ABP)

SBOM's Chris Mills moves to collegiate, student ministries

Chris Mills is changing offices at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM). The associate in communications services will be an associate in the office of collegiate and student ministries, effective Dec. 1.

In his current role, Mills serves as the Web minister for www.alsbom.org, www.sbd.org and www.greatcommissiongps.com; handles social media for the SBOM; and facilitates training and consulting in Web design for Alabama Baptist churches. In his new role, he will be responsible for student missions, international student ministry, community college ministry, state student/collegiate event planning and social media/technology.



MILLS

"It brings me great joy to see students 'get' missions," Mills said. "Obedience is something we, as followers, of Christ seek to do daily. A lot of times, God uses missions opportunities to open our eyes to what daily obedience looks like."

"I'm excited about the opportunity to walk alongside students seeking to take that journey. I'm excited about working toward reaching the nations that God has brought to our campuses."

Doug Rogers, coordinator of communications services, has seen Mills' enthusiasm in action.

"Chris came to the state board at a time when we needed to focus attention on our website and social media efforts, and he tackled the task with expertise and enthusiasm," Rogers said. "His

contribution to how we communicate our story has been both timely and far-reaching, and I'm grateful for not only his ministry but his heart for missions."

Mike Nuss, director of the office of collegiate and student ministries, has noticed Mills' missions-mindedness, too.

"We are incredibly excited to have someone with Chris' passion for missions and connecting students to missions opportunities around the world joining the SBOM collegiate and student ministries team. His missions experience, along with his heart for international students and BCM (Baptist Campus Ministries) background, makes him a great fit for his new assignment at the State Board of Mis-

sions," Nuss said. A Greenville native, Mills holds a bachelor's degree from Troy University, where he was active in the BCM, even serving as president. He will graduate from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary with a master of divinity in December.

Mills is a member of First Baptist Church, Montgomery. He is a deacon and international ministry Sunday School teacher. He will marry Brooke Fussell on June 9.

In other changes in the collegiate and student ministries office, associate Keith Loomis will assume responsibility for youth ministry and evangelism training, the Youth Evangelism Conference and Super Summer Alabama. (TAB)

Yemeni government cracks down on protests; women plead for help

By Ava Thomas
International Mission Board

The embers of the Arab Spring still glow red in much of Northern Africa and the Middle East, but flames grew tallest in Yemen's capital of Sanaa on Oct. 26.

They stretched skyward from a pile of women's veils, set alight as a plea for assistance from the international community.

"Here we burn our makrama (veils) in front of the world to witness the bloody massacres carried out by the tyrant Saleh," read leaflets handed out by women present at the demonstration, according to The Associated Press.

It's a traditional Bedouin tribal cry for help from the women of a nation that has faded from headlines.

Not without a fight

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh has long said he would step down from his 33-year rule, but he doesn't seem to be going down without a fight. In late September, government gunfire killed dozens of demonstrators and rockets hit a protest camp. The bloodshed didn't slow down in October.

And women were right in the middle of it all, begging for democracy and freedom. One Yemeni woman, Tawakkul Karman, was even named as a joint winner of this year's Nobel Peace Prize for her activism for women's rights.

"What do they want? Well, what do we all want? We want lives filled with joy. We want the freedom to pursue the things we enjoy, and we want to experience the kind of love found only in a family," said Beth Judson, a Christian worker who spent some time in Yemen in the past. "This is what they want as well."

They're not so different from women in other parts of the world but they can't be "lumped together" either, Judson said. "They are young and old, rich and poor, conservative and liberal, religious and marginal." And the theme of their dreams is starting to change, she said.

"More recently, I think there has been a shift taking place in what the younger generation of girls wants out of life. Many of their mothers only ever thought about getting married and having sons," Judson said. "Though this is still very important to many of the high school- and college-age crowd, they are also starting to explore new and perhaps unconventional paths for their lives."

The average age for marrying is rising for women because they sometimes fear their husbands might keep them from going to college, she explained. "Most of the women who are protesting have at least some education and are lobbying for their own rights, a freedom that was once reserved only for men."

It's a yearning Judson prays will

put them on a journey to finding freedom in Jesus Christ — a permanent freedom they can't find in expanded civil rights or career opportunities.

"My desire is that these women find the joy that they are searching for," she said. "The joy and satisfaction they seek comes only from being set free from the chains of sin and death and being robed with the righteousness of Christ."

A lasting joy

It is a lasting joy and not a temporary one they seek, Judson said.

"A new government or a degree from a well-respected university or a job will not give them what they are looking for," she said. "A relationship with their Maker, the One who loves them and created them for fellowship with Him — only this can fill them with the joy they seek."

Judson asked believers to pray
► for God to move among the hurting people of Yemen,

► for Yemeni women to find their joy and freedom in Jesus Christ and

► for believers to boldly share their faith with the people of Yemen.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Names have been changed for security reasons. To read more about women in Yemen, check out the book "Behind the Veils of Yemen" by Audra Grace Shelby. (IMB)

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

Mississippi evangelist charged with video voyeurism

GOSNELL, Ark. — A Southern Baptist evangelist and former camp pastor at LifeWay Christian Resources' FUGE summer youth events has been charged with video voyeurism in a home where he was staying as a house guest while preaching a revival in Arkansas.

Sammy Nuckolls, who lives in Olive Branch, Miss., with a wife and young child, was released on \$50,000 bond from Mississippi County Jail in Blytheville, Ark., after giving police taped verbal and written statements admitting he set up a secret camera to record video of the woman of the house taking a shower, according to media reports. The woman told police in Gosnell, Ark., where the home is located, that she noticed Nuckolls had left several items in the bathroom as she prepared to shower, including an oversized pen.

After she left the bathroom Nuckolls went to retrieve the items, including the pen, and took them into his room. After he left the house, she plugged the pen into a computer and discovered it was a spy camera containing video of her in the bathroom.

According to the *Blytheville Courier News*, Nuckolls told police he had done the same thing to two other women in Mississippi and provided their names. A graduate of Williams Baptist College, Nuckolls received his master of divinity degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tenn.

Nuckolls was also charged in Olive Branch, Miss., and police in Waldron, Ark., may file charges, according to news services in Mississippi. Nuckolls has pleaded not guilty on all charges, sources said.

October CP giving 17.27% below last year's pace

NASHVILLE — Contributions to Southern Baptist national and international missions and ministries received by the SBC Executive Committee in October were 17.27 percent below the same month last year, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Frank Page. The total includes receipts from state conventions and fellowships, churches and individuals for distribution according to the 2011-12 SBC Cooperative Program (CP) Allocation Budget. As of Oct. 31, gifts received by the Executive Committee for distribution through the CP Allocation Budget totaled \$14,581,528.92, or \$3,043,239.54 behind the \$17,624,768.46 received in October 2010.

For the SBC CP Allocation Budget, the October total of \$14,581,528.92 is 94.07 percent of the \$15,500,000 budgeted to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. During the last fiscal year (Oct. 1, 2010–Sept. 30, 2011), CP receipts for the year were up 0.06 percent — the first increase since 2007. Combined CP and designated giving for the year, meanwhile, were up 0.17 percent.

New Mexico Baptists say don't sell Glorieta

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — New Mexico Baptists overwhelmingly passed a resolution urging the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and LifeWay Christian Resources to ensure that Glorieta Conference Center continues its ministry to Southern Baptists.

The resolution, adopted at the state convention's annual meeting, was in response to LifeWay's recent announcement that Glorieta's operations were being scaled back and that trustees were seeking "viable options" for disposition of the property, including sale.

The resolution noted that Baptist Convention of New Mexico messengers in 1947 unanimously voted to purchase property that ... was deeded to what was then the SBC Sunday School Board in 1950 "with the intent that a great Baptist training center would be established and maintained in the West."

It cited "Baptists' sacrificial investment of millions of dollars that has contributed to the growth of Glorieta" and that the conference center has operated for 63 years "for the glory of God."

CBF finishes fiscal year 15 percent behind budget

ATLANTA — The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) ended its fiscal year \$2.1 million short of its 2010-11 budget goal of \$14.5 million in total revenues, controller Larry Hurst reported to the CBF Coordinating Council on Oct. 21. Anticipating a shortfall, Hurst said staff limited expenditures to 85 percent of budgeted amounts.

The finance committee proposed a \$12.3 million budget for 2012-13, the same bottom line in the current 2011-12 spending plan. Staff will develop next year's budget proposal for review by the finance committee and vote by the council in February. Hurst said undesignated revenues in 2010-11 totaled \$6.8 million, 18 percent below budget projections of \$8.25 million. The offering for global missions took in \$4.6 million, 16 percent short of an offering goal of \$5.5 million.



Photos courtesy of Birmingham Baptist Association

BEFORE AND AFTER — Restoring Hope volunteers repaired the home of Cornelius and Leticia Henderson in Ensley after it was badly damaged by an April 27 tornado.

'Life restoration'

Restoring Hope rebuilds homes, lives in Greater Birmingham area

By Joseph Rhea
The Alabama Baptist

Although six months have passed since tornadoes ravaged Alabama, many survivors are still in the process of recovery.

Restoring Hope intends to be around as long as that recovery takes. "This is a marathon," said Rick Ousley, head of communications for the program.

Restoring Hope is not an organization per se; rather it is an organizing structure that matches churches with tornado survivors. The goal is to enable churches in the Greater Birmingham area to meet needs in the communities around them.

The program started with Birmingham Baptist Association (BBA). After BBA sent its first responders into the tornado-ravaged areas, it found that it lacked a system for organizing long-term relief work for the survivors, Executive Director Mike McLemore said.

As he considered how the association could do the needed work, McLemore decided to "think be-

yond Southern Baptist circles."

"We sent out a letter of invitation to the leaders of all the faith communities we knew to attend an informational meeting at Shades Mountain Baptist Church (in Vestavia Hills) about how to conduct long-term work," he said. "About 200 people came from all communities, all denominations."

Providing assistance

Restoring Hope was born from that June meeting. McLemore and others assembled a steering committee that meets weekly to discuss new cases and decide how to distribute funds and resources.

Methodist, Presbyterian and various Baptist and nondenominational churches are helping 70-80 families currently signed up for Restoring Hope assistance.

"Although the bricks and mortar and nails matter, the greater need is a Kingdom need, a spiritual need," said Saint Green, chairman of the steering committee and minister of children & family development for Grace Life Baptist Church, Mc-

Calla. "We wanted ... to make this about life restoration."

In addition to rebuilding teams, the program has spiritual care teams that volunteers can join. These teams are trained to counsel survivors, pray with them and evangelize non-Christians. The teams also coordinate with churches in the survivors' areas so that the churches can take over leading the people spiritually. And Restoring Hope is hungry for more people to be involved. The program's website requests skilled and unskilled construction workers, move-in teams, meal providers, volunteers to manage donations and teams to clean houses and neighborhoods.

"We've had over 150 churches or organizations indicate interest in being part of the work of Restoring Hope," Green said. Twelve churches have fully committed to the program. Green expects that more will join as word about Restoring Hope spreads.

For more information, visit www.restoringhopebc.org or call 205-447-4009.

Christians challenged to share gospel with EvangeCube

In the past 12 years, EvangeCube has gone from "Unfolding the Answer to Life's Greatest Puzzle" to encouraging believers to "Simply Share Jesus." Today e3 Resources is issuing a new challenge: "The Power of 12."

To commemorate 12 years of EvangeCube, between now and Dec. 12, 2012 (12/12/12), e3 is challenging 1 million Christians to use EvangeCube to share the gospel with one new person each month for 12 months — with the ultimate goal of 12 million gospel presentations.

e3 calls this "The Power of 12" not only because of EvangeCube's anniversary but also because of the number's prominent usage throughout the Bible: 12 sons (tribes) of Israel, 12 judges, 12 disciples and 12 years of age was when Jesus spoke His first recorded words.

As people share EvangeCube with others, e3 is asking that they document their experience and submit photos, videos and stories to excite, encourage

and invite others to join the effort.

On Dec. 12, 2012, the images will become a photo collage that creates the face of Jesus.

"Ultimately 'The Power of 12' is more than just numbers or an event that spans a period of time. It's a call for a spiritual lifestyle change. It's being the face of Jesus every day, sharing His love while sharing His story," an e3 press release said.

For more information, visit <http://e3resources.org>. (TAB)



Across Alabama's Associations

BESSEMER

► **Living Faith Cathedral, Hueytown**, was voted in as a member of Bessemer Association during its annual meeting Oct. 24. The church had been under watchcare for the past year. Johnny Williams 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

► **Marvel Mission Church, Brierfield**, was voted in as a member of Bibb Association. Stan Dawson is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► The This & That Craft Guild of **McElwain Church, Birmingham**, will hold a sale featuring crafts, baked goods and gently used items Nov. 19, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. For information call Florence Renfroe at 205-871-5148. R. Joseph Tricquet Jr. is pastor. ► The women's ministry of **Hunter Street Church, Hoover**, will hold Joy to the World: Hope for the Exploited Nov. 15, 6 p.m., in the student building. The focus will be to raise awareness of human exploitation. Kimberly L. Smith, president and co-founder of Make Way Partners and author of "Passport Through Darkness," will speak. Dinner will be served. There will be a fair trade market in conjunction with national Woman's Missionary Union. Purchases are cash or check only. To register visit hunterstreet.org by Nov. 13. Child care will be provided by registration only. Buddy Gray is pastor.

CAHABA

► **Ocmulgee Church, Selma**, will hold its annual Christmas dinner theater Dec. 16-17, 7 p.m. A four-course meal will be served. For tickets call 334-872-5494. Seating is limited. Danny Sumerlin is pastor. ► **Uniontown Church** held a special day to honor the memory of Betty Mayton Oct. 30. The service was attended by family and friends who enjoyed a meal and a time of remembrance. It took the place of the annual ingathering service held the second Sunday in November. Scott Hale is pastor.

CLEBURNE

► **Heflin Church** will hold Couponing 101 with Theresa Shadrix of *The Anniston Star* Nov. 17, 6-8 p.m., in the fellowship hall. Bring a canned food item for HEARTS. Light refreshments will be served. For information call 256-463-2576 or visit www.heflinbaptist.org. Philip R. Morris is pastor.

LIMESTONE

► **Lindsay Lane Church, Athens**, will hold a special day for families called Building a Successful Family Nov. 13, 8:45 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m., with Jerry Pipes. Dusty McLemore is pastor.

MOBILE

► **Trinity Church, Wilmer**, will celebrate its 105th anniversary with homecoming Nov. 13, 10:30 a.m. Former Pastor James King will speak. Former Music Minister Ethridge Turner will lead the music. A covered-dish lunch will follow the service. Dwayne Reed is interim pastor.

TALLAPOOSA

► **Wayside Church, Alexander City**, recently named Wren-

fro Oliver, Robert Morgan, Coolidge Jarvis, David McCollough and Albert Parker deacon emeritus during its 64th anniversary celebration. The men have more than 100 years of combined service. Jason S. Rodgers is pastor.

WALKER

► **Northside Church, Jasper**, held Margie O'Rear Day Sept. 18



O'REAR

A reception was held in her honor in the afternoon.

WINSTON

► **Shawn Blanton** is the new pastor of **Concord Church, Natural Bridge**. He and his wife, Shelly, have three children. There will be an ordination service for Blanton Nov. 13, 2 p.m., at Mount Carmel Church, Double Springs. Randy Taylor is pastor of Mount Carmel.

Across Alabama's Associations will not print Nov. 24 because of state convention coverage. Submit church announcements for the Dec. 1 issue by Nov. 18.



Photo courtesy of Kennedy Baptist Church

KENNEDY RAs HOLD PINWOOD DERBY RACE

The Royal Ambassadors of Kennedy Baptist Church in Lamar Baptist Association participated in a pinewood derby race Oct. 7 at the church. The boys ages 6-11 also enjoyed a campout. Keith Martin is senior pastor.

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

Hinson retires after 30 years at Spring Hill Avenue

After more than 30 years of service at Spring Hill Avenue Baptist Church, Mobile, Minister of Music Billy G. Hinson retired.

Hinson's announcement came on the heels of his May retirement from a 32-year position as professor of history at the University of Mobile. He obtained much of his music knowledge from his oldest brother, a voice major at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge and quartet singer.

When Hinson taught in a public school in Louisiana, a small church needed a music director so he filled the role. He went on to serve other churches, including Riverside Baptist Church, Mobile, before coming to Spring Hill Avenue Baptist.



HINSON

Hinson said the most enjoyable aspects of music ministry have included presenting the gospel in song and identifying and encouraging musical talent in people when they didn't necessarily realize they had it. He praised his wife of 46 years, Shirley, for her support. "She's always been right with me, singing in the choir, singing in the ladies ensemble," Hinson said.

He also acknowledged those who have served alongside him at Spring Hill Avenue Baptist, including pianist Fran Trotter. "She's just so committed to being there," Hinson said. "She has just been fantastic."

A reunion dinner was held Aug. 27 for him and current and former choir members. During the worship service Aug. 28, the church recognized Hinson and former and current choir members united to sing "I Will Arise." His son Jason also sang during the service. Afterward the congregation enjoyed a special luncheon and time of fellowship. Hinson will continue serving as minister of music at the Mobile Baptist Association church until his replacement is found.

Kinston's New Chapel WMU creates homeless ministry

"I was in Mobile to pick up my brother-in-law at the oil rig he was working at," Kelli Batson said. "I was waiting in my car and saw a man trying to sleep on the ground with no pillow."

From that point on, Batson knew God was calling her to love and care for the homeless. And that's just what she's doing through the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) at New Chapel Baptist Church, Kinston, where she's been a member for more than a year.

Batson was appointed WMU director in September, and in early October, she and the 25 WMU members began Help for the Helpless, a ministry that gathers and organizes donations of clothes, food and toiletries and delivers them to homeless shelters in Alabama.

"[Help for the Helpless] wants to give directly to the homeless people," Batson said, noting donations are given directly to shelters, not donation centers where items are resold.

The Sardis Baptist Association church's WMU has already delivered three large boxes filled with jackets, socks, canned goods and shampoo, lotion and other hygiene items to the Waterfront Rescue Mission in Mobile. "We're just starting out now," Batson said, "but someday we'd like to see [Help for the Helpless] spread from [church to church] to reach every shelter (in Alabama)."

For more information, call Batson at 334-378-9139 or Lisa Harrelson at 334-764-3206.

Bullock-Centennial sees 50 people saved at crusade

Bullock-Centennial Baptist Association held an evangelistic crusade Sept. 17-21 at Conecuh Springs Christian School in Union Springs. Evangelist Ken Freeman brought the message, and Dean, Gayna and Geoffrey Forrest led the music. Chip Colee, minister of music for First Baptist Church, Montgomery, led a community choir that performed each night as well.

The event opened with a Kids' Day on Sept. 17 at Ed Farrior Park in Union Springs. It featured games, concessions and a worship service led by the Forrests. Earl and Patsy Hinson, members of Eastside Baptist Church, Union Springs, sponsored the event in memory of their granddaughter Taylor Mullins, who was killed in a car accident earlier this year.

By Sept. 21, 450-500 people attended the crusade. Director of Missions Gene Bridgman reported that 50 people made professions of faith. "We're being sure to follow up with these folks," Bridgman said. He is grateful for John Bush, ACross Festivals director who helped publicize the crusade, and the generosity of the association's churches, who raised more than \$10,000 to fund the event.

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MS-LA-AL-AR-TN

Churches unite to fight poverty issues in Lowndes Co.

By Lindsey Robinson
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

When Lisa Rose, director of church and community ministries for Montgomery Baptist Association, moved back to Alabama — specifically Montgomery — after being in missions for more than 16 years in New York, she thought she was returning to the progressive heart of the civil rights movement.

Instead she felt that she'd been thrown back to a darker era of poverty and prejudice.

In Lowndes County, 31 percent of the population lives below the poverty level and Rose has felt the racial tension.

"While I have seen some Christians sit in the pew and do nothing about the issues that this county faces, I am extremely grateful for those churches in Lowndes County who have stepped up and are living out the gospel," she said. And a handful of Lowndes County churches are stepping out to battle generational poverty, denominational separation and lingering racism.

On Oct. 22, more than 100 white and black Christians from Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ, Catholic and nondenominational churches gathered for Operation Inasmuch, a "one-day missions blitz" of construction projects for 14 homes of elderly black resi-

dents in communities like Hayneville, Letohatchee and Mosses.

"It's an opportunity to break down some denominational and racial barriers so the body of Christ can really be seen the way it should be," said Sylvester Hardy, pastor of Jonathan's House of Prayer in Hayneville.

But the work didn't end that day — the event kicked off The Olive Tree Ministry, an interdenominational nonprofit organization designed to show Christ's love and fight generational poverty. The ministry will begin a tutoring program in early 2012 and work from there to see where God leads it in reaching the county for Christ.

"We're going to show the love of Jesus and the love of the Father in our community. And we're expecting nothing in return," said Darrell Paulk, pastor of Hayneville Baptist Church in Montgomery Association.

They started by repairing pipes, stairs, walls and ceilings; providing insulation; building wheelchair ramps; painting; and running water lines to homes during Operation Inasmuch. The projects were jointly funded by the churches.

Of course, not all of the volunteers were involved in construction. A team of volunteers brought lunch and cold drinks to workers at each site, while another team took care



Photo by Lindsey Robinson

REPAIRS — Charles Dean, a contractor from Steep Creek Baptist Church, Hope Hull, in Montgomery Baptist Association, examines damaged pipes at a home in Hayneville.

of small children while their parents and older siblings worked.

Volunteers contacted local senior centers to find elderly homeowners who desperately needed home repairs, especially before winter.

"A lot of them don't have water because their pipes busted last winter and there's nobody to fix them," Operation Inasmuch coordinator Audrey Marlette said.

In 84-year-old Mary Murphy's

home, a broken pipe caused water damage that left a hole the size of a twin bed in a back room.

'I'm blessed'

"I'm blessed to get this work done," said Murphy, who is largely confined to her bed.

One of her 14 children, Mary Edwards, was among the volunteers at her home.

"Eventually she's going to have to move anyway, but we're going to keep her here as long as we can," Edwards said.

Banks Washington, 70, has lived in his mobile home for 15 years. A solitary wall socket is the only source of electricity and a spigot in

the front yard the source of water.

"It means a great deal. It means a whole lot," Washington said of the repairs. "It'll stop the winter air from coming in. I'll have running water."

Bill Morgan, a member of Hayneville Baptist, worked at Washington's home.

"Nobody should live like this," Morgan said of the home, which needed repairs on the skirting to provide some insulation.

Paulk's 13-year-old son Brayden worked alongside him at Washington's home. "I'm here to help people who need the love of Christ and feel like they've been left behind," Brayden said.

Someone You Should Know

By Julie Payne
The Alabama Baptist

FLORENE ELLIOTT

Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove
Bessemer Baptist Association

FAVORITE VERSES: Isaiah 26:3
and Romans 8:28

FAVORITE HYMNS: "I Thirst" and
"When He Was on the Cross
(I Was on His Mind)"

HOBBIES: Ceramics and sewing

FAMILY STATUS: Widowed after 47 years
of marriage to Clyde; three children,
Dwayne (deceased), Carolyn and Glenn;
six grandchildren; and three great-granddaughters



ELLIOTT

Florence Elliott has been a member of Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove, since 1958. She worked with the preschool Sunday School department for several decades and has been involved in Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). An ongoing ministry for Elliott is visiting church members who are sick or homebound, oftentimes bringing them food. "Some [people] don't have outside help from their families — they live away," she explained. "You can fill that need."

Q: What was your upbringing like?

A: I was brought up in church. We grew up in a Christian home, [and] my mother taught Sunday School. I was never saved, never born again, until I was 28.

Q: So how did you come to know the Lord?

A: We had a three-day revival (at church). I didn't make a decision while ... there, but the Holy Spirit didn't let go. I was saved at home in the early morning hours. I made a profession of faith the

following Sunday (at Cottage Hill Baptist).

Q: What ministries have you been involved in?

A: I worked with VBS (Vacation Bible School). I've been involved in WMU at the church. We have our Joy Club (the church's senior adult group).

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

A: It changes everything when you accept the Lord.

NAMB's 2012 budget begins phase out of some funds, will impact state

North American Mission Board (NAMB) trustees approved a \$115 million budget for 2012 during their Oct. 17-19 meeting in Philadelphia.

The budget is a 5.4 percent decrease from this year's \$121.5 million budget. NAMB Chief Financial Officer Carlos Ferrer said the budget decrease resulted in part from the transfer of the World Changers/Power Plant missions programs — and associated revenues — from NAMB to LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville. The decrease also reflects a general belt-tightening trend at the entity, which is funded almost entirely by offerings given in Southern Baptist churches.

In his third-quarter financial report to NAMB trustees, Ferrer announced year-to-date total revenues of \$101 million, down about 2 per-

cent. But Annie Armstrong Easter Offering revenues are 3.5 percent higher over the same period last year, Ferrer said.

In line with reducing expense, NAMB trustees, following a lengthy discussion, adopted a motion whereby NAMB would phase out — over five years — the entity's traditional provision of benefits to some missionary personnel who receive less than half their salary from NAMB. Over the years, NAMB has jointly funded many missionaries with state conventions and local associations and covered the cost of health insurance for some.

This will impact 11 missionary personnel in Alabama. Seven have regional and/or statewide assignments and four are in associational missions positions.

(BP, TAB contributed)

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Samford University celebrates homecoming with students, alumni

Samford University alumni enjoyed a weekend of reunions and other events during homecoming Oct. 28–29.

Members of the class of 1961 took a special interest. They were freshmen when the school, then Howard College, relocated from East Lake to the new Lakeshore campus in the fall of 1957.

At a luncheon in their honor, Samford President Andrew Westmoreland presented class members with anniversary diplomas bearing the name Samford University. "You are a part of something timeless," he said, commending the class for celebrating its 50th reunion with a special gift to the school.

Prior to homecoming, the class raised \$76,382 to establish a Legacy scholarship for students. One leader of the campaign, Joe McDade, was among three honorees at an alumni banquet.

McDade, a retired Baptist minister from Montgomery, and 1992 graduate Mark Davidson, an investment director from Mobile, were honored as Samford's 2011 Alumni of the Year. Birmingham attorney Kitty Rogers Brown, a 2001 graduate originally from Russellville, was named Outstanding Young Alumna.

Former Samford music faculty member Bill Nugent received an honoris causa honorary alumnus designation. Nugent wrote the words and music to the Samford fight song while teaching at the school during the late '50s. He served as grand marshal of the 2011 homecoming parade.

The 31-unit parade included members of the homecoming court: freshmen Madison Miles, of Duluth, Ga., and McDavid Maddox, of Dothan; sophomores Emily-Erin Robinson, of Roanoke, Va., and



Photo courtesy of Samford University

KING AND QUEEN — Samford University crowned its 2011 homecoming king and queen, Jeremy Towns and Elizabeth Gettys, during halftime of its football game against Western Carolina on Oct. 29.

Mathes Ballard, of Lookout Mountain, Ga.; juniors Lauren Barry, of Dallas, and Cameron Collins, of Cornelius, N.C.; and seniors Meredith Edney, of Vicksburg, Miss.; Jordyn Elrod, of Franklin, Tenn.; Elizabeth Gettys, of Alexander City; Jeremy Towns, of Dolomite; Matt Wambles, of Dothan; and John Woods, of Louisville, Ky.

Campus festivities

At halftime of the football game against Western Carolina, Gettys and Towns were named homecoming queen and king. Gettys, an economics major, is the daughter of

Sarah Beth and Charles Gettys and a member of First Baptist Church, Alexander City. Towns, a sports medicine major and varsity football player, is the son of Janice Towns and attends Holy Trinity World Outreach Ministry in Birmingham. They were chosen by vote of the student body. The Bulldogs won the game 52–24.

Throughout the weekend, many academic units and organizations held tailgate gatherings and special reunions. The classes of 1986 and 2001 enjoyed their 25-year and 10-year reunions.

The journalism and mass communication department inducted alumni George H. Smith, of Birmingham, and the late Hugh Frank Smith, of Memphis, Tenn., into its Wall of Fame.

Former student workers in the school of education's Media Center helped celebrate the 20th anniversary of the academic technology program led for two decades by Ed Landers.

The campus festivities began with an Oct. 28 choral vespers featuring the Samford Chorale and A Cappella Choir. Among those enjoying the service were 1961 graduate Bob Henderson and his wife, 1963 graduate Jeanie Wilson Henderson, of Tuscaloosa. Upon exiting Reid Chapel, the former baseball and basketball player marveled to the former majorette about the changes that 50 years can bring.

"Back then, you could see from the chapel clear across campus," he said, referring to the lush trees that, like Samford, have grown and thrived since his freshman year.

(SU)

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'Nonconventional ministry'

Fellowship of Faith member reaches community with piano lessons

By Anna Keller
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Morris Lyle is a government engineer with no musical background. However, the member of The Fellowship of Faith Church, Huntsville, was inspired to start a music school last year after reading an article titled "Save the Music" about the benefits of music education for children.

"The article talked about how learning music trains kids' minds and exercises a part of the brain that might not be used in other ways," Lyle said. "With the school, I pretty much implemented what the article proposed as a way of improving kids' learning."

According to Pastor Troy Garner, through the school, Lyle has helped meet a real ministry need in the community.

"Mr. Lyle is a perfect example of a person who has embraced the vision of the church," Garner said. "A part of our vision is that we want all members involved in ministry, and he'd heard me say, 'If we don't have a ministry that you want, let us know and we can start it.' That's exactly what Mr. Lyle did."

Right now, the school — which currently has six students ranging from kindergarten through seventh grade — only offers piano lessons. But Lyle said he is open to expansion if there is enough interest in an additional instrument. Students meet on Wednesday evenings at the Madison Baptist Association church and take lessons from an instructor Lyle recruited from a local music company.

The school offers opportunities for students when resources might otherwise keep them from participating in lessons. Keyboards are lent to students to use at home and scholarships are offered.



Photo courtesy of The Fellowship of Faith Church

DEDICATION — Morris Lyle (back, left), a member of The Fellowship of Faith Church, Huntsville, started a music school at the church last year. Pictured with him are Gabrielle Henry Perkins (front), (l to r) Josiah Drake, instructor Weredena Smith, Pastor Troy Garner and Tavion Garrett.

"If we know the student has a keen interest in music and will be committed and dedicated to it, we are willing to support them in the entire process," Garner said. "We have several students who probably would not be involved in the program if we did not offer these scholarships, and we are happy to help them develop their skills."

'Always smiling'

One such student is 10-year-old Josiah Drake, who, according to his mother, Andrea, "loves" taking lessons and "is always smiling and happy after his lessons."

"It was great for me, because I wanted him to stay in music but couldn't afford it," Andrea Drake, a Fellowship of Faith member, said of the scholarship.

The school held its first recital in July, and the second is planned for December.

"At the first recital, the parents

were all excited to see how the students had performed and progressed," Lyle said, noting he got a lot of positive feedback.

Though the school started small — with just three students — Lyle has not been discouraged by the numbers. In his view, if the school can grow by adding even three committed students each year, then that will be a positive accomplishment.

Garner said the school has turned out to be a strong and unexpected outreach to nonmembers of their church — both adults and children — as well.

"It offers a nonconventional ministry to our kids and to the community," he said. "We offer the music school before Bible study on Wednesday nights, and oftentimes parents will bring their kids to the music school and they'll stay for Bible study. It's awesome! God is definitely in this music school."



Home Rule and the Alabama Constitution

By Jim Williams
Special to The Alabama Baptist

A state constitution provides the framework within which governmental decisions are made. Some decisions affect the whole state and should be made by general laws of the legislature; others are local and should be left to city and county officials.

Alabama's constitution contains no standard, or rule, to define which decisions can be made locally (that is, no "home rule"). Without such a standard, there is no solid foundation for county government. The Legislature often makes decisions for counties, one at a time, through "local acts." In many cases, exceptions to constitutional rules have to be approved by popular vote on "local amendments."

Chaotic result

The result is chaotic: Today there are hundreds of constitutional amendments that affect only a single county and more than 35,000 local acts of the Legislature. These local acts are not in any code; they are published only in the year enacted. No one keeps track of them. For the most part, there are no checks and balances on adoption, since the Legislature normally defers to the members from a given county on their local bills.

Legislators are elected to make policy for our state government. Why should they spend time on local matters that we elect county commissioners to

manage? To see the inefficiency in this, imagine how profitable Alabama's automakers would be if their boards of directors handled issues that arise as autos are being assembled down on the line. Wisely they delegate that power to those directly involved and spend their time on decisions related to the health of the corporation as a whole.

The biggest problem with having no home rule standard is the lack of accountability. What is the law? State laws and constitutional provisions vary from county to county. Who is responsible for problems that arise? For example, is Jefferson County now at the brink of bankruptcy because of decisions made by elected officials in the past or flawed legislative acts that created the structure and governed the county's finances? Obviously both and county officials today can resolve the problems only if the Legislature acts.

Fortunately the Legislature has created a constitutional revision commission to recommend reforms. There is no more important issue for this commission to address than developing a balanced home rule standard. The goal should be to prevent problems like those now facing Jefferson County.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jim Williams is executive director for the nonprofit, nonpartisan Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama. Jim may be contacted at jwillia@samford.edu.

Changing charitable tax code could affect churches, nonprofits

The current tax deduction for charitable giving is under attack, and the services provided by churches and other institutions could suffer, U.S. senators were warned Oct. 18. "Tax reform options being discussed today are options that target charitable giving concocted by those who, hungry for more tax dollars to finance reckless government spending, are now casting their sights on the already depleted resources of charities and churches," Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, said at a hearing by the Senate Finance Committee.

The committee heard testimony on a proposal by President Obama that would ultimately limit charitable deduction. A prominent research organization has estimated the projected 28 percent cap on itemized deductions could cause a \$6 billion drop in charitable giving, Hatch said. Some witnesses expressed their fear that nonprofits, charities and churches will suffer during this time of economic crisis if the incentive to give money is suppressed.

Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., the committee's chairman, noted one-third of taxpayers itemized deductions last year. Of those, 86 percent claimed charitable deductions.

Higher income families tend to donate to medical facilities, while lower income families contribute often to religious establishments and basic needs charities, Baucus said in his opening statement. Hatch said an alteration in the current tax code could cause donations to decrease and significantly damage the nonprofits' ability to continue serving the community.

'The lifeblood of charities'

"Charitable donations are the lifeblood of charities, and the last thing Congress should do is interrupt the blood supply," said Hatch, the lead Republican on the committee.

Frank Sammartino, assistant director for tax analysis at the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), presented the committee with options for revising the tax handling of charitable con-

tributions. The CBO, he said, categorized 11 possible alternatives into four groups:

- ▶ Retaining the current tax deduction for itemizers but adding a floor or minimum level.
- ▶ Allowing all taxpayers to claim the deduction, with or without a floor.
- ▶ Replacing the deduction with a nonrefundable credit for all taxpayers, equal to 25 percent of a taxpayer's charitable donations, with or without a floor.
- ▶ Replacing the deduction with a nonrefundable credit for all taxpayers, equal to 15 percent of a taxpayer's charitable donations, with or without a floor.

Expressing his opposition to changing the charitable deduction, Hatch said the goal is not to reward some donors more than others or allow the federal government to experiment by converting the deduction into a tax credit.

"It's not really about the donor at all," Hatch said. "It's about the charity. It's about directing sufficient funds to charities so that they can carry forward the good work our so-

ciety so desperately needs them to perform."

He also explained that lower income Americans are more generous than wealthier ones, giving a higher percentage of their income than higher income taxpayers, regardless of tax benefits. Economists call it "inelastic charitable giving," but Hatch called it "giving from the heart."

More important things

Russell Moore, dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., gave a brief statement and said the discussion cannot be boiled down solely to economics. Urging the senators not to change the charitable tax deduction, Moore said giving to charities "teaches and shows that there are things more important than simply the abundance of our possessions."

"We're not simply economic units," Moore said.

The hearing can be viewed online at <http://1.usa.gov/qCNXCo>. (BP)

ALABAMA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES & FAMILY MINISTRIES

Legacy

NOVEMBER 2011

year-end Gifts Benefit *the* Giver

By Bob Dewhurst, ABCH VP, Ministry Development

Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH) is blessed by those who give throughout the year for the benefit of the children and families we serve. We so greatly appreciate this generosity.

As we seek to be wise stewards, it is our desire to help people like you to make an informed decision when considering certain types of gifts to the Children's Homes. In fact, did you know there are certain benefits to giving a gift at the end of the year?

Year-End Giving Benefits

Among the benefits of gifts given at the end of the year are:

- Potential tax savings from charitable deductions
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- Income tax deductions this year for gifts actually made in future years
- Personal satisfaction in knowing that you are involved in helping a child

I would like to focus your attention on ways of making gifts from or of property or stocks while avoiding certain taxes you might end up paying on that gift. If you are considering a gift of either one, consider this:

- The property or stock you have available for giving may have substantially appreciated in value.
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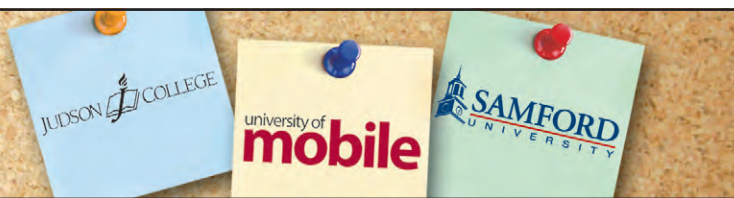
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CAMPUS News



JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson to Present ‘The Diary of Anne Frank’:** The Judson College drama department will present “The Diary of Anne Frank” by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett Nov. 10–12 at 7 p.m. nightly in Alumnae Auditorium. The play will be directed by Judson artist-in-residence Billie Jean Young. There will be one 10-minute intermission. For more information, call the music department at 334-683-5149.

► **Judson Western Equestrian Team Places at Show:** The Judson College Western equestrian team competed at its first set of Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA) shows for the season Oct. 8.

The shows were hosted by North Georgia College & State University in Dahlonega.

Other competitors included Berry College, Clemson University, Georgia Tech and Lander University.

The Judson team finished third overall during both competitions

and qualified two riders for the end-of-season Western regional show.

Four of the nine team members were competing in their first Western IHSA show, coach Jennifer Hoggle said.

► **Artist Lisa Michitti Featured:** Judson College will feature the mixed-media artwork of Lisa Michitti through Nov. 20 at the Marian Acree Tucker Gallery on campus.

“My work reflects my life: pursuit of knowledge, alternate perspectives, complex relationships, deceptive simplicity and layered content,” Michitti said.

Michitti is currently an adjunct faculty member at both Judson and the University of Montevallo.

Works in the exhibition are for sale. For more information about the work or the artist, contact Jamie Adams at 334-683-5251 or jadams1@judson.edu.

Images of Michitti’s work may be seen at www.mtheorydesign.com.

► **Judson Equestrians Perform Well in Georgia:** The Judson College equestrian team joined several other college teams in competition the weekend of Oct. 21–23 at

Berry College in Rome, Ga. Large and small universities around Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina competed in the show.

Judson placed 10th of 14 teams in the hunt seat competition while missing riders in half of the point-gathering events.

In the Western seat show Oct. 22, Judson placed fourth of six teams.

In the next day’s Western seat show, Judson placed third overall. Judson sophomore Megan Cook, of Murray, Ky., placed first in the individual intermediate competition.

Judson’s next hunt seat competition will be held Nov. 19–20 in Greenville, S.C.

► **Judson Sponsors Equine Clinic:** Birmingham equine clinician, trainer, instructor and judge Bryan Tweed hosted a training event at Judson College on Oct. 24. Tweed conducted a clinic using Judson students to demonstrate the effectiveness of equine-facilitated mental health instruction as well as a sports psychology session for the college’s riding team members.

Tweed has ridden for 30 years and trained with some of the leading professionals in the equine industry. He also has taught clinics

and judged equine events around the Southeastern United States.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **UMobile to Present 2011 ‘Christmas Spectacular’:** The University of Mobile (UMobile) Center for Performing Arts will present its annual “Christmas Spectacular!” at Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Nov. 30 and Dec. 1–2.

Doors will open at 6 p.m. for ticket holders and at 6:30 p.m. for nonticket holders. The event will begin at 6:45 p.m. Donations to cover production expenses will be accepted during the show.

This year’s show will feature the talents of more than 250 UMobile musicians. The diverse Christmas sounds of musical ensembles including the VOICES of Mobile, IMPACT, SOUNDS of Mobile, RamCorps and the A Cappella Choir will captivate audiences of all ages.

For more information, call the Center for Performing Arts at 251-442-2420.

MARKET PLACE

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT PLACING A CLASSIFIED AD, CALL THE ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST, 205-870-4720, EXT. 102, OR E-MAIL ADS@THEALABAMABAPTIST.ORG. COPY DEADLINE IS TWO WEEKS BEFORE PUBLICATION.

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR: Jamestown First Baptist Church located in South Central Kentucky is seeking her next senior pastor. JTFBC is a strong leadership church with a core body mix of creative, missioned and biblical people. Grace and mercy characterizes our church over engaging cultural warfare. We cooperate with the SBC in our missions giving and are focused in reaching all peoples. Our next pastor will be distinctively Baptist with an ability to communicate and relate to a theologically/economically diverse audience. JTFBC is giving first consideration to those who hold an M.Div. or higher and demonstrate creative communication coupled with successful church growth. If interested, please send a resumé and a DVD or CD to: Pastor Search Team, P.O. Box 308, Jamestown, KY 42629-0308. Deadline for resumé is Dec. 1.

PASTOR: Good Hope Baptist Church of Purvis, Miss., is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Kristi Nelson by e-mail kristi@goodhopepurvis.com or mail to: P.O. Box 1117, Purvis, MS 39475.

PASTOR: Siberton Baptist Church is now accepting resumé for a full-time pastor. Please mail all resumé to: Siberton Baptist Church, c/o Pulpit Committee, 627 Jones Street SE, Attalla, AL 35954.

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.

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

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: New Elkhatchee Baptist Church is now receiving resumé for bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: Mary Shockley, 448 Newman Road, Alexander City, AL 35010, or mshockley@russellmedcenter.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Fultondale First Baptist Church is looking for a bivocational pastor that will lead our church in spiritual growth and recovery from the damage of the April tornado. Please send resumé to: P.O. Box 595, Fultondale, AL 35068.

MINISTER OF MUSIC/EDUCATION: FBC Haleyville is seeking minister for worship and congregational discipleship for a strong, active church family. Contact 205-486-3762 or jcooley@fbchaleyville.org.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF EDUCATION & ACTIVITIES: First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Ala., is searching for a part-time minister of education and activities (approximately 20–25 hours per week). For more information, call the church office at 334-863-4109.

YOUTH PASTOR: FBC Opelika is receiving resumé for full-time youth pastor. The ideal candidate will have at least five years experience in youth ministry, seminary experience and possess a heart and passion to love and disciple students in grades 7–12. Resumé may be sent to: FBC Opelika, ATTN: Execu-

tive Pastor, P.O. Box 329, Opelika, AL 36803.

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 resumé to: info@underwoodbaptist.com.

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 resumé to: info@underwoodbaptist.com.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS: Salem-Troy Baptist Association is accepting resumé for a full-time director of missions. Mail resumé to: Salem-Troy Baptist Association, P.O. Box 242, Troy, AL 36081. Deadline: Jan. 20, 2012.

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

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MISCELLANEOUS

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Want to know God?

By Director of Missions
Jim Jackson
Elmore Baptist Association

Whether we like it or not, in this country, we are already into the “political season.” The president and those who would like to defeat him next November are involved in speeches, rallies and debates.

Each one running for the office wants our vote. As he or she describes the problems our nation faces, he or she is saying to us, “Believe me!” — “Vote for me.” As he or she proposes solutions to the problems, he or she is saying, “Trust me!” — “Vote for me.”

Beneath our problems as a nation and individuals is our search for truth about ourselves and God. The difficulty in our search is our willful sin and rejection of God. We refuse why God made us (to fellowship with Him) and how He designed us (to serve Him). Whether we understand or know it, we are driven by a desire to know God and have a personal relationship with Him, and we can do nothing to make it happen.

The desire to know God in a personal way moves people to search through religion, philosophy, nature or books. There may be truth in each of these places, but ultimate truth is found in God. We need to hear from Him, know Him and fellowship with Him.

In response to our need, God has provided a way. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). God came to His world in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ.

As Jesus came and lived among us, He said in words and lifestyle, “Believe me; trust me.” Jesus said, “Believe me” — “My word is true and trustworthy.” Jesus said, “Trust me” — “I have come to seek and save the lost.”

We must believe that in Christ alone can the barrier of sin between God and us be broken down. Through faith, we must trust that His word and life are the only way to salvation and hope for the future.

Jesus said, “Have faith in me when I say that the Father is one with me and that I am one with the Father. Or else have faith in me simply because of the things I do” (John 14:11 CEV).

Society built on pride

Southern Baptist representatives help Japan's homeless find hope

As the sun rises over Japan, millions rise early to head to work. Together, Tokyo and neighboring Nagoya represent the business and manufacturing facets of the country's economy. Hisaya Kazu, 62, also rises early from his cardboard cocoon to go to work.

By 3 a.m., Kazu is picking up aluminum cans in Sakae Park in Nagoya. He cashes in the aluminum for enough yen to buy his meals for the day.

Like many affluent nations, Japan isn't quite sure what to do about its homeless population. Local Christian workers familiar with the situation estimate that more than 1,000 of Nagoya's 2.2 million people are homeless. In Tokyo, with more than 12 million people, more than 4,000 people live under bridges and in parks.

In Japan employment practices are a primary cause of Japanese homelessness, explains Wendy Hoshizaki, a Southern Baptist representative working in Japan. Most Japanese factories and some businesses house their employees in company-owned dormitories, so those who lose their jobs often lose their homes as well.

For most Japanese, unemployment and homelessness are a disgrace to the family's honor, said Richard Oue, a Southern Baptist representative in Tokyo.

"Many times, if somebody loses their job, they are too embarrassed to go home," Oue said.

Financial analysts estimate that nearly 1 million Japanese people lost their jobs between 2008 and 2009. After the March 11 tsunami, close to 158,000 people lost their



BP photo

MEETING PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS — Southern Baptist representative Wang Lee distributes food to homeless men and women in a park in Nagoya, Japan.

jobs when water destroyed entire villages and the fishing industry along the northeastern coast of Japan, which is 10 hours north of Tokyo. For many, losing their job means a loss of identity.

In the wake of the massive economic downturn, Christian workers note a new spiritual interest among the Japanese. Among the homeless, in particular, a signifi-

cant number in Tokyo and Nagoya are responding to the gospel. "[The homeless] are beginning to ask, 'What is important? What is real? Isn't there some hope?'" said Mark Hoshizaki, a Southern Baptist representative who works with the homeless in Tokyo.

Still more than 99 percent of Japanese do not know Christ.

Southern Baptists' gifts to the

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Cooperative Program help Southern Baptist representatives around the world share the gospel. Give to the offering through your local Southern Baptist church or online at imb.org/offering, where there are resources for church leaders to promote the offering. Download related videos at imb.org/entirechurchvideo. (BP)

WEEK OF PRAYER

for International Missions and
International Missions Study
Dec. 4-11

HISHEART HISHANDS HISVOICE



LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING

National Goal: \$175 million
Alabama's Goal: \$11.5 million

TOGETHER

For more information and resources about the Cooperative Program, please contact State Missionary Jim Swedenburg, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 283, jswedenburg@alsbom.org.

Disaster relief volunteers from Michigan help clean up a yard in Harvest, Alabama.

In the months since April, when more than 60 tornadoes ravaged our state, Alabama Baptists, along with volunteers from 12 other states, joined forces to help restore homes, communities and lives, and in the process painted a picture of what the Cooperative Program is all about — working together to accomplish more than we can alone.



SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 13

Explore the Bible

By Robert Olsen

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

DO YOU SHOW RESPECT TO OTHERS?
Romans 14:1-12

Doesn't God Respect Them? (1-4)
One of the difficulties in Christianity is getting along with other believers who think differently than we do. This is an issue in the church today, with differences in things such as music preference, worship styles and political views, and it was an issue in the early church as well, especially with eating certain types of food and celebrating (or lack thereof) certain days. Since Christians are to demonstrate unity, how do we handle issues such as these?

At the church in Rome, there were believers with many different backgrounds. Some were rich, some poor, some slaves, some free, etc. Also, as with any church, Christians were at different levels of spiritual maturity. Paul encouraged believers to accept others who have weak faith. What Paul meant here is that some believers are able to interact with sinners and not take on their sinful behavior. Paul also said not to argue about doubtful issues. He meant gray areas — areas where there is no scriptural position. For example, the Bible never states what type of music ought to be played in church. Some may say no music should be in church at all. Since there is no clear precedent in the Bible, Christians need to not pass judgment on each other regarding this issue. Certainly it is OK to have a preference, but Christians need to realize that where the Bible is silent, it is OK to have a difference of opinion. Too often in churches, people think that their opinion is doctrine and must be obeyed by all other Christians. There are areas where the Bible is clear; for example, the belief that Jesus is the only way to experience forgiveness of sin is clearly represented in the Bible. There can be no divergence of opinion on this matter. In Paul's day, some believers thought that a true Christian could not eat meat that had been sacrificed to an idol. If one had been a pagan who had sacrificed to idols in the past, then he or she might not want to eat this meat because he or she would be supporting this practice of idol worship. Others, know-

ing that there are no other gods, that they are just worthless idols, had no problem eating the meat. The key point here is to recognize that we need to respect one another because God has accepted us. Unless it is a clear issue in Scripture like stealing, murder or adultery, Christians need to accept one another and differences of opinion.

Didn't Christ Die for Them? (5-9)
Paul turned from the issue of food to the issue of special days. A Jew who became a Christian might still want to keep the Sabbath, which is Saturday. Other converted Jews might want to exercise their freedom to worship on Sunday, which most in the early church did. Paul said this was an issue that should not divide believers. However, Paul asserted that their concern should be to honor God. So whatever we choose to do, it should not be done for personal gratification but to honor God.

Aren't They Family? (10a)
In the first part of this transition verse, Paul dealt with the weak in faith who criticize those with whom they disagree. In the next part, Paul addressed the strong in faith who look down on the weaker brother. For example, the weak might criticize the strong for preferring a rock band in worship, while the strong might look down on the one who only wants to have hymns in church. However, Christ died for both the strong and the weak.

Aren't We Accountable to God? (10b-12)
We will all have to give an account for our actions before God. Instead of criticizing other believers or tearing them down, we ought to work toward building one another up in the faith and encouraging one another. The world already hates Christians — Scripture even says the world will (see John 15:18-19); it is a travesty when Christians hate other Christians as well. Since we are ambassadors for Christ, we need to live in a way that is pleasing to God, which shows the world the love of Christ. When believers hold grudges or criticize one another, the world does not think that the Church has anything to offer it.

Bible Studies for Life

By Eric Mathis

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

STAND FOR THE LORD
Exodus 32:7-20, 25-26

This month's Bible study is Make Your Life Count. Last week, we encountered the story of Moses and the burning bush. Through that narrative, we considered the call that God has placed on our lives. This week's lesson is centered in the Exodus account of the golden calf. It examines Moses' response to the Israelites when they committed idolatry and calls us to consider how we might also stand for God in the midst of challenging circumstances in our lives.

Intercede on Behalf of Others (7-14)
Exodus 32 is interesting in that it resumes the story of the Israelites from Exodus 24:14. The narrative between Exodus 24 and Exodus 32 takes place on the mountain between God and Moses (24:15-31:18). For 40 days and nights, Israel has been without Moses and access to God. Frustrated, the people appeal to Aaron, Moses' brother and aide, to act in his stead and help them access God (1). They follow Aaron's command to remove their gold and give it to him (2-3). Within a day, Aaron uses the gold to create a calf (4-5) that is used in a festival honoring the graven image (5-6).

In anger, God tells Moses of the Israelites' behavior and commands him to leave the mountain and return to the people (7-9). The narrative further describes God's intent to consume the Israelites yet spare Moses (10). Moses (who was timid in last week's lesson) questions God's plan and implores Him to spare the Israelites (11-12). He recalls the covenant God has established with His people (13), and in a surprising move, God relents and does not inflict the disaster originally intended (14).

From Genesis to Exodus 32, major themes in the Old Testament are creation, fall and the new covenant inaugurated by God. However, the Exodus 32 passage illustrates a break in this covenant and the world God intended for Israel. In other words, while Moses is on the mountain with God, the Israelites seem to forget that He is their God and they are His people. They break the first and second com-

mandments, displaying they cannot handle the risk of faith in a God who is not seen. They reduce God to a tangible object that can be grasped.

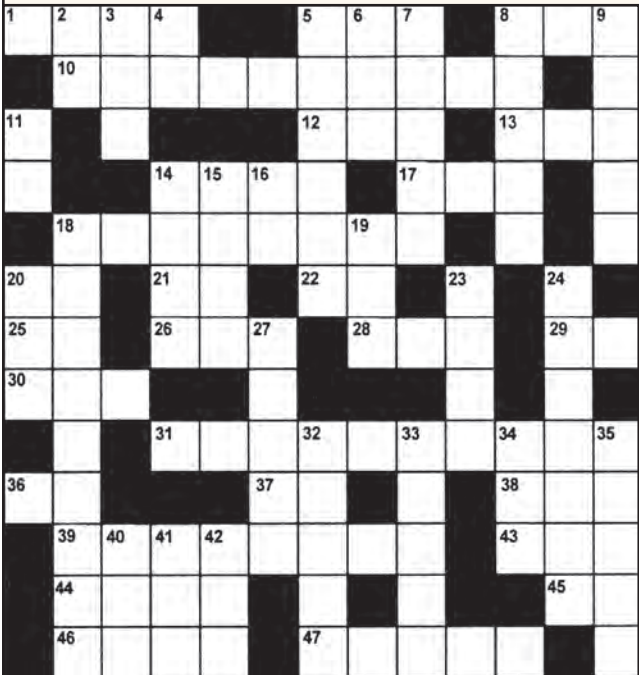
Lest we judge the Israelites, however, let us remember how quick we often are to follow their path and produce a false god when God seems distant or inaccessible. Perhaps our response to sin should be more like that of Moses. Moses responded to the Israelites' behavior with pleas to God on their behalf. For the first time in the Exodus account, Moses stood up to God and He listened. God chose not to give the Israelites what they might have deserved, beginning a pattern of redemption that continued to draw others into the covenantal relationship established in Genesis. Could it be that God might respond in similar ways if we, too, petition on behalf of others?

Confront the Sin (15-20)
Though God responded favorably to Moses' request, Moses still obeyed God's command. He went down the mountain carrying the two tablets of the covenant in his hands (15-16) and confronted the people by breaking the tablets and destroying their graven image (19-20). The broken tablets symbolize that the covenant with God has been broken, and the destroyed graven image symbolizes Moses' desire to make Israel choke on its perversion of God. Once again, Moses' actions call us to examine our response to sin: We are to honestly confront sin when necessary. Honest confrontation provides an open pathway for restoring the covenant with God.

Call for a Return to God (25-26)
Moses saw firsthand the Israelites' disobedience and called all those who would stand with God to join him. The Levites responded and followed their commitment to stand with Moses by slaughtering the idolaters. Notice that Moses called people not to his cause but to God's cause. Just as Moses petitioned God, Moses also petitioned the people to return to God. His willingness to take a public stand for a just cause is a good example for us. When we are willing to stand for causes that are just, we often motivate others to do the same.

Christian Crossword

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Across

- 1. Works, which were ____ in you. (Matt. 11:21)
- 5. Him and ____.
- 8. Kimberly. (nickname)
- 10. This ... sinful _____. (Mark 8:38)
- 12. Her countenance was no more _____. (1 Sam. 1:18)
- 13. Set it up there under an _____. (Josh. 24:26)
- 14. Whose waters cast up mire and _____. (Isa. 57:20)
- 17. Emergency Medical Technician. (abbr.)
- 18. ____ and mercy shall follow me. (Ps. 23:6)
- 20. Shed ____ blood. (Gen. 37:22)
- 21. There shall be ____ poor among you. (Deut. 15:4)
- 22. Ye have ____ portion ... in Jerusalem. (Neh. 2:20)
- 25. Audiovisual. (abbr.)
- 26. Large tree, largely destroyed by blight.
- 28. Though now ye ____

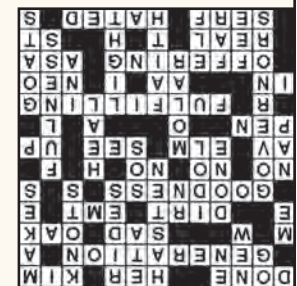
- him not. (1 Pet. 1:8)
- 29. From my youth _____. (Luke 18:21)
- 30. They that handle the _____. (Judg. 5:14)
- 31. Love is the ____ of the law. (Rom. 13:10)
- 36. Not out.
- 37. Support group for those who quit drinking.
- 38. Prefix meaning new.
- 39. Coming to him and ____ him vinegar. (Luke 23:36)
- 43. I ... quieted myself, as a child, ____ weaned child. (Ps. 131:2; 2 words)
- 44. Actual.
- 45. Saint. (abbr.)
- 46. Tenant farmer in the Middle Ages.
- 47. Esau ____ Jacob. (Gen. 27:41)

Down

- 2. Bashan was ruled by king _____. (Deut. 3:1)
- 3. Bring the offering ... of the ____ wine. (Neh. 10:39)

- 4. Printer's measure.
- 5. See that ye ____ the matter. (2 Chron. 24:5)
- 6. Estimated Time of Arrival. (abbr.)
- 7. Jumps on his horse and ____.
- 8. Something a sailor is good at.
- 9. Maketh. (mod.)
- 11. Go on before _____. (1 Sam. 25:19)
- 14. He that is mighty hath ____ ... great things. (Luke 1:49)
- 15. Set ... the ____ ... in the house of God. (2 Chron. 33:7)
- 16. Registered Nurse. (abbr.)
- 18. Ye shall be brought before ____ and kings. (Matt. 10:18)
- 19. Ship's cry of distress.
- 20. To sleep for a while.
- 23. Stretching forth thine hand to _____. (Acts 4:30)
- 24. In thy presence is ____ of joy. (Ps. 16:11)
- 27. Tooth.
- 32. The unfeigned ____ that

- is in thee. (2 Tim. 1:5)
- 33. But if we walk in the _____. (1 John 1:7)
- 34. "Are you coming?" "____ minute." (2 words)
- 35. He shall set the ____ on the left. (Matt. 25:33)
- 40. Charge for professional services.
- 41. To be with Christ; which is ____ better. (Phil. 1:23)
- 42. Small imaginary being.



Ex-slave pleads with US government for help with Sudanese slaves

Ker Aleu Deng waved his white cane in front of his body as he stepped cautiously into the second floor hearing room at the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington. He had come to speak for those who could not speak for themselves and plead with the American government for help on the issue of slavery in Sudan.

"Now that I have been very fortunate to get out of the situation, I still think about those who are in the same situation I was in," Deng told the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights.

A civil war rooted in religious differences tore apart what used to be the largest country in Africa. Fighting broke out in Sudan more than two decades ago between the Islamic, Arab-dominated north and the predominantly Christian and animist south.

Frequent raids of villages in the south by militia from the north — as well as the enslavement of survivors — marked the conflict. A declaration of independence signed on July 9 finalized the Republic of South Sudan's decision to secede and become the 196th country in the world.

Giving his testimony Oct. 4 through a translator, the Sudanese man told how he was blinded by slave master Zakaria Salih. Deng's job was to sort hibiscus leaves and tend goats. When he was accused of allowing the leaves to get wet, letting the animals get lost and skipping Islamic instruction, his eyesight was the price to pay. He was beaten and hung upside down from a tree as Salih rubbed chili peppers into his eyes.

When Deng was "too little to remember," murahaleen — government-trained militia raiders — invaded his village, burned huts, killed the men and stole livestock. He was then dragged along with his mother by camels into a life of slavery in northern Sudan. The young man was beaten with a horsewhip on a daily basis, he said. He was not given food everyday, though the animals were. He was even prohibited from speaking his native Dinka language. His mother became Salih's concubine and was forced to sleep in the garden to protect the crops from be-

ing eaten by animals. She was beaten as well if she resisted in any way.

Deng expressed his hope that Congress could assist those still enslaved in Sudan, including his mother, Angel Mangok Ding.

John Prendergast, co-founder of the Center for American Progress' Enough campaign, gave a suggestion to Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., the subcommittee chairman, about what needs to be done to eliminate these crimes against humanity in Sudan. "We will have an opportunity in the next few months to push a more aggressive policy," Prendergast said. "We just need to be there with a unified position about what the things are we expect from the Obama administration."

Sudan's 22-year civil war resurrected slavery. It was used, along with starvation and ethnic conflict, as a weapon of warfare. Ellen Ratner, a journalist for Talk Radio News Service, addressed the idea that slaves are sometimes considered prisoners of war and should be released.

"I spoke to some of my friends that are in the military who say whenever there is a war, prisoners of war are taken," Ratner told the subcommittee. "Even if you don't want to call it slavery, which it's clearly slavery, people are returned. Why not return these people? The war is done. It's now a separate country."

'An ongoing issue'

While Ambassador Princeton Lyman communicated his belief that slavery in Sudan has been stamped out for the most part with the seceding of the south, he still called it "an ongoing issue." Smith asked the special envoy to Sudan to raise the profile of the slavery issue.

The State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report of 2011 called Sudan "a source, transit, and destination country for men, women and children who are subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking." It also confirmed there are still slaves who remain with their captors.

"You are all powerful men and women," Deng said in his closing remarks to the subcommittee. "Please, find some way to help." (BP)

"Why not return these people? The war is done. It's now a separate country."

Ellen Ratner
Talk Radio News Service

Which is more important for evangelicals to emphasize — evangelism or justice?

By Russell D. Moore
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Some evangelicals talk as though personal evangelism and public justice are contradictory concerns or that one is part of the mission of the church and the other isn't. I think otherwise and I think the issue is one of the most important facing the church these days.

First of all, the mission of the church is the mission of Jesus. This mission doesn't start with the giving of the Great Commission or at Pentecost. The Great Commission is when Jesus sends the church to the world with the authority He already has (Matt. 28:18), and Pentecost is when He bestows the power to carry out this commission (Acts 1:8).

Content of the mission

The content of this mission is not just personal regeneration but disciple-making (Matt. 28:19). It is not just teaching, but teaching "them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20).

This mission is not inconsistent with what we have seen already in the life of Jesus. His mission is defined by Old Testament expectation (for instance, Psalm 72), and in the Gospel accounts in terms of redemptive love for the whole person, both body and soul. From the literally embryonic moments of the Incarnation, such terms are present in Mary's prayer about the coming of her Messiah (Luke 1:46-55), and then in Jesus' own inaugural words about His Kingdom's arrival (Luke 4:18-19).

This mission is summed up in the Gospel as a message of reconciliation that is both vertical and horizontal, establishing peace with both God and neighbor. The Scripture tells us to love neighbor "as yourself" (Luke 10:27-28).

This is not simply a "spiritual" ministry. Jesus cared for the physical and economic needs of wounded people and even transcended steep ethnic hostilities. As theologian Carl F.H. Henry reminded evangelicals a generation ago, one does not love oneself simply in "spiritual ways" but holistically.

Of course, Jesus' ministry would

be about such things. After all, the Bible shows us from the beginning that the scope of the curse is holistic in its destruction — personal, cosmic, social, vocational (Gen. 3-11) — and that the gospel is equally holistic in its restoration (Rev. 21-22).

Moreover, the biblical prophetic witness consistently speaks in such terms. Is Ahab's acquisition of Naboth's land (1 Kings 21:1-19) a matter of personal sin or social injustice? Well, it was both. Was the sin of Sodom a conglomeration of personal sins or societal unrighteousness? It was both (Gen. 18:26; Ezek. 16:49).

The prophets never divided up issues of righteousness as neatly as we do in the "personal" and the "social." Isaiah speaks of God's judgment both on personal pride and idolatry (Isa. 2:11) and the "grinding" of the faces of the poor (Isa. 3:14-15). Through Joel, Micah, Malachi and even John the Baptist the witness is the same.

The new covenant church continues this witness. Even after the public ministry of Jesus, His apostolic church continues a message of both personal justification and interpersonal justice. James directs the churches of the dispersion both in terms of their personal speech (James 3:1-12) and the unjust treatment of wage-earners (James 5:1-6).

Widows and orphans

James defines "pure and undefiled religion" as that which cares for widows and orphans (James 1:27). Of course he does: his brother already has (Matt. 25:40).

For those who might seek to pit James against Paul, the New Testament allows no such skirmish, either on personal redemption or on ministry to the vulnerable. When they received Paul, the apostles were concerned, of course, that he proclaimed the correct gospel.

However, they also cared that he remember the poor. This was, Paul testifies, "the very thing I was eager to do" (Gal. 2:10).

So how does the church "balance" a concern for evangelism with a concern for justice? A church does so in the same way it "balances" the gospel with personal morality. Sure, there have been churches that have emphasized public justice without the call to personal conversion. Such churches have abandoned the gospel.

"The short answer to how churches should 'balance' such things is simple: Follow Jesus."

Russell D. Moore
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

But there are also churches that have emphasized personal righteousness (sexual morality, for instance) without a clear emphasis on the gospel. And there are churches that have taught personal morality as a means of earning favor with God. Such also contradicts the gospel.

We do not, though, counteract legalism in the realm of personal morality with an antinomianism. And we do not react to the persistent "social gospels" (of both liberals and conservatives) by pretending that Jesus does not call His churches to act on behalf of the poor, the sojourner, the fatherless, the vulnerable, the hungry, the sex-trafficked, the unborn. We act in the framework of the gospel, never apart from it, both in verbal proclamation and in active demonstration.

The short answer to how churches should "balance" such things is simple: Follow Jesus. We are Christians. This means that as we grow in Christlikeness, we are concerned about the things that concern him. Jesus is the King of His Kingdom, and He loves whole persons, bodies as well as souls.

Christ Jesus never sends away the hungry with, "Be warmed and filled" (James 2:16). What He says, instead, as He points to the love of both God and neighbor, to the care of both body and soul, is: "You go, and do likewise" (Luke 10:37).

(BP)

No Christian church buildings left in Afghanistan

Not one Christian church building is left standing in Afghanistan, according to the U.S. State Department. The last such public place of Christian worship was destroyed by its landowner in March 2010. The U.S. State Department's International Religious Freedom Report, which revealed the destruction of the final Afghan church building, said there was a decrease in religious freedom during the reporting period, which covered July

to December of 2010. The decline was a result of the Afghanistan government's failure to acknowledge mistreatment of Christians and other religious minorities, according to the September 2011 report.

Afghanistan's constitution conveys a contradiction that has resulted in the restriction of religious freedom, according to the report. The document states that Islam is the "religion of the state" but also declares that "followers of other

religions are free to exercise their faith and perform their religious rites within the limits of the provisions of the law."

Population estimates for Afghanistan range from 24 to 33 million. It is projected that 80 percent are Sunni Muslim, 19 percent are Shia Muslim and less than 1 percent practice another form of religion. The Christian community is estimated to consist of 500 to 8,000 members. (BP)

Inspiring people

TobyMac's music points teens, young people to Christ

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

For more than 20 years, Toby McKeehan (better known as TobyMac) has been combining pop, rock, soul, hip-hop and urban flavors with Christ-centered lyrics. As his songs have gained national attention by being featured in numerous television programs, movies and sporting events, the gospel-filled lyrics have been instrumental in pointing teenagers and young adults to Christ.

"I think God's been teaching me a lot of things lately and reminding me of messages that need to be shared," McKeehan said. "We all need to be reminded that in the middle of a world that is telling you to focus on yourself, God is calling us to help meet the needs of others."

"I think that if we don't have the reflection of God's Word and friendships that remind us of that, it's easy to get caught up in this world. All of a sudden, you look up and you're a self-absorbed person. It's awkward at times and you're working against the very hard ways of this world when you say, 'I'm going to care about others.' It takes a lot more effort than to just care about yourself."

McKeehan said he is passionate about reaching teenagers and young adults because of the impact a youth minister made on his life.

"I grew up in Fairfax, Va., and when I was 12 years old, my mom was dragging my siblings and me to church every Sunday," McKeehan said. "We didn't go to Sunday School, just to church. I didn't really understand a lot of things about church and the Bible but was too afraid to ask anyone about them."

A pivotal turning point came when his youth pastor invited him to church camp. McKeehan was excited about the new experience but never expected that the week would change his life.

"Looking back, it's funny because I didn't have a clue what was really involved in a church camp," he said. "I had invited four friends, and I just thought we would play a lot of sports. That's what I thought the whole week would be about. It was interesting because obviously there was a lot of preaching, which we didn't expect."

"But the beautiful part of it all was every night when the youth pastor would sit on the floor with us in our little cabin, he would open the Bible and share about Jesus. I remember that youth pastor telling us about the mistakes he had made in life and about the hope that he had found in Christ. I think the Bible suddenly made more sense to me because the youth pastor seemed like a regular person who was willing to get down on our level and reach out to us. As a 12-year-old, God used that to begin to work in my heart."

Before the end of the week, McKeehan knew that he needed to talk



Photo courtesy of The Media Collective

'GREAT OPPORTUNITIES' — Toby McKeehan (better known as TobyMac) works to shine the spotlight on Christ and makes it a priority to provide entertainment that presents biblical principles.

with the youth pastor about accepting Christ as his Savior.

"I will never forget that Friday night, getting into my sleeping bag and my heart was just pounding," McKeehan said. "The whole time I was trying to lay there and go to sleep, but I knew that I needed to do something about what I was feeling inside. I finally unzipped my sleeping bag, walked into the other room and woke up that youth pastor in the middle of the night. I shared with him that I had never accepted Christ before, but I was ready to do so. He led me to Christ right then."

God at work

Afterward he began praying that his father also would accept Christ. A few months later, his father agreed to attend a worship service when he heard there would be a guest speaker and relaxed atmosphere. As the Lord was working, McKeehan's father made a profession of faith during the invitation. From then on, his entire family regularly attended worship services together.

Years later, he went on to attend college at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., and formed the contemporary Christian music group dc Talk in 1987 with Michael

Tait and Kevin Max. After performing together for more than a decade, the band members decided to pursue other ventures.

Although he has garnered many accolades and achievements, McKeehan remains focused on shining the spotlight on Christ.

This year, he is releasing his first Christmas album, "Christmas in Diverse City," which includes a song written to raise awareness about adoption. McKeehan and his wife adopted twins in 2002. Because of his commitment to faith and family, he makes it a priority to provide entertainment that presents biblical principles while wearing many hats as a singer, songwriter, author, record label president and parent of five children.

Through his albums and concerts, McKeehan desires to share songs that are not only relevant to believers but also spark conversations and pose questions with non-Christians.

"By sharing songs about the attributes of Christ and the fruits of the Spirit, it presents great opportunities for non-Christians to start asking questions and opens doors to share the gospel," he said.

For more information, visit www.tobymac.com.

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Maldives deports Indian teacher for owning Bible

MALE, Maldives — Police in the island nation of Maldives held a teacher from India for about 15 days before deporting him Oct. 14 for having a Bible in his house, a source said.

Shijo Kokkattu, a 30-year-old Catholic and teacher at the Raaf-ainu School in Raa Atoll, was arrested in late September after police found a Bible and a rosary in his house during a raid, a foreign source in the capital city of Male said.

Charging that Kokkattu was preaching his Christian faith in the Muslim nation, police took him to another island for interrogation and kept him in custody for more than two weeks, said the source.

In September, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs published new regulations under the Protection of Religious Unity Act of 1994, signaling a renewed commitment to control unlicensed preaching of Islam and propagation of non-Islamic religions in the country. The act outlaws promotion of anything that represents a religion other than Islam or any opinion that disagrees with Islamic scholars.

The new set of regulations maintains a longtime ban on propagation, display and expression of any religion other than Islam. The regulations state that only preachers licensed by the government are allowed to speak in public, and they must not create hatred toward people of any other religion.

The latter stipulation has been criticized by members of Islamic organizations such as the Islamic Foundation of the Maldives, who say that because the Quran speaks against Judaism and Christianity, they too should have the right to do so.

Any violation under the act is punishable by an imprisonment of between two and five years, banishment or house arrest.

Foreigners who are found proselytizing are to be deported, it said.

'Religious tolerance bill' threatens Indonesian church

BOGOR, Indonesia — Members of a church in Bogor, West Java, are determined to continue meeting outside their sealed building each Sunday until they are granted freedom to worship inside it, despite a ban on street meetings issued by the mayor.

"The church will never give up meeting together," a local source who preferred to remain unnamed said of the Indonesian Christian Church, in the Yasmin area of Bogor.

The ban on street meetings forced church members to worship at an alternate location Oct. 23.

Amid the stand-off, religious freedom for groups such as the Yasmin church would be dramatically reduced under a "religious tolerance bill" under consideration by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, critics of the proposal say.

On Oct. 9, Yasmin church members and police officers clashed on the street in front of the sealed church building over the Christians' right to meet there. According to local media reports, a police chief has accused church members of knocking him unconscious, while the church has countersued police for disrupting its service.

In defiance of a Supreme Court order early this year affirming Yasmin's constitutional right to freedom of worship, Bogor mayor Diani Budianto canceled the church's worship permit, locked and sealed its church building and banned church members from meeting on the street.

Azerbaijan to imprison for uncensored religious material

BAKU, Azerbaijan — Prison terms of up to five years or maximum fines of nearly nine years' official minimum wage are set to be adopted by Parliament in mid-November for groups of people who produce or distribute religious literature without going through Azerbaijan's compulsory prior state censorship of all religious literature.

The punishments are included in proposed amendments to the Criminal and Administrative Codes prepared by the powerful presidential administration and approved by two parliamentary committees Oct. 28.

Parliamentary officials said they are set to be adopted in one reading, probably Nov. 15.

"Insanity is only increasing," one member of a religious community who asked not to be identified said.