



INSIDE



Christians must wait on the Spirit in order to reach the world, Luter says

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Pastors Conference provides opportunity for personal spiritual renewal

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Alabama's Al-bright advocates for DOMs at NAMB

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Funding missions and ministries

Alabama Baptists approve \$43 million CP budget with slight increase for SBC

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Baptist messengers overwhelmingly approved a \$43 million Cooperative Program (CP) base budget for 2012 during the state convention annual meeting in Mobile on Nov. 15. They also increased special offering goals, approved a new missions partnership strategy and honored several Alabama Baptist pastors and churches for outstanding efforts and giving.

The new budget reflects a shift to 43 percent of the budget going to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), up from 42.5 percent — a difference of \$215,000.

The \$215,000 difference came from reductions in funds allocated to Samford University, The Baptist Foundation of Alabama, the Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers and the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

Divided 50-50

Messengers also approved a \$700,000 SBC causes/state causes budget and a \$1 million challenge budget that, if reached, will be divided 50-50 between the state convention and the SBC.

“Every dollar (of the \$1 million challenge budget) will be allocated on the 50-50 formula,” said Lawrence Phipps, chairman of the SBOM, as he presented the budget to messengers.

The 2012 budget is a reduction from recent years and reflects the state of the economy. It is a little more than the 2006 budget, a little less than the 2007 budget and is the same as the 2011 budget. But so far this year, Alabama Baptist giving is 6.7 percent below budget needs and is a little over 2 percent below giving at the same point a year ago.

The only concern over the 2012 budget voiced from the floor came from Ron Madison, pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville.

“I am a strong Alabama Baptist supporter, pastor of a church giving significantly to the Cooperative Program and all special offerings,” he said. “I’m

standing here as a matter of conscience, registering concern in light of what has been said.

“Alabama Baptists continue to lead (the SBC in CP giving), not from a position of wealth but from a position of conviction. ... Now we are at a time when ... our state has significant needs, we are moving into a different kind of relationship with the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and where dollars that have been coming back here are going to go away and some of that impact is being felt already,” Madison said. “I register a concern that we do not ... endanger the health and well-being of our missions work here by setting a pattern that we will obligate ourselves to in the future. I’m not speaking against the budget. I’m just registering a concern ... (and) request our leadership to reveal this on a yearly basis [to] ensure we do not mortgage the missions and ministries only we are responsible for.”

Also approved by messengers were the special offering goals for 2012:

▶ Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO) for International Missions — \$11,600,000

▶ Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (AAEO) for North American Missions — \$6,100,000

▶ Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries Offering — \$2,600,000



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

OFFICERS RE-ELECTED — The 2012 officers for the Alabama Baptist State Convention are (l to r) President Mike Shaw, FBC Pelham; First Vice President John Killian, Maytown Baptist; and Second Vice President Travis Coleman, FBC Prattville.

▶ World Hunger Offering — \$800,000

▶ Disaster Relief Offering — \$200,000

The Disaster Relief Offering also was approved to become a new annual emphasis for Alabama Baptists, similar to the LMCO and AAEO.

Making connections

The other new item approved was a strategic partnership strategy called Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections to be developed for implementation in January 2013.

“This strategy will focus on connecting IMB (International Mission

Board) and NAMB missionaries from Alabama with other Alabama Baptists,” according to the Book of Reports. This partnership will involve local churches and associations, as well as the SBOM. “It is a major part of the overall FutureFocus for Great Commission Ministries Task Force Report to be given at the 2012 state convention meeting in Montgomery.”

Awards and recognitions given were **Troy L. Morrison Awards for Leadership and Church Health**

▶ New Church Work — Kevin Castleberry, pastor of Cel- (See ‘Top,’ page 3)



“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.” — Psalm 107:1

Graphic by Lauren C. Grim/istockphoto.com

COMMENT

Doing Great Commission Ministries Together

A heartfelt cry for Alabama Baptists to work together in Great Commission Ministries — that is the best way to describe the 189th annual session of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, which met at Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Nov. 15–16.

It was an important emphasis for Baptists in Alabama and across the nation because Baptists are struggling with the question of whether to continue the “convention” form of cooperation or embrace the more individualistic “societal” approach of doing missions.

Time and time again during the annual meeting, speakers emphasized the importance of working together. In a theme interpretation, host pastor Adam Dooley pointed out that “multiplication produces faster growth than addition. That is why we partner together as Baptists in Alabama. By coming together, we can impact more people for the cause of Christ.”

Rob Jackson, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Decatur, reminded messengers that in order to “turn the world upside down” for Christ as the church in Philippi did, “Alabama Baptists must work together with radical leadership, the Cooperative Program and missions and evangelism.”

Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions Executive Director Rick Lance pointed to the “yellow shirt army” (credentialed disaster relief volunteers) as evidence of the benefit of working together and praised it for serving 256,147 meals following the April 27 tornadoes, providing 5,253 showers, completing 1,430 chain saw jobs and providing crisis child care for 350 children. Such an impact could not have been made without cooperation, he said.

And there were warnings about the dangers of failing to cooperate. Charles T. Carter, pastor emeritus of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, called it hypocrisy to claim concern for lost people while Cooperative Program (CP) giving continues to decline. He pointed out that prior to the Conservative Resurgence that began in 1979, CP giving averaged 11 percent. Now it is 5.8 percent across the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). Concern for the lost and failing to give to missions through the primary channel of missions support do not go together, Carter said.

In his president’s address, Mike Shaw, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pelham, warned pastors about the sin of pride. Departing from his prepared remarks, he cautioned pastors about being more concerned about their church getting credit for ministry efforts than the results of those efforts. One approach evidences cooperation. The other, individualistic concerns.

Despite the strong emphasis on “together,” it remains an open question whether Baptists in Alabama and the SBC will continue to embrace the methodology of cooperation as expressed through the convention system.



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

While support of career and long-term missionaries through the CP continues to decline, there has been a tidal wave of American short-term, local church-based missions trips. In their book, “When Helping Hurts,” Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert document that in 1989, about 120,000 people participated in short-term missions projects. By 2006, that number had grown to 2.2 million short-term missions participants. That year, Americans spent \$1,600,000,000 on short-term missions! That is not a mistake — \$1.6 billion.

Redirecting missions money

A growing number of churches are reducing or eliminating their CP giving and redirecting their missions money to church-sponsored events and ministries.

Passion for a particular ministry has led some to focus on one cause (a societal approach) rather than the balanced approach of multiple ministries characteristic of convention organization. Today there is no lack of voices calling for total commitment to international missions or church planting in the major cities of the Northeast or eliminating abortion or serving the poor and hungry or an array of other possibilities.

Yet the recent convention provided an unexpected example of the importance of the balanced approach to missions and ministry. Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, and first vice president of the SBC, paused to recognize state missionary James Blakeney during his Tuesday night sermon.

Luter shared that it was Blakeney, then a member of New Orleans Baptist Association’s staff, who sat down with him over lunch on a weekly basis to teach him how to grow a church through Sunday School. “Everything I am today as a pastor, I owe to James Blakeney,” he said. Franklin Avenue is now the largest Southern Baptist church in Louisiana.

Luter is an example of the importance of the training done by associations and state missionaries. Yet that kind of ministry has few champions and many critics. Whether it would exist in the individualistic approach of societal missions is questionable. Convention organization makes it possible because it has proven valuable even if it is

not exciting. That is an advantage of the balanced approach.

Individualistic approaches to missions and ministry provide recognition and influence for decision makers. Conventions reflect the corporate will of the body, so leadership and power are harder to come by.

Convention organization is cumbersome. It requires a denominational structure to function. Societal missions takes little organization.

Convention organizations take time to make decisions. Societal missions can turn on a dime. The streamlined, quick-responding characteristics of societal missions appeal to those used to immediate action and quick gratification.


The current debate is not new to Baptists. When Baptists formed the Triennial Convention of 1814 to support Adoniram Judson’s work, the issue of how Baptists would work together was paramount. In his book “The Baptist Heritage,” Baptist historian H. Leon McBeth wrote, “Most of the Northerners preferred to work through an independent society unconnected to the churches, while the Southerners unanimously favored an associational or convention plan based upon the churches.”

For their first decade, Baptists followed the convention model. But in 1826, Francis Wayland, president of Brown University in Providence, R.I., led a successful effort to adopt the societal approach to missions. That plan is still used by American Baptist Churches, formerly known as Northern Baptists.

When the SBC was formed in 1845, a convention plan of cooperation was approved. But by the early 20th century, Southern Baptists argued about being a “Board Baptist,” a derisive term for those who cooperated in missions rather than appoint church missionaries.

Now again the issue of how Baptists will do missions and ministries is at the forefront of Baptist life in Alabama and throughout the SBC. That is the reason convention planners chose the theme “Great Commission Ministries ... Together.”

My prayer is that Alabama Baptists and all Southern Baptists will again choose the convention approach to working together that provides a balanced approach of “many ... Great Commission Ministries” in Alabama and around the world. 🙏



THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

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

(ISSN 0738-7741; USPS 011-080)
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is published weekly except for one week in July and December by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 1-800-803-5201. Fax: 205-870-8957. Web site: www.thealabamabaptist.org E-mail: news@thealabamabaptist.org or circulation@thealabamabaptist.org. Periodicals postage paid at Birmingham, Ala., and other locations.

Alabama Baptist State Convention 2012 Cooperative Program Budget

(Approved Nov. 15, 2011)

| | CP BASE BUDGET | STATE/SBC CAUSES BUDGET | TOTAL BASE/ CAUSES BUDGET | CHALLENGE BUDGET |
|---|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION MINISTRIES | 18,490,000 | 400,000 | 18,890,000 | 19,390,000 |
| STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS MINISTRIES | | | | |
| <i>EVANGELISM/DISCIPLESHIP (38 full-time employees)</i> | | | | |
| Evangelism | 114,946 | 1,407 | 116,353 | 116,353 |
| Sunday School and Discipleship | 330,914 | 4,050 | 334,964 | 334,964 |
| Collegiate and Student Ministries | 103,647 | 1,158 | 104,805 | 104,805 |
| Christian Ethics/Chaplaincy | 57,212 | 700 | 57,912 | 57,912 |
| Evangelism/Discipleship Salaries/Housing | 2,171,473 | 26,579 | 2,198,052 | 2,198,052 |
| Evangelism/Discipleship Travel/Field Services | 243,011 | 2,974 | 245,985 | 245,985 |
| <i>LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (11 full-time employees)</i> | | | | |
| LeaderCare/Church Administration | 180,406 | 2,208 | 182,614 | 182,614 |
| Leadership/Church Health | 140,400 | 1,718 | 142,118 | 142,118 |
| Worship Leadership/Church Music | 92,590 | 1,133 | 93,723 | 93,723 |
| Leadership Development Salaries/Housing | 482,616 | 5,907 | 488,523 | 488,523 |
| Leadership Development Travel/Field Services | 59,633 | 730 | 60,363 | 60,363 |
| <i>MISSIONS MOBILIZATION (14 full-time employees)</i> | | | | |
| Associational Missions & Church Planting | 838,092 | 10,258 | 848,350 | 848,350 |
| Global Missions | 196,319 | 2,513 | 198,832 | 198,832 |
| Missions Mobilization Salaries/Housing | 579,910 | 7,098 | 587,008 | 587,008 |
| Missions Mobilization Travel/Field Services | 65,034 | 796 | 65,830 | 65,830 |
| <i>MISSIONS SUPPORT (31 full-time employees)</i> | | | | |
| Executive Director | | | | |
| A. Director's Office | 32,146 | 393 | 32,539 | 32,539 |
| B. Disaster relief | 988 | 12 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| C. Supplemental Aid | 988 | 12 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| D. Strategic Initiatives | | | | 262,514 |
| E. Mission:Dignity (Formerly: Adopt an Annuitant) | 8,890 | 110 | 9,000 | 9,000 |
| F. Partnerships | 988 | 12 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Information/Facility Services | | | | |
| Director's Office | 465,550 | 5,711 | 471,261 | 471,261 |
| Accounting | 2,248,750 | 27,524 | 2,276,274 | 2,276,274 |
| Church Compensation Services | 15,651 | 179 | 15,830 | 15,830 |
| Communications Services | 171,176 | 2,095 | 173,271 | 173,271 |
| Computer Services | 149,891 | 1,835 | 151,726 | 151,726 |
| Facility Services | 1,558,506 | 19,076 | 1,577,582 | 1,577,582 |
| Cooperative Program and Stewardship Development | 88,559 | 1,084 | 89,643 | 89,643 |
| Missions Support Salaries/Housing | 1,566,090 | 19,169 | 1,585,259 | 1,585,259 |
| Missions Support Travel/Field Services | 107,935 | 1,321 | 109,256 | 109,256 |
| TOTAL STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS MINISTRIES | 12,072,311 | 147,764 | 12,220,075 | 12,482,589 |
| CHURCH RETIREMENT PLAN (CHRP) | 796,128 | 9,745 | 805,873 | 805,873 |
| STATE CONVENTION ENTITY MINISTRIES | | | | |
| <i>Christian Higher Education Ministries</i> | | | | |
| A. A. Earl Potts Scholarship | 120,158 | 1,471 | 121,629 | 124,080 |
| B. Board of Aid to Students | 273,202 | 3,344 | 276,546 | 282,119 |
| C. Samford Extension | | | | |
| D. Judson College | 1,002,704 | 12,273 | 1,014,977 | 1,035,432 |
| E. Samford University | 4,842,036 | 59,266 | 4,901,302 | 5,000,079 |
| F. University of Mobile | 2,569,149 | 31,446 | 2,600,595 | 2,653,005 |
| <i>Other Entities and Commissions Ministries</i> | | | | |
| A. Children's Home and Family Ministries | 272,680 | 3,338 | 276,018 | 281,580 |
| B. Shocco Springs | 585,887 | 7,171 | 593,058 | 605,010 |
| C. The Alabama Baptist | 594,197 | 7,273 | 601,470 | 613,591 |
| D. The Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers | 200,110 | 2,449 | 202,559 | 206,642 |
| E. The Baptist Foundation of Alabama | 400,220 | 4,899 | 405,119 | 413,283 |
| F. The Christian Life Commission | 26,314 | 322 | 26,637 | 27,173 |
| G. The Education Commission | 3,472 | 42 | 3,514 | 3,585 |
| H. The Historical Commission | 137,375 | 1,681 | 139,056 | 141,858 |
| <i>Auxiliaries and Other Ministries</i> | | | | |
| A. ALCAP | 70,265 | 860 | 71,125 | 72,558 |
| B. Woman's Missionary Union | 543,792 | 6,656 | 550,448 | 561,541 |
| TOTAL STATE CONVENTION ENTITY MINISTRIES | 11,641,561 | 142,492 | 11,784,053 | 12,021,539 |
| TOTAL BASE AND CHALLENGE BUDGET | 43,000,000 | 700,000 | 43,700,000 | 44,700,000 |
| SPECIAL OFFERING GOALS | | | | |
| Lottie Moon Christmas Offering | 11,600,000 | | | 11,600,000 |
| Annie Armstrong Easter Offering | 6,100,000 | | | 6,100,000 |
| Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries | 2,600,000 | | | 2,600,000 |
| World Hunger Offering | 800,000 | | | 800,000 |
| Disaster Relief Offering | 200,000 | | | 200,000 |
| TOTAL SPECIAL OFFERING GOALS | 21,300,000 | | | 21,300,000 |
| TOTAL BUDGET AND SPECIAL OFFERING GOALS | 64,300,000 | | | 66,000,000 |

'Thank you'

Lance focuses on Alabama Baptists working together

Alabama Baptists are "difference makers in a world of indifference," declared Rick Lance during his executive director's report to the Alabama Baptist State Convention on Nov. 15.

One set of difference makers are the disaster relief volunteers, he said.

"Alabama will always remember April 27, 2011 — 4-27-11," he said. "I will always remember the images and experiences of being beside some of these who went way beyond the call of duty."

"There's no way we can ever say thank you. ... No

gratitude will ever be enough," he said as he recognized the "yellow shirt army" for their work following the devastating tornadoes in April.

As attendees gave a standing ovation for the disaster relief volunteers' efforts, Lance said, "Words can't express our gratitude and appreciation for all you have done."

Other difference makers can be found in global missions through Alabama Baptists work with Guatemala, Ukraine, Haiti and Michigan, Lance noted.

And "if you want to be everywhere in the world 24/7, 365 days a year, the Cooperative Program is the way to do that," he said.

Collegiate and student ministries are another group of difference makers, Lance said.

"They are potentially cumulatively touching the lives of as many as 300,000 students."

Lance also asked for prayer for church planting efforts in the state.



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

'CALL OF DUTY' — Rick Lance, executive director for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, delivers his report during the convention's annual meeting Nov. 15.

"Birthing a church is not easy," he said. "Pray for our church planters and opportunities in Alabama to plant new churches."

"Also pray for church revitalizers," he added. "We have 3,250 churches already in existence, but many need to be refocused and revitalized. I pray a fresh wind of the Lord's spirit will pour on our churches that would touch the entire world as we stay on the go and grow for Jesus Christ."

Wrapping up his report by reading Psalm 133:1-3, Lance reminded Alabama Baptists "we have more in common than we have in terms of differences."

"We are saved by the same Savior ... set apart for the same service ... [and] sustained by the same source. ... We are a family and families work together."

"Together, we have one mission, the Great Commission ... one program, the Cooperative Program ... many ministries, Great Commission Ministries."

(Traci C. Gyan and Jennifer Davis Rash)

Top CP givers, missions volunteer of year recognized for service

(continued from page 1)

► **Baptist Church, Semmes**
► **Bivocational Work** — James "Jim" O'Neal, interim pastor of Chatom Baptist Church

► **Established Work** — Kevin Blackwell, pastor of Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown

After presenting the awards, Morrison said, "I'd like to commend these men for being selected to receive these awards. Leadership requires responsibilities. Jesus said whosoever wishes to become great among you must become your servant. ... Leadership is not something we pursue but something that is given by the Lord. ... I commend these men for exercising the traits of humility, which leads to greatness."

Top CP givers

► **Most CP per resident member** — First Baptist Church, Monroeville, with \$389.14 per resident member. Micah Gandy is pastor.

► **Highest CP percentage of undesignated giving** — Evergreen Baptist Church, Clayton, with 36.62 percent. Wayne Williams is pastor.

► **Most CP dollars given** — Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, with \$702,282. Danny Wood is pastor.

Missions Volunteer of the Year

► **Ken Kelley**, a member of Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville (see story, page 16)

Messengers also approved the audit of the SBOM, heard a report from the Inter-Baptist Fellowship Committee on challenging believers to live out their faith in Christ and watched a video report from Frank Page, CEO of the SBC Executive Committee.

"Thank you to Alabama Baptists for over \$18,100,000 to reach this world for Christ," he said. We know there is much still to be done. Not everyone has had the opportunity to hear. I challenge you to pray what more could you do. One percent more — would you do that? As we work together, there will be more good things happening for the Kingdom."

Convention Stats

Messengers — 763
Churches — 373

Look for audio clips in the online edition provided by Master Sound Audio & Video.

Alabama Baptists pass resolutions on 'life,' marriage, disaster relief

By Neisha Fuson
The Alabama Baptist

Messengers unanimously approved seven resolutions during the Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC) annual meeting Nov. 15–16 at Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile.

The resolutions dealt with topics such as the sanctity of life, marriage and the 400th anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible.

The only resolution to garner action from the floor was **On Protecting the Sanctity of Life in Alabama**, which commends the 2011 Alabama Legislature for “protecting the unborn child by passing the Alabama Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act.”

One amendment

John Killian, first vice president of the ABSC and pastor of Maytown Baptist Church, proposed adding “and the governor” to the commendation since the governor supported the bill and signed it into law.

Both the amendment and the resolution passed.

The other resolutions were

▶ **On Defense of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)** — A resolution requesting that the Alabama congressional delegation “actively oppose any repeal or modification of DOMA, which would remove the protection that only marriages between a man and a woman shall be permitted in the United States and that no other form of marriage or union replicating marriage will be permitted between persons of the same sex.”

▶ **On the 400th Anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible** — A resolution preserving “the memory and the unique benefits of the King James Version,” commending these benefits to succeeding generations and requesting that Alabama Baptists “use these translations of God-breathed Scripture in God-honoring ministry.”

▶ **On Disaster Relief** — A resolution expressing appreciation to “those involved in helping minister to persons affected by the tornadoes” and “special appreciation to Mel Johnson, associate in the (Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions’) office of global missions, for his coordination of the disaster relief efforts.”

▶ **On Religious Liberty in a Global Society** — A resolution restating Alabama Baptists’ “long-standing view that religious liberty is an inalienable human right” and affirming that this “freedom entails the civil liberty to convert to another religion or to no religion.”

▶ **On Appreciation for Paul Miller** — A resolution expressing “gratitude to God for Paul Miller,” retiring president of the Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH), and calling on Alabama Baptists to pray for Miller and the continued ministry of the ABCH.

▶ **On Appreciation** — A resolution expressing Alabama Baptists’ “profound gratitude to the Lord and to those whom He used to bring about a convention characterized by God’s blessings.”

While no resolutions were received on the topic of immigration, resolutions chairman Rob Jackson, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Decatur, said, “It is still our responsibility to share Jesus Christ with everyone whether the person is in Alabama legally or [not]. It is our responsibility to share the love of Jesus Christ with them.”

ABHC helps churches preserve history

During her report to the state convention Nov. 16, Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission (ABHC), reminded messengers of the recent efforts by disaster relief teams and the lives touched through church camps and the Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries.

“This is our history — the stories of the way God has worked through Alabama Baptists,” Berg said.

Telling our story

By God’s grace, Alabama Baptists have their ministries, their stories, she added. “It’s our job to preserve that story, even in the face of disaster and hardship.”

And many Alabama Baptist

churches, associations and convention entities have taken the ABHC up on its free microfilm ministry to preserve the written records or materials telling their stories.

“Although we have microfilmed over half a million pages of Alabama Baptist records in the last three and a half years, hundreds of churches’ records remain at risk until they are preserved on microfilm,” Berg noted.

The ABHC also preserves oral history to enliven and augment that which is recorded on paper.

Alabama Baptists can teach their children about their history and heritage through ABHC publications and writing awards as well as help others learn about salvation, discipleship, faithfulness and

stewardship through church histories and biographies of Alabama Baptists, Berg said.

“Through our Recognition Ministry, we have an opportunity to express thanksgiving for God’s years of faithfulness to us and to recognize the faithfulness of Alabama Baptists in serving and in sharing the gospel,” she noted.

Marking anniversaries

In 2011, the ABHC offered assistance to 140 churches and associations celebrating anniversaries, according to the Book of Reports. It presented framed certificates to 77 churches, associations and state convention entities.

The ABHC recognizes churches celebrating anniversaries of 25-year increments. (TAB)

Audit, Insurance committees report no entity inadequacies

When Alabama Baptists give tithes and offerings through their churches, it is God’s money, explained Bobby DuBois, associate executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM). “When we receive money at the State Board of Missions or any of our entities receive money, it is God’s money and we are accountable for how it is used,” he continued.

DuBois presented the reports of both the state convention Audit Committee and the state convention Insurance Committee. He said

members of both committees met with executive and financial leaders of the SBOM and all cooperating entities to ensure the wise management of funds and appropriate insurance protection for each ministry.

Detailed examination

After meeting with each entity, the Audit Committee reported no inadequacies in the various audits.

The Insurance Committee did a detailed examination of the insurance coverage of each entity to ensure the coverages were appropriate and adequate for the type ministry

performed. According to the Book of Reports, “The committee affirms the insurance coverage in place among all entities interviewed and commends the State Board of Missions and entities of the Alabama Baptist State Convention for their careful attention to the protection of their operations.”

While neither committee has authority over any entity, the committees’ work provides a resource for cooperating entities and helps demonstrate accountability to the members of Alabama Baptist churches, DuBois said. (TAB)

Great Commission Task Force continues research, evaluation

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Is there a way we can do better in carrying out Great Commission Ministries?”

That’s the question the Great Commission Task Force (formerly Great Commission Study Committee) continues to evaluate one year after being formed by then-state convention President Jimmy Jackson.

Jackson, pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, and chairman of the task force, provided the interim update from the group during the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) report to the state convention Nov. 15.

Discovering Alabama

Reminding Alabama Baptists that the task force is composed of SBOM executive committee members, Jackson said the four meetings held since last year’s state convention coincided with already scheduled executive committee meetings.

“It has saved Alabama Baptists a lot of money by meeting at the times already set,” he said. “We have been researching information and evaluating where we are, but we don’t say we know everything.”

“Our desire is to determine, first of all, how we can improve what we are doing and how we can further what we are doing.”

So far, the task force has heard from four Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders.

On Jan. 20, the group met with Bob White, executive director of the Georgia Baptist Convention and a member of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force (GCRTF) in 2009–10. “We talked about the history of the SBC and its relationship to the Cooperative Program (CP) and how we minister,” Jackson said.

On March 17, Frank Page, CEO of the SBC Executive Committee and a member of the GCRTF, discussed the historic working relationship of the SBC and state conventions in relationship to the CP. “We looked at what we are doing and what is being done throughout the SBC,” Jackson noted.

On May 12, Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB), shared “what is going to be taking place in the years to come.”

On Aug. 11, Ronnie Floyd, pastor of Cross Church, Springdale, Ark., and chairman of the GCRTF, shared the reasons behind the GCRTF recommendations and “what we can do to better serve the Lord.”

“As we did our evaluations, we found out that Alabama is

No. 1 in CP giving across the entire SBC and has been for quite some time,” Jackson said. Also “Alabama is a perennial leader in SBC missions giving through Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong and World Hunger. The tornado does impacted the giving of local churches but we are still No. 1.”

Other items the group discovered were

▶ “Our ... partnership with NAMB is changing.”

▶ “There is a growing need for strategic church revitalization in Alabama and North America.”

Jackson said the task force affirms the following recommendations made by the SBOM (see story, page 1):

▶ Increase the percentage of CP gifts to SBC causes by 0.05 percent in 2012.

▶ Allocate any undesignated funds exceeding the 2012 base budget on a 50/50 basis between the SBC and the state.

▶ Consider a new paradigm for global missions partnerships by focusing on assisting missionaries with Alabama roots.

▶ Increase the special offering goal for disaster relief.

The task force also reaffirmed the following:

1. “Our commitment to the Great Commission.

2. “Our commitment as a state convention to the primary means and preferred model of supporting missions by giving through the Cooperative Program.

3. “Our partnership in missions with the larger family of faith called Southern Baptists.

4. “Our commitment to reach the lost (statewide, globally).”

Following the Lord

“We will continue to meet and follow the Lord’s leadership,” Jackson said, noting a more detailed report will be presented at the 2012 state convention meeting in Montgomery. If additional time is needed, then a third report will be offered at the state convention meeting in Huntsville in 2013, he added.

“Slow is best. Carefully and wisely is going to demand some time,” Jackson said in an interview following his report. “It is good for us to look it over. We are evaluating where we are, and we can improve in some areas.”

The GCRTF’s main concerns were baptism numbers and missions money, he said. “What we are trying to do is evaluate where we fit into that as Alabama Baptists raise our level and reach more people with the gospel.

“Have we been challenged to do something we are already doing? We want to do better, of course, but if it’s not broke, don’t break it.”

'When Jesus Comes'

Share God's love, Shaw urges in state convention president's address

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

It brought thoughtful reflections snuggled right up against outbursts of laughter, a touch of scolding soothed with an abundance of encouragement and a visual reminder of several past events in Alabama and Southern Baptist life.

But woven amid each aspect of the Alabama Baptist State Convention president's address were the true appreciation and sincerity of heart that Mike Shaw, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pelham, consistently presents.

And while Shaw's personal rendition of "I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me," "Love Lifted Me" and "He Lifted Me" drew the audience in to sing with him softly and reverently, it was his emotional response to the special music just prior to his Tuesday morning address that snatched the hearts of those watching.

As Shaw's wife, Mary, sang "When Jesus Comes," he reached for a tissue as his eyes welled with tears. The song itself, his wife singing it and his moment to challenge Alabama Baptists to exalt the Savior left him a bit emotional — and gave the audience a peek into the tender spirit of the state convention president.

Preaching from Mark 9:14-29 in which a father brings his demon-

possessed son to Jesus for healing, Shaw developed the sermon segment of his address around the same theme as the title of the song his wife sang.

"First we see the father's dilemma ... which is a lost world," he said.

The father listens to Jesus and claims belief. "He needed hope and he needed help," Shaw said.

Pointing to the immigration issue in Alabama, he said he believes his concern as "a preacher and a Christian" is not whether a person is legal or illegal but does he or she know Jesus as Lord and Savior? "Nothing else should matter to me," Shaw said.

"We owe the gospel to everyone on this planet.

"Should the day ever come when anything else is more important to me than that, I will put my Bible down and never preach again," he said.

"Second we see the failure of the disciples," Shaw continued. "They had a problem with their walk with the Lord ... in the Word ... [and] in their work.

"The disciples had a problem with pride," he said. "The disciples didn't have any power because they had a problem with their walk. ... We have to do God's work, God's way.

"The greatest danger in the ministry is pride," Shaw said, noting,

*"God loves you
and God loves your
church. God doesn't
love anybody more
than He loves you."*

Pastor Mike Shaw
Alabama Baptist State
Convention president



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

'TENDER SPIRIT' — Mike Shaw, Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC) president and pastor of First Baptist Church, Pelham, addresses messengers at the ABSC annual meeting Nov. 15.

"Preachers have too much pride. ... We need to get rid of pride in our churches."

And "when attendance, baptisms and offerings are down, we need to ask the Lord, 'What are we doing wrong?'" he said.

"Many churches ... have forsaken what God has blessed in the past.

"My prayer is that we will plan revival services to get our hearts and the hearts of our people right with

God. ... We need a fresh touch from God."

The final deliverance is that Jesus comes, Shaw said.


Lordship over all

"When Jesus comes, He shows us His lordship over all things including demonic powers," he said. "When Jesus does a work, He does it forever.

"God loves you and God loves

your church," Shaw said. "God doesn't love anybody more than He loves you. You can't do one thing to make God love you more, and you can't do one thing to make God love you less.

"When you let Jesus come, your church will be alive," he noted. "We see love, lordship and lifting.

"May God lift the Alabama Baptist State Convention and let people see Jesus in us." 

Christian Life Commission focuses on relief

It was in the wake of the state's April tornado disaster that members of the Alabama Baptist Christian Life Commission (CLC) responded to an urgent need.

In the midst of people grieving their losses from the storm's deadly path, these CLC members found ways to minister to survivors' physical and spiritual needs.

Some CLC members served hot meals and provided a drop-off center for two weeks. They fed 100 people one week and 300 the next week. One member — who is trained as a chaplain — went door-to-door, offering pastoral help to families. Some assisted in cleanup and fundraising for survivors, while others distributed amenities that were difficult to find at that time.

Without knowing for 12 hours that his family had survived the storm, Richard Montgomery as-

sisted in clearing trees and supplying food and water to survivors. His family did make it, and he continued working for 28 days in disaster relief.

A long list of disaster relief efforts by CLC members were described as CLC Chairperson Mitzi Holladay gave her report to the state convention Nov. 16. CLC members went above and beyond in disaster relief, she said, speaking proudly about the humility the members displayed in their work.

Loving a neighbor

They fulfilled the Matthew 22 commandment, which is to love God and "love your neighbor as yourself," Holladay said.

"We do all this because we love our Lord," she said before a video showing stories about the difference disaster relief volunteers made following the tornadoes.

As a 16-person organization that educates Christians about ethical

and moral issues currently of interest to Alabama Baptists, the CLC encourages churches to participate in Special Sundays that address topics relevant to applied Christianity, such as Substance Abuse Prevention, Sanctity of Human Life, Citizenship and Religious Liberty and Anti-Gambling.

It also promotes the special offering for the World Hunger Fund. Alabama Baptists gave \$749,201.14 to this fund in 2010, according to the Book of Reports.

The CLC also distributes the "Christian Life Report," a quarterly newsletter that features literature written about topics such as these. According to the Book of Reports, the newsletter's circulation has increased to 6,000 subscribers.

The "Christian Life Report" can be read online at www.alsbom.org. (TAB)

ALCAP continues to be moral voice for faith community

The moral voice for the faith community — that is how Dan Ireland described Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP). Ireland, director emeritus of ALCAP, gave the report for the organization because of the absence of current Executive Director Joe Godfrey, who was recuperating from surgery and unable to attend.

Ireland recalled that he has been present for every legislative session — including special sessions — for the last 34 years and recited a litany of bills ALCAP followed during the last legislative session. These included a number of bills expanding the sale of alcohol, which ALCAP opposed, and sanctity of life bills, which ALCAP supported.

One sanctity of life bill that became law during the past year bans all abortions after the 20th week of pregnancy because of the ability of the baby to feel pain after that stage of development.

In the Book of Reports, ALCAP

shared its involvement in the anti-immigration law adopted during the last legislative session. The report said ALCAP succeeded in amending the Senate version of the bill to protect churches ministering to illegal immigrants. But in conference committee, that amendment was dropped, the report said.

New approach

Ireland also shared a new approach to character education developed by ALCAP. With fewer opportunities to teach about the evils of drugs and alcohol, ALCAP through its American Character Builders arm has developed kits dealing with bullying, drug use, alcohol and tobacco. Some of these kits are being used by organizations such as Boy Scouts of America.

He urged churches to use the kits with church youth groups or for churches to ban together to do community education on these topics. (TAB)



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

WORSHIPFUL PERFORMANCE — The Voices of Mobile, a University of Mobile 16-person vocal ensemble, performs before Fred Luter's message at the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 15 at Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile.

'Empowered by Another'

Christians must wait on the Spirit in order to reach the world, Luter says

By Neisha Fuson
The Alabama Baptist

If Alabama Baptists are going to fulfill the Acts 1:8 Challenge, then they must follow the example of the early church in Acts, Fred Luter told them on Nov. 15.

Preaching the Tuesday evening sermon during the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting in Mobile, Luter — pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, and first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention — maintained his traditional energy as he developed his message, "Empowered by Another."

But before the "amens" and "that's rights" came Luter's way, several "amens" were voiced for the opening musical presentation by the Voices of Mobile, a University of Mobile (UMobile) 16-person vocal ensemble.

Songs included an a cappella version of "Crown Him With Many Crowns," a cheer-invoking performance of "The Old Rugged Cross" and a version of "O Holy Night" that was recently recorded for Charles Stanley's InTouch Ministries broadcast.

As Luter made his way to the podium, he high-fived the Voices of Mobile producer and executive director of UMobile's Center for Performing Arts, Roger Breland. And that brotherly exchange set the tone for the evening's message.

Luter asked the audience, "Have you ever wondered how the early church did it? How did 131 people (together with the 12 disciples) pull off the monumental task of reaching the world for Christ?"

Acts 17:6 says those believers "turned the world upside down," he said with repetition

and long drawn-out syllables in a way only a self-described New Orleans street preacher could.

"They shook stuff up," Luter said. "They changed some thinking ... some marriages. ... They changed some lifestyles ... some traditions."

The early church made a difference not only in Judea but also in Jerusalem and Samaria and to the ends of the earth, he noted.

"These plain, ordinary men and women did extraordinary things for the gospel of Jesus Christ. They faced fears ... and opposition, but they turned the world upside down. ... The Hebrew word for that is 'Wow!'" Luter said with a smile.

He suggested the early church accomplished this unimaginable task because it was empowered by another — the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 1:4, Jesus commanded believers to "stay put" and wait for the promise of God, Luter said.

"Could that possibly be the problem in our (U.S.) churches today?" he asked. "We don't like to wait for anything. ... If we're waiting, we're complaining."

But Luter said one major lesson he has learned in ministry, especially after Hurricane Katrina came through Louisiana in 2005, is that there is a blessing in the waiting.

'Wait on the Lord'

"If you wait on the Lord, He will empower you to do what you cannot do by yourselves," Luter said, noting three things that happen when a person waits on God:

► He or she becomes a new person.

The early church is a perfect example. Its members were frightened, running for cover

and denying Christ before His death. After the Holy Spirit came and indwelt them, they were new creations.

"Before the promise, they were immature; after the promise, they were imitators," Luter said in a singsong fashion. "Before the promise, they were mediocre; after the promise, they were mighty. Before the promise, they were reluctant; after the promise, they were ready."

"Before the promise, they were wimpy; after the promise, they were warriors," he said. "To be victorious, you have to wait on the promise of God."

► He or she has a new purpose.

"When you're empowered by another, you realize it's not about you. It's not about your agenda, your title, your ideas," Luter paused, smiled and added, "your seat (at church)."

Christians must lift up the name of another, Jesus Christ, and they must do it everywhere they go, he said.

► He or she has a new power.

When the Christians of the early church were empowered by the Holy Spirit, they were given a strength, boldness and courage that they had never had before, Luter said, referencing the filling, leading and empowering of the Holy Spirit, not just the receiving of the Spirit.

If Alabama Baptists are going to reach the world for Christ, then they must wait on the promise of God and expect to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, he said.

Luter closed with a prayer and a challenge for everyone attending the annual meeting to go back to their homes all across Alabama and make a commitment to the Acts 1:8 Challenge, so that just as the Christians of the early church were recognized by their communities as the people who "turned the world upside down," so, too, would Alabama Baptists be known in their communities.

With a holler and an overhead twirl of his handkerchief, he said, "Let it be, let it be, because you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you."



LUTER

Alabama Baptist retirement centers give hope to seniors

By Traci C. Gyan
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

To present a genuinely personal report on the Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers to the state convention, Billy Austin, president of the centers, said he thought a video highlighting three residents would be the best way to achieve that.

Ava Kee, a resident of Randolph Retirement Center (Knollwood) located in Roanoke, shared her story, including her feeling of hopelessness. After leaving an abusive relationship, Kee was homeless and living out of her car.

"When I got here, I felt worthless," Kee said. "Once here, I knew I had a place and that the people here, and God, were always here for me."

The Retirement Centers exists to help senior adults retain their independence and dignity.

Austin writes in the Book of Reports, "Many (of our residents) ... are like Caleb (in Joshua 14), full of life and a desire to 'conquer their mountain,' even if it is inhabited by giants! The giants they face may be financial, health related or just plain old loneliness, but they are giants to some residents, many of whom, like Caleb, are living in their eighth decade!"

Next on the video was Lura Cox, whom attendees watched celebrate her 100th birthday. "I've had a great blessing being here," she said. A representative of the century of wisdom of senior citizens, Cox is a resident of the Montgomery Retirement Center (Eastview).

'Wealth of wisdom'

Austin encouraged attendees to embrace the great resource that is our senior citizen population. "Whether your church is reaching into one of our retirement centers or into its own membership, I encourage you to not overlook the wealth of wisdom and maturity available in your elder statesmen," writes Austin in the Book of Reports.

The last resident highlighted in the video was Joyce Bigham of Hutto Tower Retirement Center in Dothan. Bigham shared with viewers the struggles of poverty and not being able to meet the maintenance needs and upkeep of her deteriorating mobile home.

An emotional Bigham stated, "There was no way out of the poverty I was living in until I learned about Hutto Tower."

"Many (residents) are living life to its fullest, every day! Our campuses of care, located in Montgomery, Dothan and Roanoke are surrounded by churches, many of whom have members and friends living in one of our retirement centers," stated Austin in the Book of Reports. "Working together, Alabama Baptists will never forsake the elders of our state!"

The Baptist Village of Dothan is the fourth location of the retirement centers.

Sharing, giving vital to accomplish Great Commission

By Neisha Fuson
The Alabama Baptist

I'm not fussing; I'm just fussing," Charles T. Carter joked with messengers attending the Tuesday afternoon session of the state convention annual meeting in Mobile.

But in developing part two of Alabama Baptists' mantra — One mission, the Great Commission; one program, the Cooperative Pro-

gram; and many ministries, Great Commission Ministries — Carter had a serious message to deliver.

Using 1 Corinthians 3:1-9 as his text, Carter, pastor emeritus of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, and a James H. Chapman fellow of pastoral ministry at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, emphasized sharing and giving.

He said there are conditions

that require Southern Baptists to make a difference and challenges to Southern Baptists to make a difference.

The conditions are numerous, including more people in the world, more knowledge, more mental pollution (like pornography), more lost people and more selfishness.

Selfishness, Carter said, finds a foothold both nationally and denominationally.

Nationally, members of Protestant churches in the United States gave only 2.38 percent of their income to churches in 2009 — the lowest percentage in at least 41 years.

Denominationally, Southern Baptists agree on the need to witness to the lost and disciple new believers but have given proportionally less each year to the Cooperative Program since the Con-

servative Resurgence, from 11 percent in the 1980s to only 5.8 percent in 2008. "That's hypocritical," Carter said.

The challenges to Southern Baptists include making disciples, found in Matthew 28:19-20, and making disciples in the way Jesus said to make disciples, Carter said, noting 1 Corinthians 3.

There are three focus areas: global, local and person-

al, he explained.

al, he explained.

Global — praying for international missionaries, supporting missionaries financially and going to international locations to share God's Word while working with local believers.

On a missions trip to seven cities in the Soviet Union, Carter said 5,857 accepted Christ and were born into God's family but not

because he was speaking. It was because they were hungry for the gospel and someone came to share it.

"[Christians involved in the trip] did together what we could not do apart," Carter noted.

Local — giving and serving in Alabama Baptist life, exemplified after the April 27 tornadoes.

Personal — telling individuals in personal circles of influence about Jesus Christ.

Carter shared his testimony of how as a 6-year-old boy, his 16-year-old neighbor had found Christ while visiting a church in Georgia.

She returned home to Alabama and asked his parents' permission to take him with her to a local church.

She shared her faith in a loving and tangible way and gave of her time and Aug. 15, 1943, Carter accepted Christ. "Tell someone about Jesus," Carter said, noting it was because believers shared with the young neighbor who then shared with him that he found Christ. It was a "together" experience, he said. ■

Pastors: Equip the saints, develop mature disciples

Equipping the saints is not an option for pastors and other church leaders — it is a must, said Adam Dooley, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile.

Delivering the Tuesday morning theme interpretation from Ephesians 4 during the state convention annual meeting at his church, Dooley said, "There is no such thing as getting away from the basics of equipping people to walk with Christ as mature disciples who will then reach others for Christ and help mature them in the faith also.

"There is no substitute for a genuine walk with God that just reaches one person at a time," he noted. "Jesus told us to tell. The disciples showed us how to tell. Heaven rejoices when we tell and yet we don't tell."

Paul's words emphasize that the role of pastor is more than preaching the gospel, Dooley explained. The pastor also is charged with equipping others to share the gospel. "An entire church ought to be engaged in ministering to others," he said.

Why? Multiplication is faster than addition.

"We can reach more people if we work together," Dooley said. "That's why we partner together as Baptists in the state of Alabama. We believe that by coming together, we can impact more people for the cause of Christ."

Members can become critical and resentful if not equipped. "Those who do not serve will often prevent others from serving. ... In church, we argue over things that simply do not matter," he said. "If [church members] are not equipped, they will resent the work of the others.

"Their main focus is to criticize and critique everything and everyone else," he said, pointing to 2 Thessalonians 3 in which Paul describes an undisciplined life and those who are "busybodies."

The congregation will become self-absorbed rather than reach out if not equipped.

"We are building barriers to keep people out because we are more concerned about keeping the same things than reaching people for Christ," Dooley said. "If we don't lead our people to Christ, our churches are going to self-destruct.

"I agree we need revival and ... that starts with prayer ... but sooner or later, when we get off our knees, we have got to start aggressively sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and getting our people to join us in this effort," he said. "When people are challenged to share the gospel, they start to

know the gospel better. One reason we can't articulate our faith is that we have never had to articulate it."

Speaking the truth in love happens when believers are equipped.

"You can't be angry with the people that you are trying to reach," Dooley said. "Does it ever bother you that sometimes we are guilty of standing in our pulpits and ranting and raving about what is wrong in the world while we turn a blind eye to what is wrong in our churches?"

He also stressed the importance of a deep, relational understanding of who God is. "It is one thing to preach Christ; it is another thing to really know Christ. ... Maturity among the people of God will rally us for the sake of the gospel." (TAB)



DOOLEY



CARTER

Alabama Baptists must remember, reflect, revitalize

God has begun a good work in us but He is not through," said Rob Jackson, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Decatur.

Developing the third of three convention themes revolving around "together," Jackson shared his message out of Philippians 1:6 with the state convention Nov. 16.

"In the passage, the church at Philippi was growing, excited, had a passion for Him and was involved in missions sending and giving to the apostle Paul," he said. "Paul [tells the church], 'I am confident you will finish the race because God has placed His hand upon you and it was He that is doing this.'

"The same I believe is true for us (as Alabama Baptists)," Jackson noted. "God who began a good work in us will be faithful to complete it."

To do this, "we must"

- ▶ remember,
- ▶ reflect and
- ▶ revitalize.

"We must remember how God began a good work in us," he said, taking the audience back to the beginning days of the state when the fertile soil and warm climate enticed people to settle in the area.

This was the 1800s, when people were coming out of the second Great Awakening and had an expectancy of God, Jackson noted. "They had evangelism and missions at the core of their being."

But when many were choosing between the two, Alabama Baptists came together and "the anti-missions movement was drowned out."

"God began to move in the Alabama Baptist State Convention like

a mighty tsunami," he said. "Alabama was turned upside down because we came together."

Alabama Baptists didn't stop there, however. They helped form the Southern Baptist Convention and took missions global. "Missions and evangelism were at the very forefront of everything we did.

"The work God has called us to do is a good work," Jackson said.

"It's not a work we can do on our own. It's not a work where we argue over the color of the carpet or whether we have chandeliers or pipe organs or drums. ... God has called us to ... turn the world upside down for the glory of God."

Reflecting on the work brings memories of Alabama Baptists' leadership in ministering to Civil War soldiers and

how 150,000 men gave their hearts to Christ through that effort.

Reflecting means understanding the amazing healing work done by God in China in 1929 that led to the Shandong revival and how a discouraged missionary team seeing only a handful of converts were inspired after more than 3,000 believers came out of one village during that time.

"God did a great work among

Southern Baptists," Jackson said. "It spread beyond Southern Baptists and Shandong province, so much so that revival began to shake the foundation of China. ... Today there are 10,000 Chinese coming to faith in Jesus Christ every single day. ... When we got our hearts right ... a country was changed. ... What is keeping us today from seeing this revival?"

He described glimpses of this type of transforming faith with his family and in his church. "We see it in pockets," he said.

"God wants us to remember what He started with Alabama Baptists in changing this world and reflect upon the good works He's done in your life," Jackson said. "But then He wants us to

revitalize together.

"God is looking for ... a convention to say, ... 'Here are we; use us for your glory,' he said. But "we have to come together in expectant faith ... bodacious evangelism and missions ... and radical leadership.

"As we come together as people in faith, God begins to overflow in our lives and people begin to hear of Jesus Christ and ... want to experience ... a living Lord." (TAB)



JACKSON

Alabama Baptists tapped for service

During the 189th annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, Baptists from across the state were elected to serve on the governing boards of convention-related entities. Also approved by messengers were individuals to serve on the committees of the convention.

The Committee on Boards and Commissions nominates members to serve on the executive committee, the State Board of Missions (SBOM) and convention entities. The Committee on Committees names members to convention committees. The following is a complete list of individuals approved for service during the annual meeting. The list was provided by the SBOM. An asterisk (*) before the name indicates a layperson.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Mike Shaw

District: David Chambers, Robert Gamble, Philip Morris, Michael E. King, Danny Wiggins, Larry Cummings, Gregory T. Pouncey, Scott Stevens, John P. Gates, *Olivia J. Wages, Timothy M. Cox, *Patti Shoemaker.

Members at large: *Sammie Barstow, John T. Brock, Mike D. McLemore, John A. Nixon Jr., James S. Watkins, Scott Guffin, Jim Cooley

STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

Terms to Expire 2014: *Wynette Cox, Autauga; John W. Price, Baldwin; Kevin Blackwell and Rick Patrick, Bessemer; Carl Williams, Bethel; *James Holley, Bethlehem; *O. David Taunton, Birmingham; John Nicholson, Cahaba; Jerry Colquett, Carey; Don L. Rushing, Clarke; Eddy Garner, Colbert-Lauderdale; John Fain and Jerry Grandstaff, Columbia; Jack Williamson, Conecuh; Danny Courson and Max Buttram, Coosa River; *Ramona Fryer, Covington; Jim Hill, Dale; Kenneth Clement, DeKalb; *Jane Ellen Wood, East Liberty; Derek Gentle, Elmore; Jeff Edwards, Escambia; *Carol H. Cardwell and Scott Harris, Etowah; *Ramzi Malek, Friendship; George A. Thompson Jr., Judson; Daniel J. Hughes, Limestone; Jimmy E. Jackson, Madison; *Kelly S. Jones, J. Derrall Marshall, Gregory T. Pouncey and James W. Mercer, Mobile; Andy Hepburn and Rick Evans, Montgomery; *Davis Woodruff, Morgan; *Vicki M. Maddox, Mud Creek; *Charles D. Coffey, Muscle Shoals; Glenn B. Sandifer, Pickens; Marvin D. Minton and Alan L. Griffith, Russell; John S. Foles, Sulphur Springs; Steve Poteat and Gary Wiggins, Tallapoosa; Jimmy Garner, *Sammie

Barstow and John A. Nixon Jr., Tuscaloosa; Dennis Culbreth and John P. Gates, Walker

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Chairperson 2011-12: Lawrence Phipps
Chairperson 2012-2013: William M. Hand

Terms to Expire 2013: *Tonya P. Jackson, Central, Decatur; Kevin McCreless, Broadway, Rainsville; *Bridgett Ramsey, Mount Zion, Alexandria; William Hand, First Baptist, Lafayette; *Carol R. Brock, Parkview, Eufaula; Ronald Boulware, Antioch East, Greenville; Art Burroughs, Fulton Road, Mobile; *Edna Stevens, Moundville, Moundville; *Janet Teer, Northport, Northport; Ron Horton, New Prospect, Haleyville; Lindy Hale, Dawson, Birmingham; *Carl Sallé, First Baptist, Prattville

CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION

Terms to Expire 2015: Michael J. Brooks, Pine Flat, Selma; Jeffrey W. Fuller, Rockford, Rockford; Kenny Hatcher, Northside, Selma; *Page Hughes, Westwood, Alabaster

BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Terms to Expire 2012: *Morrell Dodd, Hunter Street, Hoover

Terms to Expire 2013: Bryan S. Gunn, Shades Mountain, Birmingham

Terms to Expire 2015: *Doyle Powell, First Baptist, Montgomery; *Janet Teer, Northport, Northport; *Lawson Swearingen Jr., First Baptist, Fairhope; *Reyn Norman, First Baptist, Greenville; *E. Spencer Knight, First Baptist, Prattville

EDUCATION COMMISSION

Terms to Expire 2015: *Melba Brown, Government Street, Mobile; James Nichols, Chapel Hill, Northport; Rick Marshall, Eastern Hills, Montgomery; Bobby Hopper, Linden, Linden

BOARD OF AID

Terms to Expire 2015: Phil M. Boyles, Sage Avenue, Mobile; Michael Staton, Seven Hills, Mobile

INTER-BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

Chairperson 2011-2012: Bobby Hopper, Linden, Linden

Terms to Expire 2014: Eddy Garner, Woodmont, Florence; Bill King, Providence, Opelika; James Preachers, Mount Carmel, Coffee Springs

CHILDREN'S HOMES

Terms to Expire 2013: *Tanya Birchfield, First Baptist, Montgomery

Terms to Expire 2014: *Ray Hammock, Springhill, Mobile

Terms to Expire 2015: *Bonnie Henderson, Providence, Opelika; *Samuel C. Allison, Hunter Street, Hoover; *Allan Neill, Woodmont, Florence; *R. Kurry Wyatt, First Baptist, Cullman

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Terms to Expire 2015: *Jerry C. Armor, Pleasant Grove, Moulton; *John E. Reid, Grove Hill, Grove Hill; *Bobby Joe Seales, Westwood, Alabaster; *Angie Mills Cooper, First Baptist, Tuscaloosa; *Mavis M. Gates, Shades Mountain, Birmingham

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

Terms to Expire 2012: Travis Coleman Jr., First Baptist, Prattville

Terms to Expire 2015: *Amelia Reid Pearson, First Baptist, Alexander City; Gary

D. Fenton, Dawson, Birmingham; *Stewart Calvert, Pleasant Grove, Boaz; *William D. Melton, Evergreen, Evergreen

JUDSON COLLEGE

Terms to Expire 2015: *James E. Brady Jr., Hopewell, Marion; *Bruce Fuller, Pine Flat, Selma; Henry H. Cox, Durant Chapel, Bay Minette; *Ann T. Ray, Southside, Decatur; Gregg S. Morrison, Shades Mountain, Birmingham; *Lenora Pate, Dawson, Birmingham; *Robin T. Hall, First Baptist, Cullman

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

Terms to Expire 2014: *Kamal Constantine, Dauphin Way, Mobile; *Mikell D. Speaks, Luke 4:18 Fellowship, Mobile

Terms to Expire 2015: *Deborah R. Nelson, First Baptist North Mobile, Saraland; *Daphne P. Fondé, First Baptist, Fairhope; David Johnson, Westwood, Alabaster; *Dean N. Parker Jr., Dayspring, Mobile; *Gabi Constantine, First Baptist, Satsuma; *Will Phillips, Dauphin Way, Mobile; *William F. Ingram, First Baptist, Cullman; Robert M. Seaborn Jr., First Baptist, Fairhope

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

Terms to Expire 2015: *John Bell, Shades Mountain, Birmingham; *Rhonda Witcher, First Baptist, Cullman; *Hobart Grooms Jr., Brookwood, Birmingham; *Lev Bragg, Shades Mountain, Birmingham; *Timothy Vines, Shades Mountain, Birmingham; *Tom Lamberth, First Baptist, Alexander City; Buddy Champion, First Baptist, Trussville; *C. Thomas Houser, First Baptist, Huntsville; *W. Clark Watson, The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham

SHOCCO SPRINGS

Terms to Expire 2012: *H. Byron Phillips, First Baptist, Oxford

Terms to Expire 2015: *Kendal Adams, Lakeview, Auburn; Roland P. Brown, Golden Springs, Anniston; Cory Horton, Elkdale, Selma; F. Max Croft, Agape, Scottsboro

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Chairperson 2011-12:

*Rick Gibson, First Baptist, Tuscaloosa

Terms to Expire 2014: *Rick Gibson, First Baptist, Tuscaloosa; *Ben F. Kelley, First Baptist, Montgomery

RESOLUTIONS

Chairperson 2011-12:

Jerry Henry, First Baptist, Fairhope

Terms to Expire 2012: Matthew DeBord, First Baptist, Clanton; Johnny Fain, First Baptist, Dothan; Jerry Henry, First Baptist, Fairhope; *Belinda Hepburn, Taylor Road, Montgomery; Judson W. Hurt, First Baptist, Decatur; Teman Knight, Heritage, Montgomery; Robert Smith, New Zion, Moulton

RETIREMENT CENTERS

Terms to Expire 2015: Paul Edward Burkett, Lakeview, Montgomery; *Barry Carroll, Heritage, Montgomery; James Nance, Mount Enon, Dothan; *Earl R. Davis, First Baptist, Clanton; *Byron Morrison, Trinity, Roanoke

MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

Chairperson 2011-12: Don Campbell, First Baptist, Birmingham

Terms to Expire 2012: Don Campbell, First Baptist, Birmingham; *Barbara Moore, First Baptist, Pelham; Billy Nutt, First Baptist, Gulf Shores; Jere Patterson, Central Park,

Shaw names committees

Two committees, the Credentials Committee and the Tellers Committee, were appointed during the state convention's opening session Nov. 15. The Committee on Committees also was named during the Tuesday sessions.

State convention President Mike Shaw, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pelham, in Shelby Baptist Association, announced the appointments 30 days prior to the annual meeting in accordance with bylaw requirements, but messengers had to ratify the appointments during the meeting.

The convention Credentials Committee helps with problems regarding registration and seating of messengers.

Serving as chairman of the committee was Philip Morris, Heflin Baptist. Serving with him were Scott Bush, Southcrest Baptist, Bessemer; Robert Heard, First Baptist, Pelham; William Gregory Hyche, Brent Baptist; Terry Sutton, First Baptist, Montevallo; Roger White, Liberty Baptist, Crossville; and Joshua Young, Westside Baptist, Boaz.

Tellers Committee members would have helped convention officers tabulate convention votes if ballots had been used.

Steven W. Loggins, Beechwood Baptist, Mount Olive, served as chairman. Other members were Matt Basford, Hartford Baptist; J. Brad Eubank, Bethsalem Baptist, Billingsley; Steve Johnson, Union Springs Baptist, Randolph; and Billy Kendrick, Millry Baptist.

The following also were elected to serve on the Committee on Committees until 2013: John A. Nixon Jr., Northport Baptist, chair; J. Scotty Hogan, Westmeade Baptist, Decatur; and Tim Patton, First Baptist, Greenville. (TAB)

Decatur; Tommy Puckett, Santuck, Wetumpka

INSURANCE COMMITTEE

Chairperson 2011-12:

*Charles Ed White, Heflin Baptist

Terms to Expire 2014: *Ken Stephens, First Baptist, Montgomery; *Charles Ed White, Heflin, Heflin

TIME, PLACE, PREACHER

Chairman 2011-12:

Allan Murphy, North Shelby, Birmingham
Terms to Expire 2012: J. Warren Culver, Capitol Heights, Montgomery; Chance Darlington, The Church at Pine Level, Deatsville; William L. Hart Jr., Pleasant Grove, Ozark; Allan Murphy, North Shelby, Birmingham; Wade Rials, Thorington Road, Montgomery; G.P. "Chip" Starnes III, First Baptist, Bay Minette; Bill Wilks, NorthPark, Trussville

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Chairperson 2011-12: Rusty Sowell, Providence, Opelika

Chairperson 2012-13: Henry H. Cox, Durant Chapel, Bay Minette

Terms to Expire 2014: *Paula T. Culver, Capitol Heights, Montgomery; James W. Mercer, Hollinger's Island, Mobile

Time, place, preacher report

The 2012 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting will be held at Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery, in Montgomery Baptist Association Nov. 13-14.

The convention preacher for the 2012 annual meeting will be Lawrence Phipps, pastor of Vaughn Forest Baptist.

Alternate preacher is Sammie Reid, pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Warrior, in North Jefferson Baptist Association.

Messengers voted for Vaughn Forest to be the site of the 2016 state convention annual meeting, which will take place Nov. 15-16 of that year. (TAB)

Miller delivers last report to Alabama Baptists

By Traci C. Gyan
Correspondent, TAB

After starting as an intern and giving 39 years of service to the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH), Paul Miller, outgoing president and CEO, gave his final state convention report Nov. 16.

"I can't think of a place I would have rather served than the Children's Homes & Family Ministries," he said.

Under Miller's leadership, the foster home ministry was started, and now it has the most children involved, he noted.

Miller also reported a large growth in ABCH's preventative services of counseling. Currently the staff visits 35 locations across the state each week.

The ABCH's newest efforts are through family care, which serves mothers and children who need a safe place after leaving abusive homes.

According to the Book of Reports, the ABCH "served 354 children ... in 2010, 85 mothers and children ... and 2,954 individuals through Pathways Professional Counseling. At least 13 professions of faith were made by children while in our care."

"Every day, children and families are in the storm of their lives," Miller said. "We want to do everything we can to prevent it. When we can't prevent it, we will do everything we can to minister to them."

His expansive career was evi-



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

GRATEFUL — Paul Miller, outgoing president and CEO of the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, and his wife, Diane, thank Alabama Baptists for their prayers during her battle with cancer.

dent not only in his report but also in his company on stage.

Thuan Sims, a product of the ABCH who is studying to be a minister, softly played his guitar throughout Miller's report.

"Thuan was with us for eight years," Miller said. "Together we worked to care for him and then send him to the University of Mobile. Gifts from Alabama Baptists helped make that possible."

Milton and Christa Sims also joined him on stage. They have been foster parents for almost three years. In that short period of time, they have cared for approximately 10 children.

In a rare moment at the conclusion of Miller's remarks, his wife, Diane, joined him on stage so they could thank Alabama Baptists for praying for them. ❧

No shortcut

God's 'glorious presence' only manifested as Christians draw near with clean hands, pure hearts, Evans says

By Neisha Fuson
The Alabama Baptist

Clean hands and a purified heart drawing near to God — these are requirements to experience the awesome presence of the glory of God, Rick Evans told Alabama Baptists during the convention sermon he preached from James 4:8-10 on Nov. 16.

Evans, pastor of Dalraida Baptist Church, Montgomery, said, "Without the presence of the Lord in our churches, our worship is as useless as an empty fireplace on a cold winter's night."

The Lord's presence will not be manifested in a mighty way if people just show up at church, "pray some prayers and sing some songs," he noted. Christians must "return to their first love," and it must be with clean hands.

The condition of a person's hands tells a lot about him or her, Evans said, giving examples like a farmer's hands, calloused and hard, or a musician's hands, tender and smooth.

"What condition are your spiritual hands in this morning?" he asked the audience.

"I'm afraid we run before [God] with dirty hands, where clean hands are actually required," Evans said. "If we are going to experience the glorious presence of God, we must walk in harmony with His will and before Him with clean hands."

Believers also must draw near to God with a purified heart — emptied of all things within it, he noted.



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

A CHALLENGE — Rick Evans, pastor of Dalraida Baptist Church, Montgomery, preaches the convention sermon at the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting, challenging attendees to draw nearer to God.

"God wants us to get to the point where our will is broken, where our heart has no desire of its own ... and we just want to please Him ... just want to be near Him ... to be broken before Him.

"That's the heart He heals, and that's the heart He purifies," Evans said.

He referenced Psalm 55 and David, who dealt with sin for years in every way possible and yet sin remained in his life.

Finally he had an "Aha!" moment, Evans said.

David realized God didn't want sacrifices or songs but a broken spirit and a contrite heart.

But once a believer does draw near to God with clean hands and a purified heart, how does He then

reveal His glory, Evans asked.

Through His people's lives, he said, noting God's glory is revealed differently today than it was during Old Testament days when He revealed Himself with miraculous signs like burning bushes and parting of seas.

'God's manifestation'

Evans said songwriter Lanny Wolfe must have "understood God's manifestation" when he wrote "Surely the Presence of the Lord Is in This Place," with the lyrics, "I can feel His mighty power and grace. ... I see the glory on each face. Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place."

But there is no shortcut, Evans said. "We can't try to imagine the glory of God in banners or [church decorations]."

"Let's draw near to Him, spend time in our prayer closets and have our hands clean and our hearts pure ... and (then) the presence of the glory of the Lord will be in this place." ❧

"Let's draw near to Him, spend time in our prayer closets and have our hands clean and our hearts pure."

Pastor Rick Evans
Dalraida Baptist Church

WMU's WorldSong Missions Place celebrates 20 years, continues to transform lives

By Traci C. Gyan
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Happy Birthday, WorldSong!" was the theme of the celebratory video shown during the state convention report of Candace McIntosh, executive director of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). WorldSong Missions Place, the summer camp owned and operated by Alabama WMU, celebrated 20 years this summer.

WorldSong is located in Cook Springs, just 20 miles east of Birmingham at the base of Bald Mountain. More than 500 staff members and more than 20,000 summer missions campers have found spiritual refuge in WorldSong's 620-acre campus, McIntosh said.



McINTOSH

"The true beauty of WorldSong is in the transformation of lives that takes place on this campus," she said.

Church groups and religious organizations utilize the campus buildings throughout the year. However, in June and July, these grounds are reserved for Alabama WMU's Summer Missions Camp. "Summer Missions Camp provides a unique environment that introduces campers to Jesus Christ and teaches them about God's heart for the people of the world," McIntosh said.

She said more than 5,000 campers have asked Jesus Christ to be their Savior. More than 3,000 have felt the call to serve as missionaries, and 1,529 have surrendered their

lives to full-time Christian vocations.

"The ministry of WorldSong continues to shape tender hearts of young girls and boys who understand what it means to give, to go and to pray," she said.

"Thank you, Alabama Baptists, for entrusting us with the lives of your girls and boys. Thank you, pastors, for recognizing the importance of raising up Great Commission children and teenagers who will one day be the missions leaders in our churches," McIntosh said.

Equipping leaders

This year, Alabama WMU also trained "more than 560 leaders through Equip ... for Missions, for Ministry, for Life, the statewide training event held at Shocco Springs Conference Center in July," according to the Book of Reports. Regional trainings were

held at Five Points Baptist Church, Northport; Parkway Baptist Church, Auburn; and Thomasville Baptist Church during the month of August.

More than 470 women attended Alabama WMU's annual missions event, Renew, One Day, held at First Baptist Church, Prattville, in February, according to the Book of Reports. And 600 girls and their leaders attended Complete, a gathering for girls in grades 7-12, at Valleydale Baptist Church, Birmingham.

According to the Book of Reports, Alabama WMU also assisted with disaster relief efforts following the April tornadoes by serving with the state's child care unit in Rainsville and a child care team in Phil Campbell.

It also partnered with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions to care for ministers affected by the storms. ❧

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'Revive us again'

Pastors Conference provides opportunity for personal spiritual renewal

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

A movement of God — a true revival — is what Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference leaders anticipate from their preparation and execution of the Nov. 14 annual meeting of pastors.

Held at Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, prior to the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting, participants in the pastors conference heard a full day of messages outlining the need, as well as some how-tos, for revival.

"It has been the cry of my heart for a long time to experience what we experienced [at the pastors conference] ... a movement among preachers," said John Copeland, president of the pastors conference and pastor of First Baptist Church, Fulton. "It has been incredible to watch God put this conference together."

From a lesson on directed prayer times (see story, page 13) to testimonies of what a movement of God looks like today, pastors had the opportunity to experience a day of personal spiritual renewal and commit to continue in that vein following the event. The music even created an atmosphere for the day's purpose as singer/songwriter Josh Davis used the piano and acoustic guitar to lead the congregation in worship.

Davis is founder and president of Proskuneo Ministries, a faith-based music ministry that seeks to unite cultures in worship.

Copeland said, "My prayer has been from day one that we would leave this meeting ... revived, that we will go back to our churches and God will carry that revival through us."

"I hope your heart has been touched ... that you are different than when you came," he said at the conclusion of the conference.

Clay Crum, pastor of Spring Hill South Baptist Church in Crenshaw County, spontaneously shared as the conference was closing that the experience had changed him.

"I have been touched by this meeting more than anything else and I almost didn't come," he said. "If you leave this place with just more knowledge of what you learned today, you wasted your time, but if you leave this place with a burning in your heart to truly see ... a change across Alabama, across America ... [then you will be different]."

Byron Paulus, executive director of Life Action Ministries, gave a similar challenge to pastors during the concluding session.

With help from Jamison Work, senior pastor of Candies Creek Baptist Church, Charleston, Tenn., and Bill Elliff, pastor of The Summit Church, Little Rock, Ark., Paulus explained what a movement of God looks like. The three speakers also provided current examples and gave those in attendance an opportunity to hear from God through a public verbal commitment to seek revival as well as a time of prayer for God to speak to their hearts.

'Passion for revival'

"God has given me such a burden and passion for revival," Paulus said. "It is all that comes out of me. I bleed it."

"For me and my walk with God, my greatest need is not to hear more truth. My greatest need is to learn to obey the truth I already have," he said. "It is what we walk, not



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

MODERN-DAY REVIVAL — Byron Paulus (left), executive director of Life Action Ministries, talks with Tennessee Baptist pastor Jamison Work about the movement of God his church experienced.

what we preach, not what we talk.

Outlining six characteristics of a movement of God, Paulus said, "I don't believe Pentecost is going to appear again like in Acts 2, but I believe there are echoes of Pentecost."

1. A movement begins by not moving.

"They were praying, fellowshiping in the word of God, reflecting on the cross of Jesus Christ," he said of those gathered in the upper room in Acts 2. "Pray, fast, seek God, then let God tell you His plan."

2. A movement is experienced before it is exported.

"Revival spreads on the wings of testimonies ... [but] we want to export the gospel before we ever experience it," he said.

3. A movement is messy.

"Some will say it is emotional," Paulus noted.

4. A movement is Word-driven.

"Peter's words were 40 percent quoting the Old Testament," he said. "How many times have our messages been 40 percent quoting the Bible?"

5. A movement is Christ-exalting. "Authentic movements of God are Christ-exalting," he said.

6. A movement is filled with awe. "We are going to be awed at what God can do. It's all theory in a sense until even in our day, we hear the stories."

Work shared his church's story of how a movement of God changed the individuals in the congregation and how "it was as though the manifestation of God exploded in our church."

"As God began moving ... an 11-day meeting turned out to be a six-weeklong meeting," he said, noting much of the movement came through people confessing sins to each other, church leaders confess-

ing corporate sins such as prayerlessness and broken family bonds being restored. "There were sparks of revival. Our people were so excited to share what God was doing."

But not everyone was excited, Work noted. "As people begin to hear ... that we were having these hours-long sessions, and many of those in confession, the typical thing that went through the community was that they are just airing their dirty laundry. ... [And] there were [some] in our congregation on the fringe who are afraid of what they are seeing God doing, and we are actually having people leave. They did not understand what God was doing in someone else's life and it breaks my heart."

Still the work done in church members' lives has been "overwhelming and staggering," Work said. "He made Himself known in our lives like we had never known before."

Elliff described the movement of God at his church earlier this year as "sweet."

Mended relationships

"It was ... the way the church is supposed to be, the way you've always longed for it to be," he said. "People's needs are being met because others are obeying God as He leads them. Hurts are being healed."

Church members there also confessed sins to each other and mended broken relationships.

"That's what we need — the normal work of the church is not what we need," Elliff said. "We need the manifest presence of God."

"But what do we do? What's the next step?"

Reading from Psalm 85, Elliff said, "First the psalmist says we need to cry out because no one else can save us. ... We

need a course correction that only a national movement of revival can bring.

"God is just waiting for us," he said. "He is waiting for us to get desperate enough to know only He can save us."

Second "we cry out because He can save us," Elliff said. "What we need is God's glory to come. What we

need is not just a moment of glory. "When revival comes, God starts doing things in the land," he said, noting that not only will the Church be revived but also the lost will be awakened.

In other business, new pastors conference officers were elected:

► President, Mike Cassity, pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Montgomery

► President-elect, Fred Lackey, pastor of Westside Baptist Church, Jasper

► First vice president, Kevin Blackwell, pastor of Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown

► Treasurer, Mark Smith, pastor of Eastside Baptist Church, Birmingham

(Correspondents Traci C. Gyan and Daniela Werner contributed)



COPELAND



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

PASTORS CONFERENCE OFFICERS — The 2012 officers for the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference are (l to r) Vice President Kevin Blackwell, President Mike Cassity and Treasurer Mark Smith. Not pictured is President-elect Fred Lackey.



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

REVIVAL IS POSSIBLE — Gregory Frizzell, evangelist with the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, says revival is possible because of God's grace, at the 2011 Pastors Conference on Nov. 14.

Revival comes from deep love relationship with God

By Daniela Werner
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Despite collapsing morals, declining baptisms and signs of God's judgment currently seen in the United States, there is hope for this nation, said Gregory Frizzell, prayer and spiritual awakening specialist with the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

That hope is revival, he said. Whether America sees a new move of God sweep across its land is up to those within the church, not outside of it, he added.

And it all comes down to prayer, Frizzell said as he took about 90 minutes during the morning session of the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference to outline

three specific items that must happen for revival to come.

First, individual believers must have an intimate quiet time with God, he said.

After reading James 5:16, Frizzell asked the audience, "Do you notice that deep confession and humility have to come before the power? That's always the pattern of God. ... It's the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man — someone with a broken, yielded heart."

Prayer was the center of Jesus' life and He is our example, he said.

At this point, Frizzell led the audience in a directed prayer to further embed the message in listeners' hearts.

Second, he emphasized the urgency of leading one's family into a deeper prayer life.

"We can't lead anyone else into revival if we're not doing it with our families," Frizzell said. "Our first ministry is to them."

Third, once believers have their personal and family's prayer life renewed, they can help facilitate corporate prayer and repentance, he said.

These two elements of revival can be seen in the New Testament church, which understood that corporate prayer and repentance were paramount to demonstrating power, he said.

Thinking that Christians can achieve their full potential with topical prayer is not in line with the New Testament, and topical prayers will not pull the United States out of moral quicksand, even coupled with innovative activities, according to Frizzell.

"Deep, periodic Spirit-led house cleaning and corporate prayer are what bring in revival," he said. "We don't ever outgrow that."

Catalyst by grace

Ultimately a deep love relationship with God is what produces revival, Frizzell said, emphasizing that God's grace is what enables any Christian to be a catalyst for true revival.

"God has non-negotiables. Either we live by them or we do without His power," he said. "Ask Him for more demonstration of His Spirit; He can use you. It's not too late."

Frizzell finished his time by leading those present in a second directed prayer to demonstrate his last two points.

"Deep, periodic Spirit-led house cleaning and corporate prayer are what bring in revival!"

Gregory Frizzell
Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma

Day of sermons focus on revival, staying motivated, 'declaring God as Lord'

By Daniela Werner and Traci Gyan
Correspondents, The Alabama Baptist

The "only hope we have as Southern Baptists is revival," Michael Catt, senior pastor of Sherwood Baptist Church, Albany, Ga., told those attending the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference. Others speaking during the afternoon session were Texas radio personality Kyle Martin and Alabama evangelist Don Graham.

"We're in a battle of open and closed doors," Catt said. "[The church in Acts] started behind closed doors. Then their doors flung open and thousands were saved. Since then, the devil's been trying to get the church to close its doors and mind its own business."

But don't grow weary in the work of spreading the gospel, he said.

"There's a war strategy going on right now to take you down, to take me down," Catt said. "If you quit, if you cave, if you give up ... then everything you've ever done will be in vain because all they'll remember is that you quit."

Prayer support

He reminded the pastors they have the prayer support of other believers, their congregations are depending on them and people outside the church are watching. These are incentives to not give up, Catt said.

He held an altar call for pastors who desired a fresh outpouring of God's Spirit. Pastors filled the altar and Catt prayed, "Send us revival or send us home."

Martin, who hosts the weekly radio show "Time to Revive," said it is time for the pastors to get out of

their comfort zones and pursue the lost sheep. After all, Jesus ate with sinners and tax collectors, he said.

"When was the last time you sat down with people who didn't know Jesus and told them how He's changed your life?" Martin asked the audience. "Your people are watching you. If you don't do it, they won't."

"If you want to see Alabama change, you need to be radical for the Lord," he said. "[The lost] will be drawn to you, but my generation doesn't care about your religion. They don't even care about your doctrine. They care if you're authentic."

Graham of Don Graham Revival Ministries in Clanton passionately urged pastors to hold a solemn assembly for revival.

"It's time to jar our people," he said. "Pastors have to warn people of being rejected by God if they don't repent."

The leaders of God's church must lead the way to repentance, being earnest as they turn to the Lord and ask for a radical repentance, Graham said, urging pastors to humble themselves, weep and even howl if necessary. Pastors must be willing to say, "I think I'd die if God does not touch my church."

"We have to guard against a divided heart and come to God with a whole heart," Graham said, suggesting pastors issue a moratorium on all activities that are not directly related to revival. He also encouraged pastors not to forsake the assembly of revival and prayer, despite low participation and interest from members.

"We invite our people to repent by preaching the truth," Graham

said. "Revival or ruin. Those are our options."

"God is a God of now," he said. "Delayed obedience is the same as disobedience."

In the morning session, Herb Reavis, pastor of North Jacksonville Baptist Church in Florida, shared tools needed for churches to gain a revival fire.

Preaching like Elijah

Preaching from 1 King 18:20-40, Reavis said pastors should first provide revival preaching like Elijah, who told God's people what they needed to hear rather than what they wanted to hear. Revival preaching delivers people from their neutrality, expects a definite decision, confronts people with the truth and exalts the majesty and grandeur of God,

"Stop playing games and speak up declaring God as your Lord and Savior," Reavis said.

Second, hearts need to be prepared for the sovereign move of God, he said, noting it is essential to be unified and not divided. "We will never have revival until we have unity."

Reavis also noted the need for holiness. "We do not have to compromise with the world to reach the world," he said. "We have to walk in purity and holiness."

Third, constant prayer that understands and asks God's will is needed.

"If you want a spiritual awakening, you have to be ruthless with sin, just as Elijah was with the false prophets of Baal," Reavis said.

"We have to do radical surgery on our souls to get to the root of our sins."



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

ALTAR CALL — Michael Catt, senior pastor of Sherwood Baptist Church, Albany, Ga., prays, 'Send us revival, or send us home,' at the 2011 Pastors Conference on Nov. 14.

'God will reveal Himself there'

Students share about life, experiences at Judson College

Two young women shared how God led them to Judson College during the college's report to the state convention Nov. 15.

Jana Davenport, of Jemison, and Haley Gates, of Carrollton, also shared what their experiences have been at the Alabama Baptist women's college.

Davenport, a psychology major, said Judson's motto, "Knowledge and Faith for a Purposeful Life," is everything she's discovered there.

"I've worked harder than I had ever thought possible, but I've had more joy than I've ever had before," she said.

Davenport said she sees Judson as an environment where students are encouraged to grow spiritually, a blessing she has experienced on a personal level.

"There are many reasons a woman may choose Judson," Davenport said. "But no matter what the reason, I believe God will reveal Himself there."

Gates took the advice of a member of her home church, First Baptist, Aliceville, to consider Judson as an option during her college search.

When she stepped on the campus, Gates said she had a "defining moment" when God told her that while she had a plan for her life, His plan was greater.

A biology and chemistry major, Gates said she has been prepared academically and spiritually by Judson professors.

"Thank you for giving to [Judson] and allowing me to seek out the will of God (in my life)," she said.



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

'A BLESSING' — David Potts, president of Judson College, introduces students Jana Davenport (center), of Jemison, and Haley Gates, of Carrollton. The two shared about their experiences at the Alabama Baptist women's college.

According to the Book of Reports, Judson was one of six Alabama colleges and universities receiving presidential recognition after being named to the honor roll for community engagement by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Judson's newest athletic program, soccer, had a good third season and improvements continue to be made in the Charles F. Dunkin Athletic Park.

Equine students competed in the Intercol-

legiate Horse Show Association in the college's new riding arena.

With the new Spanish major, Judson now has 19 majors, 23 minors and 11 pre-professional programs.

President David Potts closed the report with a thank you to Alabama Baptists.

"God bless Alabama Baptists for caring enough to keep Judson (and) to keep Christian higher education," Potts said. "Together, we do make a difference." (TAB)

UMobile celebrates 50 years, looks to future

On Nov. 14, the University of Mobile (UMobile) celebrated its 50th birthday. "Welcome to the birthday party, and thank you for what you have made happen," UMobile President Mark Foley said Nov. 15 during his report to the Alabama Baptist State Convention. "I'm grateful for your investment in the history of [UMobile] and the investment you will continue to make in the future of [UMobile]."

Established as Mobile College in 1961,

UMobile reaches all generations through its various programs and activities, as well as through the work of its students and faculty.

During Project Serve 2011, classes were canceled to allow 1,100 faculty, staff and students to volunteer within the community, covering an estimated 60 locations within a two-county region.

The Center for Leadership and the Twelve23 Movement have become great tools to "share the vision of transforming America

into a nation where God is honored," according to the Book of Reports.

During his report, Foley expressed concern for the nation's spiritual condition. "Generation Y consists of over 100 million highly educated and capable men and women with the least biblical input in history," he said. "We have failed to disciple them as we should have. [UMobile] is focused on reaching that 100 million and figuring out how to engage and retain them."

The Book of Reports also notes that Foley and Joe Savage, director of the Center for Leadership, each released a new book and sent more than 155,000 inspirational emails in the past year. Through the Center for Leadership and Twelve23 Movement, UMobile has held leadership events with more than 5,500 attendees and impacted the students of the Alabama public school system.

With an estimated enrollment of 1,750 students, UMobile is striving to fulfill its vision of "Changing Lives to Change the World." Through its 10-year strategic plan for growth, 2020 Vision, students are encouraged to not just get an education to prepare for their professional career but also use their career as a platform for ministry locally, nationally and internationally.

"Our university is looking forward," Foley said. "We understand it is about the expansion of Jesus Christ among us." As UMobile celebrates a half-century of accomplishments, he understands there is more work to be done. "The greater purpose of a 50th birthday is seeing how you get to the 60th birthday." (TAB)

Samford makes difference in lives

Being at Samford University makes me want to be a better person." This statement resonated throughout the state convention report given by Andrew Westmoreland, president of Samford, on Nov. 15.

He heard this statement from a student walking across the quad. The statement also was captured in feedback collected from a recent focus group. Furthermore Westmoreland shared that he thinks these words every day as he stands among his highly esteemed faculty and staff.

During the past year, Samford has been recognized by *Kiplinger's*, *USA Today*, Princeton Review and *Forbes*. And for the 20th consecutive year, it was ranked in the top tier of its peer group in the annual college rankings released by *U.S. News & World Report*. The nursing school received recognition as well for its new graduate program in aesthetics, cited among the top programs in the nation, according to the Book of Reports.

In fall 2010, Samford enrolled 4,715 students, a new record. Students come from 47 states and 16 countries, increasing Samford's reach of spreading the gospel throughout the world, Westmoreland said.

He noted 28 students from China are enrolled in Samford's English as a Second Language program. During a church service, Westmoreland and his wife witnessed the baptism of two Chinese students. "Now we have two new disciples that will share God's Word when they return to China," he said.

According to the Book of Reports, the Samford family is proud to have "invested undesignated Cooperative Program receipts from Alabama Baptists — more than \$4.8 million last year — toward awarding \$30.2 million in scholarships." Samford also has received \$125 million in gifts and commitments. This is part of the Campaign for Samford with a goal of \$200 million designated for scholarships and academic programs. (TAB)

Education Commission, Board of Aid tout schools, students

The numbers speak for themselves," said Melba Brown, who serves on the Alabama Baptist Education Commission. She asked all those in attendance at the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 15 to stand if they were in some way involved (either by attending, giving financially or have family members that attend) one of the three Baptist institutions in the state: Judson College, Samford University or the University of Mobile (UMobile).

"(You who are standing represent) a myriad of callings, vocations, locales and backgrounds," Brown said. "Many of you would express that your current Christian worldview was shaped by your experience in the (Christian institutions)."

The commission, established in 1979, "seeks to be an effective advocate on behalf of Alabama Baptists for Christian higher education in Alabama," according to the Book of Reports.

The commission's responsibilities include serving in an advisory capacity, reviewing the distribution of Cooperative Program funds for Christian higher education, serving as a liaison between the three Alabama Baptist schools, serving as a vehicle of communication between the schools and serving as a catalyst for prayer support.

Brown gave a visible example of all that the commission exists to accomplish as she invited the presidents of Samford, Judson and UMobile to join her at the podium as those in attendance stood in prayer for the three men and the institutions they lead.

"It's all about team work," Brown said. "People working together for common goals ... that's what we're all doing. Serving, training and giving so that others may know Christ and His love."

Board of Aid

Bill Goodwin, chairman for the Board of Aid to Students in Church-related Vocations and pastor at Lincoln Baptist Church, also spoke at the annual meeting.

The Board of Aid provides students who are "preparing for the Lord's work" with scholarships to the three Alabama Baptist institutions.

Goodwin said Lincoln Baptist is an average-sized church with an average-sized budget that "could never provide students with scholarships ... but when (Alabama Baptists) work together with other (Baptists) through the Cooperative Program, we are able to accomplish things we could only dream of doing alone."

"Thank you for giving (in the past)," he said. "And (thank you) for giving now."

According to the Book of Reports, the board awarded 210 scholarships in the amount of \$254,294 to students in the 2010-2011 academic year. (TAB)

EMA members encouraged to 'stand for what they know is right'

By Neisha Fuson
The Alabama Baptist

Don Campbell and Jim Simpson got more than just a good meal when they attended the Education/Music Association (EMA) banquet Nov. 14 at Moffett Road Baptist Church, Mobile.

Campbell, senior adult and pastoral care pastor of First Baptist Church, Birmingham, was presented the Paul Stewart Excellence in Music Ministry Award for his 40 years as a music minister at three Alabama Baptist churches and two Texas Baptist churches.

Simpson, minister to senior adults at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, received the Christian Educator of the Year Award for his 43 years as an education, pastoral care and senior adult minister. He has served six Alabama Baptist churches and one Oklahoma Baptist church.

EMA members also enjoyed the musical group Sounds of Mobile, under the direction of Bruce Earnest, chair and director of the musical theatre department at the University of Mobile (UMobile).



Photo by Neisha Fuson

AWARDS — Don Campbell (right) received the Paul Stewart Excellence in Music Ministry Award and Jim Simpson received the Christian Educator of the Year Award at the Education/Music Association banquet Nov. 14.

Prior to the banquet, EMA members heard from Mark Foley, president of UMobile, on leadership trends for the future and Lee Wright, coordinator of church compensation services at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), and Miguel Perez of GuideStone Financial

Services on retirement trends. Foley said there is a disturbance in the evangelical world in the United States.

If Christians keep doing things "as usual," then they will eventually lose the nation, turn the church into a monument and "see the influence of Christ decline to a point



Photo by Neisha Fuson

NEW OFFICERS — (L to r) Treasurer, Larry Morrison; Secretary, Bill Carr; President-elect, Guy Anderson; and Adviser, Dale Huff. Not pictured are President, Jim O'Dillon, and Vice President, Sonya Tucker.

that it is as significant as a yawn," he said.

Three symptoms of this disturbance in churches are plateauing/declining membership, congregations growing older and a biblically illiterate generation.

Foley said these symptoms are prominent because of two problems.

First is church-centric thinking — Christians placing the emphasis on going to the church building and a successful day measured by attendance numbers instead of spiritual fruit.

'Generational transition'

Second is generational transition.

"There are 100 million people that are Gen Y," Foley said. "They are going to change everything ... and lead this country in 20 years. What are you doing to engage ages 31 and younger (in your church)? What are you doing to disciple them?"

Noting there are two solutions

to the evangelical disturbance, he said Christians can either dig a foxhole or position themselves for an assignment from God.

"We need people who will no longer retreat," Foley said. "People who will stand for what they know is right, no matter what."

"If we humble ourselves, seek His face, pray and turn from our sin, God will have an assignment for us."

In other business, new EMA officers were elected:

► President, Jim O'Dillon, First Baptist Church, Cullman

► President-elect, Guy Anderson, Elkdale Baptist Church, Selma

► Vice president, Sonya Tucker, SBOM

► Secretary, Bill Carr, First Baptist Church, Bay Minette

► Treasurer, Larry Morrison, First Baptist Church, Sylacauga

Dale Huff, director of the SBOM office of LeaderCare and church administration, is adviser of EMA.

Shocco Springs sees 1,000 more decisions in 2011 than in 2010

By Traci C. Gyan
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Through this difficult summer (following the April 27 tornadoes), God reminded me that what we do together makes a difference," Buster Taylor, executive director of Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega, said during his report to the state convention Nov. 16. The events of April 27 "reprioritized all our state ministry efforts towards storm recovery."

While Shocco Springs was spared damage, it did hurt, along with the rest of the state, and took a hit in the number of summer campers, he said.

"Even though the number of youth and children attending camps was less, God did more," Taylor added, noting 1,000 more decisions were registered in summer 2011 than in summer 2010. "It's evident that God uses a different scale than we do."

He also reported that Shocco sponsored its annual missions

trip to Guatemala following the summer camp season.

"With 31 staff and volunteers joining the missions team, we undertook two projects," Taylor said.

One team shared Christ with hundreds of children in five public schools and distributed food and prayed with families in the communities around the schools.

The second team completed a multi-year wall project.

"It was exciting to see that last block laid, providing Camp Eden in Santiago an increased degree of security for their campus," Taylor said.

He also shared how he randomly met Chad Lawrence, an Excel native, while in Minneapolis recently.

"He (Chad) asked where I worked," Taylor said.

'Unashamedly shared'

"He then unashamedly shared that as a 12-year-old boy, he attended camp at Shocco and there prayed to receive Christ. He continued to tell how in subsequent summers, while attending other summer camps, he grew, rededi-

cating his life to following Christ."

Lawrence told Taylor that he attended Troy University and participated in missions projects to the beach, where he learned to boldly share his faith with others.

"Wow, here I was 1,000 miles away from home, listening to a young man tell me how attending a camp at Shocco had impacted his life," Taylor said.

Working together

"Our convention theme — 'Great Commission Ministries ... Together' — is played out in this story," he said.

"Chad's home church, Excel Baptist, brought him to camp at Shocco. He found Christ and continued to grow in his faith. While at Troy, he continued to strengthen in his walk with Christ.

"Following what was a very difficult summer and year, God reminded me that what we do together does make a difference," Taylor said. "I want to thank you, the Alabama Baptist State Convention, for partnering with Shocco Springs by attending events, sending children and youth to camp and by giving through the Cooperative Program. Together, we can have a positive impact for the Kingdom."

"Following what was a very difficult summer and year, God reminded me that what we do together does make a difference."

Buster Taylor
Shocco Springs Baptist
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'Send me'

Deerfoot Baptist member named Outstanding Missions Volunteer

By Brian Blackwell
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Many ministers recall that signature moment when they realized their calling; Ken Kelley's was on an Easter morning on a south Georgia farm.

For several years, Kelley and his wife, Mary Ann, had contemplated giving up their farming operation for a call to the missions field. At the time, Kelley was raising peanuts, cotton, corn, wheat, pigs and cows on a farm near Tifton, Ga., but he felt that missions could be in his family's future.

On April 11, 1982, Kelley was preparing to teach his Sunday School lesson on a cloudy Easter morning. What followed was a supernatural experience, he said.

"God expressed Himself in a bright light, a holy light," said Kelley, who was named the 2011 Outstanding Alabama Baptist Missions Volunteer on Nov. 15 at the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting in Mobile. "When I got off my knees, the sun was shining through

the sky. There was no doubt that, as God had sent Jesus to seek and save the lost, ... God was sending me to seek and save the lost."

Three months later, Kelley enrolled at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., to prepare for a career in missions. But as he progressed in seminary, his professors advised him that it would be too difficult to pursue a full-time career overseas when his family was caring for a daughter with disabilities.

So Kelley shifted his focus to serving as a pastor of churches in the United States while participating in a variety of missions trips, including more than 25 overseas to places like Brazil, Zimbabwe and Romania. His work has included constructing chapels, preaching, cleaning up disaster areas, feeding men at a homeless shelter and performing maintenance work in an apartment complex.

Kelley cites his experience in agriculture as helping lay the



Photo by Neisha Fuson

HONORED — Ken Kelley (left) receives a plaque for outstanding missions volunteer from Reggie Quimby.



Photo by Mary Ann Kelley

PLANTING SEEDS — Ken Kelley (second from left) explains some Scripture to interpreters who are helping him share the gospel at Cherechiu Baptist Church in Romania. Kelley was named the 2011 Outstanding Alabama Baptist Missions Volunteer on Nov. 15 at the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting.

groundwork for his four decades of missions trips.

"The years spent farming were a great time for me to get to know the Lord better and watch Him grow and plant stuff," said Kelley, who resigned as a staff member at Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville, in 2006 to devote more time to missions. "I look at it as a wonderful way for planting churches. A person plants the seeds and watches God cultivate [them]."

Carol Massey, a fellow Deerfoot Baptist member, said Kelley embodies the heart of volunteer missions and even called him "Mr. Missions."

"For the more than 10 years I have known Ken, he has shown me that as a Christian, he is the real deal," Massey said.

"His history of missions work here in his Jerusalem (and) in his Judea and throughout the world is documented both here and in heaven."

Going, doing missions

Roger Willmore, Kelley's pastor for nearly seven years, has also noticed how he walks the walk.

"Ken does not just talk about missions," Willmore said. "He rolls up his sleeves and does missions, and he does missions in his own

community and around the world."

And as Deerfoot's missions coordinator, Kelley leads others to do missions, too.

While he has a particular passion for Romania — where he has traveled more than 20 times for up to five weeks at a time — he still has a desire to go on trips to locations he has yet to visit.

"There are many places throughout the world I would like to go to, such as India, which is on my radar for one day," Kelley said. "I just want to be wherever the Holy Spirit leads and where the Lord can use me to share the love of Christ with the lost." ❏

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Alabama's Albright advocates for DOMs at NAMB

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

He's the sole strategist left at the North American Mission Board (NAMB) for associational missions, but he's adamant the partnership is not just going to survive but flourish.

"I think the current strategy is solid," Stan Albright told *The Alabama Baptist*. "But we are always learning to do better as the Holy Spirit reveals, and we will be a part of that."

Albright, national director for associations for NAMB, spoke to the Alabama Baptist Conference of Directors of Associational Missions (DOMs) during the group's annual meeting Nov. 14. The meeting was held at the University of Mobile (UMobile) prior to the state convention and included a performance by UMobile's Impact vocal group and a combined luncheon with the Mission Belles (DOM wives' organization).

Acknowledging the anxiety and confusion among associational leaders about the future partnership between associations, state conventions and NAMB, Albright — a native Alabamian who has served on staff with several Alabama Baptist churches and Calhoun Baptist Association — sought to assure DOMs he exists to be their advocate at NAMB.

While some DOMs expressed a lack of trust in NAMB and concern over the way it defines partnership, several DOMs also affirmed Albright for keeping their concerns before NAMB leaders.

Outgoing DOM President Steve Loggins, DOM for North Jefferson Baptist Association, said, "I am now assured that we have at least one voice for the state conventions and associations at NAMB, but he is just one voice."

Making it work

Albright acknowledged his lone voice is much different from the former Home Mission Board days of as many as 25 employees relating to associations and churches in the 1980s, but he still contends he can make it work.

"Churches, associations and state conventions have always had a voice



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

STRATEGY — Stan Albright (right), NAMB's national director for associations, discusses his new role with Jamie Baldwin (left) of the SBOM and Don Carroll (center), retired DOM for Calhoun Association, on Nov. 14.

on the leadership team for NAMB," he said. "This voice has been represented by previous vice presidents and team leaders and today is represented by the strategic leadership team as a whole. Each member at the table (of the strategic leadership team) has his own relationships with these valuable partners — from Dr. (Kevin) Ezell to the regional and team vice presidents to the unique roles of each team leader. It is truly a team effort.

"My role is unique in that my specific responsibility centers on the work of the local associations and the DOM/church planting catalysts that lead them," Albright said. "This focus allows me to bring insights and suggestions concerning associationalism to the forefront of any discussion."

But the accountability concerns of NAMB "telling" DOMs what they can and can't do through a job description and covenant that must be signed are only for DOMs who are NAMB-funded, Albright explained. "Most, if not all, DOMs in the South are not affected by this."

And even the requirements put on NAMB-funded DOMs, who are now called church planting catalysts (CPCs), have been tweaked a little since the original job description was written last year, he noted.

'Just get it done'

Originally the decision was that CPCs were going to be required to spend 60 percent of resources and efforts in church planting and that four churches would have to be planted each year.

"The percentage is no longer there," Albright told the DOMs. "The current job description does not contain any percentage time requirements but places a level of trust upon the DOM/CPC to use the ... timetable he needs to complete his responsibilities. ... We are saying, 'It is your responsibility; just get it done.'"

"And while the target goal for CPCs is to plant four churches a year, understanding and grace are applied in every situation," he said, noting the CPCs don't actually have to be the church planter themselves. But they have to see that it gets done. "If they are in an area where the ground is hard and needs a lot of preparatory work, then those things are considered. ... There is a clear understanding that some regions are more difficult than others. ... If a missionary does not reach his goal for a certain year, his situation will be evaluated with understanding and grace based upon his situation."

Albright also clarified that the assessments and reviews of the CPCs in the field are going to be done by state conventions, not NAMB.

"We are not assuming that authority but have yielded that responsibility to our state partners," he said.

"NAMB does not pretend to know everything about all the needs across North America, but the lead-

ers strive to know so we can be more effective in our strategies, communication, training, etc., and so there is little or no confusion," Albright told *The Alabama Baptist*.

"NAMB's trustees have instructed that 50 percent of all funding must move to church planting. We've already moved from 28 percent to 42 percent since last year," he said, noting that all NAMB's funding to the field "will go directly or indirectly into reproduction activity."

"The DOM is to encourage local churches to think outside of themselves as churches on mission ... to consistently work with churches to remind them of the lostness that exists and to remind them to engage beyond the local area," Albright said. It's about holding them to a level of accountability, he noted.

NAMB is doing something similar by holding the CPCs accountable, he told the DOMs.

'We've got to plant'

"I know you have ministries (in your associations that may have previously received NAMB funding)," Albright said. "We are not telling you to stop doing that, but we've got to plant churches, and that is where NAMB will hold [those who receive funding] accountable."

As all of the resources are shifting to the church-planting focus, the training opportunities for DOMs also are changing, he noted.

"What's going to happen is that there is going to be a huge dependence on the partnership and working with you and your state conventions and associations," Albright told the Alabama DOMs.

But he plans to keep the lines of communication open through his new IMPACT strategy:

1. Inform

"The desire of the association impact team is to be an office that

keeps you informed of what is going on," he said, noting a new email newsletter he sends out monthly to explain happenings at NAMB impacting associations, promote missions opportunities across the nation and announce training events.

Recognizing communication coming out of NAMB over the past year has been confusing at times, Albright said he hopes this newsletter will help clarify information for DOMs.

2. Mobilize

"One of the desires in our office is to make you aware of ministry opportunities across our nation in order to mobilize your association," he said. "We want to assist you, not tell you. We desire for you to be in the forefront."

3. Prepare

"We want to help you with strategic thinking," Albright said. "There is a difference between calendar[ing] and strategic thinking.

"When we start thinking strategically, we talk about really recognizing the landscape where we really are," he said. "Knowing your community, population basis, knowing who lives there — then when you see all those things, it gives you ammunition to inform your congregations about what has to happen to push back the lostness in your area."

4. Assess

"We have a process ... where we can come in and basically take your association through an assessment process," Albright explained. "It's a situation where we can come in or we can teach you how to do it yourself, where we interview — or you get someone outside the association to do it — all pastors in 30- to 35-minute sessions individually.

"Data (from those sessions) reveals things," he said. "What does this mean? What are implications? What are possibilities? Where do we go from here?"

5. Community

"We are a community of churches ... and some are in need," Albright said. "Your time could be consumed with working with these churches. I'm not telling you we are to move beyond them, but I am telling you don't let them hold you back."

NAMB currently is assessing a potential new ministry to strengthen at-risk churches, he noted. Called RENEW, the strategy would include a partnership between NAMB, the state convention, the association and healthy churches within the association in an effort to revitalize a church at risk.

6. Transform

"This is a culmination of the other five elements — for us to be able to sit down and talk together," he said.

It also means partnership in leadership development and training, such as developing a coaching network among DOMs, Albright noted.

"The bottom line is ... I want to be your friend, a truth teller, and to think strategically with you.

"I want to help but you are going to have to be part of the help." ■



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

NEW DOM OFFICERS ELECTED — (L to r) Secretary/treasurer, Jim Jackson, Elmore Association; President, Bill Morgan, Autauga Association; and President-elect, Ben Chandler, St. Clair Association.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 27

Explore the Bible By Robert Olsen

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

DOES YOUR LIFE SPEAK WELL OF GOD? Romans 15:1-13

Prefer Others (1-4)

Paul continues with his discussion on strong and weak believers and how they ought to relate to one another. When there is a difference of opinion between believers, the stronger believer in Jesus Christ needs to forego his or her opinion and be more concerned for his or her fellow believer. Just as Christ did not live to please Himself, so, too, the stronger believer needs to be more concerned for others than himself or herself. As long as the matter is not clearly dealt with in Scripture, the stronger believer must show concern for the weaker by giving up his or her freedom on the matter. Our focus should not be on ourselves but on God and the unity of the church. One way that we can maintain this focus is by reading God's Word. When Paul points out that everything written in the Bible is for us, he is referring to the Old Testament, using a reference to Psalm 69:9. Many times, we neglect the Old Testament, but for the early believers, this was the only Bible they had. In the Old Testament, we can be encouraged by the knowledge of God and His character as well as seeing godly examples to follow. Seeing figures such as Joseph, Elijah and Boaz encourages us to persist in faith and hope.

Live in Harmony (5-6)

In stating that believers are to be "in agreement," Paul means "the same mind." Again this is a plea for unity. It is sad that unity has to continually be stressed to believers, showing that quite often, there is discord among them. Because Paul spends so much time on the subject, it is of utmost importance for believers to be unified. When Paul speaks of agreement, he means living at peace with one another, forsaking our opinions and desires for the sake of others. We are supposed to be different than non-Christians and live differently. Complaining, arguing, gossiping and the like have no place in the church. When non-Christians see us behave in such a manner, why would they want to be a part of that? What a disservice we do to God when we misrepresent His name

and bring dishonor to it instead. We need to take the focus off ourselves and focus on the One who saved us. When we learn to focus on God, we realize the importance of doing His will and not our own.

Accept Others (7-11)

Christians are to accept one another, because Christ has accepted them and, by accepting one another, God is glorified. Jews and Gentiles can get along within the church because God has accepted both of them. Many Jews in Paul's day believed that God was the God of only the Israelites. This was patently wrong, demonstrated by Paul recalling several passages from the Old Testament that revealed that God loves Gentiles. Since God loves all people regardless of race or nationality, Christians need to do the same. Christianity does not belong to a certain nation or land. Therefore churches today can and should embrace Christians of other nationalities and races. Anyone who claims to be a Christian needs to get rid of racist attitudes.

Express Hope (12-13)

Paul quotes Isaiah 11:10, which affirmed that the Messiah would come from the line of David, the son of Jesse. This is a reference to Christ, who will rule all the nations. The Jews of Jesus' day believed the Messiah was going to come and throw off Roman oppression and bring Israel back to a nation of prominence as in the time of David and Solomon. Christ did not do this, as in His first coming, He was the suffering Servant prophesied in passages like Isaiah 53. However, when Christ comes again, He is going to judge the nations. But in His first coming, Christ gave hope to the people of all nations, who now can be made right with God through Christ. Out of the Jews came the Savior of the entire world, bringing hope to all people and all nations. Christians need to live in this hope, which is different from the hope that non-Christians can experience. Hope in our eternal salvation because we have been made right with God gives us the peace to be able to face any trial. The world needs to see this in the Church so that it can see God's glory.

Bible Studies for Life By Eric Mathis

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

ADOPT THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE Deuteronomy 32:1-9, 36-39, 43

This month's Bible study is a series of four lessons based on events in Moses' life. Through it, we are examining ways in which we can make our lives count as we seek to bring about God's kingdom in this world.

Last week, we examined the Israelites' complaints when they ran out of water and the poor response of Moses and Aaron. Through that narrative, we considered ways in which we can respond to difficult situations. This week's lesson examines the song Moses recited at the end of his life. This song centers all of life in knowing and living under the greatness and graciousness of God. As we study this lesson, we will be called to make time for self-reflection, look at life's big picture and determine what is and what is not important and worthwhile.

God Is Worthy (1-4)

Prior to Moses' song, which begins Deuteronomy 32, Moses reminded Israel that Joshua was the one who would lead the people into the promised land (31:1-8). Moses also described how the Israelites would break the covenant, follow other gods and pay the price for doing so (31:14-30). In Chapter 32, Moses introduced his song, which functions both as a proclamation of Yahweh's name and a word of caution to the Israelites.

The song's first section boasts in praise of God. Moses calls all the heavens and the earth to hear the words he is about to proclaim. He uses water imagery to plead his instruction and speech to be heard by all and admonishes all people to follow his example in ascribing greatness to God. In its most simple interpretation, this passage might remind us that gaining perspective on life begins by first acknowledging God's work in and through us. However, in the context of reminding Israel about its waywardness (Chapter 31), Moses is careful to remind the people that God is decisive, truthful, faithful and upright. Just as someone can find solidity and safety on a cliff, so we can find safety in God in the midst of our waywardness.

Humanity Is Willful (5-9)

Though initially offering praise to God, Moses' song takes a decidedly critical turn to once again declaring the perverse and corrupt nature of God's people (5). After questioning the unwise people's commitment to God, Moses reminds them through another question that God is their creator (6). He calls them to turn toward the days and generations long past for solid reminders about God's goodness (7). Finally Moses reminds the Israelites who they are: God's chosen people (8-9).

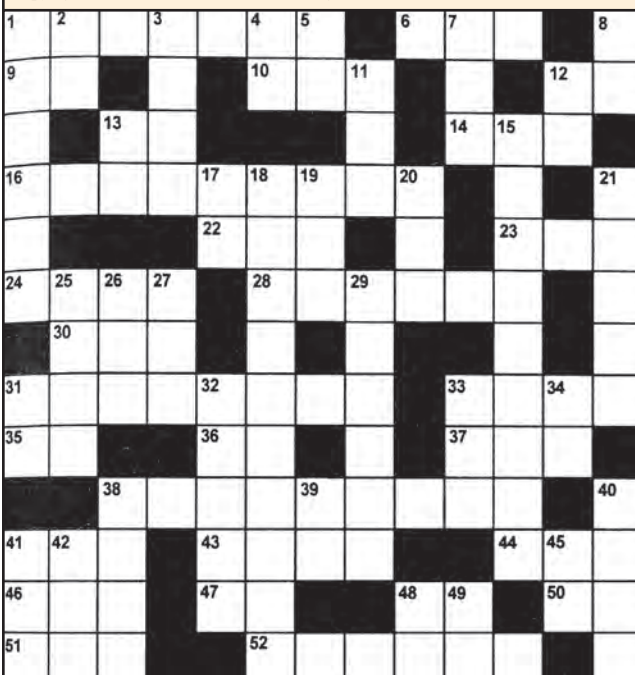
Although this passage recalls who Israel is as God's chosen people, it is important to note that Israel's special relationship with God does not mean God has rejected other people. It means that God, in person, has chosen to be committed to encouraging Israel. In spite of its faults — including service to other gods — God does not give up on it. And here we find a reminder for ourselves that it is hard to get God to give up. We can be stubborn as God's people in a covenant relationship, but God is more stubborn than we are. God is faithful, true, upright and absolutely committed to being our God, even when we are not always His most faithful people.

God's Ways Are Wonderful (36-39, 43)

The remaining verses in Deuteronomy 32 further recount Israel's history (10-47). They describe God's provision to Israel, Israel's faithlessness and God's rebuke to the people. Although God's rebuke may at times mock the people's faithlessness and waywardness (37-38), God remains faithful and compassionate when His people's power is gone (36). More importantly, God remains the God of all gods who makes provisions for our life, healing and deliverance (39). In this truth, we can find great hope. No matter how far we stray or how faithless we might become, God will continue to be stubborn about us. God will continue to receive us and have compassion for us as His people. This is, indeed, the wonderful way and message of the gospel and the God who continues to create, redeem and sustain us. For this and all other blessings, we give thanks.

Christian Crossword

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Across

- Let him deny ___ and take up his cross. (Mark 8:34)
- ___ Lincoln.
- Spirit of the Lord came up ___ David. (1 Sam. 16:13)
- Being exceedingly ___ against them. (Acts 26:11)
- We.
- ___, and also our fathers. (Gen. 46:34)
- Tower, whose ___ may reach unto heaven. (Gen. 11:4)
- Defeats.
- Environmental Protection Agency. (abbr.)
- To and ___.
- The ___ was upon the earth forty days. (Gen. 7:12)
- Take the widow's ox for a ___. (Job 24:3)
- Tool for wedding.
- Mary anointed the Lord with ___. (John 11:2)
- God gave them up unto

Down

- ___ affections. (Rom. 1:26)
- New Testament. (abbr.)
- United States. (abbr.)
- Mary ___ Joseph.
- And thine ___ as the grass of the earth. (Job 5:25)
- Is able to.
- Is the correct size. (Acts 26:11)
- Hereafter ye shall ___ heaven open. (John 1:51)
- A grain.
- As he is Christ's, even ___ are we Christ's. (2 Cor. 10:7)
- Pound. (abbr.)
- Mother.
- Yea.
- Teach us to ___ our days. (Ps. 90:12)
- Unclean animal. (Deut. 14:18)
- It ___ not good. (Gen. 2:18)
- And to ___ is gain. (Phil. 1:21)
- Jesus went ___ to Jerusalem.
- For ___ are his workmanship. (Eph. 2:10)
- Remember all thy ___. (Ps. 20:3)
- Christian Era. (abbr.)
- The Lord heard ... and looked on ... our ___. (Deut. 26:7)
- Sickness. (French)
- He was ___ at that saying. (Mark 10:22)
- One of the king's most ___ princesses. (Esther 6:9)
- What every director hopes for.
- Charged particle.
- Cast the ___ on the right side. (John 21:6)
- Be not among ... riotous ___ of flesh. (Prov. 23:20)
- ___ top of that ...

- Something worn to warm the ears or hands.
- A form of car.
- 450 in Roman numerals.
- I have commanded my sanctified ___. (Isa. 13:3)
- Physical therapy. (abbr.)
- A group of people working for a common cause.
- Hear, O Lord, when I ___. (Ps. 27:7)
- Yes, in the navy.
- Printer's measure.
- Pound. (abbr.)
- To exist.



Want to know God?

By Pastor Dennis Culbreth
First Baptist Church, Jasper

Even though it has been nearly 50 years, it seems as if it was just yesterday. It was late at night. I had just been tucked into bed and was drifting off to sleep when I was awakened by a deafening scream. I leapt to my feet and ran out to the hallway. I quickly made my way to the kitchen where I saw my mother (she was the one who let out the scream) and a stranger, a woman whom I had never met. The woman's clothing was torn; she was bleeding from various cuts and looked terrible. In fact, she looked as if she had been in a fight. By that time, my father also had made it to the kitchen, and we listened intently to this stranger tell us a horrifying tale.

This poor woman was from the nearby town of Evergreen. She had been on her way home when she was kidnapped by two men and taken to nearby Beulah Cemetery, an old abandoned graveyard miles from anyone. These men were planning on having their way with her, killing her and burying her in the deep woods of Conecuh County. Thankfully both men were too drunk to carry out the evil deed and she was able to escape.

But where should she go? She was in the middle of the swamp in the dark of night with two half-drunk men chasing her.

She was running for her life and had no idea which way to go. Until she saw the light.

Our house was located high on a hill a mile from old Beulah. Some months before, my father had placed a security light in the yard, and that was the light she saw.

It was the only light visible for miles around. This poor woman did the only thing she could do.

She fought through briars and deep thickets and crossed a cold creek in the dark of night, running toward what she hoped would be safety. She ran toward the light.

That is a beautiful picture of the gospel of Christ.

Let us remember that it was the light of Christ that saved us.

We were wandering in a dark world of sin when "we saw the light."

Historical Highlights

from previous issues of *The Alabama Baptist*

Compiled by Kathleen Prude

50 Years Ago November 1961

139th Convention Highlights: The Alabama Baptist State Convention will hold its 139th annual session Nov. 14–16 at Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile. The convention, made up of 710,000 members of 2,750 Baptist churches in the state, will have approximately 2,000 people present in the three-day meeting.

The annual convention sermon will be delivered by Alvin H. Hopson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Huntsville. Howard M. Reeves, pastor of First Baptist Church, Mobile, will give his address Tuesday morning. J.W. MacGorman, professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, will lead the devotional periods at the beginning of each session. Among the principal speakers will be Forrest Feazer, former Texas Baptist executive secre-

tary, and Paul M. Stevens, director of the Southern Baptist Radio-TV Commission in Fort Worth, Texas.

40 Years Ago November 1971

Popular Convention Site: More than 2,000 Alabama Baptist pastors, church staff members and laypeople are expected in Huntsville Nov. 16–17 for a two-day Alabama Baptist State Convention meeting at First Baptist Church, a popular site of the convention three years ago when messengers met in Huntsville for the first time in 53 years.

Lambert Mims, Mobile public works commissioner and the first layman to be elected convention president in 28 years, will speak at the opening session. Bringing the annual convention sermon at the same session will be Andrew W. Tampling, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sylacauga. Messengers will be welcomed to the church and

city, respectively, by host pastor Alvin Hopson and Madison Baptist Association Director of Missions Hugh Chambliss. Grady Cothen, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, will bring the major message Tuesday afternoon.

30 Years Ago November 1981

Possible Convention Issue: November 17–18 are the dates for the Alabama Baptist State Convention, which will meet in Montgomery's Civic Center.

An item of interest will be the election of a new president since Drew J. Gunnells, pastor of Spring Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, is concluding his second year as president and is not eligible for re-election.

Interest income may become an issue at the meeting since Vernon Yearby, pastor of Santuck Baptist Church, has raised questions about the procedure of handling Cooperative Program funds. His contention is that the interest on money processed by the convention office in Montgomery should be passed on to the cause for which it is designated.

(Note: Yearby was hospitalized following a heart attack on Monday prior to the convention. His absence allowed the item of business about interest to go unchallenged.)

20 Years Ago November 1991

Convention Agency Anniversaries: The only fires that Alabama Baptist State Convention officials

hope to put out at the Nov. 19–20 meeting will be the candles at the anniversary parties of four convention agencies.

Samford University will be celebrating its 150th anniversary in a Tuesday night pageant.

Also celebrating anniversaries will be the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes (100th), The Baptist Foundation of Alabama (50th) and the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission (25th).

10 Years Ago November 2001

Convention Theme Interpretation: Several speakers at the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting, held Nov. 13–14 at Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, emphasized the convention's theme for the upcoming year, "Through Every Door ... Making Disciples."

Jim Warren, director of missions for Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association; Max Croft, director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' office of discipleship and family ministries; and Tom Anderson, pastor of Mount Gilead Baptist Church, Dothan, presented Bible Moments focusing on discipleship throughout the meeting.

Former Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry stressed the importance of discipleship during the Tuesday evening session, which also featured laypeople from across the state offering testimonies about how they are working to bring people in, build them up and send them out.

TBFA helps people recognize stewardship opportunities

Ministry is "taking care of the responsibilities entrusted to us," Barry Bledsoe, president of The Baptist Foundation of Alabama, told Alabama Baptist messengers during his report to the state convention Nov. 16.

Noting the three ministry focuses of the Foundation — a program that is academically sound, technology up-to-date and works in stewardship development — Bledsoe said he currently is concentrating on stewardship development. He defined this as helping people recognize their stewardship opportunities to support the Lord's work.

This involves planning the stewardship of one's estate and the financial future of one's family, he said.

Foundation officials are urging as many Alabama Baptists as possible to consider planning and executing stewardship decisions affecting their estates, Bledsoe said. The Foundation has partnered with Kingdom Stewardship Alliance to work with Alabama Baptist churches to conduct "vibrant estate stewardship ministry" conferences.

Since November 2010, 10 churches have received planning assistance.

The result of these decisions will ultimately mean more than \$250 million going to Baptist causes, he added.

"[Estate stewardship] introduces members to the reality that how we plan our estates is most often the largest act of financial stewardship we will ever undertake," Bledsoe said.

When the Foundation was organized more than 70 years ago, the hope was to one day have \$10 million in assets, and today it is distributing \$10 million annually to Baptist causes, he said.

According to the Foundation's financial position statements listed in the convention's Book of Reports, the organization's fiscal year 2010 liabilities and net assets were \$209,098,179. Specifically, investments for fiscal year 2010 were \$46,366,009.

The group's proceeds from sales of investments were \$2,314,427. (TAB)

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BP photo

ALWAYS FAITHFUL — Floyd and Ivey Woodard served low-paying small churches their 52 years in the ministry. Now in retirement, they're seeing God's faithfulness through Southern Baptists' Mission:Dignity gifts.

The money 'always came'

Mission:Dignity provides for about 2,000 retired pastors

Floyd Woodard was 25 years old when he felt God calling him into a life of ministry nearly six decades ago. Married just five years, he was teaching a Sunday School class when he was approached about becoming a preacher.

"I knew the Lord was dealing with me and so finally I came to the place that I decided I would answer the call, that God called me to preach," Floyd said. "I started pastoring back in 1955 in a church that had us preach two Sundays a month. They paid us \$15 a Sunday. We drove about 55 miles one way to get there."

When a church in Forsyth, Mont., offered \$150 a month in the mid-'60s, he readily accepted the call. He fondly remembered talking to a church member about receiving a weekly check. "When I talked to him and asked him about giving me a check every week, he said, 'Well, there are five Sundays in some months,' and I said, 'We have to eat that Sunday, too!'"

At times, it was difficult for Floyd and his wife, Ivey, to make ends meet on the small salary he received, but God was always faithful.

"There were several times," Ivey recalled, "when I would go to the grocery store and I'd spend my last dollar for milk, and I didn't know where the next dollar was coming from, but it always came."

Over the years, the Woodards were not afraid of hard work and

often took additional jobs to make ends meet. "We did some work for different people," Floyd said, "like in the sugar beet fields and helping cut corn in the silage and stuff like that occasionally."

"I did a little carpenter work to help supplement our income. Roofed a few houses," he said, chuckling at the memory.

As with many small churches, food from members' gardens or farms also was part of the "pay" received by most preachers.

For the Woodards, the meat served at the dinner table could be of an unusual variety. "When we first moved to Eureka (Mont.), a man from Great Falls had killed a deer," Ivey recounted. "He didn't need it, so he gave us that deer."

"It was so big it looked like a cow to us, but that was our meat for the winter," Ivey said as Floyd chimed in, "Even gave us a little elk and a little moose we got to try out. Only thing I never tried was the bear meat."

Necessities of life

Retirement — after 52 years in the ministry — made getting the necessities of life even more difficult. When a fellow pastor died, his widow applied and began receiving help from Mission:Dignity. That prompted the Woodards to seek assistance as well.

Through Mission:Dignity,

GuideStone Financial Resources assists about 2,000 retired Southern Baptist ministers and their wives who have critical financial needs. Most of these pastors served small congregations in decades past with little, if any, contributions toward a retirement plan. Sixty percent of Mission:Dignity recipients are widows. One of every four recipients is a pastor's widow age 85 or older. Qualified recipients are eligible for grants of \$200 to \$530 each month.

The ministry, which receives no Cooperative Program funds from the Southern Baptist Convention, is funded by individuals, Sunday School classes and churches. Gifts of any size are welcome, and contributions are paid out in grants, with nothing taken out for administrative expenses.

"I am just thankful that somebody thought of this — that sometimes retired pastors might need extra help," Ivey quietly shared. "It's a real blessing to a lot of people besides us."

Floyd voiced a special word of gratitude to donors "for their sacrificial giving because it has enabled us to come to the end of the month meeting our bills without getting so far behind." Through it all, Floyd and Ivey trusted in God's provision and kept smiles on their faces.

"We talked about the hard times," Ivey said, "and all the lean times we went through in earlier years with the salary being low and not knowing where the next dollar was coming from all the time, but it's always been a happy time."

"We felt we were doing what the Lord wanted us to do, and we knew He would provide. And He always did provide." (BP)

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Church compound attack in Kenya kills 2, wounds 3

GARISSA, Kenya — Suspected Islamic extremists with Somalia's al-Shabaab militia threw a grenade into the home of the church guard of an East Africa Pentecostal Church congregation outside Garissa, Kenya, on Nov. 5, killing an 8-year-old girl and another member of the church, sources said.

Three other people were seriously injured in the 8 p.m. grenade attack on the house, which is near the gate of the church compound. Killed instantly were 8-year-old Winnie Mwenda Mutinda and 25-year-old church member John Kikavu. The child was the youngest daughter of church elder Patrick Mutinda, who also serves as the guard or watchman of the church building, sources said.

The watchman's son, Samuel Mutinda, 12, suffered burns on his chest and leg, and his 10-year-old brother, Peter Mutinda, sustained burns on his hand and leg. Their grandmother, Rachael Kandu, was also severely burned.

Al-Shabaab activity near the Somali-Kenya border has increased since Kenya began air strikes on al-Shabaab-held territory in southern Somalia in October in retaliation for the rebel group's kidnapping and murder of foreigners in Kenya.

An area pastor said a fellowship of church leaders met Nov. 3 and wrote a letter to authorities requesting police security for churches in Garissa, especially on Saturdays and Sundays. The pastor said he received a threatening message Nov. 6 on his cell phone, reading, "Message from al-Shabaab — You must migrate [from] Garissa town within 48 hours or you see bomb blast taking your life and we know your house, Christians will see war. Don't take it so lightly. We are for your neck."

Baptist house church leaders attacked in Hanoi, Vietnam

HANOI, Vietnam — A gang of men attacked leaders of a Baptist house church network near Hanoi on Nov. 13, leaving one pastor unconscious and seriously injuring several others, including women and teenage children.

Leaders of the Agape Baptist Church were participating in a spiritual renewal meeting at the home of Pastor Nguyen Danh Chau in Lai Tao village, Bot Xuyen commune, My Duc district, when the gang intruded at 9:30 a.m., sources said. Beating people and smashing property, the gang seriously injured more than a dozen participants and warned Nguyen Danh Chau that they would kill him if he continued gathering Christians, the sources in Vietnam said.

The seriously injured Christians included five male pastors, four female pastors and other church leaders and several of the leaders' teenage children. The worst wounded, Nguyen Danh Chau, lay unconscious for many hours, and as of midnight Nov. 15, he was still suffering severe chest, stomach and head pain. One pastor's wife, Nguyen Thi Lan, was still unable to walk and function normally at press time after she was struck in the stomach and groin.

The denomination's top leader, Nguyen Cong Thanh, said in a statement Nov. 15 that he had met with the injured. "All they could do was weep and I also could not prevent my tears from flowing," he said. "Why do they gratuitously beat servants of the Lord like this? What crime have they committed, what enemies have they made?"

Evangelist in Pakistan shot, killed by unidentified gunman

KARACHI, Pakistan — An evangelist was shot dead Nov. 16 by an unidentified gunman in what his family believes was a radical Muslim group's targeting of a Christian.

Zahid Jameel, 25, told Compass Direct News that his father, Jameel Saawan, and a helper were opening the doors of their cosmetics shop in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal area of Karachi on the morning of Nov. 16 when a young man appeared and shot his father, first in the neck and then in the face. The young assassin fled on a motorcycle on which two people were waiting, keeping watch for him, Jameel said.

Jameel's father had not spoken of any threats on his life in recent weeks, though he had received threats after voicing his desire to start a welfare organization for poor Christians in the Essanagri area of Karachi two years ago, he said.

"We firmly believe that my father was killed because of his preaching of the Bible, because there is no other reason," Jameel said. Michael Javed, a former member of the Sindh provincial assembly, told Compass that he had known the victim for several years, as both of them are from Quetta. "Saawan was a very good man," Javed said. ☞