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HIT AGAIN — Kevin and Tiffany Moss, of Huntsville, lost their home in the April 27, 2011, tornadoes. On March 2, the home Mount Zion Baptist Church helped them rebuild was damaged by another tornado.

Top photo courtesy of David Cochran, bottom photos by Neisha Fuson

Finding the blessings

Huntsville family hit twice by tornadoes finds way back to God

By Anna Keller
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Theresa Wilson couldn't stop thinking about the Moss family.

Kevin and Tiffany Moss and their two children, 10-year-old Andrew and 23-month-old Ashlynd, lost their home in one of the April 27, 2011, tornadoes, and the next week, Kevin Moss lost his job.

Wilson, who established Feeding the Flock at Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville, three years ago to prepare meals for its homebound and sick, felt called to extend the ministry to the community at large when the tornadoes hit.

"After April 27 happened, we started cooking and delivering meals from my home into the community, kind of like the Red Cross was doing," she

said. "Before the Red Cross came after the storm, we bought bread and made sandwiches by candlelight, because we didn't have any electricity. We did that daily until we got power and then started with hot meals, preparing 500 meals a day from the various volunteers' kitchens."

And though Wilson and her fellow Feeding the Flock volunteers

(See 'Doing,' page 3)

Alabama Baptists rapidly respond to March 2 tornadoes

A long day of weather watching and tornado touchdowns March 2 left several communities with damage, and Alabama Baptist disaster relief volunteers were ready.

"The overall response was excellent, and the majority of it was han-

dled by local resources," said Mel Johnson, disaster relief strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

The SBOM effort wrapped up its official role in the cleanup March 10, but there was still work being done in Limestone County, he said.

Limestone Baptist Association Director of Missions Robert Fullerton said, "There's still a lot of work out there to be done."

While 25 volunteers from the association worked together with volunteers from Morgan Baptist Association on debris removal the week after

the storms, Fullerton anticipated volunteers working for the rest of March.

A team of 35 from a Louisiana church will arrive March 18 and stay for one week to help with debris removal and clean up.

On March 31 a team from the Baptist Student Union of McNeese State University in Lake Charles, La., will assist in whatever relief work is needed when they arrive.

In July, 398 Mission Serve volunteers will help with Rebuild Limestone County, a recovery/rebuild emphasis that the association created, pulling

(See 'Focused,' page 8)

'Bingo' may be back after 'not guilty' verdicts

By Sondra Washington
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

If Alabama gambling magnate Milton McGregor keeps his promise, then it won't be long before VictoryLand in Shorter reopens its casino. But Attorney General Luther Strange is still warning him and other would-be casino operators that facilities using "so-called 'electronic bingo'" machines will face "vigilant" law enforcement activity.

McGregor's announcement was issued soon after he and five other defendants were acquitted of all charges Feb. 7 in the state's federal gambling corruption retrial.

Although celebratory images of McGregor and the other defendants, Sen. Harri Anne Smith, I-Slocumb; former Sen. Jim Preuit, R-Talladega; former Sen. Larry Means, D-Attalla; lobbyist Tom Coker; and Country Crossing spokesman Jay Walker, were seen on several news stations, many believe justice was not served.

"I think we have the best legal system in the world but it's not perfect," said Eric Johnston, president of Southeast Law Institute. "I think the system was used and a lot of people who were guilty got away with it."

Sen. Scott Beason, R-Gardendale, who helped investigators with the case, said, "I saw corruption and I stood against it. What happens after that is up to other people."

As far as future slot machine-style gambling facilities are concerned, Strange has "pledged [he] will not allow the state ... to spiral back into the gambling problems of the past."

"This is not about whether I believe gambling is good or bad," he said. "This is about the rule of law. ... When the Alabama Supreme Court makes a ruling, it is my ... duty to uphold [it]. The ... Supreme Court has been crystal clear about what is legal ... when it comes to so-called 'electronic bingo.' ... The only form of bingo authorized ... to the Alabama Constitution is the traditional game commonly known as bingo."

COMMENT

‘Personalities Have to Gel’

Personalities have to gel.” According to a best-selling book on establishing effective boards of directors for the nation’s biggest and best corporations, that common sense conclusion is an important first step for effective board participation. “Directors must be able to express their views without offending others or shutting down debate,” *New York Times* best-selling author Ram Charan wrote in his latest book, “Owning Up.”

Unfortunately many boards of directors have not learned that lesson. Even more unfortunately, many church groups have not learned that lesson either. As a result, deacon groups, church committees, ministry teams, organizational officers, even church staffs fail to work together because personalities fail to gel.

Charan listed both negative and positive characteristics that impact the ability of personalities to gel. His list seems equally appropriate whether one serves on a board of directors or in a local church position.

Chief among the corporate stumbling blocks is a big ego. Because people are leaders in their fields, they are used to being listened to, having power and getting their way.

In the church, such selfishness may be called sin. Still people in the sacred world give vent to ego about as much as anyone else. Sometimes the church becomes the stage for people to demonstrate their importance, much to the detriment of the cause for which they were chosen.

Closely related to ego is the desire to control. Whether in a corporate environment or church setting, people can act to control the process and the outcomes. Control is another form of power. It can be exercised by out-talking everyone else, failing to cooperate, distracting from the primary goal with outlandish proposals or actions or any number of other ways.

At its core, the need to control is about self, not about the goal or group.

Charan also scolded the board member whose answer to every problem is a reflection of that person’s experience. For the salesman, the answer is more sales; for the operations person, the answer is cutting production costs, etc.

In the church, that trait can be seen in the one who met Christ at a Billy Graham revival insisting that what the church needs is more revivals. Those whose Christian life was renewed through a short-term missions project believe everyone taking a missions trip would revitalize the church. Sometimes those in music ministry believe the key to what ails the church is in praise and worship. On



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

and on, the “pushing” goes with participants unable to think beyond their experience.

Sometimes board members act like members of the Republican and Democratic parties. No matter what one says, another says the opposite. Church groups can do the same. Some churches have been plagued by this problem for decades. Others experience it when, for whatever reason, members choose to follow a contrary mindset.

Plagued by a contrary spirit

Neither business nor the church can make progress when plagued by a contrary spirit.

The value of a member who never says a word is also questioned. This person might view himself or herself as unable to contribute to the group. He or she might fear the group or even think the group unworthy of his or her participation. Whatever the reason, the person does little more than take up space.

While not all members contribute the same amount of input to any group process, frequently the one who makes a single comment or asks a single question brings clarity to the discussion with his or her insight. That is true in business as well as in the church.

On a more positive track, Charan said effective group members must have “the humility to ask for other points of view.” A Native American proverb says, “Listen or your tongue will make you deaf.” One cannot hear what others are saying unless one listens. Asking for input shows a desire to learn from others and acknowledges the value of other people as well as their ideas. Didn’t Jesus say something about loving one another in John 13:34 that applies here?

In addition to humility, Charan said a good board member must have courage, courage to engage in the decision-making process. Whether in business or the church, asking the difficult question can be a hard thing to do. Group intimidation can keep one from challenging assumptions. Respect for a leader can prevent one from examining alternatives.

Courage to engage in the process shows a commitment to the best outcome, not just the easiest.

Participating in the process should not keep one from being willing to accept the group’s decision. That is not to say the group is always right.

Groups — including churches — can be wrong just as individuals can be wrong. But the decision was committed to the group, which means that every member functions under the authority of the group whether it is a board of directors, deacon body or church committee.

When a decision violates one’s principles or scriptural understandings, then one may have to move away from the group altogether.

In reality, few things are that dramatic, which brings up Charan’s next point. An effective group member is willing to change his or her mind. Perhaps it is because of new information. Perhaps it is because information is put together in a new way. Whatever the reason, there comes a time when one might have to acknowledge a new level of understanding and change his or her mind about the issue before the group.

Changing one’s mind is not a sign of weakness. It is an expression of strength when one can learn, grow and change as one engages in the group process.

A good group member also sees the big picture, not just the nit-picky parts. Every member brings strengths to the group process. The good member overcomes the temptation to concentrate only on that part he or she knows well and strives to see how the proposal impacts the whole business or church or ministry.

Personalities have to gel for effective group leadership. That is a fact. Given the challenges facing the church today, there is not time to dabble in the sin of selfishness and all its expressions. It is time to love one another, even in the way we make decisions as a group.



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

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Ties that bind

Friendships within church family keep members connected, active

Research proves what most ministers long have suspected: Friendships developed at church positively influence religious behavior and — to a lesser degree — beliefs.

Sam Stroope, a doctoral student in sociology at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, analyzed data from the Baylor Religion Survey, a random survey of more than 1,600 adults nationwide conducted by the Gallup organization. He wrote about his findings in an article that will be published in the summer issue of the journal *Sociology of Religion*.

The greater the number of friends a person has at church, the greater the likelihood of that person's involvement in religious activities, he discovered.

"Friends matter more than any other factor — income, age, gender, geography, denominational background or how long a person has been going to church," Stroope noted in an interview.

Religious activities include publicly observable behaviors such as singing in the choir, attending worship, participating in Bible study classes, joining in church social events and performing church-related volunteer work.

That outcome might be expected, Stroope noted, since peer groups of any kind tend to monitor behavior and either reward or discourage certain actions.

Private activities

But religious activities identified in the survey also included more private activities such as prayer, Bible reading and sharing one's faith with other people. Stroope suggested subtle indicators, such as a well-worn Bible, might provide the kind of monitoring by others that encourages certain behaviors.

The connection between having friends at church and religious involvement holds true across all Protestant traditions — evangelical, mainline and African-American.

"You would think evangelicals might get more bang for the buck, so to speak, but that does not seem to be the case," Stroope observed.

While the connection between church friendships and religious activity holds true for Catholics, it is less pronounced. Stroope suggested the difference might be attributed to Catholics' emphasis on Christ's presence in the sacraments, while Protestants emphasize the presence of Christ wherever "two or three are gathered."

Supernatural beliefs

"The implication seems to be that if churches want to retain congregants and see them become more involved, it may matter less the charisma of the pastor and matter more how effectively the church is facilitating friendships," he said.

"Nothing replaces a church member taking the time to develop friendships with someone on the periphery of church life."

Friendships at church also have an effect — somewhat weaker but still significant — on belief in the supernatural, biblical literalism and religious exclusivity, research demonstrated.

People with no friends at church hold fewer supernatural beliefs — God, the devil, angels, demons, heaven and hell — than people who report some or most of their friends attend their church, Stroope discovered.

"With regard to supernatural beliefs, there wasn't an incremental effect evident. It's not the number of friends but whether you have friends at church at all," he noted.

However, having a greater proportion of friends at church increases the likelihood a person will affirm the Bible should be interpreted literally and believe only Christians will go to heaven, research showed.

Stroope's analysis marked the first study testing the relationship between networks of friends at church and a variety of religious indicators using nationwide data. (ABP)

'Doing His work'

Church helps rebuild family's home, lays foundation of friendship, faith

(continued from page 1)

encountered several families through their outreach, the Mosses particularly touched her heart.

"Every day, they'd bring sack lunches and Jake (Wilson's son) would take an extra sandwich out and feed it to my dogs," Tiffany Moss said of the days and weeks following the storm. "Theresa found out that I had a little girl, and she started bringing diapers, wipes and sippy cups."

And when Mount Zion Baptist wanted to reach out to the community after the storm and asked if Wilson knew anyone who needed a home, the first people who came to her mind were the Mosses.

So the Madison Baptist Association church began the process of rebuilding the family's home on the same lot. Simultaneously Wilson and the Mosses began building a strong foundation of friendship and faith.

"I'd been out of church for 16 years," said Tiffany Moss, who calls herself a "religious mutt" since she was baptized in a Baptist church, raised Mormon and attended a Church of Christ school. "Through all this, my family has found its way back to God. My husband grew up at Mount Zion as a kid, and now we're back as a family."

Life-changing outreach

With a group of church members and Missions/Outreach Minister David Cochran, the Mosses developed a house plan. The church had the correct permits in place, so volunteers were able to work on the house to keep costs low. Some missions groups from other churches helped with the project, and the family moved into its new home in late February.

And as it turned out, the outreach was life changing for the Mosses. Their lives had

been riddled with tragedy, from the storm and Kevin Moss' job loss but also the death of their oldest son, Chase — who had cerebral palsy — in December 2010.

"Everything that's happened this last year brought so much devastation, but through it all, it's gotten us back to God," Tiffany Moss said. "We've been so blessed in so many ways."

One of those blessings was a new job for Kevin Moss.

Unbelievably the Mosses' new home was damaged by the storms that blew through the Huntsville area March 2.

"We were able to restructure and replace the electrical panel over the weekend (after the storm)," Cochran said.

A utility truck passed by the home that Sunday evening, and its team was able to inspect and approve the restructure of the wall and the panel box. By 7:30 that night, the power was back on.

"Kevin called me and excitedly said, 'God is truly awesome,'" Cochran said. "It was a God thing because neither the inspection department nor the utilities usually work on the weekends."

Some siding was damaged as well, but Cochran and other volunteers were able to replace drywall on the house and the heating and air conditioning units were fixed.

"It's just God's people faithfully doing His work," Cochran said. "All things are possible with God."

As the storms swept through the area March 2, God called another to Himself. Andrew prayed for God's protection while he huddled on the floor of his classroom with his teacher and classmates. He told Mount Zion Pastor Ron Madison that night he had asked Jesus into his heart.

Tiffany Moss recounted the day's events with a smile and said, "I couldn't be more proud of my son." (Neisha Fuson contributed)

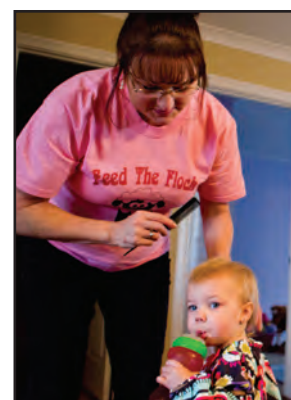


Photo by Neisha Fuson

LIKE FAMILY — Theresa Wilson of Mount Zion Baptist Church has grown attached to the youngest Moss.



Photo by Neisha Fuson

FELLOWSHIP TOGETHER — Tiffany Moss and baby Ashlynd (front) play together as Ron Madison (far right), pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville, visits with Kevin Moss.

Family reunion

FBC Gulf Shores gives warm welcome to annual 'snowbirds'

By Carrie B. McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Around December each year, new faces begin appearing in the congregation of First Baptist Church, Gulf Shores. Some are in the choir, others are in Sunday School, but the fact that they are welcomed as old friends keeps them coming back to their winter church home.

"I have been at First Baptist Gulf Shores since 1999, and one of the happy surprises was that during the winter, we see about a one-third jump in worship attendance from winter guests," Pastor Lloyd Stilley said.

That "jump" equals about 200 people, Stilley said, mostly Northerners escaping the cold and snow. Often called "snowbirds," they are eager to not only enjoy the warmer Southern weather but also get involved in ministry during their stay.

"They work in the kitchen and join the choir, and we even have a Sunday School class especially for them that's taught by one of our winter guests who has been coming for over 20 years," Stilley said.

Faithful teacher

That teacher, Ray Ekhoﬀ and his wife, Ruth, live on a small farm in Brimfield, Ill., about 25 miles from Peoria. They began coming to the Gulf area in 1989, and in 1990, they visited the Baldwin Baptist Association church. During a fellowship time between services, Ray Ekhoﬀ spoke with three men over coffee and soon was joining them for golf.

Year after year, the Ekhoﬀs continued to attend the church, and about 10 years ago, he started teaching the winter Sunday School class.

The class started with about 15 members, he said, and has grown to about 40 members.

"We don't lose anyone except to illness or death, which hasn't happened yet," he said.

'Most appreciative'

While he and his wife both said the welcoming atmosphere of First, Gulf Shores, is an important part of why they have continued to attend, the church's doctrinal stance has played an important role as well.

"I am most appreciative of the theology and scriptural beliefs of the congregation," Ray Ekhoﬀ said. "This church has not wavered in its scriptural stance."

He called teaching Sunday School a privilege but added that singing in the choir is enjoyable as well since his home church, which is part of the Evangelical Free Church of America, does not have a choir. Ruth Ekhoﬀ said she has enjoyed leading small groups in Beth Moore Bible studies and echoed her husband's feelings about the warmth of First, Gulf Shores.

"Everyone is overwhelmingly friendly and they are such warm people. That's what brings people back," she said.

Reg Wiltshire, a London, Ontario, native, has been coming to Gulf Shores for 17 years.

His passion is evangelism so he



Photo by Lyle Ratliff

WINTER CHURCH HOME — FBC Gulf Shores sees about a one-third jump in worship attendance from guests known as 'snowbirds' during the winter season. Often guests are eager to get involved in ministry.

serves on the church's visitation team, along with singing in the choir and participating in Bible study. Whether he's at the store or on the beach, Wiltshire is always looking for opportunities to share the gospel and invite people to church.

"You never know who you will meet, but it's exciting to tell others about Christ," he said.

Stilley said the best way to describe the feeling in the church during the winter is to compare it to a family reunion.

"It's a happy influx," he said.

"We're their Southern church and we feel a great deal of joy around this time of year to see dear friends who are at home here for a while."



Photo by Lyle Ratliff

'A HAPPY INFLUX' — Winter guest Ray Ekhoﬀ (center), of Brimfield, Ill., greets other 'snowbirds' at FBC Gulf Shores. Ekhoﬀ teaches a 'snowbirds' Sunday School class at the church.

Beeson honors FBC Pleasant Grove pastor

Samford University's Beeson Divinity School recently honored Daven Watkins as its 2012 Master of Divinity Alumnus of the Year. Watkins, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove, received a master of divinity degree from Beeson in 1999. He was cited for his role in shepherding his congregation following April 2011 tornadoes.

A graduate of Georgetown College in Georgetown, Ky., Watkins holds a doctor of ministry degree in preaching from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Charlotte, N.C. Prior to being named to the Pleasant Grove post in 2008, he was pastor of First Baptist Church, Owenton, Ky. He and his wife, Jane Ellen, have two children.

Watkins was presented the alumnus award by Beeson professor Charles T. Carter. (SU)



WATKINS

Religious coalition calls Obama mandate 'grave violation'

A diverse coalition of 500-plus religious leaders, university presidents and professors, and health care professionals has signed a statement calling the contraceptive/abortion compromise a "grave violation of religious freedom" that "cannot stand."

"The simple fact is that the Obama administration is compelling religious people and institutions who are employers to purchase a health insurance contract that provides abortion-inducing drugs, contraception, and sterilization," the Feb. 27 letter reads.

'An insult to ... intelligence'

"It is an insult to the intelligence of Catholics, Protestants, Eastern Orthodox Christians, Jews, Muslims, and other people of faith and conscience to imagine that they will accept an assault on their religious liberty if only it is covered up by a cheap accounting trick."

"Under the new rule, the government still coerces religious institutions and in-

dividuals to purchase insurance policies that include the very same services" that were offered before the compromise, the statement reads.

"It is no answer to respond that the religious employers are not 'paying' for this aspect of the insurance coverage.

"For one thing," the statement adds, "it is unrealistic to suggest that insurance companies will not pass the costs of these additional services on to the purchasers. More importantly, abortion drugs, sterilizations and contraceptives are a necessary feature of the policy purchased by the religious institution or believing individual. They will only be made available to those who are insured under such policy, by virtue of the terms of the policy."

It matters not "who explains the terms of the policy" purchased by the religious organizations, the statement says.

From a moral perspective, it only matters "what services the policy covers" — and the policy covers contraceptives, abortion-causing drugs and sterilization.

"This so-called 'accommodation' changes nothing of moral substance and fails to remove the assault on religious liberty and the rights of conscience, which gave rise to the controversy," the statement reads. "It is certainly no compromise."

Baptist signers

Among the Baptist signers were Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.; Robert Sloan Jr., president of Houston Baptist University; David Whitlock, president of Oklahoma Baptist University; Samuel W. "Dub" Oliver, president of East Texas Baptist University; David Dockery, president of Union University; and Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School of Samford University. (BP)

Churches prepare to share Christ with children through VBS

By June Mathews
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

All over Alabama, preparations are under way for the Vacation Bible School (VBS) adventure of a lifetime, courtesy of "Amazing Wonders Aviation."

According to LifeWay Christian Resources' 2012 VBS webpage, the weeklong experience will take kids on an imaginary journey to some of the world's most spectacular natural wonders.

Each day will begin in the Worship Rally Hangar and then move on to Bible Study at Victoria Falls, Missions Under the Northern Lights, Music at the Matterhorn, Crafts at the Great Barrier Reef, Recreation at the Grand Canyon and Snacks at the Paricutin Volcano.

The theme was drawn from Psalm 147:5: "Our Lord is great, vast in power; His understanding is infinite" (HCSB).

"We want everyone who attends VBS to know the power of our awesome God," Jerry Wooley, LifeWay's VBS specialist, said when announcing the theme last summer. "He has the power [to] create these awesome natural wonders, but He also has the power to make an awesome impact on our lives."

Longtime VBS songwriter Jeff Slaughter composed the music for "Amazing Wonders Aviation."

LifeWay recently announced that this year will be Slaughter's last as VBS songwriter, an annual role for him since 1996.

Even though VBS is a summertime event, the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) always begins the leadership training process well in advance. This year's state VBS faculty was assembled in September and has been in preparation mode ever since, said James Blakeney, an associate in the SBOM office of Sunday School/discipleship.

"We met for the first time at Shocco Springs (Baptist Conference Center in Talladega) in November," he said. "Then we trained at Ridgecrest (Conference Center in North Carolina) in January. That's where we write the skit we present at the clinics and make other plans."

VBS clinics

After their training was complete, faculty members geared up to spend the week of Feb. 20 on the road conducting five VBS clinics in five cities (Decatur, Birmingham, Montgomery, Enterprise and Monroeville) in five days.

These clinics, strategically located to be within an hour and a half drive from any point in the state, are designed to train associational leaders, who, in turn, train their churches for VBS.

With 16 years as state trainer and promoter of VBS under his belt, Blakeney is appropriately known as "Mr. VBS." Largely thanks to his efforts, Alabama Baptists lead the Southern Baptist Convention in VBS training.

"Tennessee is trying to beat us," he said with a smile. "But they haven't caught up with us yet."

At the clinic at NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville, in Birmingham Baptist Association, Daniel Edmonds, director of the office of Sunday School/discipleship, reported



Photo by Neisha Fuson

VALUABLE TRAINING — Vacation Bible School associational leaders learn about LifeWay Christian Resources' 'Amazing Wonders Aviation' at a clinic at NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville, on Feb. 21. The leaders will, in turn, train their churches for VBS.

that in 2011, approximately 253,000 children were enrolled in VBS in Alabama. Of those children, 6,603 made professions of faith.

Those statistics, Edmonds said, underscore the importance of VBS in leading children and their family members to Christ.

"VBS is still the No. 1 Southern Baptist attractional evangelism event," he said.

Even churches unable to manage VBS on their own following the massive April 27, 2011, tornado outbreak found that other churches

were willing to make it happen for their kids, Edmonds said.

"Not everyone will respond to the message, but everybody should have the chance to hear," he said.

"Some of the most memorable times you'll ever have in evangelism are through VBS."

2011 statistics

During the clinics, several associations (see sidebar) were recognized for 100 percent VBS reporting from member churches. But the news wasn't all good. Of the 2,900 churches reporting, 800 did not hold VBS in 2011, a number that bothers Blakeney.

"That's a lot of churches that don't have VBS," he said. "And that's why we keep doing this (training)."

For more information and resources, visit www.lifeway.com/vbs2012/yourvbs/.

What pastors say about VBS

1. Know that God is in control.
 2. The pastor of the church should be the pastor of VBS.
 3. Do not discount youth or adult VBS.
 4. Allow yourself to delegate.
 5. Remain humble and teachable.
 6. Prepare and follow a detailed job description.
 7. Keep it fun and new by using creative methods to enlist workers.
 8. Plan ahead for follow-up.
 9. Be passionate and enthusiastic.
 10. Serve as if you have been truly "called" instead of like a "volunteer."
- Honorable Mention: Take advantage of this year's theme to be creative with outreach and promotion.

Compiled by Cyndi Rogers, a member of the 2012 state VBS faculty, from a survey of Tennessee River Baptist Association pastors.

Associations with 100 percent VBS reporting for 2011

- ▶ Cherokee
- ▶ Cleburne
- ▶ Etowah
- ▶ Fayette
- ▶ Friendship
- ▶ Lookout Mountain
- ▶ Mud Creek
- ▶ Sipsey
- ▶ St. Clair
- ▶ Tennessee River

Source: James Blakeney, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions



Photo by Neisha Fuson

'MEMORABLE TIMES' — The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' Vacation Bible School faculty shares songs from LifeWay Christian Resources' 'Amazing Wonders Aviation' at the NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville, clinic Feb. 21.

Across Alabama's Associations

BESSEMER

► **Canaan Church, Bessemer**, will hold a Young at Heart fellowship luncheon March 15, 10:30 a.m., with The B-Team Angels. The group will perform and bring handmade jewelry to sell. The church also will hold Sportsman's Night March 29, 7 p.m., with Al Odom, founder of Fishers of Men. Participants in the April 21 tournament (at Midlake public launch from 6 a.m.-3 p.m.) must be present with entry fees. The money will go to help missions. Canaan also will hold a student world hunger relief weekend March 30-31. There will be a 24-hour famine from Friday at 7 p.m. to Saturday at 7 p.m. For information call 205-425-4381 or visit www.canaanbaptist.net. Morgan Bailey is pastor. ► **Tannehill Valley Church, McCalla**, will hold 2012 Spring Fling April 7, 10 a.m., for preschool through sixth grade. There will be an Easter egg hunt, inflatables, game booths, activities, crafts, contests and door prizes. Jonathan Reaves is pastor.

BETHEL

► **Nanafalia Church** will celebrate homecoming April 8, 10:30 a.m. Former member Randy Taylor will speak. Lunch will follow in the fellowship hall. Hal Taylor is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Shades Crest Church, Bluff Park**, will hold a weekday education program fundraiser called Celebrating the Arts Silent Auction March 30 in the fellowship hall. There will be a silent auction at 5:30 p.m. and a live auction at 6:30 p.m. For information call Miche'l Godwin at 205-824-9050.

CHILTON

► **Providence Church No. 2, Clanton**, will hold an Easter sunrise service April 8, 6 a.m., at the new outdoor amphitheater adjacent to the church. There will be a live dramatic presentation of the life of Christ including His birth, death, burial, resurrection and ascension. Bring a lawn chair. For information call 205-755-4126. Guests also are invited to a dress rehearsal April 1, 3 p.m. Glenn Bonds is pastor.

COFFEE

► **Victoria Church, Jack**, will host a seven-church revival March 18-23 and 25. Services will be Sundays at 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Pastor Cary Mauldin of Zion Chapel Church, Elba, will speak March 18; Pastor Mark Cooper of Woodland Grove Church, Elba, March 19; Pastor Richard Collier of Whitewater Church, Elba, March 20; Pastor Doug Knight of Hebron Church, Troy, March 21; Pastor Ken Hagler of Wise Mill Assembly of God, Elba, March 22; Pastor Larry Grim of Mount Zion Church, Jack, March 23; and Pastor Donnie Marler of Victoria Church, March 25. For information call 334-897-5471.

DEKALB

► **Second Church, Fort Payne**, will hold a senior adult banquet March 17, 6 p.m., with Christian humorist/musician Brother Billy Bob Bohannon (Bill King). King also will speak during the Sunday morning service March 18, 11 a.m. John Screws is pastor.

MADISON

► **Mable Hill Church, Ardmore**, will hold revival March 18-22 with Tony Billions, of Oak Hill, Tenn. There will be special singing each night. Services will be Sunday at 5 p.m. and weeknights at 7. The church also will hold a gospel concert March 23, 7 p.m., with Jeff and Sheri Easter. Doors will open at 5 p.m. There is a minimum donation per adult. For information call 256-420-8172 or visit www.mablehillbaptist.org. Mike Clark is pastor.

MOBILE

► **Charlie Stallings** is the new pastor of **Trinity Church, Tanner Williams**. He previously served as associate pastor/director of outreach for Lilly Orchard Church, Big Point, Miss., and director of budget and finance for Temple Church, Big



STALLINGS

Point, Miss. He also has served as minister of youth and children for Crowder Church in Mississippi. Stallings and his wife, Tracy, have one child and are expecting their second in May.

SHELBY

► **First Church, Vincent**, will hold a special service of rededication for its renovated worship center April 1, 11 a.m. A covered-dish lunch will follow. Darryl Wood is pastor.

ST. CLAIR

► **Eden Westside Church, Pell City**, will hold Life Action's 15-day revival summit March 18-April 1. Services will be March 18 at 8:10, 9:35 and 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. and March 19-22 and 26-29 at 6:31 p.m. There will be instructional teaching, family seminars, music and programs for children and youth. For information call 205-338-7711. Jacky Connell is pastor. ► **Heritage Church, Pell City**, will hold revival March 26-29, 6:30 p.m. On Monday, Ben Chandler, director of missions for St. Clair Association, will speak and the Heritage praise team will lead the music. On Tuesday, Andrew Westmoreland, president of Samford University in Birmingham, will speak and the CrossPoint Church, Trussville, praise team will sing. On Wednesday, Evangelist Junior Hill will speak and the Heritage praise team will lead the music. On Thursday, Kevin Hamm, pastor of Gardendale First Church, will speak and its choir will sing. For information call Jessie Hayes at 205-362-9039. ► **First Church, Moody**, will hold its Easter Egg Extravaganza April 7, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. There will be inflatables, games and lunch. For information call 205-640-5328. Brad Moseley is pastor.

TENNESSEE RIVER

► **Tennessee River Association** will hold disaster relief training for introduction, cleanup and recovery and chain saw March 16-17. To register visit www.sldr.org. The association also will hold a horse whisperer event March 27, 6:30 p.m., at the rodeo grounds on Highway 35 near Comer Bridge in Scottsboro. For information call 256-259-6135. Dwight Everett is director of missions.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Circlewood Church, Tuscaloosa**, will hold Awakening Revival March 25-28 with Evangelist Jeff Crook. Daniel Crews will provide special music. Services will be Sunday at 6 p.m. and weeknights at 6:30. There will be a Tuesday lunch service at 11 a.m. and a Wednesday pizza blast at 5:30 p.m. for children and youth. For information call 205-553-4315. Herb Thomas is pastor.

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

Former national WMU President Helen Fling dies

BIRMINGHAM — Helen Fling, a former national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) president and former missionary who spent nearly 25 years in Birmingham following her time on the missions field, died March 1 in Texas. She was 97.

"Helen was a very special lady," Wanda S. Lee, executive director of national WMU, said.

Fling's profession of faith at age 8 was just the beginning of her commitment to Christ. She married Baptist preacher Robert (Bob) Cobb Fling in 1934 at the age of 19. Fling attended Baylor University, but while raising their daughter she completed her degree via correspondence courses at East Texas State University.

The Flings also served with the former Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in New York and the former Foreign Mission Board in Munich, Germany.

Over the years, Fling served in several prominent WMU posts including recording secretary for national WMU, 1957-63; president of national WMU, 1963-69; and president of New York WMU, 1971-76.

In addition, Fling made history as the first woman to hold a Texas Baptist post when she was elected second vice president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in 1967.

In the 1960s, she wrote two books that encouraged the advancement of missions, "Enlistment for Missions" and "Changes and Choices."

In 1977, Fling moved to Birmingham and served on the national WMU staff as promotion coordinator for development of WMU work in "new work" areas.

After her husband's death in 1982 and her retirement in 1984, Fling continued to be an active member of Mountain Brook Baptist Church.

BWA names 2012 recipient of human rights award

WASHINGTON — Edgar Palacios, co-founder of the Lutheran University of El Salvador and former coordinator and executive director of the Permanent Committee of the National Debate for Peace in El Salvador (CPDN), is the 2012 recipient of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award.

Palacios is being recognized for his role in helping to negotiate peace in El Salvador during the civil war of 1980-1992.

He played key roles in the CPDN, part of the social movement in the Central American country, leading the organization through one of the most turbulent periods in El Salvador's modern history. In the period 1989-1992, Palacios testified at various times as a representative of the churches and the CPDN before the U.S. Congress and the United Nations on the situation in El Salvador. In 1990, he was co-president of a peace conference relating to El Salvador in the Netherlands.

Ordained to the Christian ministry in 1985, Palacios served several Baptist congregations in El Salvador, did stints with two congregations in Mexico City and currently serves as an associate pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.

Palacios is a co-founder and a former executive secretary of the National Council of Churches of El Salvador and was a representative of the Historical Protestant Churches of El Salvador. He taught at several universities, colleges and seminaries in El Salvador, Mexico and the United States. He helped to found the Lutheran University of El Salvador in 1988. He is the recipient of several other awards.

The 2012 BWA Human Rights Award will be presented during the BWA general council meeting in Santiago, Chile, in July.

Midwestern partners with Green Scholars Initiative

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary officials have announced a partnership with the Green Scholars Initiative offering Midwestern's ancient language students opportunities to research and publish their findings about one of the world's oldest biblical texts that dates to the second century.

Over the next 10-12 years, Midwestern biblical language professors and students will research, analyze and publish information from the earliest Greek texts of the Book of Psalms, part of a collection known as the Bodmer Papyri.

Midwestern's research will begin with the Papyrus Bodmer 24 (P24), which was officially presented to Midwestern by Green Collection director Scott Carroll during the seminary's Feb. 2 faculty meeting. Midwestern subsequently will receive one papyrus leaf of the text from Psalms 17-119 approximately every two months until all 50 leaves are completed. This papyrus is approximately dated to the late second century.

Alabama Cooperative Program Gifts

Alabama Baptist Giving

Year to Date through February 29, 2012

FEBRUARY

CP Challenge Budget Goal	\$3,641,666
CP Challenge Budget Gifts	\$3,853,179
Over Goal for Month	\$211,513

YEAR TO DATE

CP Challenge Budget Goal	\$7,283,332
CP Challenge Budget Gifts	\$7,222,094
Under Goal for Year	\$61,238

'God-ordained' film

Pro-life 'October Baby' movie touches abortion survivors worldwide

The phrase "abortion survivor" may seem like a misnomer, but it's not, and on March 23, moviegoers can watch a film about that very subject, inspired by a true story.

The movie, "October Baby," chronicles a young woman's search for the truth about her past — a past that includes discovering that her mother tried to have her aborted, only to place her for an adoption when the abortion failed. The film, though, doesn't dwell on abortion but instead weaves the story of the main character's past in with a romantic plot and a college road trip.

It is being promoted by the same company — Provident Films — that marketed "Courageous" and "Fireproof." It also has an endorsement from Alex and Stephen Kendrick — who directed and produced "Courageous" and "Fireproof" — as well as endorsements from a host of pro-family leaders, including Dennis Rainey, Richard Land, Ted Baehr and Charmaine Yoest. LifeWay Christian Resources is offering Bible study materials to accompany the movie (LifeWay.com/OctoberBaby).

The film was made for less than \$1 million — a small movie budget — but has received high marks for its production.

There are no stats on abortion survivors, but Jon Erwin, who directed and produced the movie with his brother Andrew, says there are more than many people would think.

"I think a lot of people find the story unbelievable, and that's the beauty of it — it's absolutely inspired by a true story," Jon Erwin told Baptist Press. "I screened it one night, and a young person came up to me and said, 'This is my story.' And that keeps on happening. She said, 'I was an abortion survivor. My sibling was killed.'"

Erwin has received emails from as far away as Africa with people telling them they were abortion survivors.



Photo courtesy of Joshua Walsh

'A HUMAN ISSUE' — Rachel Hendrix and Jason Burkey film a scene in 'October Baby,' which is set to be in theaters March 23.

The story itself was inspired by Gianna Jensen, whose story is among the first that pops up when the phrase "abortion survivor" is Googled.

This is the Erwin brothers' first movie and their friends keep asking them: Why make your first movie about an abortion survivor?

"God shattered my heart over this issue," Erwin told Baptist Press. "I honestly did not know that the words 'abortion' and 'survivor' could go together. It so shocked me and so motivated me, and the more I studied it, it so mesmerized me that

I felt I had to do something about it. I work in a business called entertainment, and we first have to entertain. So I thought, 'What if we put this subject matter into a romance, into a coming-of-age story, and into a movie

that will be entertaining to watch?' By them watching it, they would be exposed to an issue and kind of be forced to think. We're not trying to tell people what to think. We're just trying to get them to think for themselves."

Erwin, who attends The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, added, "In my own journey, I said I was pro-life, I've always been pro-life and I was raised in a Christian home. But what have I done about that? Faith without works is dead. I felt it was time to do something."

Ironic connections

Actress Shari Rigby also felt convicted to be part of the film, but for different reasons. The Erwins sent her the movie's script to gauge her interest in playing the role of the birth mother, not knowing that 20 years ago she had had an abortion. Even more ironic: The birth mother in the movie works in a law firm, and Rigby was working as a paralegal in a law firm when she had her abortion. After

reading the script, she called the Erwins asking: How did you know about my past?

"I felt like it was God-ordained instantly," Rigby said of being chosen to play the role. "I'm a believer, and I know the promises of God and I know He can do great things with our lives. When I sat down and I started reading this script — to have something on paper that was parallel to my life, I just knew it was ordained."

There were times during filming, she said, when she was not acting.

Rigby said she realizes many viewers will find the topic of abortion survival unbelievable. But she knows it's very real. Her oldest son went to a Christian school where a teacher had adopted two children who had survived an abortion.

"I actually was made aware of abortion survivors many years ago," she said.

The Erwins were inspired to make a movie by watching the work and success of another movie brother tandem — the Kendricks. Jon Erwin served as second unit director on the set of "Courageous." He had already begun writing the script for "October Baby" when "Courageous" was shot in the spring of 2010. Prior to "Courageous," Erwin said, he viewed his work as a career with the goal "simply to get paid and feed my family." The Kendricks asked him: "What's the purpose of your work?"

"That was a difficult question for me to answer," Erwin said. "Stephen and Alex motivated me to step out there and really try to follow God into the great unknown, and we did. And it's quite a jump from being a work-for-hire guy to being a guy [in charge of a movie]. I don't think I would ever have made that jump without the Kendricks."

Erwin wants people to watch the movie without a political lens. Just like the character in the movie, he said, survivors of abortion often have medical problems for life.

"It's a human issue," he said. "Take away the politics, take away the stigma, and look at the person and see it through the lives of social justice. It's absolutely real." (BP)

**For more
about Alabama natives
Jon and Andrew Erwin,
read 'Alabama brothers
produce pro-life movie'
at <http://tinyurl.com/74u7f9a>.**

Heritage puts on 'out-of-the-box' event to collect shoes

By Anna Keller
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

If you happen to be in the vicinity of Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery, on April 14 at 11:30 a.m., then you may feel very out of the loop if you're not participating in Rise Up 2012: Dance Your Shoes Off. Participants will perform a group dance routine to collect shoes for local and international ministries, celebrate Jesus' resurrection and express love for the Lord and all His people.

Shoes donated at the event will be given to Forest Park Ministry Center, a Montgomery Baptist Association ministry that provides assistance with food, clothing and utilities. Additional shoes donated will be taken to Mexico and Nicaragua when church members go on missions trips to those locations later in the year.

The event was inspired by a similar one put on in April 2011 by Second Baptist Church, Houston, which included more than 2,000 participants.

"A staff colleague forwarded the Second Baptist Houston YouTube link to me months



ago, and I saved it as a possible resource for the future, which is now!" said Kenneth Loomis, worship minister at Heritage Baptist. "One of our church members, Celia Powell, is leading the effort to instruct the participants, using the choreography created by Second Baptist Houston."

Heritage has set a goal to have between 300 and 500 participants and is reaching out to local cheerleading squads as well as campus ministry groups at neighboring colleges. It also hopes to attract local TV and radio coverage both before and during the event.

"It's different enough that people who aren't even involved in church really will see

the need to participate in this," Pastor Teman Knight said. "It is out of the box, but it's very attractive even to folks who aren't really committed to missions or other things like this. That [is] what really excites us about the event. It will give us an opportunity to not only proclaim the resurrection of Christ in our neighborhood but also let us provide shoes to those in need."

And there are still opportunities to get involved. Come and observe the celebration, come and donate a pair of shoes or come and dance your shoes off.

To be a part of the group, the church asks that you attend at least one to two rehearsal sessions held in the Oasis (the student ministry room). The rehearsal sessions are

- ▶ March 25, 12:30–2 p.m.;
- ▶ April 1, 4–5 p.m. or 6–7 p.m.; and
- ▶ April 4, 5–6 p.m.

Heritage's website (www.hbcm.net) has a video tutorial so that participants can have extra practice sessions at home.

For more information, email Loomis at kenneth@hbcm.net.



Photo courtesy of FBC Oneonta

FBC ONEONTA HONORS ACCOMPANIST
First Baptist Church, Oneonta, honored Charlotte Langer on Jan. 29 for her 40 years of service as church pianist/organist.



Photo by Doug Rogers

CLEANING THE YARD — Members of the Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association disaster relief team clean up a yard in the Buttston community in Tallapoosa Baptist Association after the March 2 tornadoes.

Focused Disaster relief response was 'excellent'

(continued from page 8)
from Habitat for Humanity's fundraising event called Rebuild Alabama.

"Limestone County has pulled together really well," Fullerton said, noting several organizations and ministries that have worked together to benefit the county as a whole.

At press time, Fairview Baptist Church, Athens, which had been damaged by the morning tornadoes, had not been repaired but members were still able to meet in the sanctuary for services. Beyond just roof damage, all of the windows will also need to be replaced at the church, Fullerton said.

Flint River Baptist Church, Meridianville, in nearby Madison



Photo by Doug Rogers

SERVING — Members of Mountain Springs Baptist Church, Frog Eye, in Tallapoosa Baptist Association serve lunch to volunteers and emergency personnel March 5 at Eagle Creek Baptist Church, Dadeville.

Baptist Association was the other church damaged during the storms. Progress was being made on repairs, at press time.

Ron Lynch, church ministries director for Madison Association, also reported damage in area subdivisions and businesses. The association deployed three disaster

relief teams to assist homeowners in those area.

Chilton and Autauga Baptist associations also responded to assessed jobs in Verbena for damage in rural communities south of Clanton, Johnson noted. Primary work in that area concluded by end of day March 4, he said.

Disaster relief teams located near Tallapoosa Baptist Association responded to the damage in Tallapoosa County. The teams provided chainsaw and chaplaincy ministries in the Alexander City and Eagle Creek areas, Johnson said.

Tommy Puckett, disaster relief district 12 coordinator, assisted Tallapoosa Association DOM Barry Cospers with coordination and assessment.

"Work will continue using teams local to the area," Johnson said.

Geneva Baptist Association also assisted one home owner with downed trees and did some area cleanup.

For more information on Alabama Baptist disaster relief efforts, how to get trained or where to donate, visit www.sbd.org. (TAB)

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Doctors try to save Ugandan pastor's eye after attack

KAMPALA, Uganda — While a Ugandan pastor was fighting to retain sight in his remaining eye after an acid attack, Muslim extremists in February were shooting at his close friend, a leader of another church.

Doctors at Sheba Hospital in Tel-Aviv, Israel, are still not sure what kind of chemicals Muslim extremists cast on Bishop Umar Mulinde of Gospel Life Church International outside of Kampala last Christmas Eve, but they know that the acid is threatening the vision in his remaining eye. Mulinde, a former sheik (Islamic teacher) who became the target of Islamic extremists after converting to Christianity in 1993, said his left eye has been getting better under the specialized treatment he has been able to receive since the attack was publicized.

"The damaged right eye is somehow affecting the left eye," Mulinde said. "The doctors are thinking of removing the right eye with hope of saving the left eye." Mulinde said he was encouraged that ministry is continuing at his church in Namasuba, about six miles outside of Kampala, though his friend Zachariah Serwadda, a pastor with an Evangel Church congregation, was ambushed Feb. 4 after an evangelistic outreach in the predominantly Muslim town of Mbale.

"I only heard several voices as I dropped down when the windshield of my vehicle got broken," said Serwadda, who was unhurt in the attack. "It could be the same group (that attacked Mulinde). It seems it's the same network, because after attacking Bishop Mulinde, they threw down letters at the Gospel Life Church International there threatening to attack other preachers like him."

Rumor leads to harassment of Christians in Egypt

MEET BASHAR, Egypt — Tensions remain high in an Egyptian village where as many as 5,000 mostly Salafi Muslims went on a rampage over a false rumor that a church was holding a girl against her will in order to convert her back to Christianity.

Dismissing media reports of 20,000 rioting Muslims, sources said between 2,000 and 5,000 hard-line Muslims, most of them from the Salafi movement, harassed Christian villagers in February in Meet Bashir in the Nile Delta, attacked a church building to "save" the girl, damaged a priest's house and then destroyed his car. The girl was not in the church building. She reportedly said her father, a Coptic convert to Islam, treated her poorly and that she had fled of her own accord, and that after hearing reports of the attacks, she contacted police.

The Salafis have used such rumors to incite other attacks. In January, Salafists terrorized Christians of a village in northern Egypt after an unsubstantiated rumor spread about a video recording of an affair between a Coptic man and a Muslim woman.

The Muslims in Sharbat forced numerous Christians to abandon their property in informal but binding "reconciliation councils," though a parliamentary commission overturned their rulings in February, and most of the evicted Christian families have returned home.

Belarusian officials threaten, raid religious meetings

MINSK, Belarus — Religious communities in various parts of Belarus have faced visits, threats and warnings for holding meetings for worship that officials regard as illegal.

On one Sunday in January, officials visited three Pentecostal services in separate villages. Pastor Vasili Raptsevich — who led worship in a church-owned house in a village in Brest Region for about 10 disabled church members unable to travel to the main congregation in a nearby town — was summoned to the police station. There he was told that he had violated the law by conducting a religious service away from its legal address without permission from the Regional Executive Committee.

Police threatened him with court proceedings and threatened to strip his Pentecostal church of state registration, he said. In February, police in the capital Minsk — among them masked riot police — launched a mass raid on a cultural meeting being held in a Pentecostal pastor's home. Thirty-four participants were taken to a police station but were released two hours later without any explanation and without any official record being drawn up. Police refused to comment.

Coming soon to your church ...



one-year
anniversary

April 27, 2011
special commemorative
issue

The Alabama Baptist is producing a special commemorative issue of the paper marking the one-year anniversary of the April 27, 2011, tornadoes. Initial plans call for up to 300,000 newspapers being distributed through the 3,200 Alabama Baptist churches.

For information on sponsorship opportunities, contact Bill Gilmore at 205-870-4720, Ext. 107 or bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org.

More alcohol sales goal of bills in state Legislature

By Sondra Washington
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

For the past several years, Alabama legislators have introduced and debated several alcohol-related bills during each legislative session. This year is no different.

Since most of these types of bills have previously succeeded in legalizing alcohol sales where they were not originally allowed or increasing the quantity and types of liquor sold across the state, most bills introduced this session focus on further expansion.

"They keep coming back and

asking for little things, and it all adds up in the end to a freer flow of alcohol," said Eric Johnston, president of the Southeast Law Institute. "They want to open the tap and keep the legislation flowing. ... They are dealing with a volatile subject. ... From their perspective, it's something they would like to do, but on the other hand, alcohol (is a) problem — a big killer."

Larger beer container

Some of the bills being considered this session include Senate Bill (SB) 294, sponsored by Sen. Paul Sanford, R-Huntsville, which

attempts to increase the maximum beer container size from 16 to 25.4 ounces. In a little more than two weeks, Sanford's bill was introduced and passed from the entire Senate. A companion bill, House Bill (HB) 264, was introduced in the House by Rep. Jim Barton, R-Mobile, and co-sponsored by Reps. David Sessions, R-Grand Bay; Jamie Ison, R-Mobile; and Chad Fincher, R-Semmes. It is uncertain which version of the bill will be considered in the House, but both bills have been placed in the Economic Development and Tourism Committee.

Another alcohol-related expansion bill is SB 358, sponsored by Sen. Tom Whatley, R-Auburn, and co-sponsored by Sen. Gerald Dial, R-Lineville, who is also the Majority Whip. It seeks to allow wineries to sell their wines in Alabama farmers' markets, among other places. So far, the bill has been referred to the Senate committee on Job Creation and Economic Development.

Similar bills, HB 149 and HB 372, sponsored by Rep. Becky Nordgren, R-Gadsden, have been introduced in the House and have been referred to the Economic Development and Tourism Committee.

"They are turning farmers' markets into liquor stores," said Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program. "The farmers' markets are supposed to be family oriented. ... You will see an increase in underage people buying wine from farmers markets."

Last year, Rep. Mac McCutcheon, R-Capshaw, introduced a bill attempting to legalize homebrewed beer, mead, cider and wine. According to Godfrey, the bill was "so dead on arrival" that it received the House Shroud Award for going "down in flames." This year, he reintroduced the bill, HB 354, with several co-sponsors: Reps. Phil Williams, R-Huntsville; Pebble Warren, D-Tuskegee Institute; Mary Moore, D-Birmingham; Mike Ball, R-Huntsville; Howard Sanderford, R-Huntsville; Barry Mask, R-Wetumpka; Thad McClammy, D-Montgomery; John Rogers, D-Birmingham; Dan Wil-

liams, R-Athens; Joe Hubbard, D-Montgomery; Elaine Beech, D-Chatom; Oliver Robinson, D-Birmingham; and Jim Patterson, R-Meridianville. It has already passed from the Economic Development and Tourism Committee.

In addition to these bills, Dallas County legislators are trying to allow a referendum on Sunday alcohol sales in their region with

HB 266, sponsored by Rep. Darrio Melton, D-Selma, and co-sponsored by Rep. David Colston, D-Hayneville. The bill has passed the House and is being considered in the Senate, where Sen. Hank Sanders, D-Selma, has already introduced a companion bill, SB 267.

Rep. Todd Greeson, R-Ider, introduced HB 129 to authorize draft

or keg beer or malt beverages in Fort Payne. The bill has passed the House and is currently in the Senate Local Legislation No. 1 committee.

'On-premise tastings'

Ball, along with his co-sponsor Hubbard, introduced HB 289, to allow brewpubs to "conduct on-premise tastings or samplings of their products and sell their products for off-premises consumption."

Godfrey said there is talk of introducing another bill to privatize ABC stores, which would lead to "increased consumption of alcohol and more alcohol-related problems" in the state. He is rallying support from Christians to "tell our representatives that this is not good for Alabama."

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something
is missing?

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Ala. Women's Hall of Fame inducts Birmingham lawyer

Her former law partner told the story of Nina Miglionico being chastised by her mother for going to jail to confer with her clients.

"Ladies don't go to jail," her mother said.

"Mother, I'm not a lady; I'm a lawyer," she replied.

But Samuel Rumore Jr. added, "Nina was both."

Miglionico was inducted into the Alabama Women's Hall of Fame (AWHF) on March 1. The AWHF, founded in 1970, is housed in A. Howard Bean Hall on Judson's campus in Marion.

Miglionico, who died in 2009 at age 95, served as a lawyer for 73 years.

Miglionico was born in Birmingham to Italian immigrants. She graduated from Woodlawn High School, completed her undergraduate education at Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham and earned her law degree at the University of Alabama.

One of the first women lawyers in Alabama to start her own practice, Miglionico was elected president of the National Association of Women Lawyers in 1958. In 1996, she re-

ceived the Margaret Brent Award from the American Bar Association as one of the five outstanding women lawyers in the United States.

Miglionico began her political career by winning a seat on the newly formed Birmingham City Council in 1963. She served until 1985, including a stint as president from 1978 to 1981.

'Never overlooked'

The primary address was delivered by Circuit Judge Helen Shores Lee of Birmingham. "When I think of Nina, I think of adjectives like perseverance, strength, courage and conviction," Lee said. "She was only 4 feet 11 inches (tall), but Nina was never overlooked by the council members with whom she served."

Lee said Miglionico was vilified because of her ethnicity, her Catholicism and her progressive views on race. "Nina got phone threats, hate mail, a cross burned in her yard and even an attempted bombing at her home," Lee said. "But she con-

tinued to work for the underdog."

Rumore was associated with the Miglionico law firm for 37 years. He noted that Miglionico was able to practice law for so long because she began so early.

"There were no positions for female attorneys in that day, so she was offered a secretarial job and told to learn shorthand," Rumore said. "Nina decided she'd rather open her own practice."

Miglionico was inducted into the Birmingham Gallery of Distin-

guished Citizens in 2008. She will be inducted into the Alabama Lawyers' Hall of Fame on May 4.

Rumore also served as Miglionico's executor and that she'd given generously to Catholic charities around the state.

"Most surprising was that she left \$1 million to the Birmingham Museum of Art," Rumore said. "People of Alabama will enjoy [her gift] for years to come."

For more information, visit awhf.org. (JC)

Want to know God?

By Pastor Charles Miller
Owens Cross Roads Baptist Church

It is not uncommon today to meet someone who expresses an interest in "knowing God." There are comments made such as "I read the Bible on occasion but I don't understand it" or "I don't read the Bible much; it gets me confused" but "I'd like to know more about the Bible, but I'm not certain as to how (to learn)."

To know God, the Bible says we must have faith: "He who comes to God must believe that He is" (Heb. 11:6).

The Bible also says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

We must confess our sin and repent of it and place our faith in God's Son, Jesus, who died on a cross so that our sin could be forgiven.

Once Jesus is Lord of our life, then we must continually "feed" upon the Word of God. The prophet Jeremiah, who was very troubled with his people, society and ministries, said, "Your words were found and I ate them; and your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart: For I am called by your name, O Lord God of hosts" (Jer. 15:16).

Jeremiah's diet changed, his delight changed and he discovered that his destination had changed, all because he began to know God through His Word.

There is no greater joy than having forgiveness of sin, peace with God and assurance of eternal salvation. All of this is available through God's grace as one exercises faith in His Son (see Ephesians 2:8).



Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done wonderful things, things planned long ago.

Isaiah 25:1

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CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR: First Baptist Church of Mt. Olive, Mt. Olive, Ala., is seeking full-time pastor. Master of divinity preferred; 5-10 years experience as pastor at a Southern Baptist church. Please submit resumes by mail to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church of Mt. Olive, 3200 Mt. Olive Road, Mt. Olive, AL 35117, or email resumes to: sheila@fbcmo.org.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Presently searching for bivocational pastor at Heritage Baptist Church in Pell City, Ala. Send resume to: Henry Grogan, 921 Hill Top Street, Pell City, AL 35125.

EXECUTIVE PASTOR: Executive pastor to serve large Jacksonville area Southern Baptist congregation. Appropriate business degree and/or comparable experience with strong leadership and administrative skills required. Ability to develop and enable both staff and lay persons to accomplish the vision of the church. Seminary degree is helpful but not required. Previous experience in a similar position or other church leadership roles is helpful. Send resume to: xp2012@fruitcove.com.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC/FULL-TIME MUSIC EDUCATION OR MUSIC & MISSIONS/OUTREACH: Rainsville First Baptist Church is searching for either a bivocational minister of music or a full-time combination of music and education or music and missions/outreach. We enjoy blended worship with approximately 80 percent praise and worship accompanied by a 7 to 9 piece praise band. Resumes can be emailed to: jmann2270@gmail.com, or mailed to: RFBC, P.O. Box 585, Rainsville, AL 35986. For more information call 256-638-3141.

MUSIC PASTOR: FBC Jacksonville, Ala., is seeking a music pastor to lead both traditional and contemporary worship services. If interested, send resume by March 29 to: FBC, P.O. Box 400, Jacksonville, AL 36265, or email to: dstaples@fbcjville.org.

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tional, downtown church, is seeking a full-time pastor of worship and music. The salary range is around \$38,000 plus benefits. Please mail resumes to: Personnel Search Committee, 529 Convention Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, or email: search@fbcbcr.com.

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Counting the Cost of Creating Jobs

By Jim Williams
Special to The Alabama Baptist

In a public opinion survey earlier this year, the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA) found that Alabamians rate jobs and the economy as the most important issues facing the state. The governor and Legislature are focused on ways for the state to encourage job creation and are considering a number of proposals.

Many of these proposals involve new kinds of tax credits or incentive payments to businesses that make investments in Alabama. For example, under one bill, the governor could allow an investing company in a qualifying industry to keep as much as 90 percent of the state income taxes withheld from its employees until it recovered the cost of its investment. Other bills would create or increase incentives for investments in research and development activities, data processing centers, coal mining, historic structures and film productions.

What would be the cost of these tax incentives? How many jobs and how much state revenue would result? The fiscal notes accompanying the bills contain no estimates.

Those who favor this approach believe that the tax incentives will lead to investments that would not occur otherwise.

This will produce jobs and economic development, and the tax incentives will more than pay for themselves through the income and sales and other taxes that result. However, others believe that tax incentives often go to companies that would invest in Alabama anyway; in such cases, giving a tax benefit creates a loss of tax revenue rather than a gain.

The truth is whether the state gains or loses revenue from tax incentives depends on the project. It makes sense for the state to limit incentives to projects that have the best chance of being profitable.

PARCA studied Alabama's tax incentive programs several years ago. It found that it was possible to identify the kinds of projects most likely to be profitable to the state in terms of the new tax revenue they would create. It suggested that the state limit its tax incentives to such projects. The proper place for such limits would be in the law governing the tax incentive. Some of the proposed bills have limits of one kind or another to minimize the chance of losing tax revenue.

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

CAMPUS News

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **High School, Transfer Students Invited to UMobile Visit Day:** The University of Mobile (UMobile) invites prospective students to attend Visit Day on March 16. The event begins at 8:30 a.m. and includes a campus tour, messages from the faculty and campus activities with current students. An optional overnight stay in the residence halls is available.

A \$2,000 visit scholarship is also available for participants. This scholarship is awarded to new students who register for and attend this event, apply for admission and enroll at UMobile. This scholarship awards \$250 per semester up to eight consecutive semesters attended. Only one UMobile Visit Scholarship is available per person.

To register, visit www.umobile.edu/visit or call 251-442-2222 or 1-800-WIN-RAMS (1-800-946-7267). Additional visit days are also available, and students also may schedule a campus visit at a time that fits their schedule.

► **UMobile Hosts Faculty Art Exhibit:** The University of Mobile Faculty Art Exhibit on display through April 4 features an assortment of artistic styles in a variety of media. The exhibit is on display weekdays from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. in Martin Hall Gallery on the university campus.

The public is invited to a reception honoring the artists and highlighting the exhibit March 29 at 1:30 p.m. in the gallery.

For more information, call Philip Counselman at 251-442-2283 or visit www.umobile.edu.

► **Center for Performing Arts, Dauphin Way Baptist to Present 'Mobile Passion Play':** The University of Mobile (UMobile) is partnering with Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, to present "Mobile Passion Play: Telling

His Story" March 30-April 1 at the church. The performances will start at 7 p.m. each evening. Tickets may be picked up at the UMobile Center for Performing Arts in Martin Hall, LifeWay Christian Store in Mobile and Dauphin Way Baptist. Doors will open to ticket-holders at 6 p.m. and non-ticket-holders at 6:30 p.m. each evening.

"Mobile Passion Play: Telling His Story" is a full-stage dramatic presentation that depicts the life of Jesus Christ. Telling everything from His birth to His resurrection, the Passion play will be portrayed through music and drama with a realistic biblical set.

The performance will be directed by Mickey Henderson, minister of music and worship at Dauphin Way. More than 250 musicians from the combined choirs, soloists and full orchestra of UMobile and Dauphin Way will perform.

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

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Switchfoot to Perform at Samford:** The popular rock band Switchfoot will perform at Samford University on May 3 at 7 p.m. in the Pete Hanna Center. The concert is part of a weeklong series of Spring Fling events at Samford.

The five-member group began with successes in the Christian rock scene before gaining mainstream recognition when its music was featured prominently in the 2002 movie "A Walk to Remember." Its seventh studio album, "Hello Hurricane," received a Grammy award in 2011 for Best Rock Gospel Album. Its most recent album, "Vice Versa," was released in 2011.

For tickets, visit <https://www.ticketreturn.com/prod2/team.asp?SponsorID=4517>. For more information, call 205-726-2276.

JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson Equestrians Compete:** Judson College hosted the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association's Western show Feb. 18.

Teams from Zone 5, Region 2 participated, including Berry College, Clemson University, Georgia Tech, Lander University and North Georgia College & State University.

And on Feb. 25-26, Judson equestrians competed at Berry near Rome, Ga.

Judson equine coaches Jennifer Hoggle and Janice Williams said they were proud that for the first time in many years, Judson had riders qualified for the regional horse show in both Western and hunter competition.

Megan Cook, of Murray, Ky., qualified in the hunt seat advanced walk/trot/canter class. Rebecca O'Neal, of Chatom, qualified in the hunt seat walk/trot class. Andrea Luckie, of Alexander City, qualified in the novice Western horsemanship class. Corey Finlay, of Oxford, qualified in the intermediate Western horsemanship class. And Jana Davenport, of Jemison, qualified in the beginner Western horsemanship class.

Converse College in Spartanburg, S.C., sponsored the equine hunt seat regional show March 3. O'Neal placed third in walk/trot competition.

Lander in Greenwood, S.C., hosted the Western regional show the same day.

Luckie placed first in novice Western horsemanship. Finlay placed second in intermediate Western horsemanship. Davenport placed third in beginner Western horsemanship.

Luckie and Finlay will compete in the Western semifinal show March 24-25 at the University of Findlay in Ohio.

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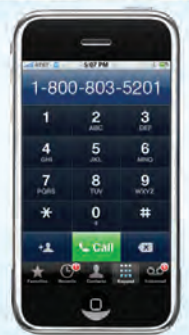
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A monthly advertising supplement — March 2012

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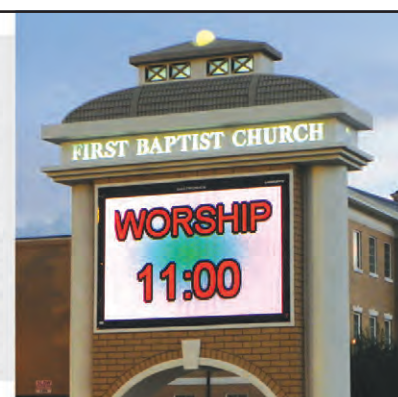
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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For March 18

Explore the Bible

By Cecil Taylor

Dean, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

AN UNEXPECTED MESSIAH: HONOR HIM
Luke 4:16-30

Sermon (16-21)

After His baptism and temptation Jesus returned to Galilee for ministry (Luke 4:14-15). Jews welcomed Him in their synagogues and “praised” Him for His teaching. The experience in Nazareth served as an example of His ministry of teaching in “their synagogues.”

Synagogues were places for worship, prayer, teaching, judgment and fellowship. People of similar culture and interests tend to get together. Today in every major city of the world, there is an American community with close ties. It would have worked the same way in the lands of exile. It took a quorum of 10 Jewish men to establish a synagogue. Led by elected laymen, a synagogue service included numerous benedictions, offerings, prayers, songs and readings from the Law and the Prophets followed by someone who spoke on the readings.

Nazareth was Jesus’ hometown. As a good Jew, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath “as was His custom.” While regular worship should be more than just a habit, it should be at least a habit, as it was for Jesus.

Often visiting rabbis (teachers) led part of the service. On this occasion, the synagogue’s rulers asked Jesus to do the reading from the Prophets. Normally teachers stood up to read Scripture and then sat down to teach. The attendant brought Him the scroll of Isaiah from the “ark,” the closet that held the Hebrew Scriptures. It is not clear whether Isaiah 61:1-2 was the official selection for the day or Jesus chose it Himself. Isaiah pictured Israel’s deliverance from exile in terms of the Year of Jubilee. This was a year when all debts were canceled, slaves were freed and all property reverted to its original owners (Lev. 25). It was a time of “good news” to the poor and captives of all kinds. When He finished reading, Jesus rolled up the scroll, returned it to the attendant who cared for the synagogue properties and then sat down. Every eye was fixed on Him. “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled,” He said. “It is talking about me!”

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me” pointed back to the descent of the Spirit on Him at His baptism (Luke 3:21-22). “He has anointed me.” In Hebrew, the word “anointed” is Messiah; in Greek, it is Christ. So “He has made me Messiah/Christ.” And the day of grace has come.

Reaction (22-30)

Jesus made a wonderful impression, and everyone was amazed at His speech. But the congregation quickly objected. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” The question implies the people thought His lineage too common for Him to be the Messiah-King. He stopped neither to answer the question nor to correct their error. Rather Jesus quoted a popular proverb that described their hardheaded attitude. “Physician, heal yourself” means “Prove your claims!” He knew His hearers would logically insist that He perform some of the miracles here in His country that He had performed in Capernaum, the headquarters for His Galilean ministry. But He knew also that no amount of miracles would convince them to accept Him. Even great prophets, mighty men of God, get no respect in their hometowns. Why? Probably because familiarity breeds contempt.

Since His Jewish kinsmen would not receive Him as Messiah, Jesus hinted that God would send Him to “the Gentiles” (literally “the nations”) just as He did Elijah and Elisha. Although there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s day, God sent him to the Gentile widow in Zarephath in Sidon (1 Kings 17:1-16) just up the coast to the north. And although there were many lepers in Israel in Elisha’s day (2 Kings 5:1-4), God sent him to the Syrian Gentile Naaman. The implication is that to the Jews, Jesus would be an unwelcome prophet but the Gentiles would be more responsive. Mention of the Gentiles turned the Nazarenes’ wonder into fury and led to a mob scene in which they tried to throw Jesus down the precipice on which their city stood. Some say it was Jesus’ claim to be Messiah that infuriated the people, but they were looking and longing for their messiah and would have welcomed him. It was His words about going to the Gentiles that stoked their ire. But He (miraculously?) escaped.

Bible Studies for Life

By James R. Barnette

Associate professor of religion, Department of religion, Samford University

I CELEBRATE YOU
Psalm 92:1-15

Psalm 92 is the only Psalm assigned to a specific day: the Sabbath. Some even see a link in that the name “Yahweh” occurs seven times in the Psalm and the Sabbath was the seventh day. The Old Testament Sabbath was a day not only for rest but also for corporate worship. Moreover it was intended to be a delight rather than a burden. The psalmist’s concern is not just with adoration but also more generally with the life and future of the righteous and the wicked. Ultimately this piece is an affirmation of God’s sovereignty and the deliverance of His people. Verse 8, which appears in the very middle of the passage, punctuates this theme of sovereignty with the emphatic pronoun “you.” God alone is exalted forever.

Celebrate God in Worship (1-4)

“To sing praises” is a single verb, the root of the Hebrew word for psalm, meaning to play an instrument or sing with accompaniment. “The lyre” is in Hebrew the 10 and refers to a 10-stringed instrument. The Hebrew word translated “works” or “deeds” refers to God’s activity in creation. Seven times in Genesis 1, we are told that what God made was “good.” This psalmist adds an eighth “good thing,” namely that it is “good to praise the Lord.”

In addition to His creation, “works” and “deeds” also are often associated with God’s saving activity. Both nuances are appropriate, because God’s creating and saving activities speak to His universal sovereignty. Whether we are stirred by His creation that surrounds us or His salvation that frees us, we have every reason to give praise and thanks to God.

Recognize the Eternal Realities
of Worship (5-9)

The psalmist shifts attention to the Lord’s enemies, who make life difficult for His people. The New International Version refers to them as “senseless,” while other translations refer to them as “brutish,” “stupid” or “rude.” The great tragedy of these dull souls is their failure to grasp the short life cycle of their wayward lives. It is significant that verse 8 is surrounded by two verses that focus on “evil-

doers.” In terms of the structure of the Psalm and the reality of the psalmist’s world, the affirmation of God’s dominion is made in the midst of evil. Appearances in the world seem to deny the reality of God’s reign, for evildoers flourish. But the psalmist affirms that, without question, they will perish. The senseless wicked are like grass; they have no deep root, and their luxuriant growth passes quickly.

Enjoy the Benefits of Worship (10-15)

God’s changelessness is celebrated by His servants. Such celebration generates a resurgent life among His people, as portrayed in the repetition of the words “fresh” and “flourish.” The wicked will flourish but only briefly, “like grass.” The righteous, on the other hand, will flourish like trees planted in God’s garden. The “horn” is a symbol of power, and God gives His people power to overcome their foes. In this context, “fresh oil” speaks to a renewed anointing to serve God. It also suggests the thought of preparing a “living sacrifice,” since the verb is used elsewhere not for anointing but for moistening the meal offering with oil before presenting it to the altar (see Exodus 29:40). To “bear fruit in old age” speaks to youthfulness in latter years, like that of Moses whose “eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated” (Deut. 34:7). Such maturity and passion for God do not wane as the faithful servant moves closer to eternity. The final verse returns us to the Psalm’s main thrust, which is not the anticipation of our destiny but the praise of God. The opening verses called us to declare this adoration with our lips; now the conclusion calls us to adore Him through our lives. To “proclaim” or “show” that “the Lord is upright” is the crowning phrase to which verses 12-14 lead up. The close of the Psalm is telling us to not only voice our praise but also “be” praise by how we live. Psalm 92 affirms that trust in self alone is illusory and ultimately leads to destruction. Trust in the sovereign God brings true understanding and connects us to the unfailing source of life. From this psalmist’s perspective, the irony is that the more sophisticated and self-sufficient we think we are, the more ignorant and insecure we actually are.

Christian Crossword

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Across

1. Omri ... did ____ than all before him. (1 Kings 16:25)

5. Fools die for ____ of wisdom. (Prov. 10:21)

8. ____ are his people. (Ps. 100:3)

10. Tempted like as we _____. (Heb. 4:15)

11. Migratory birds.

13. Shortened form of a place to wash up.

14. The ____ of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23)

15. The women ____ hangings for the grove. (2 Kings 23:7)

16. Compass direction.

18. Anno Domini. (abbr.)

19. He that ____eth is like a wave of the sea. (James 1:6)

20. One way to move a boat.

21. Desert places with water and vegetation.

22. Let us ____ and be sober. (2 Thess. 5:6)

24. If he ____ lamb. (Lev. 3:7; 2 words)

27. Children of Gad called the altar _____. (Josh. 22:34)

Down

29. Is not her younger sister ____ than she? (Judg. 15:2)

30. Your wives shall be _____. (Ex. 22:24)

33. Railroad. (abbr.)

34. ____ I go unto him that sent me. (John 7:33)

36. Thy ____ goats have not cast their young. (Gen. 31:38)

37. I Daniel was mourning three full _____. (Dan. 10:2)

39. The Lord is with thee, thou mighty _____. (Judg. 6:12)

40. Vietnamese new year celebration.

41. If he gain the ____ world. (Matt. 16:26)

43. Love thy neighbor ____ thyself. (Matt. 19:19)

44. Egyptian sun god.

45. The path of virtuous conduct in Confucianism.

46. A highly prized game fish.

49. Where David and his men were ____ to haunt. (1 Sam. 30:31)

50. New Testament. (abbr.)

Down

1. Cautions.

2. Northwest state. (abbr.)

3. Symbol for rhenium.

4. Goodness gracious!

5. Blessed are ye that ____ now. (Luke 6:21)

6. Biblical word for donkey.

7. Compass direction.

8. The ship was covered with the _____. (Matt. 8:24)

9. Christ abideth for _____. (John 12:34)

12. For example. (abbr.)

13. The ____ of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)

14. Equipment used to help patients move around.

15. Have ____ their robes and made them white. (Rev. 7:14)

17. Mightest war a good _____. (1 Tim. 1:18)

19. Women's Army Corps. (abbr.)

21. Old Testament. (abbr.)

22. A growth on the skin.

23. Strong bulls of Bashan have ____ (singular verb form) me. (Ps. 22:12)

24. He that is ____ God heareth. (John 8:47)

25. It rained ____ and brimstone. (Luke 17:29)

26. Regarding. (abbr.)

28. Does (biblical variation).

30. I rejoiced because my ____ was great. (Job 31:25)

31. Set cherubims within the ____ house. (1 Kings 6:27)

32. Except a corn of ____ fall into the ground. (John 12:24)

35. Health Maintenance Organization. (abbr.)

37. And ____ not a little comforted. (Acts 20:12)

38. And the ____ and the pelican. (Lev. 11:18)

42. Not cold.

47. The head of Elisha ... stand ____ him this day. (2 Kings 6:31)

48. Utah. (abbr.)

RESOURCES:

Your Guide to Today's New Music and Literature



Sound Bites

By Rick Sharp and Adam Borden

KARI JOBE

Where I Find You
Sparrow Records

Kari Jobe's sophomore album is causing quite a stir in the music industry. Released January 24, "Where I Find You" quickly rose to the top of iTunes' overall Album chart and sits at the top spot of the Christian and Gospel chart. The album's first single, "We Are," flew to Billboard's Top 10, and the Winter Jam 2012 tour featuring Jobe is already setting atten-

dance records wherever it goes.

Jobe, worship leader for Gateway Church in Southlake, Texas, said this about the new album: "These



songs come from such an honest place of praising God for what He's done — and what He's continuing to do in our

lives — because of His grace and goodness. Ultimately, it's about de-

claring who He is and enjoying the simplicity of knowing the Lord is near. He's for us, He loves us and sometimes, we need to just stop, enjoy His presence and take that in."

"What Love Is This," a ballad recorded with just piano and Jobe's haunting voice, may well be the sleeper hit on the record. "We Exalt Your Name" is another powerfully moving worship ballad sure to touch a lot of hearts.

This record is certain to be one of the standout releases of 2012. Jobe, already a two-time Dove Award

winner from her debut album in 2009, has hit her stride with this record. (Sharp)

CHRIS AUGUST

No Far Away
Fervent Records

Chris August's 2011 single "Starry Night" from his CD "No Far Away" has the distinction of being the first debut single in more than three years to top the Christian AC (Alternative Rock — Christian) Monitored chart. It also hit the No. 1 spot in Billboard's Christian Songs chart and won the 2011 Gospel Music Association (GMA) Dove Award for Pop/Contemporary Recorded Song of the Year. Oh, and August won the 2011 GMA Dove New Artist of the Year and Male Vocalist of the Year awards as well, all on the strength of "No Far Away."



August spent two years away from his Garland, Texas home pursuing a secular music career with Geffen

Records, a time when he was away from the church. He says the song "Starry Night" is a "rededication of my music and my life to Jesus." While the hit single is the record's strongest track, there are others,

such as the sunny "You and I" and the darker, serious "Battle" that help to round out this fine first effort.

August's voice is clear, with definite R&B influences. If you're a fan of good Christian pop with a strong message of faith, you'll like this record. (Sharp)

GOLD CITY

Somebody's Coming
New Haven Records

Two years in the making, "Somebody's Coming" is worth the wait.

Daniel Riley enlisted co-producer and musical mentor Michael English to put together top-shelf tracks and vocal arrangements.

Dan Keeton stands tall throughout the record with his clear, powerful tenor tone. New lead singer Jerry Pelfrey makes his Gold City debut with "Showers of Blessings."

In all of Tim Riley's songs, none may be more fitting of the extreme bass register he possesses than "I Get Down." I did a big ol' laugh the first time I heard it and stopped in the middle of the song so I could go down the hall to grab some co-workers to enjoy the moment. (Borden)



Book Reviews

By Martine Bates Sharp, Ed.D.

Church Diversity: Sunday — The Most Segregated Day of the Week

Scott Williams. *Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 2011. 190 pp. (Paperback).*

The idea that Sunday is the most segregated day of the week is not a new one. Author Scott Williams calls it "gut-wrenching reality," offering this book as a guide to confronting the need for cultural diversity in the church.

Think you know what's coming? Think again — the author, an African-American, isn't just referring to predominately white churches, but all churches that are not ethnically diverse. He writes that churches that continue to consciously segregate themselves into ethnic groups with arguments such as "it's the only piece of culture that we have left" are missing the mark. "They are incongruent," the

author insists, "with who Jesus is and what the gospel is all about."

The book contains vignettes of what the author calls "churches ahead of the curve" in encouraging diversity, an honest look at the problem of diversity in worship, and a chapter on practical ways to encourage diversity in churches.

Intense, edgy and at times in-your-face, the book challenges us to get out of the comfortable place we are in and turn our "Great Omission" into the Great Commission.

Characters of the Crucifixion

Robert Wilkerson. *Enumclaw, Wash.: WinePress Publishing, 2011. 144 pp. (Hardback).*

The introduction to "Characters of the Crucifixion" promises to deal "with the lives of the men and women involved with the crucifixion of Christ."

It does, but not in the way you might expect. There is little history here, and limited footnoted information.

The author, a retired pastor, evangelist and North American Mission Board missionary who lives in Alabama, has chosen instead to select a facet of each person's life or character and turn it into a sermon—or, as he writes later in the introduction, a devotional message.

For example, the chapter on Mary, the mother of Jesus, focuses on love, while the chapter on Peter deals with grace and forgiveness after failure. There are 19 chapters in all, dealing with 18 characters; two chapters focus on Jesus.

If you are looking for a historical study, keep looking. If you are looking for an easily read devotional book that presents food for thought in an interesting format, this could be the one. (B)

Movie Reviews

By Rick Sharp
and Martine Bates Sharp, Ed.D.

Monumental

Pyro Pictures Production

Did you know that the Pilgrims went to Holland seeking religious freedom before sailing on the Mayflower for the New World? Did you know that the first Bibles printed in English in America were printed by Congress for placement in schools? Did you know that most of the Founding Fathers were devout Christians and not agnostics, atheists or Deists, as we have been led to believe by historical revisionists?

On a two-year quest to find the "secret that has made America the freest and most prosperous country in the world," Kirk Cameron uncovered some amazing and little-known facts about the people who

founded our nation. He also discovered a monument in Plymouth, Massachusetts, that memorialized the Pilgrims and presents the five core principles that made this nation great — principles that will keep America healthy, Cameron said, if we as a nation will return to them and reinstate them as the core of our culture.

But "Monumental" is not a history lesson, nor is it a travelogue, although it contains elements of both. Instead, it is a stirring call to action. One speaker in the documentary points out that freedom is not just won; it must be sustained — "the work," he said, "of centuries."

It is Cameron himself, in the end, who issues the call. An advocate of

strong personal and family values, Cameron noted, "The responsibility to secure freedom for my family doesn't begin at the White House — it begins at my house ... join me and we will secure a monumental future for our children."

Can we go back to values and principles from days gone by? The Renaissance and the Reformation are held up as examples of going backward to move forward.

In theaters across the nation beginning on March 27th, there will be people rising to their feet with Cameron at the end of the movie — people who believe, at least for that moment, that they can effect change within our nation. It will be interesting to see what follows. (B)

Christian Marketplace

Top Five Best Sellers

Fiction

1. **The Harbinger**, Jonathan Cahn (Charisma Media)
2. **Courageous**, Randy Alcorn, Alex Kendrick and Stephen Kendrick (Tyndale)
3. **Longing, Bailey Flanigan Series #3**, Karen Kingsbury (Zondervan)
4. **My Foolish Heart, Deep Haven Series #4**, Susan May Warren (Tyndale)
5. **Desert Gift, Side Roads Series #2**, Sally John (Tyndale)

Hardback

1. **Jesus Calling**, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
2. **Heaven Is for Real**, Todd Burpo (Thomas Nelson)
3. **The Resolution for Men**, Stephen Kendrick, Alex Kendrick and Randy Alcorn (B&H)
4. **The 5 Love Languages**, Gary Chapman (Moody)
5. **Jesus Calling, Deluxe Edition**, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)

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 Get Out There! Jan Flores 52 views Watch	 Dealing with Disappointment Jeff Iorg 209 views Watch	 Looking Out For Kids: A Youth Minister... Rachel Mitchell 37 views Watch
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Channels

- Biblical/Theological
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Featured Presentations

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BP photo

ONLINE TRAINING — E-quip.net is an online learning community where anyone, anywhere can watch videos and download podcasts of presentations by various Southern Baptist leaders on a variety of topics.

Equip.net useful for training

Free website offers videos, workshops to equip pastors, leaders

A free online learning community is capturing the training provided at many conferences and workshops throughout the Southern Baptist Convention and archiving it to view at any time.

E-quip.net was initiated by the Canadian National Baptist Convention (CNBC) about a decade ago to meet a need among leaders whose schedules or locations kept them from attending various training opportunities.

The traditional method for training leaders is to designate a time and a location and to coordinate schedules and travel plans to ensure that everyone is present to receive the material as it is delivered in person.

But with modern technology, such presentations can be captured on video for people to access online. Gerry Taillon, national ministries team leader for the Canadian convention, said this type of training doesn't replace face-to-face training, but it does suffice when such training is not accessible.

Bivocational schedules

"Bivocational people who don't have time to attend conferences could do this after work. Students could do it after school," Taillon said.

About 15 state conventions partner with the CNBC to supplement the site, which is supported with Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program funding. State convention partners contribute material to the learning community, and they each have their own versions of the site.

"Whenever a partner publishes a presentation, every other partner

can add that to their site if they want," Taillon told Baptist Press (BP).

"So each partner has their own site, and the stuff that's on their site is the stuff that they want on their site. They can take it from what they do or from any other partner," he said. "So it multiplies our efforts. We don't have to do all of the training right here in Canada. We can use what Ohio does, what Michigan does, what Arizona does."

Bobby Gilstrap, executive director of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan, said e-quip.net has become "an essential part" of training leaders in the state convention. In Michigan, leaders are pointed to bscm.e-quip.net, and they can view the videos or listen to the podcasts individually or in groups with other people.

"It is rare that I am with a group or visiting with a pastor when I don't direct them to one of the workshops on our e-quip training portal," Gilstrap told BP. "With hundreds of top-quality workshops available, almost every leader in a church can find training to help them reach their God-given capacity in the role God has given them in their church."

The Michigan convention adds 10 to 12 workshops to the e-quip.net site each year, he said.

"Our e-quip training portal is featured in most everything we do," Gilstrap said. "Our approach has been that if it is worth promoting as a 'live' workshop, it is worth recording and promoting to our people."

"Having online training is essential to our ability to resource the needs of many of our leaders. With

over half of our pastors being bivocational, our training portal allows them to attend quality training on their own schedule," Gilstrap said.

John Coin, pastor of Anchor Baptist Church in Walker, Mich., has seminary training but also takes advantage of bscm.e-quip.net.

"It's kind of like if you have a building and you want to support the roof of the building, you need to have pillars to hold it up," Coin told BP.

CP support

Because e-quip.net is supported through the Cooperative Program, it is free to all users. Anyone, even those who are not Southern Baptists, can utilize the material. But if users register on the site, they gain additional options.

"People can go to the site and just watch videos if they want," Taillon said, "or they can sign up and ... get more privileges," Taillon said. "They can mark the videos where they left off, they get to bookmark things. They can evaluate things and comment on videos if they want."

Among the topics addressed in e-quip.net videos: theology, leadership, marriage and family, sharing Christ, starting churches and strengthening churches, worship and preaching. Several videos are in Spanish.

"I really think this is the future of training, not that face-to-face training isn't important," Taillon said. "It is important, but the key issue here is that we want to get training out to as many people as possible."

"When you can't do it face-to-face, this is a great way to do it." (BP)

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

US House calls for Iranian pastor's immediate release

WASHINGTON — Adding pressure to Iranian officials, the U.S. House of Representatives has passed a resolution calling for the immediate release of Iranian pastor Yousef Nadarkhani, who could be executed any day for his Christian faith.

The resolution passed March 1 by an official vote of 417-1, although the one representative who voted "no" — Lois Capps of California — said she did so by mistake, and she corrected her vote minutes later and said in a floor speech she supports Nadarkhani.

Nadarkhani — whose first name also has been spelled Youcef — was sentenced to death in 2010 for converting from Islam to Christianity in a case that began in 2009. His plight has gained international attention. Several sources close to Nadarkhani say the death order already may have been issued.

The resolution "condemns the government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of religious minorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran and its continued violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and calls for the government of Iran to exonerate and immediately release Youcef Nadarkhani and all other individuals held or charged on account of their religion."

The resolution further states that "numerous government of Iran officials have attempted to coerce Youcef Nadarkhani to recant his Christian faith and accept Islam in exchange for his freedom." A U.N. official, the resolution says, reported that Iran secretly executed 146 people in 2011 and more than 300 people in 2010.

The White House and State Department also have released official statements urging Iran to free Nadarkhani.

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association lays off 50 people

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) is laying off 10 percent of its staff as it shifts resources to make online evangelism a priority.

Some 50 people on the 500-member staff will lose their jobs between mid-March and this summer, said Brent Rinehart, a BGEA spokesman, March 1. About 20 of the affected staffers work at the association headquarters in Charlotte, N.C. Others have worked as field staff across the globe or at The Cove, the BGEA's training center in Asheville, N.C. "It's definitely not a reflection of the financial health of the organization," Rinehart said. "It's really more redeploying resources to focus on those areas of great impact."

One of those areas is SearchforJesus.net, a website the BGEA launched last April that includes a real-time count of "decisions" people make to become Christians.

The ministry laid off 55 people in 2009 during tough economic times that affected numerous religious and nonreligious organizations. Famed evangelist Billy Graham remains the chairman of the association he founded in 1950. His son, Franklin, runs the day-to-day operations as the CEO and president.

The ministry operates festivals, training and the Billy Graham Library in addition to its online outreach. The BGEA's revenue dropped from \$126 million in 2005 to \$85.7 million in 2009, Rinehart said. In 2010, it totaled \$91.6 million.

Appeals court rules NYC churches can meet in schools

NEW YORK — New York churches gained a victory in the courts Feb. 29 as the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a district judge's injunction against the city's enforcement of a ban to keep churches from meeting for worship in public schools.

The 2nd Circuit, though, instructed U.S. District Judge Loretta Preska to act quickly on the case, encouraging her to issue a final decision by mid-June so the matter can be resolved before the next school year. While churches can continue to meet in New York City schools at least through the end of this school year, some already have moved on to more reliable space.

One Southern Baptist congregation in the city moved all three of its campuses out of public schools, and another congregation is sharing its rented meeting space with other churches in an effort to support the body of Christ in New York.

The Journey Church has three campuses in New York — an Upper West Side campus in Manhattan, a Village campus in Manhattan and a Queens campus. All three were meeting in public schools before the legal wrangling intensified early this year. Now the Upper West campus is meeting in the Directors Guild of America New York Theater on 57th Street. The Village congregation has temporarily moved to a United Methodist church for an evening service and in Queens, Journey has moved to a United Artists movie theater.