

# THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



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**Top photo:** Jordanian Pastor Nour (right) coordinates assistance for Syrian refugee families. **Bottom left:** An X-ray documents torture perpetrated on a 15-year-old boy. **Bottom right:** Many refugees have lost family members during the uprising like this 12-year-old boy (left) and his uncle.

BP photos

# Ongoing Suffering

## Christians minister to Syrians fleeing violence in their country

**M**uhammad, two of his sisters and an elderly uncle sit on the floor of a rented house beside a trash-strewn gully in a town near Jordan's northern border with Syria.

The uncle fingers his prayer beads and looks into space as a mosque nearby sounds the Muslim call to prayer. Children of various ages trek in and out of the room, playing games to stave off boredom.

A little boy clutches a stuffed teddy bear; a girl admires her reflection in a pink hand mirror. The women hastily cover their faces when a visitor's camera appears — not for modesty or religious reasons, but for fear of the

long arm of the ruling Assad regime in Syria.

Life for this Syrian refugee family now consists of sitting and waiting. But it's better than the hellish existence they endured for months in Homs, the besieged city across the border they

fled in March. Much of Homs, one of the centers of the year-old Syrian uprising, has been shelled to rubble by Syrian military forces bent on crushing the widening rebellion.

"Homs is a city of ghosts now," Mu- (See 'Baptists,' page 12)

### A TIME TO REMEMBER: 2011 TORNADOES

Gov. Robert Bentley holds a special prayer event on the steps of the State Capitol in Montgomery on April 27 marking the one-year anniversary of the April 27, 2011, tornadoes that hit the state. Alabama flags represented the number of lives lost on that tragic day. Disaster relief volunteers (wearing yellow shirts) also were present.



Photo by Doug Rogers

## 'No emphasis' given to social issues in state

By Sondra Washington  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

A few years ago, Alabama legislators could blame gambling bills and supporters for the lack of pro-family legislation being considered in the Statehouse. Although there is no pro-gambling legislation in sight, moral and family values supporters have the same complaints. This time, business is to blame.

"Time is running out and pro-life bills have stagnated as they did last year," said Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program. "It makes me feel as though the House and Senate leadership are not as passionate about pro-life issues as they are about business. ... They've not given any emphasis to the social issues like the pro-life bills. They have also been passing a lot of alcohol liberalization bills that they say are going to help business. I say they are going to produce more alcohol-related problems as far as families being broken up, lives being destroyed and jobs lost."

On April 26, Alabama representatives passed House Bill (HB) 354, which allows people to "produce a limited amount of home brewed beer, mead, cider and table wine for personal use." The legislation, sponsored by Rep. ... (See 'Extremely,' page 9)

# COMMENT

## Whosoever Shall Lose His Life for My Sake...

A co-worker at *The Alabama Baptist* saw a news release about the death of Charles Colson and responded in shock. “You mean he was a prisoner,” she said. Colson was known to her only as the founder of Prison Fellowship and a respected leader in the evangelical Christian community.

Charles Colson certainly was that. But, for me, to forget what Colson was before he became a Christian is to miss his greatest contribution to the cause of Christ. Colson was Exhibit A that “whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Matt. 16:25).

By secular standards, Colson’s former life was to be envied. He founded a successful law practice and in 1969 was appointed Special Counsel to President Richard Nixon. Of himself, Colson wrote that he was valuable to Nixon because “I was willing to be ruthless in getting things done.” One writer described Colson as the “evil genius of an evil administration.” Others called him Nixon’s “hatchet man.”

The traits that took Colson to the pinnacle of power proved his undoing. Colson was tied to such historic episodes as Watergate, the Pentagon Papers and the White House Special Operations Unit better known as “the Plumbers.”

He was indicted for conspiring to cover up the Watergate burglary and ended up pleading guilty to obstruction of justice charges. He was sentenced to federal prison, fined and disbarred.

It was during the turbulent months following the downfall of the Nixon administration that Colson began his journey toward faith in Jesus Christ.

A friend gave him a copy of C.S. Lewis’ “Mere Christianity” and that book proved pivotal. Shortly afterward, reports began to surface that Colson had “got religion.” Many thought it a ploy to save himself from judicial wrath and several newspapers printed ridiculing cartoons.

Many religious leaders shared the skepticism. Before his sentence, Colson joined a Congressio-



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

nal prayer group of evangelical Christians but only after some participants overcame some severe reservations about him and his newfound faith.

In 1975, shortly after getting out of prison, Colson was a featured speaker at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Pastors Conference in Miami. He brought with him Edmon Blow, an Alabama Baptist preacher from Montgomery. Blow led a Bible study at Maxwell Federal Prison Camp where Colson was imprisoned. In his book “Born Again,” Colson describes Blow as “a tall, rawboned man.” I remember him as thin and red headed, a man whose southern accent testified to his origin. Colson introduced Blow at the Pastors Conference as a “brother” and described how the Bible studies and Blow’s unquestioning faith in Jesus Christ had influenced his life.

#### ‘It was only the beginning’

That night Colson shared how he had come to faith in Christ with the 13,000 people present. He said, “It was, as you all so well know, not the end of anything except my old life. It was only the beginning — starting out on a long, hard journey.”

He also hinted at what would be the focus of the rest of his life — prison ministry. He told the crowd, “If I have anything that I can leave with you, it is the appeal, the crying I heard of hundreds of thousands of men and women who sit

tonight frightened, forgotten and alone in the dark concrete holes of American prisons.

“I can only speak to you of the suffering of men’s souls, of our less fortunate brothers who need us, who need God’s work and Christ’s love.”

That night, the straightforward, transparent, unpretentious style in which Colson spoke, in which he responded to reporters’ questions during a news conference, in which he communicated in personal conversations, convinced many this once self-driven man really had been “born again.”

One of life’s hard truths is that one cannot prove one has changed by mere words. It takes years and years of faithful living to demonstrate that “old things are passed away ... that all things have become new.” That is exactly what Colson did.

In 1976 he founded Prison Fellowship which became the nation’s largest evangelical outreach to prisoners and their families.

In 1983 he founded Justice Fellowship to work for reforms in the nation’s criminal justice system.

Colson became a noted Christian philosopher, ethicist and author. He wrote advocating church-state separation in his book “Kingdoms in Conflict.” More recently he was a catalyst championing religious freedom as expressed in the Manhattan Declaration. He worked to bridge the gap between Roman Catholics and evangelical Christians. He frequently wrote about current social issues from a conservative biblical standpoint.

And the honors poured in. He won the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion and gave the \$1 million award to Prison Fellowship. President George W. Bush presented him the Presidential Citizens Medal. The Salvation Army gave him the organization’s highest award. More than a dozen Christian colleges presented him honorary degrees.

And all of this for a man who for the first 40-plus years of his life scoffed at Christians and their faith.

No one can detract from Colson’s contributions to society and to the kingdom of God. He has been an unequalled gift from God for more than three decades. So identified was he with evangelical Christianity that my co-worker had no idea of his previous life.

Still Colson’s story is Exhibit A of the power of God to change the life of anyone who will turn to God through faith in Jesus Christ. To use Colson’s words from the 1975 Pastors Conference, it was only after he was willing to lose his old life of ambition, power and greed that he found the true meaning of life in Jesus Christ.

What God did for Charles “Chuck” Colson, God can do for others so don’t give up on that friend or family member for whom you have been praying. There is no telling what God can do with someone once they give their lives to Him as Lord and Savior.

## Letters to the Editor

### DISAPPOINTED IN COVERAGE

I received a copy of *The Alabama Baptist* Commemorative Issue and was saddened by the lack of reports in it of the tornado damage that the churches and people of St. Clair County received. It was as if *The Alabama Baptist* had avoided an entire area where many lives were lost, four churches damaged and thousands of volunteers worked diligently — as if nothing ever happened in our county and we were simply left out. The only mention I saw in the commemorative issue was a list of churches and several dots on a map. I have heard several complaints from other members at the church I attend mention that we were equated to a dot

on a map as if the tornado had never happened here. I am also a subscriber to *The Alabama Baptist* paper and am thinking of canceling my subscription since we no longer seem to be a part of *The Alabama Baptist*.

James Roberts  
St. Clair County

*EDITOR’S NOTE* — *St. Clair County and the good work done by the association was covered in the special commemorative issue on pages 10 and 19 as well as noted on the map. The efforts also will be featured in the June District 11 tornado coverage. Because of the broad nature of the special issue, however, St. Clair Association’s efforts*

*were not given a full individual feature. We would like to apologize if we have erred in our judgment.*

### SPEAKING OUT

The editorial by Bob Terry in the March 22 issue — “Where Am I Blind?” — is just so great. Amen and amen.

He said everything in just the correct way. I am proud of the article as a Christian and a Baptist. I wish those who should see it would have opportunity to read it. Maybe they will.

Thanks for standing up for Christian and biblical standards in our state and speaking out.

Carol Lynn  
Talladega, Ala.





"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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CDN photos

# ATTACK against believers

## Bombings in Nigeria continue to target Christians, churches

**S**uspected Islamic extremists attacked a TV viewing center in Jos, Nigeria, April 24, in a Christian area of the city where a crowd had gathered to watch a soccer match.

At about 10:15 p.m. at the viewing center, one of many such establishments popular for watching soccer in Nigeria, attackers drove past the site and threw an explosive device at hundreds of Christians watching soccer, eyewitnesses told Compass Direct News (CDN).

Some 10 minutes after the bombing, security agents evacuated the injured to a nearby hospital. Medical personnel at the hospital were treating at least four people under strict supervision of police and other security agents.

Soldiers and police under Nigeria's Joint Military Task Force charged with keeping peace in the country's embattled Plateau state cordoned off the area around the establishment. Authorities have not commented on whether the Islamic sect Boko Haram is responsible for the attack.

The bombing marks the second time in two weeks that the Christian area, Tudun Wada, has been attacked. Boko Haram, which seeks to impose a strict version of sharia (Islamic law) throughout Nigeria, was suspected of detonating a bomb a few yards from the center during Easter celebrations, injuring five Christians. Various churches in Tudun Wada commonly use the site as a base for evangelistic campaigns.

With Christians and Muslims living in

close but separate quarters of the Tudun Wada area, the attacks have heightened tensions between the two communities. Eight churches are located in the area — Christ Way Baptist Church, Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Bishara 2, Angwan Yashi, ECWA Good News Church, Assemblies of God Church, Redeemed Peoples Mission, Solid Rock Church and Deeper Life Bible Church.

### TV viewing centers

Last year, suspected Islamic extremists bombed three TV viewing centers in Christian areas near Jos on Dec. 10. A few minutes into a soccer match televised at a viewing center in the village of Ukadum, a bomb went off, killing a 31-year-old man. During the same game, bombs exploded at viewing centers in two other predominantly Christian areas of Jos, injuring at least 10 others, including several who were left critically injured or in a coma.

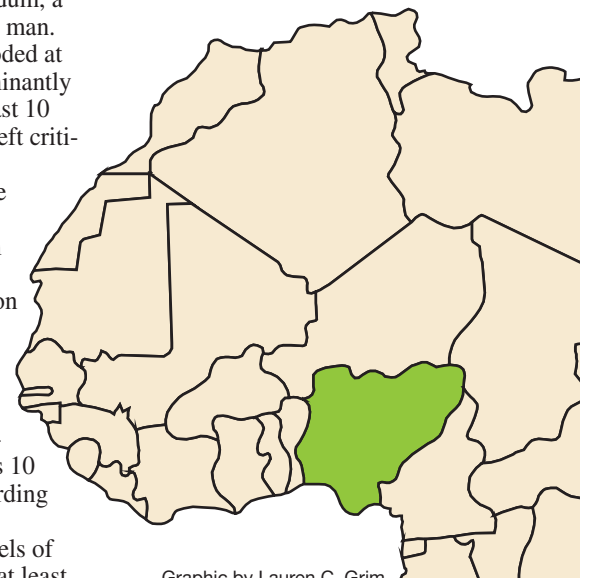
Nigeria's Plateau state has become especially volatile as it lies between the country's predominantly Muslim north and Christian south. Nigeria's population of more than 158.2 million is divided between Christians, who make up 51.3 percent of the population, and Muslims, who account for 45 percent. The percentages may be less, however, as those practicing indigenous religions may be as high as 10 percent of the total population, according to Operation World.

The attacks were waged on the heels of a suicide bomber's Easter killing of at least

38 people in the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna. Security personnel at a church had blocked the bomber, believed to belong to the Boko Haram sect. The bomber then drove away, detonating his explosives in the street at a nearby motorcycle taxi center, sources told CDN. In addition to those killed, dozens of people were injured.

The bombs damaged the buildings of ECWA Good News and All Nations Christian Assembly, besides blasting off roofs from nearby homes and hotels and destroying vehicles.

Law enforcement agents believe ECWA Good News was the bomber's primary target, a source told CDN. (BP)



Graphic by Lauren C. Grim



Photo by Neisha Fuson

# 'Every day is a gift'

By Julie Payne  
The Alabama Baptist

**Surviving April 27, 2011, tornadoes leads Decatur family to a yearlong journey of blessings amid healing**

**A** thick piece of glass hanging from a chain around Michael Pate's neck momentarily glinted. He looked down and grasped the stone-like object in his hand, pausing in a moment of reflection. "This glass I wear, it was in me," he said. "It was lodged in my abdomen wall."

Michael now wears it as a testimony of God's grace and his family's miracle story after last year's devastating tornadoes.

On April 27, 2011, Michael was in his mobile home in Hillsboro (near Decatur) with his then 2-year-old son, Tyler. Michael's wife, Andrea, had left to visit her grandmother.

Michael had been following the day's weather on the Internet. When Tyler awoke from his nap about 3 p.m., Michael looked outside and noticed the horses were still grazing in the field. At first he thought everything

was normal. But moments later, he spotted an ominous EF5 tornado — the same destructive tornado that barreled through Phil Campbell — heading directly toward his home. "God, help us," Michael remembers praying.

"I had to make a judgment call of try[ing] to run for a storm shelter I knew of, but knowing how far away it was, I wasn't going to make it," he said.

Instead, Michael quickly snatched up Tyler and moved him to the master bathroom closet, in the process wrapping a bed comforter and extra clothes around his son's body to protect him.

The next thing Michael knew, the mobile home was rolling and he felt suction. A strong wind gust proceeded to rip the front

of the home apart. "That was the last thing I remember till I heard people hollering for 'father,'" he said.

Relatives of the Pates' neighbors found Tyler first. He was transported to Children's Hospital in Birmingham by ambulance as "Baby Doe" because at the time no one in the res-cue effort knew his name. It wasn't long before he was located by relatives and reunited with his mother.

*"I had to make a judgment call of try[ing] to run for a storm shelter I knew of, but knowing how far away it was, I wasn't going to make it."*



Photo by Neisha Fuson

Michael, Andrea and Tyler Pate

Tyler, who turns 4 on May 21, was the child visited by Gov. Robert Bentley last April at Children's Hospital.

His primary injuries were to the left side of his skull and brain due to a compressed skull fracture and brain protrusion.

Tyler spent 13 days in the hospital before beginning physical and occupational therapy to regain use of the right side of his body.

Michael was found shortly after and sent to Decatur General Hospital. He recalls how difficult it was to not know the specific details of Tyler's condition during those first few hours.

The following days in intensive care are still a complete blur to Michael. He was in

surgery for six hours the first night and doctors did much to repair his battered, lacerated body. Deep cuts covered his legs and arms and an 18-by-21-centimeter gash in his leg required additional medical attention. It took doctors two hours to remove pieces of rock, gravel, tree limbs, glass and even shingle material from his body. He has undergone three surgeries since last April, and two of his injured fingers on his left hand still feel “half asleep.”

Throughout the journey of healing and recovery, Michael took notice of how people demonstrated God’s love to his family in a variety of ways.

Michael was raised in a Christian home and attended a Christian school in Florida with Andrea.

“I assumed I was saved ... but after the storm I realized I really wasn’t saved because there was never [a] true conversion,” he shared. “People would automatically assume I was Christian because of my morals and the way I lived, but there was no change [in me].”

During his recovery, Michael’s mother prayed about some books to give him and found two: “In the Grip of Grace” by Max Lucado and “God is in Control: My Unshakable Peace When the Storms Come” by Charles Stanley. The books made a lasting impression on him.

“God put people in my life that needed to be there,” he remarked. “My doctor was a Christian. He said that my healing has been a miracle.”

And there were many others who stepped up to help. Family members, friends, people from the Pates’ church, Central Park Baptist, Decatur, as well as Central Park Senior Pastor Jackie Kay, offered support and encouragement to the family.

Jere and Jody Patterson, members of Central Park Baptist, also have been encouragers. Jody is Tyler’s Sunday School teacher and Jere, interim director of missions for Bessemer Baptist Association, has been influential in Michael’s life.

“Michael’s faith has increased,” Jere Patterson said. “[This journey] has made him more dependent on God.”

Jody Patterson believes God has a plan for the Pates.

“Michael is a miracle himself because he was so terribly injured,” she explained, adding that Tyler is a smart, gentle child who “absolutely loves” Sunday School. “He is such a joy,” she shared.

### Continuous therapy

Tyler is now enrolled in the Head Start Program for special needs children in Decatur. There are also visits to Children’s Hospital for constraint therapy that will help Tyler re-learn to spontaneously use his right hand. “He can do it if he’s reminded to do it,” Michael explained, adding the therapy should help to improve his fine motor skills.

In addition to the emotional support offered by friends, the church’s missions house — typically used by Southern Baptist representatives on stateside assignment — was opened up for the Pates’ use.

Epic Church, Decatur, also donated a car to the family through its distribution center. “There have been other things out there that have really been a blessing,” Michael added.

He sparkles with excitement recounting how God has worked through His people throughout the past year.

Andrea agreed, noting how she has seen evidence of God’s presence throughout the journey.

For her, it is little things like the story of her cell phone charger.

When she initially discovered there was a

problem after the storms hit, she drove to a Walmart.

The store was closed, and with one bar left on her cell phone she sat in the parking lot trying to use the broken cell phone charger in her car.

“I plugged it in, and I had to hold it to make it stay, and it worked,” she said.

“It was a God thing. ... Now mind you I sat in the parking lot for about an hour waiting for it to charge, but it worked.” She added, “God gives us what we need when we need it, even if it doesn’t ... work to begin with.”

### ‘God still works miracles’

Michael noted, “To look at where that storm hit our trailer ... it’s devastation three quarters of a mile [in] all directions. The center of that storm that hit my house was a mile and a quarter wide, and we were thrown in the opposite direction of all the debris.

“I realize now that every day is a gift that God gives us,” he shared. “God still works miracles.” 🙏

**“God put people in my life that needed to be there. My doctor was a Christian. He said that my healing has been a miracle.”**



Photo by Neisha Fuson

Michael and Tyler Pate play at the Ronald McDonald House in Birmingham.



Photo by Joseph Chancellor

The Pates’ property and vehicles were destroyed by the April 27, 2011, tornadoes.

# Across Alabama's Associations

## AUTAUGA

► The Young at Heart of **Camellia Church, Prattville**, will host Christian humorist/musician Brother Billy Bob Bohannon May 4, 6:30 p.m. Mark Stokes is pastor.

## BESSEMER

► The J.O.Y. senior adult fellowship program of **The Church at McAdory, McCalla**, will host gospel singer Wayne Goodwin May 27, 11 a.m. For information call 205-477-8265 or visit [www.bc-mcadory.org](http://www.bc-mcadory.org). Bill McCall is pastor.

## BIRMINGHAM

► **Ridgecrest Church, Trussville**, will host apologetics theologian Ergun Caner May 6, 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Caner is provost and vice president of academic affairs for Arlington Baptist College in Texas. He also teaches theology, church history and apologetics. For information call 205-661-3722.

## CALHOUN

► **Michael Williams** is the new associate pastor of education and senior adults for **Golden Springs Church, Anniston**. He comes from Woodridge Church, Mobile. He holds a master of divinity and doctorate of ministry from New Orleans Seminary. Williams is married to Charity. Roland P. Brown is pastor.



WILLIAMS

## COFFEE

► **Mount Pleasant Church,**

**Enterprise**, will host a fish fry May 6 following the morning worship service. For information call 334-347-1305. Steve Bruce is pastor. ► **Victoria Church, Jack**, will celebrate homecoming May 6. Sunday School will be at 9:45 a.m. and worship at 10:45 a.m. Derek Snellgrove and Chosen will sing. Lanny Shepard will speak. Lunch will follow. Donnie Marler is pastor.

## GENEVA

► The 39er's C.L.U.B. of **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will hold a luncheon meeting May 8, 11 a.m., with Dennis Finch. Finch will share his testimony about the process of needing a double lung transplant. For reservations call 334-684-9617 by May 4. Mike Shihrah is pastor.

## LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

► Men's Ministries of **Lookout Mountain Association** will hold the annual Children's Home Work Days at Friendship House in Oxford May 4-5. For information call John Yarbrough at 256-996-9011. The association also will hold its annual evangelism rally May 20 at Welcome Hill Church, Fort Payne. A fellowship meal will begin at 5 p.m. with the service to follow at 6 p.m. Jamie Perigo will speak. James Maples is pastor of Welcome Hill Church.

## RUSSELL

► **First Church, Hurtsboro**, will hold a singing May 27, 6 p.m., with Proclaimers Quartet. The community and neighboring churches are invited. Refreshments will follow. Christopher Webb is interim pastor.

## SHELBY

► **Fourmile Church, Wilsonville**, will celebrate homecoming during a memorial service May 5, 10 a.m., with guest speaker and former Pastor Elvin Liveoak. A covered-dish meal will follow. For information call 205-669-6681. Roger Chambers is pastor.

## SIPSEY

► **Sipsey Association** will hold a senior adult day of revival May 8, 10:30 a.m., at Bethabara Church, Northport. Bill King, director of missions for Tuskegee Lee Association, will speak. A covered-dish lunch and a program with Brother Billy Bob Bohannon (Bill King) will follow. Mac McGrath is pastor of Bethabara. Elaine Stripling is associational senior adult coordinator, and Max Stripling is director of missions for Sipsey Association.

## TUSCALOOSA

► **Ruhama Church, Peterson**, will host Promised Land in concert May 6, 5 p.m. The church also will celebrate homecoming May 27, 11 a.m. Terry Gibbs will sing. Tommy Easterwood is pastor.

Please submit news items for "Across Alabama's Associations" at least three weeks prior to the event. Call 205-870-4720, email [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org) or visit [www.thealabamabaptist.org](http://www.thealabamabaptist.org) and click on "Submit News."

## Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

### Voice of Martyrs director dies amid investigation

BARTLESVILLE, Okla. — "Our hearts are broken" but the Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) "will continue serving with our persecuted brothers and sisters," the ministry stated after the death of its executive director in mid-April.

Tom White, 64, who led VOM for more than two decades, died in what is being described as a possible suicide on the heels of a molestation investigation by local police.

White was reported missing April 17. Police found his body April 18 in a warehouse at VOM's headquarters in Bartlesville, Okla.

Police reported that a note was found in his vehicle that suggested he was suicidal or possibly fleeing to avoid investigation into allegedly molesting a juvenile female.

"None of those in leadership at VOM, including our board of directors, were aware of these allegations at the time of Tom's death," VOM officials said in a statement April 20.

Under White's leadership, VOM had become one of the most recognized persecution ministries.

Founded in 1967 by Richard and Sabina Wurmbrand after both were imprisoned in communist Romania for their faith, VOM focuses on assisting believers in countries where they suffer persecution and raising awareness of their plight.

White worked personally with the Wurmbrands and was imprisoned himself in Cuba. Communist troops captured him in May 1979 after the plane from which he was dropping Christian material crash-landed. VOM, in its statement, noted, "There is no doubt that Tom cared about his wife, his children and his grandchildren. And there's no doubt that he cared about VOM. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our hearts are broken."

"However, the work that God has called VOM to do is bigger than any one of us. There are persecuted Christians who need our help. The legal process will go forward, and we will continue serving with our persecuted brothers and sisters. We appreciate the many who are praying for our work, and we encourage you to join us in praying for Tom's family during this difficult time."

### Group calling itself 'Angry Queers' vandalizes church

PORTLAND, Ore. — A satellite church affiliated with controversial Seattle pastor Mark Driscoll was vandalized early April 24 and a group calling itself the "Angry Queers" has reportedly taken responsibility. Stained glass and other windows were broken at the Mars Hill Church, according to a post on the Facebook page of Pastor Tim Smith.

"Neighbors of the church reported seeing several young adults in black masks throwing large rocks into the windows," a church news release said. "Police stated that a bank in the area was also vandalized in the same way and that they believe the vandalism was planned ahead of time, most likely by an activist group."

On April 24, KPTV FOX 12 reported it had received an email from someone using the name "Angry Queers" and claiming responsibility. Mars Hill Portland opened last October. During the first service, protesters gathered in front of the church and yelled obscenities at worshippers to speak out against the church's stance on homosexuality. Mars Hill Church was founded in Seattle about 15 years ago by Driscoll, who preaches against homosexuality and believes it's a sin. In his Facebook message, Smith encouraged church members to continue their work.

"The good news is our church is off to a great start," he wrote. "A few piles of broken glass doesn't change anything for us."

Chuck Currie, a liberal Portland pastor who has criticized Mars Hill's theology, nonetheless urged that the vandalism be treated as a hate crime. "If Mars Hill Church represents the worst of Christianity, and I believe it sadly does, those responsible for this attack represent the worst of Portland," Currie said.

### Vt. Senate rules against physician-assisted suicide

MONTPELIER, Vt. — The Vermont Senate has turned back an effort to legalize physician-assisted suicide.

Supporters of assisted suicide failed April 12 to garner the votes needed to suspend Senate rules in order to consider the proposal as an amendment, according to the *Burlington (Vt.) Free Press*.

They needed 22 votes, or a three-fourths majority, but gained only 11.

Eighteen senators voted against suspending the rules.

The measure would have enabled people considered to have fewer than six months to live the legal right to request a lethal drug dosage.



Photo courtesy of Lakeside Baptist Church

### LAKESIDE GAS DONATE COFFEEHOUSE MONEY TO CHILDREN'S HOMES

Girls in Action from Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham, present a check for \$2,600 to Rod Marshall (right), president and CEO of the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries. The group hosted a coffeehouse to raise money for the children's homes March 4. Breck Ladd (left) is pastor.

# DANCE

your

# SHOES OFF

By Anna Keller  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

## Montgomery's Heritage Church holds unique missions event involving all ages

The members of Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery, were certainly willing to think "outside the box" for their most recent churchwide missions event. Not only was their Rise Up 2012: Dance Your Shoes Off flash mob April 14 something that garnered community interest, but it also was a way for members of all ages to participate.

"Heritage is all about the generations coming together to worship and serve God, and Rise Up 2012 created a beautiful picture of that," said Kenneth Loomis, the church's worship minister. "There were three babies in the womb with their

expectant mothers participating, a 4-and-a-half month old in the arms of his dad, children and teens and then adults of all ages with the oldest participant being an 86-year-old lady (Sara Smith)."

### High-energy event

And those members' efforts were not in vain.

Thanks to the high-energy event — which drew in 300 viewers in addition to the 300 flash mob participants — the church received 550 donated pairs of shoes, which will be distributed to people in need both locally and internationally.

According to Loomis, despite the large number of participants, the choreography for the event

came together smoothly. Rehearsals began in late February, and participants had the option of attending in-person practices at the church or rehearsing at home with the help of a practice video (supplied by Second Baptist Church, Houston, who originally developed the choreography).

"Dance Your Shoes Off was a spiritual event for me from the beginning to the end," said Smith, a member of Heritage. "I think God had to say, 'Well done!' when He saw those hundreds of pairs of shoes left on the grass for people who need new shoes."

Word about the event spread in a variety of ways. One Huntsville man happened to be passing

through town and was sidetracked by the event, stopping by a local shoe store to purchase a pair to donate. A couple of local Montgomery news channels were present to document the event.

"We didn't do a lot of advertising, because we were mainly interested in our folks doing it organically," Pastor Teman Knight said. "One of the neat things that happened was a lady heard about it in the barbershop and went home and told her friend in Prattville. That friend happened to be Jill Zimanek, a radio host for one of the Christian stations here, The River. She came and learned the choreography and danced with us on the 14th with three or four of her friends, plus she talked about it on the radio."

For Zimanek, being a part of the

event created a memory that will stay with her for life.

"I was overcome with emotion during Rise Up," she said. "I think it was just a little tiny bit of what heaven will be like, and I was just so thrilled to be a part of it. Praise God for Heritage Baptist Church,

Montgomery, and their vision and efforts to pull this together. I'm sure God was smiling. I could feel it."

Loomis said the success of this event has made another Rise Up a definite possibility in the future.

"The feed-

back has been overwhelmingly positive," Loomis said. "This event has been life-changing for individuals, families and Heritage. Conversations will begin soon about the future, and I think it's very likely you'll see Rise Up 2013 in Montgomery next year." ❧



Photos courtesy of Teman Knight



## Someone You Should Know

By Julie Payne  
The Alabama Baptist

### HAROLD HOWELL

Glynwood Baptist Church, Prattville  
Autauga Baptist Association



HOWELL

**FAVORITE VERSE:** John 3:16

**FAVORITE HYMN:** "Amazing Grace"

**HOBBIES:** Fishing, watching football

**FAMILY STATUS:** Widowed after 58

**years of marriage to Junetta; five children, George, Linda, Naomi, Rebecca and Patricia; 12 grandchildren; and 20 great-grandchildren**

Harold Howell, 90, is deacon emeritus at Glynwood Baptist and has taught Sunday School for most of his life. He served in the U.S. Navy in World War II and received the Good Conduct Medal and the Purple Heart. He later retired as a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force. He began practicing law in 1975 and continues to work at his law firm, Howell Sarto & Howell in Prattville. He also works with the Alabama Teen Challenge program.

**Q: How did you come to know the Lord?**

A: I was saved at age 16 at Cal-

vary Baptist Church, Birmingham.

**Q: How did you get involved in teaching Sunday School?**

A: I started teaching Sunday School [at] age 19 and have taught ever since almost. When I got back from law school they made me a deacon and [I've] served as a deacon at every church I've ever belonged to. I was in Texas, Kansas, Albuquerque [New Mexico], Ohio, Japan, New Jersey [and] back to Alabama.

**Q: What do you get from teaching Sunday School?**

A: It strengthens my faith. To

teach you have to really study it [the Bible] and learn it and it makes me a stronger Christian.

**Q: What does your ministry demand?**

A: That's my life. That's what the Lord told us to do. When you do it, you get joy out of it.

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

A: He's made me into a different person. I grew up in a family that never went to church. There was no church in my house at all. ... I got connected to Baptists when I was 12 years old. ❧

## FBC Tuscaloosa to host writers workshop

It was another amazing year, and I am already anticipating next year," a participant in the annual Southern Christian Writers Conference (SCWC) said of the 2011 workshop.

And next year's SCWC is here and just around the corner — set for June 8-9 at First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa.

The event will feature Gilbert Morris, a novelist of more than 300 books, and Lurlene McDaniel, a successful author for teens.

Several instructional sessions will cover topics such as investing in your writing, writing young adult novels, the writer and the law, working

with a Christian book publisher, screenwriting and several others.

The SCWC also judges a writing contest. This year's deadline is May 14 for the following categories: nonfiction magazine article, newspaper article, short story (fiction), poetry or letter to the editor.

Send entries to SCWC Writing Contest, P.O. Box 1106, Northport, Ala. 35476.

To register for the workshop, visit [web.mac.com/wmdsloan/SCWC/Registration\\_form.html](http://web.mac.com/wmdsloan/SCWC/Registration_form.html) or email [scwcworkshop@bellsouth.net](mailto:scwcworkshop@bellsouth.net). Pre-registration ends June 1. (TAB)

# 'A passion runs through him'

## Alabama native reflects on his role in helping launch Vermont's 1st Southern Baptist church

**O**ne-hundred-one-year-old Roscoe Anderson recalls that his first chore as a 5-year-old was to follow his father up and down furrows of their farmland, placing one grain of corn in each of his dad's footprints. "From that time on, I realized that was my occupation," Anderson said. "I was a farmer."

What he didn't realize was just how God would put him to work as a farmer. Ultimately, Anderson would devote himself to preparing soil and planting seeds for God's work in New England. Originally from Clarke County, he grew up in the early 1900s in a family of subsistence farmers with a strong Christian heritage. His parents, Thomas and Lola, named Roscoe after a pastor they had dearly loved.

Anderson said he came to a saving relationship with Jesus at about age 8 during a two-week revival. "I thought my heart would leave my body if I didn't go forward," he said.

His was the only decision for Christ during the revival services, but Anderson still remembers the church's celebration over his salvation. "It had been a very dry year and the streams were pretty dry. A group of men took axes and shovels and made a pool out of a crater to baptize me," he said.

It wasn't long before the family moved to the Liberty community where Liberty Baptist Church was the center of nearly everything. Anderson attended school at the church whenever tuition could be scraped together.

At age 12, he supported his family by working in a sawmill; around age 14, he began working in the textile factory in Union. He married Daisy at age 18, and his role in World War II was on the horizon. Anderson was among several thousand civilians who resigned their jobs and enlisted in the Army Air Corps (now the U.S. Air Force) to help the British face the Germans. He spent the war years there helping modify British ships for war.

Those experiences, alongside military personnel who knew his work and recommended him, set Anderson on course for defense-related positions, even serving in research and development for various munitions projects. After the war he worked on projects with General Electric (GE), a military supplier. While based in Tampa, Fla., with Daisy and their two children, he traveled a lot, often to Vermont.

### All steps along the journey led to Vermont

Anderson always looked for a place to worship on Sunday wherever he was, and he quickly noticed the absence of Southern Baptist churches in Vermont. "What impressed me most was that God put it on my heart to go to Vermont," he said. "And it was the only state in the union without a Southern Baptist church." When a position opened up to manage the GE firing range in Vermont, he was on his way.

Merwyn Borders, a former Southern Baptist missionary in New England and a historian for New England Southern

Baptist churches, reflected on Anderson's influence on Baptist work in Vermont. "The thing that stands out about Roscoe is that the first work in Vermont was started by laypeople, not missionaries," Borders said. He described Anderson as "professional in his work, down to earth, with an ability to engage people and a desire to reach out."

Susan Brindle, widow of Bob Brindle, an early pastor of the first Southern Baptist church in Vermont, said Anderson began in 1960 by putting an ad in the newspaper asking if anyone in the community might be interested in beginning a Bible study with the goal of becoming a church. "They began meeting in their rental home. That property became available to buy, and it became the first church building of the South Burlington Church," she said.

The South Burlington Baptist Church, now known as New Covenant Baptist Church, reached only about 110 members at its peak but spawned 37 other churches in Vermont.

To all who know him, Anderson is fondly known as "Mr. Roscoe."

Having entered a second century of life, his fervor for God and for His church still radiates brightly. In 2009, at age 99, Anderson retired from 30 years of teaching the 3-year-old Sunday School class at First Baptist Church, Starkville, Miss., where he currently resides near his children and grandchildren. (BP)



BP photo

Roscoe Anderson (center), who organized Vermont's first Southern Baptist church in 1960, is shown here with his granddaughter, Jamie Hunt, and her husband, Trey.



BP photo

Members of South Burlington Baptist Church — Vermont's first Southern Baptist congregation — pose for a picture during the 1960s. The church was founded by layman Roscoe Anderson, the man at far right holding a child. To Anderson's left is one of the church's interim pastors — Tom Elliff, now president of the International Mission Board.



COLSON

## Prison Fellowship founder Colson dies

Former Watergate felon turned evangelical leader and Prison Fellowship founder Charles W. “Chuck” Colson, 80, died April 21 in Fairfax, Va. He had been hospitalized since March 30 when his speech became slurred during the Wilberforce Weekend Conference in northern Virginia.

He was airlifted to Inova Fairfax Hospital in Falls Church, Va., where doctors performed surgery the next morning. He suffered an intracerebral hemorrhage in his brain.

“Though we mourn the loss of a great leader, we rejoice knowing God has welcomed his humble and faithful servant home,” Prison Fellowship CEO Jim Liske said in a statement.

Colson started his career as a hard-nosed political operative in the Nixon White House, which led to a conviction in the Watergate proceedings for obstruction of justice — and a seven-month sentence served out at a federal prison in Alabama.

In the midst of the historic scandal, Colson’s self-assurance and religious apathy broke after a Christian businessman friend, Tom Phillips, prayed for him.

Upon his release from jail, Colson decided to start a prison ministry — Prison Fellowship.

Today Prison Fellowship is at work in most U.S. prisons and in more than 115 countries around the world.

“Chuck Colson was a towering intellect who already has a high-impact place in history as a courageous reformer,” said his pastor, Hayes Wicker, of First Baptist Church, Naples, Fla.

Colson also helped launch the 1994 Evangelicals and Catholics Together initiative and was co-author of the 2010 Manhattan Declaration.

Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, said in a letter to signers and supporters of the Manhattan Declaration, “Let us celebrate the life of ... a man of integrity, fidelity and true Christian faith.”

Colson is survived by his wife Patty, three children and five grandchildren. (BP, TAB)

# ‘Extremely disappointing’

## ‘Home brew’ bill passes House; pro-life, gambling-restriction bills stuck

(continued from page 1)

sored by Rep. Mac McCutcheon, R-Capshaw, was passed 44–33 and is now in the Senate Small Business Committee.

“We need people to contact their senators and let them know that we oppose this bill because how do you regulate what someone is brewing in their homes,” Godfrey said. “It exposes young people and children living in the homes to alcohol — not only having alcohol on hand but the production of alcohol.”

Of all the pro-life legislation lawmakers filed this session, only one bill has passed one of the legislative houses, and abortion opponents are fighting for it to be considered in the other.

Recently Senate Bill (SB) 10, which would allow Alabama to opt out of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act permitting taxpayer dollars to be used for elective abortions, passed from the Senate.

Although experts say the House still has enough time to present and pass the bill, it cannot be considered since Rep. Jim McClendon, R-Springville, said the House Health Committee will not meet again this session. McClendon heads the committee in which the bill would have to have passed out of before other representatives could vote on it.

“That is extremely disappointing,” said Eric Johnston, a Birmingham attorney and president of the Southeast Law Institute. “If Alabama doesn’t take care of this procedural problem, we will be stuck with it. ... The House Health Committee needs to meet or the bill should be assigned to another committee.”

Another sore spot for pro-family supporters this session is the lack of progress on HB 414 sponsored by Rep. Allen Farley, R-McCalla, which makes possession of 10 or more slot machines or gambling devices a felony. The bill passed from the House Judiciary Committee April 5 but has not moved since.

“If HB 414 doesn’t pass, we expect the gamblers to open up again soon because the penalty is so small,” Johnston said. “It’s just a misdemeanor. It is not a deterrent for the crime. The best solution to the problem is to make it a class C felony and that makes it a significant deterrent from crime because you not only lose your machines you lose your property and everything. ... If that bill passes, it will be a significant tool to close down these places.”

### Immigration law debate

One more feverishly debated issue at the Statehouse is the wording in legislation proposed to amend Alabama’s immigration law.

HB 658 sponsored by Rep. Micky Hammon, R-Decatur, and co-sponsored by 41 other representatives recently passed from the House and the Senate Judiciary Committee. If passed, this bill would revise last year’s Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act.

Sen. Scott Beason, R-Gardendale, filed a similar bill, SB 541, which recently passed from the Senate Job Creation and Economic Development Committee and awaits a third reading.

Johnston does not believe Alabama’s law needs to be changed just yet.

“Arizona’s (immigration law court case) will be decided in June, and until that happens we don’t need to amend our law,” he said. “We need to wait and see what the Su-



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

*“We need people to contact their senators and let them know that we oppose this bill because how do you regulate what someone is brewing in their homes.”*

Joe Godfrey  
Alabama Citizens Action Program

To contact your senator, call 334-242-7800.

preme Court says is constitutional, and then we’ll have guidance. Right now, we are just guessing.”

Neither of the state’s budgets has been passed from the Statehouse. The General Fund Budget passed the House, and the Education Trust Fund Budget passed the Senate. Yet some lawmakers have proposed a way to help the state generate more money for education.

Rep. Randy Davis, R-Daphne, along with seven co-sponsors, filed HB 360, which would become the Flexible School Calendar Act of 2012 and would allow school systems to shorten their 180-day school calendar by increasing the number of hours children are taught per day. This shortened schedule could affect tourism areas around the state like Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega, providing longer summer vacations and camping seasons.

Sen. Trip Pittman, R-Daphne, filed a similar bill, SB 517, which has not moved since

being sent to the Senate finance and taxation education committee.

HB 360 has passed the House and Senate tourism and marketing committee and is pending a third reading on the Senate floor.

### ‘A lot to be done’

Meanwhile, Godfrey hopes Alabama legislators will focus more attention on pro-family legislation over the remaining seven days of the session.

“I hope they will get some of these pro-life bills passed,” he said. “I hope they will slow down and stop some of these alcohol liberalization bills. ... At the end of this session, I hope we can rejoice in the passage of conservative, family values legislation.”

Johnston added, “I think there is a lot to be done. The budgets are still out there. ... There are a lot of other bills that are caught up in a log jam. They are going to run out of time and these bills (are) not (going to) pass and what is their excuse going to be.”

## VOICE YOUR OPINION

**SPEAK UP** on issues in the Baptist world by writing a letter to the editor of *The Alabama Baptist*.

### Remember to:

- Include your name and address
- Focus on issues, not people
- Be as concise as possible



# BAPTIST CAMPUS MIN



Photo courtesy of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

1. David Sumner, *University of North Alabama*
2. Kimberly Andrews, *University of Alabama and Shelton State Community College*
3. Willie Alexander, *Alabama A&M University and Calhoun State Community College*
4. Tracie Griggs, *Metro Montgomery area*
5. Lee Dymond, *Auburn University at Montgomery*
6. Edwin Hocutt, *University of Alabama in Huntsville and Calhoun State Community College — Huntsville campus*
7. Brad Bensinger, *Troy University*
8. Bill Morrison, *University of Alabama at Birmingham*
9. Steve Thompson, *Auburn University*
10. Brantley Bonds, *Auburn University and Southern Union Community College — Opelika campus*
11. Craig Hawkins, *University of Alabama at Birmingham and Jefferson State Community College — Shelby campus*
12. Shannon Hughes, *University of South Alabama and Springhill College*
13. Sean Thornton, *University of Montevallo*
14. Eddie Chambers, *Alabama State University*
15. Jerrod Brown, *University of South Alabama and Bishop State Community College*
16. Jake Duke, *West Central Alabama area*
17. Gary Brittain, *Jacksonville State University*
18. Nate Young, *University of Alabama*

## BCM reaches students for Christ on college campuses

By Sondra Washington  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

For almost 90 years, college and university students in Alabama could leave for school and have the opportunity to continue growing in their faith without skipping a beat thanks to Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM).

In the past, BCM primarily provided students with opportunities for worship, devotion, fellowship and moral accountability, according to Mike Nuss, director of the office of collegiate and student ministries at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

"The university was thought to be a godless institution that students needed to be protected from not necessarily [a place to be] ministered to," Nuss said, noting that BCM has its roots in the YMCA movement of the late 1800s and early 1900s.

"As early as 1923 in their centennial annual meeting, Alabama Baptists expressed concern that ministries to students be established on every major college and university campus in the state," Nuss added. "Auburn University, the University of Alabama, the University of Montevallo and Jacksonville State University were among some of the first schools to have BSU/BCM work established in the early to mid-1920s."

Today BCM — formerly known as BSU (Baptist Student Union) — has expanded its ministry "to reach students for Christ, grow faithful disciples, prepare students for Christian leadership and involve students in missions service," Nuss said. "Today the college and university campus is seen as one of Alabama Baptists' greatest missions fields."

He said nearly 30,000 students are reached annually at various campuses across Alabama.

At the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), Baptist campus ministers and student leaders connect with nearly 700 students annually through a conversational English ministry for international students, student-led Bible studies, various fellowship events, intramural sports and worship services. Each year, students also have the opportunity to do hands-on ministry work and take missions trips across the country during spring break to share their faith with others.

### Positive response

This year, 46 UAB students spent their vacation in Long Island, N.Y., leading worship, distributing invitations to an Easter service and taking "care bags" to train station commuters. Bill Morrison, senior Baptist campus minister

at UAB, said students respond positively to this ministry, which recruits extensively during new student orientations and tries to find "underreached areas" on campus. "We have 27 students on our leadership team here," he added. "We try to meet (with) them consistently and challenge them in their spiritual walk. We work with those students to help equip them and encourage them to make a difference while they are in school."

Meredith Burbank, a junior at UAB, was greatly affected by BCM and now serves on the leadership team.

"I grew up Baptist, and I thought I was saved at a young age," she said. "But God just shook my world and turned it upside down. It was this past summer that I was really saved. ... The BCM has been nothing but absolutely positive in helping me grow in my relationship with Christ. ... I've really learned what it is to love people the way Christ loved the church and to have a heart for people and share the gospel of Christ."

Jerrod Brown, a Baptist campus minister at the University of South Alabama, has seen similar results in Mobile students.

"Our mission is to reach, grow and send collegians and to help our local Mobile Baptist Association churches do the same," Brown

*"Today the college and university campus is seen as one of Alabama Baptists' greatest missions fields."*

said. "All that we do is guided by this mission. ... We have seen students reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ for the first time, we have watched as students grew and matured in their faith and we have had students discover their God-given mission as they were sent to serve."

Brown added that training and mobilizing Christian students to engage other students each week has worked well on the campus. Each semester, the BCM hosts a weeklong outreach event featuring creative evangelism projects like "conversation tables" where students can discuss the gospel and "skeptics coffee houses" to address faith questions and share the gospel.

"These emphasis weeks help us to connect with the lost on campus and help us mobilize the Christian student to be able to boldly share their faith with others," Brown said. "Christian students are open to living a life that means something, that has purpose. They want to live their faith out on campus and in the world. We want to help them do that."

For more information about BCM, visit [www.thestudenthub.org](http://www.thestudenthub.org).



# ISTRIES

*still making an impact  
across the state*

## Finding 'exciting crowd,' Nintendo at JSU's BCM, 'I was hooked'

By Logan Huggins  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

**M**y story with Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) starts long before my first steps on campus, way back in high school. In 2008, I graduated from Jacksonville Christian Academy fifth in my class. Although that's usually an impressive figure, when you realize I graduated from a class size of 20, it loses its punch slightly. As you would expect, social circles in such a limited environment were extremely stifling.

After graduation, I remember praying humbly to the Lord, asking him to show me His glory in this new, unknown world of Jacksonville State University (JSU).

Once school started and I found myself wandering aimlessly across campus (as all bewildered freshmen seem to do), I came across a strange, circular building situated at the main intersection of town. The building I had stumbled across just so happened to be the BCM building — a monument to 1970s architectural design and home to the JSU BCM. Inside, I found not only an exciting crowd of Christian college students but also a Nintendo Entertainment System. Needless to say, I was hooked.

Although I had always imagined what being part of such a thriving body of believers felt like, the reality of BCM blew away all my expectations. Plus, as a long-distance commuter, the BCM building served as the perfect home away from home, a place to recharge my batteries after a long day.

By the following spring semester, I had transitioned into BCM and settled onto a more significant spiritual role. I joined a weekly Bible study group, helped out with worship services and even helped orchestrate a womanless beauty pageant that raised money for student missions. In hindsight, it was clear how God was at work through my first year at BCM. We did food drives, fundraising for missions, as well as hundreds of other things in order to extend His kingdom through the community.

### 'The Lord blessed our efforts'

Little bit by little bit, the Lord was carefully crafting this shy little private-schooler into a super extroverted captain of outreach. Throughout that following summer, I and the rest of the BCM outreach team tirelessly poured our heart and soul into the lives of incoming JSU students. Then, as He always does, the Lord blessed our efforts.

Throughout the next few years, the BCM would eventually become one of the fastest growing groups on campus. For example, our regular attendance at JSU's worship service quadrupled in only two years. We were having record crowds at BCM events left and right. Wherever we looked, God had His hand in our ministry and was transforming the lives of students as well as the entire culture of JSU.

Although it might be possible to write of the hundreds of lives we've impacted through BCM student missions trips, intramural teams and other outreach efforts, I seriously believe there wouldn't be enough paper in the world to fully express the magnitude and beauty of the ministry of JSU BCM.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Logan Huggins is a senior majoring in communications at Jacksonville State University and is the current BCM state president.*



HUGGINS

## BCM by the numbers

	Alabama	SBC
Campuses with collegiate ministry	45	795
Students reached by Baptist Campus Ministries	27,948	353,666
Professions of faith as a result of BCM	346	12,189
Students involved in witness training	837	14,262
Students serving in collegiate missions	1,783	31,509
Students involved in Bible study groups	2,402	32,785
Student contributions to student missions	\$252,184	\$6,101,173

Source: Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

## BCM invests in the future of the church

By Mike Nuss  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

**A**s a general rule, investments aren't paying very well these days — at least the financial kind. But I believe investing in ministry to college students has rewards that can pay off in ways many Alabama Baptist churches cannot imagine.

At a time when Southern Baptists are decrying the trend of students leaving the church and looking for new gimmicks and tricks to keep them, let me suggest that one of the best tools Alabama Baptists have isn't new at all. In fact, it's been around for more than 90 years.

Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) is alive and well on campuses across Alabama. BCM ministers to almost 30,000 students annually and is a direct result of churches across our state partnering with Baptist associations and the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) to reach and disciple college students and involve them in the life of a local church.

BCM exists to reach students for Christ, help them grow in their daily walk with Him and lead them to find ways to serve Him through missions involvement. Campus ministers, God-called men and women who serve through local associations, the SBOM and some as employees of our state Baptist schools, work directly on campuses to help students as they struggle to discover God's direction and strive to integrate their education with His plan for their lives.

Recent research shows that students involved

in BCM during their college years are much more likely to stay connected to the church as they move into young adulthood. These students not only tend to remain in the church, they are significantly more involved in church leadership, missions, teaching and serving. By investing in collegiate ministry today, we are investing in the future of the local church and working to fulfill the Great Commission in a vital partnership effort.

The impact of BCM on students' lives is multifaceted and far-reaching not only in Alabama but across the Southern Baptist Convention. Alabama's unreached college students make up a missions field we can't afford to ignore and your gifts through the Cooperative Program are the fuel that helps make this ministry possible.

Throughout my life, many individuals and churches have invested in me — teaching, guiding and providing experiences and opportunities to help me find my place in God's world of work. Today Alabama Baptists have an amazing opportunity to continue that legacy of investment in the future of the church by supporting, encouraging and praying for BCM — an investment with eternal rewards.

For more information, contact Mike Nuss at [mnuss@alsbom.org](mailto:mnuss@alsbom.org) or 1-800-264-1225.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Mike Nuss is the director of collegiate and student ministries for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. He served as BCM campus minister at the University of South Alabama for 15 years.*



NUSS

# Baptists attempt to assist Syrian refugees but funds running low

(continued from page 1)

hammad said, sipping tea with his visitors. "There is no value to a human life there."

Syrian refugees streaming into Turkey and Lebanon have garnered most of the international media attention. But more than 90,000 Syrians, mostly Sunni Muslims, had crossed into northern Jordan by early April, according to one unofficial government estimate. More slip across the desert border each night, walking secret routes to avoid the guns of Syrian soldiers — or bribing border guards to let them pass. Some are injured. Some carry elderly family members and small children. Most are traumatized, terrified and enraged by what they have experienced. At best, they face an uncertain future in Jordan, where housing is cramped and expensive, and jobs are scarce.

But the overwhelmingly Muslim refugees who come to this part of northern Jordan have found an unexpected local friend: Nour, a Christian pastor who leads an evangelical church.

"This is our call, to reach out," said Nour, a softspoken man

with a neatly clipped graying mustache. "Our door is open to Christians or Muslims anytime."

Nour has become a one-man clearinghouse for aiding Syrian refugee families. He helps them find places to live (so far, there are no official refugee camps in the area). He and his church members deliver food, blankets, mattresses, medicine and other basic supplies. He coordinates assistance from a variety of other churches and Christian groups. He cooperates with the local Islamic aid society, which refers many refugees to the church. Most of all, he listens.

## Number of refugees continually growing

The church, which started out helping about 30 refugee families, now coordinates regular assistance to more than 270 families, at least 1,000 people. Nour estimates more than 1,000 refugee families live in the area — with many more on the way if conditions in Syria don't improve soon.

Along with area Christians, Southern Baptists are attempt-

ing to help by reaching out to the Syrians fleeing the violence.

"BGR (Baptist Global Response) and its partners have been responding to needs of refugees flooding out of the country," said Jeff Palmer, executive director of BGR, an international relief and development organization. To date, Southern Baptists through BGR have provided about \$160,000 of relief supplies, he said.

"The World Hunger Fund reserve is low, and we will only be able to respond to about half of [new requests]," Palmer said. "Jesus told His followers to 'work while it is day,' and right now we have the opportunity of daylight with these refugees. As volatile as the region is, night may be coming and no one will be able to work. We need people who care about people in need to take advantage of the daylight, so the love of God can be demonstrated for these families in crisis."

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Names have been changed for security reasons.* (BP)

## WMU introduces new trademark, 'Missions for Life' tagline

Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) has introduced an updated trademark and a new tagline as key elements for the missions organization's branding.

WMU's trademark since 2006 has incorporated the letters WMU with a larger "M" to place emphasis on "missions."

The new trademark is an updated version of the



original one adopted by WMU in 1913. The original graphic contained a number of elements, including the outline of a fish, an early Christian symbol; a flame or light representing the light of Christ in Christians to lead others to Him and to follow His light into the world; an open Bible representing knowledge of Scripture and teaching missions-related passages; and a globe expressing the idea of an outward focus on the peoples of the world.

WMU's new trademark incorporates two elements from the original version: the fish and a stylized circle or world.

"The colors of blue and green are fresh and appealing to both genders and, used in a stylized circle, they express the idea of sharing Christ in our world," said Julie Walters, communications specialist for national WMU.

"We believe this new graphic celebrates our heritage while embracing today's opportunities by better reflecting the active, friendly, reliable and invested mindset of those involved in global missions through WMU," she said.

And missions — the singular focus of WMU — is emphasized in the Southern Baptist auxiliary's new tagline, "Missions for Life."

WMU's tagline since 2005 had been "Change a Life. Change the World." (BP)



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# RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

by Jennifer Davis Rash • executive editor • jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

## 'I'll be praying for you'

Are you committed to prayer or do you just make a contribution to prayer?

Jane Bellew, board chairwoman of *The Alabama Baptist*, asked that question during the state Baptist paper's March board meeting.

We were brainstorming potential future editorial topics for the paper and prayer surfaced as an idea to consider.

Could we enhance the spiritual lives of our readers with an emphasis on prayer and by providing resources for developing one's prayer life?

We talked about the fact that fewer and fewer people understand how to pray corporately. We also discussed how the phrase "I'll be praying for you" has become a general nicety-type statement rather than a sincere investment. It's said more as a closing statement in a conversation after hearing about someone's concerns or situation — kind of like how we start a conversation with "How are you?"

What do we really mean when we tell people we will be praying for them? Do we? And, if we do, is it merely a contribution toward the praying being done or are we truly committed to pray intensely and consistently? How often do we even remember to ask them about the concern or the situation the next time we see them?

My brother takes this matter seriously. He is careful not to flippantly tell others he is praying for them unless he truly means it. So when he calls or sends me a text saying he is praying for me on a certain day or about a difficult situation, I know without a doubt he is indeed praying for me.

One of my co-workers also is careful



to say things like "I'm going to say a prayer for you right now" or "I just prayed for you about this." She is a true prayer warrior, but she's also careful not to overpromise.

A friend of mine at church has had some serious prayer needs during the past year. When she was sharing her situation with a few of us, she said she was seeking prayers from those who were committed at the level of "on your knees, until you are exhausted" kind of praying. She's given that kind of prayer commitment to us at one time or another, and we had to decide if we were dedicated enough to return the favor.

### Prayer warriors

I have been blessed to have a consistent stream of strong prayer warriors in my life including retired Southern Baptist missionaries Mickey and the late Charlotte Searcy. They were definitely a team you wanted praying for you in times of need.

Charlotte taught me about prayer journaling and organizing prayer lists. She encouraged praying together and praying out loud. She meditated on Scripture and truly knew how to listen to God. She took praying for others seriously.

But what if we are not dedicated at the level Charlotte was? How do we deepen our commitment, and how do we find the kind of time needed to pray at that level?

I think of the various stages of life and how so many of them are excessively busy with no time to spare. At the same time, we have to remember this is one of the spiritual disciplines and we must find a slot for it. Here we are back to balance again — proper sleep, consistent exercise, productive effort at work, time with family and friends and time with God in His Word and in prayer.

As we consider praying through a situation, praying without ceasing, praying corporately, finding time to pray, what does prayer include, etc., let us hear from you.

How has your prayer life been turned around? What resources are available for developing one's prayer life?

## Rashional EXTRAS ...

*What topics are on your mind?*

*Email jrash@thealabamabaptist.org*

### Health tips from "40 Days to Better Living — Optimal Health"

By Dr. Scott Morris  
Church Health Center of Memphis, www.churchhealthcenter.org

- ▶ Know your family health history. It can be relevant to your own health.
- ▶ Your physician cannot treat what you do not tell him or her. Doctors have heard and seen it all, so do not risk your health because you are feeling embarrassed.
- ▶ Quick fixes in medicine are generally not a good long-term solution.
- ▶ Good medicine is preventative medicine.
- ▶ Overexposure to the sun can cause serious health problems.

## Tips for a successful prayer time

### 1. Schedule a prayer time.

Make an appointment with God, and make it a priority. Start with a small amount — even just 10 minutes — and increase from there. It has to become a strong enough priority that you can't go to bed until it is accomplished, like brushing your teeth.

### 2. Just get started.

Don't spend too much time thinking about it. Don't look for the "right time" or "right place." Obstacles will always come up. Ignore them and focus on just getting a start, even if it's a very small one.

### 3. Think of God's point of view.

This typically leads to confession and repentance. Once you offer to God your apology for not seeing His perspective and understanding His heart better, then you'll receive His genuine forgiveness. Then a new closeness comes over you as well as a deep inner joy.

### 4. Be specific.

The success of your prayer in connecting to God depends a lot on the actual content of what you are praying for. Making a prayer list is helpful in being specific. Write it down and have the list with you when you pray. Keep adding things to the list and subtracting them all the time.

### 5. Pray out loud.

When I speak the words out loud, it forces me to clarify my thoughts. When the words come out and I hear them expressed, then I can move along to the next thought. If I keep the words in my mind, it's harder to keep going and my prayers tend to taper off to nothing very quickly.

### 6. Pray with other people.

This takes a commitment and requires us to become vulnerable. It means we are opening up our personal thoughts and desires in prayer to someone else. But the rewards are far greater than the price.

Try taking turns with a prayer list, with each person praying for one item on the list at a time.

You could also have each person pray one sentence and the next person pray a sentence.

### 7. Pray for others.

Praying for others helps not only the person you are praying for but also you. It grows and develops our own personality and heart to become more like God's. Prayer for others helps us to achieve a deeper understanding of the person we are praying for. It

also helps us learn patience. It helps us better understand the things we can change and the things we can't and teaches us forgiveness.

### 8. Ask questions.

I have often found it helpful to write down a question and then pray about it. Usually I write down the answer as I receive it in a stream-of-consciousness manner.

After my initial prayer question, many thoughts start flowing into my mind and may eventually go off in a totally different direction that I never would have thought of.

By writing it down, God leads me to a deep, definite and personal message that He has for me that I never would have thought of on my own. Also think of prayer as a two-way conversation and listen for God's answer.

Another value of writing it down is that you can review it later. This gives you the opportunity to analyze with both your rational mind and your emotional heart whether the message is really from God.

### 9. Create a holy environment.

Find a place in your house that is the most comfortable for you to pray and cultivate the atmosphere in that area with inspiring books, pictures, music, flowers, candles, etc.

But remember your environment should assist you to pray. It should not be a distraction from connecting to God.

### 10. Build your foundation step by step.

Have patience. Don't expect instant gratification.

Prayer is something that functions very much in the real world and God is very much a God of natural laws. If you focus only on some certain end result, you will be disappointed. Even if you obtain it, you won't experience long lasting joy, but only a momentary feeling.

Prayer should be thought of more like breathing or eating. You have to do it every day for good health.

**Rev. Jim Stephens**  
Bloomington, Ill.

## From the Twitterverse ...

March 7, 2012

Ed Stetzer @edstetzer

We must not neglect our neighbor for Netflix. Our family for Facebook. Our town for Twitter.

March 15, 2012

The Daniel Plan @thedanielplan

Too busy to exercise? Use commercial breaks to exercise when watching the news or TV. Or motivate yourself by putting your exercise equipment by the TV and only watch your favorite shows IF you exercise during them.

*UPCOMING TOPICS include being misunderstood. Send us your experiences with and suggestions on this topic. Email jrash@thealabamabaptist.org or comment on our blog at thealabamabaptist.wordpress.com.*

# Major League Baseball strikes out chewing tobacco

America's favorite pastime returned for another season April 5. The Major League Baseball (MLB) tradition, with peanuts and crackerjacks inseparably entwined with it, is as American as apple pie.

But when fans first passed through the turnstiles of Major League ballparks or tuned in to watch their favorite team early this season, they may have noticed the diminished visibility of something that has also been part of the baseball tradition since its earliest days — smokeless chewing tobacco.

For the first time in history, Major League ball clubs are playing ball with limits on the usage and visibility of smokeless tobacco on the field and in front of fans and cameras. As part of a five-year collec-

tive bargaining agreement reached in November between MLB and the players association, players, coaches, managers and other team personnel are no longer permitted to stash a can or package of smokeless tobacco in their back pockets or anywhere else in their uniforms when taking to the field or anytime fans are in the ballpark. Nor are they permitted to have a wad of smokeless chew — otherwise known as dip — tucked under their lip when signing autographs or participating in on-camera interviews or fan meet-and-greets.

The new restrictions are a positive step toward curtailing smokeless tobacco's widespread and devastating impact on health: oral cancer, mouth lesions and gum disease, to name a

few ailments caused by the products, which also have been linked to heart attacks and pancreatic cancer.

And with a 36 percent rise in the rate of smokeless tobacco use among high school boys since 2003, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the new limits are a positive step toward reducing the damag-

ing influence of smokeless tobacco.

The agreement, enthusiastically supported by baseball Commissioner Bud Selig, follows a concerted effort last year by Southern Baptists and other faith groups, along with numerous public health organizations, in calling for a complete ban on smokeless tobacco products in MLB. (BP)



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### CHURCH POSITIONS

**PASTOR:** Shiloh Baptist Church of Hartford, Ala., is seeking a full-time pastor. 5+ years experience as pastor of a Southern Baptist church preferred. Please submit resumés by mail to: Pastor Search Committee, Shiloh Baptist Church, 873 N. Shiloh Road, Hartford, AL 36344.

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

**SENIOR PASTOR:** First Baptist Church, Blakely, Ga., is seeking resumés for the position of senior pastor. Candidates must possess at minimum a degree from a Baptist seminary. Send resumés to: FBC, P.O. Box 667, Blakely, GA 39823 or resume@fbcblakely.com.

**SENIOR PASTOR:** Bethlehem Baptist Church, located in Clarksville, Ga., is seeking a full-time senior pastor. BBC is nestled among the mountains in a vibrant community and is a mission-minded church committed to proclaiming the never changing gospel to an ever-changing world. With attendance averaging 400-500, we have multiple staff members and two Sunday School sessions and worship services. Poised for growth, our congregation desires a pastor to lead us in the evangelism of our local community and beyond through outreach, biblical teaching and fellowship. Our building and grounds are debt-free and well-maintained. Send resumés to: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 448, Clarksville, GA 30523 or bbpcpsc@gmail.com.

**BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR:** West Highland Baptist Church in the Bessemer/Hueytown area is seeking a bivocational pastor. You may email resumés to: thobson.whbc@hotmail.com or mail to: WHBC, ATTN: Pastoral Search Committee, 4839 W. Highland Church Road, Bessemer, AL 35023.

**FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC:** First Baptist Church of Killen, Ala., is seeking a full-time minister of music. Please send resumés to the Personnel Committee at: First Baptist Killen, P.O.

Box 236, Killen, AL 35645. For a copy of the job description, please contact the church office via 256-757-5334 or email a request to: mail@firstbaptistkillen.org.

**MUSIC MINISTER:** Pineville Park Baptist Church in Pineville, La., is seeking a full-time music minister. If interested, email resumés to: Pastor Steve McAllister at steve@pinevillepark.org.

**BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC:** Central Baptist Church in Gardendale is searching for a part-time minister of music who is devoted to God. We are a small church with blended worship (more modern upbeat music than traditional). Resumés can be emailed to: lawanna@cbcgardendale.com or Central Baptist, 4650 Newfound Road, Mt. Olive, AL 35117. Call 205-381-0766 for details.

**BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP PASTOR:** Concord Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational worship pastor. Please send resumés to: concordbaptist@bham.rr.com. You may also visit our website concordfamily.org.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL MINISTER:** First Baptist Church of Trussville, Ala., is seeking a full-time middle school minister to lead students in grades 7th and 8th. College undergraduate degree required. Previous student ministry experience preferred. Please submit resumés via email to: resumés@fbctrussville.org or mail to: Middle School Minister Search Team, ATTN: Allison Stanley, 128 N. Chalkville Road, Trussville, AL 35173.

**PART-TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTER:** Cedar Grove Baptist, Leeds, Ala. Part-time children's minister. 15 hours, 1st-5th grades. Great volunteer base. For questions and resumés contact 205-699-4806, steven@cedargroveleeds.org.

### OTHER POSITIONS

**CHURCH PIANIST:** Heritage Baptist Church of Southside, Ala., near Gadsden is looking for a church pianist for Sunday morning and two Sunday nights per month. If interested, please contact Jeff Thompson at 256-312-0746 or John Herron at 256-312-1063.

**DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS:** Suwannee Baptist Association, an association of 39 churches in Suwannee and Hamilton

counties in Florida, seeks a director of missions. A job description is available on the website: suwanneebaptassoc.net. A description is available upon request from smbsearch@gmx.com and where resumés should also be directed.

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### FOR SALE

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**PATRIOTIC SINGING FLAG:** Six-tier lighted patriotic singing flag (Elizabethtown, Ky.). Used for choir cantatas. Manufacturer's construction/lighting instructions included. Photos available. POC: John Rice, john@severnvalley.org or 270-765-7822.

### MISCELLANEOUS

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## Want to know God?

By Mike McMorris  
Alabama Baptist minister

What is most important and makes the difference in our lives is that we know Jesus Christ personally. Would you say you have come to know Christ personally or are you still in the process? If you know Christ, then would you cut this out and pass it on to someone who doesn't? If you are still in the process, then please read on.

The Bible teaches us that there is a holy God who created everything we see and cannot see and He loves us. It also tells us that our sin has separated us from God and His love.

Sin is living life our own way. In our sin, we are left under God's wrath, and if we remain that way, then we will live eternally without Him.

The good news is God, because He loves us, did something amazing for us. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to this earth, born as we were.

He lived a sinless life doing God's will. He did it so He could make a sacrifice for us on a cross.

He took our sin and God's wrath due to us on Himself to the cross, paying for your sin and mine.

He died, was buried and three days later rose from the dead victorious over sin and death.


By doing that, Jesus provided the only lifeline for us to get to God.

Is knowing these facts enough for us to reach God? No. We repent, or turn, from everything we think of what it means to reach God. We change our minds about trusting in our good works, our morals and even church-going if we think doing it will get us to God. We trust in Jesus and Him alone as our Savior.

Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

We then follow Jesus as our Lord.

We read His Word, connect with His church and allow Him to have authority in our lives.

Jesus called and still calls people to follow Him, and as they do, their lives are changed immediately and progressively. 

# 50<sup>th</sup> annual Judson College Ministers'

# Golf Tournament

By David Byrd  
Special to The Alabama Baptist



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**T**he 50th annual Judson College Ministers' Golf Tournament will be held in Marion on May 14–15. The tournament is open to all ministers serving Alabama Baptist State Convention churches or entities.

Several years ago a feature writer from *The Montgomery Advertiser* came to the tournament to observe and interview players for a story he was writing. While interviewing the chairman of the golf committee, he said, "So, what we have here is a golf tournament with no cussing, no drinking and no gambling! I've never seen anything like this, and yet everyone seems to be having a great time!"

It is a great time for ministers from around our state convention to get together for fellowship. All skill levels are represented at the golf tournament. It also provides an opportunity for ministers to

*To register for the 50th annual Judson College Ministers' Golf Tournament in Marion on May 14–15, call Lesia Hightower at 334-683-5109.*

visit the campus of Judson College to learn what is available for the young women of their churches. Judson offers an outstanding educational experience in a Christian setting.

At this year's tournament there will be a \$10,000 hole-in-one prize. Other hole-in-one prizes include a set of Nike irons, a Panasonic 32" LCD television and a \$500 Visa gift card. A steak dinner will be served on Monday evening. Each flight is made up

of four golfers with a first and second prize being awarded to each flight. Door prizes will also be awarded. The tournament is limited to the first 72 players who register. For more information or to register, call Lesia Hightower at 334-683-5109.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — David Byrd is pastor of Northside Baptist Church, Jasper, and chairman of the Judson College golf committee. ☪*

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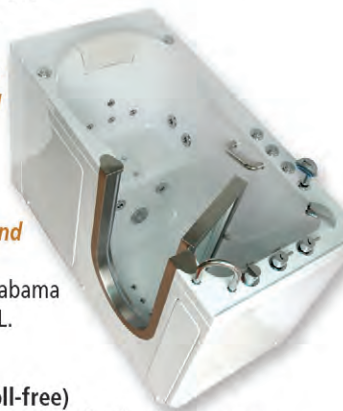


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## Reverse Mortgage News

By Jimmy Dixon

Most of my customers have used a reverse mortgage to pay off debts that were on their home. The mortgage payment had become burdensome and they needed relief. That's the beauty of a reverse mortgage — no more monthly payments!

Others have used it as a source of income because they wanted a better lifestyle. I've also had several grown children approach me because they found out their parents were struggling. They were deciding between meat or medicine while they were house-rich but cash-poor.

Last week I helped a lady who had power of attorney for her great aunt. The great aunt has around-the-clock sitters and was running out of money. With the reverse mortgage they will be able to pay

sitters for a long time to come.

Last month I was flooded with calls about seniors and property taxes as I wrote, "I often talk with seniors who are paying property tax when they may qualify for an exemption."



Jimmy Dixon

This is true. When you reach 65 you ought to check with your county's tax assessor. However, I should have said, "This is only for the property where you live." I'm sorry for the confusion.

For a free brochure or more information about reverse mortgages, contact Jimmy Dixon at 205-567-4800 or jdixon@mcgowinking.com.

Like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives. He is Bible Study director and a deacon at Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown.



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# Family Matters

## A Coke & A Smile

By Dani-Ga Chester, ABCH House Parent

My husband and I are house parents with Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries on their Mobile campus. Serving on staff for over three years has not only been challenging but an honor to serve the boys and girls who need help. Over the years, we have had the privilege to meet some incredible people and see and do some pretty amazing things. This past Wednesday, April 4, was one of those moments.

We were invited to the Coca-Cola plant in Mobile to their annual picnic that recognizes employees, honors workers, and hosts a speaker. We were delighted to get that invitation again. They also asked us to get the shoe sizes of the kids before we came because they were going to purchase new shoes for all the kids on campus. Wow!

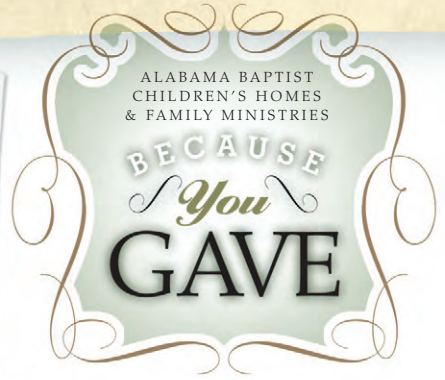
After eating with 300-plus Coke employees, we heard former Alabama running back Siran Stacy share his testimony and offer an invitation to accept Christ. Several men stood up all over the enclosed, white tent showing they wanted to receive Christ ... yes, AT A COKE PLANT. We also learned that a couple of years ago, this plant rewrote its company statement to: Honor God and Serve Others. Wow!

Later we walked inside and were asked to sit down in the chairs provided. The room was decorated with Coke products of all kinds. Here our children would receive their new shoes. Once the child had found his or her seat, a Coke employee began taking off the shoes and socks of the child and placing the child's feet in a bucket. Carefully, the Coke employee started washing the feet of the child. It was an amazing and beautiful sight -- all over the room you could see Coke employees carrying new boxes of shoes, buckets of water being poured over feet, a bit of a confused look on some children's faces, and new shoes and socks being placed on the children's feet. It was a beautiful sight I will never forget.

That a company of this magnitude would humble themselves by washing the feet of children showed an attribute of Christ. It was an astonishing sight.

I know that these precious children will not forget that moment. I pray that what's embedded in their hearts is that Jesus Himself humbled Himself to the point of death so that they may live in eternal freedom.

"A coke and a smile" now has a new meaning for me!



BECAUSE YOU GAVE, Twon's life was completely changed. He went from living in the projects with limited prospects to now attending college with hopes of serving in worship ministry. Mindy went from living a life that no child deserves to living the life that every child deserves.

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*This Mother's Day, Sunday, May 13, is the Annual Day of Prayer for the Children's Homes. It is also the day when many churches choose to participate in our Annual Offering, which funds about one-third of our annual operating budget. Would you please join us in prayer, and encourage your church in the offering? Materials are available by contacting Kay Taylor at [ktaylor@abchome.org](mailto:ktaylor@abchome.org) or 1-888-720-8805.*

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## Congratulations Graduates!



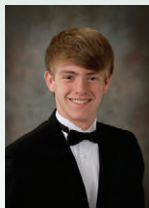
### Cory Buffaloe

Jacksonville State University  
B.A. Theater Performance; Minor in Communications  
Grace Baptist Church  
Active in the Memphis Ministry Team  
Will work with "Trumpet in the Land" outdoor theater in New Philadelphia, Ohio, upon graduation.



### Rachel Burden

LeFlore High School  
Honor Choir  
Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church  
Youth Board  
Plans to attend Alabama State University.



### Whitten Riley Green

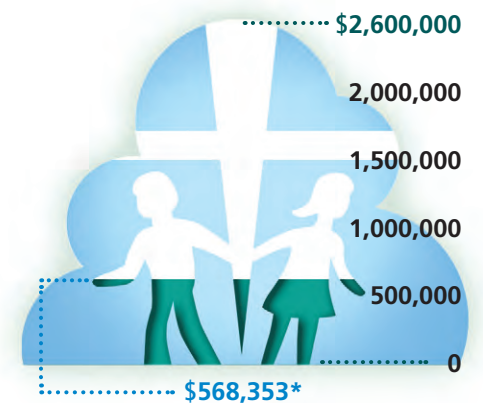
Westminster School at Oak Mountain  
Indoor Track; Soccer Team Captain; Shelby County All-County Soccer Team  
The Church at Brook Hills  
Served on three international mission trips to Peru, Honduras and the Middle East  
Camp of Champions volunteer; Chic-fil-A employee and cow mascot; Shoal Creek Golf Club employee; Published writing for 280 Living  
Plans to attend Mississippi College and major in Kinesiology.



### Stephan Reach

Pleasant Grove High School  
4.1 GPA, National Honor Society, Football, Superintendent's 100 Super Scholars, Merit Scholarship from Samford University, Birmingham  
Westmont Baptist Church  
Choir, Sound Tech, Mission Team  
Works part-time at Gilmer Pharmacy and does yard work and repairs for shut-ins in our community.  
Plans to attend Samford University and major in Pharmacy.


## 2012 ANNUAL OFFERING




The 2012 goal for the Annual Children's Homes Offering is \$2.6 million. Please encourage your church to give.

\* Graphic represents giving totals as of press time.

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# Births to cohabiting couples increase during past decade

The number of babies born to unmarried couples who are living together in America has increased dramatically during the past decade, according to a new report by the National Center for Health Statistics.

"We were a little surprised in such a short time period to see these increases," Gladys Martinez, a demographer and the lead author of the report, said.

About 23 percent of the reported births in the study — based on face-to-face interviews of 22,000 men and women from 2006 through 2010 — were to unmarried heterosexual couples who were cohabiting when the child was born.

In 2002, the figure from a similar study was 14 percent.

## Bad economy

Researchers in the study did not attempt to explain the increase, but a sociologist from Bowling Green State University in Ohio told *USA Today* that it could be attributed to the economy.

"Marriage is an achievement

that you enter into when you're ready. But in the meantime, life happens. You form relationships. You have sex. You get pregnant. In a perfect world, they would prefer to be married, but where the economy is now, they're not going to be able to get married, and they don't want to wait to have kids," Karen Benjamin Guzzo said.

**"[Cohabiting] gives couples more flexibility but less stability to the kids born into these relationships."**

Brad Wilcox  
*National Marriage Project*

Another sociologist, Kelly Raley at the University of Texas-Austin, told *USA Today*, "It just could be that it's OK now to have a kid outside of marriage."

Brad Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, said children with cohabiting parents are three times more likely to experience their parents' breakup by the age of 5 than children whose parents are married.

"They have less stability, security, legal and cultural support," Wilcox told *TIME*, adding, "[Cohabiting] gives couples more flexibility but less stability to the kids born into these relationships." (BP)



**The Baptist Foundation of Alabama is pleased to announce a FREE estate planning teleconference in partnership with PhilanthroCorp on May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5:00 p.m. CST.**



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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For May 6

## Explore the Bible By Cecil Taylor Dean, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

### CHRISTIANITY 106: LEARN TO PRAY Luke 18:1-14 Two parables on prayer

#### Persistent Widow (1-8)

The key to this first parable hangs on the front door. Jesus told it to encourage His disciples not to “lose heart” or “faint,” i.e. “Do not get ‘fed up’ with praying” or “grow sick of praying.” They must pray persistently despite the world’s hostility, knowing that the Lord will set all things straight when He returns.

Widowhood was especially hard in Jesus’ day. Usually a widow had no education, no job, no money, no property, no power and no status. Worse, in Jesus’ story, an unnamed villain was harassing a widow. Her only hope for help was to plead her case before a judge. This widow drew a bad judge who feared neither God (he was corrupt) nor man (he lacked sympathy). With no other options, she simply pestered that crooked, calloused man until one day he threw up his hands and helped the widow because she never quit asking.

This is a parable of contrast. It tells not what God is like, but what He is not like. No one has to pry a blessing from God’s reluctant hands. If unrelenting requests can sway a calloused, crooked judge to do right, how much more will His people’s unceasing prayers move the just and loving Judge of all the earth to right the wrongs done them. The Greek verb translated “delay long” suggests “postpones (His) wrath.” God postpones judgment to give those who persecute His people time to repent. Despite God’s patience, however, judgment day will come quickly.

One final question remained. When He comes, will the Son of Man find faith on the earth? Or will His long delay, assumed in the parable, drive most disciples to give up in despair? This open question each must answer for himself.

#### Pharisee and the Tax Collector (9-14)

Clearly Jesus aimed this second parable at self-righteous folks who “looked down on everybody else.”

In Jesus’ day Pharisees were respected religious leaders. They carried out all their religious duties and more. This man voluntarily fasted two days a week (Monday and Thursday), prayed three times a day, tithed all he acquired — not only his own field and garden produce but also all he bought — and kept all of the “traditions of the elders.”

It was the tax collectors who were the bad guys. Common people despised them as leeches who charged them unbelievably high taxes and as traitors who collaborated with the hated Roman occupiers. Most folks admired Pharisees and hated publicans. It shocked Jesus’ hearers when Jesus put the Pharisee in a bad light and the publican in a good light.

The Pharisee approached God boldly with what began like a praise psalm: “I thank you, God.” So far, so good. But here the prayer went horribly wrong. It turned out this Pharisee was grateful only for himself. Five times in two verses he used the first person singular pronoun, making himself the major subject of the prayer. And he put down the publican praying nearby, referring to him derisively as “this tax collector.”

In contrast the tax collector drew no attention to himself but engaged God in prayer with a sense of his sinfulness and begged for divine mercy. The word “mercy” implies the man knew he could not earn forgiveness. All he could do was ask for God’s compassion.

It was the tax collector, not the Pharisee, who went home right with God. It was not that the tax man was more upright in character than the Pharisee but that God rejects those who are confident they need no mercy and “justifies” (shades of Paul!) the undeserving who cry for mercy. Obviously “justification” involves mercy rather than impeccable moral character.

Ask people what they must do to get to heaven and most reply, “Be good.” Jesus contradicted that answer. Throughout the Bible God favors people who are “real” over people who are “good.” Heaven depends not on what a person has done for God but on what God has done for that person.

## Bible Studies for Life By James R. Barnette Associate Professor of Religion, Department of Religion, Samford University

### BUILDING A LEGACY Deuteronomy 6:1-15a

#### Build on the Right Foundation (1-5)

Deuteronomy constantly challenges us with its plea for obedience. The command to “do” what God says occurs about 50 times in this book. Now Moses proceeds to instruct the people in the commandments, as they in turn are to teach their children.

In verse 4 Moses declares God’s uniqueness and Israel’s response in undivided loyalty. The celebrated Shema is recited in the liturgy twice daily by pious Jews, thus termed by some “the Jewish Creed.” This creed gets the name from the very first word, Shema, which means “hear.” The imperative “hear” is fundamental to a covenantal understanding of the people of God. In listening, Israel is summoned, commanded and assured by the One with authority Who imposes on Israel a purpose and identity that He wills. The imperative brings Israel into a defining relationship in which the people submit to Him and His way alone.

The expression “with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” is a favorite in Deuteronomy (see 4:29; 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 26:16; 30:2) and gives insight into ancient Hebrew psychology. The “heart” was regarded as the seat of the mind and will. The word “soul” refers to one’s “being,” the source of life and vitality. Using these two terms together indicates the call to love God with unreserved devotion that is punctuated by strong passion or “might.” Jesus added the phrase “with all your mind” and described verses 4 and 5 as “the first and great commandment” (Matt. 22:37; Luke 10:27).

#### Share Your Life Message (6-9)

Love for God was not to be a secret devotion, a purely private relationship that did not concern others. From the start it was to involve the element of public confession as well as personal allegiance. This loving devotion to the “one” Lord must be shared in the

home. These God-given truths must be taught not only by Moses but also by every parent in Israel. Their commitment to the spiritual welfare of their children was never to be neglected. Furthermore, this love for God and His word must be shared in the community. Displaying the truth on their doorposts and gates made it unmistakably clear to neighbors that this was a family committed to God and His word.

#### Keep Your Focus (10-15a)

A key word in the book of Deuteronomy is “remember.” When they inhabit the promised land, the Israelites should not forget the generosity God has constantly shown throughout some of their darkest years. They are told here that in the highly materialistic culture of Canaan they will be in danger of forgetting four crucial things about God: His gracious promise, His incomparable nature, His generous gifts and His mighty acts.

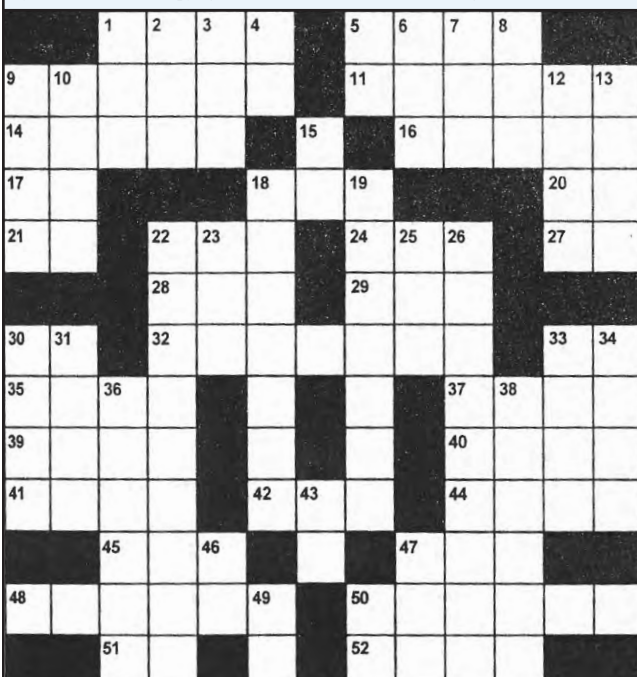
The Israelites are confronted with both a negative and positive exhortations they are not to forget God (verse 12), and they are to serve Him (verse 13). Jesus quoted verse 13 when He was tempted by the devil. According to the Greek text of Matthew 4:10, He replaced the word “fear” with “worship” in response to Satan’s challenge. We are ourselves exposed to the lure of rival idols, “the gods of the people around you.” Nevertheless, we are to fear and serve God only and take “oaths in His name.” We are called to a vow of total allegiance to the One Lord.

The deliberate neglect of the Lord was equivalent to defiance of His sovereignty over all of life. In the secular realm a rebellious vassal was punished by his overlord. In the Lord’s realm His curses would fall on the covenant-breaker. The Lord is a jealous God (see Deut. 5:9) Who would visit His people with judgment should they take lightly their covenant with Him. The presence of God among His people was an encouragement to good conduct and provided a strong incentive for Israel to walk in His ways.

*James Barnette is the teaching pastor of Brookwood Baptist Church, Birmingham.*

## Christian Crossword

By Janet Adkins Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



### Across

- Poetic foot.
- I looked through my \_\_\_\_\_ment. (Prov. 7:6)
- Shall be in \_\_\_\_\_ of the judgment. (Matt. 5:21)
- Thou has \_\_\_\_\_d all things. (Rev. 4:11)
- By me if any man \_\_\_\_\_ in. (John 10:9)
- Alma \_\_\_\_\_.
- Indefinite article.
- Belonging to the talking horse.
- Continent. (abbr.)
- Baby’s first word.
- Shade tree.
- Let us make man in our \_\_\_\_\_ge. (Gen. 1:26)
- Poet Eliot’s initials.
- The shortest month.
- He who now letteth will \_\_\_\_\_ . (2 Thess. 2:7)
- Quiet, please.
- Effectual \_\_\_\_\_ prayer. (James 5:16)
- Alabama. (abbr.)
- When they ... had gone six \_\_\_\_\_s. (2 Sam. 6:13)
- In \_\_\_\_\_ was there a voice heard. (Matt. 2:18)

- Form of Alex.
- Part of a list.
- The Lord hath \_\_\_\_\_ the kingdom. (1 Sam. 15:28)
- Adam called his wife’s name \_\_\_\_\_ . (Gen. 3:20)
- Neither shall ye break a \_\_\_\_\_ thereof. (Ex. 12:46)
- Day of the week. (abbr.)
- The Lord God is a \_\_\_\_\_ and shield. (Ps. 84:11)
- Belonging to Sarai’s husband.
- Let us make man in our \_\_\_\_\_ge. (Gen. 1:26)
- “Strength” or “strong one.” (Hebrew)
- In Isaac shall thy \_\_\_\_\_ be called. (Gen. 21:12)
- Medicine measure.
- \_\_\_\_\_ yourselves likewise. (1 Pet. 4:1)
- The wicked are like the troubled \_\_\_\_\_. (Isa. 5:20)
- Ye shall \_\_\_\_\_ no manner of blood. (Lev. 7:26)
- Quickened who were \_\_\_\_\_ in trespasses, and sins. (Eph. 2:1)
- There was one \_\_\_\_\_, a prophetess. (Luke 2:36)
- The father of such as dwell in \_\_\_\_\_s. (Gen. 4:20)
- Historical periods.
- Savings document.
- Paul, called unto him the disciples, and \_\_\_\_\_d them. (Acts 20:1)
- Let the woman learn in \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Tim. 2:11)
- The \_\_\_\_\_ fervent prayer. (James 5:16)
- Southern general.
- Not with eyeservice, as \_\_\_\_\_ pleasers. (Eph. 6:6)
- Characteristic.
- To practice boxing.
- Lest he \_\_\_\_\_ thee to the judge. (Luke 12:58)
- To whom be glory

- forever, \_\_\_\_\_. (Rom. 11:36)
- Jonathan ... had a son ... \_\_\_\_\_ of his feet. (2 Sam. 4:4)
- Midpoint. (British var.)
- Will never be \_\_\_\_\_ for by sacrifice. (1 Sam. 3:14 NIV)
- Roman numeral for 6.
- Printer’s measure.
- We shall \_\_\_\_\_ him as he is. (1 John 3:2)
- Naval vessel insignia.
- Thought added to letter.



# World Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

## Evangelical Christian elected mayor in Russia

MOSCOW, Russia — For the first time since the days of the Czars, a Protestant has been elected mayor of a major Russian city. In run-off elections in the auto-making city of Tolyatti/Volga on March 18, the Evangelical Christian and political independent Sergey Andreyev trounced “United Russia’s” candidate, Alexander Shakhov.

Andreyev won nearly 57 percent of the vote. *The Moscow Times* reports that the upset occurred despite the national government having poured billions into the city to bail out AvtoVAZ, the city’s largest employer.

The incoming mayor is a member of the Association of Missionary Churches of Evangelical Christians made up of 25 congregations in Russia and the Ukraine. In a recent interview he stated, “I am neither Scientologist, Baptist nor Hare Krishna. I am an Evangelical Christian.”

Andreyev was trained as a lay preacher in St. Petersburg’s Baptist “New Life” congregation before moving to Tolyatti as a 20-year-old school teacher in 1993. The youth organization Living Word, which he founded in Tolyatti 19 years ago, is still described as Baptist.

Though he did not campaign as a Protestant believer, Andreyev made no attempt to hide his religious connections and ran his campaign from the church offices of “Divine Fire”, a local Full-Gospel charismatic congregation.

Lyudmila Kuzmina, head of the Tolyatti branch of Golos, an election-monitoring non-governmental organization (NGO), stated in *The Moscow Times* that Andreyev was “not entirely independent. The power vertical doesn’t allow it.” Yet she praised Andreyev for his willingness to cooperate with her organization — a rarity among Russian politicians.

## Azerbaijani court liquidates Protestant church

BAKU, Azerbaijan — A court in the Azerbaijani capital Baku has ruled to liquidate the Greater Grace Protestant Church, the judge’s assistant said.

At a 15-minute final hearing April 25 in the church’s absence, Judge Tahira Asadova upheld the suit lodged by the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations. When asked how the judge could have taken a decision which means that any activity the church engages in would be illegal and subject to punishment, Asadova’s secretary Sevinj Ahmedova said, “The court has decided.”

She said the decision will enter into force a month after the written verdict is issued, unless the church lodges an appeal. Church members said they intend to challenge the decision through every court, even to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Ilya Zenchenko, head of Azerbaijan’s Baptist Union, said he is troubled by the decision. “I protest against it — it is not just,” he said.

## Group representing American nuns disciplined

WASHINGTON — The Vatican has launched a crackdown on the umbrella group that represents most of America’s 55,000 Catholic nuns, saying the group was not speaking out strongly enough against gay “marriage,” abortion and women’s ordination.

Rome also chided the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) for sponsoring conferences that featured “a prevalence of certain radical feminist themes incompatible with the Catholic faith.”

The Vatican’s disciplinary action against the LCWR was announced April 18, one day before Pope Benedict XVI marked seven years as pontiff.

# ‘UnbeLeeable’

## Houston Rockets’ Courtney Lee keeps strong faith

By Bill Sorrell  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**T**eer Butler gave her son, Courtney Lee, many things, but a basketball and a Bible are the two items that changed his life.

Lee — a guard/forward for the Houston Rockets — doesn’t shy away from his Christian roots. He’s quick to acknowledge his mother and grandmother, Laverne Johnson, in his spiritual upbringing.

“My faith has always been strong ever since I was a child. That is one thing my mother and grandmother instilled in me,” Lee said.

“I’ve been going to church with my family, following the Word and worshipping my whole life.”

Growing up in Indianapolis, Lee was baptized when he was 6. Living in Orlando during the off-season, Lee said he attends First Baptist Church, Orlando.

This past February Lee had an answered prayer. He was in a motor vehicle accident when a driver ran a red light. While it totaled his Cadillac Escalade, he walked away with no major injuries.

At first Lee’s prayers centered around games and asking God for blessings. Now he tells God “He is an awesome God.”

One of the most difficult times came at Western Kentucky University. While he was named Sun Belt Conference Player of the Year, tied the school’s all-time scoring lead with 2,238 points and made a Sweet 16 appearance in 2008, he suffered the greatest loss of his life.

His roommate, teammate and mentor Danny Rumph died in May 2005 from hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, an abnormal growth of muscle fibers in the heart. Rumph, who was 21, died during a pickup basketball game in Philadelphia, his hometown.

Lee works with the Daniel E. Rumph 11 Foundation that Rumph’s family started to bring awareness to cardiac disease. Lee also is involved with the HEARTS program at a Houston hospital. It screens young athletes for the condition that Rumph had.

When Lee was ready to throw in the towel at Western as a freshman, Rumph encouraged him to stay.

“There were a lot of points in my life where I might have been struggling. I may have a tough time and turn to Christ. You realize that He is always there.”

Philippians 4:13 is Lee’s favorite Bible verse and has helped him meet challenges.

“It (faith) is challenged once you step out of your house every day.”

Lee is a mentor to Rockets rookie



Photo courtesy of the Houston Rockets

**PURPOSE** — Courtney Lee, a guard/forward for the Houston Rockets, thinks God has blessed him with being in the NBA, good health and allowing him ‘to do the things he does.’

forward Chandler Parsons. Their friendship began when they played on a pro-am team in Orlando.

“He has been real helpful to me, especially off the court. ... I’m glad he is on my team. He is a really good person, a really good player,” Parsons said.

Houston is the third team that Lee (6’5” and 200 pounds) has been on since being drafted 22nd overall by the Magic in 2008. It was in Orlando that he experienced his greatest thrill in basketball, playing in the 2009 NBA finals.

“Sun Belt Conference Player of the Year was a good experience

but going to the next level and going to the finals, nothing can compare,” said Lee, who was first team All-Sun Belt Conference three straight seasons and was ranked 28th nationally in scoring with 20.4 points per game.

Lee refused to mope about playing on three different teams in three seasons. He embraced the opportunity to meet different people, build relationships and discover God’s purpose.

“God has blessed me with a lot

of things. Being in the NBA is a blessing, being healthy, being able to do the things I do, helping people, helping my family,” Lee said.

Former teammate Shane Battier, now with the Miami Heat, called Lee an “outstanding guy” who works hard and is someone wanting to do the right thing.

Lee understands that NBA players are role models. He wants fans to see him “doing the right thing” and that includes “going to church.” He takes church with him on road trips, watching worship services on his laptop.

“(Christ) went through a lot worse. He died for us. You think about that and you want to keep going.”

Lee plays with mental focus and energy and uses his versatility to defend and score. He is averaging 11.1 points per game as well as 2.6 rebounds and 1.5 assists.

During the 2009–10 season with the New Jersey Nets, Lee led the team in steals with 93, free throw percentage (86.9) and three-point shots (76).

Lee’s message is about Jesus.

“He is everything to me. He is the Creator. We all can live this life on earth giving back to Him,” Lee said.

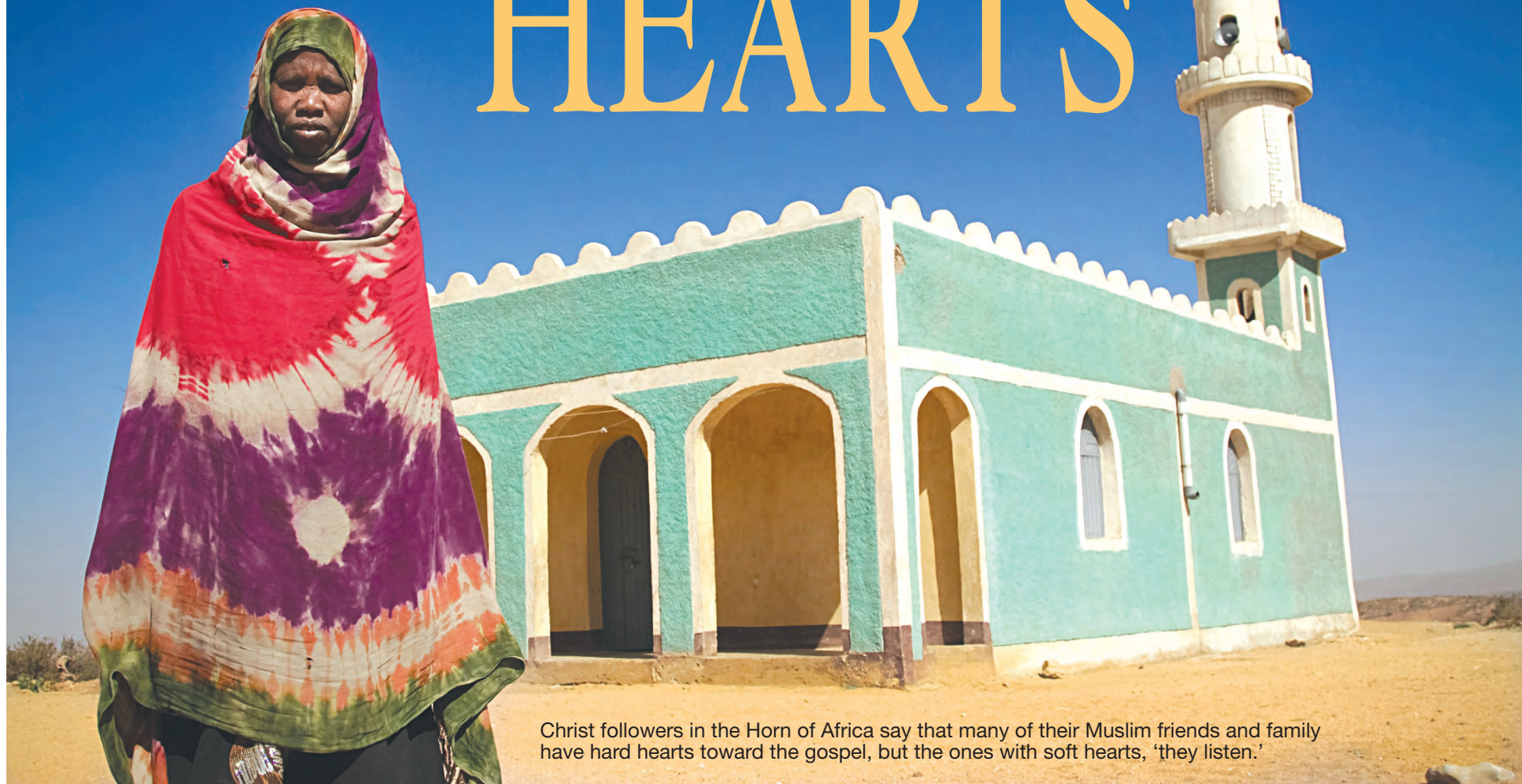
That truth can be described as the headline once did of Lee: “UnbeLeeable.”

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announcements should arrive three weeks prior to the event.



# Listening with soft HEARTS



Christ followers in the Horn of Africa say that many of their Muslim friends and family have hard hearts toward the gospel, but the ones with soft hearts, 'they listen.'

IMB photo

## In Africa's Horn, dozens follow Christ — even sheiks, witch doctors

**I**t used to be a brothel, the sandy house where Mike and Abbey Nettles are raising their children in the Horn of Africa.

When they arrived, their first act was to make the place a home.

The second was to learn enough local language to tell people how to get there.

"I can't tell someone how to make bread, but I can tell them how to get to my house, and when they get here, I can tell them about Jesus," Abbey said. "We didn't come to be masters of this language — we came to learn as fast as we could how to tell people about Jesus."

And tell people they have.

Over the past two years, the gospel has swept through the formerly unreached and unengaged people group they live among.

"We don't have time to waste — the need is urgent," Mike said. "So we share as much as we can, and we spend our time investing in believers who want to learn how to make more disciples."

Believers like Berhanu. Though initially disowned by his family, he was later able to baptize one of his sisters — along with 25 more new believers.

"Since I have believed in Jesus, I know my role is to share my faith with other people," Berhanu said. "Not ev-

eryone wants to hear, but it doesn't matter — I just need to share."

So he tells, and when he finds people to believe, they start meeting in groups to study together. He finds that his people are seeking truth — people like Sarah, whose grandmother was a witch doctor and father was a Muslim sheik.

"In my house, there were always animal sacrifices," Sarah said. "My grandmother would kill the chickens to see what the guts said. Because of the Satanic worship, it was a bad environment to grow up in."

But one day someone shared Jesus with Sarah, and she started to read what her holy book said about Him side by side with what the New Testament said.

"What the Bible said is true — I know this now," she said. "In the past, I was afraid and had trouble sleeping. Now I have peace in my heart."

But for a while, the decision didn't bring peace in her home. Her father beat her, knocking out some of her teeth and breaking her leg. She fled.

But after years of hearing the gospel, her father — the Muslim sheik — also came to faith in Jesus.

"Most Muslims think the story of Jesus is a lie, but more and more are coming to believe," Sarah said. "When I tell people the story of Adam and the story of Jesus — that



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He healed people, died for our sin and was raised again — some say this is bad, that it is a lie."

Those people, she said, have hard hearts. "But the ones with soft hearts — they listen."

She has a goal to share Jesus with four people a week — she knows she is to be about sharing Him no matter the cost.

"I feel I must tell others," she said.

Mike and Abbey say they are amazed but not surprised.

"We know God called us here because He was already working in the hearts of these people, so we came expecting that He was going to do something," Abbey said.

To learn more about how to pray for the people of the Horn and how to reach out to those same people groups living in your area, visit [prayforthehorn.com](http://prayforthehorn.com).

EDITOR'S NOTE — Names have been changed. (IMB)