

# THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



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**'I believe'**

BP photo

Kevin Durant grows in his faith as the Oklahoma City Thunder continues its quest for an NBA title.

## NBA playoffs prompt 'I believe' campaign

**A**s the Oklahoma City Thunder's NBA playoffs run continues, Oklahoma Baptists are teaming up to reach people for Christ in connection with the games and activities.

Churches from the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO), specifically its Union Baptist Association and Capital Baptist Association, are looking for ways to serve the community and share the gospel. The theme for the Baptists' campaign is "I believe."

"Everyone is talking about the Oklahoma City Thunder and the NBA playoffs," said Tim Gentry, the BGCO's evangelism specialist. "Oklahoma is proud of the progress our local NBA team has made, and during the playoffs people will be cheering them on, saying, 'I believe.' But the phrase 'I believe' has two meanings to Christians."

During the playoffs, the Capital and Union associations, the BGCO, My316.com and Oklahoma City-area churches will be involved in servant evangelism and witnessing outreach efforts. "Our volunteers will be in Bricktown [Oklahoma City's entertainment district] helping as ambassadors of Christ, sharing their faith with others in words and deeds," Gentry said. "For example, our churches have volunteered to place team T-shirts at the home games on chairs and prayer walk the entire stadium."

In addition, Oklahoma Baptists have printed a high-gloss mini-magazine that contains stories and testimonials from recognized Christian athletes including Thunder players Kevin Durant and Derek Fisher, as well as University of Oklahoma football quarterback Landry Jones.

"People will use the printed literature to share their faith in person," Gentry said. "Christians will be sharing their faith online through social media on Twitter and Facebook."

Gentry said Twitter participants are using the #ibelieve hashtag to join in conversations.

"We want people to talk up the Thunder but share other things you believe in, like your faith in Jesus," Gentry said. "It's a good way to share your testimony with a large audience." (BP)

## are Americans RELIGIOUS?

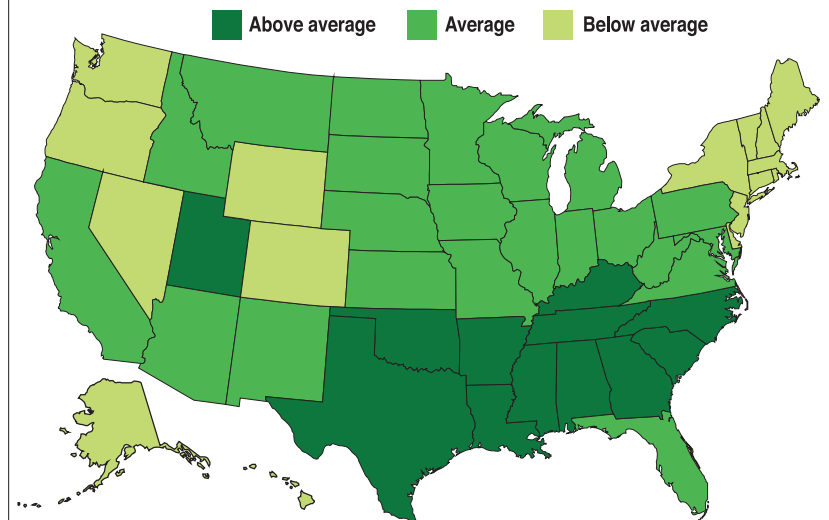
Gallup Daily asked more than 350,000 adults in the U.S. and District of Columbia if religion was an important part of their daily life and how often they attended worship services. Below are the results of the survey.

### 10 most religious states

Mississippi	59 percent
Utah	57 percent
Alabama	56 percent
Louisiana	54 percent
Arkansas	54 percent
South Carolina	54 percent
Tennessee	52 percent
North Carolina	50 percent
Georgia	48 percent
Oklahoma	48 percent

### 10 least religious states

Vermont	23 percent
New Hampshire	23 percent
Maine	25 percent
Massachusetts	28 percent
Alaska	28 percent
Oregon	30 percent
Nevada	30 percent
Washington	30 percent
Connecticut	31 percent
District of Columbia	32 percent



# COMMENT

## Disappointed in State Legislature

Hopes for family-friendly legislation were high when the 2012 session of the Alabama Legislature opened Feb. 7. But when the gavel came down on the regular session May 16, there was general disappointment among leaders of family-friendly organizations who regularly work in Montgomery.

Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizen's Action Program (ALCAP), for example, stood before the State Board of Missions of the Alabama Baptist State Convention two days after the session closed and declared plainly, "I'm disappointed in our conservative friends who lead the state Legislature."

Godfrey had every right to be disappointed. The Legislature failed to act on priority legislation to strengthen laws against illegal gambling in Alabama. The lawmakers sidestepped bills to limit abortion. And while legislative leaders claimed there was insufficient time to consider a variety of pro-family legislation, both the Senate and House of Representatives found ample time to endanger the lives of Alabama citizens through expanded alcohol bills.

After raising hopes that the legislative culture of Alabama would be different under new leadership with a long list of accomplishments in the 2011 session, the 2012 session was more like business as usual. Perhaps that was best illustrated by the fact that in 2011 the new leaders delivered on their promise to quickly pass all the required state budgets so attention could be given to other issues. But in 2012 the Legislature was back in its old patterns of waiting until the final minutes of the session to approve state budgets. As a result, some important issues went unresolved and Gov. Bentley had to call a special session of the state Legislature so the bodies could complete their assignments.

One measure that was completely overlooked during the regular session was State Attorney General Luther Strange's attempt to strengthen penalties against illegal gambling. He worked closely with legislative leaders and argued that Alabama law enforcement does not have the tools it needs to fight illegal gambling because "of the weakness found in our criminal statutes."

He asked the Legislature to make possession of more than 10 slot machines a Class C felony instead of a misdemeanor. The proposal was introduced in House Bill (HB) 414 with a lot of fanfare



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

and a commitment by leaders in the House and Senate to pass the bill.

But it did not happen. The bill never came to the floor of the House for consideration. The result, as Strange warned, leaves Alabama vulnerable to another invasion by slot machine owners who will gladly exchange the petty fines they might have to pay in exchange for the huge profits their machines take from Alabama citizens.

#### Lack of action

House leaders are trying to explain away their lack of action by talking about "changing the strategy" to get the bill passed. Interestingly even their own explanations include making decisions when the attorney general was out of the state and failing to communicate the strategy changes to colleagues in the Senate.

Unlike the years before the current leadership, no pro-gambling bills were considered by the Legislature and for that we are thankful. Still it is hard to see the lack of action on this important bill as anything but a failure of leadership. We can only hope this decision by the state Legislature does not signal a return of the power of gambling forces.

Abortion foes had high hopes going into the legislative session. A bill that appeared certain for approval was HB 223 which would have required abortion centers to meet similar standards required in other medical centers. The logic of the bill seemed self-evident. Health and safety standards should be consistent for all types of medical centers. But because standards are different today, the bill would have drastically reduced the number of abortion sites in the state. The bill passed from the House but never made it out of the Senate Finance and Taxation Education committee.

Of all the anti-abortion bills introduced, only a politically charged option relating to national health insurance passed. That bill allows Alabama to opt out of permitting abortion coverage by exchanging participating health plans, which could receive funds under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, thereby using taxpayer money to fund abortions.


Again promises made by the conservative majority in the state Legislature failed to be translated into anything but words.

Alcohol-related legislation had a different outcome. Like their predecessors, current legislators continued to ignore the health and cultural impact of alcohol.

The alcohol content of standard drinks of table wine, a bottle of beer or a shot of whiskey or other distilled spirits all contain equivalent amounts of alcohol. A breathalyzer can tell no difference between a 12-ounce bottle of regular beer (6 percent alcohol by volume), a 5-ounce glass of red or white wine, or a drink of one and a half ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits (either straight or in a mixed drink).

In 2009 the Alabama Legislature increased the allowable legal alcohol content of beer from 6 percent to 13.9 percent. That made a single bottle of beer more than twice as dangerous as two shots of whiskey because of the increased alcohol content.

This year the Legislature increased the allowable size of beer bottles from 16 ounces to 25.4 ounces. That is the size of a wine bottle. Legislators said it was a "business" decision. What it does is create a far more dangerous culture where drinking a single bottle of beer can have the same effect on the body as belting back five shots of whiskey or drinking five glasses of wine. That is not the kind of culture that bodes well for Alabama.

Good people serve in our state Legislature. Not all wear the same party label. Many are devoted to the highest good of the state. Some are personal friends for whom we pray regularly. Still it is disappointing to see how far short the 2012 state Legislature fell from the high standards members set for themselves when first elected. Alabama needs better than that. Alabama deserves better than that. 

### Correction

A copy editing error in the Explore the Bible Sunday School lesson in the May 17 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* created the false impression that the executioners of Jesus shattered His legs. That, of course, is not what the Bible teaches and not what was written by Dr. Cecil Taylor, dean of the School of Christian Studies at University of Mobile, who wrote the lesson. The description provided in the third paragraph of the lesson was a description of the unknown remains of a bone box found in Jerusalem. *The Alabama Baptist* apologizes to Dr. Taylor and to readers for this unfortunate mistake.

## Letters to the Editor

### LACK OF PRO-LIFE EFFORTS

For over 20 years we have witnessed pro-life legislation die in the Alabama State House over partisan wrangling or because some high-powered Democrats in the past were opposed to the pro-life efforts. Many of us were excited when the Republicans took over the Legisla-

ture, because with a pro-life governor we were sure that common-sense pro-life bills would finally be voted upon, passed and signed into law.

Unfortunately, many good pieces of pro-life legislation to save the lives of unborn children and to protect the safety of women to help prevent two tragedies

from occurring at an abortionist's hands have still failed in the new Legislature after two years of a new majority.

To the chagrin of many of us, it seems as if any effort to expand alcohol, from the size of beer containers to having Sunday sales at state parks, has gotten (See 'Letters,' page 15)



"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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# Taste of the South

By Julie Payne  
The Alabama Baptist

## North Shelby Baptist makes 'wow statement' in community with cooking competition

Savory smoked meats, scrumptious soups and decadent desserts were available at every turn. Smiling cooks eager to share their culinary creations heaped generous servings of their foods onto plates for each passerby to enjoy. Such was the scene May 5 at North Shelby Baptist Church, Birmingham, at the first annual Taste of the South cooking competition. Under sunny skies, throngs of attendees wove in and out from under the covered tents of the cooking competitors. Each competitor was vying for top place in his or her respective food category: chicken, ribs, "other" meats, soups and stews, desserts and lagniappe (foods that did not apply to any other category).

Dana Polk, a member of the Shelby Bap-

tist Association church since 2005, was a cooking participant in team Pork-A-Dot. Stationed with her husband and daughter, she served portions of her flavorful cornbread — cooked in a pan on the grill — and meat to enthusiastic tasters.

### Sharing the love of Christ

"I've been doing the cornbread for a while," Polk said as she served hungry spectators. "This is the first cooking event I've ever done," she noted. "It always tastes better when you know you're cooking it for somebody else."

The endless array of tasty foods to sample, good music, door prizes and fellowship — all set up in the North Shelby Baptist parking lot — were there for a purpose: to reach the community with the love of Christ.

Mateo Melendez, associate pastor for North Shelby Baptist, was a primary or-



Photo by Julie Payne

ganizer of Taste of the South. He said the church had put on a large Easter pageant for years and it wanted to do "something new" for the community.

The idea of a community-wide event developed into combining a fun, festival atmosphere with a cooking competition — one that would be conducive to reaching all ages. "We thought if we worked at having a variety of foods and a variety of flavors, it would be welcoming to everybody," Melendez explained. "Everybody likes to eat and cooking shows are so popular right now, so we just thought for sure that [it] would be something everybody would enjoy."

The day was free to attendees and cooks did not have to pay an entry fee to participate. The cooking competitors included members of the church as well as "friends and neighbors," Melendez said.

A panel of five judges, all members of North Shelby Baptist, sat inside the fellowship hall to judge each food entry. Awards included first, second and third place trophies, and the grand prize trophy was dubbed "The People's Choice" award.

In conjunction to the tasting event, a fundraiser took place near the entrance of the church. The fundraiser was made possible by the North Shelby Baptist disaster relief team's meat-smoking unit. More than 400 pieces of meat, including Boston butts and ribs, were cooked to perfection on seven smokers. The proceeds from those sales went to benefit the church's upcoming high school ministry missions trip to Guatemala and middle school missions trip to Kentucky.

Billy Graham, North Shelby Baptist church member and head of the church's disaster relief ministry, was instrumental in connecting the fundraiser to the Taste of the South event. "We're located on Highway 280, south of Double Oak Mountain, and we probably have 25,000 cars pass by every couple of hours," Graham noted of the church's location. "We wanted to make a wow statement in the community, invite them in and let Jesus be seen through us."

In addition to Graham's desire that the church be a "shining light on a hill to the community" through the event, Melendez said the church benefited from the event's organization and planning process.

"There was a real emphasis on praying through each [planning] task — that was kind of a renewed ... passion for our church," Melendez said. "That was really ... part of the goal also — we wanted our church members to be excited about reaching the community and ... praying over the event."

Melendez hopes Taste of the South turns into a yearly outreach and that it opens the door for more partnerships in the future. "We really see it just continuing to grow and [to] be a good outreach event for north Shelby County," he said. ☪



Photo by Julie Payne

North Shelby Baptist Church member Dana Polk (center) said friends encouraged her to enter her cornbread in the Taste of the South cooking competition. She is assisted by husband David and daughter JulieAnn at her team's table.



Photo courtesy of Alabama WMU

**SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL CARE** — During the May 18 Alabama Baptist State Board meeting Candace McIntosh (left) and Becky Luther of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union showcase the quilt that Hackleburg children helped make during the 'Celebrate Kids' ministry event April 21.

# 'Celebrate Kids'

## Alabama WMU ministers to Hackleburg children 1 year after tornadoes

By **Sammie Jo Barstow**  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Becky Luther suspected that April 21, 2012, would be a challenging day. That feeling was confirmed when the first child who registered for "Celebrate Kids" in Hackleburg stated: "My daddy is in heaven."

"I took a deep breath and told her that I'm sure heaven is a beautiful place and that someday she will be able to see him again there," said Luther, director of Temporary Child Care (TCC) for Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU).

"Celebrate Kids" was a one-day event co-sponsored by Alabama WMU and The Salvation Army. Alabama WMU planned and organized the activities and volunteers, and The Salvation Army provided the funds from a designated donation.

"Our goal for the day was to love on the children of Hackleburg in the name of Jesus," said Candace McIntosh, executive director of Alabama WMU. "We wanted to give the children a fun day and also a chance for them to talk about what they experienced during the horrible devastation their city endured April 27, 2011, and in the days after that."

Indeed, for 41 children, "fun" was the word to describe the day.

Luther remembered the 10-year-old boy who hugged one of the volunteers and stat-

ed: "This has been the best day of my life!"

First Baptist Church, Hackleburg, in Marion Baptist Association, provided the facilities and several volunteers for the event.

"I can't begin to express how much support we received from the church," McIntosh said. "Although they are presently without a pastor, the church pulled together and provided everything we needed."

The day began with registration and an opening session with high-energy music and a spirit of celebration. The children rotated through various activities during the day, including tile painting, quilt square designs, puppetry, Bible storytelling and games.

According to Luther, all the activities were designed to be fun but were also created to help children tell what happened to them during the disaster and express their feelings about the experiences of the past year.

One of the most popular activities was painting quilt squares. "One of the quilt squares had a drawing of a tornado with an

angel in the corner. When I asked about it, the young boy who created it said that an angel had protected his family during the tornado," Luther said. Other squares depicted family members who were killed. At the end of the day the squares were sewn together. McIntosh and Luther hope to arrange for the quilt to be displayed in a public place in Hackleburg.

Karl Ragan, Alabama Disaster Recovery Coordinator for The Salvation Army, said he thought the day was a "great success." Although immediate disaster relief is always important, according to Ragan, "it's obvious that sometime down the road after a disaster, kids need spiritual and emotional care and the kids definitely got that with 'Celebrate Kids.'"

"For us, this was an opportunity to expand the ministry of our TCC team," McIntosh said. The day was such a success that McIntosh and Luther hope it can be a model for the future.

"We always come in immediately after the disaster, but this event gave us an opportunity to return months later and provide a different kind of ministry for children," McIntosh said.

### Plan of salvation

To close out the day, Mike Ingram, a disaster relief chaplain and pastor of Millbrook Baptist Church, Elmore Baptist Association, gave the plan of salvation in what McIntosh described as "a sweet, child-friendly way."

The children were then given balloons for the closing activity.

"I told the children that the colors of the balloons reminded me of the colors of the rainbow, and a rainbow reminded me of the promises God has given us," McIntosh said. "He promised that He will never leave you, and He will take care of you."

She told the children they could choose any color balloon and if they had a family member who died in the storm, they could choose a white balloon.

The group went outside with the balloons, and Ingram prayed for the children and their families. They all counted to three, released their balloons and shouted, "Thank you, God!"

## Baptists help stop violence in border town

José Angel could have left Juarez, Mexico, behind. No more listening to regular reports of violence between rival drug cartels. No more worrying about whether he and his family were safe. He even had a job interview in the United States.

But coming back from that interview, Angel knew he couldn't leave. More to the point, he believed God was calling him to stay.

In a city physically and emotionally affected by dark tales of violence in recent years, someone must be a beacon of light, Angel said.

"Our doctrine is good. Now is the time to live out what we believe, to live according to God with confidence," he said.

As counselors, Angel and his wife began putting their skills to work. They listened to friends and family of victims of the violence. For example: an 8-year-old girl came home one day to find her mother had killed herself and must now raise her siblings.

The couple counsels 10 to 12 people a day, serving people who are shocked and confused and lacking hope. People need a relationship with Christ to rely on to carry them through such trying times, Angel said.

The Angels have taken to the offensive in this expansive border town. The Baptist General Convention of Texas has helped the Angels by providing the No Más Violencia curriculum.

Beyond fostering forces for peace, the Angels' efforts have seen the forming of congregations where they have used the No Más Violencia materials. Young people begin by coming together to make a difference in their communities and in the process discover the hope of Christ — the only hope, Angel said, that can truly change Juarez.

"The light is in us and we are the light," he said. "Darkness cannot stay where there is light."

Statistics do indicate the environment is improving somewhat. Overall crime is down 40 percent in Juarez. Murders have dropped from more than 3,100 in 2010 to slightly more than 1,900 in 2011. Still the Citizens' Council for Public Security and Justice lists Juarez among the world's most violent cities.

Angel remembers Texas groups working "arm-in-arm" with Mexican Baptists in their efforts to share the hope of Christ throughout Juarez. They helped motivate Mexican churches to focus on sharing the gospel. With Juarez struggling, the groups have stopped coming. He encouraged Christians in the U.S. to return, believing that together, Texas and Mexican Baptists can have a significant impact on the city. (ABP)

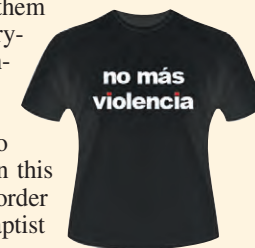


Photo courtesy of Alabama WMU

**CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS** — Hackleburg children enjoy a day of fun activities.

'IF YOU CHOOSE

# Christ

YOU'LL NEVER GO WRONG'

Former Baptist World Alliance President Billy Kim speaks at Samford University's commencement program May 19.



Photos courtesy of Samford University

More than 5,000 people gather in Samford University's Pete Hanna Center for the final of a series of commencement exercises May 19.

## Former BWA President Billy Kim challenges Samford graduates at its May commencement exercises

**F**ormer Baptist World Alliance (BWA) President Billy Kim urged Samford University graduates to make the right choice and to rely on the power of prayer during commencement exercises May 19.

"Life is made up of choices," said Kim, chairman of the Far East Broadcasting Company of Korea. "The choice we make determines the quality of time and life that is worth or not worth living."

Kim, whose radio network broadcasts Christian programming in 140 languages, asked the students to choose to follow Jesus.

"If you choose Christ, you'll never go wrong," he said.

He spoke to an audience of more than 5,000 in Samford's Pete Hanna Center. Graduates from Samford's largest school, the Howard College of Arts and Sciences, received diplomas, along with seniors from the School of the Arts and Orlan Bullard Beeson School of Education and Professional Studies.

The program capped a series of graduation events that included commencements May 18 for Samford's Brock School of Business, Cumberland School of Law, Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing and McWhorter School of Pharmacy. Beeson Divinity School held its commencement and consecration

service May 9. A total of about 880 seniors received degrees.

Kim, who began his Christian ministry by founding a church in Seoul, Korea, in 1960, stressed the power of prayer.

"Prayer is the key to solving all of life's problems," he said. "In this world, we encounter many difficult obstacles. I believe that if we have a life of prayer we will overcome whatever troubles we might face. Prayer can change your life, your family and this nation. It is time for God to heal this great nation."

### 'Humanitarian and civic work'

In addition to diplomas to seniors, Samford awarded an honorary doctor of humane letters to Korean business and civic leader D.K. Lee, a former president of Rotary International, for his "humanitarian and civic work." Lee is chair of Bubang Techtron Company, a leading manufacturer of consumer household appliances, and is chairman of the Community Chest of Korea.

This year's top student award winners were: Kara Lynn Peal, of Dallas, Ga., the President's Cup for the highest academic average; Hannah Michelle McSween, of Knoxville, Tenn., Velma Wright Irons Award for the second highest average; and Caroline S. Noland, of Boiling Springs, S.C., and Andrew Lewis Toney, of Collierville, Tenn., the John C. Pittman Spirit Award.

Senior Riley Westmoreland, president of the Student Government Association, gave the farewell address on behalf of her classmates, urging them to stay close to Samford as alumni.

Eight retiring faculty members were introduced at programs for their respective schools. They are: English professors Nancy Whitt and Rod Davis; sociology professor Robin Roberts; music professor Bill Strickland; pharmacy professor Robert Schrimsher; and nursing professors Judy Bourrand, Barbara Money and Judith Vinzant. Dean of academic services and registrar Paul Aucoin will also retire in the fall.

BWA President John V. Upton Jr., who also is executive director of the Baptist General Association of Virginia and the Virginia Baptist Mission Board, spoke at the Beeson commencement.

Upton advised the 17 new Beeson graduates to not forget who they are — that to do so would "make a mess" for themselves and those around them. He also said that while there is no way to know where a ministry is headed, "I assure you that a hand will nudge you at the right moment, in the right direction."

In keeping with a long-standing Beeson practice, each graduate received a copy of the Holy Scriptures along with their diploma. This year, a like number of Bibles were provided to members of the Quechua tribe in Peru, which has several ties with the divinity school. (SU)

# Faith

key to  
successful life'



Photos courtesy of the University of Mobile

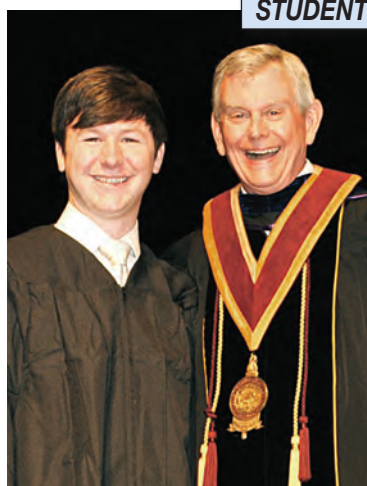
Commencement speaker Frederick T. Stimpson III

## UMobile holds 46th graduation ceremony May 12

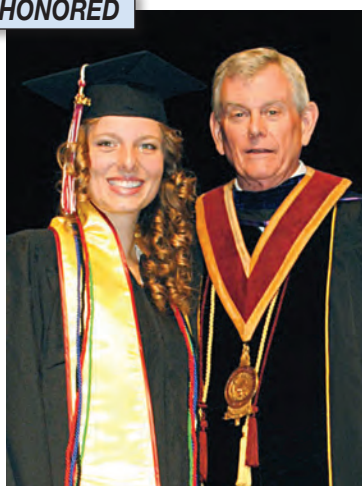
**F**aith is key to a successful life, Frederick T. Stimpson III, chief executive officer of Scotch Gulf Lumber, told the University of Mobile (UMobile) Class of 2012 during commencement ceremonies May 12 at the Mobile Civic Center.

"In my opinion, if you learn to approach all instances of your life, including your career, through the eyes of faith, you will have a great shot at a successful life," Stimpson told approximately 350 students receiving associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees.

The university's top two student awards, the William K. Weaver Jr. Excellence Award and the Annie Boyd Parker Weaver Excellence Award, were presented to graduates — Andrew Chandler Pouncey, of Mobile, and Kala Marc Holt, of Millerville, respectively. Pouncey graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor of science in music, and Holt graduated summa cum laude from the honors program with thesis, earning a bachelor of arts in English and a bachelor of arts in humanities, while receiving the area award in humanities.



President Mark Foley with student Andrew Chandler Pouncey



President Mark Foley with student Kala Marc Holt

### STUDENTS HONORED

Retiring Professor of Biology Thomas Bilbo carried the ceremonial mace and led the procession into the arena. The ceremony was dedicated in memory of Kenneth Bergdolt, professor emeritus, who died Dec. 23, 2011.

Stimpson — who said it was "a great privilege to stand before a group that will take part in shaping the world" — shared personal examples of how prayer and obedience to God was vital in bringing his company through tough economic times. "Regardless of how difficult circumstances are, the way

forward is through faith in our Lord and obedience to Him," he said. "We need you out there. We need you in every aspect of our culture and our economy.

"Of course you have received an education, but more importantly, you are graduating from a university where a Christian world view is integrated into all areas of study, where you are exposed to approaching all aspects of your life, including your career, through the eyes of faith," he said. "[T]he Lord is preparing you today for a great tomorrow." (UMobile)

## Across Alabama's Associations

### BESSEMER

► **Canaan Church, Bessemer**, will host a Family Milestone Conference June 7, 6:30 p.m. The conference will explore what it means to lay stepping stones for a child's development. There will be break-out sessions and refreshments will be provided. To RSVP for child care call 205-425-4381. Morgan Bailey is pastor.

### BIRMINGHAM

► The Woman's Missionary Union of **First Church, Birmingham**, will host guest speaker Margie Duncan, director of human resources and administrative assistant of Birmingham Association, June 5, 10:30 a.m., in the fellowship hall.

Lunch will follow. For information and lunch reservations call 205-870-3888. Stan Lewis is pastor.

### BIBB

► **Bob Johnson** is the new pastor of **Rehobeth Church, Lawley**. He has served as pastor of churches in Alabama and Mississippi. He holds a bachelor of science degree from Crichton College in Memphis, Tenn., and a master of divinity degree from Mid-America



JOHNSON

Seminary, also in Memphis. Johnson and his wife, Jackie, have two children.

### DEKALB

► **Broadway Church, Rainsville**, will host "Men of Honor," a Sherwood Pictures Production and LifeWay simulcast June 15, 6-8 p.m., in the new sanctuary. Men of all ages are invited. For information call 256-638-4219. Kevin McCrelless is pastor.

### MONTGOMERY

► **Catoma Church, Montgomery**, will host a Father's Day guest speaker, Tony Nolan, June 17, 10:15 a.m. Chad Underwood is pastor. ❧

## Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

### Baptist Messenger celebrates 100th anniversary

OKLAHOMA CITY — On May 15, the *Baptist Messenger*, the newspaper of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO), reached a milestone few publications do. The *Messenger* officially turned 100 years old.

"We are so grateful for all of the people involved in the preparation, production and promotion of the *Baptist Messenger* over these 10 decades," said Brian Hobbs, editor.

"They leave us with a strong legacy and great footing for the future. We pray God continues to bless the *Baptist Messenger* in the years to come."

The *Baptist Messenger* has a print circulation of nearly 60,000 and a digital version as well. Hobbs became the 11th editor in the *Messenger's* history in 2011.

Notable leaders such as U.S. Sen. Tom Coburn, financial expert Dave Ramsey and leaders within the Southern Baptist Convention extended statements of congratulations to the *Messenger* on its 100th anniversary.

Oklahoma's Gov. Mary Fallin and Lt. Gov. Todd Lamb jointly declared May 15, 2012, as "*Baptist Messenger Day*" in Oklahoma through an official citation.

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said on Twitter on May 15, "Congratulations to the *Baptist Messenger* of Oklahoma on the paper's 100th birthday today. A century of service to Baptists."

In conjunction with its 100th anniversary, the *Messenger* is hosting a series of celebration events that are open to the public. One was held May 15 at the Baptist Building in Oklahoma City, where numerous former staff were in attendance. Popular *Baptist Messenger* columnist Walker Moore, who is president and founder of Awe Star Ministries, spoke at the gathering. Moore also will speak at several "homecoming" events scheduled across the state in the next few months.

The *Messenger* recently completed a series on the paper's history, "10 decades in 10 weeks," featuring highlights and history from each decade.

In addition, the *Messenger* will publish a 100th anniversary edition magazine in time for release at the BGCO annual meeting in November. For more information, visit [www.baptistmessenger.com](http://www.baptistmessenger.com).

### Arkansas pastor becomes new chairman of ERLC

NASHVILLE — An Arkansas pastor has become chairman of The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) after the resignation of a retired Indiana minister who was leading the Southern Baptist entity's trustee board.

The new chairman, Richard D. Piles, pastor of First Baptist Church, Camden, Ark., circulated an email notice May 21 of the change in trustee leadership. Piles had been serving as the ERLC vice chairman.

The former ERLC trustee chairman, Steve Faith, a retired pastor and director of missions from New Albany, Ind., resigned from the trustee board, citing "his desire to commit more of his time and energy toward the local church where he is a member as they are currently without a pastor," Piles stated in an email.

Both Piles and Faith were elected to their ERLC leadership positions during the trustees' September 2011 meeting in Nashville.

Other members of the ERLC executive committee are Donald L. Mason, a Georgia layman; Stephen W. Long, a director of missions in Ohio; Christopher L. Slaughter, a West Virginia layman; and Stephen G. Veteto, a Colorado seminary educator.

### Tenn. Baptists approve sale of convention property

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. — The executive board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention voted unanimously to accept a \$9 million offer for the convention's office space in Brentwood, Tenn., during a special called meeting May 17.

The executive board has been in its present location since 1969. David Green, president of the executive board and pastor of First Baptist Church, Greeneville, said the meeting was historic for Tennessee Baptists.

The two buildings which comprise the Baptist Center (the original structure and the conference center added in 1989) along with 5.25 acres will be purchased by Franklin Land Associates LLC.

Relocation plans for the convention were not announced. ❧

## Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions

**ONE MISSION:**  
The Great Commission

**ONE PROGRAM:**  
The Cooperative Program

**MANY MINISTRIES:**  
Great Commission Ministries



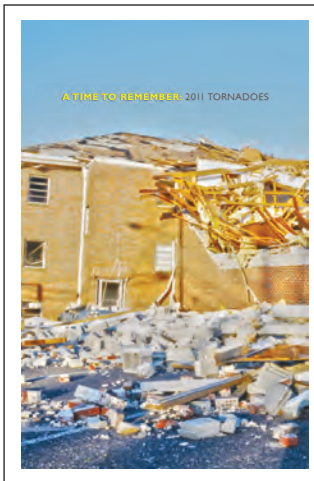
*news and features about missions and ministries from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (800) 264-1225 □ [www.alsbom.org](http://www.alsbom.org)*

# Opportunities for Giving, Training and Inspiration

**T**hank you, Alabama Baptists, for observing “A Time to Remember” during worship services commemorating last April’s tornadoes. Many churches chose the suggested date of Sunday, April 22, while others marked the anniversary at other times.

According to the best information at press time, approximately 250 churches have contributed \$166,000 to the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Offering as part of the anniversary.

Thanks to all who have participated in this offering so far. We are still receiving funds and appreciate all contributors to this fund which allows us to be better prepared for deployment in terms of equipment and other resources when disaster strikes again.



To help with this effort, please send checks payable to: State Board of Missions, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111-0870, For: Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Offering.

Any questions may be directed to our disaster relief strategist, State Missionary Mel Johnson, at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 389, or (334) 613-2389, [mjohnson@alsbom.org](mailto:mjohnson@alsbom.org).

## Summer Conferences & Workshops

Let me commend to you a variety of conferences and workshops being sponsored by your State Board of Missions.

Some are being held at Shocco Springs Conference Center in Talladega while others are conducted in a variety

of locations across our state.

The SBOM’s website, [www.alsbom.org](http://www.alsbom.org), provides a wealth of information through the “Upcoming Events” link.

If you have any questions

By Rick Lance  
State Missionary  
Executive Director

about our website, please contact State Missionary Brian Harris at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 310, or (334) 613-2310, [bharris@alsbom.org](mailto:bharris@alsbom.org).

## SBC Meeting in New Orleans

This year, Southern Baptists will gather in New Orleans, June 19-20, for the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

It’s been said many times

that Baptist annual meetings are times of inspiration and information. Certainly, there’s also an aspect of the annual convention as a family reunion of Southern Baptists concerned about Great Commission ministries.

*I hope to see many people from Alabama there in a few weeks. If you need information on registering as a messenger, please go online to [www.sbcannualmeeting.net](http://www.sbcannualmeeting.net).*



Numbers 14:24



**Allen Jackson**  
Camp Pastor

**Brett Rutledge**  
Worship Leader

**Youth Leadership Camp**  
**super summer alabama**  
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[www.supersummeralabama.com](http://www.supersummeralabama.com)

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Any student in the state of Alabama who has completed the 8th-12th grade and exemplifies solid spiritual leadership in his or her church. Each student must adhere to a high standard of Christian maturity and meet certain requirements in order to participate.

**\$225 per student**  
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# WHO KNEW? *The First Three Weeks of College...*

**Transitions**  
*Helping high school students take the next step in their faith journey.*



What a student does during their first three weeks of college sets the pattern for his whole college career in the relationships he establishes and the patterns he develops. Help lay the groundwork for Christlike college experiences by connecting yourself or your students with collegiate ministers by visiting [www.sbccampusconnect.net](http://www.sbccampusconnect.net). Once you go to the web page, enter contact information for yourself or your student. It takes less than three minutes and it will be networked to the campus of your choice!

**Collegiate and Student Ministries • 1.800.264.1225, ext. 275 • (334) 613.2275**

**FOCUS on One Mission**

# WORSHIP & MUSIC EVENTS

**CHILDREN'S CHOIR SUMMIT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**  
**Shocco Springs, July 6-7, 2012**

**"Hidden Treasures"**

A training conference for children's choir directors, workers, ministry assistants, coordinators, music ministers or "wanna be's." An interactive learning experience with many perks to get your choirs ready for the new year! This year's theme of "Hidden Treasures" reflects the importance of how music helps our children to hide God's word in their hearts. Come join us!



**Cost:**

- Until June 1, \$88 per person (based on 3 or more per room)
- After June 1: \$98 per person

For more information, please call 1-800-264-1225: Music Specialist Karen Gosselin, ext. 318, or (334) 613-2318, kgosselin@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Sharon Cleveland, ext. 279, or (334) 613-2279, scleveland@alsbom.org.



# ALABAMA BAPTIST BOYS CAMPS 2012

**A BOY DOES NOT HAVE TO BE IN RAs TO ATTEND**



**Northwest Alabama**

Earle Trent Assembly Baptist Camp, Florence

**July 16-19**, 4th-7th grade boys

Contact: (256) 383-7021 for more info

**July 19-21**, 1st-6th grade Lad & Dad

Cost: \$140/pair

**Northeast Alabama**

Marshall Retreat Center, Guntersville

**July 9-12**, 4th-12th grade boys

Cost: \$150

**July 12-14**, 1st-6th grade Lad & Dad

Cost: \$160/pair

**North Central Alabama**

Stoney Creek Christian Camp, Cullman

**June 23-26**, 4th-12th grade boys

Cost: \$150

**June 26-28**, 1st-6th grade boys and Dad or Mom

Cost: \$160/pair

**Southeast Alabama**

The Vineyard Christian Retreat Center, Ariton

**June 25-28**, 4th-12th grade boys camp

Cost: \$150

**July 28-30**, 1st-6th grade Lad & Dad or Mom

Cost: \$160/pair

**ONE NIGHT: RA Campouts at the Vineyard**

**April 27-28 & November 2-3**

Contact: (334) 762-2256

**Southwest Alabama RA Camp**

Baldwin Baptist Camp, Foley

**May 28-June 1**, 1st-6th grade boys

Contact: (251) 945-5112 for more info

Registration information for camps may be obtained at [www.alsbom.org/ra](http://www.alsbom.org/ra) or by contacting State Missionary Steve Stephens at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 268, or (334) 613-2268, [sstephens@alsbom.org](mailto:sstephens@alsbom.org) The State RA Camp staff includes a college age counselor for every 5 to 7 boys. Church chaperones are not required at these camps, but they are welcome.

# REACHING THE MANY FACES OF ALABAMA



**2012** THE SUMMIT:  
FOR CHURCH LEADERS

Shocco Springs  
Friday and Saturday

AUGUST 3-4, 2012  
ONE WEEKEND ONLY

# 2012 THE SUMMIT: FOR CHURCH LEADERS

Where can your church get comprehensive training for your leaders? Consider The Summit: For Church Leaders at Shocco Springs, August 3-4, 2012. Read some of the comments that were made following this training in 2011:

—“We are a very small church, but we had seven members to come to this Summit for the first time. ... Folks wanted more than just seven conferences. ... Our pastor, chairman of the deacons and Sunday School director were part of the seven.”

— ...has given me a new strength and confidence to move forward and stand strong for our children ... help teach/lead them to Christ.”

— “...opened my eyes on how to get seniors more involved in church activities. ... to be mentors for younger groups.”

— “My expectation was of a Baptist social occasion. The reality was an eye-opening of youth teaching.”

— “The Dynamic Church Development conference inspired me as a pastor to be more proactive in helping the leadership of the church I serve.”

Make your plans now to bring the leaders of your church to The Summit for training in even more areas of church life than was available in 2012. Some of these areas include Sunday School & Discipleship, church music, church legal issues, using technology to enhance your Bible study, and so much more!

Reservations may be made by calling Shocco at 1-800-280-1105. Visit Shocco's website: [www.shocco.org](http://www.shocco.org).

Watch [www.alsbom.org/summit](http://www.alsbom.org/summit) for updates of what will be offered as it becomes available.

For more information, please contact State Missionary Jamie Baldwin at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 240, or (334) 613-2240, [jbaldwin@alsbom.org](mailto:jbaldwin@alsbom.org).

## YOU'RE INVITED!



**RICK LANCE**, state missionary/executive director: Come join us at The Summit! The Summit will be a time of relaxation, refreshing, refocusing and renewal for all

church leaders. Every pastor and leader needs this opportunity to slip away for worship, inspiration, and training at Shocco Springs. See you there!  
[www.RickLance.com](http://www.RickLance.com)

**DANIEL EDMONDS**, state missionary/director, Sunday School & Discipleship: The



Summit will provide great training for pastors, education staff, Sunday School directors, singles ministry leaders, senior adult leaders, discipleship leaders and teachers of all age groups in the areas of Sunday School and discipleship.  
[www.alsbom.org/sundayschool](http://www.alsbom.org/sundayschool)



**JEFF HAMMACK**, state missionary/coordinator, Computer Services: Get help with using technology in the ministries of your

church.  
[www.alsbom.org/computer](http://www.alsbom.org/computer)



**KEITH HIBBS**, state missionary/director, Worship Leadership & Church Music: Worship leaders, song directors, accompanists, sound

system technicians and even children's choir workers will benefit from the training that will be offered in worship leadership and church music.  
[www.alsbom.org/worship](http://www.alsbom.org/worship)



**MIKE JACKSON**, state missionary/director, Leadership & Church Health: Leadership conferences for deacons, pastors and

church staff will be a big part of The Summit. Come join us!  
[www.alsbom.org/leadership](http://www.alsbom.org/leadership)



**KEITH LOOMIS**, state missionary/associate, Collegiate & Student Ministries: Come to the Summit and learn how to develop a well-

rounded collegiate and student ministry.  
[www.theStudentHub.org](http://www.theStudentHub.org)



**STEVE STEPHENS**, state missionary/associate, Global Missions: Are you a Men's Ministry/Brotherhood director or Royal Ambassador

leader who needs training? The Summit is for you!  
[www.alsbom.org/men](http://www.alsbom.org/men)  
[www.alsbom.org/ra](http://www.alsbom.org/ra)



**JIM SWEDENBURG**, state missionary/director, Cooperative Program & Stewardship Development: Come

join us and get help with budgeting in the church, generational issues and church legal issues.  
[www.alsbom.org/cp](http://www.alsbom.org/cp)



**PHIL WINNINGHAM**, state missionary/associate, Evangelism: Interested in learning more about the

Evangelism Response Center? Come to The Summit and learn how your church can put it to use.  
[www.alsbom.org/evangelism](http://www.alsbom.org/evangelism)



**LEE WRIGHT**, state missionary/coordinator, Church Compensation Services: Church treasurers, finance committees, and

ministers of all kinds will gain helpful training in financial issues.  
[www.alsbom.org/ccs](http://www.alsbom.org/ccs)



Alabama Baptist Convention  
State Board of Missions

This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

# Why I Believe in the Cooperative Program



BY CANDACE McINTOSH

I didn't grow up in church.

When I became active in a local Southern Baptist church as a young adult, I remember my pastor often referencing the Cooperative Program from the pulpit and later explaining to me the beauty of what we do as Southern Baptists through CP.

Later, I would experience this gift personally as my seminary education was supplemented by gifts given through CP.

However, it was on a trip to Africa that the depth of what we do really took on an even deeper meaning to me. I was working with a friend of mine who serves as a missionary with the International Mission Board.

We had gone to visit a missionary friend of hers from another sending agency. For years, I had heard testimonies from our missionaries who were told by friends serving with other agencies how blessed IMB missionaries are because of the strong support of Southern Baptists.



On this day, I listened as this friend shared that her husband was preparing to head back to the United States to raise their support for the upcoming year. She would remain behind and alone for a few months to take care of their children while her husband was gone.

As I listened and saw the visible stress on her face and heard it in her voice, I breathed a prayer of thanksgiving for Southern Baptists and the foresight our leaders had in establishing a means of support that would give stability to our missions personnel: a testimony of what I had been taught years ago.

I can hear my pastor's voice today, "Candace, we can do more together than we can do apart." Thank you, Alabama Baptists, for your heart for missions and understanding that together we are strong for the sake of the Kingdom.

*Candace McIntosh is executive director of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union: on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/AlabamaWMU](http://www.facebook.com/AlabamaWMU) and Twitter @alwmu.*

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**FRIDAY AND SATURDAY,  
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**• 40 TEAM MAXIMUM • ROUND ROBIN  
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1225, EXT. 273, [MCOKER@ALSBOM.ORG](mailto:MCOKER@ALSBOM.ORG).**

# SUMMER CAMPS FROM WORSHIP LEADERSHIP & CHURCH MUSIC

## Mix456 • July 9-13, Shocco

A week-long worship arts camp using all of the senses and arts to discover music and our Creator.

For 4th-6th graders

### Classroom Settings:

music learning in a fun way, new friends, games, crafts. Each class performs on Thursday.



**Recreation:** Bazooka Ball, swimming, field games, mini golf, aqua jump

**Worship:** band, skits, age-appropriate speaker

**Free Time:** devotions (student-led), snack bar, games, food

**Cost:** \$265 per person

### Registration:

- (1) 1-800-280-1105
- (2) Go online to [www.alsbom.org/mixREMIX](http://www.alsbom.org/mixREMIX) and click on "Mix456 T-Shirt Order Form."
- (3) Complete and fax form to Cindy Parrish at (334) 288-2693 by deadline.

### Deadline for t-shirt forms: June 8, 2012.

For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Cindy Parrish at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 230, or (334) 613-2230, [cparrish@alsbom.org](mailto:cparrish@alsbom.org).

## ReMix • July 9-13, Shocco

A week-long worship arts camp using all of the senses and arts to discover music and our Creator. For 7th-10th graders

**Teams:** music, new friends, team competitions. ReMix performance Friday morning

**Recreation:** paintball, night swimming, zany team competitions, mini golf, aqua jump

**Worship:** praise band, skits, age-appropriate speaker

**Free Time:** devotions (student-led), snack bar, games, food

**Cost:** \$265 per person

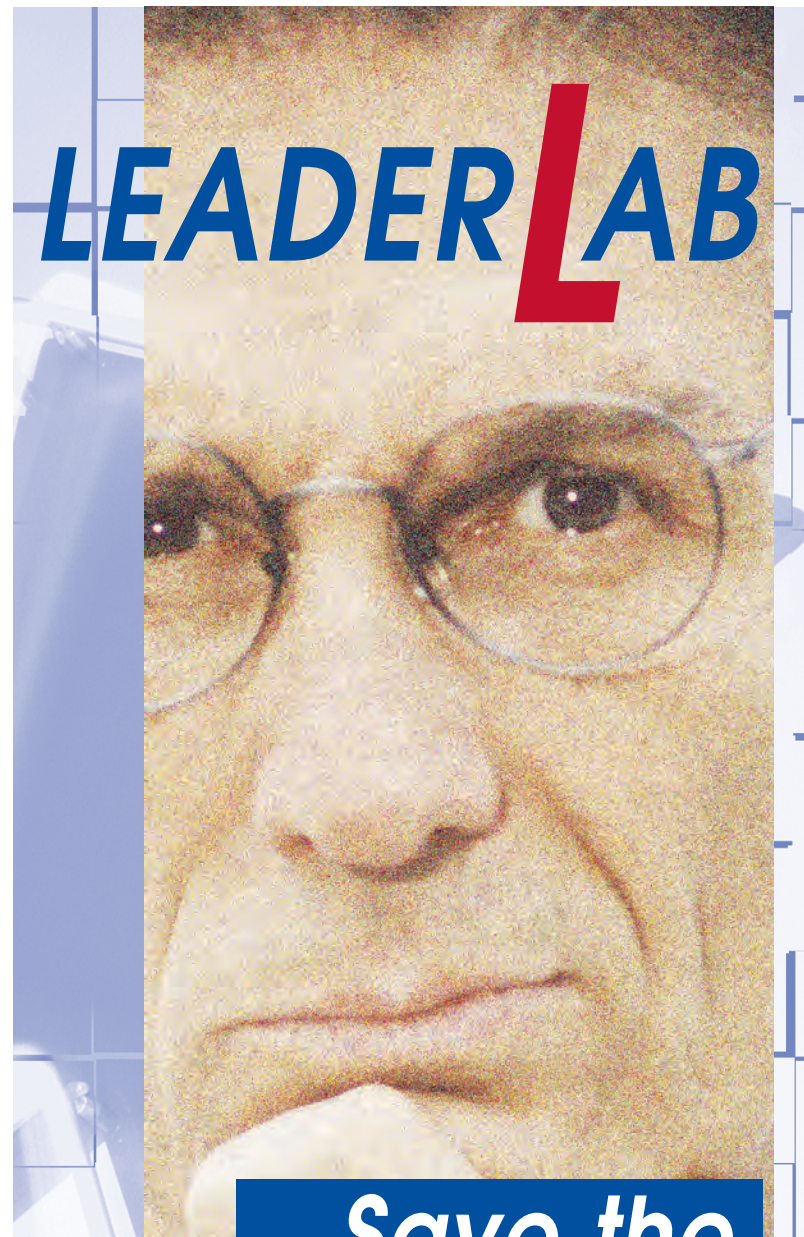
### Registration:

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- (2) Go online to [www.alsbom.org/mixREMIX](http://www.alsbom.org/mixREMIX), and click on "ReMix T-Shirt Order Form."
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For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Cindy Parrish at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 230, or (334) 613-2230, [cparrish@alsbom.org](mailto:cparrish@alsbom.org).

# LEADER LAB



## Save the Date!

Premier leadership training offered to pastors, staff members and lay leaders of

**Tuesday-Thursday, July 17-19**  
**Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery**

Alabama Baptist churches.

Register online now at [www.alsbom.org/leaderlab](http://www.alsbom.org/leaderlab).  
Early bird rates available until June 15.

For more information about registration or cost, please contact Ministry Assistant Jamie Allen at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 256, or (334) 613-2256, [jallen@alsbom.org](mailto:jallen@alsbom.org).  
[www.alsbom.org/leaderlab](http://www.alsbom.org/leaderlab)

# YOUTH EVANGELISM CONFERENCE 2012

# INSIDE



Alabama Baptist Convention  
State Board of Missions

youthevangelismconference

This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

**REGISTER NOW** at  
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### MONTGOMERY, AL

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CHRIS BROOKS



BEAN & BAILEY



RUSH OF FOOLS

## JULY 27-28, 2012



Alabama Baptist Convention  
State Board of Missions

youthevangelismconference

This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

## Want to know God?

By Pastor Jerry Henry  
First Baptist Church, Fairhope

When I was a little boy, my mother would tell me to play outside. Bouncing a ball inside the house was a hazardous activity. Things could get broken very easily. My ball and I were sent outside where the atmosphere was much better for safer play.

While safer play may be outside, knowing God is something that comes from inside. Outside information can give us facts about the God of creation and revelation, but a personal relationship is a matter of knowing God from the heart. The hardest words in the Bible were given to those who did not question God as Creator but still were distant from Him. "I never knew you. Depart from me" (Matt. 7:23, HCSB).

Paul was the greatest missionary who ever lived, but his knowledge of God before he became a Christian was from the outside in. He took it upon himself to correct Christians and force them to deny the living Christ.

However, the transformation that happened to him on the Damascus Road changed him from the inside out. He not only experienced the living Jesus that he had denied, but he made the inward commitment to follow Jesus as Lord and Master. As Ananias laid hands on the newly converted Paul, Paul received the Holy Spirit and his eyes were opened (Acts 10:17). God was no longer a rigid lawgiver but a personal Savior Who gave His life for the one who was chief of sinners. Saul the Pharisee became Paul the Christian.

In Fairhope, my wife and I often go to Mobile Bay and watch the sunset. It is so inspiring to see the beauty of God's creation. Our inward commitment to Christ is enhanced as our Lord opens our eyes to so much of His glory. An inward presence of God's Spirit widens the lens of our hearts as sightseeing becomes a worship experience.

Knowing God is an inside out process. The beginning involves an inner commitment to Christ as Savior and continues with baptism and church membership. We continue to study God's Word and let God's Spirit conform us to the image of Christ.

Knowing God thus becomes a heaven-on-earth adventure that never ends.

# Letters

(continued from page 2)  
more attention from legislators than saving unborn children.

While it would be easy to criticize the new Republican leadership for making pro-life bills anything but a priority, or to criticize the governor for not making these issues more of a focus like he did when campaigning for the office, we have to first look at ourselves.

We all want a better economy and better jobs, but the Lord says, "If my people will humble themselves and pray, and turn from their wicked ways, then He will hear from heaven and heal their land."

How many of us have said, "Let's don't talk about those moral issues when it comes to politics," or voted for Sunday alcohol sales on the basis of better economics, etc.? How many times have we prayed for our leaders, prayed to end abortion, prayed for the sanctity of marriage and so forth? Let's refocus internally, then readdress

To the best of our knowledge, all of the ads in *The Alabama Baptist* represent legitimate companies and offerings. However, one should always exercise normal business caution in responding to ads.

the failure of the last two legislative sessions.

Don Wallace  
Northport, Ala.

## CHOOSING STORIES

I was delighted to read the story "A Troubled Culture" in the April 19 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* paper. I've been working with Maya Missions for over 23 years. Pastoral training, evangelism and church planting have been our passion throughout this time.

About seven years ago, we added Vacation Bible School to our ministry goals. We have seen hundreds of children and adults come to faith in Christ.

Wayne Anderson, the founder and director of Maya Missions, has poured his heart and soul into this ministry. He now has over 50 Maya and Ketchi national pastors representing 34 churches in the Pastoral Training School four times a year. These men have been evangelizing villages in Guatemala for a number of years.

Over the years, I have sent stories and pictures to *The Alabama Baptist* publication but not more than a couple of paragraphs are usually written. Though I am a Southern Baptist pastor committed to the SBC, it seems to me when

you work with an Independent Baptist missionary your missions work is not newsworthy. I hope the paper that I enjoy reading, and that we provide for our church members free of charge, is not biased in choosing its missions stories. There is so much more being done among the Maya and Ketchi Indians of Central America by Southern Baptist pastors than what the article indicated.

Stanley Kilgore  
Center Grove Baptist Church  
Cullman, Ala.

## BULLYING TACTICS

I have just read your article on page 13 of your May 17, 2012, edition about Dwight McKissic.

It saddened me to read this article.

It appears that McKissic doesn't want to be a part of the SBC (Southern Baptist Convention). It appears that he wants to run the SBC. If your article is correct, and he threatened to bring a resolution calling for the ouster of ERLC (Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission) President Richard Land because of his opinions, then McKissic must believe that he has to control the job of the ERLC.

This sounds as though he as-

sumes his opinions are superior to Land's opinions.

As I read the article, McKissic emerged as someone who is used to getting his way and is using his bullying tactics on the SBC. I am sorry that Mr. Land felt compelled to write an apology for his opinions unless he was led to do so by the Holy Spirit.

If he was led to do so because of McKissic's threats, then the SBC is in trouble.

Jacquelyn Fike  
Millbrook, Ala.

## CREATING DIVISIONS

After a meeting on May 2 with SBC leaders, Dr. Richard Land decided that he should apologize for impugning the motives of the reverends Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton for statements they made in the Trayvon Martin case.

While I agree with Dr. Land that "God alone is the searcher of men's hearts," I am not convinced that their motives cannot be discerned by hearing and observing what they say and do, especially when the success of their endeavors depends on creating divisions between groups or classes of Americans.

Wayne Parker  
Pike Road, Ala.

## MARKET PLACE

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

### CHURCH POSITIONS

**SENIOR PASTOR:** Atco Baptist Church is currently accepting resumés for senior pastor. Atco is a conservative Baptist church located 50 miles north of Atlanta in the foothills of northwest Georgia. We are a mid-size church with a great harvest surrounding us. Resumés may be sent to: Atco Baptist Church, ATTN: Jack Smith, Chairman, Pastor Search Committee, 20 Parmenter Street, Cartersville, GA 30120. We will be accepting resumés through the end of June.

**MINISTER(S) OF MUSIC AND/OR YOUTH:** FBC Attalla is currently accepting resumés for minister(s) of music and/or youth. Please mail resumés to: FBC Attalla, ATTN: Search Committee, 607 5th Street, NW, Attalla, AL 35954.

**PART-TIME WORSHIP PASTOR:** Concord Baptist Church in Bessemer, Ala., is seeking a part-time worship pastor to lead a blended worship service. Please send resumés to: concordbaptist@bham.rr.com. You may also visit our website concordfamily.org.

**FULL-TIME MUSIC/YOUTH MINISTER:** Westside Baptist Church. Resumés may be mailed to: Stan Wicker, c/o Westside Baptist Church, 1026 Caroline Street, Elba, AL 36323, or emailed to: stanwicker@aol.com.

**PART-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR:** First Baptist, Palmyra (Birmingham area). Duties: Wednesday night, Sunday morning, youth activities, mission trips. Salary TBD. Send resumés to: rstathamfbc@bellsouth.net.

**PART-TIME, BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF STUDENTS:** Pates Chapel Baptist Church in Jemison, Ala., is searching for a part-time, bivocational

minister of students. Please email resumés to: hammitup@centurytel.net, or mail resumés to the church at: 190 County Road 295, Jemison, AL 35085, to the attention of Youth Search Committee.

### OTHER POSITIONS

**CHURCH SECRETARY:** Northridge Baptist Church, Northport, Ala. Inquiries can be made to: 205-758-5599 or info@northridgebaptistchurch.com. Full-time position with benefits. Applicants must have good secretarial, financial, computer and communication skills.

**CHURCH PIANIST:** Sharon Heights Baptist Church, Brookside, Ala., (near Gardendale) is seeking a church pianist. To apply or to further inquire about this ministry opportunity, contact Marc Culver (minister of music) at marc@sharonheights.org. No phone calls please.

**BOOKKEEPER:** Opening for experienced bookkeeper at Christian ministry. Computer skills required. Possible full-time or part-time. Mail resumés to: Business Administrator, P.O. Box 10472, Birmingham, AL 35202.

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**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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# 'Whoever God brings'

## Haitian immigrants help push N.C. church out of comfort zone

Nobody in Mount Olive, N.C., was quite prepared for an influx of Haitian immigrants seeking low-paying jobs in area poultry processing plants, but the community's First Baptist Church viewed the challenge as an opportunity.

Dennis Atwood knew that congregations must be flexible to respond to unforeseen needs in their communities, but the pastor at First Baptist Church, Mount Olive, N.C., was initially stumped when 25 Haitians showed up at Sunday worship in 2010 — and kept coming back in greater numbers.

The Haitians came to town seeking jobs and places to worship. First, Mount Olive, soon agreed to open one of its buildings to them so they could start their own church, Solid Rock First Haitian Tabernacle of Grace.

"Part of being a Christian is being open to whoever God brings your way," Atwood said. "You can't really evade that."

Even so, nothing has been easy about the Haitians' first months in Mt. Olive and the surrounding communities.

"The first thing everybody felt was shock," said Charles Brown, Mount Olive's town manager and a member of First, Mount Olive.

The sudden influx of Haitians, estimated regionally now around 4,000, began as word spread through Florida in 2010 that there were poultry factory and farm jobs available in great numbers in the agricultural region southeast of Raleigh.

There was some initial pushback, particularly in the housing market as landlords were either unwilling or unable to rent to the newcomers.



ABP photo

**EAGER TO LISTEN** — Nearly all the Haitians who attended a recent service at First Baptist Church, Mount Olive, N.C., brought Bibles and followed along closely to the message.

That resulted in some severe crowding conditions, with reports of up to 20 Haitians sharing single-family homes and apartments, Brown said.

He said the housing situation has improved and that long-time residents seem to be more accepting of their new neighbors. "I was heartened to see most people seem to be more accepting of these people," Brown said. It has also helped that Haitians have opened two businesses in Mount Olive, including a restaurant that is "very good," Brown said.

Atwood said it has been a similar learning curve for his congregation. Some say privately they wish the Haitians would find another place to worship, yet Atwood said he's had no group of members approach him about asking them to leave.

Part of that reticence is their unfamiliar worship style. The service

Atwood leads in the stately sanctuary features a blend of classical, contemporary and traditional music meant to praise God.

While Solid Rock is mostly a Baptist congregation, some are Catholics, Methodists and a mix of other Christian faiths. The worship style is a blend of charismatic and Pentecostal.

It has also 90 percent in Creole and much longer than the traditional service, said Erilus St. Sauveur, pastor of Solid Rock Church. "Baptists usually worship one hour, but we usually stretch it out to three hours," he said.

Atwood said the church is working with St. Sauveur to find the Haitians their own worship space. Atwood said he looks forward to the day when the two congregations will become ministry partners instead of landlord and tenant. (ABP)

## PERSECUTATED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



### Ethiopian Christian faces circumstances similar to Job's

JIJIGA, Ethiopia — His wife died shortly before he was falsely accused of desecrating the Quran, and by the time he was released from prison in eastern Ethiopia, his two children, ages 6 and 15, were missing.

Tamirat Woldegorgis walked out of prison in Jijiga on April 25, limping, after spending nearly two years in custody, including months in a small cell with 50 other inmates that left one leg paralyzed. "I have been trying to locate my children, but all in vain," Woldegorgis said. "My life is ruined — I have lost my house, my children, my health. I am now homeless and I am limping."

Muslims in his native Hagarariam village may have taken his children to further discourage him from having any influence in the area, said Woldegorgis, now staying with a friend in an undisclosed town. A member of the Full Gospel Church, Woldegorgis was arrested in August 2010 after a Muslim co-worker in the clothes-making business the two operated out of a rented home discovered he had inscribed "Jesus is Lord" on some cloth, area Christians said. His business partner later accused him of writing "Jesus is Lord" in a copy of the Quran, although no evidence of that ever surfaced. Angry sheikhs from area mosques had Woldegorgis arrested for desecrating the Quran, though sources said Muslims also accused him of writing "Jesus is Lord" on a piece of wood, on a minibus and then on the wall of a house.

Woldegorgis was sentenced to three years in prison on Nov. 18, 2010, and eventually was transferred to a prison in Jijiga. While he was in prison, authorities sometimes beat him in efforts to force him to recant his faith and become Muslim, but he refused, he said.

### Nigerian church bombing linked to Islamic terrorists

JOS, Nigeria — The Nigerian military's discovery of a Muslim terrorist base full of ammunition and explosives in Jos on May 19 refutes Islamist claims that Christians have been bombing their own churches, a local pastor said.

An intensive three-day search by Nigeria's Special Military Task Force found four Improvised Explosive Devices, along with 19 other explosive devices.

In northern Nigeria's Kano state, Nigerian forces killed a suspected Islamist militant in a raid May 1 following Boko Haram's April 29 attack on a worship service at Bayero University, where 19 people reportedly died from a bomb blast and gunfire. Two of those killed in the attacks were professors.

A Catholic church held a memorial service May 11 for the 10 Catholics slain at the university. Pastor Emefiena Ezeani, who had just finished conducting mass at his parish when he heard about the attack, said too many people are refusing to acknowledge that churches are as much primary targets of Boko Haram as police, government and media facilities are.

"Has Boko Haram, thanks to their being truthful, not made it unequivocally clear that their ultimate intention is to Islamize the whole of Nigeria? I am worried by the disturbing and deafening silence," he said. In an attack in Maiduguri, in the northeastern state of Borno, that authorities said was related to the Kano assault as it took place on the same day (April 29), suspected Boko Haram militants reportedly charged into a Church of Christ in Nigeria service and began firing as the congregation was about to take communion.

Witnesses reportedly said that when congregation members who escaped later returned, they found the pastor dead along with four other slain worshippers.

### Islamist mob throws urine, ditchwater at Christian group

BEKASI, Indonesia — No arrests have been made since 600 Islamists hurled bags filled with urine and ditchwater at about 100 members of a church in mid-May and threatened to kill its pastor. Police looked on as the mob attacked the Philadelphia Batak Christian Protestant Church worshipping on the street in Bekasi, near Jakarta in West Java Province on May 17, church attorney Saor Siagian told Compass Direct News by phone.

The mob began to throw urine, ditchwater, rotten eggs, stones and dirt when Pastor Palti Panjaitan came to address the congregation. The church had to disperse, Siagian said.

Pastor Panjaitan told local media he received a death threat and has filed a police complaint.



Photo courtesy of Antioch Baptist Church

### GUIN'S ANTIOCH MAKES STRUCTURAL, MINISTRY IMPROVEMENTS

Antioch Baptist Church, Guin, in Lamar Baptist Association recently installed double-paned, insulated windows in the sanctuary. The tint on the new windows blocks the sun's rays, adds comfort to the sanctuary and improves its appearance. The church also started Wednesday night Bible study April 4 for adults and children.

## in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders

### Glenn L. Vernon

#### Mobile Citronelle Assembly former director dies

Glenn L. Vernon, former director of Mobile Baptist Citronelle Assembly, died April 29. He was 78.

Vernon received a bachelor's degree in English and drama from Mississippi College in Clinton, Miss., and attended graduate school at Louisiana State University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. From 1966 to 1999, Vernon served as the director of Mobile Baptist Citronelle Assembly, now known as Camp Whispering Pines, a multifunctional campground that hosts numerous youth and church events throughout the year.

Vernon founded Camp SMILE (Special Meaning in Life's Expectations) in 1972 and began serving as a language missionary to the American Indians in 1988. He also helped start and develop several American Indian churches in south Alabama. He was actively involved in both Camp SMILE and Citronelle Memorial Baptist Church until his death. Vernon was preceded in death by his wife of 40 years, Sylvia. He is survived by four children and two grandchildren.

### Lee Porter

#### Former longtime SBC recording secretary dies

Lee Porter, a former Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leader who worked to ensure the integrity of voting in ballots for the SBC presidency, died May 17. He was 83.



PORTER

Porter, of Franklin, Tenn., a retired editor at LifeWay Christian Resources, served 25 years as SBC recording secretary, an annually elected post responsible for casting, collecting and tabulating ballots during business sessions of the convention annual meeting. He held the post until 2002.

Porter also was twice elected a convention vice president, served as parliamentarian and worked three years for the SBC Christian Life Commission. Before that he was a pastor in Texas, Arizona and Louisiana.

## Many Syrian believers live in uneasy alliance with President Bashar Assad

Hani Sarhan is a Christian who says none of his relatives work with Bashar Assad's regime or has anything to do with it.

"But what we heard from (the protesters) at the beginning of this revolution saying — 'Christians to Beirut, Alawites to the coffin' — started us thinking about the real aim of this revolution," he said. "So from this point of view, fearing for my life, I declared my support for President Assad."

Muslims dominate this nation of 22 million people, but Christians can be found at all levels of Syrian government, business and military. The 2 million Christians there trace their roots to ancient communities and have survived under many rulers as Christian enclaves in other Arab nations, such as Saudi Arabia, have withered.

The rebellion of hundreds of thousands of Muslims against Assad that began in March 2011 has not seen Christians abandon their support for the Alawites, the Muslim sect to which Assad belongs and that has controlled Syria for decades.

Many of Syria's Christians continue to stand by the regime not out of support for Assad but out of fear of civil war if rebels gain strength, or worse, if they win and install an Islamist government that's hostile to religious minorities.

Qatana is home to a Christian community of several hundred families. Protests there against the Assad regime have prompted mili-

tary incursions and clashes between renegade soldiers and the regular army. At checkpoints surrounding the town, some Christians chat to Alawite security officers.

Christians firmly believe that the Alawite regime will keep them safe. With the town's two churches located in Sunni Muslim neighborhoods, for months many families were too fearful to attend service, Christians there said. But a teacher at a Christian school said life is better now than before.

"The crisis is almost over," she said, asking her name be withheld because she feared retribution.

A church in Homs, Um al-Zunnar, was badly damaged during the military's monthlong shelling of the city in February. Christians in Homs said the church was attacked by "foreign-backed armed gangs."

The uprising has also hurt Christians' standard of living.

Foreign visitors are nowhere to be seen in the Christian neighborhood of Bab Touma in central Damascus, a once-popular tourist attraction.

Since the revolt began, Syria's tourism sector has dropped off by 60 percent, according to the Tourism Ministry.

These days, many conversations in the close-knit communities turn to "the crisis," as it is called. Fam-

ilies watch Arab television broadcasts by the extremist Salafist sheik Adnan Arour, who from exile in Saudi Arabia calls for jihad against the Assad regime.

Pro-regime commentators on state-run Syrian TV pounce on figures such as Arour and say Assad is all that stands between extreme Islam and stability. Christians there talk of letters sent to churches saying they are the next

**"There are plenty of Christians (in Syria) who believe that democracy in the long run is the best."**

to go after Assad, and a mortar that struck a monastery in the Christian town of Saidnaya, north of Damascus, was blamed on rebels.

There is little evidence that the rebels are responsible for such acts, and Christians there say Arour does not appear to have a lot of support.

Christian doctors, lawyers and dentists have established successful and stable careers. Others occupy leading positions in the Syrian army, though a new constitution mandates the head of state must be Muslim.

"They do support (Assad) and are feeling quite anxious," said Joshua Landis, director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Oklahoma and a Syria expert. "Even so, there are plenty of Christians (in Syria) who believe that democracy in the long run is the best protection for Christians." (RNS)







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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 3

## Explore the Bible By Doug Wilson Professor, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

### A COMMISSION TO LEADERSHIP Joshua 1:1-11, 16-18

In Israel's history, the succession of leadership from Moses to Joshua is well documented. Numbers 27:23 and Deuteronomy 31:23 record Moses and the Lord commissioning a successor. In Joshua chapter one, God grants Joshua the place of leadership, and the people of Israel acknowledge his position.

Joshua neither sought nor coveted his place of service. He practiced no political maneuvering to become leader over the tribes. The son of Nun demonstrated faithfulness and humility, serving as Moses' right-hand man for 40 years, from the wilderness of Sinai through the wilderness wanderings of Kadesh Barnea to the wilderness of Moab. He had no ambition to lead either an army or a nation, though he had the character and developed the qualities to do both.

### Rely on God's Promise (1-5a)

The Promised Land is a small strip no wider than the narrowest section of south Alabama between Florida and Mississippi. This mountainous, rocky region would provide little promise of farmland to cultivate crops, raise livestock or rear children. Why would any leader guide his people to such a land? God promised this land to Abraham and later to Moses.

In this passage, the reader is reminded of God's faithfulness to keep His promises. Here one comes face to face with the brevity of human life ("Moses my servant is dead"), the certainty of opposition ("stand against you"), and the reliability of God to do what He says ("I will not leave you or forsake you"). God had been with Moses, and He would be with Joshua.

### Rest in God's Favor (5b-9)

Be strong and courageous. These words are a crucial and repetitive encouragement (1:6, 7, 9, 18) to Joshua as he takes on this onerous task of leading Israel. He recognized the consistent nature of God, the complaints lodged against Moses from all sides and the challenge of leading hard-hearted people to follow God's instructions. As with any spiritual

leader, Joshua would have to remind himself of God's commission when times got tough.

The kind of strength necessary for this leadership task could only be developed through absolute dependence on God. The Lord promised that He would be with Joshua, the same promise offered to Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3:12). Resting in God's favor is being courageous enough to trust God even when circumstances overwhelm you.

### Respond to God's Command (10-11)

Almost 40 years had passed since the great exodus from Egypt. Parents and grandparents of the adults Joshua led had already died before they approached the Promised Land. This generation knew of the land promised to Abraham and to Moses and now they would follow Joshua's leadership into their new land.

The men of Israel would have to trust Joshua. God was commanding Joshua, and he in turn passed on instructions. Joshua was not a top-down leader who needed to lord over others in order to prove his authority. Instead, Joshua had traveled, camped and fought alongside his fellow Israelites. They knew that God had appointed Joshua to lead, and they would follow.

The families of Manasseh, Reuben and Gad had their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan. The men of the army from these tribes, however, would join their fellow Israelites in taking the land on the western side. These men willingly followed their fellow soldier, who had been given a new assignment. They recognized that God was with him.

### Receive Affirmation from Believers (16-18)

Israel's army had confidence in Joshua's leadership. Their words demonstrated their commitment. First they promised to follow Joshua's commands. Second they prayed that God would bless Joshua as He had blessed Moses. Third they prepared to deal with disobedience through swift judgment. Finally they pled with Joshua to be strong and courageous, the very words of God's commission to him.

## Bible Studies for Life By Kenneth B.E. Roxburgh Chair and Armstrong Professor of Religion, Samford University

### ARE YOU JUST GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS? Malachi 1:1-14

Malachi is the final book of the Old Testament, the last "messenger" of God within the Minor Prophets. All 12 books tell the story of how God spoke to His people as they faced the challenges and opportunities of living in changing times and circumstances, shaped by the religious, political, economic and social context of their history.

Malachi occupies an important place in our Christian Bibles, as it comes at the end of the Old Testament, and contains a promise of the coming Messiah, which the New Testament conveyed was fulfilled in the coming of John the Baptist and Jesus.

Malachi does come at the later stages of Israel's history, following the return from exile and the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem under the direction of Haggai and Zechariah. However, the perspective we have in the book is not a rosy picture. There are explicit and implicit criticisms of the sacrificial system and the priests. Malachi supports the system itself, but is concerned at the way in which religious ritual has become corrupted. He challenges the apathy toward religion and a relationship with God.

### Doubting God's Love (1-5)

Malachi's favorite term for describing God is "Lord of Hosts." It is a title for God that occurs on 24 occasions within this short book and speaks of the majesty and sovereignty of God who showers His love on His people.

The book begins with God declaring His love for a people who question the reality of His concern for their lives. The setting appears to be that of the return of the people from exile; a certain disappointment had set in among the people of God that things would never be quite the same as before. This is not the anguished cry of someone experiencing suffering that you find in the Psalms of lament, but an expression of skepticism and doubt, a challenge to the faithfulness of God. Malachi answers their questions by taking them seriously and reminding them of God's covenant

promises, which include both judgment and mercy. He assures them that the "best is yet to come" when they will be able to say with confidence, "Great is the Lord beyond the borders of Israel." Israel should not doubt God's love for them but should understand His love for the whole world.

### Offering our Second Best (6-10)

This section is a long attack on corrupt priests and the way in which they are not following the proper sacrificial system. They are allowing worshipers to offer blind and lame creatures, rather than the unblemished animals commanded by God. These priests who despise God will themselves be despised by Him. Malachi is concerned that these religious leaders grasp the enormity of their failure, that their lack of commitment to God's ways are causing the people to stumble.

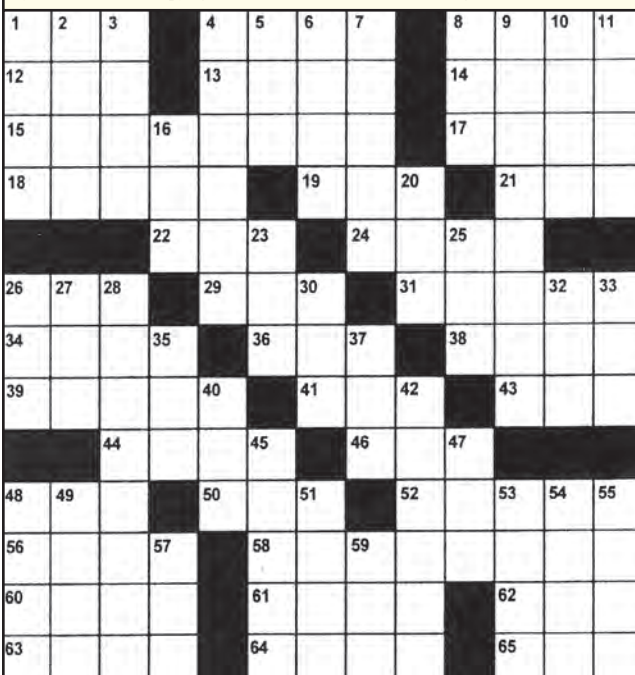
Malachi is convinced that obedience brings blessing and disobedience incurs punishment. He repeatedly emphasizes God's judgment and the connection between sin and chastening. The prophet is concerned about a mechanical understanding of worship that values ritual over relationship. He makes it crystal clear that wrong practice will hinder relationships between priests and people and between the people and God. His addressing the priests seems to leave us out, until we remember that as Baptists we believe in the priesthood of all believers. We all have a responsibility in offering our lives in the service of God, which constitutes true worship (Rom. 12).

### Forgetting Whom We Serve (11-14)

Malachi assumes that the true worship of God will stand or fall on the awareness we have of who God is. So he speaks of the God whose name is great among the nations, the Lord of Hosts. An attitude toward worship that says, "What a weariness this is," is a clear sign that the people have failed to understand what a privilege it is to honor God in our praise and thanksgiving and to live a life of holiness. He is the King of Kings and calls for reverence and respect in the way we live before Him.

## Christian Crossword

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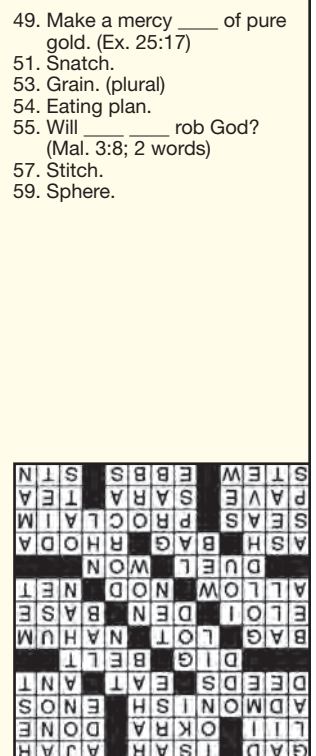


### Across

- A son of Jacob. (Gen. 30:11)
- King or emperor.
- Opened slightly.
- 52 in Roman numerals.
- Southern vegetable.
- Thy will be \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 6:10)
- \_\_\_\_\_ him as a brother. (2 Thess. 3:15)
- A son of Seth. (Gen. 4:26)
- Wonders and mighty \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Cor. 12:12)
- Take, \_\_\_\_: this is my body. (1 Cor. 11:24)
- Go to the \_\_\_\_\_, thou sluggard. (Prov. 6:6)
- If a man \_\_\_\_\_ a pit. (Ex. 21:33)
- Pants' support.
- Because Judas had the \_\_\_\_\_. (John 13:29)
- Abraham's nephew. (Gen. 11:27)
- A prophet of Judah.
- My God. (Mark 15:34)
- Daniel was in one. (Dan. 6:16)
- Foundation.
- That which I do I \_\_\_\_\_ not. (Rom. 7:15)
- Cain lived here. (Gen. 4:16)
- Peter and John used one in

### Down

- We will rejoice and be \_\_\_\_\_ in it. (Ps. 118:24)
- Assistant.
- Ten cent coin.
- A common childhood illness, \_\_\_\_\_itis.
- Slide on snow.
- Funeral vehicle, he \_\_\_\_\_. (Josh. 2:1)
- A sweetened beverage.
- A son of King Saul. (1 Sam. 13:16)
- He that heareth the word, and \_\_\_\_\_ with joy receiveth it. (Matt. 13:20)
- I will give you \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 11:28)
- Unusual.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ Commandments.
- The Supreme Being.
- Experiment room. (abbr.)
- Nickname for Beatrice.
- Come unto me, \_\_\_\_\_ ye that labour. (Matt. 11:28)
- Silver and \_\_\_\_\_ I none. (Acts 3:6; 2 words)
- \_\_\_\_\_ little Indians.
- \_\_\_\_\_ not liberty for an occasion to the flesh. (Gal. 5:13)
- His servants \_\_\_\_\_ him and told him. (John 4:51)
- Debt note. (abbr.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know in part. (1 Cor. 13:12)
- Spider's home.
- A seamstress who was brought back to life. (Acts 9)
- Slip gradually, drift into.
- National Hockey League. (abbr.)
- The poison of \_\_\_\_\_ is under their lips. (Rom. 3:13)



# World Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

## Vatican publishes rules for apparitions of Virgin Mary

ROME — The Vatican has published rules to evaluate the authenticity of the dozens of apparitions of the Virgin Mary reported each year.

The “Norms Regarding the Manner of Proceeding in the Discernment of Presumed Apparitions or Revelations” have been in use since 1978, but until now had been available only in Latin, never officially published and only circulated among bishops and specialists.

The Vatican document has now been translated into English and other languages to aid bishops in the “difficult task of discerning presumed apparitions, revelations, messages or ... extraordinary phenomena of presumed supernatural origin,” Cardinal William Levada, the head of the Vatican doctrinal office, wrote in a companion letter last December that was published only recently on the Vatican website.

The norms mandate that the local bishop must conduct a “serious investigation” to ascertain, with “at least great probability,” whether the Marian apparition effectively took place.

The rules also require an evaluation of the “personal qualities” of the alleged seer, including his or her “psychological equilibrium,” “rectitude of moral life” and “docility toward ecclesiastical authority.” The contents of the “revelation” must be “immune” from theological error, and the apparition must bear “abundant ... spiritual fruit,” such as conversions.

The authenticity of the vision should be rejected if, among other factors, the alleged seer shows “psychological disorder” or “evidence of a search for profit.”

In 2010, Pope Benedict XVI appointed a high-level commission to evaluate the authenticity of the controversial Marian apparitions in Medjugorje, Bosnia, which have been attracting tens of thousands of pilgrims for years despite opposition from local bishops.

## Uzbekistan continues to police religious meetings

YUKORI-CHIRCHIK, Uzbekistan — Uzbekistan continues punishing people exercising the right to freedom of religion or belief without state permission. In one incident, police and the National Security Service secret police raided Protestants meeting in the home of Natalya Kim in Yukori-Chirchik. They claimed that a bomb was in the home, local Protestants said.

While searching for the alleged bomb, police confiscated Christian books and a laptop. Subsequently 14 members of the unregistered Protestant church were fined for an “unsanctioned meeting in a private home.”

The verdict was supplied after the legally required time, thus preventing an appeal being lodged. Kim herself was given the largest fine, of 60 times the minimum monthly salary. Investigator Farhod Raimkulov said, “When many people gather in a certain place, it is the local police officer’s duty to inspect and see what is happening.” When asked whether the police can or should raid Raimkulov’s home when he holds a party or some other event, he said he was not part of the raid on Kim’s home.

## Muslim works only ones being approved in Kazakhstan

ASTANA, Kazakhstan — With new state censorship regulations for almost all religious literature and objects produced in or imported into Kazakhstan now in force, only some religious books — all Muslim — have so far successfully undergone the censorship process. As of May 8, 182 Muslim works had gained the Agency of Religious Affairs (ARA) approval required before they can be distributed.

Those distributing uncensored religious literature risk fines. Although the maximum period the ARA has to conduct its censorship is 60 days, some religious communities complain they have had no response to applications “for months.”

No ARA official was immediately available to say how many books or religious items are awaiting approval, if any have so far been refused, why no non-Muslim books have yet been approved and whether religious books already in use are legal or not. Officials have already confiscated religious books from libraries to check — including children’s books on the lives of Russian Orthodox saints.

# ‘Send more books’

## Book-Link ministry sends Bibles, resources overseas

Oliver Williams read the letter from a teacher in Nigeria. “If you cannot send me a New Testament, please tear a few pages out of a New Testament and send these pages to me,” the man wrote, desperate for even a portion of God’s Word.

The letter underscored a need for sending Bibles and Christian books to countries where they are not easily accessible.

Williams, a retired schoolteacher, directs Book-Link, a ministry that began in the back of a Ford Ranger truck two decades ago and now impacts the world from a two-story warehouse in rural Kentucky.

Book-Link emerged from a ministry called Books for the World, which began in 1988 as a project by the late Owen Cooper, a former Southern Baptist Convention president.

Long shelves of books as well as tables, chairs, dollies, boxes and packing materials fill the Book-Link warehouse in Eubank, Ky.

One recipient of a box of books in Africa responded, “Take out the packing material and send more books instead,” Williams recounted.

Volumes of used books and other Christian literature are repaired, processed, packed and wrapped in boxes weighing about 45 pounds each.

Through the efforts of many volunteers, the organization has shipped more than 2 million books, journals, tracts, Christian music CDs and cassette tapes to 5,000-plus recipients in more than 80 countries at no cost to those who open the boxes.

Volunteers typically bring books with them when they travel to Eubank to help pack.

“It costs about \$4,500 to ship a

20-foot container filled with 747 boxes of books to Nigeria and India and approximately \$11,000 to ship a similar container of materials to Zimbabwe and Zambia,” Williams said.

“Presently, Book-Link ships two 20-foot containers overseas yearly but has the capacity to ship three containers a year if more materials were available,” he added.

A few years ago, Williams taught at the Baptist Seminary in Kaduna, Nigeria, and told the students about Book-Link. While he was there, a 60-pound box of materials that Book-Link had shipped two or three years earlier finally arrived.

Requests received by Book-Link range from one in Africa asking for 50,000 Bibles to another from a Baptist seminary in Zambia asking for materials to establish a small library of 15 to 20 books for new pastors who venture into remote areas.

Some of the most popular resources are Bibles, theological books, atlases, concordances, hymnals, study course books, Sunday School literature, dictionaries, CDs and cassette tapes.

### Thank you letters

Book-Link receives many thank you letters from pastors worldwide such as one who wrote, “God bless Book-Link. Praise be to God for the blessings of books through Book-Link. The people of Pakwach Baptist Church of Uganda will benefit

greatly from the books. We never expected to receive books like these. Now it has happened and it is wonderful. May God bless Book-Link again and again.”

The coordinator of North European Mission in Latvia wrote, “The box of books arrived. ... The seminary president and a young professor who had studied in the U.S. were very happy to get them. I am sure they will put the books to good use and they will certainly be of use to the students who use them for years to come.”

Another letter, from the director of the Nicaraguan Christian Academy, stated, “Thank you so much for sending the books that you had promised. They arrived much faster than we had expected. Our new English-speaking church will use the hymnals and the students at our [missionary kids] school are already using the dictionaries, Bibles and commentaries.”

Now that e-readers and widespread Internet access are available, pastors in the U.S. tend to set aside traditional books and other printed materials in favor of electronic versions.

Book-Link relies on donations and volunteer labor. To join in the work of the ministry, call 606-379-1734; email [booklinkway1@windstream.net](mailto:booklinkway1@windstream.net); or visit their website, [www.shelby.net/~baptisteducators/Booklink.htm](http://www.shelby.net/~baptisteducators/Booklink.htm). Donations in Alabama may be sent to Book-Link, P.O. Box 899, Flomaton, AL 36441. (BP)

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# Historical Highlights

from previous issues of *The Alabama Baptist* Compiled by Kathleen Prude

### May 1962 50 Years Ago

Mother of the Year: A faithful Alabama Baptist church member who has “lived in the shadow of the church” all her life was named “American Mother of the Year” for 1962. Mary Celesta Weatherly, member of First Baptist Church, Fort Payne, was cited for the honor in New York City by the American Mothers Association. She is the first Alabama woman ever to win the honor.

### May 1972 40 Years Ago

Astronaut Receives Degree: Astronaut James B. Irwin, who spent almost 67 hours on the moon last summer as lunar module pilot for Apollo 15, will receive an honorary doctor of science degree from Sam-

ford University this month. The astronaut is a member of Nassau Bay Baptist Church, Nassau Bay, Texas.

### May 1982 30 Years Ago

Bible Drill Winners: Tammy Potter, of Steele Baptist Church in St. Clair Baptist Association, was the winner of the 1982 Youth Bible Drills sponsored by the Church Training Department of the Alabama Baptist State Convention. Second-place winner was Chris Burger of White’s Chapel Church in Etowah Baptist Association.

### May 1992 20 Years Ago

Return Mission: In 1952, Paul Hall flew Air Force missions over North Korea. In 1992, he returned to the peninsula with 28 others on an-

other mission — sharing the gospel in song. Hall, a Samford University music professor, is director of the Alabama Singing Men, a group of ministers of music who traveled to South Korea as part of the three-year partnership between the Alabama and Korea Baptist conventions.

### May 2002 10 Years Ago

Bestowing Honors: The president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, Michael D. “Mike” McLemore, was awarded the honorary doctor of divinity degree during graduation ceremonies for the University of Mobile. During his commencement address, McLemore cited the story of Joseph and challenged the graduates to “walk with compassion, walk with wisdom and walk with courage.”



BGR photo

Two nurses at Hope Clinic in Amman, Jordan, check patients' blood pressure before prescribing medicine.

# Hope clinic

## Clinic brings healing, hope to refugees in Jordan

**T**he child, Mohammed, was too small for his age and looked very fragile. Dr. Amy knew he wasn't getting enough to eat. The toddler, his mother, and grandmother, Mama Faiza, step cautiously into Hope Clinic, a free medical service located in the basement of an evangelical church in Amman, Jordan. As Iraqi refugees in Jordan, they expect they will not be welcome.

When a nurse greets them with a warm smile, Mama Faiza actually becomes fearful. She asks hesitantly, "Is there something wrong?" Kindness was the last thing she expected.

"Life for Iraqi refugees in Jordan is far from easy," said Dr. Amy, who has worked at the clinic for 12 years. "After their initial three-month visa runs out, they are in the country illegally. Iraqis do not qualify for refugee status. Being in the country illegally means they cannot work. ... Not being recognized as refugees also means they have to find their own housing and often are taken advantage of, having to pay far too much for derelict apartments."

### Volunteer staff

The clinic's all-volunteer staff said when patients discover they are going to be treated like human beings loved by God, they often say, "You are the only people who have ever treated us as something more than dogs."

Mama Faiza's family had gotten along well enough in Jordan because her husband was Palestinian, but when he died they were evicted from their rented apartment. Mama Faiza told the nurse she had a history of diabetes but stopped taking her medicines long ago because she couldn't afford them.

"At Hope Clinic, we treat people like these Iraqi

refugees who cannot afford to go to medical services they have to pay for," Dr. Amy said. "Most of our patients have chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension or heart diseases. For many, not taking their medication means a quick deterioration of health, with death following."

Southern Baptists play a significant part in Hope Clinic's life-saving work through Baptist Global Response (BGR).

Hope Clinic started in 1991 to offer medical care to Iraqis fleeing the Gulf War. In 1998, a team of medical volunteers began serving there, and the clinic slowly expanded its patient base. Today Jordanians, Palestinians, Egyptians, Yemenis, Sudanese, Somalis, Ethiopians and other North Africans receive outpatient family medicine, optometry, physical therapy and prenatal care. In approximately 3,600 patient visits a year clinic staff members help refugees and other people in need experience firsthand the love of God that brings hope for new life.

In a predominantly Muslim country like Jordan, evangelical believers naturally pull together to "be the hands and feet of Jesus" to people in need, said Jeff Palmer, BGR executive director.

"Many people in the world, especially refugees, struggle just to survive from one day to the next," he said. "When Christians show these refugees the love of God that heals and transforms, it's like rain in the desert."

Mama Faiza was deeply moved by her experience at the clinic that day. As she prepared to leave, she reached out to the doctor, gently pulled her head toward hers, and kissed her over and over.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Names have been changed. ReachGlobal, [www.efca.org/reachglobal](http://www.efca.org/reachglobal), a key partner in the Hope Clinic endeavor, provided information for this article. (BGR)*

## Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

### Emory University accused of academic bullying

ATLANTA — A renowned neurosurgeon, who received the Presidential Medal of Freedom and who successfully separated twins who were joined at the head, was the target of academic bullying recently at Emory University in Atlanta because he does not believe in evolution.

About 500 Emory faculty and students signed a letter to the editor of the university newspaper April 25 to call attention to commencement speaker Ben Carson's "dismissal of evolution."

"The theory of evolution is as strongly supported as the theory of gravity and the theory that infectious diseases are caused by microorganisms," the letter said. "Dismissing evolution disregards the importance of science and critical thinking to society."

The Discovery Institute launched a petition drive in response, with more than 2,700 signatures gathered within a week in support of Carson, who serves as professor of neurosurgery, oncology, plastic surgery and pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

"We call upon Emory University to publicly reaffirm that the university community welcomes and honors invited commencement speaker Dr. Ben Carson," the petition said.

David Klinghoffer, a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute, said in seeking to cast Carson in an embarrassing light, the professors who wrote the letter "used the familiar tactic of attributing to Dr. Carson beliefs, patently foolish ones, he does not hold."

### Presbytery commends pastor, defies church court ruling

NAPA, Calif. — In an unprecedented act of defiance, a California branch of the Presbyterian Church (USA) (PCUSA) refused a ruling from a church court to rebuke a pastor who wed same-sex couples.

The Napa-based presbytery of the Redwoods voted 74-18 on May 15 to instead praise Janie Spahr, who wed 16 same-sex couples when gay "marriage" was legal in California in 2008.

In 2010 the Redwoods presbytery's own court found Spahr guilty of breaking church rules by representing the ceremonies she conducted as marriages and ordered the presbytery to publicly rebuke her. That decision was upheld by the PCUSA's top court in February.

But the Redwoods presbytery rejected those rulings mid-May.

"The Presbytery of the Redwoods opposes imposition of the rebuke ... as inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ, the constitution of the PCUSA and the faithful life of ministry lived out in this presbytery," the motion said. Laurie Griffith, manager of judicial process and social witness in the PCUSA, said she had never before seen a presbytery reject a ruling from its own court.

### S.C. abstinence-based sex ed approved by HHS

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Heritage Keepers, an abstinence-based sex education curriculum offered by Heritage Community Services in Charleston, S.C., has been approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) after a study found it effective in delaying sexual initiation among youth.

The study involved 2,215 students in grades 7-9 and demonstrated that those receiving the Heritage Keepers curriculum were significantly less likely to become sexually active at the 12-month follow-up than those in a comparison group.

For those in the comparison group, sexual experience increased from 29.2 percent to 43.2 percent, compared to an increase from 29.1 percent to 33.7 percent among those who participated in Heritage Keepers. The HHS has specific metrics with which to determine if a program is "effective," and Heritage Keepers is the only abstinence-based program to this point to gain this HHS status.

### Catholics file lawsuit against contraception mandate

NOTRE DAME, Ind. — Dozens of Catholic universities, dioceses and other institutions filed lawsuits in courts around the country May 21 in a coordinated effort, spearheaded by the U.S. hierarchy, to overturn the Obama administration's contraception mandate plan.

The 43 plaintiffs, which include 13 dioceses and the University of Notre Dame, said the mandate forces religious employers to provide contraceptive and sterilization services to employees that violate their beliefs. It infringes on First Amendment religious freedom protections, they said and they charged that the federal government's exemption for religious organizations is too narrow.

"This filing is about the freedom of a religious organization to live its mission, and its significance goes well beyond any debate about contraceptives," said Notre Dame's president, John Jenkins, who famously awarded President Obama an honorary degree in 2009 despite anger from U.S. bishops.