

# THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



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# Who are senior adults?

By Julie Payne  
The Alabama Baptist

## Alabama Baptist churches strive to reach senior adults of different ages

**A** one-size fits-all approach to adults 50-plus probably has never worked but definitely will not work now." This statement, made by national expert on gerontology Amy Hanson, was made in reference to effective church ministry for older adults. It is an ever-growing topic for many pastors as they examine ways to minister to specific age brackets and lifestyles of today's aging population.

Hanson, author of "Baby Boomers and Beyond: Tapping the Ministry Talents and Passions of Adults Over 50," categorizes adults older than 50 into three age groups: the "frail elderly" (physically limited), "senior adults" (older than 70) and "new-old baby boomers" (between 50 and 70).

Ronnie McCarson, associate pastor to adults 55-plus at Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, agrees wholeheartedly with Hanson's statement, explaining that there is "no normal" in senior adult ministry anymore.

With 25 years of experience as a minister to senior adults, McCarson first began his ministry to older adults at Hillcrest Baptist Church, Enterprise, in 1987. He said that with the possibility of five generations now worshipping in church at the same time, intergenerational ministry work is increasingly important.

### Baby boomers

Mark Seanor, minister to experienced adults at First Baptist Church, Huntsville, noted, "The [baby] boomers coming our way are aging [in] a way that we're just now experiencing." Many of these adults do not want to be identified as "senior adults" or be associated with the same events their parents are involved in, he said.

Kenny Hoomes, associate pastor for spiritual maturity/senior adults at First Baptist Church, Montgomery, faced this reality several years ago when a man who had turned 65 did not want to advance to the senior adult department because his mother was in that class.

"It was an awakening for me to realize we didn't

have enough departments in the senior adult area, and those turning 65 at the time didn't want to move up," Hoomes shared, adding he realized the ministry needed to do more than just implement an "everyone doing the same thing" approach.

According to Hoomes, two main factors have affected senior adult ministry. The first is that life expectancy has increased over time and people are living much longer. The second is the population and the sheer number of senior adults.

Hoomes said for ministry programming reasons, he would break down Hanson's three age categories — frail elderly, senior adults and new-old baby boomers — even further. In his expanded definition, the "new-old baby boomer" term would encompass those in the 55-65 age range. "Then I think, because of the differences in the circumstances of life, as well as physical abilities, that it needs to be broken down into smaller groups," he said, alluding to the idea of a 65-75 group, a 75-85 group, an 85-95 group and so on.

Like Hoomes, Seanor also categorizes senior  
(See 'Ministering,' page 13)

*"It was an awakening for me to realize we didn't have enough departments in the senior adult area, and those turning 65 at the time didn't want to move up."*

# COMMENT

## Worthy of Your Support

Please allow me to say this plainly. *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper is worthy of your support and the state Baptist paper needs your support.

During the past year, circumstances demonstrated the valuable contributions the state Baptist paper provides Alabama Baptists. In the weeks that followed the April 27, 2011, tornadoes, the state Baptist paper provided stories that captured the heart, reports that lifted the spirit, articles that challenged the mind and information that built up the body of Christ known as Alabama Baptists.

The paper's award-winning reporting kept Alabama Baptists informed about the 45-plus Alabama Baptist churches destroyed or severely damaged in the storms. The paper played a key role in keeping Alabama Baptists connected during recovery and rebuilding efforts. Articles told of God's care in crises, of God's comfort in tragedy, of Alabama Baptists sharing God's love in ways ranging from a hug or prayer from a volunteer chaplain to rebuilding homes by Baptist construction volunteers.

What coverage of the tornadoes illustrated is what *The Alabama Baptist* does week in and week out, what it has done for the 170 years of its ministry. The news, information and understandings gleaned from the pages of the state Baptist paper help make it possible for Alabama Baptists to work together in the cause of Christ.

Numerous studies prove that no volunteer organization, not even a local church, can long survive without a common source of trusted, reliable information. For Alabama Baptists, that source is the state Baptist paper. That is why churches that provide the state Baptist paper to active resident families give more to missions and participate more in denominational life than churches that do not provide the paper.

The state Baptist paper is the primary source of missionary information. It is the major outlet for news and information about all that Baptists do together in the state and around the world. It is a key instructor about what Baptists believe and how Baptists work together. The state Baptist paper promotes Baptist work and also provides a forum for views about that work. The paper remains the foremost chan-



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

nel of communications for the state convention.

That is why the paper has been a trusted voice and a welcome friend in the homes of Alabama Baptists since its earliest days.

A church that fails to furnish the paper to its active families has begun to draw back into itself and away from its larger Baptist family. The only question is how long the process will take.

Because of what the state Baptist paper does for readers, for local Baptist churches and for the state and national conventions, the paper is worthy of your support.

### Making a difference in Baptist life

And the paper needs your support in order to continue making a difference in Baptist life. *The Alabama Baptist* needs your prayer support. It needs your subscription and your goodwill as you tell others about stories and articles you read each week. And the paper needs your financial support.

When I began working in state Baptist papers, I was handed a notepad and a camera. Today a reporter carries a laptop computer, a video camera, a still camera and a smartphone. The reporter writes the story, takes pictures and makes a video. Before leaving the site, a tweet teases the story through Twitter. A Facebook posting shares a story highlight along with a photo. Sometimes a summary goes directly to the Breaking News website ([thealabamabaptist.wordpress.com](http://thealabamabaptist.wordpress.com)).

Back in the office the story is fleshed out for print. Multiple photos are selected for a slide show to accompany the story on the online edition. The video is uploaded and relevant websites to the story are selected and posted for readers to use as resources.

Covering a story takes a lot more work than a generation ago and is a lot more expensive.

Computers used to be for word processing. Now computers are used for enhancing photos, for making videos, for designing pages, for story research and writing, for managing the business of the publication and every other aspect of keeping readers up to date about what God is doing through Alabama Baptists at home and around the world.

Equipment is expensive. Software is expensive. Training to keep editors and writers up-to-date on how to use them is expensive.

For decades, training future Baptist journalists has been a part of the ministry of *The Alabama Baptist*. Some student interns have been added to this staff. Others have gone to serve on other state Baptist paper staffs or in communication positions for Southern Baptist Convention entities. Some work as Christian communicators in the public marketplace.

Endowment for the Hudson Baggett Intern Program at *The Alabama Baptist* is less than \$30,000. Earnings are not enough to pay an intern minimum wage for one semester. Much more is needed to make it possible for God-called men and women to get on-the-job training as religious journalists and communicators.

Baptist colleges regularly campaign to endow important teaching positions. These are called endowed chairs. Likewise the state Baptist paper has key positions such as the editor and the managing editor which need to be endowed to ensure adequate support for God-called individuals who are trained both in communications and in theology. After all, the editor must be versed in the "how" part of communications as well as trained in the work of the church about which the editor writes.

Careful management through the years has resulted in a small reserve fund which functions as endowment for *The Alabama Baptist*. Earnings from these funds are used to subsidize the cost of the state Baptist paper for local Baptist churches. That saves each church about \$1 per subscription. Being able to keep the state Baptist paper affordable for every church is one of the goals of an endowment fund as outlined by the directors of *The Alabama Baptist*.

Underwriting these programs financially is not likely to happen with a single gift. It more likely will happen when readers agree that *The Alabama Baptist* is worthy of their support and, in addition to their prayers and subscriptions, begin to include the state Baptist paper in their wills and estate plans.

I have concluded that *The Alabama Baptist* is worthy of my support. I ask you to join me by concluding the paper is worthy of your support, too.

Pray for *The Alabama Baptist*. Subscribe to *The Alabama Baptist*. Give to *The Alabama Baptist*.

For more information, visit [www.thealabama-baptist.org](http://www.thealabama-baptist.org) or call 1-800-803-5201.

### — Clarification —

The Book-Link ministry in Alabama noted in the article "Book-Link Ministry sends Bibles, resources overseas," in the May 31 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*, was discontinued. The Flomaton address provided is no longer an option for sending books. The address to use is: Book-Link International, Inc., 100 Book-Link Way, Eubank, KY 42567.

## Letters to the Editor

### VERMONT CHURCHES

Having ministered for nearly seven years in Vermont, your recent story about the pioneering work of Roscoe Anderson there caught my attention. While you credited Baptist Press (BP) at the end of the article, when I actually accessed the BP story online, I found your

version had been somewhat condensed. Comments by brother Anderson and others which might be perceived as reflecting negatively upon Vermont were left out. I would encourage everyone desiring to get the clearer picture to read the BP version.

Archie Walker  
Ariton, Ala.





**"If ye continue in my word, then ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."**  
John 8:31-32

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# Separation of church, state

## Faith-based food pantry, government compromise on timing of prayer

Food pantry volunteer Shirley Sears patiently walked a young woman through a series of questions on an application for emergency assistance. After they completed the form, Sears told the woman she had one more question.

"Is there anything," Sears asked, "that you would like us to pray with you about?"

Yes, the woman replied without hesitation. Reaching across the small desk that separated them, Sears grasped the woman's hands and began to pray.

That scene has been repeated thousands of times over the past 15 years inside this small southern Indiana food pantry operated by nonprofit Community Provisions of Jackson County.

But recently the practice was found to be against federal policy, leaving the pantry's founder with a Solomon-like choice: Stop the prayers or give up truckloads of free food provided through the federal Emergency Food Assistance Program.

Paul Brock, who started the faith-based pantry in 1997, refused to order his volunteers to quit asking recipients whether they wanted to pray. The federal food was suspended while the sides discussed a compromise.

### 'Overly sensitive'

"These kind of cases are popping up in a lot of places around the country," said Michael Cromartie, vice president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington. "People can be overly sensitive on both sides."

Cromartie said it is not a matter of stifling religious speech, but rather following the constitutionally mandated separation of church and state rules that come with receiving and administering government assistance.

"If this food or money was coming from a

Christian charity, there would be no problem with praying," he explained, "but the (government) money comes with attachments, and you have to follow the rules if you are going to take the money."

The food pantry issue arose after an inspection last winter by Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana, which runs the program for the Indiana Department of Health and ensures compliance with federal guidelines.

Inspectors noted that pantry staff members asked recipients whether they wanted to pray. They reported that to state officials, who determined the practice was a violation of the federal rule.

"The guidelines are no religious (activity) or teaching can be required for providing services," Gleaners spokeswoman Carrie Fulbright said.

Because many food pantries have ties to churches, the state suggested to faith-based operations that they offer brochures or establish a separate room for prayer while complying with regulations.

Brock bristled at the call to stop the prayers, but he worried about having enough food to feed the 300 or so people who show up each week for help. The federal aid accounts for about 15 percent of the food distributed by the pantry, Brock said.

Brock said the pantry workers weren't violating the rules because no one was ever required to pray. "We still give food to people, even when they say they don't want to pray," he said.

Now Community Provisions of Jackson

County, the state Department of Health and the United States Department of Agriculture have reached an agreement that allows the nonprofit to keep receiving food from the federal government, according to *USA Today*.

The resolution changes the timing of when volunteers can ask recipients about praying. The move is aimed at removing any hint of a religious requirement to get the free govern-

ment food, preserving the constitutional requirement of separation of church and state, *USA Today* reported. Previously pantry workers asked about praying after recipients filled out an application for food assistance. Now they will wait until after recipients get their food.

Cindy Hubert, president and CEO of Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana, said she thinks the plan addresses the concerns and needs of all the parties.

"It really wasn't a case of anyone objecting to praying," Hubert said. "It is just that it can never be a requirement to get food. It can't even be perceived that way."

Filling a grocery cart with fresh and canned goods, single mother Kathy Gabbard said she has turned to the pantry several times for assistance and has been asked whether she would like to pray. On some of those visits, Gabbard said, she accepted the invitation.

"It didn't offend me whatsoever," she said. "I think this is a great program."

At press time no reports of this type of situation could be found in Alabama.

**"It really wasn't a case of anyone objecting to praying. It is just that it can never be a requirement to get food."**

(RNS, TAB)

# Why I RECOMMEND *The Alabama Baptist*

The leadership of every Southern Baptist church in Alabama must somehow decide how they plan to communicate with their membership. At Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Hueytown, where it is my privilege to serve as pastor, we made the decision years ago to furnish *The Alabama Baptist* to every single member of our congregation. Our people not only appreciate all the information and inspiration they find within the pages of this award-winning publication, but they are also able to stay informed about the events taking place both at church and among our sister congregations in the Bessemer Baptist Association. The value we see in providing this resource can be summarized in five words:



**Pastor Rick Patrick**  
Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Hueytown

serious thought and reflection upon current events. One may not always agree with the opinions offered, but *The Alabama Baptist* provides a place where this exchange of ideas can find expression.

► **Cooperation:** As Southern Baptists, we want to know how we can work together with other

partners in our Cooperative Program ministries, our local association and both our state and national conventions. If we are to cooperate in missions and ministries, disaster relief work, supporting our Children's Homes, Christian education and other valuable ministries, we

need to know what is going on so we can participate in our mutual work.

► **Administration:** By partnering with *The Alabama Baptist*, we provide all these resources to our church members for only pennies a week, taking full advantage of the newspaper's resources for printing and mailing, and saving our office staff hours of precious time. We not only have a better informed congregation, but we also exercise good Christian stewardship, saving the church time and money in producing our weekly newsletter. Let me encourage you to provide *The Alabama Baptist* to your congregation.

► **Information:** The news you receive by reading *The Alabama Baptist* is not only accurate, fair and balanced, but it is targeted specifically to the needs of Christians in general and Baptists in particular. Coverage of such issues as moral legislation in the state Legislature and religious persecution abroad is not only more extensive but is also presented in a manner that is consistent with our Christian worldview.

► **Inspiration:** In addition to the news features available, readers benefit from Sunday School lessons, devotional materials, reviews of Christian books and music, and testimonies of God's grace in the lives of Alabama Baptists. Upon finishing this newspaper, one is not only left informed, but also uplifted and encouraged.

► **Interpretation:** Sometimes it is helpful not simply to review the basic facts of a news story, but to consider events from a specific perspective informed by years of observation and the lessons of history. Editorials are designed to provoke

**CONNECTING**  
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*"Upon finishing this newspaper, one is not only left informed, but also uplifted and encouraged."*

# Let the GAMES begin

By Ava Thomas  
International Mission Board

## Baptist leaders in London prep for ministry during Olympics

At times, when Doug Shaw stands on the hill just outside Olympic Park in London, he can barely hear himself think. Construction buzzes and roars in preparation for the Summer Olympic Games, which start July 27. The work's been going strong for years.

Shaw can relate. He hasn't stopped in ages either. As Olympics volunteer coordinator for Southern Baptists, he's been in motion for months preparing Baptists to meet the tens of thousands of internationals coming to the United Kingdom this summer.

"We are praying that many people from all over the world who may not have an opportunity to hear or respond to the gospel without being persecuted by their neighbors might have that opportunity while they're here in London," Shaw said.

David Pile said he has the same hope. "I and others are hopeful that there will be lots of local events and lots of community engagement and we'll be able to share and shine the love of Jesus with a bunch of people that we otherwise wouldn't have come in contact with," said Pile, Olympic and Paralympic church engagement coordinator for the London Baptist Association.

Shaw is expecting the help of about 400 Baptist volunteers from the United States, and Pile is expecting the participation of hundreds of churches in England.

Volunteers will help with festivals, face painting, handing out water and a range of other things. Some will assist churches in hosting big-screen events in parks, and sports teams will help with basketball and baseball events in neighborhoods around local churches.

All of these efforts fall under the banner of More Than Gold, a joint effort of Christian churches of many denominations worldwide. More Than Gold helps Christians collaborate for ministry during major international sporting events such as the Olympics or the World Cup.

And its most famous ministry — pin trading — will be in full force during the 2012 games.

"Pin trading is the biggest of the unofficial Olympic sports," Shaw said, noting that thousands participate in the hobby.

As part of More Than Gold, volunteers trade a More Than Gold pin that shares the gospel message, he said.

The pin is a good conversation piece and helps start gospel conversations in the area surrounding the Olympic Park, where blatant evangelism is not allowed, Shaw said.

"During the Olympics, you won't be able to do literature distribution or any kind of obvious evangelism



David Pile (left) of the London Baptist Association and Doug Shaw of the International Mission Board chat over a diagram of the Olympic Park in London's Stratford area. Pile and Shaw have been working for months on strategy and volunteer coordination for ministry during the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.



IMB photo

Tourists snap photos of the Olympic Stadium in London from a viewing deck in nearby Westfield Shopping Centre. Construction continues in Olympic Park as preparations are made for the 2012 Summer Olympic Games.

within a mile of any of the venues in London or anywhere else in the UK. These areas are closed off to direct evangelism," he said.

But pin trading is a traditional part of the Olympics atmosphere, and "there's nothing wrong with talking with people," Shaw said.

Many local Baptists are also participating with a "big silent Christian witness" during the games, Pile said. They will serve as official Olympic volunteers, or Games Makers. These volunteers serve as chaplains, drivers, field setup crew members and in a range of other roles.

"They would have had to apply two or three years ago for these kinds of roles, but they will put (volunteers) in direct contact with athletes and other people involved in the games," Pile said.

A number of Christian families in the UK also participate in another of More Than Gold's major ministries — the athletes home-stay program, Shaw said.

"More Than Gold is the official Olympic manager of the program. It allows athletes' families to have a place to come and stay during the Olympics," he said.

Many athletes don't find out until the last minute that they have qualified for the games, Shaw explained, and "many families come from places where a week in London would be prohibitively expensive even in normal times."

Many of the relationships built between host and visiting families lasts well beyond the Olympics, he said. Shaw asks for Christians to pray that volunteers at the Olympics would be able to "share Christ effectively and in a meaningful way — a low-key way would be the best way to start," he said. "Pray also that volunteers coming here will have wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit."

Pile agreed, asking for prayer that "we would be able to further engage with our local communities not just this year but in years to

come because of our efforts this year."

He expressed a big thanks to Baptists in the United States for their long history of help during the Olympics.

"We would like to thank you for sending missions teams to work alongside us ... to make the most of this exciting opportunity," Pile said. "People have saved up money, taken time off work, come over here with prayer support from their home church and supported us in our historic moment so that the glory of Jesus can be shared with as many people as possible."

For hopeful volunteers late getting on the bandwagon, opportunities to serve in the UK are still available, but they "will come at a premium" for anyone who isn't local, Shaw said. He noted that most mid-range hotels in the London area are fully booked.

### Asking for prayer

He and Pile are asking for prayer more than anything, but also for potential volunteers to consider planning to serve at the 2016 games in Rio de Janeiro.

It's not too early. Abel Santos, a Brazilian Baptist, is spending this year in England with More Than Gold to learn how it works and take the ministry back to Brazil for three back-to-back events — the Confederations Cup in 2013, the World Cup in 2014 and the Summer Olympics in 2016.

"We encourage everyone to be thinking about Brazil. It would be great to have people coming in from the United States to help us with missions teams and sports events," Santos said. "If there is anyone in the United States who feels a calling to come to South America to help us, that would be great."

For more information on Olympic ministries, prayer requests and opportunities for service at the 2012 games visit [morethangold.org.uk](http://morethangold.org.uk). ☛

## Alabama Baptists to minister in London

By Maggie Walsh  
The Alabama Baptist

National Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) is sending 24 volunteers to the 2012 London Olympics Aug. 2–13. The missions team is composed of several smaller groups from various churches across 11 states: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Washington.

"I can't wait!" Lora Holland said.

Holland and her sister, Joan Hicks, are among a six-person group going from Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville, in addition to the WMU missions team.

The sisters had originally planned to go to Honduras over the summer but changed their minds after much prayer.

"The Lord just didn't give us a peace about [Honduras]," Hicks said. "Then we both heard about the London trip, and we prayed over it. It was just a God thing."

Members of the missions team will be ministering through servant evangelism, hospitality and pin trading, according to WMU corporate communications team leader Julie Walters.

Providence Baptist Church, Daleville, has three women traveling across the Atlantic with WMU to share the gospel. For Providence member Eugenia Berta, this will not be her first visit to England. "I've been to London a couple of times but never on the Lord's business," 84-year-old Berta said. Her goal for this trip is to project the love of God by helping people, even if it simply means

handing out water or praying for those she meets.

Edna Beam, also a member of Providence Baptist, said she has been on other WMU-sponsored trips across the country and, each time "they (WMU) do an awesome job planning, processing and executing" their missions trips.

Team members, who range in age from 24 to 84, are already preparing for the 11-day trip. Holland said she is "praying that He will prepare my heart" for witnessing to those in London.

### 'Open to learn anything'

Beam said she is "preparing physically as well as spiritually," as they will be doing a lot of walking to minister to those attending the Olympics. Like her sister, Hicks said she is preparing by familiarizing herself with the culture in London and praying for "more awareness of what she can do to tell others about Christ."

"I'm open to learn anything the Lord wants to teach me," she said.

WMU has been consistently sending teams to the Olympics since 1996, making this the eighth Olympics missions team. Plans are already being made to send another team to the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

Registration for the London trip is closed, but for additional ways to get involved visit [www.wmu.com](http://www.wmu.com).

If you have plans to minister during the London Olympics, tell us your story by emailing [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org) or post it on our Facebook page. ☛

# Federal appeals court rules against DOMA's federal benefits section

A federal appeals court struck down a section of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in a unanimous ruling May 31, becoming the first appeals court ever to rule against the federal law defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

The three-judge panel of the First U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston affirmed a lower court's ruling that DOMA is unconstitutional because it denies federal benefits to same-sex couples in states where they can legally marry.

The ruling, which will be appealed, would force the United States to recognize same-sex "marriages" from the seven states and the District of Columbia where it is legal, and by extension grant federal benefits, such as tax breaks and federal employee spousal insurance, to same-sex couples.

DOMA was passed in 1996 by a bipartisan 84 percent majority of those in Congress and signed by President Clinton. The appeals court ruling did not overrule another major section of DOMA that gives states latitude in defining marriage. That section was not challenged.

Neither did the panel address the issue of whether gay couples

have a right to marry. The ruling struck down Section 3 of the act, which defines marriage for federal purposes such as tax benefits.

DOMA limits tax and Social Security benefits to couples in opposite-sex marriages, the court said, and in cases where one partner in a legally recognized same-sex "marriage" is a federal employee, the act prohibits the other partner from receiving provisions for retirement and medical care, which are, "in practice, the main components of the social safety net for vast numbers of Americans."

Dale Schowengerdt, legal counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), said society should protect and strengthen traditional marriage rather than undermine it. ADF, a Christian legal group, has worked to defend DOMA.

"In allowing one state to hold the federal government, and potentially other states, hostage to redefine marriage, the First Circuit attempts a bridge too far. Under this rationale, if just one state decided to accept polygamy, the federal government and perhaps other states would be forced to accept it, too," Schowengerdt said.

"The federal government had the authority to step in against polyga-

my at one time in our nation's history, and it has the authority to step in against this attempt at marriage redefinition as well," Schowengerdt said, referring to laws Congress enacted against polygamy in the 19th century.

Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley, who filed one of the initial lawsuits against DOMA in this case, praised the ruling by the appeals court.

"Today's landmark ruling makes clear once again that DOMA is a discriminatory law for which there is no justification," Coakley said. "It is unconstitutional for the federal government to create a system of first- and second-class marriages, and it does harm to families in Massachusetts every day. All Massachusetts couples should be afforded the same rights and protections under the law, and we hope that this decision will be the final step toward ensuring that equality for all."

This will not be the final step in a decision either way, however. The Circuit Court's decision will almost certainly be appealed. The U.S. Supreme Court will have to rule ultimately on the constitutionality of this section of DOMA.

Last year the Obama administration decided not to defend DOMA because it believes the law is unconstitutional. President Obama further angered religious conservatives this May when he announced his personal support for same-sex "marriage," though he said the decision should be left up to each state. (BP, RNS)

**"All Massachusetts couples should be afforded the same rights."**

**Martha Coakley  
Massachusetts  
Attorney General**

## Across Alabama's Associations

### BIBB

► **Bob Hope** resigned as pastor of **Six Mile Church, Brierfield**. He served at the church for 12 years. His last day is June 12.

### CHEROKEE

► **Etta Griffin**, wife of retired pastor Jim Griffin and a member of **First Church, Centre**, died May 13. She was 89. Griffin was a volunteer through the Red Cross and is remembered for her work at various hospitals. She is survived by

her husband of 72 years, Jim; two daughters; four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

### COOSA RIVER

► **Westview Church, Syl-**

**acauga**, will hold Vacation Bible School (VBS) family night June 15. For information visit [www.wherethefriendsbecomefamily.com](http://www.wherethefriendsbecomefamily.com). Jimmie Roberts is pastor.

### MONTGOMERY

► **Trinity Memorial Church, Montgomery**, will hold a Father's Day breakfast June 16, 8 a.m. Rick Evans, pastor of Dalraida Church, Montgomery, will speak. For information call 334-274-1067. Stan Holt is pastor.

### MUD CREEK

► **West Jefferson Church, Quinton**, will hold a VBS kick-off parade June 9, 10 a.m., followed by a hot dog lunch. For information call 205-674-6804. Doug O'Brien is interim pastor.

### SAND MOUNTAIN

► **New Home Church, Pisgah**, will hold Body 4 Believers classes June 14, 21, 28 and July 5, 6:30 p.m. For information call

256-451-3992. David Smith is pastor.

### ST. CLAIR

► **Evening Star Church, Vincent**, will celebrate homecoming with guest singers Holy Destiny June 10, 10 a.m. Lunch will follow. Rick Alldredge is pastor. ► **Heritage Church, Pell City**, will host gospel group Vocal Event in concert June 16, 6 p.m. For information call 205-338-4874. Jessie Hayes is pastor of the church.

### TUSCALOOSA

► **Carrolls Creek Church, Northport**, will hold its education building dedication June 10. Worship will begin at 10:45 a.m. and the dedication will follow. Daniel Edmonds, director of the office of Sunday School and discipleship for the State Board of Missions, will speak. Alan Roggli is pastor.



## Wayne E. Ward

### Retired seminary professor Ward dies

Wayne E. Ward, retired professor of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., died May 23 following a massive stroke. He was 90.

A native of Piggott, Ark., Ward was a graduate of Ouachita Baptist College in Arkadelphia, Ark., and Southern Seminary where he earned a doctor of theology degree.

He also taught at International Baptist Theological Seminary in Zurich-Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and the Tantar Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem.

Ward joined the faculty of Southern Seminary in 1951 as an instructor in biblical languages and theology. Later he was awarded the Joseph Emerson Brown Professor of Theology endowed chair, which he held until his retirement in the 1990s.

Even though Ward was a popular evangelist and interim pastor serving churches across the Southern Baptist Convention, Al Mohler, president of Southern Seminary said, "Wayne Ward was born to be a teacher."

"He not only loved to teach theology, he loved to preach and the two came together in him in an incredible way," Mohler said.

Ward was preceded in death by his wife of 64 years, Mary Ann. He is survived by three children, four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



WARD

## Frank Morrison Sr.

### Retired Alabama pastor Morrison dies

Frank Morrison Sr., retired Baptist pastor, died May 21. He was 96.

Morrison was a graduate of Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He also received a master's degree from Southern Georgia University in Statesboro, Ga., and a doctoral degree online from Belford University.

For 42 years, Morrison served as pastor of churches in Alabama and Georgia.

His Alabama pastorates include First Baptist Church, Uria; Poplar Springs Baptist Church, Uria; Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Uria; Little River Baptist Church, Uria; Millry Baptist Church, Cullomburg Baptist Church, Silas; River Hill Baptist Church, Jackson, near Saltpata; and Witch Creek Baptist Church, Campbell.

He also served 25 years as chaplain at Medical Center Barbour and Crowne Health Center in Eufala.

Morrison was preceded in death by his wife, Susia. He is survived by one son, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



MORRISON

## Clyde A. Williams

### Retired Alabama pastor Williams dies

Clyde A. Williams, retired Baptist pastor and former pastor of Crawford Baptist Church, Mobile, died May 16. He was 86.

A Semmes resident, Williams graduated from Mississippi College in Clinton, Miss., and went on to attend New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary as part of an extension program. Throughout his 62-year ministry, he served as pastor of churches in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. He served as the pastor of Crawford Baptist from 1967 until 1992 before becoming a member of Indian Springs Baptist Church, Eight Mile.

Williams is survived by his wife of 66 years, Betty; three children; six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.



WILLIAMS

# Politics and the pulpit

## Churches nationwide tread lightly on politics as 2012 election draws near

With the 2012 election less than six months away, congregations are getting the message that Americans want religion out of politics. But that doesn't mean they plan to keep mum in the public square.

Instead they're revamping how congregations mobilize voters by focusing on a broader set of issues than in the past.

Preachers are largely avoiding the political fray, and hot-button social issues are relegated to simmer in low-profile church study groups.

Why? For one, Americans are growing impatient with religious politicking: 54 percent want houses of worship to keep out of politics (up from 52 percent in 2008 and 43 percent in 1996), according to the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. Churches seem to be responding.

"The biggest change we see is a drop-off in the percentage of people saying they hear politics from the pulpit," said David Campbell, a University of Notre Dame political scientist whose Faith Matters project tracked 3,100 people over five years.

"It's been happening everywhere," Campbell added. "People say they don't want to hear about

politics in church, and they're actually hearing less of it."

Still that doesn't mean the public is clamoring for a totally secularized public square. Some believe the backlash is against a particular type of religious activism that aligns closely with one party's agenda or set of candidates.

### Religious values

"When people say they want religious organizations out of politics, they mean religious organizations telling people whom to vote for," said Gordon Whitman, director of public policy for PICO, a national network of more than 1,000 faith-based organizations. "We find ... lots of consensus that our religious values should inform our positions on issues."

In April, PICO launched a national campaign to enlist congregations in registering low-income voters and championing multiple issues of "economic justice."

Missouri pastors are now leading efforts to cap payday-lending rates at 36 percent.

Minnesota clergy are rallying parishioners and others to oppose a new voter ID initiative which they say would disenfranchise low-income residents and others who lack state-issued ID cards.

For religious conservatives so-

cial issues still matter in 2012, but they're not always being billed as top priorities.

Hispanic evangelicals, for instance, criticized President Obama earlier this month for supporting same-sex "marriage" and remain opposed to abortion on demand. But those concerns won't trump the more pressing matter of immigration reform, which could lead to endorsements for Obama and Democrats running for Congress.

That's according to Miguel Rivera, chairman of the board for the National Coalition of Latino Clergy and Christian Leaders, whose membership includes leaders from 16,000 churches.

"We are very happy with the outcome of the referendum (banning gay "marriage") in North Carolina," Rivera said.

"But we hope our politicians will understand that this type of agenda is no longer acceptable if we want our country to unite again and work for the betterment of our communities."

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) plans to use soft-sell techniques in mobilizing its 45,000 churches to impact votes. Churches won't receive candidate scorecards, which "are often thinly disguised partisan devices," according to Galen Carey, NAE's vice president for government relations.

Instead they'll be equipped with resources for studying what the Bible says about such issues

as immigration and marriage.

"Churches are wary of becoming involved in a very partisan way or campaigning on issues that might be controversial because their mission is to reach their whole communities," Carey said.

Religious involvement in partisan politics is driving Americans, especially those under 35, away from organized religion, according to Campbell.

Some rising evangelical leaders see this young adult drift, documented in this year's Millennial Values Survey, as a factor that makes non-partisanship a practical necessity for churches seeking to grow and thrive.

"The last generation of Christians saw (the two major parties) as strategic allies in pushing their agendas," said Jonathan Merritt, the 29-year-old evangelical author of "A Faith of Our Own: Following Jesus Beyond the Culture Wars."

### Partisanship inevitable?

"The next generation is reconsidering how (partisanship) has blinded us and harmed us," Merritt said.

Being nonpartisan in the political arena is a tricky task, however. Example: When Pastor Paul Slack

of New Creation Church in Minneapolis makes a faith-based case against a voter ID initiative in Minnesota, he frames it as fighting against a GOP agenda.

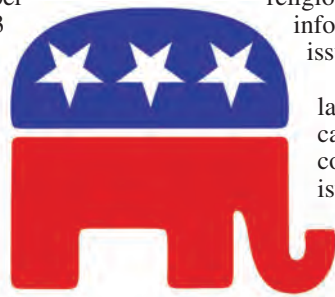
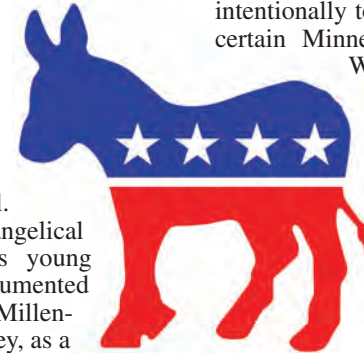
"It's politically motivated," Slack said at an April press conference. "Voter ID is designed intentionally to make it harder for certain Minnesotans to vote. ...

We need to get more people at the polls so they can take part in sharing the common life together because that is indeed a value of our faith."

And come October, all bets for nonpartisanship will be off for churches participating in Pulpit Freedom Sunday. The Alliance Defense Fund is urging pastors to preach on political issues and endorse specific candidates Oct. 7 in defiance of Internal Revenue Service codes for tax-exempt institutions. More than 250 pastors have already signed up, including Ron Johnson Jr., senior pastor of Living Stones Church, Crown Point, Ind.

Johnson preached in 2008 on why voting for Obama would be immoral. He's now running for state representative.

"If they don't like the messaging then they don't have to worship in our congregation," Johnson said. (RNS)



## Someone You Should Know

By Christine Kapurch  
Correspondent, TAB

### SHIRLEY SAMPLE

Providence #1 Baptist Church, Montevallo  
Chilton Baptist Association



SAMPLE

**FAVORITE VERSE:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18  
**FAVORITE HYMN:** "How Great Thou Art"  
**HOBBIES:** Cooking, gardening, quilting and sewing  
**FAMILY STATUS:** Widowed after 55 years

**of marriage to Edgar; four children, Sidney, Betty, Lloyd and David; 10 grandchildren; and 21 great grandchildren**

**M**rs. Shirley" as she is affectionately called began attending Providence #1 Baptist Church when she was 2 years old. Sample, 98, has served in many church positions including Sunday School teacher, Woman's Missionary Union, Vacation Bible School, Discipleship and the choir.

**Q: What influences in your life pointed you to Christ at the beginning of your faith journey?**

**A:** My grandmother carried me each Sunday to service starting when I was 2 [years old]. I accepted Christ when I was 16 and was baptized when I was 21.

**Q: Why have you continued serving through the years?**

**A:** My husband Edgar and I were always considered pillars of the church.

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

**A:** For years everyone expected me to bring a pan of chicken dressing whenever the church had a family meal.

**Q: What do you get from the ministry?**

**A:** I worked at the Jemison school lunchroom for years. Many of the students still remember me.

**Q: How do you see yourself involved in ministry service in the future?**

**A:** I have gotten to the place that I can't do much of anything, but I pray a lot.

*If you know of a person who should be featured as "Someone You Should Know," send his or her name, a contact number and the reason you think he or she should be featured to Someone You Should Know, c/o The Alabama Baptist, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209.*

## Alabama keeps Families on Mission alive in interim between NAMB, WMU

Shelby Baptist Association will host Alabama's only Families on Mission (FOM) project, a hands-on missions opportunity for families with children, July 7-11. It will be the association's fourth year to participate, but this year will take on a different level of involvement.

Traditionally this has been a national ministry of the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Shelby Association would participate in FOM through NAMB, but with NAMB's fall 2011 decision to drop the annual event Shelby Association decided to sponsor Alabama's project for 2012.

National Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) will sponsor the event beginning in 2013, and the

name will be changed to Family Mission Adventures, according to WMU corporate communications team leader Julie Walters.

Pre-registered families, which range from grandparents to kindergarten-age children, will be paired with churches in Shelby Association to work on a variety of missions projects.

Missions activities include light construction and painting, yard work, prayer walking, block parties and other ministry-oriented projects, followed by evening worship services.

For more information about FOM, contact Debbie Snyder at 205-669-7858 or debbie@shelbybaptist.org. (TAB)

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# 'Need help? Will travel'

By Gary Hardin  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Alabama 1 of 4 conventions helping to develop SBC collegiate disaster relief training programs

**N**eed help? Will travel" is often the motto of concerned college students when tragedy strikes. Proof of this mindset is the countless collegians that arrive at various weather-related disaster sites hoping to lend a helping hand. In past years lack of proper disaster relief training has limited the amount of help the students could offer, but the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is working to remedy this dilemma. For Baptists in Alabama, California, Florida and Tennessee, this solution involves developing collegiate disaster relief training programs.

Initially Alabama was not included, but the state was added as a fourth participant in light of the 2011 tornado responses and requests made by state leaders.

"Work bodies" is the term Taylor Foxx uses to describe the new generation of collegiate disaster relief volunteers.

Foxx, a communications major and leadership minor at Troy University, was among the nearly 150 Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) students who received basic disaster relief training at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega the weekend of April 20-21. He said the training he received explained what would be expected of collegiate volunteers in case of a disaster.

"I can now see myself ministering this way in the future," he said, noting that his "yellow shirt" is tucked in a drawer and ready to wear in case he is called. A member of Gateway Baptist Church, Montgomery, in Montgomery Baptist Association, who attends Bush Memorial Baptist Church, Troy, in Salem-Troy Baptist Association, while at Troy, Foxx said, "I'll serve wherever they need me to serve."

Mike Nuss, director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) office of collegiate and student ministries, believes collegiate disaster relief training will give students the credentialing they need to be part of a disaster relief response team from their campus ministry group in the event of a need in Alabama. College volunteers will serve alongside existing disaster relief teams.

"One issue that arose after the April 2011 tornadoes was the use of

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## Reverse Mortgage News

By Jimmy Dixon

I never thought I would be in competition with companies who hire such well-known folks as actor Fred Thompson or Henry Winkler "the Fonz," but I am and it's okay. Actually, it is good for my customers. I believe competition caused a reduction in the fees associated with reverse mortgages.

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Jimmy Dixon

business, I'm still working to keep that trust. Unlike the "big boys" you'll find my personal phone number below, and I am still making house calls in order to do business face-to-face, not over some 1-800-number while sitting in an office in another state.

There are several ways to make a reverse mortgage work for your benefit and I will be glad to discuss your options. For a free brochure, quote or if you just have questions, call 205-567-4800 or email [jdixon@mcgowinking.net](mailto:jdixon@mcgowinking.net).

Remember, like The Alabama Baptist, Jimmy covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives. He is Bible study director and an active deacon at Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown.



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## relief training program

untrained volunteers," Nuss explained. "Thousands of Alabama university students responded to the needs around them, but they lacked the training that SBC disaster relief required. While students could still be involved in the basic relief efforts, they wanted to help on a deeper level and to be part of the official Alabama Baptist disaster relief ministry."

Alabama Baptist campus ministers have been working with Mel Johnson, SBOM disaster relief strategist, to develop a training model that can be used to credential college students quickly.

"The collegiate training captures students' passion and energy," Johnson said. "They have an important capacity to listen to, and pray with, victims of disaster and they have the vigor to assist with clean-up after a disaster."

According to Johnson, a task force of leaders from campus ministries and disaster relief will refine Alabama's collegiate training model. "This is a work in progress," he said.

Chris Mills, an associate in collegiate and student ministries, agrees.

"We are ... on the front end of this and our state is partnering with the North American Mission Board (NAMB) to see how we can better do that," he said.

Sean Thornton, Baptist campus minister at the University of Montevallo, participated in the training and left feeling excited about the possibility of college students being credentialed for disaster relief ministry.

"The training session opened the eyes of the students to the level of preparedness they would need to serve effectively in times of disaster. Many students have the mindset of 'Let's just go help someone' when, in reality, their opportunities will be limited and their access restricted if they are not credentialed. My students left the training knowing they were part of a bigger picture," Thornton said.

According to Melody Harper, campus strategist for the International Mission Board, her informal surveys among



Photo by Chris Mills

A student (left) presents a disaster relief plan for Mel Johnson (right), disaster relief strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, to critique. The students divided into groups to develop plans for mock disasters as part of the training.

students at Baptist universities and state disaster relief directors provided a "connector" that got the ball rolling to involve college students in disaster relief ministry. She can see the potential.

### 'Three hallmarks of our denomination'

"Collegiate disaster relief training brings together missions education, campus ministry and disaster relief — three hallmarks of our denomination," Harper said.

The California Southern Baptist Convention (CSBC) has trained 130 students during the past 18 months, according to Don Hargis, Baptist men's ministry specialist at the CSBC.

"Having college students as part of disaster relief ministry brings energy, freshness and innovation to a ministry of mostly retired volunteers. The students will learn from us and we will learn from them," Hargis said.

Susan Peugh, NAMB disaster relief coordinator, said the Florida Baptist Convention (FBC) conducted disaster relief training in March at Baptist College of Florida in Graceville.

Professor David Coggins and Fritz Wilson, FBC disaster relief strategist, led the training as part of Florida's disaster relief ministry project.

The Tennessee group is still in the planning stages for its training.

Peugh noted other college groups also have been involved in disaster relief. Sixty students from Morehead State University in Kentucky spent their spring break assisting homeowners in the West Liberty area with cleanup after a tornado struck at the end of February. Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia partnered with Liberty University to send 300 Liberty students to Binghamton, N.Y., in October 2011, to assist victims of flooding from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. The Liberty students were trained on two consecutive Wednesday nights before leaving for New York.

"We're hoping to get more states engaged in collegiate disaster relief ministry, along with training schedules," Peugh said. "This is a different approach and one with great potential." (Sondra Washington contributed)

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# Words used as weapons

## Guidelines seek balance between free speech, bullying

When Sally tells Jimmy that he's going to hell for believing in a false religion, is that Sally exercising her First Amendment right to free expression, or is that Billy getting bullied?

A broad coalition of educators and religious groups — from the National Association of Evangelicals to the National School Boards Association — endorsed a new pamphlet to help teachers tackle such thorny questions May 22.

Authored chiefly by the American Jewish Committee (AJC), "Harassment, Bullying and Free Expression: Guidelines for Free and Safe Public Schools," contains 11 pages of advice on balancing school safety and religious freedom.

### Free speech

"There are those who believe that we can't have restriction on bullying and protect free speech; conversely there are those who think that the rules against bullying are so important that they trump any concern for free speech," said Marc Stern, the AJC's chief counsel and lead author of the pamphlet.

"The organizations that have joined in these guidelines believe that that's a false choice."

Among other groups endorsing the pamphlet: the Muslim Public Affairs Council, the Christian Legal Society, the American Association of School Administrators, the Hindu American Foundation, the Islamic Society of North America, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations.

A national conversation on bullying that began about a decade ago has been punctuated in recent years by the highly publicized suicides of harassed gay students, and "Bully," a new documentary on the subject.

The federal government, 49 states and the District of Columbia have anti-bullying policies in place, noted Charles C. Haynes, director of the nonprofit, Washington-based Religious Freedom Education Project/First Amendment Center, which funded the pamphlet.

Alabama passed the Student Harassment Prevention Act in 2009, which required the State Department of Education to develop "procedural policies to manage and possibly prevent these [harassment] acts against any student by another student."

And while cases in which these rights conflict in schools are rare, they do happen. "There have been recently in the news some situations in which anti-bullying policies have been used to punish Christian students for expressing their personal religious beliefs while at school," said Kim Colby, senior counsel of the Christian Legal Society.

Colby cited the case of a Fort Worth high school student last year. In German class, Dakota Ary said he believed homosexuality is wrong and got suspended for it. His teacher had called the comment an instance of possible bullying. Ary's suspension was later reduced.

Stern said the pamphlet was not written in reaction to such cases. What the pamphlet hopefully will do, he continued, is give educators a framework to avoid the horror stories and teach students how to express themselves civilly in a democratic society.

Malissa Valdes-Hubert, public information manager at the Alabama Department of Education, said she has seen cyberbullying become one of the biggest problems in schools because it is not always punishable.

### Cyberbullying

"In order for a student to be punished at school for cyberbullying, they have to do it on school grounds or be using a school device," Valdes-Hubert said.

There have been no cases in Alabama where the attempted prevention of bullying has interfered with a student's freedom of expression, according to the Alabama Department of Education.

In cases where such interference does occur, the pamphlet can fill a

need the judicial system has not, said Francisco M. Negron, general counsel to the National School Boards Association.

"It talks about the difference between what constitutes a personal attack, and the expression of an idea," Negron said.

**"There have been recently in the news some situations in which anti-bullying policies have been used to punish Christian students for expressing their personal religious beliefs while at school."**

The pamphlet is based on current law governing speech rights and public schools. Private schools have far more leeway in regulating student speech.

Generally, though, giving students more, not fewer, opportunities to express themselves tends to dampen the most noxious speech, Haynes said.

"When [students] are given an opportunity to be civil about their views and to have a forum that is theirs, in my experience, most students take that very seriously and are very responsible," he said.

Some excerpts from the pamphlet:

▶ "Words that convey ideas are one thing; words that are used as assault weapons quite another."

▶ "Repeatedly bombarding a fellow student with otherwise protected speech, even if it ostensibly conveys an idea, can also constitute harassment."

▶ "Schools themselves are free to communicate in a noncoercive way their own views on subjects that generate controversy in the community." (RNS, TAB)



### Adger's Mud Creek celebrates 175th anniversary

Mud Creek Baptist Church, Adger, celebrated its 175th anniversary May 12. This was also Decoration Day, a day when people are invited to visit the church cemetery and put flowers on their loved ones' graves.

Event organizer Jane Kitchens and her husband, Bill, compiled and presented the church's history, a labor of love that took more than a year to accomplish. Copies of the history were given to the members of the Mud Creek Baptist Association church.

Kitchens said the entire church came together to prepare for the event, especially the youth group, who took time to clean the grounds and exterior of the church. The service included a reading of the church's history and music from the Royal Masters Quartet.

Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented a plaque during the service. Pastor Billy Brewer gave an uplifting sermon that urged attendees to continue moving forward, even while looking back at history.

More than 175 attendees were present to enjoy the service and dinner on the grounds that followed. Brewer said although the church has a smaller number of regular attendees, there is a "very sweet spirit" that reaches out into the community.

"Even though we're an older church, even though we're a smaller church, there is still work to be done and people's needs to be met," he said. (Maggie Walsh, TAB intern)

### Union Springs' Liberty Baptist marks 175 years

Liberty Baptist Church, Union Springs, celebrated its 175th anniversary May 13, the same day as the church's annual homecoming and Mother's Day. Pastor Ronald Earles said the Bullock-Centennial Baptist Association church had more than 90 attendees for the occasion, which was "really good to see."

Church member Lily Hall read the church's history, and Elizabeth Roughton and Tyson Hall brought the special music.

Calvin Milford presented a plaque on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. Larry Jones, chairman of deacons, said receiving the plaque made the day a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

"[The plaque] showed that Baptists are unified and supportive of each other," Jones said. "To me, it was just a special day — to be a part of a church that's still living, still doing the work of the Lord."

The time of fellowship was followed by a covered dish dinner on the grounds. Earles said he hopes to see the church grow in the coming years, despite the rural setting and multiple churches in the area.

"Although I do want to see the church grow, I don't want it to just be in numbers," he said. "I want to see us grow spiritually — that's the main thing." (Maggie Walsh, TAB intern)

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# RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

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

## Taming the pinball effect

The arcade is packed. The lines are long. And the pinball machine is the highlight of the afternoon. Person after person takes his or her turn launching the ball into play and works hard to block it each time it attempts to fall into the drain.

Ever feel like you are the ball inside that pinball machine — bouncing and spinning from one situation to the next with no control over your own schedule or situation?

People are pulling and tugging on you. They are waiting on you with concerns when you walk into the office each morning. Others are calling you at night to ask you to do more in your already-overcommitted volunteer projects.

You are within two days of wrapping up a two-year-long work project and your boss hands you the next major project to “be getting up to speed on.” As you are cleaning up the bowl of cereal accidentally knocked off the table by one child, the other child spills her fruit punch on the white carpet.

The examples could go on and on, but the fact is that no matter how many items you check off the day’s to-do list, it seems 14 more show up.

And everyone you know must be following the advice “if you want something done, give it to a busy person” because you’ve determined that you are the busy person in their lives.

I have to admit I’m one of those busy people continually taking on more projects, consistently overcommitting and feeling obligated to do whatever is asked of me. I know — shocker, right? You would never have guessed that about me.

It’s not that any one person or everyone in my life is doing any-



thing wrong. It’s my own struggle of learning to balance, understanding the cost of each item I take on and being OK with sometimes disappointing others. If you’ve been following Rashional Thoughts, you know of my journey to achieve balance in life.

I’ve been learning about myself and growing in my ability to set boundaries, share responsibilities and accept “above average” in some cases when I prefer excellence in all cases.

### Avoiding extremes

As I’ve observed others, some say I must cut everything extra out, be super focused on my schedule and stay clear of anything that might distract me. Those who say this do get a lot done and have maintained a decent balance, but they seem to sacrifice the relationship part in some areas in order to achieve this. That doesn’t work for me.

Others are so focused on the relationship side and soaking up every moment of life that the tasks needing to be accomplished are not prioritized appropriately. That doesn’t work for me either.

And then there are others who, while desiring excellence in all that they do, are so overwhelmed that they spend more time talking about what all has to be done than actually doing what has to be done. Again, this doesn’t work for me.

I’m working to balance productive, quality results with deep, sincere relationships while participating in all parts of life and not sacrificing any one over the other.

Is this achievable? I’m not exactly sure yet, but I’m definitely trying to figure it out.

I have learned I must determine the boundaries in my life or there will be none. I also have learned I do have to pick and choose what I’m involved in if the results I achieve are important to me. I might get away with doing everything that comes my way, but I can’t do it all with excellence.

I’m also learning so much from the information you share with me.

Thank you for taking this journey with me. Maybe together, we’ll find the answers. 🙏

# Rashional EXTRAS ...

*What topics are on your mind?*

*Email jrash@thealabamabaptist.org*

## Health tips from “40 Days to Better Living — Optimal Health”

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

► Obesity tends to reduce the percentage of water in your body. If you are overweight, you should be drinking even more water. You should be drinking about eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day.

► Know the signs of a heart attack: chest pain that feels like squeezing, pressure or pain; pain or discomfort in the jaw, back, neck, arms or stomach; shortness of breath; cold sweat and nausea or lightheadedness.

► If you have wounds, they should heal more or less within a week. If they don’t, see a doctor.

► If you are on prescribed medications and start feeling better, don’t stop taking the medication just because you feel better. Check with your doctor first.

► An important aspect of overall health is oral health. Make sure you have a dental appointment set. You should have a checkup and teeth cleaning every six months.

## From the Twitterverse ...

**April 30**

theResurgence @theResurgence  
People in ministry have a tendency to run until they collapse. It is important to take care of your staff.  
Retweeted by Kirk D. Griggs @KirkGriggs

**May 4**

bobby gilstrap @bobby\_gilstrap  
RT @EntreLeadership: Stop spending time doing ridiculous things to avoid facing tasks outside of your comfort zone.

Chris Mills @couponchris

Good things that become ultimate things become idol things that become destructive things. @pwilson #CS12

**May 9**

Max Lucado @MaxLucado  
Don’t equate the presence of God with a good mood or a pleasant temperament. God is near whether you are happy or not.

Thom Rainer @ThomRainer

A mission statement is of little value unless it is clear to your people and leads to specific action.

Soul Caffeine @Soul\_Caffeine

When you judge someone, you only see their flaws. When you love someone, you always look for the best in them.  
Retweeted by Kirk D. Griggs

Rick Warren @RickWarren

Life’s too important to be petty. Ignore little hurts & keep moving.

**May 22**

Oswald Chambers @oschambers  
[God’s] purpose is not just to answer our prayers, but that through prayer we might come to discern His mind.

Thank you, Jennifer, for the article on prayer in the May 3 issue. I would like to see more on prayer as I know it to be the power source for us and if ever we needed power (to live our lives as Christ would have us to live), now is the time. I agree that we must be disciplined not to make the “I’ll pray for you” just a statement but actually mean sincere, deep prayer.

I enjoyed the tips offered on prayer and found a new one in No. 8 — Ask Questions. I will be exercising that also.

Thank you again for your writings and your work at *The Alabama Baptist*.

**Bonnie Windle  
Carrollton Baptist Church**

*Ozzie Newsome, general manager of the NFL’s Baltimore Ravens and Crimson Tide All-American receiver from 1974–77, speaking about Coach Bryant’s impact on his life and career in the book “Bear Bryant on Leadership” by Pat Williams with Tommy Ford:*

“Several of Coach Bryant’s leadership principles have been valuable to me. First, let the information make the decision. If you get the right information, it’ll lead to the right decision. Second, work intelligently and don’t waste time putting in long hours that aren’t productive. Third, if you make a bad decision, go back through the process and figure out where things went wrong. And fourth, never compromise the team. Set your standards and don’t operate on exceptions, otherwise all you’ll do is deal with those exceptions.”

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

# ERLC trustees reprimand Richard Land, terminate radio program over Trayvon Martin comments

Two reprimands have been issued to Richard Land by the trustee executive committee of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC).

The ERLC trustee executive committee also is terminating Land's weekly call-in radio show — the venue where Land made comments about the Trayvon Martin killing that ignited intense controversy, prompting the formation of a trustee ad hoc investigative committee.

The ERLC, led by Land since 1988, must "redouble our efforts ... to heal re-opened wounds," the executive committee said of Land's on-air comments about the intrusion of politics into the Trayvon Martin case and his references to President Obama, Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson by name.

At the outset of its reprimands and broadcast termination the trustee committee stated that Land's statements "were very hurtful and offensive to the Trayvon Martin family and to many in the African-American community, including hundreds of thousands of African-American Southern Baptists. Damage was done to the state of race relations in the Southern Baptist Convention."

The two reprimands of Land by the ERLC trustee executive committee state:

"We reprimand Dr. Land for his hurtful, irresponsible, insensitive and racially charged words on March 31, 2012, regarding the Trayvon

Martin tragedy. It was appropriate for Dr. Land to issue the apology he made on May 9, 2012, and we are pleased he did so. We also convey our own deepest sympathies to the family of Trayvon Martin for the loss they have suffered. We, too,

express our sorrow, regret and apologies to them for Dr. Land's remarks. We are particularly disappointed in Dr. Land's words because they do not accurately reflect the body of his work over a long career at the ERLC toward racial reconciliation in the Southern Baptist Convention and American life. We must now redouble our efforts to regain lost ground, to heal re-opened wounds and to realize the dream of a Southern Baptist Convention that is just as diverse as the population of our great nation.

"We further reprimand Dr. Land for quoting material without giving attribution on the Richard Land Live! (RLL) radio show, thereby unwisely accepting practices that occur in the radio industry, and we acknowledge that instances of plagiarism occurred because of his carelessness and poor judgment. We examined Dr. Land's written work during the investigation, and we found no instances of plagiarism in any of Dr. Land's written work. As a Christian, a minister of the gospel of our Lord and as president of the ERLC, Dr.

Land should have conformed to a higher standard. We expect all future work of the ERLC to be above reproach in that regard," the trustee executive committee said regarding plagiarism allegations against Land over material he failed to attribute to a *Washington Times* columnist on the March 31 broadcast.

Regarding the call-in radio show, the ERLC trustee executive committee stated, "We have carefully considered the content and purpose of the Richard Land Live! broadcast. We find that they are not congruent with the mission of the ERLC. We also find that the controversy that erupted as a result of the March 31 broadcast, and related matters, requires the termination of that program. We hereby announce that the Richard Land Live! radio program will end as soon as possible within the bounds of our contracts with the Salem Radio Network."

Land, in a statement issued to Baptist Press, stated, "I have said on numerous occasions that I believe in trustee oversight and governance. I am under the authority of the trustees elected by the Southern Baptist Convention. This whole process was conducted in a Christian manner by Christian gentlemen.

"I look forward to working with them and their fellow trustees and the ERLC staff as we seek to continue to minister the gospel of our Savior across our great land."

The ERLC trustee executive committee that issued the reprimands and broadcast termination is led by Richard D. Piles, pastor of First Baptist Church, Camden, Ark. (BP)



LAND

**"We must now redouble our efforts to regain lost ground, to heal re-opened wounds."**

**ERLC trustee executive committee**

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### CHURCH POSITIONS

**PASTOR:** Prayerfully seeking a full-time pastor. Mail resumés to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, Lanett, P.O. Box 365, Lanett, AL 36863, or email: dbishop@suscc.edu.

**PASTOR:** East Gadsden Baptist Church of East Gadsden, Ala., is seeking a full-time pastor. Five plus years of experience as pastor of a Southern Baptist church preferred. Please submit resumés by mail to: Pastor Search Committee, East Gadsden Baptist Church, 211 North Sixth Street, East Gadsden, AL 35903.

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

**PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER:** Round Island Baptist, Athens, Ala., is seeking a part-time music minister. Submit resumés to: JeanAngel@charter.net, or mail: 16407 Miller Street, Athens, AL 35611. Job description available upon request.

**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.

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

### OTHER POSITIONS

**CHILD CARE WORKER:** Eastside Baptist Church Daycare, Birmingham, is hiring a full-time child care worker. Applicants must be 19+ with a GED or HS diploma. To apply, please email resumés to: EastsideBaptistDaycare@yahoo.com.

**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.

**THRIFT STORE MANAGEMENT:** Opening for thrift store management at Christian ministry. Retail experience required. Mail resumés to: Thrift Store Director, P.O. Box 10472, Birmingham, AL 35202.

**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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### MISCELLANEOUS

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## Want to know God?

By Pastor Jerry Henry  
First Baptist Church, Fairhope

Tests are stressful. They put pressure on us to come up with the right answers. Too often, what we thought we knew shows itself to be the wrong answer when put to the test.

Two friends overslept and were late for their algebra class. They told the teacher that they had a flat tire. The teacher then put the students in separate rooms and asked the question: "Which tire was flat?" They failed the test.

The Gospel of John gives an example of those who claimed to follow Christ but failed the commitment test. It seems that initially Jesus accumulated a large crowd of followers. His teaching was magnetic and His miracles were amazing. He had just fed the hungry crowd of 5,000 men and their response was to make Him king.

However, the more He demanded, the more they walked away. They wanted a Messiah who gave everything and asked nothing. Their definition of what Jesus should be was structured by what they wanted, not by what Jesus was demanding. In the end, only 12 disciples were left and one was Judas. John chapter 6 begins with 5,000 and ends with 12 — and one of these is a devil (John 6:70–71). The dropout rate was tremendous. It still is.

Being a Christian involves making an initial commitment of faith and also staying the course. Life gives us tests that show us if our faith is genuine. They may take the form of a major change, a senseless tragedy, a deep hurt or an impossible situation.

Genuine faith holds on to Christ and pushes past the quitting points. It refuses to walk away. "Lord, whom will we go to? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

One Baptist seminary professor had a favorite saying he repeatedly told his students, "A faith that fizzles before the finish had a flaw from the first." As Southern Baptists, we believe that once saved, always saved. It is a theology that is biblically correct. At the same time, a truly committed faith is one that stays the course and doesn't allow the person to walk away.

Does your faith pass the commitment test? The right answer carries eternal consequences. "But the one who endures to the end will be delivered" (Mark 13:13b). ❏

# Seminaries confer degrees on Alabama Baptists

A number of Alabama Baptists graduated from Southern Baptist seminaries with degrees at the master's level or above during the spring 2012 semester.

Their names, hometowns and degrees were provided by their schools.

► **New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Doctor of Ministry — Alphonso Brady Sr., Mobile; William Bryan Camp, Chandler Springs; Barry F. Coper, Graham; Blake Samuels Kersey, Trussville; Christopher O. Moses, Greenville; Robert Hudson Mullins, Tuscaloosa; and D. Clarke Skelton, Brantley

Doctor of Philosophy — Arthur Gene Rice, Loxley

Master of Divinity — Robert Locke Bowden, Montgomery; Walter Mark Bristow, Columbia; Nathan Dale Farris, Montgomery; Jonathan Andrew Hill, Mobile; Zachary David Ritchie, Guin; and Brad Franklin Robertson, Miller-ville

► **Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Doctor of Educational Ministry — Leslie Parker Umstatted, Cullman

Master of Arts in Counseling — Katherine Allison Brooks, Florence

► **Beeson Divinity School, Samford University:**

Master of Divinity — Benjamin John Birdsong, Birmingham; Brett A. Brandewie, Tallahassee, Fla.; Shannon Craig Cobb, New Albany, Miss.; Otis Dion Culliver, Monroeville; Tom M. Gardenhire III, Harrison, Tenn.; Ruby Heard-Bustamonte, Calera; Brian Robert Hinton, Northport; Chad B. Keathley, Homewood; Ralph Robert McCracken Jr., Corner; Jason Nathaniel Odom, Pleasant Grove; Antonio Owens, Birmingham; Timothy Scott Rutherford, Cullman; Fred Wilks Senko, Birmingham; and Laura Alicia Zappia, Fontana, Calif.

Master of Arts in Theological

Studies — Clyde Timothy Ray Jr., Florence

Master of Theological Studies — Matthew Steven Bracey, Ashland City, Tenn., and Stephen Keller Greene, Birmingham

► **Southern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Master of Divinity (School of Theology) — Patrick Tyler Gordon, Rogersville; Timothy Dale Hirsbrunner, Cullman; and Alexander Ray Roberts, Decatur

Master of Theology (School of Theology) — Raymond Michael Johnson, Chunchula

Master of Divinity (School of Church Ministries) — David Charles Brown, Birmingham, and Aaron Benjamin Hung, Auburn

Master of Divinity (Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism) — Kenneth William Lovett, Auburn, and Curtis William Worshek, Huntsville

Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling — Amanda Nicole Battles, Birmingham

Master of Arts in Missiology — Joshua Stan Albright, Jacksonville; William Gregory Hyche, Birmingham; Glynn Clayton Reeves, Hueytown; and Robert Martin Smith, Birmingham

Master of Arts in Worship — Andrew Parker Hendon, Hokes Bluff

► **Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Master of Divinity with Christian Ministry — William Lucas Dillard, Gordo; Jonathan Lee Harris, Aliceville; Joshua Ross Hoomes, Prattville; Stephen Noah Reid, Selma; Jonathan A. Sorensen, Cowarts; David Russell Talbert, Gadsden; and William Rocky Wright, Montgomery

Master of Divinity with Biblical Counseling — Dianna Lynn Cagle, Birmingham, and Lindsay Nicole Core, Birmingham

► **Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Doctor of Ministry — Harold James Spikes Jr., Mobile

Master of Divinity — Dustin Blaine Bruce, Mexia

Master of Divinity in Biblical Languages — Wesley Bates, Grand Bay, and Christopher Brent McNeal, Dothan

Advanced Master of Arts in Christian Education — Nathan Edward Ziglar, Ozark

Master of Arts in Missiology — Sharon Copeland Traywick, Hokes Bluff (TAB)



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## Ministering to seniors could require multifaceted approach

(continued from page 1)

adult ministry into more than three groups. "Here at [First, Huntsville], we're building our ministry around four different life stages," Seanor remarked. Those four stages are the "Builders" (almost retired), "Explorers" (just retired), "Pillars" (those who have been retired for a time) and "Homebound."

"But not all homebound folks are elderly," Seanor clarified, explaining that sometimes this can be a spouse or family member who becomes a caregiver for a loved one.

So what does the implementation of a multifaceted ministry approach for older adults look like to churches?

At Cottage Hill Baptist, the church is developing a baby boomer ministry and is examining how it can best minister to this particular group. McCarter noted that while concepts about baby boomer ministry are becoming more prevalent, carrying out those ideas in the local church are just beginning.

In addition, he believes missions can bridge the gap between the various ages. "I think missions is really going to be the place where [baby] boomers fit in and bridge gaps with the older group," he said, adding that Cottage Hill recently sent a group of both baby boomers and

older senior adults to Tuscaloosa. McCarter also believes ministering to different ages within senior adult ministry requires a "full-time" effort. "If you're going to minister

**"I think missions is really going to be the place where [baby] boomers fit in and bridge gaps with the older group."**

to all three of these age groups, there is no such thing as 'part-time,'" he said, adding that schedules and lifestyles vary between each group.

Seanor noted there is a need within churches both large and

small to develop new ways to reach the baby boomer generation. He said many baby boomers are looking for significance and purpose, and he believes helping those adults find significance within the church is important. He shared that at First, Huntsville, several initiatives are planned throughout the next few months to reach this age group.

And for Hoomes, ministering to the whole person is an important element of senior adult ministry.

"We have realized that in our ministry, we have to ... think about really ministering to all these age groups and minister to them in lots of ways," Hoomes concluded. "It's not just [about] eating and going on trips ... we try to take a holistic approach to minister to seniors ... ministering mentally, emotionally, physically, socially and spiritually." (ABP contributed)

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 10

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

### FAITH DARE

**Joshua 2:1, 6, 8-15; 6:22-23**

Throughout the Old Testament God demonstrates His plan for the nations to know Him (Ex. 7:5; Ps. 67:2-3; Ezek. 38:23). This knowledge is an intimate relationship with Him by faith. Jethro (Ex. 18:11-12), Rahab (Josh. 2:11), Ruth (Ruth 1:16) and the Ninevites (Jon. 3:5) are among the Gentiles whose words or actions demonstrated faith in the God of Israel.

### Words of Faith (2:1, 8-13)

Joshua entrusted two Israelite spies to bring back a report about Canaan. They were to pay particular attention to Jericho, a walled city not far from the Jordan River. As a former spy himself, Joshua knew this task required faith, not simply skills of observation. The men demonstrated discretion, entering the home of a woman whom the locals would expect to be visited by strangers. The spies discovered a Canaanite woman who believed in Yahweh (the LORD), the God of the Israelites.

Rahab expressed genuine faith. She knew the name of the covenant God of Israel. She attributed Israel's military victories to Yahweh. In fact she confessed that He is the God of heaven and earth. She acknowledged that this God reigns over the affairs of all nations.

Her genuine fear of Yahweh, her reverential submission to His will, led her to hide the Israelite spies and to ask for their protection when Jericho was attacked. Her words of faith were accompanied by actions of faith.

### Faith in Action (2:6, 14-15)

The spies knew their lives were in Rahab's hands. When the city officials demanded to inspect her quarters, she would have to remain silent or they would die. She also knew that war was coming and that her life and the lives of her loved ones were in their hands. They had to trust one another and live up to that trust. Not only did they need to demonstrate faith in Yahweh but also faith in each other.

Here were men called to be holy trusting a prostitute. Here was a city dweller trusting members of military reconnaissance for an advancing army. Here were Israelites trusting a Canaanite. What did they have in common? They confessed that Yahweh is the sovereign God of heaven and earth.

James writes that faith without works is dead (James 2:17). He admonishes his readers to live out their faith, challenging them to "be doers of the Word and not hearers only" (James 1:22).

Paul adds that believers have been created in Christ to do good works (Eph. 2:10). Demonstrate your faith — at home, at work, at the ballpark, on vacation. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

### Faith Rewarded (6:22-23)

The spies did what they had been entrusted to do and they returned safely. In the intervening chapters, the Israelites crossed the Jordan River through God's miraculous work. They set up a monument so that children and future generations would know that the stories are true (4:6-7, 21-22) and so that all the nations would know that God interacted with His people (4:24). Israel acknowledged their covenant relationship with Yahweh through circumcision and the celebration of the Passover, and Joshua bowed before the commander of Yahweh's army.

The walls of Jericho were down and the inhabitants had been executed. All of Rahab's neighbors were dead. So how was Rahab's faith rewarded? Her family was safe. She was alive. She would live out her life among the Israelites (6:25), and she would become only one of five women listed in the genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1:5). One of the Gentile ancestors of Jesus had come from the pagan city of Jericho.

What is the challenge for you in this lesson? Speak your faith (Matt. 10:32). Live your faith (1 Cor. 15:58). Defend your faith (Jude 3; 1 Pet. 3:15). Faith is rewarded, but faith is not static.

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

### DO YOU HONOR YOUR COMMITMENTS? Malachi 2:1-16

In a book that analyzes the modern world, Craig Gay suggests that the essence of worldliness is not to be found in personal morality but rather "going about our daily business in the world without giving much thought to God." As such, the secularism of our society has led to the "eclipse of God" within our lives and we are more interested in the momentary illusion of personal well-being than in a hunger and thirst for God and His righteousness.

### Commitment to God-Given Responsibilities (1-9)

Malachi calls the priests and people of Israel to consider their covenant relationship with God, which is the basis of real religion. Covenant is essential in Malachi: our relationship with God is grounded in His grace but calls for a response of gratitude from His people. God's desire in entering into relationship with sinful humanity was to give us "life and well-being" which called for a life of "integrity and uprightness." Tragically the priests "turned aside," causing the people to "stumble" and fall into sin. Unlike Enoch, the priests were no longer walking in fellowship with God. Since they despised God and His ways, God would despise them and they would be exposed as spiritual frauds in front of the people.

For Malachi the responsibility of a leader is to teach future generations, to be faithful custodians of spiritual knowledge. This does not mean we are to fail to communicate the message of God to our generation creatively, but the message which we tell is the same "old, old story of the love of God for the world." Malachi continues to bring a challenge to teachers of Baptist Sunday School classes to "rightly discern the word of truth."

### Commitment to Others and to God (10-12)

One of the issues Malachi felt the religious teachers of his generation had missed was the problem of Jews marrying unbelievers. He draws a parallel between this manifestation of breaking covenant and the more serious breaking of their covenant relationship with

God. They had profaned the sanctuary of God by associating with other religions and not worshipping Him in purity and holiness. The key word which Malachi emphasizes over and over again is "unfaithfulness." He contrasts our unfaithfulness with God's constant love as a father to His children.

### Commitment to Family Life (13-16)

In the context of North America where faithfulness to marriage is continually being undermined, these verses are not intended to bring a sense of condemnation into the lives of those who have passed through the trauma of divorce but to encourage all of us to take the vows of a wedding ceremony seriously. Ideas of fidelity, commitment and steadfastness are never to be taken for granted or minimized. As churches we are called to seek practical ways in which we can affirm, strengthen and support marriages in the 21st century.

Malachi stresses that marriage is primarily to be viewed as a covenant, not merely a legal contract. A contract focuses on rights and responsibilities, which are important in their proper place. But a covenant relationship reminds us of the unending love of God for His people. As Hosea reminds us, God's love as a husband for his wife brings Him heartache when the relationship is broken, but God tells Hosea to mirror God's love for Israel by going back and loving his adulterous wife once again. Covenant love is reciprocal, and although the Scriptures teach us that divorce is permissible in certain circumstances it is never to be viewed as God's best for His children.

We are called to ground all our relationships on God's commitment to us. Malachi appears to link the scandal of prophets who do not live with integrity to a people who turn their back on God's teaching. Worship that has become a burden to bear rather than a response of joy and thankfulness has left the people of God undernourished spiritually, with little or no resources to live the Christian life according to the ways of the Spirit. Thus the prophet calls the people back to God and back to one another to live as faithful children of an all-forgiving father.

## Christian Crossword

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### Across

- Thou \_\_\_ the Christ. (Matt. 16:16)
- Ruler of old Russia.
- He \_\_\_ unto his own. (John 1:11)
- \_\_\_ Dolorosa, Jesus' route to Golgotha.
- A Midwestern state.
- His ears are \_\_\_ unto their prayers. (1 Pet. 3:12)
- New Testament letters.
- In the beginning was the \_\_\_. (John 1:1)
- A word peculiar to the book of Psalms.
- Morning dampness.
- A ship's distress call.
- Ye have made it a \_\_\_ of thieves. (Matt. 21:13)
- Quench all the fiery \_\_\_s. (Eph. 6:16)
- Opposite of on.
- He that hath the \_\_\_ hath life. (1 John 5:12)
- In the days when the judges \_\_\_. (Ruth 1:1)
- A distinctive quality that characterizes a person.
- Abraham caught one

### Down

- \_\_\_ ye one another's burdens. (Gal. 6:2)
- \_\_\_, and it shall be opened. (Matt. 7:7)
- Whether it be good or \_\_\_. (2 Cor. 5:10)
- Pig pen.
- \_\_\_ the Lord in the air. (1 Thess. 4:17)
- Drew the \_\_\_ to the land full of great fishes. (John 21:11)
- A form of "to be."
- Puppy's bark.
- The \_\_\_ of one crying in the wilderness. (John 1:23)
- Rant.
- In that hour Jesus \_\_\_ in Spirit. (Luke 10:21)
- Similar.
- Jacob's brother. (Gen. 25:26)
- Adam's helpmeet.
- Separate in one's grasp.
- Separate \_\_\_ systematically.
- A tribe of Israel.
- \_\_\_ (Rev. 14:15)
- Does the dog wag the \_\_\_, or does the \_\_\_ wag the dog?
- A tenth part. (plural)
- Sun. (Spanish)
- Filled with reverence.
- Demolished.
- Bovine.
- The chosen twelve.
- Israel's enemies converged at \_\_\_m. (Josh. 11:15)
- All the \_\_\_ of the earth. (Isa. 45:22)
- Sorrowful.
- Battle.
- Neither purse, \_\_\_ scrip. (Luke 10:4)
- "\_\_\_ my back, please."
- King Saul was buried beneath one of these trees. (1 Chron. 10:12)
- Enjoyment.
- Deliver us \_\_\_. (Matt. 6:13; 2 words)
- Catch.
- "\_\_\_ your vegetables."
- Arid.
- Expert.
- \_\_\_ shall not live by bread alone. (Matt. 4:4)

- Lock's companion.
- Dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, \_\_\_ men. (Acts 2:5)
- The \_\_\_ are gathered and burned in the fire. (Matt. 13:40)
- They \_\_\_ I not. (Matt. 6:28)
- Abraham's wife, S\_\_\_.
- Gather leaves.
- Mexican coin.
- Frozen over.
- This priest had seven sons, S\_\_\_ (Acts 19:14)
- Adam's home.
- Cease.
- Glass container.



# Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

## GuideStone ranked No. 1 fund for early 2012

DALLAS — GuideStone Funds ranked No. 1 out of 223 mutual fund families for the quarter ending March 31, according to fi360's Fund Family Fiduciary Rankings. This is the first time GuideStone Funds has achieved the top quarterly ranking by fi360 but follows 2011, when the Funds consistently finished in the top 10 spots.

The ranking comes on the heels of the March announcement that GuideStone Funds ranked No. 1 out of 182 funds, receiving industry ranking firm Lipper's 2012 Best Overall Small Fund Group award, one of the nation's premier financial industry honors, presented to mutual fund families with up to \$40 billion in assets.

John R. Jones, chief operating officer of GuideStone Financial Resources and president of GuideStone Funds, said he believes the recognition helps illustrate that performance and values-based investing can walk hand-in-hand.

"We believe we are dispelling the popular belief in the mutual fund industry that investors have to compromise biblical integrity to achieve acceptable investment performance," Jones said. "For the 10-and-a-half years that GuideStone Funds have been available, we have sought to provide that careful balance of generating performance while maintaining our convictions."

## Black Baptist leader reappointed to USCIRF

WASHINGTON — President Obama announced plans May 11 to reappoint black Baptist leader William J. Shaw to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

Shaw, immediate past president of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Inc., was appointed in June 2010 to the nine-member bipartisan panel charged with monitoring violations of religious freedom worldwide and making foreign policy recommendations based on their findings.

Pastor of White Rock Baptist Church in Philadelphia since 1956, Shaw served as president of the National Baptist Convention U.S.A. Inc. from 1999 to 2009. He has also been a leader in the New Baptist Covenant, a movement to unite North American Baptists across racial and geographical lines.

With the recent departure of five commissioners, including Southern Baptist Convention official Richard Land, Shaw will be the panel's lone Baptist. Along with Muslim law professor Azizah al Hibri and former GOP congressional counsel Ted Van Der Meid, he is one of three sitting members with watchdog experience.

## IMB appoints 101 new, returning missionaries

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. — On May 23, the International Mission Board (IMB) appointed 101 missionaries during a service at Brentwood Baptist Church. Forty-one of the missionaries have served previous terms, bringing the current missionary count to 4,919.

Brentwood Senior Pastor Mike Glenn challenged the appointment service audience to respond to God's call on their own lives.

"As our world keeps getting smaller and we keep saying technology will do this, and technology will do that, we still cannot replace the significance of a person telling the story of Jesus to another person," Glenn said. "As you see those celebrating their calling and their placing, don't forget you're called, you're placed, just like they are."

IMB President Tom Elliff, in a message drawn from 1 Corinthians 1:17-18, noted that the cross is a "dividing point" — everyone in the world is simply either saved or lost. This realization, he said, will shatter prejudices and simplify a believer's purpose.

"You'll just see that you have one responsibility, and that is to share the gospel with everybody."

## BWA helps rebuild Thai school in refugee camp

MAE LA, Thailand — The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) has sent \$25,000 in emergency financial assistance to a school in the Mae La Refugee Camp in Thailand to assist in the school's reconstruction after it was destroyed by fire on April 28.

The Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College, located in the Mae La Refugee Camp near the Thai-Myanmar border, faces uncertainty as to the start of the next term, which was set to begin in June. The school offers general education to refugees and training to church leaders. More than 300 students are enrolled.

The BWA is providing 50 percent of the estimated reconstruction cost of \$50,000. Additional funds of at least \$10,000 are needed for furnishing, equipment and school supplies.

Mae La houses an estimated 50,000 displaced persons and is one of the largest of several refugee camps for displaced persons from Myanmar who fled conflicts in the South Asian country. ☞



## UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **UMobile to Hold 5K Ram Run at Oak Mountain State Park:** The University of Mobile will hold the 5K Ram Run at Oak Mountain State Park in Pelham. The race will be June 23 at 8 a.m. with race-day registration on site from 6:45 a.m. to 7:30. Breakfast will be served at 9:15 a.m. and awards will be distributed for top male and female overall, masters, grandmasters, senior grandmasters and race walker as well as the top three males and females in various different age groups. Preregister online at [www.umobile.edu/ram-run](http://www.umobile.edu/ram-run) by June 22.

► **UMobile President Foley Filed Comments With the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:** University of Mobile President Mark Foley has filed comments about the federal government's definition of "religious employer" with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). He said the federal government does not have the authority to define what constitutes true religion and authentic ministry.

The government's definition of "religious employer" in the federal health care mandate is far too narrow, Foley said.

"I reject the idea that it is within the jurisdiction of the federal government to define, in place of religious communities, what constitutes true religion and authentic ministry," Foley wrote to the HHS.

In addition, Foley has joined with other leaders of faith-based service organizations, college presidents in the national Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, and the Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance to express "grave concerns" about the precedent of allowing the federal government to define what is and is not a religious organization, as part of the federal health care mandate.

Foley's comment submission to HHS is online at [www.umobile.edu](http://www.umobile.edu).

## SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Samford University's A Cappella Choir Takes Top Honors at the Florilège Vocal de Tours Competition on May 25-27:** Samford's A Cappella Choir took some of the top honors at the Florilège Vocal de Tours competition in Tours, France, May 25-27, including:

First Prize, Renaissance Competition  
Ronsard Prize, Renaissance Competition  
First Place, Free Expression

Third Place, Mixed Choirs

In addition to its recognition as an outstanding international choir, the ensemble will bring home \$3,260 in prize winnings.

A Cappella Choir director Philip Copeland, who joined Samford's School of the Arts faculty in 2010, said several judges confided in him that they thought Samford's choir was the best overall in the competition.

"The choir was completely magnificent in the Grand Prix competition today," Copeland wrote on his Samford A Cappella blog on the last day of the competition. "It was easily the best performance we've ever given together and many of us were crying after the concert." Copeland also noted that most of this year's choir members were freshmen and sophomores.

► **Divinity School Dean George Participated in National Religious Freedom Conference Panel May 24:** Beeson Divinity School's Dean Timothy George was invited to speak on a panel of religious leaders at the National Religious Freedom Conference hosted by the Center for Ethics and Public Policy.

The May 24 conference was titled "Rising Threats to American Religious Freedom" and featured professors, religious leaders and government officials from across the nation.

George spoke on a panel that included Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish and Mormon leaders on the topic "Uniting to Preserve Robust Freedoms." The topic of concern was the Health and Human Services' birth control mandate, which requires health insurance providers for certain religiously affiliated organizations to offer contraceptive services to

women, according to C-SPAN.

All of the religious leaders, George included, opposed the mandate on the grounds that it ignored the right of religious bodies not to support abortion.

## JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson College Professors Part of Childhood Education Global Summit:** Judson College education professors Gwenth McCorquodale and Lesley Sheek (in absentia) and English professor Chris Hokanson presented their research project at the Association for Childhood Education International's (ACEI) Global Summit on Childhood in Washington, March 28-31.

The project was titled "The Secret Garden at 100: Its Enduring Legacy."

The ACEI welcomed delegates from more than 70 countries to the first-established global summit to examine the challenges facing children and to explore ways to address them.

The Judson team collaborated to design instructional learning opportunities for students in primary through college classrooms that focused on how Frances Hodgson Burnett's children's novel, which celebrated its centenary in 2011, continues to speak to the trials and experiences of childhood.

McCorquodale taught the novel every year to her third-grade students before coming to Judson.

The summit reviewed such diverse issues as the commercialization of childhood, child trafficking, the genetic manipulation of human life and the philosophical meaning of childhood itself. ☞

## Alabama Ministries

### Men's conference

"A man can take the pain, but a real man don't have to" — Saddle Up Men's Conference will take place in June and will feature several Alabama Baptist personalities.

The conference is sponsored by ChristPoint Community Church, Sylacauga, and will be held at Sylacauga High School on June 16.

Bryan Taunton, pastor of ChristPoint Community Church, said the conference is about reminding men of the biblical standards for them as fathers and leaders of the church.

"More than anything, while we may feel that we are men and

appear tough on the outside and are able to bear our own pain and burdens, the truth is that we don't have to because Christ has paid the price and is willing to carry our burdens," Taunton said.

In addition to Taunton, Charlie Sanders, Randy Overstreet, Rick Burgess, Martin Houston, Coach Bobby Bowden and Coach Bobby Jackson will be speaking at the two sessions starting at 9:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

The doors open at 8 a.m., and lunch will be served between the two sessions.

For more information or to register for the conference, contact Brian Taunton at [btaunton@ChristPointCommunity.com](mailto:btaunton@ChristPointCommunity.com). ☞



Photo courtesy of The Media Collective

# 'Show Hope'

**Steven Curtis Chapman continues to encourage audiences worldwide**

**By Leann Callaway**  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**F**or more than 25 years Steven Curtis Chapman has been sharing songs and stories about God's redemption, grace, love and faithfulness with audiences around the world. As one of the most popular Christian musicians, Chapman has amassed an impressive catalog of achievements. He has garnered multiple honors, including 56 Dove Awards from the Gospel Music Association, five Grammy Awards and 46 No. 1 radio hits.

Despite the accolades and achievements, Chapman has remained dedicated to shining the spotlight on Christ.

"With all the songs that I've written through the years, my prayer has been, 'Lord, I want to know You more. As You make Yourself known, I want to make You known to others through what I write, sing and the stories I tell.'"

In addition to his music, Chapman desires to create platforms that would reach out and help those in need.

As strong advocates for adoption and orphan-care, Chapman and his wife, Mary Beth, have adopted three daughters from China. They have also established an orphan-care and adoption nonprofit ministry called Show Hope, which has given more than 2,600 financial grants to adoptive families and has impacted the lives of children from 45 countries.

In addition to financial aid, Show Hope empowers families, communities and churches with adoption and orphan-care resources to assist them in advocating and caring for the millions of orphans around the world. Show Hope also provides for orphans with special needs through special care centers in China.

Because of the immense impact that Steven and Mary Beth have made by encouraging Christians to recognize God's call to provide care for orphans, the

Christian Alliance for Orphans recently presented them with the Defender of the Fatherless Award. The Chapmans received the award at the Christian Alliance for Orphans' Summit VIII, which was held at Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, Calif., with more than 2,000 advocates for orphan-care and adoption in attendance.

In 2008 the Chapman family was devastated by the tragic death of their adopted daughter, Maria Sue. However, in the midst of a journey filled with heartache and grief, the Chapmans found comfort and strength through God's faithfulness and unfailing love.

Now with an even greater passion and purpose for sharing the gospel through songs, Chapman hopes his music will help provide comfort for people who are dealing with the loss of a loved one.

"After Maria went to heaven, I was crying out to God in the midst of grief, darkness and despair," Chapman said. "I kept saying, 'God, I trust you ... even though I don't understand.' When I started doing concerts again, I found there was a new meaning, purpose and passion in the song lyrics. Just as my family had walked through more valleys than we ever had before, I was singing about trusting God, His sovereignty and faithfulness. I found myself singing many of the lyrics with a new understanding and new desperation for the truth of the gospel.

"After all these years and after everything that my family has been through, we can still declare that God is good and that He is faithful. I want to encourage others not to lose heart or grow weary, because for those who have a relationship with Christ, this journey will take us home. That is the greatest promise and where we find our hope."

For more information about Show Hope, visit [www.showhope.org](http://www.showhope.org).

*"I want to encourage others not to lose heart or grow weary, because for those who have a relationship with Christ, this journey will take us home."*

## Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

### Judge rules FedEx mistreated Christian employee

CHICAGO — A Federal Express (FedEx) employee has prevailed in a lawsuit accusing the shipping giant of discrimination in failing to accommodate his religious beliefs.

FedEx discriminated against Eric Weathers by refusing to allow him to answer questions from co-workers about the Bible and his faith and ordering him not to disclose to others his bachelor's degree in Bible and youth ministry from The Master's College, U.S. District Judge Edmond E. Chang ruled in *Weathers v. FedEx*.

"Weathers' superiors told him that he could not discuss religion, even if asked, and he was told that he must affirmatively misrepresent his college degree," Chang wrote. "FedEx supervisors tied Weathers' hands ... on a topic of great importance to him and did not bother to respond to his request for an accommodation."

Failure to accommodate a religious practice constitutes religious discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Weathers, who worked as a sales manager, filed the suit regarding FedEx's response when a co-worker complained that Weathers quoted Scripture at work and made her uncomfortable by discussing his religious beliefs. Weathers was eventually demoted. He resigned his job and sued the company.

Weathers and FedEx have reached a confidential settlement.

### Muslim groups challenge 'anti-Shariah' legislation

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — Muslim civil rights groups are calling a new Kansas law that bans Shariah in state courtrooms an expression of Islamophobia that is vulnerable to a legal challenge.

The law, signed by Republican Gov. Sam Brownback on May 28, does not specifically mention Shariah, or Islamic law, but forbids state courts from basing decisions on foreign laws that contradict rights granted by the U.S. Constitution and state constitutions.

But the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and other Muslim groups called the law little more than anti-Muslim propaganda.

"It's obvious, based on the Islamophobic rhetoric of the sponsors of the bill, that the target was Islam and the Kansas Muslim community," CAIR spokesman Ibrahim Hooper said.

Brownback spokeswoman Sherriene Jones-Sontag said in a statement that the bill "makes it clear that Kansas courts will rely exclusively on the laws of our state and nation when deciding cases and will not consider the laws of foreign jurisdictions."

Three states — Arizona, Tennessee and Louisiana — have similar laws on the books.

### Anti-gay 'marriage' referendum garners wide support

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Supporters of a Maryland referendum that would reverse the state's gay "marriage" law have submitted more than twice the number of signatures needed — and have done so a month ahead of schedule.

The Maryland Marriage Alliance needed to collect 55,736 valid signatures by June 30, and was required to submit a third of them — about 18,000 — by May 31. Instead it submitted 113,000 signatures May 29, all of which it said were valid.

The signature campaign could bode well for traditionalists who are trying to place a referendum on the November ballot that would overturn the state's gay "marriage" law, which passed the Legislature and was signed by Gov. Martin O'Malley earlier this year. The law is on hold while traditionalists challenge it.

The alliance includes the Maryland Family Alliance, the Maryland Catholic Conference and the National Organization for Marriage.

### Catholic bishops assess church ties to Girl Scouts

HARRISBURG, Pa. — The nation's Roman Catholic bishops are reviewing the church's ties to the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (U.S.A.) after complaints that some of that organization's programs might contradict church teachings on contraception and abortion.

The inquiry by the Catholic bishops has been ongoing for two years and was prompted by persistent reports, circulated on the Internet and by some social conservatives, that the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. has ties to Planned Parenthood or, for example, endorses material on sexuality that the church would not approve.

Girl Scout leaders have denied the claims, but the bishops decided to continue their inquiry. In a March 28 letter to his fellow bishops, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, chairman of the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, wrote that "important questions still remain and need to be examined."