

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

Aug. 16, 2012
Vol. 177, No. 32

Reporting. Connecting. Inspiring.

Toll free 1-800-803-5201
www.thealabamabaptist.org

INSIDE



Alabama Baptist churches continue missions partnership in Guatemala

◆ Page 3



Baptists minister in unique way by cleaning Jewish cemetery

◆ Page 5



Calvinism roots deep in Southern Baptist history, finds modern resurgence, Dockery explains

◆ Pages 8-9



BP photo



BP photo

Left: A Sikh man pounds a drum to emphasize portions of the Sikh scripture being read during a service in Delhi, India. **Above:** Sikhs and Hindus stand in reverence during a service at a gurdwara (temple) in Delhi's Chandni Chowk district. Welcoming and hospitable, Sikhs emphasize equality in their religious traditions.

Southern Baptists minister to Sikhs following temple shooting in Wisconsin

The morning of Aug. 5 was not the typical scene for one Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wis., near Milwaukee.

Seven people, including the gunman, were shot and killed at the suburban temple in what officials have called a case of domestic terrorism, according to ABC News. Oak Creek police shot Wade Michael Page, the gunman, who then shot and killed himself. Page was known to have ties to white supremacist groups, but his motive remains unknown.

In the wake of one of the greatest tragedies to hit the Sikh community in North America, Southern Baptists have an unprecedented opportunity to reach out to their Sikh neighbors with the gospel, said Aslam Masih, North American Mission Board's (NAMB) national coordinator for Muslim people groups and South Asians.

"We have an opportunity now to turn this very sad situation into a life-changing encounter with the gospel for Sikhs throughout North America," Masih said.

Masih estimated there are more than 1.1 million Sikhs on the continent. Many of those Sikhs are concentrated in major metropolitan areas like New York City, Vancouver, Toronto, Los Angeles and Chicago. Yet, Masih said, Southern Baptists have no churches specifically focused on reaching Sikhs with the gospel. Masih expressed hope that Southern Baptists with a passion to reach Sikhs will partner together to start new works among them.

Ministry opportunities

Masih said he has already seen ministry opportunities emerge. He mentioned one Sikh temple next door to a Southern Baptist church in Baltimore. On Aug. 6 Masih talked with the pastor, who told him about his struggles to build a relationship with the neighboring temple.

Masih then, with the pastor still on

the phone, called the temple's priest and, in his own Punjabi language, expressed his sorrow over Sunday's tragedy. He asked for the opportunity to bring local Southern Baptists — including members of the neighboring church — to visit the temple and to give the Sikh community a tour of a Southern Baptist church. He said the temple leadership enthusiastically agreed — and even volunteered to bring the food. Both sides will have an opportunity to share what they believe, and Masih plans to share his own testimony. He also plans to leave them with a film on Jesus in their Punjabi language.

Masih noted that believers who feel led to reach out to Sikhs in their community should start by building bridges — much like what happened in Baltimore.

"When we start with us and what

we believe, they're not going to listen," Masih said. "When you talk about them, they'll listen. That's how you build a bridge. Show an interest in their lives, and you'll build a relational bridge."

Masih said the Trinity and the Incarnation are two beliefs that will be real stumbling blocks to Sikhs as evangelicals share Christ with them. Sikhs take a very strong belief in the unity of God from Islam and often struggle with Christian explanations of the Trinity.

Sikhs also see God as more of an abstract principle that cannot be defined by a human incarnation and have trouble understanding the incarnate Jesus.

For more about how you can get involved in reaching Sikhs near you — or elsewhere in the United States and Canada — visit namb.net/mobilize-me. (BP)

Understanding exactly what Sikhs believe

His untrimmed beard and carefully wrapped turban set him apart in a crowd.

He is not Muslim, though many of his brothers in the faith are mistaken for followers of Allah.

The silver bracelet (kara) around his wrist reminds him and others of the commitment he has made. He wears modest undergarments (kaccha), and carries a wooden comb (kanga) and a sword (kirpan) — some of the articles of his faith.

He is a Sikh man.

Sikhism is the world's fifth largest religion and was

founded in the 1500s in India's Punjab state.

More than 500 years ago Muslim descendants of Genghis Khan, known as the Moghuls, ruled India.

Forced conversions and violence were common. Sikhism began as a reaction to Islam and Hinduism, Bryan Evans said. Evans is an International Mission Board worker focused on ministry to Sikhs. Evans soon will start work on a doctorate in Sikhism.

The first of 10 gurus and the founder of Sikhism, Nanak Dev, lived at the same time as Martin Luther and (See 'Sikhs,' page 10)

COMMENT

The Most Important Question Ever Asked

Today it is called Banias. In Jesus' day the area was known as Caesarea Philippi. There Herod the Great built a white marble temple to the Roman god Pan around a huge spring that flows from a cave in the sheer rock cliff near Mount Hermon. The spring forms a river that flows into the Sea of Galilee and is one of three tributaries that make up the Jordan River.

On this site Herod's son Philip built a town to the Caesar of his day and called the new city Caesarea Philippi. This was the same Philip who ordered John the Baptist beheaded. The town, with its nearby flowing spring and its pagan worship, symbolized all the political intrigue and immorality of that day.

It was to this place, as far from Nazareth to the north as Jerusalem was to the south, that Jesus led His disciples. And it was here that Jesus voiced the words that still form life's most important question when He asked, "But what about you; who do you say that I am?" (Matt. 16:15).

Out of character?

That Jesus would even ask such a question seems out of character for Him. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned against "doing acts of righteousness" that are seen by men. Instead He urged followers to do their good deeds in secret so that not even the left hand would know what the right hand was doing (Matt. 6:1-3).

Then the Father who knows what is done in secret will reward, Jesus says (v. 4).

That was the approach of John the Baptist when rulers from Jerusalem asked him who he was. John called himself "a voice crying in the wilderness" (John 1:23). In all of the Gospels John makes his role insignificant in order to magnify the majesty of the message — that the Lamb of God was about to break into history.

But in this place of political expediency and religious and moral uncertainty, Jesus called attention to Himself. He asked, "Who do you say that I am?" The question and the answer had to be important for Jesus to violate His own general principles.

In asking the question, Jesus says something



THOUGHTS
By Bob Terry

about Himself. He says, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" English teachers call the phrase "the Son of Man" an appositive. That is a phrase that describes the noun before it. Jesus clearly declares to the 12 disciples gathered around him that He is the Son of Man. It is not a question. It is a statement of fact from Jesus' own lips.

The disciples understood the messianic overtones of Jesus' statement. Scholars point out that the term "Son of Man" was the most popular title for the long-expected Deliverer. The prophet Daniel had written, "I looked and there before me was one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worship Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away and His Kingdom is one that will never be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14).

When Caiaphas demanded that Jesus tell the Sanhedrin if he were the Christ, the Son of God, Jesus responded. "Yes, it is as you say. But I say to all of you: in the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:63-64).

Caiaphas understood Jesus' claim and called it heresy worthy of death. The disciples at Caesarea Philippi understood the claim and embraced it through faith.

The question asked by Jesus was not about His

being the Messiah. That was taken for granted. The question was about what Jesus is beyond being the Christ. Is He simply a specially gifted human being (but still a human being) or is there something more to His personhood?

The answers voiced by the disciples point toward the crowd's recognition of Him as some sort of supernatural being. He is Elijah the miracle-worker, the one who is supposed to prepare the way for the Messiah. He is Jeremiah the weeping prophet. Jewish lore held that this prophet hid the Ark of the Covenant before Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians and would return to restore the Ark to its rightful place at the time of the promised Deliverer.

Others thought Jesus was the recently beheaded John the Baptist come back from the grave. Still others thought him a member of the ancient order of prophets who had not appeared in Israel for more than 400 years.

To the crowds Jesus was something special, but He was still a human being.

Then came that most important question. It had to be answered by the 12 men who would make up the core leadership of the soon-coming church. It has to be answered by every human being. Jesus asked, "But what about you; who do you say that I am?"

When Peter answered "You are the Christ," that was not new information. That had already been acknowledged by all involved in the conversation. What Peter added became the rock of confession on which Jesus said He would build His church. "[You are] the Son of the living God," Peter declared (Matt. 16:16).

Fully man and fully God

Jesus was not just a specially gifted human being. He was not some former leader returned from the grave. Jesus was the Son of God. He was the essence of God. He was deity clothed in a human robe. He was fully man and He was fully God.

As the apostle John later wrote, Jesus was God "who became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

At the core of the Christian faith is the question, "Who is Jesus?" Some still echo the words of the crowd of Jesus' day. They say He is a teacher, philosopher, moralist or specially gifted leader, but He is human like all others ever born.

Against that conclusion stands the confession of Peter and the historic confession of the Christian church.

"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Such a conclusion is not the result of human reason; it is accepting by faith the revelation of God made known in the One who is Messiah, Redeemer and Lord.

It is faith's response to the most important question ever asked.

Letters to the Editor

STAND FOR THE WORD

I've been a born-again Christian since I was 7 1/2 years old, was raised in a Southern Baptist home and have been married to a Southern Baptist minister for 43 years. We choose to be Southern Baptist because of their stand for the Word, the Cooperative Program and their missions program. But I was dumbfounded, very burdened and very disappointed when I read about the resurgence of Calvinism in the July 19

issue of *The Alabama Baptist* ("There Is Another Way" editorial written by Bob Terry). I don't understand how our Southern Baptist leaders can "agree to disagree" when Calvinists don't accept our traditional doctrinal statement. The Word of God reads that Christ came for all of us to be saved — not an elect few. My, my, how can the leaders and whoever else is involved let this take place? I'm sure God can't be pleased with this stand.

So what will be next? Oh, yes, next is that LifeWay Christian Stores can't sell the movie "The Blind Side." Really?

The article "'The Blind Side' removal brings backlash" that ran in the July 19 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* says, "The movie as a whole promotes Christian values and a redemptive message, however it does contain instances of street language and racial slurs against African-Americans" — as (See 'Letters,' page 12)



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

(ISSN 0738-7741;
USPS 011-080)

© The Alabama Baptist, Inc.
is published weekly except for
one week in July and December
by The Alabama Baptist, Inc.,
at 3310 Independence Drive,
Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone:
205-870-4720. Statewide
phone: 1-800-803-5201. Fax:
205-870-8957. **Website:** www.
thealabamabaptist.org. **Email:**
news@thealabamabaptist.org or
circulation@thealabamabaptist.
org. Periodicals postage paid
at Birmingham, Ala., and
other locations.

PRINT
SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Church Budget — \$13
Individual — \$20.95

ONLINE
SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Church Budget — \$8.50
Individual — \$14.95

DR. BOBBY S. TERRY
EDITOR

Jennifer Davis Rash
Executive Editor

Neisha Fuson
Editorial Assistant
for Online Communications

Julie Payne
News Writer

Lauren C. Grim
Designer

Wanda Bergeron
Local Editions Coordinator

Linda Harrison
Financial Administrator

Bill Gilmore
Advertising Director

Debbie Campbell
Director of Circulation
and Public Relations

NEWS SERVICES

Baptist Press (BP), Associated
Baptist Press (ABP), Religion
News Service (RNS), Compass
Direct News (CDN), Evangelical
Press (EP), Forum 18 (F18).

POSTMASTER

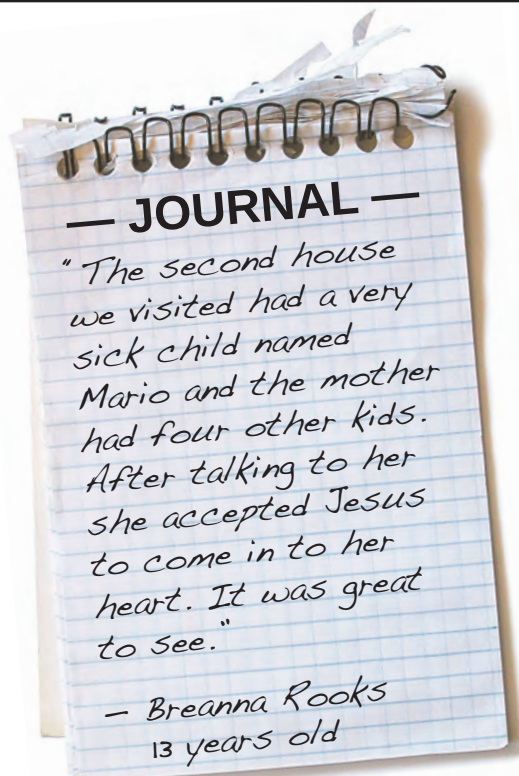
Send address changes to:
The Alabama Baptist
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209

ADDRESS CHANGE

Send old and new addresses,
and name of church to:
Circulation Department
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209
Allow two weeks.

'Nation's top Christian newspaper'

as judged by
Evangelical Press Association &
Religion Communicators Council



By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist



Shalom-Jireh Baptist Church, Conevisa, Guatemala

Photo courtesy of Allen Stoudenmire

Passion for ministry

Alabama Baptist churches continue missions partnership in Guatemala

In 2009, missions volunteer Allen Stoudenmire looked around the small village of Conevisa, Guatemala, seeking a suitable building site for a church where the growing Baptist community in the town could gather.

What he found was a half-finished concrete building with a dirt foundation, just 200 feet from the local elementary school and adjacent to a small store frequented by area residents. The owner of the lot had evil intentions for the abandoned property.

"The building was to be a night club and a house of prostitution, but God had other plans," Stoudenmire said.

The site is now the home of Shalom-Jireh Baptist Church, a church with a special relationship to Alabama Baptists thanks to Stoudenmire and his wife, Laurelle, and the International Mission Board's (IMB) Guatemala Operation Gospel Outreach Project, or Guatemala GO.

The Stoudenmires served in Guatemala from 2006 to 2008 in the IMB's Masters Program, a short-term service assignment for people age 50 and above who want to serve on the international missions field.

During those two years the Stoudenmires regularly hosted GO teams, whose primary objectives are distribution of gospel materials and door-to-door evangelism. The GO teams ministered throughout Guatemala, a Latin American country the size of Tennessee with a population of 14.7 million.

In 2007 the Stoudenmires led a team of students from Jacksonville State University to Conevisa, a small mountainside village in the eastern part of Guatemala near the city of Zacapa. They found a village mired in extreme poverty and spiritual darkness. Many of the residents were young female prostitutes and their children, Stoudenmire said.

Allen Stoudenmire was hesitant about taking the students into such a place at first, but the results confirmed a bigger plan for the village.

"God blessed in a mighty way," he said. "Many people prayed to receive Jesus and they found hope where there was none."

The Stoudenmires saw a need for a church

in Conevisa. They shared their vision with Rolando Cruz, pastor of Shalom Baptist Mission, Zacapa, Guatemala. The Stoudenmires, Cruz and other church leaders from Zacapa began visiting homes in Conevisa and holding Bible studies for the villagers. Out of that effort, Shalom-Jireh Church got its start.

In February 2008, just one week before their service in Guatemala was to end, the Stoudenmires hosted a small missions team from First Baptist Church, Moody, and First Baptist Church, Asheville, both in St. Clair Baptist Association. The churches caught the Stoudenmires' enthusiasm for Conevisa.

"These people became excited about what God was about to do," Allen Stoudenmire said.

A family tradition

In February 2009 the Stoudenmires led a 14-member team from the two churches back to Conevisa. Another group of 25 went back in October 2009, this time with some members of the Stoudenmire's home church, Thomasville Baptist Church, in Clarke Baptist Association, and an ongoing missions partnership began.

The GO teams have done everything from medical missions to Vacation Bible School (VBS), according to James Sampley, pastor of First, Asheville, who has traveled to Conevisa six times. In fact the trip has become a family tradition of sorts for the Sampley family. James' wife, Judy; his daughter, Robyn Rooks; and his grandchildren, Breanna Rooks and Cameron Sampley, have all been to Guatemala. Robyn, Breanna and Cameron were part of the 42-member GO team that went to Guatemala for a week in July.

During the first part of the week 165 students participated in a two-day morning VBS at Conevisa Elementary School. In the afternoons the team divided into groups for prayer walking and door-to-door evangelism.

In the evening the team attended worship at San Juan Baptist Church, led by Pastor Rony Medina, whose family assisted the team with transportation and translators.

A second two-day VBS was held later in the week at ELIM Christian School, where another 225 students participated. The

Stoudenmires and the missions team have a long-standing relationship with the ELIM Christian School, where 30 children from Conevisa attend thanks in part to sponsorships from the three churches.

Allen Stoudenmire reported that at least 20 prayed to receive Christ during the week.

"God used this team to share the gospel, disciple believers and bring joy, hope and encouragement to many," he said.

Reggie Quimby, director of the office of global missions for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), praised the commitment of the GO teams and their work in Guatemala. He said that while the SBOM's official missions partnerships in Guatemala will soon be phased out, he expects that "many Alabama Baptists will still have a great passion for ministry in Guatemala because of the need, as well as the wonderful relationships that have been established between our churches and the churches in Guatemala." ❧

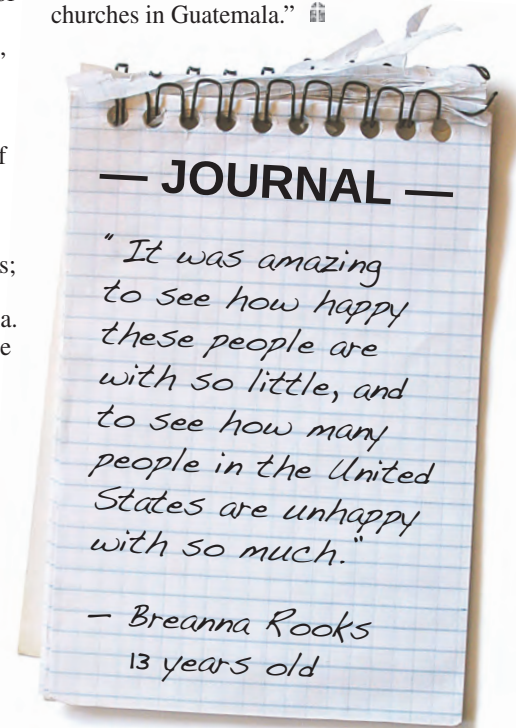




Photo courtesy of Jerome Manley

Youth, many from churches in Lookout Mountain Baptist Association, play a strategy game called 'Four on a Couch' at Godfest 2012.

Godfest 2012

Students from Lookout Mountain Baptist Association focus on 'Our God'

In an era where technology reigns supreme, spending a weekend without cellphones is unheard of. But that is exactly what 22 youth did July 13–15 at the 6th annual Godfest youth retreat sponsored by Lookout Mountain Baptist Association at Paint Rock Valley Lodge in Estillfork.

"At first they miss [their phones], but then they don't even notice they're gone," said Jerome Manley, volunteer youth leader for Welcome Hill Baptist Church, Fort Payne, and youth director for Lookout Mountain Association. "Not that it would've mattered because nobody had service anyway."

Worship services, quiet times, adult skits, jam sessions and recreational times kept the seventh-through 12th-grade students busy and involved in Christ-centered activities throughout the weekend. Daniel Lawson, pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church, Collinsville, was the speaker for the retreat.

Each year the Lord gives Manley a theme song, he said, and the teaching goes from there. This year's theme song was "Our God" by Chris Tomlin, leading Manley to teach lessons on miracles from the book of John.

"This weekend, we talked to the youth a lot about finding God's vision for their lives," he said. "Now is the time to be praying for that because it's going to take miracles if you're following God's leading."

By the conclusion of Godfest, two youth followed

that leading and accepted Christ.

In addition to Welcome Hill, four other churches participated in the youth retreat: New Bethel Baptist Church, Collinsville; Shady Grove Baptist Church, Collinsville; Little River Baptist Church, Cedar Bluff; and Church of God of Prophecy, Leesburg.

"Since we're small, us (churches) getting together seemed to make the most sense," Manley said. He noted four of the six youth from Welcome Hill attended Godfest and the other participating churches each have about the same size youth group as Welcome Hill.

Carah Sarratt, an incoming freshman at Northeast Alabama Community College in Rainsville, has attended every Godfest and said even though they had a smaller group attend this year, "it was still amazing."

"I enjoy it so much because I love getting closer to God and the people at Godfest," said Sarratt, a member of Shady Grove Baptist.

One of her favorite parts of Godfest is the jam sessions where the boys and girls are separated so they can openly talk about problems. Younger kids get to learn a lot by hearing about older kids' experiences, Sarratt said, such as ways to avoid problems or making the same mistakes.

The 18-year-old said although she cannot attend Godfest as a student anymore, she plans to return as a chaperone when she turns 21. (Maggie Walsh, TAB intern)

"This weekend, we talked to the youth a lot about finding God's vision for their lives."

**Jerome Manley
volunteer youth leader
Welcome Hill Baptist
Church, Fort Payne**

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

Church apologizes for barring African-American wedding

CRYSTAL SPRINGS, Miss. — First Baptist Church, Crystal Springs, Miss., has publicly apologized after an African-American couple was barred because of their race from holding their wedding at the predominantly white church.

"Both the pastor and those involved in the wedding location being changed have expressed their regrets and sorrow for their actions. This wrong decision resulted in hurt and sadness for everyone," the church said in a statement read at the end of its Aug. 5 worship service and posted on its website.

The congregation drew negative publicity when Pastor Stan Weatherford told the couple he could not perform their wedding at the 150-year-old church because a few members objected to blacks being married there. Instead Weatherford married Charles and Te'Andrea (Henderson) Wilson at a nearby African-American church.

"We are seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with our Lord Jesus Christ, Te'Andrea and Charles, family and friends of the Hendersons and Wilsons, our church family and our community for the actions and attitudes that have recently occurred," the church said, one week after town leaders, other First Baptist members and various observers expressed outrage.

"We the membership of First Baptist Church, Crystal Springs, hold the position that we should be open to all people. Our desire is to restore the church to be a spiritual lighthouse in doing the Lord's will in Crystal Springs and in Mississippi," the church said.

Arkansas Baptist Convention's leader to retire

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Emil Turner, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) since 1996, will retire effective February 2013.

Turner announced his intention to retire at the Aug. 2 meeting of the ABSC executive board.

"For almost 16 years, Mary and I have enjoyed the privilege of serving the Southern Baptist churches of Arkansas; we have enjoyed the kindness of the pastors and the tolerance of the church members and have enjoyed the friendship of the other ABSC entity leaders," said Turner, who was joined by his wife, Mary, for the announcement.

ABSC executive committee bylaws call for the current executive director to serve until replaced, but Turner expressed during his announcement the "hope that the operating committee can find a replacement by the time of the December meeting" of the board.

Turner has served as executive director since Jan. 15, 1996. He followed the retirement of longtime state executive director and Arkansas Baptist pastor Don Moore, who served from 1982 to 1996. Turner was serving as pastor of First Baptist Church, Lake Charles, La., when he was elected to lead Arkansas Baptists.

During Turner's tenure, the ABSC has grown from 1,378 congregations in 1996 to 1,545 churches and missions today — an increase of about 12 percent. Baptisms in Arkansas Baptist churches have averaged about 13,000 annually under Turner's leadership. Giving through the Cooperative Program has increased from \$15.5 million to more than \$21 million.

Miami school board decides not to evict church

MIAMI — A Southern Baptist pastor claimed victory Aug. 3 after Miami-Dade County School Superintendent Alberto Carvalho decided not to evict his two-year-old church from meeting in a high school for preaching that homosexuality is a sin.

The district launched an investigation into whether Impact Miami Church and Pastor Jack Hakimian violated the district's bullying and nondiscrimination policies by preaching sermons that gays can and should change and comparing pedophilia to attempts to "desensitize" and "normalize" homosexual behavior in the media.

After the Liberty Counsel, a nonprofit law firm affiliated with Liberty University, threatened to sue on First Amendment grounds, the superintendent said there would be no action to terminate the church's lease contract as long as it continues to pay its rent and keep its insurance coverage current.

"The school district acknowledges the constitutional right of all persons to express themselves freely," Carvalho said in a memo to members of the school board. "Our firm belief is that, under the law, constitutionally protected freedom of speech for all, including those who lease our facilities, must be observed even when it may be perceived as offensive to some."

'Love your neighbor'

Jews 'see God' in Baptist cleanup of graves

It was a dark day when David Eilenberg faced the statue of Christ just outside the Catholic church and bellowed, "Where are you, Jesus?"

Silence.

That day, in the depths of the Holocaust, the Polish Jew hung up belief. Millions of Eilenberg's fellow Jews died and were put in the ground before World War II ended.

Then six decades later, in the midst of their graves he met Dirk Stockton, who was cleaning the cemetery, and something big changed.

"I have watched you and what you Baptists are doing in our cemetery," Eilenberg told Stockton, reaching out to touch his chest. "I don't believe in God, but I see God in you."

That is exactly what Stockton had hoped for: that wrong relationships might be put right through the love of Jesus Christ.

For a long time Stockton had been wondering how Baptists could speak into the injustice done to Jews during the Holocaust, when 6 million Jews were systematically killed in camps in Poland alone.

"When I approached the Jewish com-

munity about bringing Baptist volunteers to clean and restore this Jewish cemetery, I was asked, 'Why do you wish to do this?'" Stockton said. "I simply said, 'Reconciliation.'"

That one word began an eight-year journey of renewing Jewish cemeteries and relationships. Matthew Jackson, who also serves among Jews in Poland, said Stockton and others have done "an incredible amount of work in Jewish cemeteries in and around the city of Warsaw."

Stockton said he believes it is making a difference.

An opportunity

"I have heard this question many times: 'Why would you, a Christian, do this for us, a Jew?'" Stockton said. "This question presents an opportunity to say simply, 'Love. I love God, and I love my neighbor. I love the Jewish people and I honor them as the root of everything that I know about God, as you have given us the Scriptures.'"

His Jewish friends, he said, find it hard to believe.

"Some Jews have responded to me by saying, 'If what you are doing, I told to



BP photo

Baptist volunteers seek to reconcile relationships between Christians and Jews by cleaning Jewish cemeteries, showing respect for the Jewish deed of honoring the dead.

people in Jerusalem, they would not believe," he said.

They find it even harder to believe that people would come all the way from the United States to help, but the volunteers' intent is to show Christ's love in a practical way, focusing on things Jews and Baptists share.

One commonality, Stockton said, is a command to "love your neighbor."

"We are seeking to open a dialogue with both Jews and Gentiles about the true nature of God's love," Stockton said. "Love is not an abstract thought or a fleeting emotion. It is action. Jesus said, 'If you love

me, you will keep my commandments.'"

It's proven to be a striking picture for Polish Jews, he said.

"One survivor of the Holocaust told me, 'What you are doing on earth, the angels are proclaiming and rejoicing about in heaven,'" Stockton said.

A six-minute documentary, at vimeo.com/45358520, is available for individuals and churches that want to know how they can be more sensitive and show love to Jewish friends and neighbors.

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

Baptist group pulls 'weeds of injustice' from Jewish cemetery

His hands trembled when Benjamin saw a letter his son-in-law received, stamped with the letterhead of the government offices of Paris' fourth administrative district.

In fact he trembled all over, so much that he had to sit down.

It turned out the letter was just asking his son-in-law to renew his driver's license. But it took the rest of the day for the 90-year-old Jewish man to recover from just the sight of the letterhead.

It was too much like the letter that summoned him away from his home 70 years ago during the Holocaust and landed him in a German concentration camp for five years. When he returned home, most of his family was dead.

Seven decades have passed, but the memory is still fresh for the Jewish grandfather.

"Sometimes it's easy for us to think about the Holocaust in terms of, 'That was a long time ago. That kind of prejudice doesn't still exist,'" said Richard Hall, a social scientist familiar with Jewish history. "But actually we are still in a generation when people can tell their children that the reason they aren't allowed to wear striped pajamas is because their grandma or grandpa had to wear them in prison camps. The memory isn't far removed at all."

And if that were not enough for Jews in Paris, there is a message just for them carved into the front of the city's imposing Notre Dame Cathedral, right in the heart of the city's fourth district.

It has been there 1,000 years. Ships 20 miles away on the Seine River could see it. Tourists from all over the world have their photo made in front of it.

The message is a statue called Synagoga, and it portrays the Jewish community as "damaged goods," Hall said. Synagoga is a woman with a broken staff, broken tablets and a snake wrapped around her eyes to indicate she's been blinded by evil.

She sits on the front of the cathedral opposite the statue Iglesia, a strong, stately crown-wearing woman representing the Christian church.

Seeking reconciliation

"For 1,000 years, the front of Notre Dame has been a billboard to the Jews of what Christians think of them," Hall said. "That's a hard message to overcome." Especially, he said, when Christians seem to be oblivious to the fact that messages like that are still being presented today.

But John Simmons is one person trying

to turn some of those messages around by a simple act. He travels from his home in the U.S. to Europe to take care of Jewish cemeteries. There he and his friends work on walls, pull weeds and clean headstones.

"To honor the dead is a very high good deed for the Jews, so to do that for them is a message of love," Simmons said. "We just want to show love, to see the Jews and the Christians reconciled. We are pulling the weeds of injustice, of the things that happened, so the land can be renewed and restored and relationships can be reconciled."

It is something Christians should be aware of and should be working to overcome, Simmons said.

"We are just showing the love of Christ," he said. "That is first and foremost."

For individuals and churches that want to know how they can be more sensitive and show love to Jewish friends and neighbors, a six-minute documentary on Jews in Paris can be found at vimeo.com/45358520.

"As Christians, we sincerely want to make the love of Jesus Christ visible to Jewish people," Hall said. "Yet to do so means that we must now express His love in a way that speaks more loudly than the long history of hatred and distrust which Christians and Jews have inherited from the past."

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

"As Christians, we sincerely want to make the love of Jesus Christ visible to Jewish people. Yet to do so means that we must now express His love in a way that speaks more loudly than the long history of hatred and distrust which Christians and Jews have inherited from the past."

Richard Hall, social scientist

LifeWay's Student Ministry takes 'Student Life' under its umbrella

A two-year transition for Alabama's Student Life — an interdenominational ministry serving the local church — is officially finalized.

Student Life has been acquired by LifeWay Christian Resources' Student Ministry, effective Aug. 15. NavPress acquired Student Life Publishing in 2010.

LifeWay's Student Ministry already offers transformational experiences for more than 50,000 students each summer consisting of the FUGE family of camps, World Changers and PowerPlant, which emphasize missions involvement.

Student Life camps also minister to more than 50,000 children and teenagers every summer and are attended by many Alabama Baptist youth groups. Though the camp experiences are programmatically different, each ministry is passionately committed to seeing the lives of students transformed by Jesus and His Word, according to LifeWay officials.

By joining arms, officials of both groups say the two ministries will be able to work together to encourage youth leaders and challenge a new generation of Christ followers.

"Both LifeWay and Student Life

share a passion for serving the church and helping the next generation grow in their devotion to Christ and commitment to reach the world for Him," explained Ben Trueblood, LifeWay's director of student ministries. "That passion for young people makes this partnership possible and beneficial to the Kingdom."

Unique emphases

Because of the unique differences and emphases of each organization's camp offerings and locations, leaders do not expect significant changes will be necessary in programming or locations.

"Each of our organizations provides conferences and camps in slightly different ways to meet needs of individual churches and student ministries," Trueblood said. "Many of those differences won't change, which will allow us to continue to meet specific needs of individual churches."

"Even though Student Life staff members are now LifeWay employees, they will continue to work out of their Birmingham offices and promote Student Life's own identity and conference offerings," Trueblood added.

Student Life president J. Roger Davis said Student Life "has been faithfully serving churches for nearly 20 years by creating events and experiences for people to have an authentic interaction with God." Student Life has provided Christian summer camps for kids and youth since 1993.

"This new season of ministry for us is exciting," Davis said. "Being part of the LifeWay family will allow us to continue serving the churches we have served and partner with new youth ministers throughout the country as we all work together to raise a generation of devoted Christ followers."

Earl Roberson, who will serve as vice president of operations for Student Life, said he is "eager to finalize the transition and continue the great ministry of Student Life as a part of the LifeWay family."

Even though LifeWay and Student Life leaders have begun the necessary behind-the-scenes transition, both organizations have a full schedule of their 2013 conferences available at their respective websites: LifeWay.com/Fuge, LifeWay.com/WorldChangers, LifeWay.com/PowerPlant and StudentLife.com. (LifeWay, TAB)

Across Alabama's Associations

CALHOUN

► **Nances Creek Church, Jacksonville**, will hold a gospel singing with Mercy's Harbor Aug. 25, 7 p.m. Garry Brown is pastor.

DEKALB

► **Gault Avenue Church, Fort Payne**, will celebrate its anniversary Aug. 26, 10:30 a.m. There will be special music, testimonies from former members and more. Dinner on the grounds will follow. Mike Mitchell is pastor. ► **Nazareth Church, Rainsville**, will hold Outdoor Extravaganza Aug. 18, 8 a.m.-noon. There will be door prizes, 3-D archery tournament, skeet shoot, children's activities and more. Eric Hixon will speak. Lunch will be provided and dinner will be at 6 p.m. The church also will hold revival Aug. 19, 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m., and Aug. 20-22, 6:30 p.m. Roger Graham is pastor.

ETOWAH

► **White Springs Church, Rainbow City**, will celebrate Heritage Day Aug. 26, 9:15 a.m.-noon. The reunion choir and others will provide special music. Bill King and Lester Hall will speak. Vince Whittington is interim pastor.

MADISON

► **Bethany Church, Huntsville**, will celebrate its 50th anniversary homecoming Aug. 26, 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow. Dennis Cleveland is pastor.

► **First Church, Guin**, will host The MaHarreys in concert Aug. 25, 7 p.m. For information call 205-468-3361. Kenny Hatcher is pastor.

MARION

► **Carrollton Church** will host Squire Parsons in concert Aug. 26, 6 p.m. For information call 205-367-8577. Tommy Winders is pastor.

PICKENS

► **Northridge Church, Northport**, will hold the Catching Kids Puppet Ministry Greatest Hits and Back to School Bash Aug. 26, 6 p.m. For information call 205-758-5599. Brad Smith is pastor.

SALEM-TROY

► **Salem Church, Brundidge**, will hold revival Aug. 19-22. Sunday services will be at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. and Monday-Wednesday services, 7 p.m. Pastor Chad Manion will speak Sunday morning and Dwayne Norman, pastor of Bush Memorial Church, Troy, will speak Sunday evening. James Newell, professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Baptist College of Florida, will speak Monday; Luke Lane, pastor of First Church, Troy, will speak Tuesday; and Kenneth Baggett, director of missions for Salem-Troy Association, will speak Wednesday. The Stephens' Gospel Trio will lead music Sunday and Jason Clifford will lead music Monday-Wednesday.

day. Chad Manion is pastor.

TALLAPOOSA

► **Sandy Creek Church, Camp Hill**, will host singer/songwriter Scott Fowler and his wife, Peggy, Aug. 26, 11 a.m. Rick Hall is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Northridge Church, Northport**, will hold the Catching Kids Puppet Ministry Greatest Hits and Back to School Bash Aug. 26, 6 p.m. For information call 205-758-5599. Brad Smith is pastor.



Thomasville's Pineview celebrates 50th anniversary

Pineview Baptist Church, Thomasville, commemorated its 50th anniversary July 29 by remembering its beginnings while looking toward the future. "It was a blessed day," said Hazel Parden, one of the charter members of Pineview Baptist.

The service began with a slideshow presentation reminiscing on the church's journey from being housed in a mattress factory to its current building, in addition to displays of charter member documents and past issues of the church's newspaper. A prerecorded video presentation by Sheldon Day, mayor of Thomasville, was then shown, as he was unable to be present for the service.

Following the video and slideshow presentations was the reading of four celebratory proclamations from Sen. Jeff Sessions, the Alabama House of Representatives, the Alabama Senate and the U.S. Senate. Each of the proclamations noted the contributions Pineview has made to Thomasville through its service and commitment "to be a lighthouse on the hilltop to the glory of God."

Thomasville Baptist Church Pastor Tyrone Parten, who attended Pineview as a child, spoke about the mission of the church from Acts 1:8 to an audience of more than 300. John Reid presented a plaque on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. The service was followed by a covered dish lunch on the grounds.

Mitch Thrower, pastor of Pineview, hopes the church continues to be active in the next 50 years. "We're striving to be a missions-minded church," Thrower said. In accordance with that goal, Pineview sent teams on summer missions trips to Michigan and Tennessee. Thrower said he hopes the church will eventually have missions trips throughout the year. (Maggie Walsh, TAB intern)

FBC Gu-Win marks 50 years with homecoming

Paired with its homecoming celebration, First Baptist Church, Gu-Win, in Marion Baptist Association also commemorated its 50th anniversary.

The event was held July 8 with morning worship, afternoon lunch and songs by southern gospel group The Masters Quartet.

Terry Dillard, secretary and treasurer for First, Gu-Win, said the services were well attended and it was a good day for the church.

"We had about double in church than what we have on a regular Sunday," Dillard said about the estimated 80 people who joined them that Sunday. "We also had two of the original charter members for the church in attendance."

The church received a plaque from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.

Pastor Tommy Roberts said he has felt extremely blessed during his almost four years as pastor of the church.

"My hopes are that things continue to get better for the church and we continue to grow in the future," Roberts said. Two people were saved at the event, he added.

Dillard said he felt everyone enjoyed the event as well as the special music from The Masters Quartet.

"I feel at this time our church is in unity, in one accord and in a great peaceful harmony," Roberts said. (Brittney Knox, TAB intern)

Life-changing. Faith-strengthening.

Holy Land Spiritual Pilgrimage

March 15-25, 2013

Join Dr. Bob Terry,
editor of *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper,
on a spiritual pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Tour holy places, meet national Christians and visit Baptist representatives.

For information, write to:

Holy Land Tour, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham AL 35209; email: HolyLand@TheAlabamaBaptist.org; or call 1-800-803-5201, Ext. 103.





IMB photo

Olympic organizers used the London games to promote the next Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. Billboards advertising the Winter Games could be found in airports, on the streets and even on London's iconic double-decker buses.

FROM London TO Sochi

Team reaches Russians in London, preps for 2014 Winter Games

Though the Winter Olympic Games in Russia are still 18 months away, church planters in the host city of Sochi are already hard at work to capitalize on what the "Olympic Spirit" will bring to their city.

And they recently spent time in London during the Summer Olympics getting a grasp on what the opportunities would look like.

"Traditionally Southern Baptists have used Olympic ministry as an opportunity for broad seed sowing. However, Olympic ministry can be much more than that. It can be a catalyst for church planting in the host city itself," said Earl Gillespie, a team member for Engage Sochi, an International Mission Board initiative aimed at taking Olympic ministry beyond the opportunity for mass evangelism.

Gillespie explained the Engage Sochi strategy is for the residents of Sochi to be reached with the gospel before, during and after the 2014 Winter Games.

"It is our goal to use the opportunities that the Olympics will bring to Sochi to not just reach out to the people of the world who will visit the city for the Games but to use this event as a way to build relationships with the people who live and work in the Sochi area," Gillespie said. "And we have already begun to do that."

The Engage Sochi church planting team, which formed after the Russian city was named as the 2014 Olympic host, has been actively involved in partnering with Central Baptist Church of Sochi for more than a year. Together they have been exploring ways to use the sporting event to connect believers with the Sochi community. The Engage Sochi team, which arrived in London prior to the start of the Summer Games, was sur-

prised at how the atmosphere and demeanor of the people on the streets changed after the opening ceremonies.

"Since the games started, people have been so open," said Kay Gillespie, who coordinates prayer efforts for the Engage Sochi initiative. "We even had one young lady thank us for coming and telling her about Jesus. If I can have those kinds of experiences in Sochi, then I cannot imagine what Jesus is going to do there."

Joining the Engage Sochi team was Danil Pankratov, a Russian Baptist pastor who partners with the team in Sochi.

"I was surprised how people would talk with you and would listen to a gospel presentation," Pankratov said. "Usually in Sochi when you try to start a conversation with people they do not want to hear. And sometimes they walk away. But I am discovering that the Olympics are a celebration, and I am pretty sure that people will be more open in Russia during this time."

While in London, the team spent time in areas where they knew Russians — specifically people from Sochi — would be.

"The Russians have two exhibits here in London to promote the next Winter Olympics, and you can already see how they are getting excited about having the Winter Games in Sochi," team member Craig Dean said.

The team uses pin trading, a popular pastime for Olympic spectators, as a way to engage people in conversation. The specially designed Engage Sochi evangelism pin uses the colors of the Olympic rings to tell the gospel story.

In addition to giving away the trading pins, the group also included a small card that explains the colors in both English and Russian.



IMB photo

Engage Sochi volunteers use Olympic pin trading as a way to engage people in conversation.

"I really like this method," Pankratov said. "It helps you to meet people and to very quickly tell the important things about why people need salvation and why they need Jesus. I can see this being very effective in Sochi."

Pankratov added that in Sochi the team has partnered with his church to offer English classes for local residents who need or want to learn English to help them better communicate during the games.

"One of the people we met here in London lives in our neighborhood in Sochi and was very excited to hear that we are starting an English program," he said. "We now have her contact information and look forward to not just teaching her English but sharing about Jesus with her."

In addition to the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, Sochi will host the 2018 FIFA World Cup and a Formula One Racing promotional event in the summer of 2014.

"I think that God has brought these events to Sochi to allow the people in our city to be more open," Pankratov said. "As the church, we have to get on our feet. And we must begin to use other methods to reach out so that even more people can hear a gospel message during these big events."

Dean said volunteers from America are needed to partner with the Sochi church. This is key, he said, as the team takes what it has learned in London and moves back to begin efforts in Sochi.

"The bridge from London to Sochi is not complete," Dean said. "As a matter of fact, it is just starting. There are nearly 400,000 people in Sochi who need to hear the gospel. So even without the Olympics coming to this area, there is a huge need for the gospel there."

For more information about how you and your church can partner with the Engage Sochi team before, during and after the 2014 Winter Olympics, visit EngageSochi.org. Click on "Register for Updates" to contact members of the Engage Sochi team.

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

Calvinism roots deep in Southern Baptist histo

Calvinism is not a recent phenomenon in Southern Baptist life but instead has deep roots in its history, Union University President David S. Dockery said Aug. 4 at a conference on the issue.

"There have been Calvinists in the convention since its inception," Dockery said at the conference sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention called "Calvinism: Concerned, Confused, or Curious."

Dockery delivered two lectures, the first focusing on the history of Baptist theology and the second spotlighting the resurgence of Calvinism within Southern Baptist life.

"This conversation is difficult because there isn't just one theological stream or tradition in Baptist life. There are several.

There isn't just 'one' leader, either," he noted, referencing some denominations, such as Methodists (John Wesley) and Lutherans (Martin Luther), who can look back to a founder or major influencer.

Dockery located the beginning of Baptist life with the rise of English Separatism in England. As Baptist life developed in England in the 1600s, Baptists divided between "General Baptists," with individuals like John Smyth as their leader, and "Particular Baptists." The Particular Baptists represented a more Calvinistic understanding of salvation, while General Baptists held to, as the name suggests, a more "general" understanding of the atonement.

At the founding of the Southern Baptist

Convention (SBC) in May 1845, it would have been difficult to find leaders who were not Calvinistic in their theology, Dockery said. He distinguished between the Calvinistic denominational leadership of the SBC and its less Calvinist laity. At that time, however, the question of Calvinism was not plaguing the newly formed denomination. Dockery drew attention to the Calvinistic leanings of the Abstract of Principles, a document written by James P. Boyce that would serve as a doctrinal weathervane for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, which was founded in 1859 in Greenville, S.C., before it moved to Louisville, Ky. Boyce was president of Southern Seminary from 1859 to 1888.

"Writing theologians have influence,"

Dockery explained, "and it was the denomination's Calvinist theologians that wrote, such men as James P. Boyce and John Dagg."

Dockery began his second address by asking the question, "Are Southern Baptists Calvinists?" He answered the question by comparing what "Calvinism" means according to different traditions. "To a Wesleyan," Dockery said, "Southern Baptists are Calvinists because we believe in eternal security, which Wesleyans do not. But to Presbyterians, who hold to a plurality of elders and infant baptism, we are not Calvinists," Dockery stated.

Dockery traced the trajectory of earlier 20th century Southern Baptist theology, which emphasized personal response, revelation and revivalism.

"Southern Baptist thought moved from a her-

Southern Baptists should, can unite over 'deep division' on Calvinism

Calvinism should not divide the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

That was the conclusion of four Southern Baptist leaders who talked honestly about the division within the convention over the issue of Calvinism while offering suggestions and maintaining that Southern Baptists should and can unite, despite differences.

"Baptists for 400 years have disagreed over this issue, and we're not going to come to some place where we all agree. I think we can come to a place where we all can work together," said Union University President David S. Dockery, one of the speakers at a conference sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention. The conference, called "Calvinism: Concerned, Confused, or Curious," was held at Crestwood Baptist Church, Crestwood, Ky.

"In the 18th century there were particular and general Baptists, but at the sending of William Carey, they joined hands together for the common cause of missions. That's something we can do again," Dockery added.

"Right now there is deep division in our convention over this issue," said Frank Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee. "It comes every year at the conven-

tion. It is not going to stop until we learn how to treat each other, how to be honest, how to clarify what we really are saying."

There are "extremes" on both sides of the issue, Page said.

Page said he appointed Calvinists and non-Calvinists to the Committee on Committees "because they were men and women that would go out and witness with me." He said he "soon" will be naming a group of advisers "to help me pull together some kind of strategy" to

help keep the convention united.

Both sides, he said, need to learn to respect one another. "We're talking about and at each other too often," he said. "When you respect someone, you talk to them."

Page added, "If we can do missions and evangelism together ... then we can pull this thing together."

Video and audio of the conference is available online at <http://www.kybaptist.org/calvinism>.

(BP)



DUMAS
Makers of Solid Wood Church Furniture Since 1928
Pews • Pulpits • Pulpit Chairs • Choir Chairs
Communion Tables • Lecterns • Hymn Boards

ROGER ROBERTS, FACTORY REPRESENTATIVE

Grove Hill, Alabama
800-633-6896 (phone)
251-605-0774 (mobile)
www.dumaspews.com
rogerdumas@tds.net



CLINE TOURS Safety Service Professionalism



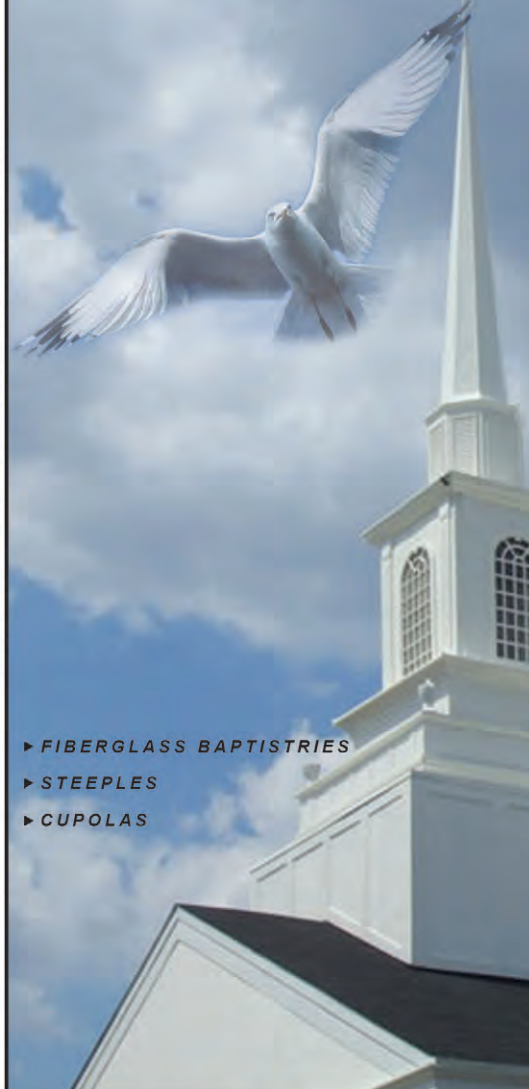
NOW HIRING:
Part-time drivers
CDL-B, w/P endorsement,
experience required.

Offering luxury motorcoaches and minicoaches for charters, tours and shuttles, 2008-2012, satellite TV, WiFi and more. One of the best safety ratings in the nation. View our rating at fmcsa.dot.gov.

CLINE TOURS, 3000 7TH AVE N, BIRMINGHAM, AL 35203
205-591-7555 • www.clinetours.com

Steeple Etc.
#1 Source for Steeples, Baptistries, & Cupolas

No job too big or too small
Complete satisfaction is guaranteed



► FIBERGLASS BAPTISTRIES
► STEEPLES
► CUPOLAS

Toll-free:
1-888-980-6161

Local
1-205-936-9410

Toll-free fax:
1-800-521-8349

WWW.STEEPLESETC.COM

GLASSDESIGNS
www.glassdesignsopelika.com



STAINED GLASS

- Home, church, business
- Free consultation and estimates
- References available

Opelika, Alabama

334-749-5520
achamblee5520@charter.net

5-YEAR/60,000-MILE BODY & CHASSIS WARRANTY
STANDARD WITH EVERY NEW BUS PURCHASE

Carpenter Bus Sales has gone the extra mile again in providing a unique 5-year/60,000-mile body & chassis warranty* with every new bus they sell!

An option like this would normally add \$3,000 to the price of a bus. With Carpenter Bus, it comes standard.



LifeWay
CHRISTIAN STORES

Call 866-750-5658
or visit us online at
CarpenterBus.com

Carpenter
BUS SALES

*Details on this Limited Warranty at www.carpenterbus.com/5-60

ry, finds modern resurgence, Dockery explains

meneutic of divine sovereignty with Boyce, [John A] Broadus and [Basil] Manly," Dockery said, "to one of personal revelation and experience with E. Y. Mullins." Mullins was president of Southern Seminary from 1899 to 1928.

As Southern Baptists became more programmatic in the mid-20th century, Dockery said, "the SBC re-envisioned itself, largely ignoring the 19th century roots."

Southern Baptist theologians like Herschel Hobbs began moving Southern Baptist theology "toward a modified understanding of predestination and foreknowledge. He [Hobbs] believed that God affirmed every free human choice in such a way that the choices are not predetermined." The "modified Arminianism" of Hobbs and famed pastor Adrian Rogers, Dockery said, stands in

stark contrast to the 19th century Calvinism.

Dockery was careful to note that it was not a rejection of Calvinism that gave rise to liberalism, but the rejection of biblical authority, inerrancy and the exclusivity of Christ.

With conservative theology laying the foundation for the convention in a post-Conservative Resurgence era, Dockery now sees various streams within the convention: fundamentalists, revivalists, orthodox evangelicals and Calvinists.

Dockery suggested that the contemporary resurgence in Calvinism is partially attributable to outside influences on seminarians and laity, such as theologians and pastors Carl Henry, J.I. Packer and John Piper. All of these spokesmen combine biblical inerrancy

with a strong commitment to Calvinism.

Dockery made the case for a "big tent" SBC in which Calvinists and non-Calvinists can partner together for the cause of Christ. He also put the Calvinism controversy in larger perspective, suggesting that liberalism, neo-paganism, and postmodernism are bigger challenges for Southern Baptists to overcome than Calvinism.

"Calvinism is not the most important conversation Southern Baptists ought to be having. We have far more that we agree on than we disagree on," Dockery said.

"By and large we don't know our heritage, our history, our theological identity or the distinctives of the various traditions," Dockery said.

He gave several axioms for Southern Baptists to use in dealing with the question of Calvinism in the convention:

► Do not compromise your own convictions.

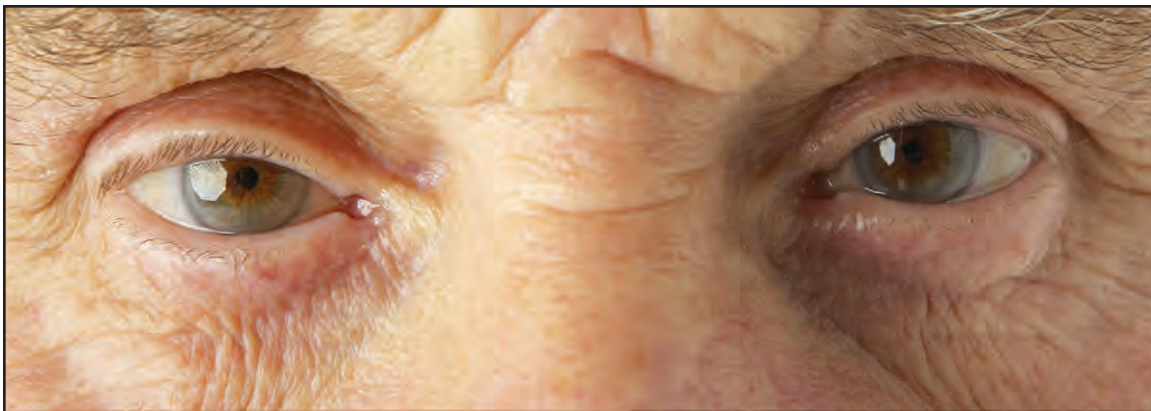
► Remember that doctrinal matters do count.

► Seek togetherness for the right reasons.

► Pray for guidance and illumination from the Holy Spirit where we have theological disagreements.

► Be humble and not arrogant when dealing with controversies. Avoid caricatures.

Video and audio of the conference is available online at www.kybaptist.org/calvinism. (BP)



**70% of Alabamians die without a will.
YOU don't have to be one of them.**

Serving Alabama Baptists since 1940.



Estate Planning

Last Will and Testaments
Advance Directives for Health Care
Powers of Attorney
Trusts

Gift Planning

Charitable Gift Annuities
Charitable Remainder Unitrusts
Endowments
Scholarships

We are told that a staggering 7 out of 10 Alabamians do not have a will. Wow! The ramifications of this on children, surviving spouses, taxes and fees are immeasurable. We think there are many reasons for this: fear of dying, procrastination, confusion about the estate planning process, the cost of creating a will . . . and more.

We, at The Baptist Foundation of Alabama, want to provide some "layman friendly" estate planning information that can enable you to protect your family and be a wise steward of what He has entrusted to you. Take the first step towards completing a Christ-Honoring Estate Plan by visiting our website at www.tbfa.org and choosing Estate Planning to access the Estate Plan Organizer ("EPO") or by completing the information below and mailing this form to The Baptist Foundation of Alabama.

☐ I am interested in receiving a **FREE** personalized estate plan!

Name _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Any information given is private and confidential.



Scan the QR Code
to go straight to the
Estate Planning page
on our website.

CLIP AND MAIL TO:

THE BAPTIST FOUNDATION OF ALABAMA, P.O. BOX 241227, MONTGOMERY, AL 36124-1227
PHONE: (334) 394-2000 / FAX: (334) 394-2039 / www.tbfa.org

Pastoral search committees must 'be honest' about beliefs, desires

According to a four-member panel of Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders, when a church has an opening for a pastorate it must be honest in stating their beliefs and desires.

Steve Lemke, director of the Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, said there "clearly" is a resurgence of Calvinism within the convention and among seminary students. Students, he said, are coming to seminary "with pre-commitments toward Calvinism, largely because of non-SBC speakers like John Piper and others."

Pastoral search committees must ask candidates who are Calvinists: "Are they committed to missions and evangelism," and, "Do they talk more about Calvin than about Jesus," Lemke suggested.

The current "distrust by both sides leads to exaggerating what the other side is saying and really going beyond where they really are," he added.

"I hope we can find ways to work together more constructively." (BP)



**Professional
SIGNS**



"We couldn't be more pleased with it. It has done so much for the community. ... We get calls all the time from people telling us what a difference it makes to read our messages. This sign is on the highway as our church is back off the road but everyone can see our sign from the highway and it makes a difference in letting people know we are here."

— **Pastor Roger White**
Liberty Baptist Church in the Painter Community

www.reliablesigns.com
205.664.0955

Sikhs' belief works-based

(continued from page 1)

John Calvin. During the time of the Anabaptists and the Reformation, Guru Nanak was trying to bring reformation to India.

Nanak disagreed with the way women were treated in Islam and Hinduism, Evans said. Women are considered equal to men in Sikhism.

In Hinduism a person's caste is known by his or her last name. In Sikhism there are no castes. Men have the last name "Singh," which means lion, and women have the last name, "Kaur," which means lioness.

Sikhs have five physical symbols of their faith, known as the five Ks: Kesh (uncut hair), Kara (a steel bracelet), Kanga (a wooden comb), Kaccha (cotton underwear) and Kirpan (a dagger).

Sikh men cover their uncut hair with a turban.

Sikhs are monotheistic and do not believe in worshipping idols.

"Sikhs believe in reincarnation, like Hindus, but like Muslims, they believe there is one god," Evans explained.

Sikhs believe humans liberate themselves from the cycle of reincarnation through meditation and virtuous living.

For those fortunate enough to escape rebirth, the ultimate destination is a return to the divine soul from which all beings emanate.

Sikhs believe a person's actions dictate his or her standing in the next life. Sikhism is works-based and service is valued. Many Sikhs donate money to build temples, hospitals and schools.

There are three main ways Sikhs believe they can achieve salvation: through meditation, good works and by the grace of their god.

Sikhs worship in a temple, known as a "gurdwara." Every morning they serve a meal called "langar."

Sikh temple services involve music from "ragis," temple singers who play the harmonium and an instrument called the "tabla." Their scriptures are recited by one of the temple's caretakers, who are called "granthi."

Granthi also give a sermon. Temple services also include congregational prayer and "prasad," an offering. Prasad contains flour, butter and sugar.

The 10th guru decreed that their scriptures would become the next guru and there would be no more living gurus. The Sikh scriptures are treated with the utmost reverence. Every evening, the scriptures are "put to bed" in air-conditioned rooms.

Learn more about Sikhs and how to share the gospel with them at sikhoutreach.org. Download a free one-page prayer guide concerning Sikhs at southasianpeoples.imb.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Prayer4_SouthAsians_Sikhs.pdf and find related information at southasianpeoples.imb.org.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Name has been changed for security reasons. (BP, RNS)



Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions

One Mission: The Great Commission One Program: The Cooperative Program Many Ministries: Great Commission Ministries

August 2, 2012

Dear Pastor:

We want to thank you, as a pastoral leader, for your support of giving through the Cooperative Program, which undergirds the ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention as well as the Alabama Baptist State Convention. Your church is a valuable member of the Alabama Baptist family of churches, and for that we are grateful.

As your leadership prepares the church budget for the coming year, we would like to encourage you to make sure that *The Alabama Baptist* is included in it for your resident family members. *The Alabama Baptist* continues to be an essential channel of communication for Alabama Baptists concerning the ministries supported through the Cooperative Program.

The theme selected by *The Alabama Baptist* this year is "Connecting Alabama Baptists." With this in mind, you will be able to stay apprised of information about missions in Alabama, in North America, and around the world. The comprehensive coverage of the recent mission involvement by Alabama Baptists in Guatemala, Ukraine, Haiti, Appalachian Region and Michigan is just one example of the ministry performed by our state paper.

The Alabama Baptist is an inexpensive investment. It actually costs less than a postcard. The regular reading of *The Alabama Baptist* by your people will strengthen your church family. It will provide for them much needed information and inspiration, which will make them not only better Baptists but better church members as well.

If you already receive *The Alabama Baptist*, then we want to thank you for your support. To add to your subscription list or to begin participation, contact *The Alabama Baptist* toll free at 1-800-803-5201, by internet at circulation@thealabamabaptist.org, or correspond with them at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. You now have two options for subscribing to the paper — either in print or online.

As long-time readers and supporters of *The Alabama Baptist*, we highly recommend it to you as a valuable resource of information and inspiration. Thank you for all you do for the cause of Christ and also for your support of Great Commission Ministries through the Cooperative Program. God bless you and yours.

Your fellow-laborers,

Rick Lance
Executive Director-Treasurer

Mike Shaw
Convention President

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

Alabama Cooperative Program Gifts

Alabama Baptist Giving

Year to Date through July 31, 2012

JULY

CP Challenge Budget Goal	\$3,641,666
CP Challenge Budget Gifts	\$2,489,923
Under Goal for Month	\$1,151,743

YEAR TO DATE

CP Challenge Budget Goal	\$25,491,662
CP Challenge Budget Gifts	\$23,942,168
Under Goal for Year	\$1,549,494



Steeple • Pews • Baptisries
Portable Baptisries • Cushions
Pew Refinishing & Upholstering

P.O. Box 1334 • Dublin, GA 31040

1-800-975-2129

www.superiorchurch.com

About Alabama

Collecting Taxes on 'Remote' Sales

By Jim Williams
Special to The Alabama Baptist

While the governor and a majority of legislators have taken a "no-new-taxes" pledge, they did provide in the recent legislative session for distributing any new revenues that might result from collecting sales taxes on purchases from "remote sellers." Collecting taxes on these sales would improve tax fairness and produce large revenue gains for the state, cities and counties, but only if Congress allows.

In 1992 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a state may not require a company to collect its sales taxes if the company is located elsewhere. Because of this rule, companies that sell through the Internet and by telephone or mail order often do not charge sales taxes. Purchases through such "remote sellers" have grown substantially in recent years, and this creates a fairness issue for retailers who have stores in the state and do collect sales taxes on purchases. Taxing some sales but not others also reduces the revenue of state and local governments.

The Supreme Court pointed out that Congress can change the rules of interstate commerce if it wishes, and there is some momentum in this case to do so. For example, a bill titled the "Marketplace Fairness Act" would allow any state that sim-

plifies its sales tax rules to require that remote sellers above a certain size collect those taxes.

The new Alabama law anticipates such a change and provides that half of the new revenue would go to the state and the remaining half would be split between the city and county where the purchaser is located. The state share would be divided between the General Fund (75 percent) and the Education Trust Fund (25 percent). It is estimated that this would produce more than \$210 million each year in new revenue for Alabama's state and local governments. About \$79 million would go to the state's General Fund, which is facing a budget shortfall of more than \$100 million in the coming year.

It is important to recognize that collecting taxes on remote sales is a fairness issue: all retail transactions should bear the same tax burden, regardless of where the seller is located. Making this happen is a matter of tax reform. It is not incompatible with a "no-new-taxes" pledge, as our state officials seem to understand.

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

Global faith restrictions

Religions suffer loss of rights, State Department report shows

Religious minorities continue to suffer loss of their rights across the globe, the State Department reported July 30, with a rise in blasphemy laws and restrictions on faith practices.

Almost half of the world's governments "either abuse religious minorities or did not intervene in cases of societal abuse," said Ambassador-at-Large Suzan Johnson Cook at a State Department briefing on the 2011 International Religious Freedom Report.

"It takes all of us — governments, faith communities, civil society working together to ensure that all people have the right to believe or not to believe," she said.

Christians in Egypt, Tibetan Buddhists in China and Baha'is in Iran are among those without religious rights, the report states.

In Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia people have been killed, imprisoned or detained because they violated or criticized blasphemy laws. In Indonesia a Christian was sentenced to prison for five years for distributing books that were considered "offensive to Islam."

These statutes, the U.S. government says, silence people in countries that claim to be "protecting religion."

The report highlighted the plight of religious minorities in countries that have been in political transition, especially Egypt, which it said has failed to halt increasing violence against Coptic Christians.

Recognition

Some religious groups struggle to be recognized by their countries. A new law in Hungary reduced the number of recognized religious groups from more than 300 to fewer than 32.

Iran, one of eight nations designated by the State Department as "countries of particular concern," was criticized for the deterioration of an already "egregious" state of religious freedom. Christian pastor Youcef Nadarkhani — who has garnered support from U.S. Christians — remains in jail and faces possible execution, while seven Baha'i leaders' sentences were returned to their original 20 years after they were reduced to 10 in 2010.

Conditions in China, another country designated for particular concern, also deteriorated, with growing restrictions on Tibetan Buddhists.

"The self-immolation of over 40 Tibetans to protest Chinese policies continues to demonstrate their desperation," Johnson Cook said.

Katrina Lantos Swett, chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, called the State Department report "commendable" but said the department still must convince policymakers

Egyptian government urged to avoid discrimination

Muslim and Coptic Christian leaders in the U.S. are calling on the Egyptian government to exclude any mention of Islamic law or language that discriminates against minorities in its draft constitution.

In a letter released Aug. 7, the leaders urge the constitution writers to "recognize the equality of all Egyptians and to reject any language that would discriminate against any citizen of Egypt on the basis of that citizen's religion or gender."

Because Egypt is home to millions of Christians, attempts to describe Islamic law, or Shariah, as the source of the country's law should also be rejected, the letter said.

Shariah is interpreted differ-

ently by various schools within Islam; some Muslims believe Shariah is a personal code that has no place in government, while in several Islamic countries Shariah infuses national law.

Egypt's recently elected president, Mohamed Morsi, was backed by the Muslim Brotherhood but has pledged to be "the president of all Egyptians."

Signatories of the letter include Rep. Keith Ellison, D-Minn., the first Muslim elected to Congress and Imam Mohamed Magid, president of the Islamic Society of North America, the largest Muslim organization in America. James J. Zogby's Arab American Institute sponsored the letter. (RNS)

that religious freedom should be a "moral imperative."

"The other challenge is convincing foreign governments to make needed improvements," she said.

In several countries, the department noted a rise in anti-Semitism, from Holocaust-denying websites sanctioned by Iran to an openly anti-Semitic party in Hungary.

Despite numerous examples of diminished religious rights, the State Department said there has been improvement in some countries.

In Cuba, while "significant" restrictions remained, most religious

organizations reported increasing ability to hold activities and seek new members.

The Russian government "generally" showed respect for religious freedom, but the Russian Orthodox Church received preferential treatment over less traditional faiths.

"Even as this report documents abuses of religious freedom, the events of 2011 show that change is possible," the report's summary states, "and suggests that countries whose constitution, laws, policies and practices protect religious freedom and human rights will be the most vibrant and stable." (RNS)



Thompson Sound, Inc.

Installing Excellence in
SOUND • LIGHTING • VIDEO

256.974.SOUND (7686)
www.thompsonsound.com

Our goal in business and in life is to glorify Jesus Christ
and spread the good news of His grace.

Like us 



Photo courtesy of Mount Hebron Baptist Church

SPRUCE PINE'S MOUNT HEBRON CELEBRATES 85 YEARS

Mount Hebron Baptist Church, Spruce Pine, in Franklin Baptist Association celebrated its 85th anniversary July 30. The church recognized members who served for 20 years or more. Della Ruth McCarley (left) and Sara Jo Hammock were among those honored.

Letters

(continued from page 2)

if there haven't been slurs against all other races. That reasoning is spiritually shallow and biased and will not stand against the Word of God. Christ came to die, rose again and lives today, not for the elect and not for one race.

Southern Baptists, don't wimp out on us ... please!

Carol Page

Alexander City, Ala.

REFORMED BAPTISTS

I am writing in response to the July 19 editorial on Calvinism. I am a student at Beeson Divinity School and Southern Baptist by background, but I consider myself in the "Reformed" ("Calvinist" can be misleading) stream of Christian thought. We emphasize God's sovereignty in salvation, which we see in passages like Ephesians 1:4 — "Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world."

The TULIP formulation of Reformed theology is only a century old and does not summarize Reformed faith well. The main point of it is that God is responsible for our salvation from beginning to end. Nonbelievers are at times described as blind (Matt. 23:16) and even dead (Eph. 2:1) — as Rom. 3:11 summarizes it, "no one seeks for God." Just as Lazarus did not

raise himself from the dead, so we understand that God is the one who raises us from spiritual death, not ourselves. We also believe repentance (2 Tim. 2:25-26) and saving faith (Eph. 2:8) are gifts of God, not earned by humankind in any way. On the Cross, Christ paid for even my sin of unbelief and bought the power to give me repentant faith.

"Calvinism" can be used as shorthand for this basic belief. Charles Spurgeon, a Baptist, used it (and believed it). This term does NOT mean we have to accept infant baptism, the idea of "sacraments" or amillennial eschatology — Lemke and Allen misunderstand or misrepresent us by accusing us of that. It would be like saying that a "serious" Republican has to believe in a completely deregulated economic sector and be a member of the NRA.

William Carey, a Baptist and one of the major proponents of world evangelism, was Reformed as well. The men who told him not to evangelize held an erroneous belief called "hyper-Calvinism." This UNBIBLICAL belief neglects the Bible's call to evangelize; it is by no means part of orthodox Calvinism. Many Reformed Baptists evangelize. Let me repeat that: many Reformed Baptists evangelize as well. I believe humankind

will be held responsible for their choices. I implore the lost to be reconciled to God, and I implore God to reconcile the lost to Himself.

And finally, I don't believe babies who die go to hell. Jesus welcomed children to Himself, saying, "To such belongs the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). I believe that God would receive a deceased infant just as Christ received children.

Despite our differences, Reformed and non-Reformed Baptists must stand together. We can and must worship, serve, labor and pray side by side. My heart burns for my lost friends, and I share the gospel with them as faithfully and passionately as I can. I strive to understand and live out the Bible faithfully and fully. And I want to see as many people as possible one day in the great multitude shouting, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Rev. 7:10).

Joseph Rhea

Birmingham, Ala.

SHARE THE ANSWERS

In response to the letter in the Aug. 2 issue, "Note on Calvinism," by Mr. D.R. Cannon, of Linden, Ala.: I am pleased to know that Mr. Cannon has found all the right answers regarding the questions be-

ing discussed about Calvinism. It would be helpful if he would tell the rest of us.

Bill Garner

Mount Olive, Ala.

GUN CONTROL

May I offer some stark truth on the subject of gun control to Mr. Robert Wilkerson, of Birmingham, who wrote a letter to the editor that was published in the Aug. 2 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*?

This gentleman has been led off track somewhere as he states, "Guns are responsible for many deaths and injuries every year." The world would like to see an example of such. Can he produce? Guns have never harmed anyone, but people do. Your idea of gun control only takes weapons out of the hands of those that have the guts to protect themselves and [keeps them] in the hands of those that will harm other human beings.

As a citizen and Christian I am not willing to give up my right to bear arms because that will not save a child or adult life. Please do your research and you will find that states or countries that have removed the right of their citizens to bear arms only cause crime and killings to increase.

Charles Rowe

Titus, Ala.

MARKET PLACE

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

CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR/LEAD PASTOR: Boone Trail Baptist Church of Johnson City, Tenn., is seeking a full-time senior/lead pastor to serve in ministry and operate with a team approach with 5 other pastoral staff. Master of divinity preferred from an accredited seminary. Five years experience in church ministry required. We are a multi-campus church with an average attendance of 600. Please send resumes to: Boone Trail Baptist Church, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, 1985 Carroll Creek Road, Johnson City, TN 37615 or pastorsearch@boonetraillbaptist.org by Sept. 30.

PASTOR: Steele Baptist Church, Steele, Ala., is seeking God's will for a pastor. Please send resumes to: Steele Baptist Church, 3811 Pope Ave., Steele, AL 35987, or email to: steelbaptistchurch@gmail.com. Call 256-538-6612 for more information.

SENIOR PASTOR: Southern Baptist church in Jackson, Ala., is prayerfully seeking God's man for the full-time position of senior pastor. Please send resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 685, Jackson, AL 36545.

MINISTER OF MUSIC: Wooley Springs Baptist Church in Toney, Ala., is looking for a full-time minister of music. Resumes may be mailed to: ATTN: Search Committee, 28025 Bethel Road, Toney, AL 35773, or email: search@wooleysprings.org.

CHILDREN'S MINISTER: FBC Troy, Ala., is searching for a part-time children's minister. Responsibilities: Oversee comprehensive children's ministry. Email resumes to: Luke Lane at

lukelane40@gmail.com.

OTHER POSITIONS

BOOKKEEPER: Westwood Baptist Church in Alabaster is accepting resumes for a bookkeeper. This part-time position (15-18 hours) will consist of accounts payable duties along with some accounts receivable duties. Relevant work experience and computer skills are required. Please send resume to: resumes@ewestwood.org.

CHURCH ORGANIST: Calvary Baptist Church, Abbeville, Ala., seeking part-time paid church organist. Call 334-585-6455 or send letter of interest with experience and qualifications to: Calvary Baptist Church, 310 Dothan Road, Abbeville, AL 36310, ATTN: Music Committee.

KEYBOARDIST: Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Montgomery, is seeking a keyboardist to play for Sunday morning and evening worship services and choir rehearsals. Interested candidates may submit resumes to John Russell at john@rbcmontgomery.com.

INDEPENDENT SALES ASSOCIATE CONTRACTOR: The 170-year-old *Alabama Baptist* is an award-winning statewide weekly newspaper with more than 200,000 readers. Baptists comprise the largest Christian denomination in Alabama with membership of more than a million. *The Alabama Baptist* is seeking contract sales people with the ability to develop advertising partnerships with businesses and organizations interested in reaching the key demographics of our readers and growing their business. As an independent sales associate contractor, you would work from your home office with

no territory restrictions. *The Alabama Baptist*, Inc. provides a unique working environment. We are partners with the churches of the Alabama Baptist State Convention working together for the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Each employee is expected to manage his/her personal and professional life in accordance with this relationship and consistent with the traditions of *The Alabama Baptist*. Send resumes and inquiries to: bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org.

BUSINESS

ELECTRONIC GIVING OPTION: egive-usa.com — Good stewardship made easy. Please call or email us for a free brochure. 1-866-303-6623 or brad@egive-usa.com.

CHRISTIAN VALUES BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY: Christian Values Technology Company seeks mature business professionals for high-income opportunity. Home-based office. Hands-on support and apprenticeship-style training. For complete information, call Paul at 888-710-6994.

FOR SALE NEW & USED STAIRLIFTS: Lift chairs, power wheelchairs, car lifts, scooters and walk-in tubs. We service Alabama. 1-800-682-0658.

CHURCH CONSTRUCTION

CHURCH BUILDING PROJECTS: Let Webb Builders help your church expand its facilities. Large or small projects. Your plans or use our custom-design building services. State licensed with 25+ years experience. Call Webb Builders Inc., 334-285-9302. Millbrook, Ala. Numerous church references available.

CONFERENCES & RETREATS

RELATIONSHAPE WORKSHOPS: Alabama-based, Christian-owned. Offering workshops for marriage, staff or deacon retreats; also congregation "natural gifts" recognition. Featuring the Myers-Briggs personality assessment. www.RelationShape.com, 256-601-6030.

TRAVEL/VACATION

BULLOCK DEER HUNTS: Adult \$295 per day, child \$100. With hunting adult, non-hunter \$75 per day. Food and lodging included. Christian family farm. 334-529-3986.

MOUNTAIN COTTAGE: Hayesville, Western N.C. Lovely, almost new mountain cottage for rent, April-November. 2 BRs, 2 BAs. All conveniences. Weekly/monthly. On beautiful Hiwassee River. Low price \$550 plus tax weekly. Sleeps five. Children welcome. No pets. 828-389-3302.

AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS: Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Ala. Rent direct — Christian family owners. Lowest prices on the beach. Call 205-556-0368, 205-752-1231 or 251-752-2366. www.gulfshorescondos.com.

LOG CABIN: Lake Guntersville area, beautiful view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log on to www.paradisevista.net to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.

FOR SALE

BUS: 2000 V-8 diesel, 17-passenger bus with chair lift. Low mileage. First Baptist Church, Detroit, Ala. Contact Eldred Spruiel, 205-273-4318.

Want to know God?

Pastor Stuart Davidson

Eastern Shore Baptist Church, Daphne

Life is full of choices. How do you make your decisions? Many people make choices on how they will be benefited. Some make decisions based on the crowd or the latest fad or fashion trend. Billions of dollars are spent each year to influence our choices. Good advertising is probably responsible for your purchasing that new iPhone or that new pair of shoes.

Some people think there are lots of choices when it comes to faith, similar to a buffet:

"I like the enlightenment of Buddhism but I'm not a fan of the robes so I'll leave that out."

"Jesus was a great teacher. However, those teachings on loving your neighbors and giving are going to have to stay on the salad bar."

"Mormons seem like nice folks. Doing nice things for people is OK as long as it doesn't inconvenience me."

After visiting the salad bar of faith, they sit down at the table and expect their concoction to satisfy their soul. When we pick and choose and create a mishmash faith, we achieve a confused and wandering soul. Our spirit thirsts for one thing and one thing only, Jesus Christ.

Jesus is clear; if you want to gain eternal life you must be born again (John 3). Jesus' own words declare Him to be the only path to salvation (John 14:6). Creating your own religion is as old as the Garden. Adam and Eve wanted to be the center of their own universe and call their own shots. They wanted to be like God. However, any road outside of Christ leads to destruction (Matt. 7:13). You may be thinking that the religion you have created at the salad bar of faith seems to fit you and even makes you feel good about yourself. Scripture tells us that "every man's way is right in his own eyes" (Prov. 21:2) ... but in the end his ways will lead to destruction (Prov. 14:12).

So follow Jesus' prescription to salvation and do not get confused at the salad bar of faith. Going your own way and making up rules as you go may seem like a good idea, but it will lead to pain and heartache. Call out to Christ and measure your faith through His Word. Go God's way today!

'It starts in our backyard'

Alabama Baptist churches part of Harvest America evangelistic crusade

By Sondra Washington
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

It's time for America to turn back to God." These are the words of renowned California pastor and evangelist Greg Laurie and the sentiments of countless other pastors and Christians across the country. To usher in this restoration and bring revival to churches and communities across the country, three Alabama Baptist churches are joining more than 1,500 congregations nationwide in Harvest America, a simulcast evangelistic crusade to be held Aug. 26. Joining the movement will be Northpark Baptist Church, Trussville, in Birmingham Baptist Association; Central Baptist Church, Decatur, in Morgan Baptist Association; and Corinth Heights Baptist Church, Haleyville, in Winston Baptist Association.

The crusade, which will be broadcast from Angel Stadium in Anaheim, Calif., is one of two multiple-day evangelistic events presented by Harvest Christian Fellowship Church in Riverside, Calif., and will feature performances by well-known Christian artists like Third Day, Gungor, David Crowder, Jeremy Camp and MercyMe. However, many involved churches will present their own praise and worship music.

Revival in America

"We will monitor the simulcast in California," said John Herring, executive pastor of Northpark Baptist. "When they get ready to present the message, we will join their broadcast. ... We hope that it's the beginning of revival in America and that it starts in our backyard."

Rob Jackson, pastor of Central Baptist, said he is asking his members to invite five people that they have been praying for to the broadcast at his church.

"We started praying 21 days out remind-



ing people to pray for Harvest America," he said. "We asked them to start praying for five people and we asked that they would invite these five to come to Harvest America as their guests. This is a time for those who have been thinking about walking with Jesus Christ to come and clearly hear the gospel."

Jackson also said his church would undergo a witness training revival called "Every Believer a Witness" by Dennis Nunn on Aug. 19-22 before the crusade.

"We will be training the church in evangelism and reaching outside the four walls of the church to see who needs to know Jesus Christ," he noted.

"I see a broader purpose, not (just) about what happens at Central Baptist. ... Our purpose is that a revival will break out in America. Harvest America is an ecumenical movement. So my prayer is that the churches across America will join hands and realize that we've got to put down our disagreements over petty things and understand that we need to be united with the gospel of Jesus Christ reaching this nation and this world."

Similarly, Herring said there is a lot of excitement at Northpark regarding this crusade.

"They (Harvest) hope they will be able to see God do another great movement in America again," he said.

"They have been doing a crusade ministry for years, but this is the first time for nationwide simulcast with it."

Over the past 22 years these crusades have been successfully reaching unbelievers. According to the Harvest America website, "More than 4,405,000 people have attended Harvest Crusades in person, and more than 1,319,400 have viewed the live webcasts. Most importantly, more than 370,900 people have registered decisions of faith in Jesus Christ."

With the help of LifeWay Christian Resources; NavPress, the publishing arm of The Navigators; and Global Media Outreach, along with many others, the California church hopes to reach even more people through simulcasts into churches and other venues nationwide. New believers receive a "Start! to Follow: How to Be a Successful Follower of Jesus Christ" book, which was written by Life Bible Study, where Herring serves as president.

Get involved

He encourages others to become involved with the movement.

"It's not too late for other churches and other groups — home groups and small groups — to be a part of it," he said. "It's free over the Internet to anyone who wants to watch it."

According to the Harvest America website, Laurie and his church hope to "partner with churches throughout the nation to create settings where community churches can join together and invite their friends and relatives to comfortably come and hear a clear and precise presentation of the gospel, respond to its message, and be given direction and materials to assist in their new faith."

For more information on Harvest America or to become a host church or home, visit www.harvestamerica.com.

LifeWay launches new children's book division

B&H Publishing Group will launch a new children's division this fall called B&H Kids.

B&H Kids will print biblically based books and products for children, pre-teens and youth, including picture books, fiction titles, full-text Bibles and study Bibles.

Initial releases for B&H Kids include two titles with faith-based movie tie-ins and two children's Bibles.

The Read-to-Me Toddlers Bible, available in both English and Spanish, also will offer interactive mobile apps. The 365 Day Children's Bible Storybook is also scheduled for a fall release. Titles with movie tie-ins include "Firebird" — an illustrated tale featured in the new film "Unconditional" (in theaters fall 2012) — and "Courageous Teens," the latest in a series of products based on the box-office hit movie "Courageous."

According to Selma Wilson, president of B&H, the new children's division will "provide tools for parents to build strong connections with their kids. We want to become a trusted teaching partner for parents whenever they need biblically and theologically sound, age-appropriate, engaging content." While initial releases will include resources for children age 4 through youth, 4- to 8-year-olds and 8- to 12-year-olds will be the main age group focus.

B&H Kids Editor Dan Lynch said, "These two age groups are where lifelong fundamentals are adopted and when the majority of decisions for Christ are made."

"B&H Kids is taking off in a big way with a strong commitment toward publishing fun and innovative content and tools to engage children," Lynch said. "Whether it's print or digital, a book or an app, our products will be geared to help parents and leaders interact with their kids in ways that truly make an impact, a powerful difference in their lives."

B&H Publishing Group is a division of LifeWay Christian Resources. B&H's print and digital releases for the trade, church and academic markets include *New York Times* No. 1 bestsellers "The Love Dare" and "The Vow," as well as the award-winning HCSB Study Bible.

(LifeWay)

— Paid Advertising —

Attention Senior Citizens

On May 22, 2012, Gov. Robert Bentley signed into law the ELDER ABUSE ACT. Protecting the senior citizens of the state of Alabama.

In my years of doing business with seniors across the state, I have seen and heard of abuse of good people being taken advantage of too much from other companies in the walk-in tub business. Anytime a company will not share the cost of their tubs over the phone, be aware that they are high pressure in their selling tactics. The biggest problem dealing with these companies is that they OVERCHARGE THE CUSTOMER FOR THE TUBS. I get calls weekly from seniors across Alabama that are concerned that they have paid way too much for their tub. I ask them what was the price they paid and it can range from \$14,000 to \$17,000. THIS IS HIGHWAY ROBBERY to say it

nicely. People are paying this because of high pressure sells. DON'T DO IT. We at Dream Baths are in the business of taking care of our seniors and helping them and not just making a sell. CALL US BEFORE YOU BUY! Remember we can SAVE you THOUSANDS and you will be a very satisfied customer after dealing with us. I GUARANTEE it.

— CHARLIE THORNTON, owner



Call 334-312-1825 or 1-855-849-5048 (toll-free) for a free estimate.



Carl Hurley & Jeanne Robertson "Double Funny"

October 16, 2012 2:00 p.m.

Huntsville, AL — Von Braun Civic Center

Join Carl & Jeanne for an afternoon of comedy & music to "lighten your heart & lift your spirit!"

Group discount. No deposit to reserve. No penalty to cancel. Call Sue at 1-800-955-4746

www.carlhurley.com
www.jeannerobertson.com

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 19

Explore the Bible By Douglas K. Wilson
Dean and Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

EXPRESSING LOVE

Ruth 1:11-13a, 15-18; 2:2-3, 11-12

We transition this week from a lesson describing self-autonomy to a lesson demonstrating self-sacrifice. Both passages come from the period of the judges (Ruth 1:1), yet they address significantly different perspectives on life and faith. The concluding lesson in Judges pointed to the apathetic attitude toward God-centered living by the Israelites, in which they ignored God as their King (Judg. 17:6; 21:25). By contrast the book of Ruth records a life characterized by self-sacrificing love in the midst of personal grief, financial bankruptcy and ethnic prejudice. Ruth's commitment precedes the line of David the king and ultimately leads to Jesus, the ultimate Kinsman Redeemer.

Sacrificial Expression (1:11-13a)

From the time of the patriarchs, levirate marriage was practiced among the tribes of Israel (Gen. 38:8). Deuteronomy 25:5-10 codifies this practice of a younger brother marrying the widow of an older brother and the humiliation of one who chooses not to redeem his sister-in-law. Evidently, by the time of the judges, the concept of the kinsman redeemer had developed from the successive brother-in-law (Latin *levir*, hence levirate) to the next available male kinsman (Hebrew *go'el*). Ruth 4 describes the actual practice of rejection and acceptance of the kinsman redeemer role. Naomi urged her daughters-in-law Orpah and Ruth to return to their fathers, for there were no more sons born to Naomi. These widows had no brothers-in-law to redeem them. Naomi's solution was for the women to return to their homes, break family ties with her and perhaps marry Moabite husbands.

Declaration of Commitment (1:15-17)

Orpah decided to go home. This gave Naomi incentive to encourage Ruth to do likewise. Instead Ruth confessed her faith in Yahweh and her commitment to Naomi. In fact, she invited Yahweh's wrath upon herself if she did not live according to her confession. This declaration of commitment is

often used in wedding ceremonies as a sentimental symbol of affection. Ruth's statement, however, was a clear confession of Yahweh as the one true God, an expression of the family responsibility she felt for Naomi and a repudiation of her Moabite lineage. She had a new family, the true God, and an accountability that remained until her death. May Christian husbands and wives truly aspire to that kind of unselfish commitment to one another.

Demonstration of Commitment (1:18; 2:2-3)

The Mosaic Law contained provisions for the fatherless, the widow, the alien and the poor (Lev. 19:9-10; Deut. 24:17-21). Ruth fit all four categories. The edges and corners of fields were not to be harvested, but were to be left for these groups. Any sheaves dropped by the harvesters were also to remain where they lay.

Ruth demonstrated her commitment to Naomi by working diligently in the field from dawn until dusk. Though burdened with the loss of a husband to provide for her and the accompanying grief and loneliness, she committed to provide for her mother-in-law.

Rewards of Commitment (2:11-12)

Ruth's commitment did not go unnoticed. Boaz paid attention, and he was of the same clan as Ruth's father-in-law Elimelech from the tribe of Judah. Judges describes a period when Israel ignored their King, yet Ruth had married into the family of a man whose name means "My God is King." This King shined His favor on Ruth, for He provided her a patron who protected her while she gleaned.

The story of Ruth is one of generous, self-sacrificing love. Love drove Elimelech of Bethlehem ("house of bread") to personal humiliation, moving to Moab so he could provide food for his family. Love led Naomi to release her daughters-in-law from familial obligation. Love guided Ruth to commit herself to Naomi's welfare and Israel's God. Love guided Boaz to protect the young stranger who would become his wife. Love ultimately provided humanity with the Kinsman Redeemer.

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

RISE ABOVE DISCOURAGEMENT
Jeremiah 20:1-13

One feature of Jeremiah's ministry was his fearlessness, which led him to receive opposition and even abuse at the hands of the religious leaders of Jerusalem. He reminds me of the great American preacher Samuel Davies. It is reported that his fame as a preacher was so great in London that when news reached King George II about "a dissenting minister from the colony of Virginia" and how he was attracting large crowds, the king wanted to hear him, so his chaplain invited Davies to preach in the royal chapel. However, as Davies was preaching, the king began to lose interest and chattered to people around him. Davies suddenly stopped. Looking directly at the king he said, "When the lion roars, the beasts of the forest all tremble; and when King Jesus speaks, the princes of the earth should keep silence." Like Davies, Jeremiah never held back his message, even if it led him to the stocks!

Expect Discouragement (1-6)

Faithful discipleship, whether in the life of the church or our surrounding culture, will often lead to misunderstanding and rejection. Jeremiah rocked the political-religious boat in Jerusalem; and yet rather than silencing him, opposition made him more resolute in his determination to be true to his calling. In the midst of a culture — and sometimes even a Christian community — that refuses to hear the "word of the Lord," we need to be like Jeremiah and refuse to give comfortable messages that ignore the challenge of living a life of holiness.

Confess Frustrations (7-10)

The feeling of being overwhelmed by the demands of ministry, especially when it brings misunderstanding and even slander from others, is part and parcel of being faithful to one's vocation in life. In this situation Jeremiah used a long-standing form of prayer to express his feelings to God, a psalm of lament. Such a prayer is full of honesty; it "comes clean" before God and yet is not

a prayer of unbelief. Indeed, only a person of faith and faithfulness is able to complain to God because his or her cry comes out of a fundamental relationship of confidence in the promises of God. Prayers of lament move from the depths of despair to the heights of hope, from despair to expressions of joy and thanksgiving. So it is here in this prayer of Jeremiah.

Remember Who Is in Control (11-13)

The center of his hope is a God who may "appear" to have deceived him. Yet Jeremiah knows that even in his call narrative of chapter 1, God told him the difficulties he would face that would eventually lead him to become "a bronze wall to stand against the whole land" (Jer. 1:18). In the depths of his heart he knows that to speak God's word will often make him a laughingstock, and yet to fail to speak is impossible because God's "word" stirs him in the very depths of his being and he cannot keep it in. It is like a burning fire that he cannot quench; an inner compulsion that will not allow him to give up.

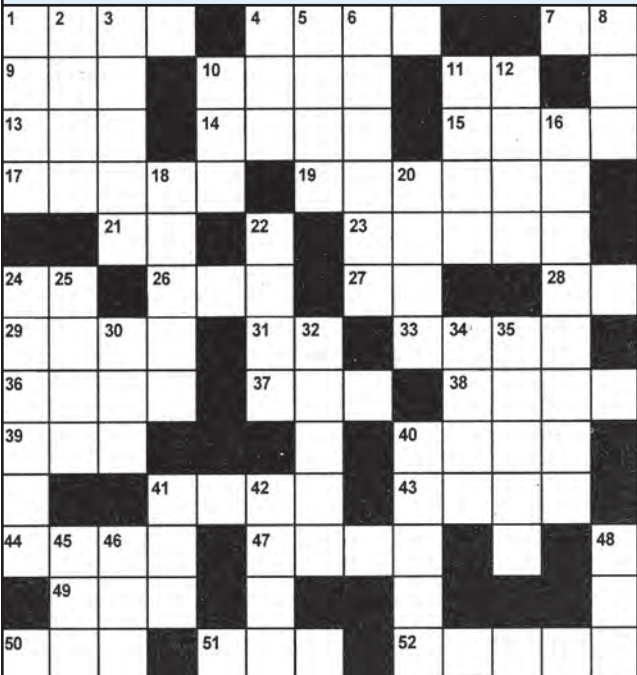
Yet the chapter does not stop with the words of verse 13, full of worship and praise. The chapter, paradoxically, goes on into a fresh expression of doubt and fear in verses 14-18 where the prophet questions why he had even been born. The word of confidence is not always the last word we speak in the life of discipleship and service. Like many people, Jeremiah falls back from praise to lament because the life of faith sometimes takes us from the heights back to the depths before we rise up in faith once more.

Winston Churchill, the great leader of Great Britain during World War II, returned during a period of great difficulty in the 1940s to give a commencement speech to his old school at Harrow. He stood before the young men who were gathered and finished his speech by challenging them to never give up.

As Christians this is our watchword, but the resources we have to support us are the promises of God and His presence with us through all the trials and troubles of life.

Christian Crossword

By Janice Buhl Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- 1. Art thou the ___ of the Jews? (Luke 23:3)
- 4. I am not ___ to destroy. (Matt. 5:17)
- 7. Do, re, mi, ___. (1 Sam. 3:9)
- 9. ___ said unto Samuel, Go, lie down. (1 Sam. 3:9)
- 10. Abihail, the son of ___. (1 Chron. 5:14)
- 11. Tuberculosis (abbr.)
- 13. She gave me of the tree, and I did ___. (Gen. 3:12)
- 14. Gold, silver, ivory, and ___ and peacocks. (1 Kings 10:22)
- 15. Full ears of corn in the ___ thereof. (2 Kings 4:42)
- 17. ___ king of Jarmuth. (Josh. 10:3)
- 19. Poured out my soul ___ the Lord. (1 Sam. 1:15)
- 21. The sons of Judah were ___ and Onan. (Num. 26:19)
- 23. The glory of the Lord shone ___ about them. (Luke 2:9)
- 24. Saint (abbr.).
- 26. Be as an ___ whose leaf fadeth. (Isa. 1:30)
- 27. Go ___ therefore. (Matt. 28:19)
- 28. ___ we love one another. (1 John 4:12)
- 29. Cut off his thumbs and his great ___. (Judg. 1:6)
- 31. And ___ came to pass. (Judg. 1:14)
- 33. Before the judgment of ___ of Christ. (Rom. 14:10)
- 36. Part in a play.
- 37. Take thou unto thee an iron ___. (Ezek. 4:3)
- 38. Your labor is not in ___. (1 Cor. 15:58)
- 39. It shall go ___ with him that is left. (Job 20:26)
- 40. Nothing.
- 41. Cain talked with ___ his brother. (Gen. 4:8)
- 43. ___ with joy receiveth it. (Matt. 13:20)
- 44. The ___, which they saw in the east. (Matt. 2:9)
- 47. Lo, the wicked ___ their bow. (Ps. 11:2)
- 49. Go to the ___, thou sluggard. (Prov. 6:6)
- 50. The beginning and the ___. (Rev. 22:13)
- 51. Noble poem.
- 52. So many ___ of voices. (1 Cor. 14:10)

Down

- 1. The Lord bless thee and ___ thee. (Num. 6:24)
- 2. ___ the Ahohite. (1 Chron. 11:29)
- 3. Wash thee with ___. (Jer. 2:22)
- 4. Ye cannot drink the ___ of the Lord. (1 Cor. 10:21)
- 5. They slew ___ upon the rock. (Judg. 7:25)
- 6. Thou shalt forget thy ___. (Job 11:16)
- 8. ___, and it shall be given you. (Luke 11:9)
- 10. Shem, ___, and Japheth. (Gen. 5:32)
- 11. ___ shalt deny me thrice. (Mark 14:30)
- 12. Did not our heart ___ within us? (Luke 24:32)
- 16. Him that for ___ and murder was cast into prison. (Luke 23:25)
- 18. Deborah ___, and went with Barak. (Judg. 4:9)
- 20. Until I make thy ___ thy footstool. (Acts 2:35)
- 22. To ___ like a calf. (Ps. 29:6)
- 24. Long, narrow pieces.
- 25. Not lift up any iron ___ upon them. (Deut. 27:5)
- 30. Building wing.
- 32. Prepare a ___ before me. (Ps. 23:5)
- 34. We have one father, ___ God. (John 8:41)
- 35. Is not ___ the Levite thy brother? (Ex. 4:14)
- 40. ___ the son of Ahitub. (2 Sam. 8:17)
- 41. Who ___ thou, Lord? (Acts 9:5)
- 42. Gaal the son of ___. (Judg. 9:26)
- 45. Convert skins to leather.
- 46. ___ it shall come to pass. (Ex. 4:9)
- 48. And the earth ___ without form. (Gen. 1:2)



RESOURCES:

Your Guide to Today's New Music and Literature



Sound Bites By Adam Borden and Rick Sharp

CANTON JUNCTION

Canton Junction
Difference Media

My first reaction was shocked disbelief when I first saw the YouTube video of a brand-new quartet called Canton Junction, made up of Tim Duncan, Michael Sykes, Aaron Crabb and Matthew Hagee. The first thing I did was contact Difference Media, only to find out that this new group didn't even have a record cut yet. Thank the Lord they got around to making their self-titled debut, "Canton Junction." Somehow the Lord directed all these men's paths to a junction known as Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas.



Hagee has been thrown into deep water with vocal powerhouses; and he is not just keeping his head above water, but is swimming along with Olympic strength. With "Canton Junction," Duncan lays the quartet's foundation with impeccable tone and pitch. He showcases his early studies of bass masters such as George Younce and London Parris.

Sykes not only calls his own number on the song that was sung the night I was saved, "Coming

Home," but he takes the full opportunity to lay the lead vocals in there with conviction.

Most notable to me is the signature Sykes track and vocals on "Hold On." Sykes has created a landmark Southern Gospel recording and has brought these singers to a higher level.

Crabb has once again stepped up his game on this record with singing that is guaranteed to give you glory bumps. (Borden)

THE INSPIRATIONS

It's in the Savior's Hands
Crossroads Music

Ever wonder why the most confident Christians are usually the most calm in times of trial and trouble? I believe it is because they have done what Scripture instructs us to do when



it says in Psalm 55:22, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee." Martin Cook learned a long time ago that it is better to place your hand in the Master's hand than to spend your time wringing your own in undue worry.

Inspirations may not have the exact vocal matching of their "Inspo" predecessors; but make no mistake, they are individually and collec-

tively some of the best singers in southern gospel music today. A big "hat's off" goes to the studio crew.

If you have not heard The Inspirations in a while, it's time for you to give them a listen. Let's look at the high points for each of these gentlemen on "It's in the Savior's Hands."

The timbre in Jon Epley's voice reminds me of Mark Lanier (Perfect Heart, 1990s).

One of the best young men in Southern Gospel music today is David Ragan. I would say Ragan is very similar to a young Ivan Parker, and has what trained singers call "proper placement."

Mike Holcomb gives the listeners another take on earlier Inspo hits, "In the Twinkle of an Eye" and "Shoutin' Time in Heaven," which was an Inspirations hit in the 1970s.

On "It's in the Savior's Hands," Jodi Hosterman has done some of the finest singing I have ever heard him do. (Borden)

PAUL BALOCHE

The Same Love
Integrity Music

One of Christian music's most beloved songwriters, performers and worship leaders has released his 12th album, "The Same Love," on Integrity Music. Paul Baloché's new record is filled, as they all have been, with Scripture-rich,

soul-enriching worship and praise anthems, uplifting rockers, and memorable choruses that we will be singing in church and listening to on the radio for a long time. I have always been amazed that Baloché has been able to maintain his grueling schedule of teaching, writing, recording and worship leading and still produce what is arguably the best church music of the last two decades. It can only be a God thing.

With songwriting help from a stellar group of friends and shared

vocals on seven of the 13 songs, Baloché has nonetheless kept the focus of this record solely on Jesus and His desire that we know Him.

The title track sets the tone for the whole record, reminding us that God's love for us is and always will be unchanging. "Your Blood Ran Down" is one of the most touching songs on the album. With only piano, cello and voice, it is in chorus format for easy integration into church worship and presents a beautiful picture of Jesus' sacrifice to save His people.

Let's hope that 20 years from now, we'll still be marveling at the wonderful church music from Baloché. If this record is any indicator, we will be. (Sharp)

Christian Marketplace

Top Ten Best Sellers

Fiction

1. *The Harbinger*, Jonathan Cahn (Charisma)
2. *Coming Home*, Karen Kingsbury (Zondervan)
3. *Loving, Bailey Flanigan Series #4*, Karen Kingsbury (Zondervan)
4. *The Fiddler, Home to Hickory Hollow Series #1*, Beverly Lewis (Baker)
5. *The Betrayal, Precinct 11 Series #2*, Jerry B. Jenkins (Tyndale)
6. *Dry As Rain*, Gina Holmes (Tyndale)
7. *Mortal, Books of Mortals Series #2*, Ted Dekker and Tosca Lee (FaithWords)
8. *Half-Stitched Amish Quilting Club*, Wanda E. Brunstetter (Barbour)
9. *The Touch*, Randall Wallace (Tyndale)
10. *The First Gardener*, Denise Hildreth Jones (Tyndale)

Nonfiction

1. *Be a Better Dad Today*, Gregory Slayton (Gospel Light)
2. *Not a Fan*, Kyle Idleman (Zondervan)
3. *Jesus Calling*, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
4. *Jesus Calling, Large-Print Deluxe Edition*, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
5. *The Circle Maker*, Mark Batterson (Zondervan)
6. *Boundaries*, Henry Cloud and John Townsend (Zondervan)
7. *Heaven Is for Real*, Todd Burpo (Thomas Nelson)
8. *Jesus Calling, Deluxe Edition*, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
9. *Crazy Love*, Francis Chan (David C Cook)
10. *Implosion*, Joel C. Rosenberg (Tyndale)

Book Reviews

By Martine Bates Sharp, Ed.D.

The Time was at Hand

Robert Finley. Charlottesville, Va.: Xulon Press, 2011. 311 pp. (Paperback).

It is difficult to know how to approach a book in which the author explains his lack of supporting documentation by writing, "I anticipate that this book will be translated into several major languages for use in Bible schools and seminaries, so for maximum simplicity I prefer that there be no footnotes," and, "In this book I have included a great deal of historical information which has been stored in my memory during 65 years of continual reading and research. But to document the specific sources of all that information would be impossible." Ooookay! Let's just forget the lack of documentation and read on. Maybe the author DOES have, as he claims, a photographic memory.

The book is an explanation of the author's understanding of end-time prophecy, which, in a nut-

shell, is that most prophecy has already been fulfilled with only the evangelization of all nations left to be completed.

He denies the teaching of the Antichrist as "purely imaginary," says there is no mention of a future tribulation in the New Testament and argues that present-day Israel has "no prophetic significance."

Finley makes strong arguments with biblical references to support his positions. The tone of the author is quite argumentative, however, pitting himself against a host of well-known and well-loved Bible teachers and preachers, always asserting his superior knowledge and understanding. For example, he recalled working alongside Billy Graham in the 1940s. "At that time I gathered that he knew less than I did about Bible prophecy, although later (possibly with help from ghost writers) he would author books on the subject."

I think that's enough about this book.

Fake Christianity

C.B. Matthews. Bloomington, Ind.: WestBow Press, 2012. 141 pp. (Paperback).

Although the title of the book is "Fake Christianity," author C.B. Matthews does not dwell on the negative; instead he spends most of the book describing his vision of what real Christianity should look like, holding up the counterfeit version from time to time as a contrast.

The author is obviously burdened by the superficial Christianity he encounters and the book is his attempt to "challenge, inspire, motivate and encourage the faithful to discover what true biblical Christianity means."

The book primarily consists of stories from the author's life and his work in campus ministry, well told and instructive.

The message of the book is clear, serving to remind the readers of who we are in Christ and what is expected of us.



BP photo

Michelle Michaels often goes into the African bush to do art for the sake of advancing the gospel. Art is 'often overlooked' in missions, she said, but is vital to contextualizing the message for some peoples.

Gospel ART

Creative arts provides effective gateway for ministry

Her job is not normal. She frequently heads into the African bush armed with a sketchpad, pencils and paintbrushes. But Michelle Michaels is not there to play around.

"Art is often overlooked when it comes to missions," Michaels said. "A lot of people go straight to humanitarian aid or church planting. Art is seen as more of a luxury than a necessity."

Michaels promotes learning how art is integrated into a people's culture as a gateway to learning how to reach them with the gospel. Crafts and paintings, she said, can contextualize Scripture using an art form people are accustomed to.

"Art is everywhere, and it's important," Michaels said. "It really helps get the message across."

Michaels once developed a henna design for a South Asian bride on her wedding day. In the dyed design was a Bible story pointing to the gospel.

"Henna is important to South Asian culture, and they get really excited when they learn that a design stands for something meaningful," Michaels said.

Before she and other Christians employed henna, the bride's family and friends had been hesitant to talk, Michaels said.

"All of a sudden, when we started doing the henna stories, it seemed like there were lots of opportunities to have conversations," she said. "It has been so great

to see how it can have eternal purposes."

Michaels' experience is one of many.

In Guatemala, missionaries had trouble conveying the gospel message to an illiterate people. After attempting to teach the Bible with no success, they decided to portray the stories through dance.

"The people were able to understand, and many people came to Christ as a result of that," Michaels said.

Music is also effective, said Ethan Leyton, a musician in South Asia. Leyton helps local musicians create their own worship music rather than importing music from the West.

"Music has a way of speaking deeply to people, so infusing the good news in the music of a culture offers a powerful way to

communicate the gospel," he said.

A few years back he and indigenous musicians produced a CD and widely distributed it in several cities.

"One day a friend was in a taxi in one of those cities, and the driver put on a CD. It was the one that I'd helped to put together," Leyton said. "When people put on music that they're comfortable with and that communicates the gospel, it gives them a chance to ponder the sometimes uncomfortable yet ultimately freeing and rewarding message Jesus brings."

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



BP photo

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Court upholds Hawaii's traditional marriage law

HONOLULU — A federal court has refused to legalize gay "marriage" in Hawaii, ruling the issue is best addressed by the legislature and that the current law — which defines marriage as between a man and a woman — does not violate the U.S. Constitution.

The ruling by Judge Alan C. Kay on Aug. 8 broke a string of court losses by traditionalists on the subject of gay "marriage."

At issue in Hawaii was a constitutional amendment passed by voters in 1998 giving the legislature the power to define marriage in the traditional sense, which legislators subsequently did.

A lesbian couple and a gay man filed suit in federal court last year against Hawaii officials, arguing the amendment and law violated the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the U.S. Constitution.

But Kay ruled the legislature had a rational interest in defining marriage as between a man and a woman.

"Throughout history and societies marriage has been connected with procreation and childrearing," Kay wrote in his 117-page decision.

"The legislature could rationally conclude that on a societal level, the institution of marriage acts to reinforce 'the important legal and normative link between heterosexual intercourse and procreation on the one hand and family responsibilities on the other.'"

Bible museum closes \$50 million deal for prime spot

WASHINGTON — Planners of a Bible museum in Washington closed a \$50 million deal July 26 on a building two blocks from the National Mall.

The Museum of the Bible, a nonprofit group planning the, as yet, unnamed museum, announced it will be housed at 300 D Street, SW, in what is now the Washington Design Center, a series of showrooms of luxury home furnishings.

"Our intent is for this museum to showcase both the Old and New Testaments, arguably the world's most significant pieces of literature, through a non-sectarian, scholarly approach that makes the history, scholarship and impact of the Bible on virtually every facet of society accessible to everyone," said Mark DeMoss, a member of the Bible museum's board.

The museum, which will likely open in 2016, will highlight the collection of the billionaire Green family of Oklahoma. That collection features more than 55,000 items including biblical artifacts ranging from Dead Sea Scrolls to Torah scrolls that survived the Holocaust.

Museum officials expect also to showcase other prominent collections from across the globe.

Planners considered Dallas and New York in addition to Washington for the museum site, but research showed people were more interested in traveling to a Bible-focused museum in the nation's capital.

Colorado bakery refuses to bake for gay weddings

LAKEWOOD, Colo. — The owner of a Colorado bakery said in spite of picket lines and online petitions he will not change a store policy against baking wedding cakes for homosexual couples — a policy that critics call hateful and bigoted.

More than 5,300 people have signed an online petition calling on the Masterpiece Cake Shop to end its policy banning gay wedding cakes. Several dozen people picketed the privately owned store in Lakewood, Colo.

Jack Phillips, the owner of the cake shop, said his ban on making cakes for gay weddings is a result of his religious beliefs. "I'm just going to do the best I can do to honor Jesus Christ," he told the *Denver Post*.

Missouri votes to approve 'right to pray' amendment

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Voters in Missouri overwhelmingly approved a "right to pray" amendment to the state's constitution Aug. 7, despite concerns about the measure's necessity and legality.

Amendment 2, which supporters said would protect the freedom of religious expression in public schools and other public spaces, received nearly 80 percent of the vote.

The language on the ballot stressed the rights of citizens to express their religious beliefs and the rights of children to pray and acknowledge God in schools.