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Reuters photo

Syrian refugees arrive at the Al Zaatri refugee camp.

Descent into CHAOS

Situation in Syria could get much worse, observers say

Could Syria's headlong descent into war and chaos get any worse? Yes — possibly much worse. A grim summary: Civilian deaths in the nearly 18-month-old rebellion against the dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad topped 21,000 in early August. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have fled their homes, seeking safety from government and militia attacks in shrinking sanctuaries within Syria or in neighboring countries. Army and rebel forces battle for control of Syria's major cities, as large swaths of the country fall under control of the rebels — or of criminal gangs.

The blood feud between the ruling Alawite sect and Sunni Muslims (the majority of Syria's population) grows more bitter by the day. Minority Christian communities fear reprisals if the Alawites fall. As the country fragments, Kurds are an-

gling for an autonomous region like the Kurdish zone in northern Iraq, which a wary Turkey vows to prevent at any cost. Sectarian tensions and clashes are spilling across Syria's borders, particularly into volatile Lebanon. Syria's civil war is turning into a proxy struggle between Shiite Iran — Assad's closest remaining ally — and the Sunni states of Turkey and the Arab Middle East. It is also increasing tensions between Shiites and Sunnis across the region. Jihadist fighters are filtering into Syria to fight government forces, leading to fears of the "Iraqization" of the conflict. Israel watches with mounting alarm.

"As the chaos drags on, it has become more complicated," a Christian observer based in the Middle East said. "The horrible things going on are coming from both sides" — though most atrocities against civilians continue to be committed by the Syrian military and the feared

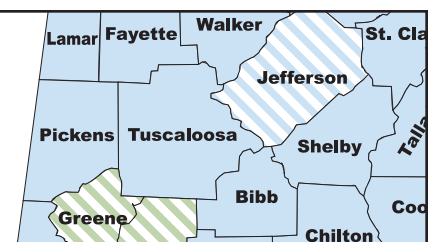
Shabihah militia groups aligned with the Assad regime. Each new defection of a Syrian general or politician, each successful attack by rebel forces, brings predictions that the regime will collapse any moment. But the military remains far more powerful and well-armed than the rebels. The endgame might play out for months, even years to come.

"The regime is done; it's just a matter of time," he predicts. "But I would be very hesitant to say that Assad is done. I think he's going to want to sow chaos [perhaps from the safety of an Alawite stronghold within Syria]. Ultimately the Sunnis will take power, but the Alawites could remain players for a long time. Assad provided stability, albeit oppressive stability. Syria might turn into what Lebanon is — a sectarian mélange. It could get pretty messy. Or, they might trade an oppres-

(See 'Christian,' page 17)

COMING NEXT WEEK...

A report on the predominant religious groups per county in Alabama as a percentage of the population and as related to Baptists.



COMMENT

Sliding Back to Pagan Standards

Is the American work ethic sliding back to pagan standards? That is not the question Eric Chester, founder of RevivingWorkEthic.com, asked in an article published in a Dec. 21, 2011, *Forbes Magazine* article. But his example of today's work ethic certainly raised the issue.

Chester said of younger American workers, they "don't always want to work, and when they do, their terms don't always line up with those of their employers. All too often, the young worker shows up 10 minutes late wearing flip-flops, pajama bottoms and a T-shirt that says 'My inner child is a nasty b-----.'" Then she fidgets through her shift until things slow down enough that she can text her friends or update her Facebook page from her smartphone."

Chester went on to say employers are searching for positive, enthusiastic people who show up for work on time, who are dressed and prepared properly, who go out of their way to add value and do more than what's required of them, who are honest, who will play by the rules and who will give cheerful, friendly service regardless of the situation.

Unfortunately, he argues, that kind of work ethic has been slipping for at least two generations.

The pagan Greeks and Romans regarded work as a curse, points out Roger B. Hill in his article "Historical Contest of the Work Ethic." Both cultures traced the word for work back to a root word meaning pain. Hard work, whether due to economic need or under the orders of a master, was disdained, Hill writes.

The Greeks believed that a person's "prudence, morality and wisdom was directly proportional to the amount of leisure time that person had." Aristotle viewed work as a "corrupt waste of time that would make a citizen's pursuit of virtue more difficult."

Romans also held work in low regard. Work detracted from virtue, they believed, and was to be done by slaves. Free men sought "independence from external things, self-sufficiency and satisfaction with one's self."

Sound familiar?

While the view of work began to change during the Middle Ages, it was not until the Reforma-



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

tion that society recognized the dignity of work itself. Religious reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, among others, pointed out that God is a worker. The opening verses of the Bible present God as Creator — an act of work. Genesis 2:2 reinforces that point when it says "By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing so on the seventh day He rested from all His work."

God continues to work

The New Testament teaches that God continues to work. In John 5:17, Jesus says "My Father is working until now and I am working." God working gives work dignity, meaning and significance, the reformers argued. Work was not corrupt, wasteful or painful as the pagans believed.

Genesis 1:27 teaches man is made in the image of God. Certainly that image implies man is to resemble God as a worker. Genesis 2:15 makes that exact point. There God gives Adam a job. He is to work taking care of the Garden of Eden. From the beginning God intended man to find purpose and meaning, at least in part, from his vocation.

Since Luther, Protestant churches have generally taught that one's vocation should be related to one's calling by God. Vocation is not just a way to support a family or pay for a hobby. Vocation is an expression of personhood and every vocation contains equal spiritual dignity.

Work became equated with the will of God. Human kind was to join God in the creation process of reshaping the world into the kingdom of God so God's will can be done on earth as it is in

Heaven. One might move up the economic ladder during a lifetime but each person was to "lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him and to which God has called him" (1 Cor. 7:17).

Christians came to understand that God worked. Jesus worked. The apostle Paul worked as a tent-maker. All people, rich or poor, were to work. In 1 Timothy 5:8 Paul writes, "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." That requires work.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:10 Paul declares that if someone is not willing to work then that person should not be given anything to eat. In each instance work contained dignity, provided meaning and was significant to the individual and to the community.

This "Protestant work ethic," as Max Weber later termed it, made much of the apostle Paul's teachings that "whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31), "For from Christ and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever" (Rom. 11:36) and "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:23-24). All the verses were applied to work.

Weber, an economic sociologist, even argues that the change in the theology of work which occurred during the Reformation led to the rapid expansion in commerce and the rise of industrialism in the same time period.

After more than 300 years of the Protestant work ethic holding sway, things have begun to change. Today instead of diligence, punctuality, deferred gratification and the importance of work, one often finds what Chester calls "me-centric workers" who he describes as "entitled, disengaged, unmotivated and disloyal."

Critics lay part of the blame at the feet of the church. They charge the church has been silent about applying God's word to the marketplace. On this Sunday before Labor Day how many Alabama Baptist churches will teach what God's Word says about the dignity of work? How long has it been since you heard a sermon about avarice and greed in the marketplace (whether employer or employee)? What does the church teach about the ethics of capitalism or the need to express love of God and love others in business?

In short, there seems to be a separation between work and the teachings of Scripture resulting in the death of the Protestant work ethic. It should be no surprise that the corrupting nature of sin moves culture back to pagan standards whenever the teachings of God's work are rejected. That includes the teachings about the dignity, significance and purpose of work as an expression of humankind made in the image of God.

LABOR DAY

*is Monday,
Sept. 3.*

Is Your Job Your Calling?

Excerpts from Dan Miller's "48 Days to the Work You Love"

Three words are used interchangeably and shouldn't be: vocation, career and job. The distinctions are significant.

VOCATION — Incorporates calling, purpose, mission and destiny. It's what you are doing in life that makes a difference and builds meaning for you.

CAREER — A line of work but not the only way to fulfill your calling. Two or three different careers can all support your calling.

JOB — Has to do with one's daily activities that produce income. Although the job cannot be the critical definition of your vocation or calling, it should be an expression of that calling and an integration of your ministry.



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

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Photos courtesy of Betty Shaw

Volunteers rebuilt Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Moundville, following the 2009 fire.



By Joe and Betty Shaw
Special to The Alabama Baptist

God's grace

Moundville's Pleasant Hill keeps faith after 'suspicious fire' in 2009

As we read the articles in *The Alabama Baptist* about the churches that were damaged due to storms, we are reminded of what God said in James 1:2 — "Count it all a joy." We want to reassure churches that God is always there to help if you keep your faith and let Him be in control.

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Moundville, was destroyed by a suspicious fire three years ago. When we look back on our experience of rebuilding our church, we could have hired a contractor to construct a much smaller facility. That is all it would have been to the community and our congregation; just another building to house our congregation. God, however, had other plans. He sent Carpenters for Christ, Bold Mission, The Brick Layers, Hale County Baptist Association, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and many faithful volunteers to craft a building to meet His master plan for our church and our community.

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church gained far more than a new building. Our congregation has grown by 39 new members since the fire.

This is second only to the spiritual compassion shown to our congregation by our community and countless sacrifices of other selfless individuals. This experience has taught us the true meaning of giving, without earthly gain.

As our congregation stood in the ashes of our church building on April 14, 2009, it was hard to see that this experience could be a blessing. Our church only had about half of the money we needed to rebuild. God took these seemingly inadequate funds to build a facility twice its original size — fully furnished — and left us more money in the bank than before the fire. Praise God, we are also debt free. Only with God's grace could this happen.

It would take several pages to detail all the work done by so many individuals, but, for example, God sent a Catholic church to donate pews, a man to donate \$25,000 in concrete and many saved and unsaved people to work on the rebuild of our church building. If God is in charge, donations will come from areas and people you could never have

dreamed would help. God says to ask and you shall receive. If you do not let people know your needs, they cannot help. When people saw God's spirit and love in the rebuild, they wanted to be a part of it. Throughout this process the Moundville community pulled together. This is significant because prior to the rebuild, the churches in our community had never shared spiritual needs as a family. Thanks to God, this has changed.

We will never know how many lives were touched and changed because of this rebuild, and we can never place a dollar value on the spiritual growth. Just this year our church received a donation of \$10,000. Prior to the fire our congregation would have probably searched for new material items to purchase. After our experience, we have prayerfully decided to return our thanks by forwarding this donation to other churches in need.

We really do not know why God chose to pour out His blessings on Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, but we surely know that God is always in control and sees a greater vision than our minds could ever comprehend. 🙏



Photo courtesy of Betty Shaw

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Moundville, in Hale Baptist Association was destroyed by suspected arson April 14, 2009.



Photo courtesy of Betty Shaw

The congregation worshipped in this mobile chapel while the church building was being rebuilt.



Photo by Tammy Stringfellow of CoeyBella Artistry

Westwood Ballet dancers perform in the ballet's 2012 spring performance of 'Carpenter's Village.'



Photo by Julie Payne

Beth Bischoff, artistic director for Westwood Ballet, instructs an advanced class through a barre exercise.

Glorifying God

By Julie Payne
The Alabama Baptist

Westwood Ballet teaches dance as form of worship to its students

Now in its 12th year ministering through the art of dance, Westwood Ballet in Birmingham has taught dance students to “use their gifts and talents to glorify the Lord.”

Originally a ministry of Briarwood Ballet in Birmingham, Westwood Ballet became a ministry of Westwood Baptist Church, Birmingham, in 2006.

The dance ministry is tucked away toward the back of Westwood Baptist's building. If it were not for the ballet's small outdoor sign, one would never suspect that through the church doors dancers pirouette and grand plié under the tutelage of Westwood Ballet teachers.

According to director Cindy Best, Westwood Ballet provides dance instruction to dancers from areas including Jasper, Hayden, Warrior, Gardendale, Fairfield and Midfield.

“Through the years it's been a tremendous blessing to ... see where [these children] have grown. Last year we had 82 students,” Best said. “And we give the free performance in May. Last year in May, we probably had around 1,200 people [who] came and watched the performance. So it's an incredible outreach that Westwood Baptist Church uses.”

Best's passion for the dance program shines as she shares about the ministry of Westwood Ballet and the three staff members who help make the program possible.

One of those teachers, artistic director Beth Bischoff, is still fairly new to the program. Bischoff began teaching classes last August after dancing with Ballet Magnificat! — a Christian ballet company based in Jackson, Miss. — for eight seasons. “We know truly that God sent her here,” Best remarked.

Bischoff grew up on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, and started dancing when she was 9 years old. “I guess [age 9] is considered a little later for dancers, because a lot of girls start when they're really young, like 3 or 4,” Bischoff explained.

She trained at Ballet Hawaii until she was 18 years old

and then moved to Mississippi to dance with Ballet Magnificat! in 2003.

“Ballet is an art, but it's a way of expression for me,” Bischoff explained. “I was really shy growing up and so ballet was always a way for me just to express myself.”

As her relationship with the Lord grew, Bischoff said that dance became more of a way for her to express her love for God. It was no longer a “self-focused thing” that involved a constant striving for perfection.

‘To love Him with it’

She said that once she began dancing with Ballet Magnificat! the Lord opened her eyes to how ballet could be used as worship. She now sees dance as a gift that can be used to bring God glory and “to love Him with it.”

Recently several of Bischoff's advanced class students were able to experience Ballet Magnificat! for themselves during its summer dance intensive program in Jackson, Miss.

“It's just an intense time of technical training, of discipline,” Bischoff explained, adding the classes include pointe, modern and jazz. “They also learn choreography that the

company does and then perform it at the end of their time there.”

According to Best, the dancers each raised their own funds to attend. “Six of our girls, through Mrs. Beth's training and guidance, raised their \$1,800 each through yard sales, hot dog sales — whatever it took — they raised their \$1,800 and they went for two weeks each and had the most amazing time,” Best explained. “Parents called after their gala performance and said it was the most incredible night of worship they had experienced. So I think it was a life-changing experience for our girls.”

Whether performing recitals that reflect the gospel or instructing students in a variety of classes, Westwood Ballet is focused on glorifying God through dance. And viewing dance as a form of worship is something Bischoff hopes her students will take away from her instruction.

“When [Beth] dances, Jesus just shines through her,” Best said. “There's just something about Beth that she brings into that classroom. ... Those girls ... dance with a different purpose. It's not about the steps. It's not about the technique. It's about Who they dance for and why they dance.” ❧

“When [Beth] dances, Jesus just shines through her. ... There's just something about Beth that she brings into that classroom. ... Those girls ... dance with a different purpose. It's not about the steps. It's not about the technique. It's about Who they dance for and why they dance.”

Cindy Best, Westwood Ballet director

in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders

Calvin A. Miller

Popular author, preacher, professor Miller dies

Well-known author, preacher and teacher Calvin A. Miller died Aug. 19. He was 75.

A retired full-time professor at Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, Miller most recently served as distinguished professor and writer in residence. He also co-taught a Bible study class at Northpark Baptist Church, Trussville, where he was a member. He served in supply preaching roles across the state and was a popular speaker at a variety of faith-based events.

A native of Enid, Okla., Miller earned a bachelor's degree from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Okla., in 1958, and a master of divinity and doctor of ministry degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

He served as pastor for five years at Plattsmouth Baptist Church, Plattsmouth, Neb., and then 25 years at Westside Church, Omaha, Neb. In 1991 Miller joined the faculty at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. At Beeson, Miller was the professor of preaching and pastoral ministry from 1999 to 2007.

Miller was the author of more than 40 books including "Letters to a Young Pastor," "The Empowered Communicator," "Marketplace Preaching," "O Shepherd, Where Art Thou?" and "Preaching: The Art of Narrative Exposition." His latest book was "Letters to Heaven: Reaching Beyond the Great Divide."

Beeson's Dean Timothy George said Miller brought to his work "a lifetime of experience as a pastor, poet, evangelist, apologist, artist and writer of renown. Calvin Miller had a palpable love for Jesus Christ and his church and he will be greatly missed both here at Beeson and throughout the body of Christ."

Northpark Baptist Pastor Bill Wilks echoed George's sentiments. "Calvin Miller was larger than life," Wilks said. "His passing is more than the end of a life, it's like the end of an era. ... As a Christian statesman he was one part rebel and one part romantic. But he was 100 percent real. He is one of the most genuinely humble and Christlike men I've ever met. It was a joy to be his pastor. He was a great encourager and friend. He will be missed, but his light for Christ will continue to shine on for generations to come."

Miller is survived by his wife, Barbara Joyce; two children; and two grandchildren. (TAB)



MILLER

Role of faith

Obama, Romney offer glimpse of their spiritual lives

President Obama says it is not his job to defend his Christian faith against doubters who suspect he is Muslim. His GOP challenger, Mitt Romney, says religion is "integral" to his life, even as he often avoids mentioning his Mormon faith by name.

In interviews published Aug. 21 by *Cathedral Age*, the magazine of the Washington National Cathedral, the candidates responded in writing to nine questions about their faith.

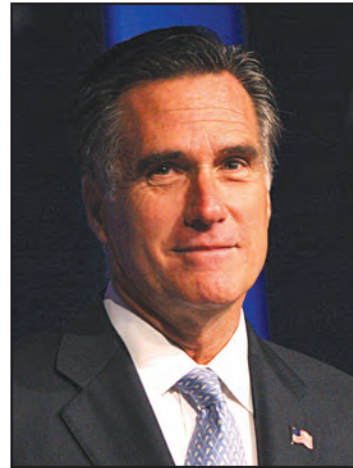
Religion has been a tricky political issue thus far for both men. A recent Pew Research Center poll found that only 49 percent of Americans can correctly identify Obama as a Christian. More Americans know that Romney is Mormon, but a significant minority (30 percent) does not believe that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is Christian.

Asked about people who question the sincerity of his faith, Obama responded: "You know, there's not much I can do about it. I have a job to do as president, and that does not involve convincing folks that my faith in Jesus is legitimate and real."

Answering the same question, Romney said: "I am often asked about my faith and my beliefs about Jesus Christ. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of mankind. Every religion has its own unique doctrines and history. These should not be bases for criticism but rather a test of our tolerance."

Both men said political candidates should be judged by their works, not faith.

"A political leader's faith can tell us a great deal or nothing," Romney said. "So much depends on what lies behind that faith. And so much depends on deeds, not words."



"Faith is integral to my life. I have served as a lay pastor in my church. I faithfully follow its precepts."

ROMNEY



"My Christian faith gives me a perspective and security that I don't think I would have otherwise."

OBAMA

Both men also said religion is central to their lives.

"My Christian faith gives me a perspective and security that I don't think I would have otherwise: That I am loved. That, at the end of the day, God is in control," Obama said.

The public eye

Romney said that "faith is integral to my life. I have served as a lay pastor in my church. I faithfully follow its precepts."

The men differed slightly on the role of faith in public life.

Obama highlighted religion's contributions to the suffrage, abolition and civil rights movements.

He also said faith provides a "moral framework and vocabulary" for the country in times of crisis.

Romney said the country should "acknowledge the Creator, as did the Founders — in ceremony and word." God should remain present in American currency, the Pledge of Allegiance and history lessons, as well as nativity scenes and menorahs in public places, he added.

"In recent years, the notion of the separation of church and state has been taken by some well beyond its original meaning," Romney said. "They seek to remove from the public domain any acknowledgment of God." (RNS)

Rick Warren's civil forum canceled

Saddleback Church pastor and "The Purpose-Driven Life" author Rick Warren announced Aug. 22 that a civil forum planned with President Obama and presumptive Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney has been canceled.

Warren, who held a similar event in 2008 featuring then-candidate Barack Obama and Republican John McCain, said he pulled the plug this year because he believes discourse between the two campaigns has become so uncivil that a polite exchange for two hours would seem hypocritical.

"The forums are meant to be a place where people of goodwill can seriously disagree on significant issues without being disagreeable or resorting to personal

attack and name-calling, but that is not the climate of today's campaign," Warren said, according to the *Orange County Register*.

No formal agreement

Warren announced plans for the forum in a conference call with reporters July 16. He said he had been in touch with senior officials from both campaigns who expressed their interest in participating, though no formal agreement had taken place.

The following day *Politico* quoted unnamed campaign officials as saying there would be no joint appearances by Obama and Romney before presidential debates that begin Oct. 3.

Warren, who said in July that 5,000 tickets would be available

and distributed by lottery, announced alternate plans for an interfaith civil forum on religious freedom in September featuring "the leading Catholic ... Jewish ... and Muslim voice(s) in America" and said one thing they all have in common is "mutual concern for protecting religious freedom for everyone."

The 2008 civil forum on the presidency produced one of the most memorable moments of that campaign.

Asked for his perspective about when life begins, Obama said answering the question definitively was "above my pay grade." McCain answered unequivocally "at the moment of conception," solidifying his support among pro-life conservatives. (ABP)



Photo by Judy Cape

ALABAMA AMONG NATIONAL DR AWARD WINNERS

Mel Johnson (left), disaster relief strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, presents Southern Baptist Disaster Relief's 2012 Distinguished Service Award to Ronnie Warren, clean up/recovery/chainsaw coordinator for Alabama Baptist disaster relief.

Across Alabama's Associations

BESSEMER

► **Don Campbell** is the new minister of worship and discipleship at **The Baptist Church at**



CAMPBELL

McAdory, McCalla. He holds a bachelor of science in music education from Samford University in Birmingham and a master of music in church music and doctor of musical arts from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He previously served as minister of music and worship, then pastor of senior adults and pastoral care at First Church, Birmingham. He also has served Bethel Church, Pleasant Grove, and Westwood Church, Forestdale. He is a member of the Alabama Singing Men. He and his wife, Debbie, have two children. Bill McCall is pastor. ► The Southcrest Gospel Singing ministry of **Southcrest Church, Bessemer**, will host The Dotson Family and Scrap Iron Quartet Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m. Scott Bush is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► Multiply, a new initiative by **David Platt**, pastor of **The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham**, and author Francis Chan, will include two Multiply Gatherings led by Platt and Chan, Nov. 9, 7–10 p.m. via free webcast from The Church at Brook Hills and Nov. 10, 8–11 p.m. via free webcast from the SF City Impact Mission in San Francisco, Calif. The content will

be the same at each Gathering but will be presented uniquely at each location. The purpose of the Gatherings is to come together with other Christ followers in their local churches and homes to encourage one another in the disciple-making process. For information visit www.multiplymovement.com.

BULLOCK-CENTENNIAL

► **William R. "Bill" Cannon II** is the new pastor of **First Church, Union Springs**. He is a graduate of Auburn University and New Orleans Seminary and is a Ph.D. candidate at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He previously served churches in Alabama and Kentucky. He and his wife, Anitra, have four children.



CANNON

COOSA RIVER

► **Hepzibah Church, Talladega**, will celebrate its 175th anniversary Sept. 16, 10 a.m. Lunch will follow. Call 256-268-2200 by Sept. 10 for lunch reservations. Keith Wrenn is pastor.

GENEVA

► **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will host The 39er's C.L.U.B. (Christians Living Under the Blood!) nondenominational luncheon Sept. 11, 11 a.m. Coley Holloway, interim pastor of Shiloh Church, Hartford, will speak. For information and reservations by Sept. 4 call 334-684-9617. Mike Shirah is pastor.

FAYETTE

► **First Church, Fayette**, has two

new staff members. **Whitney Head**, a recent graduate of Samford University in Birmingham, is the new director of music ministry. **Brad Averette** is the new associate pastor and minister of students. Scott Davis is pastor.

MOBILE

► **Terry Cutrer** resigned as pastor of **Moffett Road Church, Mobile**, to be the new pastor of Ingomar Church, New Albany, Miss. He served Moffett Road for 11 years and previously served as pastor of churches from Ohio to Mississippi. He and his wife, Dale, have three children and four grandchildren.

TALLAPOOSA

► **Bethel Church, Jacksons Gap**, will celebrate homecoming Sept. 9, 10 a.m. The Fellowship Quartet will sing. Former pastor Edward Brown will speak. A homecoming meal will follow. The church also will hold revival Sept. 10–12. Jack Womack will speak. Carl Stokes is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **Airview Church, Opelika**, will celebrate homecoming Sept. 9, 10:30 a.m. A program by Bro. Billy Bob Bohannon and a covered-dish lunch will follow. Michael Brown is pastor.

WEST CULLMAN

► **Bremen Church, Cullman**, will celebrate homecoming Sept. 9, 10:30 a.m. Mark Trammel Quartet will sing and a covered-dish lunch and afternoon singing will follow. Odis Garmon is pastor.

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

SBOM's Corbitt elected DOM for Covington Association

After seven years as an associate in the office of associational missions and church planting for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), Otis Corbitt will take a new position as the director of missions (DOM) for Covington Baptist Association beginning Sept. 17.



CORBITT

Corbitt holds a bachelor of science degree from Columbus State University in Columbus, Ga., and a master of divinity from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

He previously served as pastor of Springhill Baptist Church, Franklin; Crawford Baptist Church, Phenix City; and Pleasant View Baptist Church, Carrollton, Ga. Corbitt also served as interim pastor of Bush Memorial Baptist Church, Troy.

Corbitt and his wife, Geri, served with the International Mission Board for seven years. Prior to his time at SBOM, he led Salem-Troy Baptist Association in the DOM position.

He is a National Guard Chaplain, holds the rank of major and was called to active duty in November 2009. He was deployed to Iraq as the 441st Ordnance Battalion (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) chaplain January to November 2010.

Fred Karthaus, chairman of Covington Association's director of missions search committee and pastor of First Baptist Church, Andalusia, said the committee was searching for a leader for the past six months and "felt impressed by the Lord that Otis was [Covington Association's] candidate."

"(After) looking at all his various experience as a pastor, as a missionary, as a former director of missions, [the committee] felt that a man with that kind of experience would be able to serve [the association] well," Karthaus said.

Rick Lance, SBOM executive director, said Corbitt will be "an excellent leader to guide the ministry of Covington Association."

"While at the State Board of Missions, Otis gave leadership to the areas of building consultation for churches and led church planters as a trainer and encourager. His years of ministry with the SBOM were fruitful, and I believe his time as DOM ... will be even more so," Lance said.

The Corbitts live in Troy and are members of First Baptist Church, Troy. They have two children.

West Highland Baptist's Sanders retires after 40 years

David Sanders retired from his role as minister of music for West Highland Baptist Church, Andalusia, in Covington Baptist Association after 40 years in the music ministry.

The church honored Sanders with a retirement reception and dinner July 8. Those in attendance presented Sanders with cards and a plaque recognizing his many years in the music ministry.

In high school Sanders was involved in chorus and band. He graduated from Mobile College (now University of Mobile) with a bachelor of science in music education and biology. "I was always drawn to music," he said.

As a student at Mobile College, Sanders served at Lockler Memorial Baptist Church, Mount Vernon.

He then served as music and youth minister for both Magnolia Springs Baptist Church in Baldwin Baptist Association and Selma Baptist Church, Dothan, in Columbia Baptist Association.

He also served as minister of music and activities for Providence Baptist Church, Gallion, before moving with his family to Minnesota as a church planter through the Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board).

Sanders later relocated to Bethlehem Baptist Church, Dothan, and worked in interim positions at several churches before moving to Andalusia to serve nearly six years at West Highland Baptist.

He said he is available for music supply including directing and playing the piano and organ.

"He was real energetic," West Highland Baptist Pastor Larry Stewart said of Sanders, adding that Sanders took care of the church's music program. "We are going to miss him."



SANDERS

Alabama Ministries

Tennessee Valley Baptist Nursing Fellowship

The Tennessee Valley Baptist Nursing Fellowship — a ministry of the Alabama Woman's Missionary Union — will sponsor a one-day Continuing Education Health Seminar on Sept. 8, 8 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. at Virginia College, Huntsville.

The seminar topics include:

- common skin conditions — Ruth Yates, M.D.
- home hemodialysis — Susan Ostrzycki, RN
- auricular acupuncture/herbal medicine detox — Jewel Euto, N.M.D., M.D., Ed.D.
- massage therapy for the medically frail

— Judy Castrichini, LMT
The seminar will be worth 4.8 nursing contact hours — credit hours needed for continuing education in nursing students. There will also be door prizes and refreshments. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m.

For more information contact Charlotte Wyckoff at 256-859-6738 or email fci@hiwaay.net.

Sav-A-Life Tuscaloosa

Sav-A-Life of Tuscaloosa will host *Celebrate Life* fundraising banquet Nov. 12, 6:30 p.m. at University Church of Christ, Tuscaloosa.

Sav-A-Life is a nonprofit organization committed to helping women in crisis pregnancies

and educates women and the community about the facts of abortion. Sav-A-Life of Tuscaloosa serves Tuscaloosa, Pickens, Fayette, Bibb, Greene and Hale counties.

Don Wallace, Tuscaloosa County Commissioner, will serve as master of ceremonies; Caitlin Jane, Christian recording artist, will be the musical guest; and Gene Stallings, former University of Alabama football coach, will be the keynote speaker.

Food will be provided by Robertson BBQ Fundraising.

For more information, call Jennifer McCracken at 205-759-5433 or email Jennifer@pregnancytestcenter.org.



RNS photo

A congregation worships at one of the campuses of Community Christian Church in the Chicago area.

Taking 'where WE ARE to where THEY ARE'

Report shows more than 5,000 multisite churches, 5 located in Alabama

Five churches in Alabama are part of more than 5,000 congregations that host worship services at more than one physical location.

According to a new report researchers say these "multisite" churches, which may share worshippers across town or many miles apart, are growing at a much larger pace than traditional megachurches.

Without the burden of additional expensive buildings congregations find they grow faster in new places, said Warren Bird, research director of Leadership Network who announced his conclusions Aug. 21.

"It's a combination of both evangelism and saying, 'People may not come to this particular building. How can we take where we are to where they are?'" he told Religion News Service.

Bird, the author of books on the multisite trend, has tracked the number of churches meeting in more than one place for his Dallas-based church think tank; he combined his findings with Faith Communities Today surveys to produce the report.

Multisite churches have grown from fewer than 200 in 2001 to 1,500 in 2006 to an estimated 3,000 in 2009 to more than 5,000 today. In comparison, U.S. megachurches have grown from about 50 in 1970 to about 1,650 in 2012 in North America.

Multisite comes in all kinds of models: Some congregations speak different languages at different locations; some hear from different "campus pastors" onsite and others are preached to by a senior pastor who speaks live or via video.

"The more campuses you have, the more likely you are to use video teaching," Bird said.

Sergio De La Mora, senior pastor of Cornerstone Church of San Diego, preaches five times every Sunday on its main campus in National City, Calif. — with one service in Spanish and another translated into Japanese. After morning services, he hops in his car and drives to the La Jolla campus for a 5 p.m. service before returning to National City for its last service at 6:30 p.m.

Meanwhile, videos of his 8:30 a.m. sermon are played in satellite campuses in Escondido, Calif., and across the board in Tijuana and Mexico City. A campus pastor runs the service at a location in Tucson, Ariz.

Disadvantages?

Is one of the disadvantages of multiple sites an exhausted pastor?

"You got to remember we're born to do this," said De La Mora. "This is the new generation of preachers. People are in transit so they want options when they come to church."

At Community Christian Church in the Chicago area, Pastor Dave Ferguson has taken a different approach with its dozen sites. "I can only be at one location at a time," he said.

Each week he gathers in a room with a team of campus pastors to develop a "big idea" into a sermon. A video featuring one of them is created, but the pastors can choose whether to speak from the original manuscript, a version of it they edited or show the video.

The general message reaches about 10,000 people worshipping at sites that include a community center, a college theater, reopened churches and office parks.

The Bridge Community Church, a congregation based in

rural Indiana, has campuses in Anderson, Decatur and Muncie but also has one in Bihar, India.

Bird said churches that total at least 500 people tend to be the ones that start a second campus, but smaller churches have also created additional sites.

"It was the megachurches that pioneered it and because megachurches tend to be ones people glean ideas from, pretty soon churches said, 'Why couldn't we do that? You don't have to be really big to do that,'" Bird said.

Multisite churches in Alabama include Cornerstone Church, Auburn (two campuses); South Roebuck Baptist Church, Birmingham (four campuses — two in Birmingham, two in Odenville); New Hope Baptist Church, Birmingham (two campuses); Church of the Highlands, Birmingham (seven campuses across the state); and The Rock Family Worship Center, Huntsville (four campuses; three in northern Alabama, one in Tennessee).

South Roebuck Baptist Pastor Christopher Crain said, "[Leadership] decided to become a multicampus church in October 2005. The key leaders of the church had been praying for a way to continue reaching people with the gospel. We had a small cluster of church members living in a growing area in St. Clair County. We knew that if there was a way to break out of [the plateauing/declining] cycle, it was our responsibility to do it."

Although South Roebuck now meets in different places, it does not want to move to a video-pastor model. "I was taught that preaching is about a human connection to an audience ... where the pastor ... may adjust his sermon as the Holy Spirit guides," Crain said. (RNS, TAB)

CHRISTIANITY:

Sadistic God; Useless Savior
30,000+ Versions of "Truth"
Promotes Hate, Calls it "Love"

Atheism: Simply Reasonable



atheists.org

'Unfair attack'

Atheist billboard campaign targets Christianity

A Baptist ethicist labeled billboards by American Atheists claiming religion has no place in presidential politics an unfair attack on people of faith.

A billboard campaign timed with the national presidential nominating convention mocks the religion of both presidential candidates and counters with a message, "Atheism, simply reasonable."

Billboards placed around Charlotte, N.C., host city for the Sept. 3-6 Democratic National Convention, term Christianity "sheer silliness" that has "no place in politics." The message displays an image of Jesus on burnt toast labeled "Sadistic God: Useless Savior ... Promotes Hate, Calls it 'Love.'"

The group founded by Madalyn Murray O'Hair, a noted atheist ac-

tivist in the 1960s, wanted to place billboards for the Republican National Convention in Tampa, Fla., but says no business would rent them the space. That ad showed a white man mocking a Mormon ritual by wearing white underwear saying, "God Is A Space Alien. Baptizes Dead People. Big Money, Big Bigotry."

Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics in Nashville, says the billboard campaign crosses a line. "Unable to make a compelling case for atheism, atheists launch hateful billboards mocking faith," Parham tweeted.

"Imagine the outrage in the media had a group said bigoted and hateful things about gays, or women, or Hispanics or African-

Americans," Parham added in an EthicsDaily.com commentary Aug. 21. "The sponsoring group would have been labeled as a hate group."

"Religion, on the other hand, is an easy and seemingly acceptable punching bag," he continued. "Atheists punch away. Some liberals want a secularized public square. Others dismiss traditional morality, finding churches useful only when elections roll around. Secularists find houses of faith irrelevant."

Parham urged readers to "consider what houses of faith and faith-based organizations do in the public square" and then ask "Who would fill the vacuum if the faith community abandoned social services and muted its moral witness?" (ABP)

LifeWay's sell of Glorieta pending review

LifeWay Christian Resources is awaiting results of a theological study of Olivet University before deciding whether to sell LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center to Olivet, even as media outlets debate whether the California-based university has heretical ties.

The potential sale of the 2,100-acre Southern Baptist conference center in New Mexico is receiving added scrutiny on the heels of media reports of longstanding accusations that Olivet's founder, David Jang, promotes the heresy that he is the "second coming Christ."

Marty King, LifeWay's communications director, said LifeWay is well aware of accusa-

tions against Jang and Olivet.

"Those concerns are precisely why we engaged the National Association of Evangelicals to conduct a thorough review of their theological views to determine compatibility with ours," King said in a statement to the media Aug. 16.

Christianity Today, in an Aug. 16 article, summarized results of several investigations of Jang's activities:

► In 2008 the Hong Kong-based Independent Enquiry Committee, which included Chinese evangelical theologians, "unanimously expressed serious apprehensions and concerns" about the group and "could not exclude the ... strong

probabilities" that Jang's followers "promoted doctrines similar to that of the Unification Church, including ... the first coming of Jesus to the earth was a failure and ... their pastor is the 'Second Coming Lord' or 'Second Coming Christ.'"

► Following the Independent Enquiry Committee's findings the substantial Beijing Haidian Christian Church in China "issued a statement terminating their relationship with the Young Disciples."

► In September 2009 two of Korea's largest Presbyterian denominations, the TongHap and HapShin, "voted to break relations with Jang's organizations." (BP)

Tennessee Convention to eliminate 16 positions

The Tennessee Baptist Convention (TBC) executive board will eliminate up to 16 full- and part-time staff positions over the next several months.

TBC Executive Director/Treasurer Randy C. Davis announced the changes during a mid-August staff meeting at the Baptist Center in Brentwood, Tenn.

The changes "are not driven by the economy," Davis emphasized.

Rather, the changes are "driven by strategy to move us forward in accomplishing a clear objective: To assist the local church in winning the lost of Tennessee to Christ."

The reductions will free up nearly \$1 million once the process is finished, Davis told the TBC's *Baptist and Reflector*, noting the changes "will allow more of our resources to be pushed to the harvest fields."

Davis stated "having the privilege and accepting the responsibility of leading the gifted and committed Tennessee Baptist team of servant missionaries is one of the clearest calls the Lord has ever placed on my life."

Reversing a half-century-long decline in the number of people reached and baptized in Tennessee must become a reality, Davis said. (BP)

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

GuideStone initiative to offer funds to church members

DALLAS — GuideStone Financial Resources trustees have approved a recommendation to change the Southern Baptist entity's ministry assignment to make its mutual funds available to Southern Baptist and other evangelical church members.

GuideStone representatives will make a report to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee in mid-September with the intention of presenting the recommendation to messengers at the SBC annual meeting next June in Houston.

GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins updated trustees on GuideStone's long-range plan, GuideStone 100 during the July 30-31 meeting in San Diego.

In GuideStone's vision statement — "GuideStone Financial Resources exists to honor the Lord by being a lifelong partner with its participants in enhancing their financial security."

"GuideStone 100 was born out of our motivation, our message and our mandate," Hawkins noted. "Our motivation is to honor the Lord. Our message to each of our more than 200,000 participants is that we want to be your lifelong partner. Our mandate is to enhance their financial security. Each day, we set to live out and apply that vision."

The initiative to offer GuideStone Funds to church members, part of the earliest version of GuideStone 100, gained momentum from a motion made at the 2006 SBC annual meeting by Gary A. Smith, pastor of Fielder Road Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas.

Missouri's The Pathway editor investigated by IRS

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — A watchdog group that advocates strict separation of church and state has called on the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to investigate whether a Missouri Baptist newspaper editor violated tax law by endorsing two candidates for political office in a column.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State filed a complaint Aug. 23 citing a May 8 commentary in *The Pathway*, news journal of the Missouri Baptist Convention (MBC), in which Editor Don Hinkle observed that Southern Baptists' theology drives them generally toward more conservative policies espoused by Republicans.

Americans United Executive Director Barry Lynn said in a letter to Lois Lerner, director of the exempt organizations division of the IRS, that despite Hinkle's characterization of his views as "personal," federal tax law does not permit employees of tax-exempt organizations to use official publications to intervene in elections.

Women leading Baptist churches continues to rise

ATLANTA — It took Pam Durso a few minutes to comprehend the number that came up during her recent count of women leading Baptist churches: 150.

The number had been 102 in 2005 and 135 in 2010 said Durso, executive director of Baptist Women in Ministry. The numbers include the Alliance of Baptists, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the Baptist General Association of Virginia and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF).

Approximately 27 percent of Presbyterian churches are led by women, and it is 29 percent for Methodists. By comparison, just under 7 percent of CBF churches are led by women, Durso said.

Durso credited Facebook with enabling her to obtain most of the numbers, which are not provided by the denominations. Her tally comes from messages from Facebook friends, following status updates and fans who post news of installations on the Baptist Women in Ministry fan page.

Baptist church plant goes to court to rent worship space

HOLLY SPRINGS, Miss. — Religious liberty is at issue in Holly Springs, Miss., where a Southern Baptist church plant has gone to court to rent a worship space downtown.

The city made national headlines by passing a zoning ordinance requiring churches to get approval from 60 percent of local property owners and the mayor before locating on the town square. When Opulent Life Church sought a preliminary injunction, the district court ruled for the city, saying the church's religious freedom was not in jeopardy since it could meet at its current location at Marshall County Baptist Association.

The church turned to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in New Orleans. Just 24 hours before a recent court date, Holly Springs overturned the original ordinance, enacting a new rule banning churches altogether from the town square.

Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions

ONE MISSION:
The Great Commission

ONE PROGRAM:
The Cooperative Program

MANY MINISTRIES:
Great Commission Ministries



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

Find Some Nice Old People

“Find some nice old people”: That was the response to a question posed by Tom Elliff, current president of the International Mission Board (IMB). Some years ago, Tom asked a veteran campus minister at an Oklahoma university how to engage students in the life of the local church, especially those who were from international areas. The campus minister surprised him with this statement about finding “some nice old people.”

Much is behind that statement that needs to be fleshed out for us as we seek to relate to students in our college and university settings. Obviously, many of these young adults are away from home for the first time in their lives, and unconsciously they long for some mentoring and nurturing. Most median-aged adults still face the challenges of having children still at home. Older adults usually are not dealing with those responsibilities.

When students visit our churches, a welcome means more than a handshake and a smile. It means saying, “Do you have any lunch plans for the day?” It also expands to a wider appeal, “Do you have some friends who would like to join you?” These basic but beautiful invitations make a huge difference in the “feeling at home factor” as the students are actually away from home.

In a recent meeting of state executive directors at the IMB International Learning Center, I heard a sad story of an international student who never felt at home while here in the States. The young man was leaving to go back home following his graduation. In preparation for departure, he said to his roommate, “Here is a suitcase you can have.” Puzzled by the statement of his friend, the roommate asked, “What is in the suitcase?”

The response to that question

is heartbreaking. The international student replied, “It is a suitcase filled with gifts from my country. I was supposed to hand them out to the people who invited me into their homes, but no one ever invited me to be their guests, so you can give the gifts to whomever you please.”

Few statements can cut

By Rick Lance
State Missionary
Executive Director



to the heart any more than one that reflects a lack of hospitality. In the New Testament days, Christians personified this ministry in a Christlike fashion. It was a major ministry of the church in terms of reaching others for our Lord. If we are to emulate the early church, we must learn or relearn the meaning and purpose of this ministry in the name of Christ. Every church, regardless of

size, can be hospitality ministers to students and others.

Each year, college and university students flock to campuses all over our country. They come from all parts of the world and from cities and towns closer to home. Each of them is facing their need for a home away from home. I pray that our churches will become that home place for them. “Finding some nice old people” might be a good beginning place for such ministry.

However, all of us need to be conscious of such needs in the lives of people who will shape the future of the world!



Numbers 14:24

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries



Get Acquainted Day

At the Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd. in Montgomery
Thursday, September 6, 10 am - 3:30 pm
9:30 - 10 - Check-in and refreshments

Register by calling or emailing Charleen Hobbs,
1-800-264-1225, ext. 231, chobbs@alsbom.org, or
go online to www.alsbom.org/gad.

Alabama Singing Men and Women

Shocco Springs, September 13-14

Begins at 4 p.m. Thursday, ends with 12:30 p.m. lunch on Friday

Clinicians: Tom Smith, ASM, minister of music, Providence Baptist Church, Opelika, and Gayle Smith, ASW, Auburn City Schools

Cost: \$78 per person (double occupancy); \$20 deposit with reservation

Event Updates: www.alsbom.org/asm-asw

Reservations: 1-800-280-1105

For more information, please contact State Missionary Keith Hibbs, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 217, or (334) 613-2217, khibbs@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Sharon Cleveland, ext. 279, or (334) 613-2279, scleveland@alsbom.org.

State LIBRARY WORKSHOP

September 17-19 Shocco Springs

Online Info:

www.alsbom.org/churchlibrary

Reservations/Cost:
1-800-280-1105

For other information, please contact Ministry Assistant Jamie Allen at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 256, or (334) 613-2256, jallen@alsbom.org.

Senior Adult Choir Celebrations

Beginning at 10 a.m. each day:
October 25: First Baptist Church, Birmingham; First Baptist Church, Prattville
October 26: Tillman's Corner First Baptist Church; First Baptist Church, Opelika

Registration Form/Event Updates:
www.alsbom.org/seniorfest

You may also request a registration form or other information by contacting State Missionary Keith Hibbs, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 217, or (334) 613-2217, khibbs@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Sharon Cleveland, ext. 279, or (334) 613-2279, scleveland@alsbom.org.

CHILDREN'S & HONOR CHOIR AUDITIONS

Deadline:
November 1, 2012

150 children will be chosen from 4th-6th graders from all over Alabama. All must be actively involved in their churches' choir programs.

Two required area rehearsals: one in January and one in February



Tour dates:
March 8-10, 2013

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

CALLED TO COMMUNICATE

TAKING YOUR SPEAKING, PREACHING AND TEACHING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Thursday, November 1, 2012

Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery

"...preaching this wonderful good news of God. It's news I'm most proud to proclaim, this extraordinary Message of God's powerful plan to rescue everyone who trusts him..."

Romans 1:15-16 (THE MESSAGE)

Registration: \$20. (Preregistration is highly recommended to reserve your spot and materials.)

Registration: www.alsbom.org/etc or call the number below.



Fred Luter, pastor, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, La. and president, Southern Baptist Convention



Jim Shaddix, pastor of teaching and training, The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, and professor of preaching, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

For other information, please contact Ministry Assistant Jamie Allen at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 256, or (334) 613-2256, jallen@alsbom.org.

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

ALABAMA BAPTIST YOUTH MINISTER GULF SHORES RETREAT

OCTOBER 21-23, 2012 • GULF SHORES BEACH RETREAT

Join us on Sunday evening, October 21, to begin a great time of training and networking with Baptist youth ministers from our state. This event is for full-time, part-time, and volunteer youth ministers in Alabama Baptist churches.

THE EVENT IS FREE! You are responsible for your own transportation.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 11. Register with Ministry Assistant Lydia Patterson at lpatterson@alsbom.org or call 334-613-2275.



OUTSTANDING 2012 MISSION VOLUNTEER

The Office of Global Missions of the State Board of Missions would like to honor an Outstanding 2012 Mission Volunteer. Your help is needed.

Please think about lay people who are worthy of such recognition, and let us hear from you. We realize that there are many who could fit this requirement; however, for this purpose only one individual (or couple) will be selected.

Your recommendation will make a difference. The following information is required if a person (or couple) is to be considered:

1. The name, address and phone number of the person (or couple) being nominated.
2. The name, address and phone number of the nominee(s)' pastor, church and association.
3. A list of volunteer mission service: their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and Uttermost where he/she/they have participated during the past five years, including locations and dates. If the nominee(s) has not served in at least three of the Acts 1:8 areas,

please do not nominate that person.

4. Statements supporting your nomination of Outstanding 2012 Mission Volunteer. (Why you feel he/she/they should be recognized in this manner.)

5. Your signature with address, phone, church and association.

To access the Information Sheet and Nomination Application, go online to www.alsbom.org/missionsvolunteer.

If you do not have web access, request an Information Sheet and Nomination Application by calling Ministry Assistant Virginia Gardner at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 238, or (334) 613-2238, vgardner@alsbom.org.

Note: No phone calls or email recommendations and/or endorsements accepted. Nominations must be received, not postmarked, no later than September 21, 2012.



ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

Wednesday through Sunday, September 26-30

River Country Campground, Gadsden

CAMPERS ON MISSION FALL RALLY

Campers on Mission (COM) is a national fellowship of Christian campers who share their faith while they camp. Though sponsored by Southern Baptists, membership is open to Christian campers of all denominations.

The Alabama Chapter of COM sponsors a fall and spring rally and more than 20 missions projects a year.

Visitors who are interested in possible membership are welcome to attend the rally on Friday at 6:30 p.m.: a time of project reports and an ideal time to visit.

What do Campers on Mission do? Projects include state fairs, motor speedways, sewing, nursing home ministry, puppets, prayer walks, Seaman Center, association camps, church construction and disaster relief.

Who can join Campers on Mission? Any adult! Single or family, young or older. COM is family-friendly and provides a great way to experience the relaxation of vacation with the satisfaction of a mission project. It is a great pathway to become an on-mission family.

How do I become a member? Download an enrollment form from www.alabamacampersonmission.org

For other information: www.alabamacom.org

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries



ROYAL AMBASSADOR SOAPBOX DERBY

OCTOBER 13, 2012, IN MONTGOMERY
DOWN DEXTER AVENUE IN FRONT OF THE STATE CAPITOL

Make a car for less than \$200. Race twice a year in March and October.

For instructions, rules or other information, go online to www.alsbom.org/ra or contact State Missionary Steve Stephens at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 268, or (334) 613-2268, sstephens@alsbom.org.

FOCUS on One Mission

Cooperative Program Month

October is designated as Cooperative Program Month across the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Cooperative Program is the lifeline of missions work in Alabama and around the world. In order to raise awareness of the Cooperative Program in your congregation, please consider implementing some of the following suggestions during Cooperative Program Month:

- Have a Sunday School

come to your church to speak about the Cooperative Program. There is NO cost.

- Give your church members more information about the Cooperative Program.



The State Board of Missions joins with the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention in encouraging churches to give 1 percent more through the Cooperative Program.



By Jim Swedenburg
State Missionary

If each Alabama Baptist church increases Cooperative Program gifts by 1/4 percent of undesignated receipts per year, we will meet the 1% Challenge in only four years. This is also a good way for a church to begin giving through the Cooperative Program.

lesson or sermon series focus on stewardship and the Cooperative Program, and how it impacts the lives of people in your community, your country and around the world. Show a video clip in your service that highlights the Cooperative Program.

- Have a state missionary

Together we can do more to impact the Kingdom.

- Use the Cooperative Program poster, available at www.alsbom.org/cp.
- Order a CP Month preview kit including sermons with PowerPoints, bulletin inserts, poster and full listing of free Cooperative Program resources, such as informational brochures, video clips, posters, bookmarks, DVDs, children's resources, Missionary Moments, sermons and other promotional materials available at www.alsbom.org/cp.

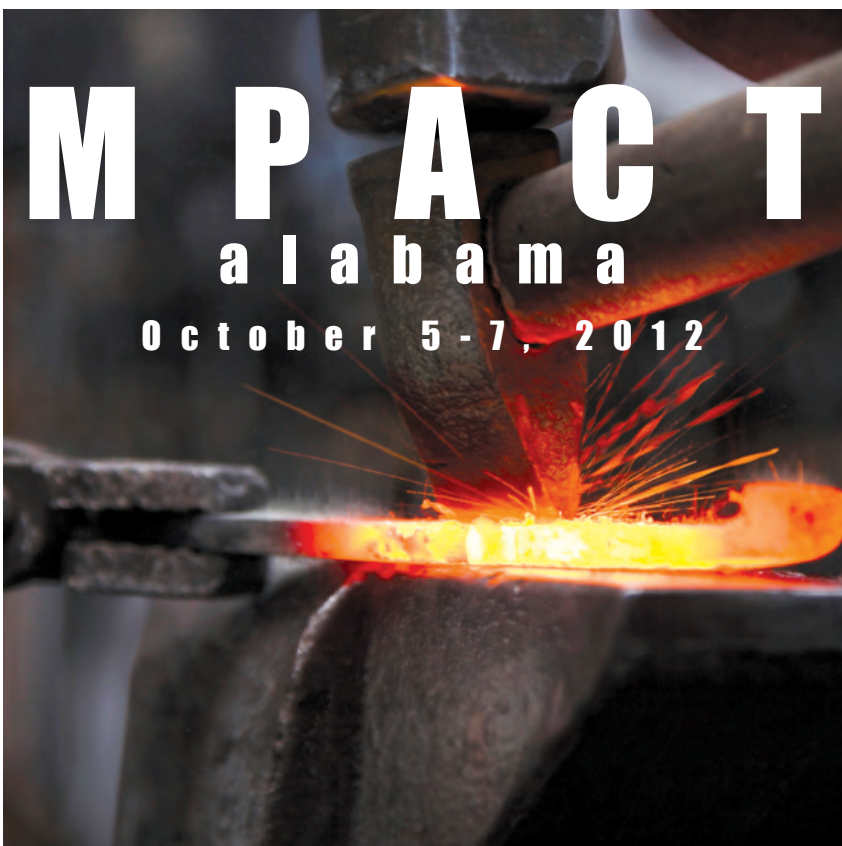
If you have no way to download and want to

use a paper form, please contact Ministry Assistant Traci Jackson, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 304, or (334) 613-2304, tjackson@alsbom.org.

For other information, please contact State Missionary Jim Swedenburg at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 283, or (334) 613-2283, jswedenburg@alsbom.org.



ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries



When a blacksmith pounds a piece of heated iron on his anvil, the force of the impact shapes the metal into a useful object and changes it forever. As Christians, we have the opportunity to have the same kind of transforming impact on the lives of those around us.

IMPACT ALABAMA is a weekend designated for students, student ministry groups, BCM groups, churches and associations all across Alabama to focus on the ministry needs of their local community.

For more information, contact your local Baptist association or the Office of Collegiate & Student Ministries, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, **1.800.264.1225**, ext. **276**, or **(334) 613.2276**, or visit www.thestudenthub.org.

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

STATE KEYBOARD FESTIVALS

**November 3, 4,
5 and 6, 2012**

Cost: \$5 per student
(money to be turned in by
the teacher)

Teachers, please bring the
money for all students to the
event or mail a check
payable to: State Board of
Missions, Worship
Leadership & Church Music,
P.O. Box 11870,
Montgomery, AL
36111-0870.

November 3: Meadow
Brook Baptist Church,
Birmingham and Mt.
Pleasant Baptist Church,
Gordo

November 4: First Baptist
Church, Huntsville

November 5: First Baptist
Church, Fairhope

November 6: First
Baptist Church, Enterprise

Registration:
www.alsbom.org/keyfest

*For more information on
this event, please contact
State Missionary Karen
Gosselin at 1-800-264-
1225, ext. 318, or (334)
613-2318,
kgosselin@alsbom.org or
Ministry Assistant Cindy
Parrish, ext. 230, or
(334) 613-2230,
cparrish@alsbom.org.*

All Things New: Senior Adult Retreat

October 15-17, Shocco Springs

Are senior adults looking for a good time? Absolutely — and that's what they find at the senior adult retreats at Shocco Springs as they gather with others of like mind. Beverly Roseberry from First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Ala., said this after the Spring Senior Adult Retreat in April 2012: "My friend who came with me didn't expect to enjoy herself. But thanks to God she had a wonderful time. We both had such a good time and enjoyed each of the conferences we chose."

Do seniors need encouragement and inspiration? Of course! Helen Harrison of First Baptist Church of Enterprise also attended the Spring Retreat and said this, "The senior conference was inspiring to keep on keeping on. Sometimes we are tired and want to pass the baton to another, but here we get refreshed and encouraged to never stop doing God's work."

Preacher: Mike Johnson, Boone's Chapel Baptist Church, Prattville

Celebration Leader: State Missionary Daniel Edmonds

Music: Robin Simpson, Boone's Chapel Baptist Church

Special Feature: Spoken For

Cost: \$155 per person (double occupancy)

Reservations: 1-800-280-1105 or
www.shocco.org/register

For more information, please contact State Missionary Eileen Mitchell at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 221, or (334) 613-2221, emitchell@alsbom.org.

FOCUS on One Mission

PASTOR, DEACON/ SPOUSE

THEME: THE LEADER
GOD USES

RETREAT

Friday and Saturday, September 28-29, 2012
Shocco Springs

Begins at 4 p.m. Friday, concludes with lunch Saturday.

Guest Speakers: Tom and Kim Blackaby

Reservations/Cost: 1-800-280-1105

Online Info:

www.alsbom.org/pastordeaconspouseretreat

*For other information, please contact Ministry Assistant
Debbie Dickey at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 218, or (334)
613-2218, ddickey@alsbom.org*

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

The Troy L. Morrison Leadership/Church Health Award will be given to individuals who have demonstrated evidence of leadership that has advanced the church in four key areas of Kingdom growth: spiritual growth, ministry advancement, missions involvement and numerical growth.

The award is given to three pastors, one from each of the following categories: New

Work, Established Work and Bi-Vocational.

To nominate a pastor you feel has

demonstrated Kingdom leadership, you may obtain an information form online at www.alsbom.org/leadership or by calling Ministry Assistant Jamie Allen at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 256, or (334) 613-2256, jallen@alsbom.org.

TROY L. MORRISON LEADERSHIP/CHURCH HEALTH AWARD

Deadline for submission of nominations is October 8.

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries



**The Bully Issue:
A Prevention Approach**



The Office of Collegiate and Student Ministries presents a "Drive-In" Youth Ministry Training Event in partnership with American Character Builders.

Thursday, September 27, 2012, at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. For more details: **www.thestudenthub.org**.

Bullying is an ever increasing issue for youth today. Some studies indicate that as many as 70% of all students have been bullied. Join us for training in a ministry-based response to a critical issue.

ENGAGE 24

Within the pages of Scripture and throughout the history of the world, God has been seeking people to engage Him, and then to engage the world with the Gospel of Jesus. Engage24 is a 24-hour period focused on engaging the world with the Good News of Christ. While Engage24 is intensely focused on a single day of evangelism (10/11/12), our mission is to promote a 24/7 lifestyle of evangelism and engagement with the Gospel.

ENGAGE24 is a 24-hour period when college students will make a coordinated effort to engage their campuses with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our desire is to see every believing college student share the Gospel with one person that day.

We are engaging on 10/11/12. Will you?

Office of Collegiate & Student Ministries

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries



**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25
6:30-8:30 P.M.
LAKESIDE BAPTIST CHURCH,
BIRMINGHAM**



SINGLE ADULT LEADERSHIP PANEL:
 ↪ Kelly Davidson, Woodstock, Ga.
 ↪ Jay George, North Monroe, La.
 ↪ Morlee Maynard, Nashville, Tenn.

COST (MEAL AND PROGRAM): \$5 per person if registered by Friday, September 14, \$15 per person afterward

REGISTRATION:
www.engagingsingles.org

FOR OTHER INFORMATION, please contact State Missionary Eileen Mitchell at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 221, or (334) 613-2221, emitchell@alsbom.org.



BP photo

In a Jordanian city along the border with Syria, a mother weeps for the son she lost during recent violence in Syria and for those who remain in that troubled land.



Reuters photo

A Free Syrian Army fighter fires an AK-47 rifle in Aleppo.

Christian workers see opportunities in Syria

(continued from page 1)

sive police state for an Islamic state. It will be a challenge either way.”

Yet as the darkness deepens, rays of light appear here and there, both inside Syria and in neighboring countries where Syrian refugees are fleeing for safety.

At significant personal risk, a Syrian Christian couple living in a neighboring country is delivering food and other basic necessities to internal refugees — mostly Sunni Muslims — in an area near one of the Syrian cities hit hard by shelling and army-rebel combat. The nearby area, populated primarily by Syrian Christians, has been spared the worst of the violence.

No ‘safe zone’

“I don’t know that there’s any ‘safe zone’ in Syria, but because this area is largely Christian, it hasn’t been a target of a lot of the fighting,” a Christian worker said. “A lot of refugees who didn’t leave the country went to this area and sought refuge. There’s a great opportunity there. We’re in the very beginning stages of that project. The severity of the need is greater inside the country than what we’re seeing [among refugees leaving the country].”

More than 37,000 Syrians have crossed the border into northern Lebanon and the eastern Bekaa region seeking sanctuary, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. They need food, clothing, medicine and shelter. Assisted by Southern Baptist hunger and relief funds, Lebanese Christians have begun a third round of aid to refugees in border areas in the north. The first round, launched when the Syrian uprising began last year, included deliveries of food and personal hygiene items. When winter set in, the emphasis moved to providing blankets, inexpensive carpets for insulation and warm clothes, since many refugees arrived with only their summer clothes. In recent months the priority has moved back to food and other basics.

“Each time we’re going back to some of the same families and a lot of new families,” an aid worker reported. “We’ve seen an increase in the number of refugees, and they’re coming from farther-reaching areas — even as far as Damascus. At first they were fairly concentrated in the area right there on the border, but now a lot of refugees have made their way farther south.

“Up until maybe three months ago we had fairly open access to the border area. But the violence on the border increased to the point where the army began frequently stopping us from going. We continue to have relationships

with Syrian families there, but it’s increasingly difficult to get to them. Some of them have come out to meet with us, but some of them we haven’t seen in weeks. There’s firing across the border.”

Even so, Christians have shared the Word of God — in addition to physical aid and the compassion of Christ — with thousands of Syrians looking for truth they can hold onto in difficult times.

“In the midst of all the violence, you see these bright spots and know He really is at work and drawing the hearts of people to Himself,” the aid worker said. “We’ve shared the gospel with maybe 15,000 people and left Bibles in their hands.”

One is a 16-year-old Syrian girl who received a Bible late last year. Recently Christian workers entered a different household to deliver aid and the same girl was there.

“None of us remembered her, but she remembered us,” the worker recounted. “She pulled one of the workers aside and said she had been reading her Bible and had written down all these questions on a piece of paper. She said, ‘I need you to help me understand what I’m reading. I have all these questions. Can somebody come back and explain the answers to me?’ It’s like the farmer who goes out to plant the seed and he doesn’t know that it’s growing. You come back later and you see a little sprout.”

Multiple Muslim and Christian-background groups — some family-size, some much larger — are reading and listening to the Word together in a “discovery” format that takes them from God’s creation of the world to the life and work of Christ in about a month.

“It’s been amazing to see, even in a group of Muslims, how people are experiencing truth and the power of God’s Word,” he said. “Our biggest challenge is leadership development. They’ll be able to do it better and carry it farther than we ever will.”

One of the local volunteers working with the aid team is retired from the military. He participated in many armed conflicts during his military career — most of them clashes with the Syrian army. He was shot three times; the wounds are still visible. When he began helping Syrian refugees, at first he did it out of a sense of obligation. Not anymore.

“Of all the people in the world I probably should hate the worst, it’s Syrians,” he now tells refugees. “But Jesus has changed me so much; He has changed my heart. Now I don’t serve you because it’s an obligation. It’s a privilege because of the forgiveness and love Jesus has shown me. He has filled my heart with that same love, and I’m able to

love you and stand beside you.”

In neighboring Jordan, where some 145,000 mostly Sunni Syrians have fled, similar forms of ministry continue in border areas. The Jordanian government has opened a large border camp for the hundreds of refugees arriving daily and will likely open more. But most Syrian families are living in border towns and villages — where they struggle to locate shelter, pay rent and find work. Christians are aiding hundreds of families with food and other needs, listening, forming friendships and sharing hope.

“We encourage them to share with us whatever is on their hearts so that we might know how to best meet their needs and show them His compassion,” a Christian worker said. “Some of the things they have seen and experienced recently are shocking. One man we have helped was shot in the head. Another man was hit by an RPG; his arm is messed up. Some refugees we meet are complete families but many others are missing fathers, sons or brothers. No two situations seem to be the same, except that there are a lot of hurting people pouring out of Syria. We sit with them to hear about what their families are going through. If they want to talk about something from a counseling perspective, we want them to talk, but we are also always hoping for those opportunities God will provide to share and introduce other things that will truly give them peace” — including Bibles and audio players with New Testament stories.

Opportunities to share

“Despite the awful things that have happened and continue to happen, God is giving us opportunities to share His love and compassion with these refugees. That wasn’t happening a whole lot beforehand. We are finding that during this time in their lives when things are in flux, they find comfort hearing about God’s love for them. After our visits, they expect us to pray with them and we are doing that and more. ... Pray that we would continue to have an open door to share life with these families and that they would see His love in our actions.”

He and other workers in Jordan and Lebanon also ask for prayer for continued open doors, for an end to the violence tearing Syria apart, for boldness and for wisdom in how best to use limited resources.

“God is at work in this crisis, and we’re trying to find where,” one worker said. “It will take a higher level of creativity and a higher level of sacrifice. Are we going to be good stewards of the crises of our day — even if that means greater suffering, hardship and risk?” (BP)

Is LifeWay curriculum biased to Calvinists?

A Southern Baptist college president says new curriculum by LifeWay Christian Resources is biased toward a decidedly Calvinist or Reformed theology viewpoint and not “representative of the vast majority of Southern Baptists.”

Emir Caner, president of Truett-McConnell College in Cleveland, Ga., wrote Aug. 27 on the blog SBC Today that he and other conservatives were initially encouraged when the Southern Baptist Convention publishing house announced The Gospel Project. It is billed as a new flagship curriculum line designed to go deeper than old Southern Baptist literature he described as “shallower than an oasis in the midst of the Mohave Desert.”

After previewing early sample lessons, however, Caner said concerns arose that the authors and sources cited emphasize predestination and diminish the importance of free will.

Theological differences

In addition, Caner noted a bent toward “ecumenism,” which he defined as “a liberal theological movement that emphasizes unity between denominations over theological distinction [and] replaces any emphasis upon Southern Baptist theology.”

“We are most definitely at a crossroads with our own publishing house,” Caner said. “Will the future of LifeWay be one that represents and advocates Baptist theology or is The Gospel Project

the beginning of an ecumenical paradigm shift?”

Caner said those questions are larger than the content of two sample lessons in newly minted material.

“They speak to the heart of the debate in Southern Baptist life,” he said. “We are in the midst of an identity crisis. And we are a divided people whether we wish for it to be so or not.”

A recent survey by LifeWay Research found more than 60 percent of Southern Baptist pastors are somewhat or strongly concerned about the effect of Calvinism on the denomination.”

“With that being the case, leaders must deal with such concerns and, unless they wish for division, alleviate such fears,” Caner said.

“To publish and promote a new curriculum that has such strong Calvinistic leanings only intensifies the situation and disregards the voice in the pew. The vast majority of Southern Baptists do not want to be known as Calvinists or Arminians, but as Baptists with a rich heritage they can learn from.”

LifeWay describes The Gospel Project as “a Christ-centered curriculum looking at the grand narrative of Scripture and how the gospel transforms lives.”

Thousands of churches have participated in a pilot project by downloading four free lessons of the study, managing editor Trevin Wax said in a news release.

“The launch of The Gospel

Project is just weeks away, and we are so encouraged by the initial response,” Wax said. “Thousands of churches from a variety of denominations and affiliations have ordered the curriculum, and it is selling nearly twice what we originally forecast.”

The press release said LifeWay is stepping up plans for a second printing of the curriculum to keep up with the demand.

Originally started by pastors

concerned about divisions in Southern Baptist life, SBC Today was acquired in July by Truett-McConnell and Caner was named as publisher.

On Aug. 1 the blog carried a story about a pastor in Maryland who after reviewing The Gospel

Project carefully decided it wasn't right for his church.

“There are numerous subtle seeds of the Calvinistic approach to Scripture and many that are overtly obvious,” observed Ralph Green, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Bel Air, Md. “The more we read and studied the curriculum, the more convinced we have become that this curriculum is not suitable for use here

“We are in the midst of an identity crisis. And we are a divided people whether we wish for it to be so or not.”

**Emir Caner, president
Truett-McConnell College**

at Calvary.”

“I am greatly disappointed because there is nothing wrong with healthy dialogue and wrestling with theological issues,” Green said.

“But when a curriculum is designed to teach only one side of the issue, it is no longer a healthy debate but indoctrination; and we cannot allow that indoctrination to take place here at Calvary.”

(ABP)

HEART OF MISSIONS ...

Calvary Baptist Church, Russellville, returned July 16 from a missions trip in San Cayetano, Nicaragua, organized through Concern for the World, an evangelistic association founded by Gene Williams.

The 18-member group left July 9, taking duffel bags full of reading glasses, flip-flops and gifts for children.

The team stayed in a house in nearby Managua and traveled into San Cayetano by bus. During the day some members installed electrical fixtures and windows in a Baptist church building while others visited houses and schools to share the gospel and held a children's activity day.

For two evenings they screened parts of the movie “Courageous” in the town square and Calvary Baptist Pastor Wade Wallace preached. After they finished setting up electricity in the church the team held a final screening to finish the movie

in the church and had two more services.

Over the course of the week 352 people signed cards saying they had accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. (TAB)

A joint missions trip consisting of five churches from Selma Baptist Association, two churches from DeKalb Baptist Association and five members of Antioch Baptist Church, Bowdon, Ga., traveled to Farmington, Maine, in August to assist Maine Baptist Association in building a new Southern Baptist campground and conference center.

The team completely re-roofed the conference center, assisted with new carpentry construction and repairs and made mechanical repairs around the facility.

Selma Association spearheaded the trip. Tom Stacey, director of missions for Selma Association, said the association desires to do

missions work outside of the Bible Belt as much as possible. They have completed 21 construction projects in nine different states over the last 15 years. (TAB)

A Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center missions team of 16 boarded a plane to Guatemala on Aug. 5 with precious cargo — dozens of Salvation Dolls.

The dolls were stitched, stuffed and created by Baptist Women, Sunday School teachers, Alabama Campers on Mission volunteers and children of First Baptist Church, Eulaton.

At First, Eulaton, first-through-sixth grade children were involved in the project so they, too, could learn about missions and outreach right from their fellowship hall in Anniston.

The missions team distributed dolls at several schools in Guatemala and returned Aug. 11. (Shocco)

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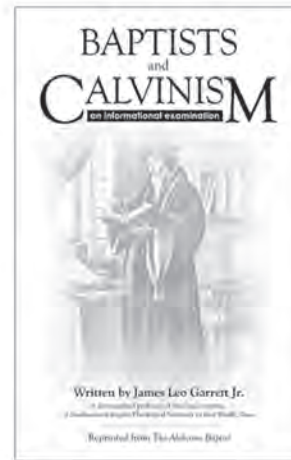
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BP photo

Shad Khalil has a new life now. 'God healed my broken heart,' he says. Khalil learned God's plan included him knowing and believing he is fearfully and wonderfully made. He enjoys playing basketball and reading the Bible in his free time.

Changing lives

'Railway boys' in India find new home, 'family' at Christian hostel

Life for boys living in India's railway stations is a real-life "Hunger Games." If they don't fight, they'll be killed. If they don't find food and survive in this arena, they'll starve on the train tracks.

Railway boys are those who have run away from home and joined gangs who live in India's train stations. They travel the country, jumping from train to train and stealing from passengers. Nine boys have left this life behind and found earthly and heavenly family.

The boys sitting at this breakfast table survived the war. The glue sniffing, the razor blade scars, the rape and the murders have knit them together.

"This is my family," Shad Khalil said, gesturing to the eight other boys in the hostel kitchen. He slings his arm around the youngest boy, pulling him close.

At 16, Khalil is the oldest boy living in this Christian hostel. His smile seems innocent, but he lost his innocence a long time ago.

Khalil, like most of the other boys in the hostel, ran away from home. Khalil left his home in Delhi at age 10. His mother came from a Catholic background but married a Muslim.

"There was no unity," Khalil said. "They were not like family at all."

Khalil's father spent many days drunk, beat Khalil's mother and forced himself on her. He beat Khalil too, throwing household items at him. When Khalil tried to protect his mother, he was nearly beaten to death.

"My grandfather was a very dirty man," Khalil said, looking out the window. Tears begin to well in his eyes. "I have a sister. I feel my grandfather is spoiling her life."

Guilt consumes his face. "I was young and wouldn't express myself," Khalil said, fixing his gaze on the breakfast table.

"I miss my sister. Pray for me and my family."

Khalil ran away and jumped on a train headed out of town. He eventually landed in a train station on the other side of the country, where he collected water bottles to sell, begged and stole from passengers. He gave a portion of the profits to his gang leader for protection.

Gang leaders are boys in their late teens or early 20s who manipulate new railway boys by introducing glue-sniffing, creating a cycle of dependency and control.

Gang leaders in Khalil's train station were notorious for throwing boys in front of moving trains. Khalil was thrown onto the tracks and hit his head. He remembers that a man dressed in white helped him off of the tracks. He has no idea who this man was and has never seen him since.

Not long after that Khalil met Prabal Dey, who offered

Khalil a life outside the railway.

Prabal and Debjani Dey have opened a Christ-centered hostel for railway boys like Khalil.

Glue withdrawals hit Khalil and his new brothers the first couple of weeks after they left the railway. The Deys substituted food, sports and television for glue. Yelling, fighting and cursing were commonplace in the hostel.

"Satan was working so much, I couldn't come out of those addictions," Khalil said, shaking his head at the memory.

Dey said it took some time for the boys to obey adults who didn't threaten to kill them as punishment for disobedience. Now, though it's been several years, the boys still act out, Dey said, since so much in their life needs redeeming.

Teaching truth

"Good food, good things can't change them," Dey said. "One thing can change them: Jesus."

The Deys teach God's Truth to Khalil and his hostel brothers throughout the day and in devotional times.

"They are completely changed because of prayer," Dey said. "They can't sleep if they don't have prayer."

The Deys and the railway boys are active members of the house church that Gary and Cynthia Follen, International Mission Board representatives, lead. Follen mentors the railway boys and helps them work through emotional scarring.

Follen played a pivotal role in Khalil's journey to Christ. "When he came to a Christian worship place, he [Khalil] was very different," Dey said. "He was anti-Christian."

Khalil came to the hostel timid and emotionally scarred. But now, more than two years later, he's quietly confident and his smile illuminates his face. When visitors come he's the first to engage them in conversation.

Khalil talks about God's provision in his life in almost every sentence. "God healed my broken heart," Khalil said.

During a nightly tutoring session, Khalil's brow furrows — the English words swim around the page. He's not following.

Khalil is 16 years old in the fifth grade. His years of sniffing glue hinder his memory and learning abilities and a lack

of nutrients in his formative years has made him small for his age.

"He has a lot of hurt in his life," Dey said. Khalil puts himself down because of the years lost on the railway.

Though he has trouble studying, Khalil's cappuccino-colored eyes and olive skin make him popular among the girls at school.

"I'm not interested," he said, blushing. He's got more on his mind, he explained. He wants to focus on his relationship with God. When he grows up, he wants to open a hostel just like this one.

But some days in the hostel are still hard.

The railway is freedom, Dey explained. The boys can jump from train to train and journey anywhere in India. Coming to the hostel means a life of structure and schedules. There's no glue or alcohol and misbehaving has consequences — a difficult adjustment.

Four of the boys who were the first to come to the hostel have returned to the railway, making Khalil the oldest.

"I've been here since I was little and I've never left," Khalil said wistfully.

Lost in thought, Khalil gazed down the road that leads to the neighborhood's exit. He was thinking about leaving the hostel.

He was not sure where he would go — but never back to the railway. "That's a bad place," he said.

Khalil persevered. Though he doesn't make high scores on his report card, his spoken English is the best in the hostel.

"He knows by heart the word of God," Dey said. Khalil was also the first boy to give his testimony in church and has plans to be baptized.

Unlike gang leaders in train stations, Khalil tries to protect the younger hostel boys. "These are my brothers, I must watch out for them," Khalil said. "This is a beautiful family — there's love here."

The redeemed railway boys are the family he never had.

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

"These are my brothers, I must watch out for them.

This is a beautiful family — there's love here."

Shad Khalil, former railway boy

Historical Highlights

from previous issues of *The Alabama Baptist*

Compiled by Kathleen Prude

50 Years Ago August 1962

Migrant Ministry: The Sand Mountain Baptist Association is composed of 28 churches in DeKalb and Jackson counties. During the months of July and August there are usually about 800 to 1,000 migrant workers who live there to gather the Irish potato crop. During the past few years a very small number of churches have ministered to them in a limited way. This year work was started on the associational level. Rev. and Mrs. Andrew Foster of the Home Mission Board spent four weeks in the area helping to set up the work. Rev. Lee Gibbs, missionary, reports it was the most rewarding work ever attempted. Ninety-three workers from 10 churches cooperated and well over 500 migrant workers were reached with the gospel.

40 Years Ago August 1972

Layman Named: Russell C.

Parrish, of Greenville, has been named first vice president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Committee's board of trustees. The election of officers took place at a Commission luncheon during the Southern Baptist Convention in Philadelphia, Pa. Parrish, manager of Boss Manufacturing Co. in Greenville, is a member of First Baptist Church, where he is a deacon and Sunday School teacher. He has also served on the Alabama Baptist Executive Board.

30 Years Ago August 1982

New DOM: William T. Spencer II has accepted the call of Bethel Baptist Association to serve as director of missions effective Aug. 2. Active in denominational life, he has served as vice chairman of both the Baptist State Executive Board and the Administration Committee. Spencer was formerly the pastor of Underwood Baptist Church, Florence.

20 Years Ago August 1992

Top Educator: Birmingham native Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Education Commission, recently received the Charles D. Johnson Outstanding Education Award, which is given annually to a person who has made a significant contribution to Southern Baptist higher education. Walker has directed the Education Commission since 1978. Prior to that he was dean of students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and was on the faculty of Samford University for 20 years.

10 Years Ago August 2002

Coach Honored: Alabama Sports Hall of Famer Herman "Bubba" Scott was honored at the dedication of the Big Oak Ranch retreat house, which was named for him. Scott's former players and friends paid for the house and furnishings, along with making a \$10,000 donation in his honor. Scott's former players used words like "hero" and "father figure" to describe the kind of man and football coach Scott was to them. In addition to being a deacon at First Baptist Church, Montgomery, Scott served eight years on the board of directors of *The Alabama Baptist*.



MARKET PLACE

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CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR: A conservative Southern Baptist church in the beautiful foothills of Georgia is seeking God's will in finding a full-time pastor. He should have a heart for God and His people, should be evangelistic and missions-minded. Please send resumés to: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 100, Clarksville, GA 30523, by Oct. 1.

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 resumés to: Boone Trail Baptist Church, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, 1985 Carroll Creek Road, Johnson City, TN 37615 or pastorsearch@boonetrailbaptist.org by Sept. 30.

PASTOR: Pisgah Baptist Church, Sand Mountain Association in northeast Alabama, is accepting resumés for pastor. Full-time and bivocational resumés accepted. Rural, conservative Southern Baptist church. Average Sunday attendance 75-100. Send resumés to: Pisgah Baptist Church, c/o Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 10, Pisgah, AL 35765, or email to: gmillican@farmerstel.com.

PASTOR: Steele Baptist Church, Steele, Ala., is seeking God's will for a pastor. Please send resumés 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 resumés to: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 685, Jackson, AL 36545.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Church seeking bivocational pastor. Please

send resumé to: New Beginning Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1376, Alexander City, AL 35011.

WORSHIP PASTOR: FBC DeFuniak Springs, Fla., is searching for a full-time worship pastor. Minimum experience of 3 years and college degree required, seminary preferred. Please send resumé to: fbcdfs@embarqmail.com or 216 E. Live Oak, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435.

WORSHIP PASTOR: First Baptist Church at the Villages (FBCATV) seeks a full-time worship pastor. Founded in 2001, FBCATV is a vibrant Southern Baptist congregation (750+ weekly attendance) located within The Villages, Fla., a fast-growing active adult community located an hour north of Orlando. For more information, visit www.fbcvillages.org and click the worship pastor search link for job description and submission requirements.

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

TWO PART-TIME POSITIONS: Minister of music and minister of youth. Central Baptist Church in Gardendale is seeking to fill two part-time positions. We are a small church with blended worship (more modern upbeat music than traditional). Resumés can be emailed to: lawanna@cbcgardendale.com or Central Baptist, 4650 Newfound Road, Mt. Olive, AL 35117. Call 205-381-0766 for details.

STUDENT MINISTER: Munford Baptist Church is currently seeking to fill the position of student minister. Please send your resumé to: P.O. Box 129, Munford, AL 36268. For more information, contact the church office at 256-358-4536.

CHILDREN'S MINISTER: FBC Troy, Ala., is searching for a part-time children's minister. Responsibilities: over-

see comprehensive children's ministry. Email resumés to: Luke Lane at lukelane40@gmail.com.

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In John 14 Jesus made a pivotal claim about Himself: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him and have seen Him." When His disciples expressed their doubts and questions, Jesus said they should know Him because of the time they had spent together. To help them He gave them one more reason to believe. "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves." They had seen Him do many miracles. He had fed 5,000 with a few loaves and some fish. He had walked on water, opened blind eyes and even brought dead men back to life. All of those things testified to who Jesus claimed to be.

Even in the face of all they had seen Him do, His original disciples were still limited in their understanding. His identity as the Son of God is the dividing line. If He is not the Son of God and just a man who lived and died then He is not the only way to God. If He is the Son of God there can be no other way for a man to know God. Because God knew we would still be unconvinced in the face of overwhelming evidence, He gave us one final proof. He raised His Son from the dead. Paul said in Romans 1 He was declared the Son of God "with power by the resurrection."

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JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Women's College Coalition Director Urges Judson College to Highlight the Positives:** Women's College Coalition (WCC) Executive Director Susan Lennon told her Judson College audience that those who labor in women's colleges must learn to "think like an ocean."

Lennon explained that "thinking like an ocean" means to try to understand the mindset of young women when they are asked to consider a women's college.

Lennon cited studies suggesting a greater percentage of women feel better prepared for vocation after graduating from a women's college and graduates are more likely involved in service, volunteerism, music and theatre as compared to women who graduate from traditional colleges.

Studies also show that students at women's colleges are more likely to develop leadership skills, Lennon said.

Lennon acknowledged that the higher education world is filled with more challenges today than ever before.

Lennon said that whereas 65 percent of high school graduates now go on to college and nearly 60 percent of these are women, 48 percent of college freshmen drop out of college at least once.

The WCC is headquartered in Hartford, Conn., and is comprised of 47 American colleges and universities. The website is women-colleges.org.

four locations throughout Mobile.

The display is open weekdays through Sept. 21 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A reception will be held in Martin Hall Gallery on Sept. 13, from 4 to 6 p.m.

Participating artists include Benjamin J. Shamback, Tony Wright, Pieter Favier, Kate Seawell, Susie Bowman, Rita Skiadas, Lucy Gafford, Rikki Rhodes, Elana Fell, Susan Downing-White, Lydia Host and Casey Ginn.

Other locations for "Artacopia" are Alabama School of Math and Science, University of South Alabama and Spring Hill College.

For more information, contact Associate Professor of Art Philip Counselman at 251-442-2283.

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Beeson's Lay Academy of Theology Offers Varied Opportunities:** Samford University's Beeson Divinity School will offer a variety of study opportunities this fall through its Lay Academy of Theology.

Course topics, leaders and dates are: Followers of the Lamb — Living in Rhythm with the Book of Revelation, led by Douglas D. Webster, six Monday nights beginning Sept. 24; A Multi-Voice Choir — The Minor Prophets, led by Mark Gignilliat, six Tuesday nights beginning Sept. 25; and Sin and Forgiveness, led by Piotr Malysz, six Thursday nights beginning Sept. 27.

Courses will begin at 6 p.m. and meet for two hours.

Beeson research professor Gerald Bray will lead two weeklong seminars that will meet weekdays, 1:30-3:30 p.m., in November and January.

For information on any Lay Academy of Theology program, visit www.beesondivinity.com or call 205-726-2731. Registration is available online, by mail or by phone.

► **Samford Receives Grant to Prepare Nursing Educators:**

Samford University's Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing has received a federal grant designed to help ease the national shortage of nursing educators. Samford received the seventh largest award of the 106 Nurse Faculty Loan Program (NFLP) grants awarded to institutions across the U.S. for 2012-13.

The \$854,146 grant, awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, will provide loans for graduate students pursuing an advanced degree with the intent to serve as faculty in a school of nursing.

The grant will fund up to 25 new students. Currently 43 Samford nursing graduate students receive funds from the loan program and students can continue to receive loans as long as they maintain good academic standing.

Individuals interested in pursuing an advanced degree in nurse education should visit www.samford.edu/nursing to apply or call 205-726-2047.

► **Nursing Dean Part of Inaugural Cohort of AACN-Wharton Executive Leadership Program:** Nena F. Sanders, dean of Samford University's Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing, was selected to participate in a world-class enrichment program designed exclusively for nursing leaders.

Sanders was a part of the first cohort of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Wharton Executive Leadership Program. Thirty-seven nurse educators from 25 states were selected to participate Aug. 14-17 at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Sanders has been involved in nursing and health administration for more than 30 years and has a wide range of experience in health policy, administration and education at the state and national levels. Currently, she serves as a member of the executive committee for Alabama Nurse Leaders in Education and Practice and as a member of the steering committee for the Alabama Health Action Coalition, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and AARP-funded initiative focused on improving the health status of all Alabamians.

Sanders has served as Ralph W. Beeson dean and professor in the Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing for 11 years. She joined the Samford faculty in 1999.



When I said, "My foot is slipping," your unfailing love, Lord, supported me.

Psalm 94:18

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UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For September 2

Explore the Bible By Jay T. Robertson Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

LIVING WITH HOPE 1 Peter 1:1-12

Peter wrote this epistle from Rome around A.D. 62-63 to encourage the new Christians in what is modern-day Turkey to stand firm in the grace of God (5:12). He encouraged them to remain faithful and live in hope in times of distress, knowing that God would vindicate them and that they would certainly enjoy the salvation the Lord has promised.

Hope: Recognize Its Basis (1:1-5)

We can stand firm in God's grace and live with hope because we are taught in Scripture that salvation was planned by God and is permanent. Jesus designated Peter as an authoritative messenger and interpreter of the gospel. Peter began by describing the basis for our hope as Christians. He encouraged them by declaring that they were elected by the Father, sanctified by the Spirit and redeemed by the Son.

Peter emphasized God's sovereignty and initiative in salvation. Father God had set His covenantal affection upon them, but He in no way violated their will. The glorious mystery of our salvation by the triune God runs deep in these waters. Peter then wrote of their conversion. As the gospel is preached the Holy Spirit works, bringing people to faith and holiness. Our redemption by Jesus was described as "sprinkling with His blood." Christians should live with hope because we have been foreknown by the Father, sanctified by the Spirit and cleansed by the Son.

Not only was our salvation planned; it is also permanent! Father God has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus. Believers have an unshakable hope for the future, for Jesus' resurrection is a pledge of their own future resurrection. Our inheritance in Jesus is imperishable, undefiled and unfading in heaven. The "hope" of verse 3 is described as an "inheritance." Nothing can tarnish or extinguish that secure inheritance. We are being guarded by God's power through faith. Father God will protect believers through His power by sustaining their faith to the end.

Hope: Rejoice in Response (1:6-9)

Peter realized that joy was mingled with grief as believers in Asia Minor suffered various trials. These sufferings were God's will for His people so that their faith might be purified and shown to be genuine. Sometimes trials discipline us when we have disobeyed God's Word (Ps. 119:67). At other times trials prepare us for spiritual growth or even help to prevent us from sinning (2 Cor. 12:1-9). We do not always know what God is up to, but we can trust Him to know and do what is best. Such faith has a great reward, for at the return of Jesus, honor and praise will belong both to Jesus and His faithful followers. As we live for Jesus we should also expect to have our faith tested at times. We too must remember that Jesus is sovereign and in control. His plan will be realized and His power is sufficient for the challenges we face.

Joy, however, is not reserved only for the future when Jesus returns. Even now His disciples love Him, believe in Him and rejoice with an inexpressible joy. Salvation is precious. It enables us to live for Jesus and to love Him even in the midst of the trials we must face. The living hope we have in Jesus enables us to respond with rejoicing.

Hope: Recall God's Grace (1:10-12)

We can live with hope as we recall that salvation was promised back in the Old Testament Scriptures. The prophets prophesied the saints' salvation, predicted the Savior's suffering and proclaimed the Spirit's service. The prophets predicted the coming of Messiah to atone for our sins, but they did not know when He would come. They hoped upon hope that their prophecies would be fulfilled in their day.

Peter's main point is that believers in Jesus are incredibly blessed to live in the time when the predictions of the prophets have come to pass. If the Old Testament prophets searched so diligently into the truths of salvation and yet had so little to go on, how much more ought we to search into this subject now that we have a complete word from God!

Bible Studies for Life By David Hogg Academic Dean at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

BACK TO BASICS Matthew 5:1-16

There have been many famous speeches. Some of them are short, such as Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Some of them are longer, such as Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. But these and other speeches like them, no matter what their subject or who delivered them, have one trait in common: they are the words of mere men. They may inspire or impress, but they do not impart life. This is what sets Jesus' great sermon apart. The Sermon on the Mount is a living word from a living God to people in need of eternal life.

Blessed and Happy

As we cast an eye over this great sermon, what strikes us immediately is the repeated use of the word "blessed." As a general rule, whenever a word is repeated it is probably a good idea to find out why. Often a speaker or writer will use a word numerous times to capture our attention. So what does blessed mean?

It has become commonplace to say that when Jesus used the word blessed, He meant more than happy. While I agree with this, I would also want to emphasize that while blessed does indicate more than happiness, it does not indicate less than happiness. In other words, Jesus is not telling us that the blessed person exemplifies these characteristics with a kind of joyless stoicism; rather, Jesus is beginning to teach us that the blessed person finds his or her joy and happiness from something beyond themselves — from God. The evidence of this comes at the end of this section in verse 16, where Jesus says that when the world sees our good works they will glorify not us, but our Father who is in heaven. We can only live what Jesus commands by the power and presence of God.

Your Inner Attitude (1-6)

But how do we start? Notice the first beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit." We begin by recognizing our spiritual poverty. It is easier for a camel to go through the

eye of a needle than a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven because the self-sufficient person fails to see his or her spiritual poverty. The confirmation of this recognition comes in the second beatitude, mourning. Those who realize their spiritual poverty through repentance and faith in Christ are left with nothing but tears before the cross, but they leave comforted with the knowledge that they have now entered the kingdom of heaven.

Your Outward Relationships (7-12)

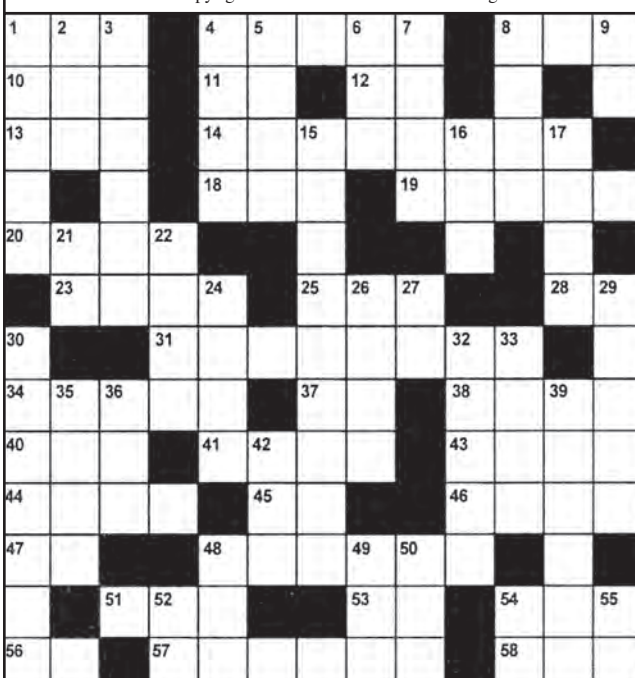
While the gospel certainly demands "my soul, my life, my all," it is not thereby centered around me. If being poor in spirit is a way of talking about ourselves in relation to God, being merciful and a peacemaker is a way of reminding us about ourselves in relation to others. It can be very difficult to be meek (humble or gentle) or merciful to someone — let alone a peacemaker — when we have suffered unjustly. The gospel, however, does not call us to defend our rights or our causes but to place our trust in the God who judges justly. You may recall that in Numbers 12 Moses was attacked by his own siblings, but God defended him even while Moses was at his most humble. Meekness and mercy leave room for God to exercise justice.

Your Worldwide Influence (13-16)

In the bustle of our lives there rarely seems room for rest, let alone acts of mercy toward others. Nevertheless, even as the world would seek to sweep us away in its wave of ungodliness we are to remain steadfast in our commitment to Christ. Why does Jesus introduce salt and a lamp in these verses? He does so because they each have a singular purpose: in the one case to add flavor and in the other to provide light. Jesus' point is that when these things lose their singular purpose they become useless, and so too with us. When we conform to the world we lose our singular purpose to live lives that glorify our Father in heaven. It is vital that we never stop hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

Christian Crossword

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Across

- The patience of _____. (James 5:11)
- Messenger of God.
- _____ so loved the world. (John 3:16)
- Before.
- There was _____ room for them. (Luke 2:7)
- _____ be taxed with Mary. (Luke 2:5)
- To place.
- Mary's hometown. (Luke 1:26)
- Exclamation of triumph.
- The angel appeared to Joseph in a _____. (Matt. 1:20)
- Son of Noah. (Gen. 6:10)
- Valley where David fought Goliath. (1 Sam. 17:2)
- Noah's second son.
- Licenses Surgeon. (abbr.)
- Elizabeth. (variation)
- Pale.
- About.

- True.
- Buzzing insect.
- His _____ drew the third part of the stars. (Rev. 12:4)
- Therefore, I _____ you. (Rom. 12:1 NIV)
- Burnt offerings of _____. (Isa. 1:11)
- District Attorney. (abbr.)
- To place.
- And _____ came to pass. (Luke 1:41)
- Mary's husband. (Matt. 1:20)
- Life story. (abbr.)
- Rear Admiral. (abbr.)
- New. (prefix)
- _____, the angel of the Lord. (Luke 2:9)
- Cyrenius was his governor. (Luke 2:2)
- _____, and it shall be given. (Matt. 7:7)
- that place _____. (Gen. 28:19)
- A prophetess. (Luke 2:36)
- He built an ark.
- Greek vowel.
- The angel of the _____.
- Entrance.
- _____ to others. (Matt. 7:12 NIV)
- Father of John. (Luke 1:59)
- Make a mistake.
- _____, thou that are highly favoured. (Luke 1:28)
- _____ shall be called John. (Luke 1:60)
- Every _____ that openeth the womb. (Luke 2:23)
- Clue.
- Cain's brother.
- Come unto _____. (Matt. 11:28)
- Melchizedek king of _____. (Gen. 14:18)
- The angel _____. (Luke 1:26)
- I am the way, the _____,

Down

- The Son of God.
- Mine product.
- He called the name of _____,

- and the life. (John 14:6)
- It is good for us to be _____. (Matt. 17:4)
- They sit in Moses' _____. (Matt. 23:2)
- Touched the _____ of his garment. (Matt. 9:20)
- Concurs.
- Fuss.
- Good tidings of great _____. (Luke 2:10)
- Historic period.
- Cooking pot.
- Unto you _____ born this day. (Luke 2:11)
- Not available. (abbr.)
- All right.



World Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Mormon women seek more visible role in church

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — For some Mormon feminists, there can be only one goal on the road to gender equality: ordination to the all-male priesthood. At the same time lots of Mormon women are perfectly comfortable with the roles they believe God assigned to them including motherhood and nurturing.

Now comes a third and, some suggest, growing group of Mormon women somewhere between these two poles.

They are not pushing for ordination, but they crave a more engaged and visible role for women in the Mormon church. It is a role, they believe, that their Mormon foremothers played. These women point to little changes that would pay big dividends: treating a president of the local Relief Society (the church's main women's group) like her male counterpart and assigning her to be a regular speaker at conferences and in worship services; quoting more women in sermons and Sunday School lessons; and selecting more women to speak and pray at church-wide General Conferences.

In the 19th century Mormon women were early suffragettes, forming alliances with national leaders such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. They were the first in the nation to vote and among the trailblazers to pursue professional careers in medicine, business and law.

But today women have become "the support staff for the real work of men," said Latter-day Saints activist and writer Chelsea Shields Strayer, "which means we are basically working with only 50 percent of our human capital."

Scotland to be 1st in UK to legalize gay 'marriage'

EDINBURGH, Scotland — Scotland has announced it will allow same-sex weddings as early as 2015, becoming the first country in the United Kingdom to do so.

"We are committed to a Scotland that is fair and equal, and that is why we intend to proceed with plans to allow same-sex 'marriage' and religious ceremonies for civil partnerships," said Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, who made the announcement July 25.

The Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church were against the move, but gay-friendly Christian groups said they were "relieved" by the announcement.

Sturgeon said religious groups and individuals opposed to same-sex "marriage" will not be punished for not performing them.

"The Scottish government is embarking on a dangerous social experiment on a massive scale," said a spokesman for the Roman Catholic Church.

Rod Thomas, chairman of Reform, a conservative evangelical network within the Church of England, said, "God designed marriage to be the union of one man and one woman, reflecting the union of Christ as bridegroom and the Church His bride. God is not a person with whom even U.K. prime ministers can negotiate a more congenial set of commands."

Book Reviews

By Martine Bates Sharp, Ed.D.

Mr. Awana: Sixty-Plus Years of Changing the World for Christ

Art Rorheim. *Larkspur, Colo.: Grace Acres Press, 2011. 266 pp. (Paperback).*

At the age of 17, Art Rorheim was asked by his pastor to serve as leader for a children's club sponsored by their church in Chicago. The two men worked together as the club grew and changed over the years, branching out to other churches around the world. As of 2010, more than 7,600 churches worldwide had active Awana ministries, reaching almost a half million children with its emphases on salvation and Scripture memorization.

In this autobiography, co-founder Art Rorheim relates the story of Awana and other details of a life spent in children's evangelism. The book is filled with stories and photographs from Rorheim's life, broken down into easily readable short snapshots — which is a good thing because there is a lot of material in the book. It is not a book to be read in a single sitting, or probably even in a weekend.

People involved in Awana will be interested in the book for its glimpses into the founding and development of the program. People unfamiliar with Awana will be inspired by a man who spent his life building a ministry that reaches so many children around the globe.

Glimpses of an Abundant Life

Frank Donaldson. *Birmingham, Ala.: Frank W. Donaldson, 2011. 314 pp. (Paperback).*

Frank Donaldson has lived an interesting life, chronicled in this autobiography. Published when the author was 90, the book is evidence of a full — abun-

dant — life and a keen memory.

While the book will certainly be of great interest to those who have known the author through the years, it is likely to hold the attention of many who are not familiar with the author. A great deal of history is included, as experienced by Donaldson as he served as a U.S. Army Air Forces pilot, an FBI agent, a law school professor at Samford for 43 years and a U.S. Attorney.

Donaldson is a member of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham.

Erasing Hell: What God Said About Eternity, and the Things We Made Up

Francis Chan and Preston Sprinkle. *Colorado Springs, Colo.: David C Cook, 2011. 197 pp. (Paperback).*

Does hell exist? Is it a place where people literally burn? Forever? How can a loving God send people to hell? Francis Chan, author of "Crazy Love" and "Forgotten God," and writing partner Preston Sprinkle set out to answer those questions from a scriptural standpoint.

Chan, who is the "voice" of the book, acknowledges early on, "Part of me doesn't want to believe in hell. And I'll admit that I have a tendency to read into Scripture what I want to find." Thus begins what has the feel of an honest, personal quest for the truth as found in the Bible.

And he found it — most of it, that is. Where Chan is sure, he says so. Where he and his co-author feel the Bible is murky, the question is left open. The unexpected result is not so much a list of answers to questions but a deep, penetrating

soul-search, leading to some convicting conclusions.

As with all of Chan's work, the language of the book is uncomplicated and easy to read; the concepts are presented clearly and simply. The issue for the reader of "Erasing Hell" is meeting the challenge laid out by the truths revealed in it.

The Pickled Priest and the Perishing Parish: Boomer Pastors Bouncing Back

Hal West. *Bloomington, Ind.: CrossBooks, 2011. 128 pp. (Paperback).*

Before you groan and skip this review — please wait! It's not what it looks like. Not at all. This book was actually written by a Southern Baptist. You thought it was a book about Catholics or Lutherans? So did I, but you know how preachers love alliteration. I guess he couldn't help himself.

Let's forget the unfortunate title and take a look at the book. Hal West is a longtime South Carolina pastor who set out to write a book to help other struggling baby boomer pastors deal with a changing world and a church that does not want — or know how — to change. He admits, "Many of us know that our churches are losing ground, as powerful forces ever so slowly erase familiar faces from our midst and erode the ground around our foundations."

Using a mixture of personal experience, research and Scripture, West carefully lays out the issues and gives some basic and challenging advice on how discouraged pastors can bounce back and lead their churches to deal with the "new realities of the 21st century."

My advice? Skip the title. Read the book.

New UMobile forensic sciences course turns lab into 'crime scene'

A new class in forensic sciences will turn a University of Mobile science lab into a "crime scene," complete with a bloody footprint and clues students will investigate using scientific methods.

Gail Shelly and Larissa Parsley Walker are team-teachers of the upper level course that combines practical applications of chemistry, physics and biology with current techniques used by the criminal justice system in processing evidence at a crime scene.

"There is a pressing need for qualified personnel in the field of forensic science, and we hope to provide our upper level science majors with a look at this interesting multidisciplinary field," said Shelly, professor of chemistry at the Christian university.

How is it different from CSI?

Walker, assistant professor of biology, said she enjoys watching television shows such as "CSI" that use science to solve a mystery, and so do her students.

"However, as enjoyable as these shows are, they rarely give a true representation of the science in-

involved in a real criminal investigation. To help dispel some of these misconceptions, Dr. Shelly and I decided to develop a new, cutting-edge course in forensic science," Walker wrote in an online journal on the university's website. The professors will write about the course in the online journal and include clues that students will use to help solve the crime.

The journal, "Investigating Forensic Sciences," is posted at www.umobile.edu.

Students get their first look at the "crime scene" during science lab Aug. 27 when the room is cordoned off with crime scene tape. Students will collect and analyze evidence throughout the semester to determine what happened in the lab and find the culprit.

"They will study the various techniques used by real-world criminologists, including analysis of broken glass, soil, fingerprints, drugs, tool marks, ballistics, hair, fibers, blood stains and explosives. Blood typing and DNA analysis will also be performed," Shelly said. (UMobile)



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile

CUTTING-EDGE — Team-teachers Larissa Parsley Walker (left) and Gail Shelly combine practical applications of chemistry, physics and biology with current techniques used by the criminal justice system in processing evidence at a crime scene.



Photo courtesy of Provident Label Group

(L to r) Jesse Garcia, Jason Roy, Aaron Branch and Michael Anderson of the band Building 429 desire to use music as a powerful tool to reach students with the gospel.

Rooted in Scripture

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Christian band Building 429 provides source of hope, healing

As their group name reflects Ephesians 4:29, the Dove Award-winning band Building 429 desires to use music as a powerful tool to reach students with the gospel.

"Teenagers have so many things weighing them down," lead singer Jason Roy said. "Many of them feel so disconnected, unwanted and unloved. ... We want to let them know that God loves them and hasn't forgotten about them."

In addition to Roy the band consists of guitarist Jesse Garcia, bass player Aaron Branch and drummer Michael Anderson. During concerts Roy shares his life experiences and struggles in hopes of connecting students to the gospel.

Like many children, Roy had to deal with issues surrounding his parents' divorce, including heartbreak, pain and bitterness that carried over into his teenage years. Those emotions intensified after Roy discovered that his father, a weight lifting champion, had become addicted to performance enhancing drugs and other illegal substances.

Desiring to seek relief from his turbulent home life, Roy began attending a local church with friends and became active in the youth group.

"When I was 15, I accepted Christ because I wanted to know peace and love in the middle of the turmoil in my life," Roy said. "A major struggle was coming to terms with who my father was and who he wasn't. Despite the mess that we were dealing with, I still loved him no matter what. I prayed for him constantly."

Roy began using music as a way to express what

he was feeling, and he wrote songs about his personal struggles.

"I started writing songs about all the things that I was too scared to say to my dad, and all the things I wished I could say to my mom, about all the brokenness we experienced. ... All I could do was place my trust in the Lord and rely on Him for the strength to get through each day."

After high school, Roy's interest in music continued and he began performing with friends at local coffeehouses and churches. As the group's popularity began building, it was not long before they received invitations to perform at larger gatherings, including conferences and music festivals.

About the same time that Building 429 started touring across the country, Roy learned that his own relationship with Christ had made a profound impact on his father who sought relief from his addictions and surrendered his life to the Lord.

The songs on the group's latest album, "Listen to the Sound," are designed to encourage listeners while pointing them to the love, grace and forgiveness of Christ.

"Through our music and concerts, I hope that people get a better picture of letting God do the extraordinary with the ordinary," Roy said.

"I love challenging, inspiring and spurring people on to have a greater knowledge of God and invest in Him through faith. It's always exciting when the Holy Spirit works through people who have no interest in being at a concert. Maybe a friend just brought them, but by the end of the night they are believers in an everlasting God and His power." ❧



Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Conservative groups address religious hostility

WASHINGTON — Two conservative groups have released a "Survey of Religious Hostility in America," which seeks to draw attention to a "relentless onslaught" against religious people and institutions.

"America today would be unrecognizable to our Founders," according to the report, unveiled Aug. 20 by the Texas-based Liberty Institute and the Washington-based Family Research Council (FRC). The FRC's security guard was shot Aug. 22 by a man who was reportedly angered by the group's anti-gay stances.

"Our first freedom is facing a relentless onslaught from well-funded and aggressive groups and individuals who are using the courts, Congress and the vast federal bureaucracy to suppress and limit religious freedom," the report said.

Other religious groups say the threat to religious liberty lies elsewhere, in conservative institutions such as the Liberty Institute, the FRC and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), which, they say, seek to impose their religious beliefs on others.

The report comes in the wake of a high-profile campaign for religious liberty by the USCCB in June and July, a "fortnight of freedom," to highlight what they perceive as attacks on the right to practice religion. The Obama administration's new mandate, which requires employers, with some exceptions, to provide contraception coverage in their health plans, particularly riled the bishops.

A poll in early August showed most Catholics agree with the bishops. But a March poll found that most Americans do not think religious liberty is under siege in the U.S.

Buffalo chapter of InterVarsity regains status

MADISON, Wis. — InterVarsity's chapter at the State University of New York at Buffalo (UB) is once again functioning as a recognized student organization following a July 28 decision by UB's Student Wide Judiciary (SWJ). The chapter was de-recognized by the Student Association Senate on April 15. The de-recognition followed the resignation of the chapter treasurer, who stepped down from his leadership position after revealing that he did not agree with InterVarsity's Doctrinal Basis.

SWJ ruled that UB's Student Association Senate improperly failed to distinguish between leadership requirements and membership requirements. InterVarsity chapter activities are open to all students. The 16-page ruling said that "it is common sense, not discrimination, for a religious group to want its leaders to agree with its core beliefs."

InterVarsity chapter leaders were pleased to learn of their restoration to the campus community. "We hope the SWJ decision sets a precedent that protects all groups on campus and creates a genuinely diverse campus environment that values differences," said co-president Nicholas C. D'Angelo. "The chapter remained focused and united during this time. Having our presence on campus challenged served to strengthen awareness of our mission and our commitment to the mission."

GSN to host 1st religiously themed game show

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — The world's best-selling book has made it to the small screen in what is thought to be the first religiously themed game show on a secular network.

"The American Bible Challenge" tests teams' knowledge of the Old and New Testaments in a quiz show interspersed with stories of the competitors and the charities they play for.

The show represents a bid to tap the religious market by the secular GSN (formerly Game Show Network). The base audience is evangelicals, said consulting producer Maura Dunbar, but she hopes it will appeal to a broader audience, including nonbelievers.

"I think people of faith will have a very good comfort level, and I think this is an opportunity for all of us to hopefully open up the Bible to new audiences and engagement," Dunbar said.

Comedian Jeff Foxworthy, coming from Fox's quiz show "Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?," will host the Bible challenge. Foxworthy describes himself as a Christian, and details attending Bible study with friends on "The American Bible Challenge" website.

The show tests biblical knowledge in culture, history, literature and current events. ❧