

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



Sept. 13, 2012
Vol. 177, No. 36

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www.thealabamabaptist.org

INSIDE



**FBC Cedar Bluff
sees 4-generation
family in choir**

◆ Page 3



**Southern Baptist
disaster relief
volunteers tend
to affected areas
following Hurri-
cane Isaac**

◆ Page 5



**Diversity of
belief, practice
evident in Pew
study of more
than 38,000
Muslims**

◆ Page 7

RELIGIOUS HOSTILITY

Religious freedom faces 'relentless onslaught' in United States

Hostility toward religious expres-
sion "has reached an all-time
high" in the United States, ac-
cording to a new report.

"The Survey of Religious
Hostility in America" shows a rising tide of
attacks on religious liberty in the public square
and in schools as well as against churches and
ministries, Liberty Institute (LI) and Family
Research Council (FRC) said in the 140-page
report. The organizations released the docu-
ment Aug. 17.

The report, which is an update of a 2004
survey by LI, documents more than 600 in-
stances of hostility toward religion — hostility
it says is dramatically growing in both fre-
quency and type. Most have taken place in the
last 10 years. Religious liberty advocates have
prevailed in legal challenges in some of the
incidents, but not in others.

"America today would be unrecognizable

to our Founders," said Kelly Shackelford, LI
president, and Tony Perkins, FRC president, in
the introduction to the survey. "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 free-
dom. This radicalized minority is driven by an
anti-religious ideology that is turning the First
Amendment upside down."

They pointed to the Obama administration's
common use of the term "freedom of worship"
instead of "freedom of religion" as part of the
problem.

"This radical departure is one that threatens to
make true religious liberty vulnerable, condition-
al and limited," Shackelford and Perkins said. "As
some have said, it is a freedom 'only with four
walls.' That is, you are free to worship within the
four walls of your home, church or synagogue,
but when you enter the public square the message

is, 'leave your religion at home.'"

The Obama administration's advocacy in an
important case decided by the U.S. Supreme
Court in January likely is one of the more crit-
icized of the incidents of hostility documented
in the survey. The administration contended
there is no "ministerial exception" that safe-
guards the rights of churches to hire and re-
move leaders without government regulation.
The high court unanimously disagreed, saying
such government involvement would infringe
on both the First Amendment's protection of
religious free exercise and its ban on govern-
ment establishment of religion. The ruling
came in *Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran
Church and School v. Equal Employment Op-
portunity Commission*.

Another Obama administration policy cited
in the report is its abortion-contraceptive man-
date, which requires all health insurance plans
(See "Other," page 13)

Southern Baptist worker murdered in Jordan; suspect arrested

A suspect has been arrested in
the death of Southern Baptist
worker Cheryll Harvey, according to
Jordanian authorities investigating the
attack on the veteran teacher.

Harvey, 55, whose body was found
in her apartment in Irbid, Jordan, on
Sept. 4 was stabbed to death. Police
reports indicate she was killed by a
young Jordanian man. Robbery was
the apparent motive, police said in the
report obtained Sept. 7 by Southern
Baptist officials.

Harvey had served the Jordanian
people for 24 years, demonstrat-
ing the love of Jesus Christ through
teaching English and other subjects in

connection with the Jordan Baptist
Society.

"Cheryll was greatly loved by
both our personnel in the
Middle East and by her
many students," Inter-
national Mission Board
President Tom Elliff said.
"We are faced once again
with a sobering reminder
of the brevity of life and
the importance of faith-
fully serving the Lord to
the very end of our time
on earth. Cheryll has left
for us a great example that
we should follow."

"She ... will always be remem-
bered for her quiet and unassuming
spirit, as well as her passion for
sharing the good news," Elliff said.

Harvey was a member of College
Heights Baptist Church, Plainview,
Texas, and grew up attending First
Baptist Church, Sudan, Texas. Har-
vey is survived by two brothers who
reside in Texas.

"As with any event such as this,
it is imperative that we remember
Cheryll's surviving family members
and friends," Elliff said,
"and that we lift them up
in prayer during these
days. We best honor her
by giving honor to the
Lord whom she so faith-
fully served."



HARVEY

Robert Roecker, pas-
tor of First, Sudan, said
the church is in a "state
of shock." Harvey had
visited her childhood
church several times since
Roecker became pastor,
offering slideshows of her work in
the Middle East.

A friend of Harvey's relayed to
him that "Cheryll talked about how
when she retired she might just stay
in Jordan. She just really loved it
there and loved the people."

"The thing that always astounded
us was when you heard her speak
she was just a meek and mild person

with just a soft voice," Roecker re-
called. "It's not the picture you have
in your mind of someone who is on
the front lines in Jordan. To have
that courage and faith was amazing
to us. The folks who knew her here
were always saying how surprised
they were at what God was able to
do through her."

LaDelta Vernon, Harvey's third-
grade teacher who would often talk
to her when Harvey came home
on occasional furloughs, said she
always imagined the quiet, well-
behaved girl with the distinctive
laugh would grow up and raise three
daughters. As it turned out, she
never married. She was a helper,
Vernon said, so her teaching English
was no surprise. Her teaching it in
the Middle East was, however.

"If she was your friend, she was
your best friend. She didn't talk
behind people's back. She was just
a sweet, sweet girl," Vernon said.
"She was doing what she wanted to
do, what God called her to do." (BP)

BP photo

COMMENT

‘God Told Me to Do It’

Call him Tom. He was a devout young man in his late 20s, a centerpiece of his growing church fellowship. Tom regularly brought co-workers to church and led several of them to the Lord. He spent a lot of time reading his Bible and was known as a prayer warrior. Church members were not surprised the Sunday night Tom came down the aisle of his local church and announced to everyone that God was calling him to pastoral ministry.

Tom was married to Gail, a girl who had grown up in the church. Everyone thought they were a wonderful couple and would make great pastoral leaders in some lucky church after Tom completed his training for the ministry.

With the blessings of their home church the two young people moved to another state to attend a Bible school known for training pastors since Tom did not have a college degree. The program he chose would take three years to complete. Tom began classes and Gail worked as a receptionist in one of the school offices.

Pressured, anxious

The first year was great. Tom frequently shared how much he was learning with his home church. But as the second year began, contact with the home church became less frequent. Friends became worried. The pastor decided to drive to the Bible school and check in with the couple. It was the week before the end of the semester, so it would be a quick visit. What the pastor found was not what he expected.

Tom had stopped going to class. He was leaving school and leaving his wife.

Tom told the pastor about how he had felt pressured from every side, how anxious and even despondent he had become. Tom had just emerged from two days of praying and fasting and seeking the Lord's will for his life.

Tom told the pastor that God's message to him was that Gail was not the right woman for him and that God wanted him to end his ministry training and leave the school. Tom's face almost glowed as he told the pastor how relieved he was now that those questions were settled. He did not have to study anymore. He did not have to think about someone else anymore.

Tom had not told Gail of his decisions yet but she would have to understand, Tom said, since God told him to leave school and to leave her.



THOUGHTS
By Bob Terry

This incident is based on a true story. The names have been changed for obvious reasons. A key question to ask is whether the message Tom received was from God or from some other source. God gets blamed for a lot of things that are not His doing. In July, a Chicago man justified his attack on a 6-year-old girl by saying, “God told me to shed some blood.” Earlier this year a man in England sawed off the head of his boss and said, “God told me to do it.”

Any special revelations, including those that come amid fasting and praying, have to be tested to see if they are of God. After all, the devil is the “father of all lies.”

The first question to ask is whether or not the revelation is consistent with the character of God. The Christian's ultimate confidence is in the character of God: in the love of God that sent Jesus to pay the price of our sin; in God's justice that will ultimately triumph over the injustices of life; in God's holiness, righteousness and truth. One theologian calls these evidences of God's greatness and goodness.

Consistent with God's Word

No revelation from God will ever transgress the character of God. Every revelation from God will always be consistent with His character.

One will also ask if the revelation is consistent with other revelations as recorded in the Bible, God's Holy Word. After 2,000 years, new light and understandings continue to flow from God's Word. No generation will ever exhaust its meaning. But those new insights and revelations will be consistent with the primary flow of God's Word. To be otherwise would be to accuse God of misleading, and God cannot lie.

History is replete with examples of generations that have misapplied Scripture or that have been more directed by culture as they approached the Bible than by God's Holy Spirit.

That is why one tests modern-day insights by the character of God made known in the grand themes of Scripture.

Just as Scripture is not for private interpretation (2 Pet. 1:20), application of Scripture is not for the individual alone. God's Holy Spirit is the guide into all truth. That implies that God-guided insights and revelations will be affirmed by other Holy Spirit-filled believers.

It is haughty arrogance to think of oneself as the only one able to understand the truth of God as revealed by the Holy Spirit. Such a spirit is an open door for the “father of all lies.” Those searching for God's truth will want insights and revelations affirmed by others who are filled by the Spirit.

Impacting the body of Christ

From individual believers God is building a great and glorious family of faith, the church. That means it is not enough to ask how a new insight impacts a solitary believer. One must

also ask how the revelation impacts the body of Christ. What is its impact on the community of faith?

While Baptists believe in the priesthood of each individual believer, we also understand the concept of the priesthood of all believers; that is, we have responsibility to each other as we live the life of faith together in Christian community.

Also, does the outcome of the revelation glorify God? Believers' lives are supposed to give honor and glory to God (Matt. 5:16) in all circumstances. That means each new insight must be

tested to see if its final end glorifies the Heavenly Father.

Had Tom sat with a Christian counselor, they might have talked about Tom's poor study habits. They might have talked about his lack of discipline and his difficulty setting priorities. They might have talked about his growing sense of failure as his grades fell and his anxieties rose. They might have talked about his resentment of Gail because she was so well liked by the faculty and administration.

Tom's revelation may not have been from God. He never tested it against God's character, against God's Word, against the understandings of Spirit-filled believers, against its impact on the church or against the glory of God.

Instead he tried to free himself of responsibility by declaring, “God told me to do it.” That defense does not work in the courthouses of the nation and it does not hold up in cases like Tom's.

VOICE YOUR
OPINION

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

Remember to:

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



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

(ISSN 0738-7741;
USPS 011-080)

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

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

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

DR. BOBBY S. TERRY
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Jennifer Davis Rash
Executive Editor

Neisha Fuson
Editorial Assistant
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News Writer

Lauren C. Grim
Designer

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

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

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

**'Nation's top
Christian newspaper'**

as judged by
Evangelical Press Association &
Religion Communicators Council



Photo by Gary Hardin

FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE — (L to r) Matison, Matthew, Venice and Billy Ray represent four generations of the Bedwell family in the FBC Cedar Bluff choir.

'Singing for the Lord'

FBC Cedar Bluff sees 4-generation family in choir

By Gary Hardin
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

At First Baptist Church, Cedar Bluff, the Bedwells — Venice, Billy Ray, Matthew and Matison — hold the distinction of representing four generations. And all of them sing in the church's choir.

Actually, there's a fifth-generation member of the family in the church, 11-month-old Natalie Bullard, but she's a number of years away from joining them.

The oldest member of the family, Venice, is 92 years old. She has been a member of the Cherokee Baptist Association church since 1943 and has raised four children in the church.

Venice joined the choir several years ago after hearing people sing karaoke. "When I heard them sing I was convinced I could sing in the choir at church," she said.

Billy Ray, Venice's son, has attended First, Cedar Bluff, his entire life. At 10 years of age he was singing in the church choir. "Singing runs in our family," Billy Ray explained.

Billy Ray's wife, Charlotte, also sings in the church choir. "I love singing for the Lord," Charlotte said. "I sing solos sometimes, and the song 'Thank You' is one of my most requested solos."

Matthew, Billy Ray and Charlotte's son,

joined the choir only recently after he and his wife, Wendy, moved their membership to First, Cedar Bluff. "The people welcomed us in as if we had always been there," Matthew said.

'Pillars of the church'

"When Matthew and Wendy joined our church, they hit the ground running," explained Pastor Mark Cosby. "They are following the example of their parents and grandparents."

Matison, Matthew and Wendy's daughter and a 5th-grader at Cedar Bluff Elementary School, is the youngest member of the Bedwell family who sings in the church choir. "Music calms me and makes me feel happy," Matison said.

Sometimes Matison, who loves art and science, sings special music in Sunday services along with one of her friends. Matison especially appreciates her church. "At my church they teach you the Bible."

Cosby describes the Bedwells as "pillars of the church." "Our folks have lots of love and respect for them," he said.

Tim Burgess, the church's bivocational minister of music, understands how rare it is to have four generations in the choir. "This really is a unique situation," Burgess said. "Having them in my choir is a privilege."

Midwestern nominates Alabama native Jason Allen as president

Alabama native Jason K. Allen, vice president for institutional advancement at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., has been selected by Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's (MBTS) presidential search team members in Kansas City, Mo., as their nominee for MBTS president.

Allen, 35, is executive director of the Southern Seminary Foundation and concurrently served as senior pastor of Carlisle Avenue Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky.

The search committee expects to bring Allen's nomination to the board of trustees in October for an official vote. If elected, Allen will succeed R. Philip Roberts as Midwestern's fifth president.

As a member of Southern Seminary's executive cabinet since January 2006, Allen has been vice president of institutional advancement since 2009 and was executive assistant to the president 2006-09. He also has taught at Southern since 2007.

Allen also has served as senior pastor of Muldraugh Baptist Church, Muldraugh, Ky., and has worked in churches in Alabama and Kentucky since 1998.

He holds a doctorate and a master of divinity degree from Southern and an undergraduate degree from Spring Hill College in Mobile.

Fred Wolfe, pastor of Luke 4:18 Fellowship, Mobile, was Allen's pastor at Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile. "I remember his conversion as a wonderful experience in his life. His life was truly changed. He is a strong leader who works well with others," Wolfe said.

From 1998 to 2001, Allen served as assistant to then-pastor Clint Pressley at Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile. Pressley, now senior pastor of Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C., said, "Jason Allen will provide great leadership, solid theology and a clear Christ-centered perspective." (BP)



ALLEN

Alabama BCM groups to participate in ENGAGE24

October 11 will see college campuses around the nation buzzing with unusual activity. Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) nationwide are holding an event called ENGAGE24 in which they encourage all Christian college students — and all Christians in general — to share the gospel with at least one person in that 24-hour period.

"Most if not all Christian students know what to say — they just don't say it," said Mike Nuss, director of the office of collegiate and student ministries for the Ala-

bama Baptist State Board of Missions. ENGAGE24 is a chance for BCM leaders to spur their students to step out in faith and share the gos-

pel with nonbelieving students.

Baptists in Alabama will be participating in all of the four-year public schools and many community colleges as well, Nuss said.

Nate Young, senior campus minister with the University of Alabama (UA) BCM, said students there are both excited and nervous about the day. Beginning mid-September the BCM will offer training and "tutoring" sessions to help students become more comfortable sharing their faith with others.

They plan to "identify students who are willing to take up the chal-

lenge," Young said, asking students to be held accountable to share.

Damien Christian, a junior political science major from Troy and the leader of UA BCM's evangelism team, is grateful to see students encouraged to share their faith.

"If 10 percent (of Christians) shared their faith, that would change our campus," he said. "Right now about 1 percent share." He hopes this day will encourage students, especially freshmen, to cultivate sharing their faith more often.

For more information, visit www.engage24.org. (TAB)



South Roebuck members 'get off couch and serve'

By Anna Keller
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

At South Roebuck Baptist Church, Birmingham, a group of nine people are making a significant impact on the surrounding community.

Rather than Sunday School classes, South Roebuck offers community groups that meet in members' homes. The groups meet for Bible study, fellowship and prayer, and the church encourages each group to determine a community outreach project their group can tackle.

One community group — led by Katherine Woods and Jon Freeman — decided it was time to "get off the couch and serve." They first decided to feed the homeless. One of their members, Katie Wagner, then came up with a way to supplement the meals with hygiene products that the homeless need.

"Katie saw this idea — on Pinterest of all places — that talked about filling bags with things like toothpaste and shampoo, and so we began making what we called Bags of Love and giving them to people along with meals," Woods said.

So far, 75 Bags of Love as well as 75 lunches have gone to homeless people in Birmingham, 40 bags were passed along to female prisoners and 70 boxes of hygiene products and other items were mailed overseas to Afghanistan, Egypt and Iraq, where they were given to U.S. military stationed there.

"The Bags of Love project went well, but then we began thinking, 'What can we do next?'" Woods said.

Turning back to the Internet once again for inspiration, the community group read a blog post about a woman who had performed

42 random acts of kindness in celebration of her birthday. The group liked the idea of that kind of outreach and decided to take it on as its next project.

The group members have left bags of microwave popcorn on the top of Redbox machines around town, brought gifts to residents at local nursing homes who do not receive many visitors and helped their children leave \$1 bills in the toy section of Dollar Tree stores so that other kids would stumble upon them and be able to buy a toy.

"We went out to St. Vincent's Hospital with a basket of goodies and left it in the ER waiting room with a note that said, 'Save your money. Have a snack on us,'" Wagner said. "We also left quarters on the tops of vending machines with a note letting people know to 'have a Coke on us.'"

These acts have made a difference to community members, certainly, but other churches have also caught wind of the effort.

"We've had several other churches contact us and ask to participate and help us," Wagner said. "We've had people from Tuscaloosa call and ask for advice for how to start a similar program in their community."

The South Roebuck community group is sparking inspiration among others within the church as well, according to Russ Donaho, minister of worship and community.

"Something like this is contagious among the body of believers," Donaho said. "It's one thing to talk about it in principle, but it's another to actually do it. Christians need to be out living what they already know they should be doing, and this group is doing just that."

"The Bags of Love project went well, but ... we wanted to do something broader."

**Katherine Woods
South Roebuck Baptist Church, Birmingham**

Few churchgoers engage in Bible study/reading, research shows

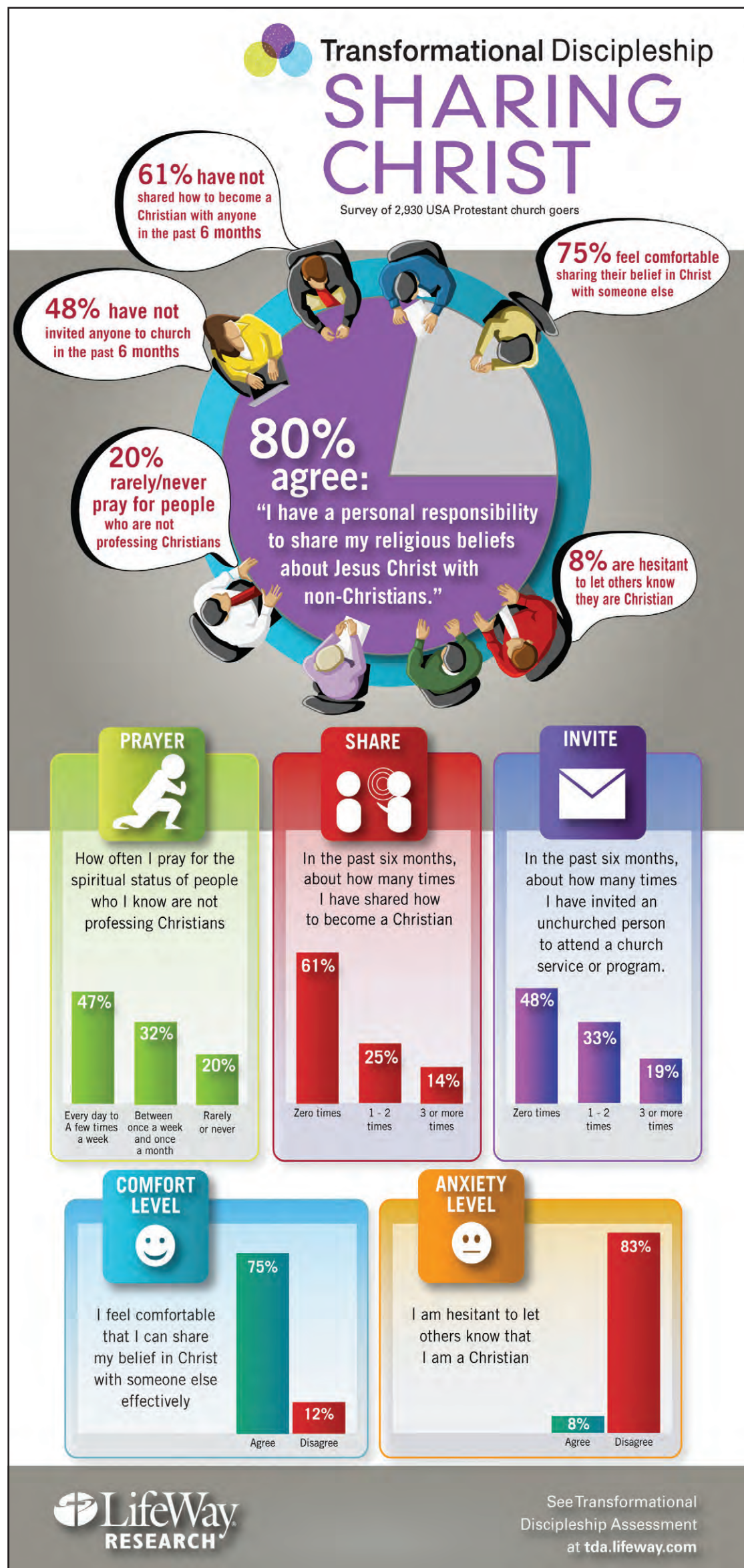
While the majority of churchgoers desire to honor Christ with their lives and even profess to think on biblical truths, a recent study found few actually engage in personal reading and study of the Scriptures.

"Bible engagement" is one of the eight attributes of discipleship identified in the Transformational Discipleship study conducted by LifeWay Research.

The survey found 90 percent of churchgoers agree with the statement, "I desire to please and

honor Jesus in all I do," and 59 percent agree with the statement, "Throughout the day I find myself thinking about biblical truths."

When asked how often they personally read the Bible, a similar number respond "every day" (19 percent) as respond "rarely/never" (18 percent). A quarter indicate they read the Bible a few times a week. Fourteen percent say they read the Bible "once a week" and another 22 percent say "once a month" or "a few times a month." (LifeWay)





NAMB photo



Left: Louisiana Baptist disaster relief volunteers prepare meals at a temporary kitchen at FBC Covington, La., to feed victims of Hurricane Isaac. **Right:** An Alabama Baptist disaster relief volunteer helps remove a fallen tree on the campus of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Photo by Frank Michael McCormack

Substantial impact

Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers tend to affected areas following Hurricane Isaac

Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBD) operations, including feeding, chain saw, mud-out, chaplaincy and recovery work, continue to assist following Hurricane Isaac. Southern Baptist workers and volunteers, including teams from Alabama, are making a substantial impact on the storm-struck communities of Louisiana and Mississippi. They mobilized quickly and effectively, including preparing and delivering 130,500 hot meals to survivors by Sept. 7.

Most of the feeding occurred in the greater New Orleans area, where some 100,000 people were still without electricity in sweltering heat a week after the Category 1

storm brought torrential rains and flooding.

In some areas the rain resulted in more flooding and residential damage than that caused by Hurricane Katrina seven years ago, and post-traumatic stress has set in for many south Louisiana residents, especially those who also went through Katrina.

SBD feeding units from Louisiana, Texas (Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and Texas Baptist Men), Arkansas, Mississippi and Oklahoma continued to serve meals at press time. After SBD volunteers cook and package the meals, the food is being delivered to flood victims by the American Red Cross and The Salvation Army. In some remote Louisiana areas, helicopters or

ferries may have to be used to deliver food in lieu of trucks.

Six Alabama Baptist disaster relief mud-out teams worked the week after the Labor Day holiday weekend — three in Louisiana and three in Mississippi, said Mel Johnson, disaster relief strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM). At press time, three more mud-out teams were set to relieve the three teams in Mississippi, he added.

The three teams preparing to leave were headed for Pascagoula, Miss., or Moss Point, Miss., said Tommy Puckett, disaster relief specialist with the SBOM. The exact location was not known at press time, but the teams going were from District 12 — Chilton Baptist Association, Autauga Baptist Association and Elmore Baptist Association.

Also preparing for a Sept. 11 departure was the Alabama Baptist disaster relief child care team, under the direction of Becky Luther, a member of East Gadsden Baptist Church.

Two teams of 10 will serve at a FEMA center in Chalmette, La., Luther said, who will go out with the first team, which will work Sept. 11–15, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day. The second team will follow the same schedule Sept. 16–19.

State's child care team helping

Team members are from various Baptist associations across the state, Luther said.

"We will be partnering with Texas, supplying the manpower but using their equipment," she said, noting they focus on comforting the children and ministering to the families.

"While the parents are filling out questionnaires and being interviewed, we provide free child care and play games, do crafts and read Bible stories," Luther said.

A group of about 25 volunteers from Alabama also worked during Labor Day weekend to clear debris from the campus of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and from the homes of nearby seminary faculty. The teams, from Cleburne

and Calhoun Baptist associations and the Tallahassee area, helped prepare the campus for classes following the holiday weekend.

Johnson also noted that a bucket truck team from St. Clair Baptist Association was serving at Camp Whispering Pines in Citronelle at press time, and that a skid steer team from Autauga Association was headed to the camp Sept. 10.

Isaac has claimed eight lives — six in Louisiana and two in Mississippi, according to CNN. Insured damages inflicted by Isaac may top the \$2 billion mark, according to insurance company AIG. That figure does not include the noninsured.

To donate to disaster relief efforts, visit www.sbd.org or send a check to: Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111. Marking it for general disaster relief will allow officials to use it for any disaster, but you may mark it specifically for Hurricane Isaac to be used only for this disaster. (TAB, BP)



Photo courtesy of John Thomas

Calhoun Baptist Association sets up a shower and chain saw unit at the ninth annual Ready Alabama Day hosted by the State of Alabama at Jacksonville State University on Sept. 6. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has designated September as National Preparedness Month.

Alabama Cooperative Program Gifts

ALABAMA BAPTIST GIVING
Year to Date through Aug. 31, 2012

AUGUST

CP Challenge Budget Goal
\$3,641,666
CP Challenge Budget Gifts
\$3,847,956
Over Goal for Month
\$206,290

YEAR TO DATE

CP Challenge Budget Goal
\$29,133,328
CP Challenge Budget Gifts
\$27,790,124
Under Goal for Year
\$1,343,204

Across Alabama's Associations

BESSEMER

► **Canaan Church, Bessemer**, will hold a minister's luncheon Sept. 18, noon. For information and reservations call Becky McDonough at 205-426-2626. Morgan Bailey is pastor. ► **Crossway Church, Bessemer**, will host pianist Frank Jones in concert Sept. 23, 5 p.m. Jones previously served as associate pastor of worship/minister to adults for Calvary Church, Tuscaloosa, and also has served as pianist for the Alabama Singing Men. Frank Sims is pastor.

BETHEL

► **Zach Wilson** is the new youth minister of **Pine Hill Church**. He previously served nine years at First Church, Frisco City. He is married to Carmen and they are expecting their first child. Chris Kynard is pastor.



WILSON

BIRMINGHAM

► **Danielle Bell** is the new minister of children for **Dawson Memorial Church, Birmingham**. She previously served 15 years at Belle Aire Church in Murfreesboro, Tenn., and also has been a contributor and pre-

sender for *Children's Ministry Magazine*. Gary Fenton is pastor. ► **Ridgecrest Church, Trussville**, will host the Ronnie Hill Crusade Sept. 16-19. For information call 205-661-3722. Thomas Hammond is interim pastor. ► **South Roebuck Church, Birmingham**, Primitives will host Brother Billy Bob Bohannon Sept. 20, 11 a.m. Chris Crain is pastor.

BLOUNT

► **Pleasant View Church, Holly Pond**, will hold a third Sunday night singing Sept. 16, 6 p.m. featuring The Fishermen from Albertville. For information call 256-796-5986. Randy Burtram is pastor.

CLEBURNE

► **Abraham Liu** with Ambassadors for Christ will speak at **Beulah Church, Muscadine**, Sept. 30, 11 a.m. Bill Brown is pastor.

COOSA RIVER

► **Lincoln Church** will celebrate its 125th anniversary Sept. 30, 10:30 a.m. Tom Whatley will speak. For information call 205-763-7351. Bill Goodwin is pastor. ► **Westview Church, Sylacauga**, will host a fall open cruise-in Sept. 22, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The cruise-in will include classic cars, hot rods, new cars, tractors and motorcycles and will feature door prizes, music and food.

For information visit www.where-friendsbecome-family.com. Jimmie Roberts is pastor.

DALE

► **Ariton Church** will celebrate homecoming Sept. 23. A music service will be at 10 a.m. and former pastor Hillary Stewart will speak at 11 a.m. A covered-dish lunch will follow. For information call 334-762-2523. David Walsh is pastor.

MOBILE

► **First Church, Irvington**, will hold revival Sept. 23-26, Sunday 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. and Monday-Wednesday, 7 p.m. Gary Permenter will speak. Ron Griffin is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Corinth Church, Elrod**, will hold revival through Sept. 14 nightly, 7 p.m. Herbie Gray will speak. Shawn Odell is pastor. ► The H.O.L.T. women's ministry of **Holt Church, Tuscaloosa**, will host the 10th Annual Fall Bazaar Sept. 15, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Holt High School gym. Rick Mitchell is pastor.

WASHINGTON

► **North Oak Grove Church, Millry**, will celebrate its 100th anniversary Sept. 23, 10:30 a.m. Lunch and singing will follow. Frank Gibson is pastor.



Collinsville Baptist celebrates 175th anniversary

Several months of preparation went into the 175th anniversary of Collinsville Baptist Church celebrated Aug. 11-12.

Nine church anniversary committee members, including Jennifer Wilkins, worked countless hours to help the event come to fruition, send out formal invitations and compile and print a church history book for attendees.

"Several decades of bulletins had been saved," Wilkins said. "We put them together and pulled out excerpts from ... church newsletters. We searched (through) many records we had in minutes and annual reports at the [Alabama Baptist Historical Commission] and included a lot of pictures."

More than 200 people attended the Aug. 12 celebration and were given a book, according to Collinsville Baptist Pastor John E. Morgan, while more than 100 attended a casual reception Aug. 11.

During the two-hour service Aug. 12 there was "lots of special music," Morgan said. Former pastor Fred Grissom presented a message based around his experience at Collinsville and how he was blessed by how gracious the church, his first pastorate, had been and how members had provided him with valuable guidance.

Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative Wendell Dutton presented the DeKalb Baptist Association church with a certificate commemorating its 175 years.

Before a covered-dish lunch and fellowship, attendees stood outside the church for a group picture.

To conclude the event the children were invited to the front of the sanctuary to lead the congregation in singing "Jesus Loves Me."

Wilkins said she felt as though the Holy Spirit was moving in and throughout the entire weekend.

"(The anniversary celebration was) a major event in my life that I will always look back on in a positive way," she said.

Morgan said he hopes the church will continue to fulfill the anniversary's theme and be "A Light on a Hill" to the community.

"[I hope that] we would live (as) Jesus said in Matthew 5 about being a light ... and that we would work to always build everything we do on Jesus as our foundation," Morgan said. (Neisha Fuson)

Pine Level Baptist Church marks 175 years

Pine Level Baptist Church in Montgomery Baptist Association celebrated a significant milestone Aug. 19 with its 175th anniversary.

According to Elaine Clifton Dicks, director of Pine Level Baptist's Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), the church's WMU acted as the planning committee for the homecoming festivities.

Before the anniversary worship service began, the church bell — purchased from a U.S. Navy ship in the 1900s — was rung, and special greeters handed out pamphlets of the church's history to the 200 attendees.

Former pastors and various church members were recognized, including Alice Jewel Townsend Tyson, a descendant of a founding church member, and her daughter, Elizabeth Tyson Gentry.

Some of the church's artwork also was recognized during the service, including two paintings hanging in the sanctuary titled "The Lord is My Shepherd" and "In the Garden." A member of the church painted the artwork in the early 1900s.

Dicks noted the theme of the church is "To God be the glory." "That [theme] was really what everything centered around that day," she said.

Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented the church with a plaque recognizing its years of existence.

Ken May, director of missions for Montgomery Baptist Association, and Bob Dempsey, associate director of missions, also were present. May also presented a plaque to the church.

Interim pastor Danny Shadix delivered a message titled "Standing with Jesus." The service was followed by a fellowship dinner that afternoon and revival Aug. 20-22.

Shadix appreciated all the members and former pastors who came back and helped the church celebrate 175 years.

He noted that Pine Level Baptist needs to continue to reach out and minister to the community. "It (the church) still is a light for Christ in that area, and even though it's small the light still shines brightly," he said. (Julie Payne)



By Christine Kapurch
Correspondent, TAB

Someone You Should Know

KITTY SINGLEY

Elkdale Baptist Church, Selma
Selma Baptist Association



SINGLEY

FAVORITE VERSE: Galatians 2:20

FAVORITE HYMN: "How Great Thou Art"

HOBBIES: Gardening, traveling, missions, service organizations

FAMILY STATUS: Married to Lewis for 65 years; four children, Van, Tony, Terry and Lisa; nine grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren

Kitty Singley is a charter member of Elkdale Baptist Church. The church celebrated its 60th anniversary this year. She served as Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) director for Selma Baptist Association for 12 years. She also taught Sunday School and was the Bible school director for two years.

Q: What led you to serve the WMU?

A: From the time I was young I was pulled into missions ... we had a vacant house next to our church and I established a missions house there.

Q: Why have you continued in ministry through the years?

A: I feel that's where God has called me. I love [it] and feel such a need for it.

Q: What does the ministry demand?

A: It just demands that you love it and feel called to do it. You have to organize your time. Even though I was an educator for 38 years I never gave up my church work.

Q: How do family members support you?

A: My husband helps me

with projects. We do Meals On Wheels together. We always work together. My children have followed suit and are doing the same work. I've had full support from my family.

Q: How do you see yourself involved in this in the future?

A: I intend to work as long as the Lord blesses us. I do not intend to stop. Like I tell my Sunday School group, God never said when you are supposed to retire. You are supposed to keep working. I never will stop working.



BP photo

Men gather for the third of five daily prayers at Mochaquwa Mosque in Guwahati, India.

Diversity of belief, practice evident in Pew study of more than 38,000 Muslims

Westerners tend to assume most Muslims are strongly committed to the Quran and to establishing Islamic republics, but that is not accurate, Mike Edens, a professor of theology and Islamic studies, told Baptist Press concerning a Pew Research Center study of more than 38,000 Muslims in 39 countries.

"About 20 percent of any Muslim population is actually committed to Islam having the leading role in their society," said Edens, who teaches at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary after serving 26 years in the Middle East with the International Mission Board.

"Most Muslims are committed to what we would call a secular Islamic worldview or a 'value' Islamic worldview," Edens said, describing "value Muslims" as those for whom the values of Islam for family, protection of the young, security for women and living a conservative, moral life are much more important than establishing an Islamic republic akin to Iran's.

According to the Pew study, the world's 1.6 billion Muslims are united in their belief in Allah and the prophet Muhammad and generally practice such religious requirements as fasting during the holy month of Ramadan and almsgiving to the poor, but they vary on how important religion is to their lives.

Varying results

"The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity," by Pew's Forum on Religion and Public Life, was conducted in more than 80 languages spoken by about two-thirds of the world's Muslim population. The United States was not included.

Among the results:

- ▶ 97 percent of Muslims in the study declared faith in Allah and the prophet Muhammad; 93 percent reported fasting during the month of Ramadan; 77 percent gave to charity; 63 percent said they pray five times a day; 9 percent had made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

- ▶ The percentage of Muslims who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca declined with distance from Mecca and was no higher than 48 percent in any country surveyed, Pew found.

- ▶ Traditional Islamic teachings such as belief in one God, belief in fate, belief in angels and belief that the Quran is the literal word of God are widely accepted across the countries included in the study.

- ▶ Half or more of Muslims in 32 of 39 countries said there is only one true interpretation of Islam, Pew reported.

- ▶ In the 39 countries surveyed, the percentage saying

religion is very important to them ranged from 15 percent in Albania to 98 percent in Senegal.

"Because Islam is defined by exterior behavior, it's not defined by belief structure so much as it is defined by what you do in your daily life: You go to the mosque on Friday at noon to pray, you stop in your business day and pray five times during the day, you fast during the daylight hours of the month of Ramadan, you give 2.5 percent of your income to advance Islam and to help the poor, you have sometime in your life taken the opportunity to go to Mecca on the pilgrimage," Edens said.

Muslims want to be seen by those around them as devoted to Islamic values, he said, not necessarily as more extreme than fellow Muslims. They are careful to appear upright, respectful and honorable.

"Islamic society is not based on innocence and guilt. It's based on honor and shame," Edens explained. "Having the Islamic behavior pattern is one way that honor is seen in your family."

As Christians share Christ with people who are strongly committed to living an honorable life in Islam, they need to point to Scriptures and to realities in the gospel that are not just guilt/innocence-based but also honor/shame-based, Edens said.

"For instance, Jesus said, 'If you confess me before men, I will confess you before my Father and his holy angels. If you are ashamed of me before men, I will be ashamed of you before Him.'"

"That's an honor/shame type of differentiation. We don't usually think of the gospel that way, but when we incorporate some of those things in our witness it helps people understand," said Edens, who also serves as the seminary's associate director of the Institute for Christian Apologetics and associate dean of graduate studies.

Peer influence plays a large role among Muslims, prompting them to observe as many of the five pillars of Islam as they can manage externally, Edens said.

"I remember a Muslim telling me that he was disturbed that he was going to have to fast through the month of Ramadan, which fell across Christmas and New Year's. I

said, 'Why is that?' and he said, 'Well, I usually go dancing and drink alcohol on New Year's Eve.'

"I was struck by the fact that his life did not always conform to Islam but he wanted to be seen as conforming to the fast of Ramadan," Edens said.

"When behavior is compact, like 28 days, it's easier for that to be observed and compared than some of the other behavior patterns. Praying five times a day, for instance, you're doing that in private."

Nothing in the Pew study, which was released Aug. 9, necessarily surprised him, Edens said.

He added that it may alarm American Christians that the task of sharing Christ with all peoples is a large one, "and it takes all of us."

"The gospel wins in the world market of ideas, but God needs His people to be His witnesses. Jesus commissioned us to be His witnesses, and we need to be faithful to that commitment," Edens said.

One way for the Pew study to impact Christians' efforts among Muslims, Edens said, is that it can "encourage us all to pray for God to give insight in the hearts of individual Muslims to the truth of the gospel and the power of the cross of Jesus Christ to transform lives."

"God is the only one who can do that. We cannot succeed in converting people. We are only witnesses. We need to be praying. We need to join God in His efforts of making Christ known among all people. This study can encourage us in our prayer lives," Edens said.

The Pew report, he said, also can challenge some people to witness to Muslims who are right at their door.

"There is no one who is going to read this article who is going to live very far from a Muslim. In fact, many of them are going to have a mosque somewhere in a neighborhood near them," he said.

"So it's no longer that you have to be called of God to go across the world to have a cross-cultural experience of sharing the gospel with Muslims," Edens said. "All you have to do is be obedient to the Spirit and desirous to be a witness and step across the street in many cases. The Muslims are here in our neighborhood, in our community, in our country." (BP)

Of the 11,352 people groups in the world today, 20 percent (2,344) are primarily Muslim. The combined population of people groups that are primarily Muslim is 1.61 billion people. Evangelicals, including Southern Baptists, are sharing the gospel and planting churches among 985 of the people groups that are primarily Muslim. These 985 people groups have a combined population of 1.51 billion.

Baptist Vein Centers Help Put Your Best Foo

It's hard to put one's best foot forward when you are suffering from pain, cramps and swelling in the legs.

Such conditions often are a sign of venous — or vein — disease, which affects approximately 15 percent of the adult population (more than 40 million people). Left untreated, these conditions can cause serious problems, to the point that normal venous flow cannot be reestablished.

The good news is the treatment of vein problems is easier and more convenient than ever, especially with the opening of several Vein Centers by Baptist Health System in north central Alabama.

Multi-locations for patient convenience

Dr. James Isobe heads up the Baptist Vein Centers at Baptist Health Center Hoover, Princeton Baptist Medical Center in Birmingham and Walker Baptist Medical Center in Jasper, as well as the Baptist Vein Center in Cullman. Dr. Isobe is a board-certified general surgeon, a Diplomat of the American College of Phlebology and a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. At the Shelby Baptist Vein Center in Alabaster, four physicians from Heart

South Cardiovascular Group — Dr. Dale Elliott, Dr. John McBrayer, Dr. Hudson Segrest and Dr. Clifton Vance — care for patients with venous disease. They treat a variety of vein issues from varicose veins to small superficial spider veins.

Each of the locations provides medical solutions for vein issues ranging from restless leg syndrome, leg pain and swelling, and leg cramps to varicose veins and spider veins.

What causes vein problems?

"Venous insufficiency is the result of faulty valves in the veins. In a healthy vein, there are one-way valves that allow blood to move toward the heart, but not away. In a diseased vein, the valves do not work properly, allowing blood to fall downward in between heartbeats," said Dr. McBrayer.



Dr. James Isobe

This back-and-forth motion of blood leads to an increased venous blood pressure, inflaming the tissues around the vein. And this inflammation can cause leg pain, swelling, bulging varicose veins, heaviness, restlessness, cramps, skin discoloration, numbness, tingling, ulcers and blood clots. Left untreated, this condition only worsens over time.

"People who have any of the symptoms of venous disease should consider being evaluated at a vein center," Dr. Isobe said. "We like to see patients early in the process. And with the availability of new technology, we are able to treat people with vein problems on an out-patient basis with minimally invasive methods and minimal discomfort."

That certainly has not always been the case. A procedure known as vein stripping was used throughout much of the 1900s to treat venous disease. This process involved inserting a wire into the vein from the ankle to the groin. The surgical procedure required anesthesia and at least an overnight stay in the hospital.



Dr. James Isobe tends to a patient at one of the Baptist Vein Centers.

Patients would then have a lengthy recovery time that usually required them to take prescription pain medication and forced them to miss time from work.

New, high-tech procedures

"For the longest time, vein stripping was the only method available to treat venous disease," Dr. Isobe said, "but that has changed significantly in recent years."

Now a trip to one of the Baptist Vein Centers can be no more troubling than a regular office visit to your doctor or dentist. These centers offer expert care in the latest forms of vein treatment and most procedures take only an hour or two to complete and can be done using a local anesthetic. Any lingering pain from the procedure can usually be treated with basic over-the-counter medication.

What are the risk factors?

Venous disease is caused by a variety of factors including:

- heredity and family history,
- gender,
- age,
- pregnancy,
- obesity,
- amount of time spent inactive (sitting or standing)

• and even trauma.

Heredity is the number one risk factor. If both your parents had varicose veins, you have an 89 percent chance of developing them. Next to heredity is gender. Women, especially those who have had multiple pregnancies, are three times more likely than men to develop venous disorders. People in professions that require long periods of inactivity, whether sitting or standing, are at increased risk as well. Age and weight are also risk factors. While older people are at a higher risk,

Shelby Baptist Vein Center physicians



Dr. C. Dale Elliott



Dr. John D. McBrayer



Dr. J. Hudson Segrest



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vein disease can start as early as childhood.

Determining the cause

At the Baptist Vein Centers, specialists examine the deep venous systems for signs of leakage, reflux or enlargement, and a registered vascular technologist takes ultrasound images of the leg. Next, a physician provides a diagnosis that identifies the cause of the patient's pain, followed soon afterward by a quick outpatient procedure.

"Most people like to come in for the procedure on either a Thursday or a Friday, then they rest over the weekend and go back to work Monday feeling just fine," Dr. Isobe said. "I've even had some patients go back to work that same day. The main thing is they walk in for the procedure, then they walk back out to their car."

For more information about Vein Disease, the Baptist Vein Centers or when the next free Vein Screening will be held, call toll-free 1-877-222-7847. You can also visit us online at VeinTreatmentBirmingham.com or click on Shelby Baptist at bhsala.com. For quick access, scan the QR codes below.

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Questionable Support

Missouri Baptist Convention officials rally behind candidate

Missouri Baptist Convention (MBC) officials joined former Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee by sponsoring an invitation-only conference call in support of embattled Republican Missouri Senate candidate Todd Akin.

The email inviting Baptists to join the conference call about "How to make a proper response to the Todd Akin controversy" carried the Missouri Baptist Convention (MBC) logo.

The Aug. 24 call was convened by Don Hinkle, editor of the MBC newspaper *The Pathway*, who is being investigated by the Internal Revenue Service for possibly violating federal tax law that bans nonprofit charities from endorsing candidates.

"I had the pleasure of emceeing a conference call today featuring former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, David Barton, former Oklahoma Congressman J.C. Watts, Ohio Congressman Bob McEwen, MBC Executive Director John Yeats and David Baker, pastor, First Baptist Church, Belton," Hinkle wrote in a blog after the event. "Hundreds of Missouri pastors joined in."

Hinkle said all the speakers expressed support for Akin, who is under fire for recent comments about rape and pregnancy for which he later apologized.

"It is time for a groundswell of grassroots support to rise up in support of Todd Akin," Hinkle wrote.

The Politico, one of a couple of media outlets privy to notification about the invitation-only conference call, said Huckabee, an ordained Southern Baptist minister and one-time president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, told pastors "this could be a Mount Carmel moment," an allusion to the story of Elijah contesting the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18.

"You know, you bring your gods; we'll bring ours," Huckabee said. "We'll see whose God answers the prayers and brings fire from heaven. That's kind of where I'm praying: that there will be fire from heaven, and we'll see it clearly, and everyone else will too."

Yeats, recording secretary of the

Southern Baptist Convention who was director of communications and public policy for the Louisiana Baptist Convention before his election last October as Missouri Baptists' executive director, told the group that he counseled Sen. David Vitter (R-La.) after he was linked to a prostitution ring in 2007.

"As I think about Congressman Akin, his quote, 'transgression,' was not nearly as vile as Vitter's," Yeats said. "So I think this thing is survivable. ... I still think he has a real shot at winning the race here in Missouri."

"It's certainly been a political setback for him," Hinkle said in

an interview on The Takeaway radio program. "However I do not believe in the state of Missouri it's fatal."

Hinkle admitted that Akin's reference to "legitimate rape" seldom resulting in pregnancy was a poor choice of words, but said the controversy has a bright side for social conservatives.

"Social conservatives, who make up a tremendous amount of the Republican Party, are happy that abortion is now back center, part of the national conversation, and we are glad in that sense that we're able to have this conversation about abortion," Hinkle said. (ABP)

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World of Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Unification Church founder Sun Myung Moon dies

SEOUL, South Korea — Sun Myung Moon, revered as a messiah within his Unification Church but regarded by many others as a vain and enigmatic man who blessed mass weddings, built a sprawling business empire and presided over a personality cult, died Sept. 3 in South Korea. He was 92.

Moon had been in intensive care at a Seoul hospital since Aug. 7, according to his church. The cause of death was complications from pneumonia, including kidney failure.

He claimed to have received revelations from Jesus, Confucius, the Buddha, Lao Tzu and Satan.

After founding the Unification Church in 1954, Moon gained fame by holding group weddings for arranged couples, many of whom had barely met before Moon matched them. Ceremonies at New York's Madison Square Garden in 1982, Washington's RFK Stadium in 1997 and Seoul's Olympic Stadium in 1999, drew thousands of couples.

Moon taught that Jesus had died without fathering children, who, as the Messiah's heirs, would have escaped the taint of Original Sin. Moon said Christ chose him to complete his mission by uniting humankind in a single sinless family. Many of Moon's arranged marriages were thus interracial and international. Unificationists called Moon and his wife, Hak Ja Han, the "True Parents" of this spiritually pure lineage.

Baby 'not human until birth,' Canadian doctors say

OTTAWA, Canada — Canada's leading doctors association has approved a resolution that says an unborn child does not become a human being until it is fully born.

Delegates to the annual General Council meeting of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) voted Aug. 15 to endorse wording in Canada's Criminal Code that says a baby "becomes a human being within the meaning of this Act when it has completely proceeded, in a living state, from the body of its mother."

The resolution was intended to stop a "backdoor" effort in the Canadian Parliament to renew a debate about abortion by revising the code, said the delegate who proposed it, the CMA reported.

Protestants see upsurge in raids, threats, fines

ASHGABAT, Turkmenistan — At least five Protestants in Turkmenistan's Lebap Region have been given large fines for religious activity without state approval in three separate trials in late August.

Protestants have been summoned and threatened, including one whose business was seized. "The situation has got markedly worse since July and we don't know why," said one Protestant, who asked not to be identified for fear of state reprisals.

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Legacy

SEPTEMBER 2012

a Certain Faith in Uncertain Times

By Bob Dewhurst, ABCHVP, Ministry Development

I believe most would agree with this statement, "We live in a world of uncertainty." I recently learned of a documentary that focuses on a billionaire couple building the largest single-family home in America. After supposedly outgrowing their super-sized 27,000-square-foot-dwelling, they embarked on constructing a 90,000-square-foot-structure. I find it hard to call such a huge building a home. However, over the period of the filming of this movie, the story line changed from one of extraordinary growth in wealth to how lives are changed by economic conditions, assumptions and risky investments. Yes, uncertainty can impact even the most affluent in our culture.

However, as a follower of Jesus Christ, I am certain of one reality. I worship the true and living God that never changes and offers me this promise, "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you'" (Hebrew 13:5 NIV).

At Alabama Baptist Children Homes & Family Ministries we greatly appreciate those who faithfully send money our way and use us as a conduit to touch the lives of children and families on behalf of Jesus Christ. What an encouragement it is to know that even with so many worshipping money and the temporary pleasures it can provide, there are those who focus on the eternal.

And because we value your partnership and want to see the best for you and your family, we are pleased to offer our partners in the ministry a free service provided by a leading Christian organization in America focused exclusively on helping Christians develop plans for their future and for the assurance of care for their loved ones in an uncertain world.

I will be sharing more information about this to our ministry partners in the days ahead. In the meantime, if you would like additional information on how this service might benefit you and those you love please don't hesitate to give me a call at 1-888-720-8805, or email me at bdewhurst@abchome.org.

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MEMORIALS

(Memorialized person's name is bolded.)

Clarice Agee, Monroeville: Eastwood BC of Monroeville;
Eastwood Adult III Ladies SS
Jane Allen, Port St. Joe, FL: Alice Lucas
Dusty Andrews, Ozark: Rusty Andrews
Lomax Andrews, Ozark: Rusty Andrews
Carlton A. Baker: Pleasant Grove BC of Salem
Gary Barron, Centreville: Centreville BC
Peggy Joyce Blackwell: Mr. & Mrs. Drennon Traylor
Mrs. Viola F. Boyington, Bay Minette: Faye S. Parker
James Earl Byrd, Monroeville: Neal Lambert,
Clare Matthews, Dean & Beth Smith
Mr. Allison Cobb, Spanish Fort: Faye & Wayne Parker
Don Collins, Scottsburg, IN: Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Norman, Jr.
Gray Collins, Montgomery: Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Ray
Lynn Champion Collins, Hope Hull: Maynita Weatherly
William Crouch, Auburn: Marjorie Kay Nix
Edith Ballas Darley, Athens: Providence BC of Gallion
Tony Dubose, Grove Hill: Lloyd & Catherine Gaddy
Doug Faison, Bay Minette: Durant Chapel BC of Bay Minette
Etta Griffin, Centre: L.B. & Joyce McFall
Lily Marie Gullage, Opelika: Ben & Barbara Blasingame
Glenn Harris, Arlington: County Line BC of Arlington

Maxine Haynes, Montgomery: Dr. Charlie Rowe
Bill Howell, Jackson: Forest Avenue BC of Jackson
Prudie Estelle Daniel Huff, Faith SS, Uriah FBC
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Griffin Owens, Sand Rock: Ruby Pate
Paul V. Peters, Tallahassee: Lafayette & Carolyn Peters
Willie Reeder, Dadeville: Pleasant Grove BC of Salem
Albert Ronnie Rieben, Bay Minette: Durant Chapel BC
Katherine Ryland Salter, Bay Minette: John T. Salter,
Faye S. Parker, Elaine S. Roley
John E. Salter, Bay Minette: John T. Salter, Faye S. Parker,
Elaine S. Roley
Katherine & John E. Salter, Bay Minette: John T. Salter,
Faye S. Parker, Elaine S. Roley
Jennifer Scott, Phil Campbell: Spruce Pine BC

Rev. George Barron Stabler, Thomasville:
Awin BC of Pine Apple
Paul Stephens, West Blocton: Margaret Stephens
Angaline Tolbert, Monroeville: Eastwood BC of Monroeville
Sam T. Tucker, Mt. Olive: Mr. & Mrs. J. Wray Pearce
Bennett Waldrop, Prattville: Virginia Waldrop
Jim Alton Wiggins: Lloyd & Catherine Gaddy
Mrs. Elliott Williams, Birmingham: Marjorie Kay Nix

HONORS

(Memorialized person's name is bolded.)

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Our perception sadly is reality

Perception is reality." Have you heard that?

Honestly, that drives me crazy. What does it mean?

Does it mean that what you think about a person determines how you will act toward him or her? Yes. Does it mean that what you think has occurred determines how you will react to a situation? Yes.

To be honest, if perception is reality, then we must put a lot of faith in our ability to discern people and situations. We certainly do not often leave room for our own error, do we?

How often do you hear broad statements like, "Ms. Smith never volunteers. She's only interested in herself." When the person acts differently than our perceptions we remark, "Well that was unlike him!"

It certainly is important to know the individuals with whom we live, work and worship. However, there is a fine line between knowing people and operating off of our own perceptions.

The problem comes when we form our ideas of one another, because those perceptions become static.

They become the standing reality from which we speak and interact with that person. Rarely do we check our perceptions and our ideas of one another.

Once our perceptions become static and set in our minds — once they become our "reality" — we act based on those assumptions. We might be completely wrong,

*A Thought
for Women*

By Jean Roberson
jroberson@wmu.org



but our perceptions still become the basis on which we treat people. And if we are not careful, we become the ones who give people bad reputations and who fail to give grace.

When I was finishing my master's degree I worked as a family therapist. It always amazed me how a family would come in

with stereotypes of each other.

For example, the "troubled teenager" was perceived as always causing problems even though the teen would have been working to change for the past year. Because the perception of the teen was that she was a troublemaker, that teen was treated as such. How could that teen possibly change if, in everyone's mind, she was a troublemaker?

In our homes, in our workplaces and in our faith communities, as Christians we are the givers of grace.

We are the ones who proclaim that everyone can become a new creature in Christ.

We are the ones who seek to know and understand others rather than build a reality

based on our own perceptions.

God, grant that we are not so egocentric in our perceptions that we fail to perceive Your reality.

A Takeaway Value . . .

As you have read this, who has come to your mind? Perhaps you could spend some time with that person so your relationship is based on who that person is now rather than on your perception.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jean Roberson, MSW, LCSW, is a ministry consultant for national Woman's Missionary Union. She serves as team leader for the adult team and director of Christian Women's Job Corps/Christian Men's Job Corps and International Initiatives.

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Want to know God?

By Pastor Zach Terry
Capshaw Baptist Church, Harvest

Growing up in rural north Alabama, my parents involved me in a local Baptist church from an early age. Despite the teaching of faithful pastors, I associated peace with God with my religious efforts. Around the age of 12 I made my pilgrimage down the aisle to pray the "sinner's prayer" and sign up for the next round of baptisms. I distinctly remember rising out of the baptismal waters and thinking to myself, "Now everything is OK, I am saved."

For the next several years I continued to attend church, live by the golden rule, occasionally pray and less frequently read my Bible. As a freshman in college I arrived early for class and found myself surfing for music. It was then that I heard the voice of a pastor I later learned was Charles Stanley. He was teaching on what it meant to truly know God from 2 Corinthians 5:21, where Paul writes, "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." I was embarrassed that I was listening to a preacher, so I turned the volume down, but I could not turn the station.

Throughout the sermon Stanley placed emphasis on what Christ did on the cross to secure our salvation rather than on any work we accomplish. I had always placed the emphasis on my works rather than the work of Christ, and frankly my life hadn't changed.

I was haunted by this passage of Scripture for a number of days until I finally sat down on my bed and simply acknowledged that my works could not save me. I realized I was a sinner and that Christ and His work alone could bring me peace with God. I trusted Jesus and His work alone that night.

In the coming days my life radically changed. I began a journey of growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

Have you turned your back on your good works and simply trusted Jesus as your Lord and Savior? If not, claim the promise of John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." Trust Christ today.

UT-Austin vindicates professor for gay parenting study

The University of Texas at Austin has cleared sociology professor Mark Regnerus of academic misconduct after he was excoriated by some in the media over a study showing that parents' homosexual relationships can have negative effects on children.

Regnerus made headlines in June when his study was published in the widely respected journal *Social Science Research*. According to his findings, children raised by homosexual parents are more likely than those raised by married heterosexual parents to suffer from poor impulse control, depression and suicidal thoughts. They also are more likely to require more mental health therapy; identify themselves as homosexual; choose cohabitation; be unfaithful to partners; contract sexually transmitted diseases; be sexually molested; have lower income levels; drink to get drunk; and smoke tobacco and marijuana.

As a result, a gay-activist blog-

ger accused Regnerus of academic fraud, demanding in July that the university release all his research material and emails with fellow sociologists.

Pre-investigation

Administrators conducted an exhaustive pre-investigation to determine whether a more comprehensive one would be necessary — including hiring a consultant who formerly ran the Office of Research Integrity at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to oversee the process.

After sequestering all of Reg-

nerus's correspondence and conducting both written and oral interviews with him and his accuser, Scott Rosensweig, UT-Austin research integrity officer Robert Peterson wrote in an Aug. 24 memorandum to administrators, "None of the allegations of scientific misconduct put forth ... were substantiated either by physical data, written materials, or by information provided during the interviews."

"Since no evidence was provided to indicate that the behavior at issue rose to a level of scientific misconduct, no formal investiga-

tion is warranted," Peterson wrote.

David Hacker, senior legal counsel with Alliance Defending Freedom, said that America's universities "should always serve as truth-seeking, free marketplaces of ideas."

"Disagreeing with a study's conclusions is not grounds for allegations of scientific misconduct; therefore, we are not surprised that those accusations were found to be baseless," Hacker said. "We agree with the UT-Austin inquiry's conclusion that the academy is the appropriate place for debate about this study." (BP)

Other instances of hostility exist nationwide

(continued from page 1)
to cover contraceptives — even ones that can cause abortions — and has a religious exemption critics find woefully inadequate.

Among other instances of hostility cited in the report:

▶ The U.S. Department of Vet-

erans Affairs at one point prohibited references to God in funerals at national cemeteries, a policy invalidated by a federal court.

▶ A Texas city barred citizens at a public senior adult center from praying before meals, singing Christian songs or listening to religious messages.

▶ Public school officials in Texas banned students from bringing gifts for classmates that

referred to Jesus or contained other religious messages, actions that elicited censure by federal courts.

▶ A Texas city outlawed a Christian ministry to former prisoners from operating within its jurisdiction, an action rejected by the state's Supreme Court.

The report may be accessed online at www.religioushostility.org. (BP)

Pakistani police arrest cleric in blasphemy case

Pakistani police have arrested a Muslim cleric for allegedly planting evidence against Rimsha Masih, a mentally handicapped Christian girl accused of committing blasphemy by desecrating texts from the Quran.

Khalid Chisti, the cleric in Masih's neighborhood, will himself be charged with blasphemy for allegedly tearing out pages of a Quran in an effort to frame Masih.

Several witnesses have come forward claiming that after a neighbor caught Masih carrying a bag of burnt trash, Chisti added pages from the Quran hoping to stir up animosity against Christians.

"I asked him what he was doing and he said this is the evidence against them and this is how we can get them out from this area," Chisti's deputy, Mohammad Zubair, told a Pakistani television station after the cleric's Sept. 1 arrest, according to *The Guardian*.

Police officer Munir Jafferi confirmed that Chisti will indeed be charged with blasphemy for allegedly desecrating the Quran, a crime that could land him in prison for life if convicted. (BP)

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Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

IBTS trustees propose move to Amsterdam

PRAGUE, Czech Republic — Trustees of the International Baptist Theological Seminary have proposed relocating the 63-year-old seminary from Eastern Europe to the Netherlands. If approved by the European Baptist Federation (EBF) governing council Sept. 26–29 in Germany, the move would mark a third incarnation of the seminary originally begun to train pastors in southwestern Europe in the aftermath of two world wars.

Started in Switzerland by Southern Baptist missionaries in 1949, the seminary took an unexpected financial hit in 1991 when trustees of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Foreign Mission Board withdrew about 40 percent of the school's total funding in a dispute related to a power struggle between conservatives and moderates in the SBC.

The seminary moved to Prague, Czech Republic, in 1997 with a new focus on graduate studies aimed at attracting graduates from Baptist unions and seminaries across Europe and the Middle East.

In recent years, the struggling European economy and the cost of maintaining aging buildings once again put the seminary's future in jeopardy. In 2010 European Baptist leaders voted to sell the campus and either find a more affordable location in the Czech Republic or relocate to another EBF partner union.

The new plan, announced in a press release Aug. 29, calls for establishing a Baptist house imbedded in VU University Amsterdam that would concentrate on doctor of philosophy study in Baptist/Anabaptist studies and mission and practical theology.

The recommendation includes a request that proper care be taken of staff affected by the move and their families.

Concentrating on Ph.D. studies recognizes that local seminaries have grown to the point that they are now able to offer undergraduate and master's degrees, the recommendation says, but there is a continuing need for doctoral studies.

Indiana church reverses policy on gay members

EVANSVILLE, Ind. — An American Baptist church in Evansville, Ind., drew local media attention with reports it has reversed its previous policy of acceptance and inclusion of members who are openly gay.

NBC television affiliate WFIE reported Aug. 21 that a paper was distributed announcing that American East Baptist Church would no longer condone homosexuality.

The new policy reportedly says current gay members can be grandfathered in and any future new gay members will be decided case-by-case.

Church leaders are not commenting publicly, but media reports indicate the issue brought discord within the congregation including the resignation of at least one staff member. The church, currently without a permanent senior pastor, reportedly changed the policy when leaders reviewed its mission statement and decided the "homosexual lifestyle" did not fit.

Formed in 2001 by a merger of East Side Baptist Church, founded in 1921, and Eastern Heights Baptist Church, founded in 1959, American Baptist East is affiliated with American Baptist Churches of Indiana/Kentucky and the American Baptist Churches USA.

West African families thrown 'from famine to flood'

NIAMEY, Niger — Six weeks of severe, ongoing flooding has claimed 52 lives and displaced almost 400,000 people in Niger, a landlocked country in West Africa that already was in the throes of a major food shortage.

Torrential rains have swept away crops, tools and homes, according to news services. Southern Baptists have mobilized a disaster assessment team and authorized an initial release of \$25,000 in relief funds.

The chief of the Sarando area told the assessment team that roughly 2,400 people have been displaced there and 190 homes have been destroyed. Residents have lost 60 percent of their millet and gardens, and homeless families have taken refuge in schools, with family members or in a local church.

Niger lies in the Sahel region of Africa, which has been struggling with a food crisis.

An estimated 18 million people have been suffering from food shortages, with nearly 1.5 million children facing starvation, according to United Nations figures.

To donate to the World Hunger Fund, visit www.baptistglobalresponse.com/donate.



JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson College Inaugurates Chapel Season:** Judson College alumna Dr. Judi Favor returned to her alma mater to deliver the first chapel address for the new academic year Sept. 4.



FAVOR

Favor grew up in Hayneville and remains a member of Hayneville Baptist Church. After graduating from Lowndes Academy she enrolled at Judson as a chemistry major.

Favor attended the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) School of Medicine, where she was a member of the AOA National Honor Society and received the CREOG Award for scoring highest in the nation on the OB/GYN written board exams.

Favor has served on the Judson College board of trustees since 1993 and chaired the board from 2005 until 2007.

"I'll always be grateful to Alabama Baptists for making possible my Christian higher education," she said. "At Judson I learned to seek not a career, but rather God's calling for my life."

► **Judson Music Program Honored at National Convention:** The Judson chapter of the Delta Omicron International Music Fraternity received two top awards at the fraternity's triennial conference in July.

The first was for chapter excellence, based on the number and

quality of the school's music programs, service programs, campus and community service, scholarship promotion and publicity.

The second recognized chapter efficiency, including promptness and documentation.

Judson professor Betty Campbell and senior Jessica Weller attended the conference to receive the awards.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **Judge Pryor Featured Speaker at University of Mobile 2012 Constitution Day:** The University of Mobile departments of history and political science will host the 2012 Constitution Day program featuring 11th Circuit Court of Appeals Judge William H. Pryor Jr.

The event will take place Sept. 18 at 11 a.m. in Ram Hall. The Constitution Day event celebrates the 225th anniversary of the Constitutional Convention.

In addition to serving on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit, Pryor teaches law classes at the University of Alabama.

Appointed by President George W. Bush during a Senate recess in 2004, Pryor's appointment was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 2005. Pryor served as attorney general of Alabama from 1997 to 2004. He was later elected and reelected to that office in 1998 and 2002.

For more information, visit www.umobile.edu.

► **Prospective Students Invited to University of Mobile Visit Day on Sept. 28:** University of Mobile invites prospective students to attend Visit Day on Sept. 28. Visit Day begins at 8:30 a.m. and includes a campus tour, mes-

sages from the faculty and campus activities with current students.

A \$2,000 visit scholarship is also available for participants. This scholarship is awarded to new students who register and attend this event, apply for admission and enroll at UMobile. The scholarship awards \$250 per semester for up to eight consecutive semesters attended. Only one UMobile visit scholarship is available per person.

To attend a UMobile Visit Day, register online at www.umobile.edu/visit or call 251-442-2222 or 1-800-WIN-RAMS. Additional visit days are also available.

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Samford's Casey Receives Award:** Senior systems analyst Abby Casey received the 2012 President's Award during the opening convocation of the fall semester at Samford University on Aug. 28.

Casey, who has worked in Samford's technology services department for 13 years, received the award as a staff member who exceeds all expectations and offers exemplary service to all segments of the Samford community.

Casey was cited as a "willing and dedicated co-worker with wonderful ideas and a generous spirit," said Samford President Andrew Westmoreland in presenting the award.

A math major and graduate of Auburn University, Casey received a glass plaque and a \$1,000 cash prize with the President's Award.



CASEY



Photo by Bill Mathews

Judson students demonstrate 'Marion Matters'

Judson College students and faculty participate in the eighth annual 'Marion Matters' on Aug. 25. The event is a community-wide service blitz that culminates the college's Welcome Week for its 175th academic session.



sxc.hu

'Generous living'

Homeless Christians in Vermont give \$69.40 offering to missions

A \$69.40 offering by a group of homeless Christians in Vermont known as the Little Flock of Jesus reminds a local Baptist leader of the widow's two mites that Jesus commended in the Gospels.

Terry Dorsett, director of Green Mountain Baptist Association, has a new perception of the homeless because of their gift to the association's missions offering, the Borders Mission Offering, for starting new churches and meeting church financial emergencies. Dorsett has asked the financially able among the association's 35 churches to match the donation.

"I think we tend to think of homeless people just as being a bunch of addicts and people with problems," Dorsett said. "While that does describe many homeless people, there's a whole subculture of homeless Christians who obviously don't have those problems, and they're just trying to live for the Lord in a different lifestyle setting than most of us might choose."

"So perhaps maybe we have misjudged how committed some homeless Christians are in the kingdom of God," Dorsett said. "These homeless people have set the example for generous living. Shall we follow their example?"

The \$69.40 gift reflects gratitude by the Little Flock of Jesus for the blankets, clothing, fast-food gift certificates, meals, Bibles and fellowship extended to the homeless by Restoration Church and Burlington Street Ministries, pastor and ministry director David Russell said.

Giving back

"[The Little Flock of Jesus] said, you know, we just want to give back, and so they gave themselves a two-day challenge," Russell said. "They wanted to raise \$100; that was their goal. But they couldn't raise \$100 in that two-day period, and they were really apologetic for not raising \$100. But they raised ... \$69.40."

"They just passed the hat among the homeless ... and just urged everybody to put in some money," Russell said.

"There's a lot of discipleship and spirituality

among the homeless population. Jesus is alive and well among the homeless," he said. "I want [Christians] to understand that even though [the homeless] might have a different culture ... maybe the homeless believers don't look like them, maybe even have some issues like drinking or some other stuff ... but I want them to realize that within the context they are living, their life is as normal as we see our lives."

"And we need to accept the fact that ... a saved homeless person might look different than a saved upper-class, middle-class person, and (we) just need to accept the fact that our realities may be different but no one reality is more normal than the other," said Russell, whose ministry is almost entirely to the homeless.

Funds for emergencies

Dorsett said the Borders Mission Offering, named for pioneer Vermont church planters Merwyn and Linda Borders, is important to the 37 Southern Baptist churches and missions in Vermont.

"Every year we use it for a variety of things. We always use it to fund church plants and we also use it [to] help for ... emergencies if a pastor or church has some kind of emergency they can't get funded," Dorsett said.

The association's latest mission, the Arlington Community Church, will receive 40 percent of the Borders Offering.

The rest of the money will fund emergencies, which last year included fuel for a church's oil tank during the cold winter, airfare for a pastor and his wife to attend his father's funeral in Florida and repairs to another pastor's car transmission.

"We have requests all the time for emergency funds," Dorsett said, "but a lot of the times we just have to say we can't help you this time, there's not enough money in the fund. If the money isn't there, then we can't do it."

Although Vermont is the "least religious state in the nation," Dorsett noted that "there is a huge revival going on in Vermont right now." The evangelical church has grown 17 percent in the last decade.

"And would we not want to join God in what He's doing?" (BP)

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Ministers' housing allowance being challenged

MADISON, Wis. — A Wisconsin judge has given a green light to a lawsuit challenging a federal law that exempts clergy from paying income taxes on the fair rental value of their homes.

U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb ruled Aug. 29 that the Madison, Wis.-based Freedom From Religion Foundation has legal standing to challenge the constitutionality of a 1954 law that grants certain tax benefits to "ministers of the gospel."

The group dropped a similar lawsuit in 2011 after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a case that individuals can sue the government only if they are affected directly by a law and not just because they are taxpayers. The Freedom From Religion Foundation, which "advocates for the separation of church and state and educates on matters of non-theism," responded by changing its salary structure to include housing allowances, which employees cannot claim on their tax returns because they are not members of the clergy.

The plaintiffs contend that the law violates the First Amendment ban on establishing religion and the Fifth Amendment guaranteeing equal protection under the law.

Current law allows employers to set aside a portion of a minister's compensation to be used to rent or purchase a home, including furnishings and utilities. The exemption's original intent was to reduce the tax burden on ministers, assuming they were poorly paid, and in acknowledgement that clergy conduct much of their ministry from their home, making their residence akin to a home office.

Regional Seventh-day Adventists move to ordain women

SILVER SPRING, Md. — Two U.S. regional groups of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have recently approved the ordination of women pastors, moving faster than the worldwide church's study of the issue.

The Pacific Union Conference, which includes California and four other Western states, voted 79 percent to 21 percent at a special session Aug. 19 to "approve ordinations to the gospel ministry without regard to gender." Weeks earlier the Maryland-based Columbia Union Conference, which includes eight Mid-Atlantic states, adopted a similar change in its policy, with 80 percent in favor.

World leaders of the church said they were disappointed with the conferences' actions. They said the Columbia Union's July 29 action was "not in harmony" with the general policy of the church and said the Pacific Union would "pre-empt the collective decisions of the world church regarding ordination."

Leaders of the Maryland-based Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is best known for observing the Sabbath on Saturday instead of Sunday, are in the midst of studying the "theology of ordination" for possible consideration at their 2015 General Conference Session.

There are about 320 women pastors in the worldwide Adventist Church. Within North America, there are about 120 women pastors and about 4,100 male pastors. Many Seventh-day Adventist women pastors hold a "commissioned" credential, which does not permit ordination, while most male pastors hold a "ministerial" credential, which does.

Broadcast TV nudity up 407 percent, study shows

HOLLYWOOD — America's parents likely do not need any evidence television content is getting worse, but a new study shows there was a 407 percent increase in full nudity on broadcast television in the 2011-12 TV year — most of it occurring before 9 p.m. and little of it containing the appropriate warning.

The study by the Parents Television Council (PTC) is the latest one showing that television is only getting coarser. A 2010 PTC study showed that profanity on broadcast TV had increased by 69 percent from five years earlier.

In light of the newest study Tim Winter, president of the PTC, sent a letter to members of the House of Representatives on Aug. 20 asking them to "give the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) your full support for decency enforcement." He also asked them to urge the FCC to "move forward with all due haste in clearing the backlog of 1.6 million unadjudicated indecency complaints."

"Contrary to what executives from NBC, ABC and CBS told you in 2004 and 2005," Winter wrote, "and contrary to what attorneys for the networks recently argued before the Supreme Court, they are not acting in the public interest; they are aggressively pursuing a dangerous agenda to completely obliterate any remaining television taboos."