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IMB photo

URBAN REFUGEES

Southern Baptist representative David Johnson visits the Hussain family in Bangkok. The Hussains are refugees from South Asia who were forced to flee their home country due to religious intolerance. They now live in Mobile.

By David Johnson
Southern Baptist representative

Unlikely friendship leads refugee family to kingdom of God

Abid Hussain walked into my life more than two years ago. He was dejected, fearful and unhealthy. In broken English he described leaving his home country with his family and coming to Bangkok. Their problems began when his wife converted from Islam to his own Hindu religion. The penalty — not just for her but for the entire family — was death by beheading.

"I've gone to many places, but no one will help us," Abid told me. "I used to be rich and owned a factory; now we have nothing. I have nothing to give my children to eat."

I'd heard that story before and had grown hard. I begrudgingly gave him some money and sent him on

his way. I hoped not to face this again. After all, couldn't he get help from the Hindu community? Why would he come to a Christian for money?

The next month, he came again ... and every month after that.

Sometimes he brought one of his four children with him. He said he couldn't bring the entire family. They were not accepted as refugees by the United Nations yet, so there was always the threat of being picked up by police and taken to jail. Thailand is one of five countries in the world that does not recognize or protect refugees, so they were always on the lookout for the police.

After a few more visits by Abid, I decided it was time to check out his story. A co-worker and I went to visit his family with an armful of food.

Abid was definitely telling the truth.

We climbed a staircase as steep as a stepladder for four floors just to get to him. They lived in an attic storage room on the roof. This family of six slept on a cement floor with one little pad as their

mattress. They had a pot or two, a small gas tank and a few toothbrushes. One wall of the room was simply a chain-link fence — allowing the rain, pollution and mosquitoes in year round.

They were excited to see us and Abid's wife, Shabnam, offered a prime spot on the floor. She had signs of isolation, fear and pain written all over her face as she showed us photographs from their

former country. Her old kitchen was stocked with equipment Martha Stewart would have envied. Their formal gardens reminded me of Williamsburg.

"We left everything to come to ... to this?" she blurted out. "What will happen to my children? They have not been to school in three years. They don't have a book to read and can't even go out to play (See 'Refugee,' page 7)

Refugee family settles in Mobile

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Abid Hussain was once a Hindu and a millionaire, living in a 19-bedroom house. Then he was a persecuted Christian living with his family in an attic storeroom on a concrete floor (see story, this page).

Now Hussain is a refugee living in a rough neighborhood in Mobile, struggling to find work and afraid for his family to go out at night. But he and his family say

that God has a plan for them, so they are grateful.

"They are nervous about their life here, and they are still struggling a lot," said Buddy Brents, a church planter for the North American Mission Board working in partnership with Mobile Baptist Association. "But he (Hussain) often says, 'God has brought me here, and I'm going to trust Him.'"

When Hussain's family was (See 'Hussain,' page 7)

COMMENT

Different Standards for Christian Messages?

Media giant Google is being lauded for its efforts to preserve free speech and to oppose censorship in the face of deadly protests and government pressures. The notorious YouTube video “Innocence of Muslims” sparked deadly protests in a number of countries. More than 20 people have died in rioting related to the video, including U.S. Ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens and three other U.S. officials.

Russia threatened to close down YouTube in that country if the offending video was not removed. In the U.S., the Obama administration did not explicitly ask YouTube to remove the video but it did ask the company to double-check to see if the video met the company’s standards to remain available.

In the face of such pressure a YouTube spokesperson said, “We work hard to create a community everyone can enjoy and which also enables people to express different opinions.” The spokesperson went on to explain that YouTube’s owner Google will remove content that is shown to violate local laws but stressed that the company strives to maintain a balance between free speech and censorship.

In the U.S. the right to free speech is protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. As Christians we believe free speech, including religious speech, is a right given by God. It is a cherished right. Most Christians applaud Google’s efforts to uphold free speech and to resist censorship. Unfortunately Google and other giant media companies have not been as committed to free speech and to resisting censorship when it comes to moral and ethical issues related to traditional Christian values.

Censorship of pro-life messages

For example, YouTube and Google have a history of censoring pro-life messages. In 2008 YouTube took down a pro-life video posted by Catholic News Agency. The video was an interview. It was not pornographic, did not show animal abuse or graphic violence — all things that YouTube does not permit.

But under pressure from abortion advocates the media giant chose not to “allow people to express different opinions,” as the company is doing with the “Innocence of Muslims” video. Instead, where the pro-life video once appeared was a



THOUGHTS
By Bob Terry

blank screen with the words “This video has been removed due to terms of use violation.”

Catholic News Agency senior editor David Uebbing said it was frustrating that YouTube removed a factual video without any explanation.

The next year YouTube took down a five-minute video titled “Requiem for the Disappeared.” It depicted a Catholic funeral and burial ceremonies for 23 unborn fetuses found dumped in trash bins behind abortion clinics in Michigan. Again no free speech. Again censorship from YouTube.

In 2010 YouTube and Google would not even put up the Tim Tebow pro-life commercial aired in connection with the Super Bowl in its Ad Blitz campaign to determine the most popular Super Bowl commercial.

One can only wonder why the company is fighting so hard for free speech for the “Innocence of Muslims” video while it fails to uphold that same value in relationship to pro-life issues.

Google is not the only media giant trying to prevent free speech and impose censorship on messages about traditional Christian values. In 2010 Apple, owner of iTunes, removed an application for iPhones and iPads that allowed one to download the Manhattan Declaration — an important statement by Christian leaders from a variety of denominations that defended traditional marriage, the sanctity of human life and religious liberty. The declaration was written in civil, non-inflammatory and respectful language.

Originally Apple accepted the app for download and rated it 4+, meaning it contained no objectionable material. But after a gay-activist group using the online petition-hosting service

Change.org gathered 7,000 signatures for a petition claiming the application promoted bigotry and homophobia, iTunes dropped the app.

According to an article in MacWorld, “Apple is known to be a defender of gay rights.” The company donated \$100,000 to oppose Proposition 8, a California proposition that ultimately banned gay “marriage” in that state. Whether that influenced the company’s decision will never be known. What is known is that more than 500,000 people signed the Manhattan Declaration, but Apple still chose to side with censorship and to curtail free speech by deleting the app.

More recently Facebook joined the media companies trying to limit free speech supporting traditional Christian values. On July 24, Facebook shut down the Chick-Fil-A Appreciation Day page launched by former presidential candidate Mike Huckabee. Huckabee said he felt Chick-Fil-A owner Dan Cathy was getting a raw deal because he supported traditional marriage. No one seemed to care that the company had never discriminated in its hiring practices or against those it served. Huckabee attempted to rally support for the beleaguered company.

Public pressure

But Facebook made the page mysteriously disappear. Twelve hours later the page just as mysteriously reappeared when Facebook decided the public pressure was too great. The incident once again demonstrated the control giant media companies attempt to exercise over messages related to traditional Christian values. It is reaching to say their record shows they are committed to free speech, to enabling people to express different opinions and to resisting censorship when the companies repeatedly block messages related to traditional Christian values.

Defenders of the media giants argue the companies have free speech rights, too, and can block any message they choose. True, but if that is the case then it is hypocrisy for Google to claim it supports free speech in cases like “Innocence of Muslims.” The company should admit it is crass commercialism driving its decisions. It wants to get more traffic to its sites in order to sell more ads.

If companies like Google, Apple and Facebook really want to defend free speech and oppose censorship then they will accept the invitation issued Sept. 12 by the National Religious Broadcasters to join in a Free Speech Charter for the Internet.

The proposal calls on the media giants to voluntarily abide by the First Amendment’s free speech requirements and fulfill their role as gatekeepers to new web-based communications platforms rather than censors.

We hope the companies are listening. There should not be different standards for messages related to traditional Christian values. To read more about the free speech charter, visit nrb.org.

Letters to the Editor

WHAT HAPPENED TO UNITY?

I am tired of hearing more about Calvinism than I do Jesus Christ. This is just another plot by Satan to split the masses. The last time it was the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship; then it was a group to find “a new way to present the gospel.” And now it is “New Calvinism.”

I have been led to be careful when I see “isms.” That should be enough for us. I thought Christianity was an entity in itself. I don’t remember “Christianityism.” Christianity is not supposed to be like a menu where you take one from column A and one from column B.

Many churches have even taken “Baptist” out of their names so you

can’t even be sure what they are teaching anymore. These arguments are destroying our youth and especially young Christians.

Whatever happened to the unity of the brotherhood? What should be discussed is the outside world that threatens our unity.

Marilyn Gentry
West Blocton, Ala.



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

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Evangelical outreach

By Anna Keller
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Phil Winningham

A biker participates in the gas giveaway that involves three volunteers. One would fill the gas tank, a second would wash the bike's windshield and a third would share God's Word with the biker.

Alabama Baptists minister to thousands of bikers in Trail of Tears ride

Each year, tens of thousands of motorcycle riders pass through northern Alabama as they participate in the Trail of Tears Commemorative Motorcycle Ride. When Sammy Gilbreath was named director of the office of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions about 16 years ago, he realized there was not a ministry in place to reach out to this robust population of riders in the state.

An evangelism tool

"My wife and I prayed about it, and we decided to buy a Harley, even though we'd never had one before," Gilbreath said. "She and I started riding together and then decided to expand it and make that an evangelism tool."

This year's Trail of Tears Ministry — which took place Sept. 15 — attracted about 100,000 riders. The event was a great success that went off without a hitch and resulted in many riders being saved, Gilbreath said.

By reaching out to riders during the Trail

of Tears ride, this ministry became the largest single event for evangelism outreach in the state, allowing volunteers to come in contact with thousands of bikers — many of whom are unchurched.

To reach out to these riders this year, volunteers from Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Athens; First Baptist Church, Florence; and the Madison Baptist Association hosted events including special worship services, booths set up with water and snacks for the riders, gas and flat-screen TV giveaways and a blessing of the bikes. To be entered into the drawing for the flat-screen TV, bikers had to agree to let a volunteer share a three-minute gospel presentation. Likewise, when bikers chose to participate in the gas giveaway, three volunteers would be a part of the process: one would fill the gas tank, a second would wash the bike's windshield and a third would share God's Word with the biker.

As a rider himself, Ric Camp, pastor of First, Florence, said this event has particular significance for him. Still, he was quick to

point out, many participants from his church are not riders themselves and enjoy participating in this evangelical outreach. Since the event, Camp has heard from several of his church members who are interested in getting contact information for some of the bikers they met via the outreach just so they can continue to stay in touch.

First, Florence, has been involved in the ministry since Camp joined the church's staff in 2010 and has enjoyed building its participation through the years.

"In past years, we've worked with F.A.I.T.H. Riders to give away a Harley," he said. "This year we decided to try something different, so we moved to the flat-screen TV."

As for continued growth of the ministry? "This will only get bigger," Gilbreath said. "We are probably going to make this a national event next year. Buddy Newsome, co-founder of F.A.I.T.H. Riders, will be bringing F.A.I.T.H. Riders from all over the country to work the event, so we'll have more booths and more volunteers." ■

State convention leaders, NAMB choose 'unity'

State Baptist convention and North American Mission Board (NAMB) leaders "have determined to move forward together in unity to impact the lostness of North America," according to a statement issued Sept. 14.

The agreement was shared during the annual NAMB-sponsored state executive directors meeting Sept. 13-14 in Grapevine, Texas.

Representatives of the state executive directors, led by David Hankins of Louisiana, met with NAMB President Kevin Ezell and other mission board leaders as part of the two-day gathering.

The session follows the creation of a special study committee in February. The study committee's assignment is to evaluate relations and cooperation between state Baptist conventions and NAMB.

Alabama Baptist Executive Director Rick Lance was part of the

study committee but was unable to attend the September meeting because of health issues (see story, this page). He told *The Alabama Baptist* following the release of the statement:

"I am glad that the leadership of NAMB and that of state convention executive directors could come to a mutually acceptable agreement as to future working relationships. This will help us all maximize our collaborative efforts to reach the unreached in North America."

Apprehension and uncertainty have marked the relationship between NAMB and a number of state conventions as the mission board has increased funding for its Send North America church planting and evangelism strategy, prioritizing Southern Baptist missions efforts on those areas of North America with the greatest spiritual lostness and the smallest number

of Southern Baptist churches. The shift has reduced joint funding for staffing for longstanding missions and ministries in the states.

Hankins said in a statement, "It is our desire [to] join ranks around the task of evangelizing and congregationalizing North America. Southern Baptists can have confidence in our united effort."

Ezell stated, "We are excited to be moving forward together in unity for the sake of the Kingdom."

When asked for more details about the agreement with *The Alabama Baptist*, Ezell said, "I would love to (share the details of the agreement) but ... [d]ue to each of the non-South states being customized per state we agreed we would keep the statement general.

"We all really are extremely pleased," he said. "It is a new day of cooperation and focus."

(BP, TAB)

Lance doing well following surgery

Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) Executive Director Rick Lance underwent colon surgery Sept. 17 to repair a colon tear caused by diverticulitis.

SBOM officials report that Lance is getting excellent care and making good progress. Lance expressed appreciation for the gestures of love and prayer support.

According to family sources, his surgeon reports that Lance's medical condition is excellent.

He was anticipating release from the hospital by Sept. 24 and will continue recovery at home. (TAB)

Bold in faith

By Sondra Washington
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Hootie & the Blowfish drummer, songwriter uses talent for God

It wasn't the massive success of Hootie & the Blowfish that led drummer and songwriter Jim Sonefeld away from God. He never made an outright decision to leave his faith behind. He simply set it aside, filling his life with other things — fame, fortune, partying — and his faith slowly “faded” away.

Over time, while Sonefeld and his bandmates skyrocketed to the top of America's music charts, his personal life was spiraling out of control. Trying to hide the pain in his heart, Sonefeld became addicted to alcohol and found himself in some dark places.

“Everybody out there loves to have a good time, but for me I was on a path that was not healthy,” he said. “I was trying to fill a void that was hidden within me and that only has one ending. It's either called death or you suffer with the addiction. I figured out along the way that I was being controlled by alcohol. Only after giving it up did I discover the root of the problem, which was not alcohol. It was Jim Sonefeld.”

As a youth, Sonefeld was raised in a Catholic family and went to church regularly. Although he said his belief system was “pretty firmly imbedded” within his heart at that time, those beliefs were overshadowed by his new way of living in adulthood.

“After school, I chose to really learn about other life experiences and that meant meeting new people, traveling and hearing other people's experiences in spirituality,” Sonefeld said. “Unfortunately, that didn't leave a really strong foundation for me.”

In college he became more interested in his lifelong love of music and playing drums, and soon he and three of his University of South Carolina friends created Hootie & the Blowfish. After about five years of “driving around in a smelly van” to various performances and sometimes “making less than minimum wage,” the group released their debut album “Cracked Rear View” in 1994 and catapulted into stardom with chart-topping songs like “Only Wanna Be with You” and “Hold My Hand.”

Life was good for Sonefeld, but all of his fame and fortune did not alleviate his inner struggles.

“When life is going well and when you are enjoying your job and your friendships and you are successful in some way, it's easy to not look closely

at yourself, your heart and your pain,” he said. “It's only on the other side of the mountain that I got a peek at it (and it didn't) look so good.”

“I wasn't choosing faith as something to stand on,” he said. “It's what a lot of people do in our society. We put all of our might in a career. It may appear joyous and successful, but when you put that first in your life, where does that leave your spiritual foundation? ... That's just a crash waiting to happen. I was a good person and I treated people the way I wanted to be treated, but I was leading a sinful life. ... Eventually when I continued to not use God as

my spiritual foundation it caught up with me.”

Ultimately, a 12-step program made the difference. “I went in with no idea other than that I surrender, my life is out of control and I can't stop drinking and I don't know how to stop,” he said. “[T]hey showed me ... that I need to admit my addiction and agree that there is a higher power that can save me. ... That's a great beginning for someone who has hit the [end of his] rope ... because I had run out of answers.”

Sonefeld said he was “literally and figuratively reawakened.”

“It was hard at first,” he said. “It's scary to give up ... the medicine that helps numb the pain.”

His bandmates were also “overjoyed.”

“It's scary to see a friend get close to the cliff and wonder if he is

going to fall off,” he said.

Recently and with some hesitancy, Sonefeld released a solo album titled “Found,” which represents and celebrates the spiritual change in his life.

“I thought if I write Christian songs, then I'm going to have to boldly live out my Christian faith,” he said. “God has continued to build me up to be a man who can continually sing His praises publicly. He has allowed me to be bold in my faith. So I'm going to sing it.”

“A life that isn't centered around God — where He is not the centerpiece — is eventually a life where the wheels are going to come off and it's going to get unbalanced,” he said. “Anything you put in front of God or in place of God is an idol. ... My chore daily is to clear that path and let Him be the center.”

Sonefeld's album “Found” is available on iTunes. For more information, visit www.jimsonefeld.com. 



Photo courtesy of Savvy Media Solutions

Jim Sonefeld (front) recently released a solo album titled ‘Found,’ which represents and celebrates the spiritual change in his life.

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

Indian people group asks for prayer, support

JOYPUR, India — The indigenous Bodo people of the north-eastern Indian state of Assam are appealing to the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) for prayer and support in the wake of ethnic clashes in recent months.

Violence broke out in Assam in July between Bodos — who are mostly Hindu or Christian — and Muslims, causing the deaths of at least 80 people and the displacement of more than 400,000 who fled their homes and are now living in Internally Displaced Peoples camps. More than 5,000 of their houses were razed.

Baptist World Aid (BWAid), the relief and development arm of the BWA, sent a grant of \$10,000 for immediate relief. BWAid and the BWA division of freedom and justice are working on a joint response to the crisis.

The violence broke out July 10 after four local Bodo boys were hacked to death in Joypur, in Lower Assam, by a group of Bengali-speaking Muslims who are believed to be migrants from Bangladesh. This led to retaliatory arson and killings. The violence was brought under control by the Indian army over a period of three days.

Another BWA member body in the state, the North Bank Baptist Christian Association, has more than 70,000 members in almost 1,000 churches, about 70 percent of whom are Bodo. The Assam Baptist Convention, another BWA member in Assam, has approximately 30,000 members in 335 churches.

WMU announces young women's outreach

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — The national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) has announced myMISSION, a new, primarily web-based organization for young adult women in missions.

Jean Roberson, national WMU ministry consultant, said the new initiative celebrates young women as a force for Christ.

“[Young women] combine their desire for a deep, authentic faith and a passion for reaching those who are suffering in this world,” Roberson said. “We hope myMISSION can be that place where faith and practice meet.”

The new organization builds on the website mymissionful-filled.com that WMU created in 2007 to provide missions discipleship resources to the next generation of young women. The organization will connect young women through Bible studies, community events and missions projects.

The website features missional Bible studies and products, interactive blogs from six young adult women in different stages of life and articles on such topics as prayer, social justice, time management, money and relationships. The site offers event planning guides and get-started kits for churches, schools and others interested in beginning myMISSION groups.

Miss. evangelist guilty of video voyeurism

HERNANDO, Miss. — Sammy Nuckolls, an evangelist who spoke for years at Southern Baptist and other youth gatherings — including Centrifuge camps sponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources — remains in custody after being sentenced to 10 years in prison for taping women with a hidden pen camera.

Nuckolls, who is in his mid-30s, also must pay nearly \$85,000 in fines and counseling for his victims.

Having waived his right to a trial by jury, Nuckolls was found guilty by a Mississippi judge on 13 counts of video voyeurism for crimes dating to 2006, according to WMC-TV in Memphis, Tenn. Though Nuckolls may appeal the Sept. 14 decision by DeSoto County Judge Gerald Chatham, bond was denied.

Over a period of four years Nuckolls videotaped women as young as 17 in private situations without their consent. WMC reported that victims wept on the stand as they recounted friendships with Nuckolls, a spiritual leader they trusted. A total of 21 victims were confirmed in Mississippi, Texas, Arkansas and Virginia, ABC 24 News reported.

Earlier this year, Nuckolls pleaded guilty to charges of video voyeurism in two Arkansas towns. He still faces charges in Texas. 

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The Hutsuls

How big is the people group?

Estimates indicate there are more than 500,000 Hutsuls.

Where do they live?

The Hutsuls live mainly in the highlands of the Carpathian mountain range in Ukraine. There also is a Hutsul population in the Romanian section of the Carpathians.

What language do they speak?

The Hutsul language is a dialect of Ukrainian with some Polish influences. This is dying, however, because education is conducted only in standardized Ukrainian. Few Hutsuls speak English.

What is their livelihood?

Traditionally, Hutsul life was based on forestry, logging and animal breeding (cattle, sheep and horses). Many Hutsuls today continue these practices, though some leave the highlands to find work in the cities. Secondary sources of income include handmade crafts (particularly wood carving, ceramics, jewelry, embroidery and painted eggs) and music.

What is their religion?

Most Hutsuls consider themselves Greek Catholic or Orthodox. However, there are superstitious and pagan beliefs and practices woven into the culture. Alabama Baptists will be the first evangelical group to minister among Hutsuls.

(Compiled by Joseph Rhea)



Photo by Scotty Goldman

A group from the vision journey team to Ukraine visits with a woman named Oksana (center, left) who is one of the few believers in her village. In rural areas, believers are still ostracized from their community.

Acts 1:8

Alabama Baptists partner with International Mission Board to reach Ukraine's Hutsul people

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Baptists might recognize a little bit of themselves in the Hutsul people who call the Carpathian Mountains in western Ukraine home. The Hutsuls are rural folks who work the land and help their neighbors when it is time for the harvest, a metaphor perhaps for the work that the Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections missions partnership seeks to promote in Ukraine.



Photo by Scotty Goldman

Southern Baptist representative and Alabama native Tim Akers (left) shares with a college student in Lviv during a vision journey to Ukraine on Sept. 6-13.

Several Alabama Baptists joined Southern Baptist representative and Alabama native Tim Akers on a vision journey to Ukraine on Sept. 6-13 to survey the area and look for ways that Alabama Baptists might help. Akers and his wife, Donna, along with their 13-year-old son, are moving to the region in October to work with the Hutsul people.

"The Hutsul are considered an unreached group, and there are few believers in the area," Akers said. "In addition, the people are hard to reach physically and socially."

The primary mission of the 17-member vision journey team, which included representatives from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) and four Alabama Baptist associations, was to make contact with believers in the region and to scout locations for new church starts. Akers said the team identified up to 10 starting points through an effort that would have taken years if he had had to do the work alone.

The enormity of the task became real to team member Greg Pouncey, pastor of Tillman's Corner First Baptist Church, Mobile, as they surveyed the area.

"The thing that showed me the greatest need was that we drove for about 12 hours one day and only saw two or three churches," said Pouncey, who serves as the chairman of the global partnership sub-committee for the SBOM. "We drove through a village of 17,000 and identified only one believer in the whole village."

"The work might seem like an overwhelming task if Tim has to do it by himself, but if he has Alabama Baptists behind him, he can accomplish so much more," Pouncey said.

Reggie Quimby, director of the SBOM office of global missions, was part of the Ukraine team as well. In addition to identifying opportunities for future contact with the Hutsul people, Quimby said the vision journey sets the groundwork for a network of Alabama Baptist associations and churches who will partner with the Akers in order to reach the Hutsuls for Christ.

"We walked and drove by many homes where people live that need to know the Lord, but how will they know

unless someone is sent to share the good news?" Quimby said. "The Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections partnership strategy is simple. We will partner with Alabama International Mission Board and North American Mission Board missionaries where they are and connect with the missionaries through prayer, partnership and people groups."

Pouncey said partnering with missionaries who have an Alabama connection will help churches feel more connected to the work.

"People will be more excited if they have a face to go along with a name," Pouncey said.

In addition, missionaries will have a network of partner churches and associations in place and ready to help meet the needs they identify. Already, Akers said, team members have ideas about how their churches can help with Vacation Bible School, medical clinics and outreach in the Carpathian region. Once he and his family are settled in the region, Akers believes more needs will be apparent and more opportunities for teams to work in the area will be available.

Team member Eddy Garner, director of missions for Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association, is looking forward to those opportunities.

Plans for the future

"During the week, we discovered potential missions trip locations for the future, and I am certain that our [Colbert-Lauderdale Association] churches will be returning to minister with Tim in the next year. I foresee a long-term partnership with Tim and Donna Akers as they reach the Hutsul people," Garner said.

As Akers prepares to return to Ukraine in October with his family, he said he is eager to see how God will work through the Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections initiative.

"With God's help, so much can be done with the help of Alabama Baptists that couldn't be done with just one missionary family," Akers said. "It's exciting to know that Alabama is willing to partner with us to reach this unreached people group." ■

Across Alabama's Associations

BETHLEHEM

► **Ramah Church, Evergreen**, will celebrate its 140th anniversary Oct. 14, 11 a.m. with guest speaker Herbert Brown, pastor of Southside Church, Greenville. A covered-dish lunch will follow at 12:15 p.m. William Bodiford is pastor.

BIBB

► **Ashby Church, Brierfield**, will hold a singing with guest singers Uplifted Sept. 30, 5 p.m. Stan Hughley is interim pastor.

CALHOUN

► **Mamre Church, Glencoe**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 7, 10:30 a.m. The Boys of Alabama will sing and lunch will follow. Allen Murphy is pastor.

CLEBURNE

► **Heflin Church** will host ventriloquist Keith Fordham and "Homer" Sept. 30, 10 a.m. For information call 256-463-2576. Philip R. Morris is pastor.

LIMESTONE

► **New Bethel Church, Elkmont**, will celebrate its 100th anniversary Oct. 7, 10:30 a.m. Mitchell McCormick is pastor.

MADISON

► **Murphy Hill Church, Toney**, will hold a gospel singing Sept. 30, 6 p.m. featuring HeavenSong Quartet. For information call 256-508-3862 or 256-828-3171. Mike McFarlen is pastor. ► **New Salem Church, Owens Cross Roads**, will hold revival with Kelton Williams Oct. 7, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. and Oct. 8-9, 6:30 p.m. For information call 256-518-9328. Michael Shaneyfelt is pastor.

MARSHALL

► **Beulah Church, Boaz**, celebrated its 130th anniversary Aug. 19 with The Singing Ambassadors in concert. Mike Johnson preached and Vonnell Head was recognized as a granddaughter of founding pastor James D. Jordan. The church's summer revival followed with preaching by Lynn Sharpton (New Macedonia Church), Mike Goforth (Sardis Church), David Martin (Mount Vernon Church) and Joey Canady (Solitude Church). Tony Holcomb is pastor.

MOBILE

► **C. Alan Floyd** is the new pastor of **Cottage Hill Church, Mobile**. He will begin Nov. 4. Floyd is a University of Mobile graduate and holds a master of divinity from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and a doctor of ministry from New Orleans Seminary. Floyd has served as pastor of First Church, Middleburg, Fla., since 1999 and previously served churches in

Florida and Georgia. Floyd currently serves on the State Board of Missions for the Florida Baptist Convention and trustee for New Orleans Seminary. He also has served as president of the Florida Baptist Pastors Conference and as trustee for the Baptist College of Florida. He and his wife, Kathy, have two children.



FLOYD

MONTGOMERY

► **Catoma Church, Montgomery**, will host southern gospel group Glory Bound Bluegrass Sept. 30, 5:30 p.m. A finger food fellowship will follow. Chad Underwood is pastor. ► **Open Acres Church, Montgomery**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 14. Steve Stephens will speak at 10 a.m. and praise and worship will follow at 11 a.m. with Final Harvest. Food and fellowship will follow at noon. Ron Davis is pastor.

MORGAN

► **Liberty Church, Hartselle**, will host "Tent Makers," an association-wide meet and greet time for bivocational pastors and wives Oct. 12, 6:30 p.m. Bring finger foods, desserts and drinks. Lynn Harvel is pastor.

MUD CREEK

► **Sparks Gap Church, Bessemer**, will hold a 5th Sunday singing Sept. 30, 1:30 p.m. with special singers The Campbells. Johnny Thacker is pastor.

NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Eddie Hughes** is the new pastor of **Pineywood Church, Gardendale**. He is a graduate of the University of Montevallo and Southern Indiana Bible College in Clarksville, Ind. He previously served as pastor of Ashby Church, Brierfield, and as minister of music for Good Samaritan Church, Center Point. He and his wife, Vivian, have two children.

RUSSELL

► **Bethany Church, Phenix City**, will celebrate its 50th anniversary and homecoming Oct. 14 with a singing at 9:30 a.m. and worship service at 11 a.m. A fried chicken dinner will follow. A barbecue will be held Oct. 12, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and Oct. 13, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The church also will hold an "Open Car Show" Oct. 13, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. with trophies and awards given at 4 p.m. For information call 334-297-1936. Jimmie Hobbs is pastor.

ST. CLAIR

► **Chipleigh (Chip) Thornton** is the new pastor of **First Church,**

Springville. He holds a bachelor of science degree in commerce and business administration from the University of Alabama, a master of divinity from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and a doctorate with a focus in preaching from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He previously served as associate pastor of Belmar Church, Louisville, Ky., and also served at Bullitt Lick Church, Shepherdsville, Ky. He and his wife, Kerri, have four children. ► **Patrick Giles** is the new pastor of **Macedonia #1 Church, Margaret**. He began Aug. 19. He and his wife, Terri, have two children. **Aaron Gray** is the new minister of music and youth. Gray previously served in several Alabama Baptist churches in North Jefferson Association.



THORNTON

TALLAPOOSA

► **Sandy Creek Church, Camp Hill**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 7, 10:30 a.m. The Cowboy Church Singers from The Cowboy Church of Lee County will sing and Yancey Sanders will preach. Lunch will follow. Richard Hall is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **Central Church, Opelika**, has called **Ross Kilpatrick** as senior pastor. He holds a master's degree from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and is working on a doctorate in leadership. He previously served First Church, Reel-town, and First Church, Ashland. He and his wife, Amy, have three children.

WEST CULLMAN

► **Bethsadia Church** will celebrate its 125th anniversary Sept. 30, 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow. Soul Seekers Quartet will perform at 2 p.m. For information call 256-737-9190. James Abbott is pastor.

OTHER

► Members of the former **Mount Moriah Fellowship Church**, located on Mount Moriah Drive on the Butler-Wilcox County line, will celebrate homecoming called Second Sunday Oct. 14, 11 a.m. Tom Cleveland will speak. Lunch will follow (bring a covered dish and serving pieces marked with your name). The Mount Moriah church board will meet in the sanctuary at 1:15 p.m. The JGD Trust Inc. meeting will be at 1:45 p.m. For information call 205-879-7849 or email maryalice@carmi-chael1.com.



Haleyville church reaches centennial mark

To mark its centennial Corinth Heights Baptist Church, Haleyville, celebrated the day with a churchwide birthday party.

The festivities began with a special parade by the children. They marched into the 10 a.m. service carrying paper torches as the congregation of about 250 sang "Onward, Christian Soldiers." According to Jackie Mize, chairperson for the Corinth Heights Baptist historical committee, the procession corresponded with the anniversary theme "Carrying the Christian torch into the future."

Al Hood, director of missions for Winston Baptist Association, led an opening prayer. Visitors and direct descendants of the church's charter members of 1912 were then recognized.

Mize said the service did not include a message but rather was set up in a "story, song, story" format.

Also recognized during the service was the active member with the most years in the church, Mildred Finley. Jerry Armor, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative, presented the church with a plaque. After Corinth Heights Pastor Lance Hogan's closing remarks, everyone congregated in the fellowship hall for a luncheon and sang "Happy Birthday" to the church. Mize said the birthday cake was made in the shape of the number 100. Following lunch, everyone went outside and released 100 balloons to conclude the afternoon.

Hogan noted the church is really working with the young families and focusing on outreach to those families in the community. (Julie Payne)

Gilbertown Baptist celebrates anniversary weekend

Gilbertown Baptist Church had a full weekend celebrating a century of existence. On Sept. 8-9 the Choctaw Baptist Association church filled its pews and activities building with guests.

The church saw more than 120 people come through the doors Sept. 8 for a fish fry and gospel concert by Heart's Desire of Meridian, Miss. Gilbertown Baptist also purchased a red maple tree and had a tree planting ceremony that evening.

The Sunday morning service started with two boys' baptisms performed by Gilbertown Pastor Brad Bakane. Representative John Reid of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission gave Gilbertown a commemorative plaque. A slideshow of old church photos, presentations from former pastors, and words of encouragement from Bobby DuBois, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions associate executive director, comprised the morning celebration. To end the celebration each attendee was given a golden balloon and asked to gather at the newly planted red maple tree to release the balloons together.

Myra Abston, Gilbertown member for 17 years and anniversary committee member, said the weekend was "just great."

Bakane encouraged the church to remember, "The memories we have of the last 100 years are not the end. (Looking forward) we're trying to reach families in our community. ... Hopefully the best years of our church are ahead of us." (Neisha Fuson)

Huntsville's Bethany Baptist celebrates 50 years

Bethany Baptist Church, Huntsville, celebrated its half-century mark Aug. 26 with a special worship service. According to Peggy Campbell, chairwoman for the anniversary event, many people assisted her with planning for the day's festivities. At the beginning of the 10:30 a.m. service the Bethany Baptist choir sang "The Old Country Church." Soloists Donna Wright and Sandy Thrower also both sang special music.

Monroe Baker, a charter church member of 1962, spoke about the early history of the Madison Baptist Association church to the 109 attendees, and former pastor James D. Johnson delivered the message. "Everyone really enjoyed [Johnson's] message," Bethany Baptist Pastor Dennis Cleveland noted.

Chairman of deacons George Williams assisted with the service's presentations as narrator. Nancy Beasley, a representative of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented a plaque recognizing the church's years of service. Charlie Howell, director of missions for Madison Association, closed with a prayer and blessing for the catered barbecue lunch that followed.

Cleveland said Bethany Baptist hopes to continue its ongoing ministry in the community and the members are excited about the possibilities in the future. (Julie Payne)



Photo by Lyle Ratliff

Abid and Shabnam Hussain (left) share a meal with David and Claudia Johnson in Mobile. The Hussains are a refugee family living in a rough neighborhood in Mobile. Abid is struggling to find work and afraid for his family to go out at night. But he and his family say that God has a plan for them, so they are grateful. The Johnsons are Southern Baptist representatives on stateside assignment in Birmingham.

MEETING NEEDS

Hussain family sees God providing for needs through Alabama Baptists while living in Mobile

(continued from page 1)

granted refugee status in May, a three-bedroom home was provided for them for free for five months, Brents said. But in October the family will have to start paying its own bills, and in five months of looking for work every day, Hussain has only managed to secure a job in the last week.

The former millionaire is working the evening shift at a gas station.

"It's been a real struggle for him, because he's a highly educated man with a degree in the medical field. He owned his own textile factory back in his country," Brents said. "He's tried to get jobs anywhere — he tells them he'll do anything, he just needs a job."

But employers say Hussain's English isn't good enough yet. "He's doing this job now just as a test job — the gas station is giving him a shot at being a clerk, and it's only part time with no benefits," Brents said.

And Hussain walks there every night. The family doesn't have a car. The church that Brents started — Hope of the Nations — gave Hussain's family three bikes, but two were

stolen. He was afraid to ride the one they had left, thinking it would get stolen too, until the church gave him a lock for it.

"But his attitude is so good," Brents said. "He experienced some serious persecution back in his home country — people physically hurt him, and his eye was damaged. But here he got health care and is able to see again. He's praising the Lord for that."

God has a plan

And Hussain's children, who have to walk nearly two miles to school each way, thank God for their little house and for the God who takes care of them, Brents said. "They're doing well, and they have such a great attitude. It's so encouraging to go over there — every time I see them, the children say that God has brought them here and has a good plan for them."

And He's been providing for their needs, Brents said. People from Hope of the Nations have brought food regularly to the family, and one church member spends Tuesday

afternoons with the kids helping them with their homework.

"They are just so happy, and they feel like the people have been so nice to them. Baptists are really good at that in Alabama, in reaching out and taking care of people who need it," said David Johnson, a Southern Baptist representative who met Hussain when he was still in Asia.

But Hussain's family is just one of many, many refugee families who need this kind of help, Johnson said. "They're just a drop in the bucket — there are so many like them."

Brents asked for Alabama Baptists to pray for the Hussain family as they continue to walk in God's plan for them in Mobile.

"They still have many needs — a job with benefits and insurance to provide for their family, a steady income, help with their utilities, a couple of bikes," he said. "It's a heartbreaking situation in many ways, but it is such an encouraging testimony of how the Lord is taking care of them and how they still have the joy of the Lord."

For more information, contact Brents at 251-725-2210 or buddybrents@gmail.com.

Refugee family gives up everything for children to have religion of love, hope

(continued from page 1)

for fear of being picked up. We have no country, no clothes and no future. It is better for us to die."

I realized that the food we brought was so insignificant. Their problems were so great — far greater than we could solve. All we could do was pray.

Abid continued to come at the end of each month for a little money. We'd occasionally take food to them, but nothing seemed to change in their lives until a friend of mine from their home country visited me.

His own family fled the country five years ago because they were Christians and had been accused of "converting Muslims." My friend is an enthusiastic Christian, happy to share Christ with anyone. I was thrilled to have someone that could actually talk with Abid in his own language. There was a problem, though: it was the middle of the month and not when Abid normally

came. I had no way to contact him except to pray the Lord would send him to me.

Not even three hours later, Abid walked into the office. My friend and Abid talked for over an hour about the good news of hope that Abid and his family so desperately needed to hear.

'God loves you so much more'

"The reason Christians have been helping you is because they have been helped by Jesus as well," my friend told Abid. "They love you, but God loves you so much more."

Abid was so grateful to hear these words in his language and said he wanted to follow Christ. Of course, my cynicism took over and though my face smiled in gratitude, I wondered if the Truth had really touched his soul.

A month or so later, our church went out to deliver food to refugees. When we stopped at Abid's, we were greeted not by

the normal fearful sufferers but by a family smiling and laughing.

They had moved into a much nicer room. It was still cement block and just one room, but it was bigger and had all four walls. This was exciting, but something else seemed different.

"We are all Christians now," Abid's wife explained. "I have read the Bible through two times in the past three months. I LOVE this book."

The next day my friend returned to town. We went directly to Abid's. For four hours, the entire family, from the 5-year-old daughter to the 40-year-old father, told us of the changes Jesus made in their lives. We even had church.

For the first time I saw the family as they truly are — not a family of beggars seeking a handout or some extra clothes or blankets but as my equals, new brothers and sisters serving the same Lord as I.

The mother who had left everything be-

hind shared, "In my old country, my family lived in a beautiful mansion. We had everything we could ever need. But it is worth giving up everything to give my children a religion of love and hope."

EDITOR'S NOTE — The Hussains received refugee status by the UN and are now living in their new host country, the United States. In fact, they are living in Mobile (see story, page 1). Before leaving Bangkok they decided to be baptized as a family. They wanted to start their new lives with the boldest statement they could think of — declaring to the world that they are followers of Christ.

David Johnson is a Southern Baptist representative serving in Bangkok, Thailand, but is currently in Alabama on stateside assignment. For more stories about urban refugees and how your World Hunger Fund dollars are at work, go to <http://asiastories.com/features/urban-refugees>.

'Proven leader'

Tebow to speak at UMobile's Leadership Banquet

The University of Mobile (UMobile) will bring NFL quarterback and Heisman Trophy winner Tim Tebow to Mobile for the 8th annual University of Mobile Leadership Banquet.

"A Conversation with Tim Tebow" will be held April 18, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. at the Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center in downtown Mobile. Sponsorships are available and tickets are on sale now at www.umobile.edu/banquet2013, or call 251-442-2917.

The annual banquet raises financial support for the school's annual academic scholarship fund. Tebow's appearance marks the eighth leadership banquet which brings a speaker of national prominence to the Mobile area who uses his or her influence to open doors of opportunity for the next generation of leaders.

Previous speakers have included former President George W. Bush, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, former Speaker of the U.S. House of

Representatives Newt Gingrich, former Georgia governor and retired U.S. Sen. Zell Miller, and former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

"Tim Tebow is not only one of the best quarterbacks in the country, but he is also a proven leader both on and off the football field," said Brian Boyle, UMobile vice president for institutional advancement.

Tim Tebow's collegiate career at the University of Florida culminated in two national championships and his being honored as the first sophomore recipient of the Heisman Trophy.

A first-round selection in the 2010 NFL draft by the Denver Broncos, Tebow burst onto the national stage as he led the franchise to the 2011 NFL playoffs for the first time in six years. Now he is suiting up with the New York Jets. Tebow is a fierce competitor with a strong work ethic and a leader his teammates trust and respect.

But even more than his impressive athletic skills, it is his integrity and character that have won him legions of fans. Tebow

is known to live a life that consistently reflects his values, and he shows dedication to helping people and communities in need.

In 2010 he founded The Tim Tebow Foundation, which is partnering with CURE International to build hospitals in the Philippines. In addition to Tebow CURE Hospitals, the foundation also grants wishes for children with life-threatening illnesses and is building playrooms in hospitals and orphanages among other far-reaching charitable works.

While Tebow sees football as a platform for greater good, it is clear that the public's fascination with him spreads far beyond the field. He has over 1.8 million Facebook subscribers and 1.5 million Twitter followers, and his *New York Times* bestselling memoir, "Through My Eyes," was named the No. 1 Sports Book of 2011. Tebow also was named one of *TIME* Magazine's 100 Most Influential People of 2012.

In an industry where many are celebrated only for their performance on the field, Tebow could be viewed as an example of how much can be accomplished by living one's values and making a positive difference in the lives of others. (UMobile)



TEBOW

Samford's enrollment ties previous record

Samford University's fall 2012 enrollment ties the previous record of 4,758 set in fall 2011. The total reflects a fourth consecutive year of record fall enrollments. Including spring semesters, this is the seventh straight semester of record enrollment.

Samford officially records enrollment at the end of the 15th class day, and 2012 totals were announced Sept. 17, according to Phil Kimrey, Samford's vice president for student affairs and enrollment management. Included in the totals are 2,965 under-

graduates and 1,793 graduate and professional students.

One key factor for the record enrollment this year was an increased retention rate of 86.5 percent from freshman to sophomore year. "We know that if we can keep students engaged with Samford after the first year, we have a strong success rate through to graduation," Kimrey said.

The total includes 708 first-year students, Kimrey said, an increase of 22 over the fall 2011 total. Also, a record 2,079 students are living on campus, an increase

of 78 over the fall 2011 record.

The profile of the entering class continues to be strong, Kimrey said, with an average ACT score of 26 and an average high school grade point average of 3.7.

"In a challenging environment within higher education, it is gratifying to know that students and families continue to seek out the educational experience provided by the faculty and staff at Samford," said Samford President Andrew Westmoreland. "With the growth of our undergraduate enrollment, we will be opening new residence halls over the next year to house an additional 300 students on campus."

Westmoreland noted that the enrollment announcement comes just days after Samford was ranked fourth among regional universities in the South by *U.S. News & World Report* annual college rankings, continuing a decades-long record for Samford being ranked in the top tier of its peer group.

Several Samford programs, including business, law and nursing, achieved high national rankings in recent months, and the university has been highly ranked in the last year by Kiplinger's, Colleges of Distinction and The Princeton Review. (Samford)



Hayes K. 'Jack' Lemmond

Former Alabama minister Lemmond dies at 82

Hayes K. "Jack" Lemmond, who spent 35 years in ministry serving churches in Alabama and Louisiana, died Sept. 8. He was 82.

Lemmond was born in Somerville of Morgan County. He graduated from Jefferson State Community College in Birmingham and earned his bachelor's of music degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Lemmond spent many years ministering to people through music and served as a minister of music at West Hartselle Baptist Church, Hartselle; Sixteenth Avenue Baptist Church, Decatur; First Baptist Church, Center Point; and Dalraida Baptist Church, Montgomery. He also served two churches in Louisiana in the minister of music role.

Besides serving as a minister of music, Lemmond led Pinedale Baptist Church, Montgomery, as pastor for 20 years. He also served as interim pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Hartselle.

He was a member of First Baptist Church, Hartselle, at the time of his death. Pastor Jeff Redmond said Lemmond was "always an encourager."

"[He] was someone who loved the Lord and who loved people," Redmond said. "When he walked in a room he always looked for someone to talk to and to encourage. He loved the Morgan Baptist Association and led the music for the weekly pastor's meeting."

Lemmond was a mentor to Mike Shaw, president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention. Shaw, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pelham, presided over Lemmond's funeral and said, "It was an honor to be asked to share in his celebration of life."

"Jack was a faithful servant wherever he went," Shaw said. "His influence will live on for a long, long time."

Lemmond is survived by his wife, Ethel; two children; seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. (Neisha Fuson)

William W. 'Bill' Causey Sr.

Former Mississippi executive Causey dies at 81

William W. "Bill" Causey Sr., longtime Mississippi Baptist pastor and retired executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, died Sept. 6. He was 81.

Causey led the board from 1989 until his retirement in 1998. He earlier had served two terms as president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Causey was pastor of Parkway Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss., from 1963 until he became the state convention's executive director-treasurer.

Causey surrendered his life to Christian ministry as a high school senior in Greenville, Miss., in August 1948 and was ordained by First Baptist Church there in February 1951.

He received a divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., in 1955 and served as pastor of Hopewell Church, Harrodsburg. He later was named a distinguished alumnus of the seminary and served as a trustee for 10 years. (BP)



CAUSEY

Judson College receives high ranking

Judson College in Marion received national recognition in the recently published *Washington Monthly* College Guide and Rankings.

Judson ranked 58th in the "2012 Liberal Arts Colleges" category, making it the top-ranked school statewide in this category.

Other Alabama schools ranked under the "Liberal Arts Colleges" category included Birmingham Southern College (111), Talladega College (202) and Stillman College (214).

According to *Washington Monthly*, schools are rated based on their contribution to the public good in three broad categories: social mobility, research and service.

Judson President David Potts frequently exhorts students and faculty to "engage" the community through service.

"Students and faculty alike find meaning in authentic service — living the exhortation of Christ in the 25th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew," he said. (TAB, Judson)

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Pray Just as You Are

The invitation hymn “Just as I Am” is synonymous with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. That song has been echoed throughout stadiums and other venues around the world. Often it is sung in our churches with the same appeal: Come just as you are.

In the truest sense, when we pray, we come to the Lord “just as we are.” We do not come to Him as worthy of being in His presence. We come as needy souls seeking His guidance.

There are three attitudes which I believe need to be exemplified in the spirit of authentic praying. First, we come to the Lord in prayer with a sense



of helplessness. We are acknowledging that without Christ we can do nothing at all. We are indeed helpless without the power and presence of Christ in our lives. He is our source of strength and stamina.

Second, when we pray we need to exemplify a sense of humility. The words of Simon Peter ring timelessly true for all of us to hear and heed: “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humility means we understand the kind of God we worship and serve. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords! When we comprehend that holy notion, we will respond to Him as

humble servants of the one, true, living Lord!

Third, when we pray we need to exemplify a sense of honesty. As people of prayer, we can come to our Lord with an open heart, seeking cleansing from sin and direction in life. There is no problem too difficult for

His children, seeking His will for our lives. Oswald Chambers has offered one of my favorite quotes concerning prayer. He said, “Prayer does not equip us for greater works; prayer is the greater work.”

(Inspiration for these thoughts came from the book *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?*, by Philip Yancey.)

By Rick Lance
State Missionary
Executive Director



Him to handle. There is no prayer too difficult for Him to answer. There is no person too difficult for Him to change.

Praying just as we are is the only way to pray. We come helplessly, humbly and honestly as

Rick Lance

Numbers 14:24

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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

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Music: Robin Simpson, Boone's Chapel Baptist Church

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



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Why I Believe in the Cooperative Program



BY MIKE SHAW

When I think of the Cooperative Program, it reminds me that, when I was a senior in high school in 1965, my youth pastor asked me to go to a youth conference at the First Baptist Church of Dothan. Most of the expenses for the conference were provided by funds given through the Cooperative Program.

During that conference, I heard the most amazing messages that touched my heart and caused me as a fairly new believer to commit to a closer walk with Christ.

One message in particular was like a burning bush experience. V. L. Stanfield from the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary said that God was going to call some of the high school students in the conference to "vocational service" for the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thought that was great — as long as it wasn't me! I had already been accepted at the University of Alabama and was going to major in pre-law, then go on to law school and become an attorney. I could really support a lot of preachers and missionaries with all the money I planned to make, and I hoped that God would call some of my friends into the ministry.

I was so disappointed that, when the invitation was given, none of my friends went down the aisle to answer God's call. Dr. Stanfield was about to close the service when he said, "Someone has been waiting for some of their friends to come forward, but God is calling YOU, not them!"

He may as well have pointed to me, and he said, "If you are willing to say that once you know that God is calling you, you will answer 'yes,' then raise your hand and I will pray for you." My hand shot up into the air, and I felt a peace like I had felt when I surrendered my life to follow Christ as a 16-year-old lost church member.

As I sought counsel from my youth pastor and Arthur Walker who was the interim pastor of our church (and also dean of students and church

history professor at the newly renamed Samford University), it became apparent that God wanted me to enroll at Samford.

When I enrolled at Samford, the Cooperative Program enabled me to receive scholarship funds for ministerial students and with the help of my parents be able to graduate without incurring any student debt.

God then led me to the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary where tuition and to some extent the ability to live on campus in very affordable student housing were underwritten by Cooperative Program funds.

Baptist people from all across the Southern Baptist Convention gave their

money to God, and I was blessed by their faithfulness and prepared by godly men for a life of ministry.

In some small way I feel that God has allowed me to "pay back" some of these blessings as the churches that I have served have given through the Cooperative Program to spread the Gospel in North America and around the world, to help provide education for God's servants in this generation and to minister in Jesus' name to hurting people.

The best investment that I have ever made is when I give to God, through my church, and my church gives to God through the Cooperative Program. If every Alabama Baptist church would give 10 percent of their undesignated offerings through the Cooperative Program, we could double or triple the effectiveness of our missionary work.

When your blood flows through your body without any problems then you generally are blessed with good health. When the blood stops flowing you will get weak, sick, and die. The Cooperative Program is the lifeblood of the Southern Baptist Convention. I hope and pray that every member and every church will be faithful in supporting the Cooperative Program.

Mike Shaw is pastor, First Baptist Church, Pelham, and president, Alabama Baptist State Convention.



CHILDREN'S * HONOR * CHOIR * AUDITIONS *

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.



CHILDREN'S * HONOR * CHOIR * AUDITIONS *

CHILDREN'S * HONOR * CHOIR * AUDITIONS *

CHILDREN'S * HONOR * CHOIR * AUDITIONS *

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.

FEATURING Scott Kindig, *keynote*, Bethany Barr Phillips, *music*, Bryan Drake, *entertainment*, and Michael Gentry, *LifeWay Christian Resources*

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

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.

2012 ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION ANNUAL MEETING

TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 13-14
VAUGHN FOREST
BAPTIST CHURCH,
MONTGOMERY

FEATURING PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS,
TUESDAY MORNING

Mike Shaw

Pastor, First Baptist Church, Pelham



GUEST SPEAKER,
TUESDAY EVENING

Phil Waldrep

President, Phil Waldrep Ministries,
Decatur



CONVENTION SERMON,
WEDNESDAY MORNING

Lawrence Phipps

Pastor, Vaughn Forest Baptist
Church, Montgomery



*Future
Focus*

*Plus times of worship and celebration, reports from the
State Board of Missions and convention entities,
exhibit hall and more.*

HOTEL GUIDE The following hotels have offered special rates to those attending the State Convention Annual Meeting. Remember to ask for the Alabama Baptist State Convention rate when you call. Rates listed do not include taxes. This information is provided as a service and

not intended to be a recommendation of any kind. If you have problems making a reservation or securing the posted rate at any of these hotels, please contact Charleen Hobbs at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 231, or chobbs@alsbom.org.

EXIT 11 (OFF I-85)

Comfort Inn & Suites

10015 Chantilly Parkway
(334) 532-4444
Rate: \$79 - \$109
Amenities: Complimentary hot breakfast, free WIFI, in-room microwave and refrigerator
Distance from Vaughn Forest Church: 3.1 mi.

Country Inn & Suites

10095 Chantilly Parkway
(334) 277-4142
Rate: Single \$69.99
Rate: Double \$79.99
Amenities: Free deluxe continental breakfast, free internet, indoor pool
Distance from Vaughn Forest Church: 3.3 mi.

Springhill Suites

1201 Townplace Drive
(334) 409-9999
Rate: \$94 (regular rate; no special rate offered)
Amenities: Free breakfast, parking and internet
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 6.5 mi.

Sleep Inn & Suites

10150 Chantilly Parkway
(334) 356-5400
Rate: \$62
Amenities: Free breakfast, free WIFI
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 2.9 mi.

Fairfield Inn & Suites

8970 Eastchase Parkway
(334) 260-8650
Rate: \$99 (king or 2 queens)
Amenities: Free breakfast, free WIFI, fitness center
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 2.9 mi.

Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites

9250 Boyd Cooper Parkway
(334) 271-5516
Rate: \$75
Amenities: Free breakfast, business center, fitness center
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 3.2 mi.

Candlewood Suites

9151 Boyd Cooper Parkway
(334) 277-0677
Rate: \$69 for suite
Amenities: Free breakfast, free WIFI
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 3.2 mi.

Microtel Inn & Suites

100 Gibbons Drive
(334) 649-4465
Rate: \$49 (single)
Rate: \$59 (double)
Amenities: Free continental breakfast, business center
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 3.5 mi.

EXIT 9 (OFF I-85)

Hampton Inn and Suites

Convention Hotel
7651 Eastchase Parkway
(334) 277-1818
Rate: \$117 Standard, King or Double
Amenities: Free hot breakfast, free internet,
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 4.2 mi.

Staybridge Suites

7800 Eastchase Parkway
(334) 277-9383
Rate: \$119 Studio Suite
Rate: \$129 One Bedroom Suite
Amenities: Complimentary breakfast buffet, free WIFI
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 3.4 mi.

EXIT 6 (OFF I-85)

Comfort Inn

5035 Carmichael Road
(334) 396-6300
Rate: \$69.99
Amenities: Free full hot breakfast, free WIFI
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 6.4mi.

EXIT 172 (OFF I-65) OR EXIT 1 (OFF I-85)

Embassy Suites

300 Tallapoosa Street (Downtown Montgomery)
(334) 269-5055
Rate: \$119
Amenities: Free hot and cold breakfast bar, indoor heated pool and whirlpool, spacious suites.
Distance from Vaughn Forest Church: 12.9 mi.

Hampton Inn & Suites

100 Commerce Street (Downtown Montgomery)
(334) 265-1010
Rate: \$99
Amenities: complimentary full hot breakfast, free WIFI and valet parking fee is only \$5.
Distance from Vaughn Forest Church: 13 mi.

DoubleTree

120 Madison Avenue (Downtown Montgomery)
(334) 430-2073
Rate: \$109 King or Double
Amenities: Fully equipped business center, fitness center.
Distance from Vaughn Forest Church: 12.8 mi.

EXIT 165 (OFF I-65)

Hampton Inn

60 Wasden Road, Hope Hull
(334) 280-9592
Rate: \$84 King and Queen
Rate: \$99 Suites
Amenities: Free hot breakfast buffet, free WIFI
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 20.2 mi.

EXIT 164 (OFF I-65)

Fairfield Inn & Suites

7560 Mobile Highway
(Airport South)
Rate: \$84 King and Queen
Rate: \$99 Suites
Amenities: Free hot breakfast, free WIFI
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 27.6 mi.

TAKING YOUR SPEAKING, PREACHING AND TEACHING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Thursday, November 1, 2012

Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd.,
Montgomery, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. (check-in at 8:30)

"...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.)

Visit: www.alsbom.org/ctc or call (334) 613-2256.



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

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

M P A C T a l a b a m a

October 5 - 7, 2012

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.

M P A C T A L A B A M A 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.

New Song Honor Choir

Junior High

Deadline for audition CDs/forms: November 12, 2012
Tour Dates: January 4-6, 2013

For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Sharon Cleveland at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 279, or (334) 613-2279, scleveland@alsbom.org.

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

Alabama Association of Baptist Secretaries Conference

March 3-6, 2013 * Shocco Springs

Theme: Be Joyful, Faithful & Prayerful

Verse: Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, steadfast in prayer (ROMANS 12:12)

General Conference Leader: Heather Messick, Mobile

Devotional Leader: Phil Boyles, pastor, Sage Avenue Baptist Church, Mobile

Worship Leaders: Bob & Sandy Waldrop, Haleyville

Tuesday night banquet theme: ol' Fashion Magnolia Garden Party

Website: www.alabamabaptistsecretaries.com

Breakout sessions will consist of several business training classes, also certification, encouragement, motivational, challenging, inspirational, creative and emergency training classes.

For more information, contact Becky Hale, AABS President, at (251) 479-4593 or (251) 342-0050, bhale@sageavebc.org

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

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.

Deadline for submission of nominations is October 8.

**TROY L. MORRISON
LEADERSHIP/CHURCH
HEALTH AWARD**

ENGAGE



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
Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions



Religious refugee lives in fear of Uzbek authorities

ALMATY, Kazakhstan — Friends of Uzbek religious refugee Makset Djabbarbergenov — who has lived with his family in Kazakhstan since 2007 — fear that the Kazakh authorities are about to return him to his homeland. Police in Almaty, Kazakhstan's commercial capital, detained Djabbarbergenov on Sept. 5.

Djabbarbergenov is married and has four sons, one of whom was born since the family's arrival in Kazakhstan.

Kazakh officials said Djabbarbergenov was wanted for "violation of the procedure for teaching religion" and "illegal production, storage, import or distribution of religious literature," each of which carries a maximum term of three years' imprisonment.

Djabbarbergenov had led a Pentecostal community in his home town of Nukus since 2001. He had been fined for his religious activity and had his home raided and Christian books confiscated.

He fled in August 2007 after police raided his home, claiming he was holding an "illegal" religious meeting.

Soon afterward Djabbarbergenov left Nukus for the Uzbek capital Tashkent. On Aug. 20, 2007, Nukus police issued a wanted poster stating that he was a follower of Jesus Christ and was being sought to face charges.

To evade arrest, Djabbarbergenov crossed into Kazakhstan in 2007, where he sought refugee status with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR acknowledged his family as refugees in 2009, but the Kazakh government has said he does not meet its requirements for refugee status.

Djabbarbergenov has appealed the decision multiple times, but each time the government has refused to overturn its ruling.

Moscow church watches building get 'forcibly demolished'

MOSCOW — Human rights defenders and church members have expressed outrage at the sudden destruction of Holy Trinity Church, a Pentecostal church in Moscow's eastern suburbs. Workers, police and civil volunteers moved in soon after midnight Sept. 6 and forcibly demolished most of the three-story building.

"In human terms, this is barbarism," Mikhail Odintsov, an aide to Russia's ombudsperson for human rights said.

Pastor Vasili Romanyuk said he had been woken in the early hours and had rushed to the site to try to halt the destruction, but was too late.

In 1992 Moscow's city government authorized Holy Trinity Church to situate its building in the outlying district of Novokosino.

According to the church the Moscow authorities subsequently withheld permission to build, and the city's land resources department annulled its land rental agreement with the church in 2005.

In 2010 the government filed suit against Holy Trinity, demanding the church remove all construction from and vacate the site. The Supreme Court ruled that Holy Trinity was occupying "disputed land without any legal basis."

Romanyuk said they had no official warning of the destruction. "We didn't believe they would just do this."

'Moved with compassion'

Jesus' love compels response to hunger issues

When Southern Baptists observe their annual World Hunger Sunday on Oct. 14 they will be called to act out the love of Jesus.

Scripture recounts several instances where Jesus saw a crowd, was moved with compassion for them and took action to meet their needs. The Greek word translated 'compassion' refers to tender emotions, deeply felt feelings or a deep churning in a person's spirit. We might call it "gut-wrenching."

That kind of compassion compels a response. Churches and other groups who want to engage world hunger have a variety of resources available to them.

Baptist Global Response (BGR) offers videos and a variety of ideas to help churches and groups plan world hunger awareness and fundraising events. Among the ideas:

► f30 Weekend — A fun way to help people, young and old, become aware of and impact world hunger. It is also great for team building, prayer, fasting, college campuses or weekend retreats.

► Harvest Festival — A variety of educational activities can help children better understand world hunger and what they can do to make a difference.

► Run for Their Lives — A 5k run to raise funds. Instead of "running for your life," this is truly a race to "Run for Their Lives." This is a great and simple idea to raise money and community awareness for world hunger.

The videos are available under the "media" tab of BGR's World Hunger Sunday page. Visit www.gobgr.org and click on the World Hunger Sunday icon.

BGR's partners in hunger relief also have helpful resources.

A particularly noteworthy item is World Hunger 101, a two-hour event that explores the issue of world hunger. The downloadable event pack from Woman's Missionary Union includes suggestions about ways to introduce the topic



BP photo/graphic by Lauren C. Grim

and how to consolidate a full understanding of issues related to hunger.

Each age-level session plan includes promotion ideas and hunger project ideas. World Hunger 101 is available for download at www.wmufund.com.

Resources available

A wide variety of resources also can be found at www.worldhungerfund.com, the homepage for the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund (WHF).

Among the free downloadable resources:

► Bulletin inserts, the WHF logo, mini-poster ads, videos and a PowerPoint presentation.

► Soup can labels to create receptacles for WHF donations.

► A coloring book depicting real people whose lives are being touched through Southern Baptist hunger ministries.

► A drama script that can be used to educate church groups on

the Christian mandate to minister to the poor.

Among the low-cost items available for order on the site:

► "Impact World Hunger," a four-page publication, sized for easy placement in most church bulletins, that also can be used as a stand-alone handout.

► World Hunger Bread Bank to help churches, schools or community groups fight world hunger by collecting money to donate to the WHF.

► WHF offering envelopes.
► A "B.E.A.T. Hunger" retreat kit.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission also provides resources at erlc.com/hunger:

► Articles on topics such as biblical directives for combating hunger and poverty and how to begin a hunger ministry.

► Two sermons, "The Ministry of the Open Hand" and "Do Justice to the Afflicted and Needy." (BGR)

Life-changing. Faith-strengthening.

Holy Land Spiritual Pilgrimage

March 15-25, 2013

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

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

For information, write to:

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



Photo courtesy of Liberty Baptist Church

CHELSEA'S LIBERTY BAPTIST HONORS MUSICIANS

Liberty Baptist Church, Chelsea, in Shelby Baptist Association honors organist June Niven (right) for 51 years of service as organist/pianist and Melodie Dean (left) for 27 years as pianist Aug. 19. Tim Cox (center) is pastor.

Renovation Ministries

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Volunteers aim to make disciples for Jesus in Anniston's 11 housing projects

For Chris Terrell, the summer ended with a splash — 11 of them, actually.

"We had 11 kids profess Christ this summer in a real radical, life-changing way, so we drove my pickup truck around with a big bucket in the back and had a traveling baptism service," he said. "We went back and baptized them in front of their family at the very places where they'd accepted Christ."

Those places are some of the toughest neighborhoods in Anniston, he said.

But Terrell, executive director of Renovation Ministries, said he feels that's what being a follower of Christ is about — reaching "the last, the least and the lost and taking the gospel to the darkness of the world."

That's why he turned down a salaried position at a church and stepped out in faith to start Renovation Ministries, which aims to make disciples for Jesus Christ in Anniston's 11 housing projects.

"Our goal is to work with children and do Bible clubs and sports camps and

any educational activity that could show them love and point them to Christ," Terrell said.

"We want them to grow up knowing Him and making Him known and to be catalysts in changing their city."

This summer 800 volunteers from Alabama and surrounding states came to work alongside Renovation Ministries in six of those housing projects.

"We were in those neighborhoods every single day, and that developed a consistency that showed the community we cared," Terrell said. "We're not just a summer ministry — we're a year-round active ministry in these communities."

Renovation's work depends on lots of help, he said.

"Our goal for 2013 is to have 100 volunteer missionaries each week for all 10 weeks of



Photo courtesy of Chris Terrell

A little girl plays with a parachute during recreation time at the Don & Lee Trailer Park Bible club in Oxford.

summer, which would give us the capacity to be in all 11 neighborhoods for the entire summer," Terrell said. "We would love for more churches to look at Anniston for their summer missions trip or Disciple Now weekends. There isn't a single person who's come who hasn't left with a piece of Anniston in their heart."

Anniston has been in Terrell's heart since God led him to start Renovation Ministries three years ago, he said.

"It's been pretty overwhelming — we are just a grassroots ministry initiated by God. We just want to love people and show them who God is."

It's important that Christ-followers do that in their own backyard, he said.

"We want to impact the people who come in such a way that they leave changed too," Terrell said. "We want them to experience God in a true and real way so that they go home and begin to work in their own backyard."

Steve Robinson, minister to youth at Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery, said that's exactly what happened with his youth group.

Students from Eastmont worked in Anniston last year, and when they went back this summer the kids in Anniston remembered their names.

"I've been doing this 19 years, and I've never seen anything have an impact like what Renovation is doing in Anniston," he said. "They are willing to do anything to further the gospel, and they're just following the Spirit. I'm impressed with how well and wisely they're doing the work there."

And the impact on the students was amazing too, he said. They came back "so fired up" about what they'd done in Anniston that they got Eastmont fired up about it too.

"The women of the church then raised money for paper products, crafts, sports

Baptist hospitals achieve excellence

Three Birmingham-area Baptist Health System (BHS) hospitals have been recognized as top performers in the Joint Commission's key quality measures program for the second consecutive year. Princeton (Birmingham), Walker (Jasper) and Citizens (Talladega) Baptist Medical Centers were recognized by the Joint Commission for achieving excellence in performance on their accountability measures during 2011.

The Joint Commission is an independent, nonprofit organization that accredits and certifies health care programs in the United States.

"This distinction demonstrates that [the medical centers] have attained and sustained nationally recognized levels of excellence in providing evidence-based patient care in the clinical areas of heart failure, pneumonia and surgical care. Princeton and Walker ... also received this distinction for their demonstrated quality in the care of patients with heart attack," said Elizabeth Ennis, BHS chief medical officer.

Only 244 hospitals in the U.S. have achieved this distinction. Last year, the hospitals were recognized by the Joint Commission for the same achievements. (BHS)

304 pages; \$21	"Addresses the subject with keen logic, a grasp of history, and thorough exegesis of biblical literature." -Foreword by Dr. Paige Patterson, President, SWBTS Destroys "myth that the ancients had no way of preserving grape juice." -Dr. R. L. Sumner, Biblical Evangelist "The clarity, logic, and thoroughness, an outstanding attorney uses ... I recommend it strongly." -Judge Paul Pressler
240 pages; \$12.95	"Some of the funniest stories you will ever read." -Foreword by Dr. John Hatch "A beautiful book, easy to read, and full of genuine spiritual wisdom." -Adrian Rogers "Throughout, you will be laughing, crying, and reaping lessons and anecdotes to use in your own ministry or with your own family." -T.C. Pinckney, Baptist Banner
	Cookbook by Mrs. Joe (Bonnie) Brumbelow 233 recipes all personally used and endorsed by a pastor's wife and mother of three boys, now pastors. Most recipes easy to prepare; many original. Includes Mexican, Chinese, Sugar-Free recipes, Tamale, and egg roll recipes. Perfect for the new or experienced cook.

Available from your local bookstore, freechurchpress.com, LifeWay.com, hannibalbooks.com
Signed copies: David Brumbelow, P.O. Box 300, Lake Jackson, TX 77566; postpaid

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

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Photo courtesy of Chris Terrell

Justin Alexander, a summer intern with Renovation Ministries, baptizes a child from the Cooper Homes Community who professed Christ this summer.

equipment, you name it, and then they spent a weekend working in Anniston too," Robinson said.

In all the work that's gone on, Terrell said they've seen God do amazing things.

"I could tell you stories of days when we had backyard Bible clubs and there was a 100 percent chance of rain and it went around us on the radar — not a single drop ever fell," he said.

And even bigger, he said, was the city of Anniston asking Renovation to lead a Bible study in a really rough area of town in hopes that it would help improve the neighborhood.

"We average 60 kids a week at that club every Wednesday night, and we're within 10 or 15 feet of one of the roughest areas of Anniston," Terrell said.

"We go into the neighborhood and meet their families and invite them to come. We just want to pour out blessings on the community."

Pouring out the gospel

The first goal, Terrell said, is the community, but the second is to "pour the gospel into the students and adults who come to work, along with a real responsibility to share it."

The time is now, he said.

"The work of God is here. I believe God is on the verge of something huge for our city," Terrell said.

For more information, visit renovationministries.com or call 256-499-1182.

CHURCH LEADERS:

Have less than 125 members? Check out this conference

A conference celebrating the ministry of small churches will be sponsored by Samford University's Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence (RCPE) on Oct. 8-9. "Like a Mustard Seed: Supporting and Celebrating Smaller Church Leadership" will focus on the needs of small-membership churches of all denominations.

According to RCPE Director Michael Wilson, studies show that 80 percent of all Protestant churches in America have memberships of 125 or less, and almost 25 percent of those churches have a weekly attendance of 35 or less.

"We know these figures match

what we have observed in Alabama, regardless of denomination," said Wilson, adding that many rural congregations with small budgets are served by bivocational pastors.

"These churches and the ministers that serve them fill a vital role and are often underappreciated for their contribution to their members' faith," said Wilson, who hopes the upcoming conference will provide inspiration, affirmation and practical help for those ministers and their churches.

For more information, go to www.samford.edu/rcpe or call 205-726-4064. (Samford)

SCIENCE, RELIGION & THE CHURCH

A free, one-day interdenominational conference for pastors, ministerial staff and church members

Saturday, October 20
9 a.m.—4:30 p.m.
Dawson Memorial Baptist Church
Birmingham, Ala.

Keynote address by noted author Dr. Karl Giberson

Special sessions by the Samford University Center for Science and Religion

- Can There Be Purpose in a World of Chance?
- Where Do We Come from?
- Is There a Place for the Soul in a Physical Brain?
- What Difference Does Interpretation Make?
- The Seven Deadly Sins of Science and Religion

Lunch will be provided for up to five ministers and members per congregation if registered by October 12.

For schedule and additional information, go to <http://faculty.samford.edu/~sfdonald/Conference.pdf>
To register, contact Mandy Hewitt at 205-871-7324 or mandy.hewitt@dawsonchurch.org



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Historical Highlights

from previous issues of *The Alabama Baptist*

50 Years Ago September 1962

Mission Observes First Service: The Catoma Baptist Mission sponsored by Trinity Baptist Church, Montgomery, began its services Sept. 2 in the Catoma school house. Claude Ammerman preached the first sermon. Frank Hixon, superintendent of missions of Montgomery Baptist Association, is the interim pastor. Charles Heltman is pastor of Trinity Baptist Church and George D. Shell is chairman of the missions committee.

40 Years Ago September 1972

Fastest Growing Church: Centcrest Baptist Church, Birmingham, is the fastest growing Baptist church in Alabama and may be the fastest growing in the South, according to the church. The church also sponsors Jonah Missions, three musicals that run during

summer months in Panama City Beach and Fort Walton Beach, Fla., and in Gatlinburg, Tenn. The pastor, Bob Curlee, has written several musicals that have received national recognition for their resort evangelism. Young people are prominent in the church that calls itself "the church of the future."

30 Years Ago September 1982

Hospital Dedication Service: Hudson Baggett, editor of *The Alabama Baptist*, brought the keynote address at the Sept. 26 dedication of Baptist Medical Center (BMC) — Princeton's new west wing. Others on the program included Marvin Prude, chairman of the board, BMC; Thomas S. Roote, executive director of Birmingham Association; Robert C. Chandler, executive vice president, BMC Princeton; Emmett R. Johnson,

president, BMC; Allan S. Wilensky, president of Princeton's medical staff; chaplain John N. Sims and Josephine Early, vice president of nursing, Princeton. The hospital celebrates its 60th anniversary this year.

20 Years Ago September 1992

Hawaii Partnership Workers: As part of the Alabama/Hawaii partnership, Rafe Banks, Philip Lett and Jason Schultz, all of First Baptist Church, Ashville, spent the summer as volunteers at the Puu Kahea Conference Center operated by the Hawaii Baptist Convention. They provided support assistance to church camps, retreats, Centrifuge and Missions Adventure Camps.

10 Years Ago September 2002

Samford Ranked: Samford Uni-

versity has been ranked as one of the top institutions in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report* magazine in its 2003 selection of America's Best Colleges. Samford ranked fifth in the South in the category, Best Universities—Master's, which includes schools offering a full range of undergraduate and master's programs and some doctoral programs. Samford offers 26 degree programs, including 18 at the master's and doctoral levels. Samford has been ranked in the top 10 in its category by the magazine since 1990.

Van accident kills 2, injures 12 youth

Two people were killed and 12 others injured Sept. 16 when a van carrying youth from Cedar Grove Baptist Church, Maryville, Tenn., collided head-on with an SUV while returning from a weekend retreat in Gatlinburg, Tenn.

The driver of the van, Jeff Trussell, and teenager Courteney Kaliszewski were killed. Ten passengers ranging from middle school to college age were transported to hospitals in the area.

The driver of the SUV, 21-year-old Tyler Schaeffer of Seymour,

Tenn., crossed the center line of Chapman Highway in Sevier County and struck the van head-on, causing it to catch fire. Strangers stopped to help rescue passengers in the church van and offer aid until emergency vehicles arrived.

Active in church

Trussell, 45, was a member of Cedar Grove who sang in the church choir, served as a deacon and acted as a volunteer youth leader. Kaliszewski, 16, was a junior at Seymour High School and

a member of the National Honor Society. She was very active in the Cedar Grove youth group and with Big Creek Missions, a Kentucky-based Christian ministry that connects churches and volunteer groups to reach out to poor communities in Appalachia.

Police officials are currently discussing possible charges against the driver of the SUV. Police said a "powdery substance" was found in Schaeffer's SUV and sent to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation for analysis.

(ABP)

Want to know God?

By Minister of Education and Outreach Ken Bush
Central Park Baptist Church, Decatur

One of the most basic questions of life is, "Why am I here?" Life can seem so meaningless and often just doesn't make a lot of sense. There appears to be no real purpose for our existence.

Is it really about "grabbing all the gusto" like one beer company used to proclaim? Does life revolve around how much "stuff" we can accumulate? If so, we are in a pretty pitiful situation.

Where can we go to discover what life is supposed to be about? Well since God is our Creator, it only makes sense that the One who designed each of us would also be the One we turn to in order to find out about life. Colossians 1:16 says, "For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible ... everything got started in Him and finds its purpose in Him."

Obviously this line of thought assumes the existence of God. This may be an assumption you are not ready to make. If so, then very little of what I say will make sense to you. I won't try to prove God's existence but will merely suggest that you take an honest look at our world, the stars in the sky or even your own body and ask yourself, "Is it easier for me to believe that a divine power created all of this, or should I believe that a spontaneous combustion occurred out of nothing, starting an extremely complex sequence of events which eventually resulted in some protein molecules accidentally forming a microscopic life-form which later managed to crawl out of a swamp, grow arms and legs and develop a mind like mine?"

Give God a chance to prove Himself to you. Simply say, "God, if You exist, please show me something that will convince me You are there!" I have no idea how He will choose to do it or how quickly, but I believe He will answer your request. You see, the God I know doesn't want to remain hidden, He doesn't want to be a stranger and He doesn't want to leave you clueless as to why He created you. He does want a personal relationship with you, and He wants to show you what He created you to be and do. Of that I am certain.

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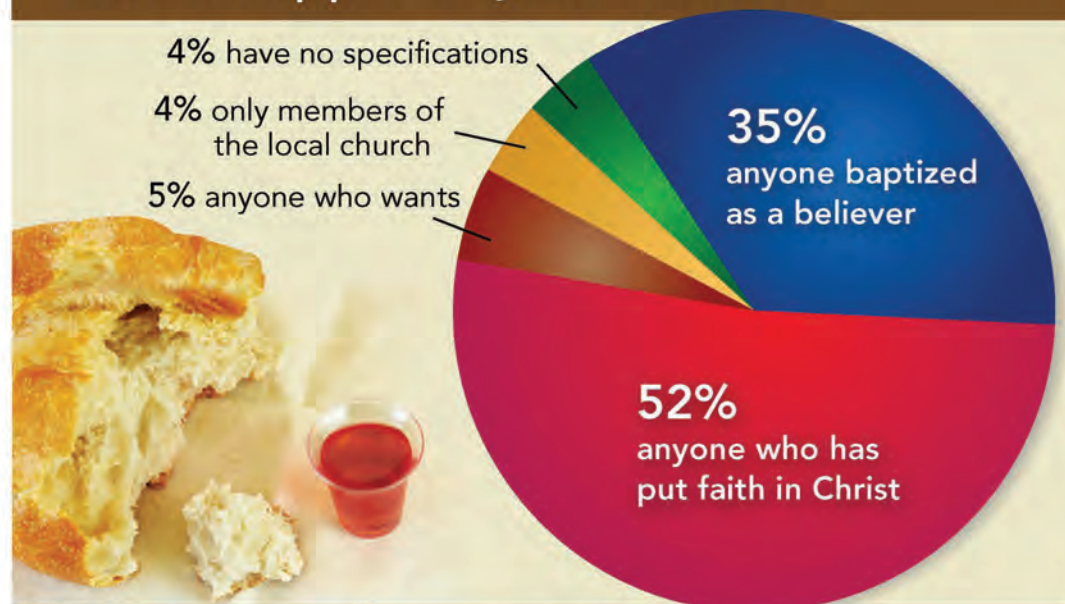
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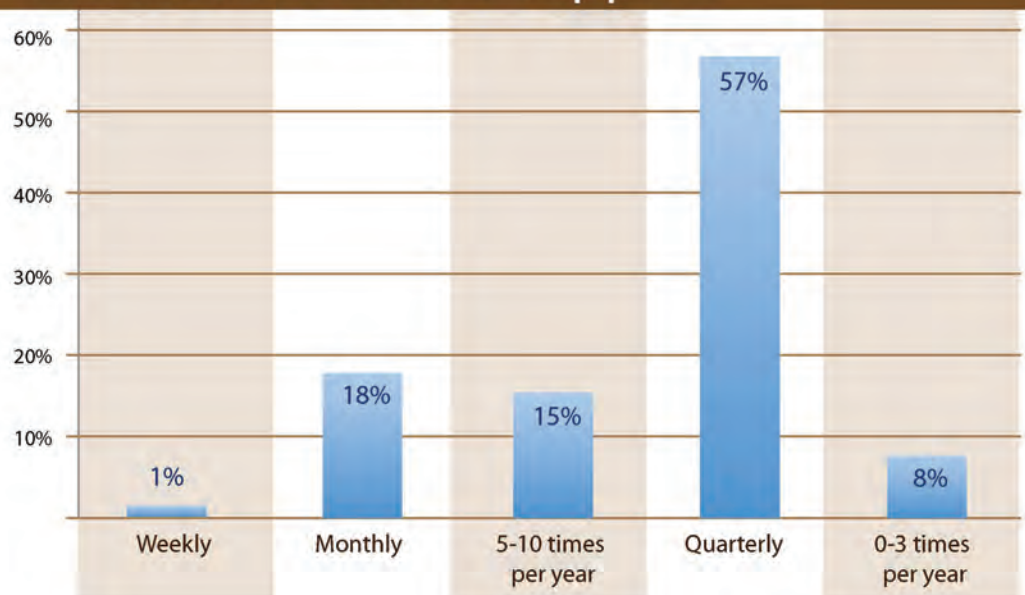
Pastors' views on the Lord's Supper

Survey of 1,066 SBC Pastors

Who may participate in the Lord's Supper at your church?



How often does your church conduct the Lord's Supper?



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RESEARCH

Syrian Baptists seek prayer as civil war continues in area

Baptists in Syria are appealing for prayer for peace in the Middle Eastern country as the civil war drags on, severely affecting the lives of the country's citizens, including the lives of Baptists and other Christians.

Mouner Ajji, pastor of Aleppo Baptist Church, reported that Baptists in the area of Aleppo known as Midan were among those who were able, for the first time in days, to get out of their houses Sept. 16. Government forces had re-established control over that section of the city that had fallen into the hands of rebels, enabling freer movement.

He reported, "I did not have a chance to visit the area to see the damage but I hope that there is not that much destruction there." However, he attempted to go to Jdaide, an old area of the city, but had to abort his tour due to heavy shelling and gunfire.

Ajji expressed concern that schools and universities are unable to reopen for the new school year. "Mid-September is the time that schools and universities start, but it seems that they won't now, because thousands of refugees are living in schools and in the university campus and fighting is still going [on] in many areas in

the city." He indicated parents are too afraid to send their children out due to the fighting.

Aleppo, the largest city in Syria, is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. It was largely spared during the earlier stages of the Syrian civil war that began in March 2011 but has been increasingly drawn into the conflict in recent months.

Fighting for control

The Battle for Aleppo began on July 19 between the Free Syrian Army and the Syrian military. Rebels and government forces have been fighting for control of the city. Hundreds have been killed in the violence and many Aleppo neighborhoods have been badly damaged.

In one of the most recent attacks on Sept. 9, more than 30 civilians and two security force members were killed near the Municipal Stadium as a result of a car bomb blast.

According to the United Nations more than 200,000 people have fled Aleppo, once home to more than 2 million people and regarded as Syria's commercial hub. The Baptist Convention of Syria, a BWA member organization, has approximately 600 members in 10 churches. (BWA)

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For September 30

Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson

Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

LIVING UNDER STRESS

1 Peter 2:18-25

Showing Respect (18-20)

Peter commanded slaves to obey their masters, even the unjust ones. It is important to understand that the Roman institution of being a bondservant was different from the institution of slavery in North America during the 17th through the 19th centuries. Bondservants were generally permitted to work for pay and to save enough money to buy their freedom. The redeemed slave was officially designated a “freedman” and frequently continued to work for his former master.

Some newly converted slaves during this time thought that their spiritual freedom also guaranteed personal and political freedom, and they created problems for themselves and the churches.

Peter, in agreement with Paul’s instruction in 1 Corinthians 7:20-24, basically said for the new believers who were slaves to stay put and serve their masters as if they were Jesus Himself. Christian slaves should show respect to their masters.

These verses teach believers today to be submissive to those who are over them. In a day when the rules apply to everyone but me and there is little respect for authority, Christians should stand out as exemplary workers as they show respect to those in authority.

Following Jesus’ Example (21-23)

The human tendency is to fight back and to demand our rights. Anyone can fight back. It takes a Spirit-filled Christian to submit and let God fight his or her battles. Christians are not to go looking for trouble or stir up trouble.

As Jesus’ disciples we are to be willing to suffer as He did, enduring every pain and insult received because of our allegiance to our Master.

If Jesus as the servant of the Lord did not sin or use deceit despite suffering intensely as the Righteous One, then believers should follow His example and refrain

from sinning or using deceit when they are mistreated as Christ’s disciples.

Jesus did not strike back at His accusers. He kept handing over to Father God every dimension of His life, including the fate of His enemies. He knew that God would judge rightly on the last day, both vindicating Him and punishing His enemies if they refused to repent.

Do you always have to have the last word? Are you daily entrusting yourself to God?

Accepting God’s Provision (24-25)

Believers are to follow Jesus in His suffering, but it must always be remembered that His suffering is unique and the basis of salvation for His followers. Jesus did not die as a martyr; He died as the Savior. Jesus Himself bore our sins in His body. Jesus’ death is the means by which sins are forgiven. Jesus bore our sins in His body on the tree, that is, the cross. Jesus was cursed for the salvation of His people (Deut. 21:23).

Jesus’ death not only provided forgiveness for our sin but the power to die to sin and live to righteousness.

No one ever meets Jesus and remains the same. Jesus changes people. Has Jesus changed you? Do you have new desires for Jesus, the Bible and the church? Do you have a burden to introduce lost people to Jesus?

Have you returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your soul? The Bible is clear: we all have strayed from Father God. We all have rebelled against the loving Creator God. We all deserve the wrath of God in hell for all eternity.

The good news is that you do not have to die and spend eternity in hell. You can be forgiven and reconciled to Father God because of what Jesus did on the cross for sinners.

Will you turn to Him now and ask for forgiveness on the basis of Jesus’ death on the cross? Christian, will you seek to introduce a lost person to Jesus before it is too late?

Bible Studies for Life

By David Hogg

Academic Dean at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

YOUR DECISION

Matthew 7:13-29

Life or Destruction (13-14)

I wonder how many times each day someone who is lost and asking for directions hears the line, “You can’t miss it!” The irony, of course, is that countless people do indeed miss their destination despite the quality of the directions.

We intuitively know that finding a new destination usually takes a series of twists and turns that are new to us. So here at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us that in order to enter into the way of the Kingdom we must enter through the small gate into the narrow way.

Significantly, however, Jesus never promises that the narrow way will be straight. There will be twists and turns, obstacles and pitfalls. D.A. Carson has noted that the word for “narrow” in verse 14 is related to the word for “tribulation.” The suggestion is that those who choose to follow Christ will not walk a straight path of ease but will endure opposition and suffering.

The imagery here is intriguing. On the one hand there is a narrow gate followed by a correspondingly narrow path; on the other hand there is a wide gate leading to an equally wide path.

When entering through a wide door it is easy to take baggage, and keeping that baggage throughout the trip is possible because the road never narrows. On the contrary a narrow door leaves no room for baggage, and because the path never widens there is never any opportunity to add baggage as you go.

Here is a call to repentance in order to enter into the kingdom of God that reminds us that sin, our baggage, must be checked at the door. Self-righteousness, pride, greed, gluttony, lying — the list of sins goes on, but none of them belong in the Kingdom. We enter the Kingdom as we entered the world, with nothing to offer and in total dependence.

Genuine or Counterfeit (15-23)

In light of the demands of entering the kingdom of God, it is entirely fitting that Jesus should move on to help people identify false prophets: those who lead others astray down the broad path.

The metaphor of fruit is very helpful and instructive. Jesus will use this metaphor again later in the Gospel, and every time it is used we are reminded that what we do is directly related to who we are.

A pear tree will not produce oranges, and a wicked person will not act for the good of others. A preacher is not good, he lacks the righteousness of Christ, if he takes from those who are needy to enrich himself or proclaims a gospel that does not consistently call for repentance from sin and trust in the death and resurrection of Christ.

The warning in verse 19 is stark. Those who do not bear fruit consistent with the Kingdom will be condemned in final judgment.

The message is clear: if false prophets will meet this end, so too will those who follow them. At first the broad gate and road may have seemed the more appealing because it allows for more baggage and less resistance and suffering. But in light of the final judgment, the burden of choice is reduced.

Rock or Sand (24-29)

Drawing this to a conclusion Jesus paints a picture for us that every child in Sunday School knows.

The point of the imagery is to place the decision to follow Jesus in sharp relief. The wind and the rain are certainly the trials of life but are most poignantly representative of the final judgment. At the risk of mixing metaphors, the good choice to follow Jesus means that the wise man who builds his house upon the rock will be able to withstand the buffets along his journey and will pass through the final judgment successfully. The only question that remains is what decision you have made.

Christian Crossword

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Across

1. But ____ unto you. (Matt. 23:13)

4. A time to rend, a time to _____. (Eccles. 3:7)

7. The name of his city was _____. (1 Chron. 1:50)

10. The children of Aram; Uz, and _____. (Gen. 10:23)

11. Upon the great ____ of their right foot. (Ex. 29:20)

12. God ____ is ____ to deliver us. (Dan. 3:17)

14. Source.

16. You fathers, where ____ they? (Zech. 1:5)

17. ____ no violence to the stranger. (Jer. 22:3)

19. Eye hath not seen, nor ____ heard. (1 Cor. 2:9)

20. Fear and the ____, and the snare, are upon thee. (Isa. 24:17)

21. Ye have made it a ____ of thieves. (Mark 11:17)

22. Thou didst ____ on the Lord. (2 Chron. 16:8)

24. Golf score.

25. She bound the scarlet ____ in the window. (Josh. 2:21)

26. 4 in Roman numerals.

27. All they are brass, and ____, and iron. (Ezek. 22:18)

28. He ____ to meet him. (Gen. 29:13)

29. Joseph was a goodly _____. (Gen. 39:6)

32. ____ me, and be merciful unto me. (Ps. 26:11)

35. Edible grain.

36. Pronoun.

37. Why are ____ so fearful? (Mark 4:40)

38. My yoke is _____. (Matt. 11:30)

40. His eyes shall be ____ with wine. (Gen. 49:12)

41. Promises of God in him are yea, and in him _____. (2 Cor. 1:20)

43. How long will it be ____ thou be quiet? (Jer. 47:6)

44. ____ also, which went with Abram. (Gen. 13:5)

45. He maketh me to ____ down in green pastures. (Ps. 23:2)

46. Southern state. (abbr.)

47. Their ____ calveth. (Job 21:10)

48. ____ smote the donkey. (Num. 22:23)

51. Early day.

53. Were there not ____ cleansed? (Luke 17:17)

54. Article.

55. Cereal grain.

56. The ____ number of them. (Num. 3:48)

57. Make us ____ together in heavenly places. (Eph. 2:6)

Down

1. ____ hath believed our report. (Isa. 53:1)

2. ____ Father which art in heaven. (Matt. 6:9)

3. ____ the Mahavite. (1 Chron. 11:46)

4. ____ up the gift of God. (2 Tim. 1:6)

5. Age.

6. When ____ were children. (Gal. 4:3)

7. The Lord taketh my ____ with them that help me. (Ps. 118:7)

8. Lincoln's nickname.

9. 49 in Roman numerals.

13. God planted a garden eastward in _____. (Gen. 2:8)

15. Respect to him that weareth the ____ clothing. (James 2:3)

16. The birds of the ____ have nests. (Matt. 8:20)

18. Not ____ thing hath failed. (Josh. 23:14)

20. She took a ____, and poured them out. (2 Sam. 13:9)

21. Come and _____. (John 21:12)

22. Tear.

23. Adam called his wife's name _____. (Gen. 3:20)

24. She fastened it with the _____. (Judg. 16:14)

25. There is a ____ here. (John 6:9)

27. Young child.

28. Peleg ____ begat _____. (Gen. 11:18)

30. I am the ____ of Sharon. (Song of Sol. 2:1)

31. Consider what I _____. (2 Tim. 2:7)

32. Thy ____ and thy staff they comfort me. (Ps. 23:4)

33. ____ hath not seen. (1 Cor. 2:9)

34. It is appointed unto ____ once to die. (Heb. 9:27)

36. It doth not ____ appear what we shall be. (1 John 3:2)

38. Lamprey.

39. Balak ____ hath brought me from _____. (Num. 23:7)

40. Put pure frankincense upon each _____. (Lev. 24:7)

41. To be troubled.

42. Neither desire thou his dainty _____. (Prov. 23:6)

44. Solitary.

45. Let the dry ____ appear. (Gen. 1:9)

47. Unto thee will I ____, O Lord. (Ps. 28:1)

48. David arose from off his _____. (2 Sam. 11:2)

49. ____ the son of Abdiel. (1 Chron. 5:15)

50. The angels of God ____ him. (Gen. 32:1)

52. Conjunction.

53. It is not for you ____ know. (Acts 1:7)

World of Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Brits use NYC clinic to choose children's gender

NEW YORK — A New York City clinic is providing sex-selection services to British couples who want to “balance” their families — a practice that is outlawed in their home country.

The couples spend up to nearly the equivalent of \$50,000 per trip to New York City in an effort to guarantee they have the child of the sex they desire, according to the *Telegraph*. Most of the clinic's clients have two or more children of the same sex but want a child of the opposite sex, said Jeffrey Steinberg, director of Fertility Institutes in Manhattan. The British government banned sex selection for “social or ‘family balancing’” reasons in 2009, the *Telegraph* reported. No such prohibition exists in the United States.

The female British clients begin their treatments in London clinics by taking drugs to stimulate egg production before traveling to New York City to complete the process, the *Telegraph* reported. After fertilization in the clinic, the embryos undergo pre-implantation diagnosis to determine their health and sex before the chosen ones are implanted.

British clients are “fairly evenly split, perhaps slightly [favoring] girls,” Steinberg told the *Telegraph*, while clients from China and India choose boys at a rate of 98 and 97 percent, respectively.

Professor reveals artifact referring to ‘Jesus’ wife’

CAMBRIDGE, Ma. — In a surprise announcement that seemed scripted by the novelist Dan Brown, a Harvard professor revealed an ancient scrap of papyrus Sept. 18 that purports to refer to Jesus' wife. The so-called “Gospel of Jesus' Wife” presents a dialogue between Jesus and His disciples, said Karen King, a well-respected historian of early Christianity at Harvard Divinity School.

The fourth-century fragment says, “Jesus said to them, ‘My wife,’” according to King. The rest of the sentence is cut off. The fragment also says “she will be able to be my disciple,” according to King. The discovery that some ancient Christians thought Jesus had a wife could shake up centuries-old Christian traditions, King suggested. The papyrus now belongs to an anonymous collector who asked King to analyze it. Three scholars have determined the fragment is not a forgery, King said, but further tests will be conducted on the ink. The scholar also said she will press the fragment's anonymous owner to come forward.

Uzbek police raid home, beat disabled child

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan — Police raided the Tashkent home of a Russian Orthodox woman Valentina Pleshakova, and her disabled daughter, Natalya, seizing their religious literature and beating Natalya. Freed in the early hours of the following morning, they were each heavily fined later in the day and their confiscated literature was ordered destroyed. After the intervention of the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in Uzbekistan, Metropolitan Vikenty, the fine was changed into an official warning on appeal. No books were returned. A government-backed website attacked them and another Christian the Metropolitan had defended, Muhabbat Mamatkulova.



Photo courtesy of Antioch Baptist Church

BAPTIST WOMEN CHOOSE LOCAL MISSIONS PROJECT

The WMU at Antioch Baptist Church, Fyffe, — including Jimmie Fae Jolley (front), Joy McGee (left) and Naomi Hilly — support the Fyffe Senior Center in community outreach and meals for the homebound.



UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **University of Mobile Upper Room Theater Presents Upcoming Performances:** University of Mobile's Upper Room Theater is featuring three productions at the Saraland Center for Performing Arts.

The first performance is “Seven Brides for Seven Brothers” Nov. 8–11, directed by Keone Fuqua, assistant professor of performing arts and production manager. The second performance is “Godspell” Feb. 28–March 3, directed by Bruce Earnest, assistant dean of CPA/School of Music. The final performance is “Pirates of Penzance” April 18–21, directed by Patrick Jacobs, associate professor of music.

To order tickets or for more information, contact Anica Whaley at 251-442-2383 or awhaley@umobile.edu.

► **University of Mobile Celebrated as Military Friendly School:** Victory Media has named The University of Mobile to the Military Friendly Schools list and features UMobile on www.militaryfriendlyschools.com. The 2013 Military Friendly Schools list honors the top 15 percent of universities that ensure the success of America's military service members, veterans and spouses.

A full story and detailed list of the schools will be highlighted in the annual G.I. Jobs Guide to Military Friendly Schools and will be distributed to military personnel in early October.

► **University of Mobile Sporting Clay Shoot Competition to Benefit Rams Baseball:** The University of Mobile will host the 2012 Sporting Clay Shoot on Oct. 12 to support the men's baseball program.

The shoot is at Taylor Creek Shooting Preserve in Theodore starting at 8 a.m. Register online

at www.umobile.edu under “Features” or call Tonya Gomien at 251-802-5789.

Registration ends Oct. 3. Fees cover 100 clay targets, t-shirts, and lunch. Attendees also will have an opportunity to meet Joe Espada, a graduate of UMobile and third-base coach for the Florida Marlins.

All proceeds benefit the UMobile men's baseball program.

JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson Names New Equine Teams:** The Judson College Equestrian Team has announced team members for the 2012–2013 show season.

Hunt seat team members returning from last season include Olivia Breimhorst, of Gardendale; Christina Duke, of Vestavia; Madelyn King, of Collierville, Tenn. and Faith Williams, of Crossville. New members are Veronica Primavera, of Deatsville and Kayla Syck, of Tallassee.

Western team members returning from last season are Lindy Cowart, of Brandon, Miss.; Shelby Crews, of Greenville; Jana Davenport, of Jemison; Christina Duke, of Vestavia and Rylee Parnell, of Tibbie. New members are Kayla Brasher, of Jemison; Brianne Culp, of Brunswick, Ohio; Bri Hunter, of Somerville and Mary Kilpatrick, of Dothan.

The Judson teams will be competing with schools such as Berry College, Emory University, Georgia Tech, Mississippi State, the University of Alabama and the University of Georgia.

► **Area Pastors Meet Judson Students:** Pastors from Marion's downtown churches conducted their usual early-semester chapel at Judson College on Sept. 18. Students, faculty and staff were introduced to each minister and encouraged to support local congregations.

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Samford's Popular Hymn Sing Set for Oct. 14:** Singers and listeners of all ages are invited to participate in Samford University's annual Hymn Sing on Oct. 14 in Reid Chapel. The afternoon of congregational hymn singing will begin at 2 p.m.

Samford School of Music dean Joseph Hopkins and church music and worship leadership instructor Eric Mathis will lead the singing. Hunter Goff and Lynda Little will accompany as organist and pianist, respectively.

The event allows the audience to participate in choosing and singing familiar hymns and gospel music.

The Samford University Choral will present special music including the spiritual “I Believe This is Jesus” and a Chinese tune sung in Chinese, “Pengyou, Ting,” which means “Listen, My Friends.”

The afternoon of singing will conclude with fellowship, lemonade and cookies. Prior to the event, lunch is available in the university dining hall. For information, call Mathis at 205-726-2323 or email emathis@samford.edu.

► **Samford University to Co-Produce ‘The Forgotten Carols’ with Theos Theatricals:** Samford University and Theos Theatricals will co-produce and present “The Forgotten Carols” at Leslie Wright Performing Arts Center on Nov. 17, 7 p.m.

The production tells the story of Constance, a young nurse who sees the holidays as a meaningless distraction until she is assigned to care for an aged gentleman who believes that he has been alive for 2000 years and has met people from the Christmas story such as the innkeeper who turned away Joseph and Mary.

For more information, visit www.samford.edu/wrightcenter.

Freshmen journalism scholarships available at Samford

Samford University's department of Journalism and Mass Communication (JMC) will award six to eight partial scholarships to freshmen who enroll in the fall of 2013.

Worth \$1,800 per year, the scholarships will be awarded based on ACT scores, high school grades, volunteer work and participation in media-related clubs. The scholarships can be renewed each year that the student maintains a 3.5 or better grade point average and is involved with Samford student media.

“These scholarships can provide \$7,200 in financial assistance dur-

ing a student's time at Samford,” said Samford JMC chair Bernie Ankney. “They can help students receive an outstanding education in journalism and mass communication at a reasonable cost.”

Samford offers programs in print and broadcast journalism, public relations and advertising. The JMC department also houses an interdisciplinary film production minor and offers courses in web and visual communication, social media and photojournalism. Samford journalism students regularly win awards for their work and graduate to be highly

competitive in the job market.

“Samford alumni work for some of the top magazines, newspapers, television stations and public relations and advertising firms in the nation,” said Ankney. “This scholarship can be a great step toward a successful future in journalism and mass communication careers.”

For more information, call Ankney at 205-726-2948 or email him at rnankney@samford.edu. Applications are also available at <http://howard.samford.edu/jmc/content.aspx?id=2147490241>. The application deadline is Jan. 8, 2013. (Samford)



BP photo

Brian Scott, missions pastor for College Heights Baptist Church, Casper, Wyo., leads children in soccer drills in a park. The clinic was held as part of community outreach done by More Than Gold in connection with the Paralympics.

More Than Gold

Paralympics 'easy lead in' to gospel in London

Brian Scott sees every day what it's like to live with hurdles — he's had a "hurdler" living in his home for the past few years. "Our foster daughter, Rachel, who's 24, is paralyzed on one side, and she has difficulties from a brain surgery she had when she was a child," said Scott, missions pastor of College Heights Baptist Church in Casper, Wyo.

They are difficulties God is redeeming, he said — and using for ministry.

During the recent Paralympic Games in London, Rachel and the rest of the family shared the gospel with other people working to overcome difficulties.

It's something Scott said fit hand in glove, just like Rachel becoming part of their family.

"My wife, Hallie, was a provider for kids who were wards of the state until she became pregnant with our daughter, Lainie (now 3). Then she said, 'If I'm going to be home with Lainie, I'll only be able to help others with special difficulties if they're in my home, too.'"

Living out the gospel

So when Lainie was born, Rachel also moved in — a new baby, a new adult daughter and a new way to live out the gospel as a family, Scott said.

The Paralympics was just an extension of that, he said. The Scotts passed out water, visited in homes, painted faces, ran a soccer clinic and shared the love and message of Jesus at the recent Paralympics, Aug. 29–Sept. 9.

The Paralympic Games, a major international sporting event, is held immediately after each Olympic Games. Athletes with physical and intellectual disabilities ranging from amputation to cerebral palsy compete in 21 sports.

"It's very easy to share the gospel in [the Paralympics]," Scott said. "People are going through trials, and it's a perfect time to talk about important stuff. They are overcoming obstacles, and it's so easy to

then talk about the one who overcame our greatest obstacle in life for us — our sin."

The 2012 Paralympics got the best response ever worldwide, with 2.7 million spectators attending, 100 nations airing the broadcasts and unprecedented displays of enthusiasm from the host country, according to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

It turned out to be the perfect scenario for College Heights Baptist to connect with the British people — something Scott has wanted to do for years, he said.

"We've been involved in missions in Africa for years and have had layovers in London every time. We were ready to have a church partner in London that we could spend time with when we traveled through," Scott said. "So when we heard More Than Gold was looking for volunteers to partner with a church for the Paralympics, we jumped on it."

More Than Gold, a joint effort of Christian churches of many denominations worldwide, helps Christians collaborate for ministry during major international sporting events. The effort saw more than 2,000 teams come for the Olympics a few weeks ago, but ministry efforts were diminished during the Paralympics — Scott's church was the only Southern Baptist group from the United States to come.

"The Paralympics has been amazing for us in sharing, because it's such an easy lead in," said Scott, whose family and others from his church saw dozens of children come to their soccer clinic after they canvassed the neighborhood surrounding Holy Trinity Church, Barkingside.

"The church will continue to work with the kids and families, which is the best part of all," Scott said. "It's good for them to know Christians will come and help them, but it's even more important for them to know that their local church cares."

To learn more about More Than Gold, visit morethangold.org.uk. For more information about the Paralympics, visit london2012.com/Paralympics. (Eurasia News)

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Marriage cuts child poverty by 80 percent, report shows

WASHINGTON — Being raised in a married family reduces a child's probability of living in poverty by more than 80 percent, according to a report by The Heritage Foundation. The report found the chief cause of child poverty to be the absence of married fathers in the home.

"Some of this difference in poverty is due to the fact that single parents tend to have less education than married couples; but even when married couples are compared to single parents with the same level of education, the married poverty rate will still be more than 75 percent lower," Robert Rector, a senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation, wrote.

"Marriage is a powerful weapon in fighting poverty. In fact, being married has the same effect in reducing poverty that adding five to six years to a parent's level of education has," Rector wrote in "Marriage: America's Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty," released Sept. 5.

In 2010 only 59 percent of all births in the United States were to married couples, the report said. Out-of-wedlock births often are confused with teen pregnancy and births, Rector noted. But few out-of-wedlock births occur to teenagers. Three-quarters of out-of-wedlock births in 2008 in the United States were to women between the ages of 19 and 29.

"The decline in marriage and growth in out-of-wedlock births is not a teenage issue; it is the result of a breakdown in relationships between young adult men and women," Rector wrote.

The United States is steadily separating into a two-caste system with marriage and education as the dividing line, he wrote. On average, high school dropouts who are married have a far lower poverty rate than single parents with one or two years of college, Rector reported.

In 2011 federal and state governments spent more than \$450 billion on welfare for low-income families with children, the report said. About three-quarters of that money went to single-parent families.

Americans overstate size of religious minorities

PHOENIX — The typical American underestimates how many Protestants there are in the U.S. and vastly overestimates the number of religious minorities such as Mormons, Muslims and atheist/agnostics, according to a new study.

Grey Matter Research and Consulting asked 747 U.S. adults to guess what proportion of the American population belongs to each of eight major religious groups: Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Mormon, Muslim, atheist/agnostic, believing in God or a higher power but with no particular religious preference, and any other religious group.

The average response was that 24 percent of Americans are Catholic, 20 percent are Protestant, 19 percent are unaffiliated, 8 percent are Jewish, 9 percent are atheist or agnostic, 7 percent are Muslim, 7 percent are Mormon and 5 percent identify with all other religious groups.

Respondents were correct on Catholics — 24 percent of the country is Catholic. But according to the 2008 U.S. Religious Landscape Survey from the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 51 percent are Protestant, 12 percent are unaffiliated, 2 percent are Jewish, 4 percent are atheist/agnostic, less than 1 percent are Muslim, 2 percent are Mormon and 4 percent identify with all other religious groups.

New Orleans police arrest preachers for anti-gay slurs

NEW ORLEANS — Hurricane Isaac didn't stop thousands of gay revelers from partaking in "Southern Decadence" in New Orleans, but a few preachers who tried to witness at the homosexual Labor Day weekend party were arrested.

Police arrested eight preachers for yelling anti-gay slurs over bullhorns in violation of a city ordinance passed last October, the *Times-Picayune* reported.

The ordinance prohibits "any person or group of persons to loiter or congregate on Bourbon Street for the purpose of disseminating any social, political or religious message between the hours of sunset and sunrise," according to the *Picayune*.

Paul Gros, a French Quarter pastor who offers his Vieux Carre Assembly of God Church as a base for ministers protesting the event, said he believes the ordinance violates freedom of speech.

The nine pastors plan to sue the city of New Orleans, claiming that the city ordinance is unconstitutional.