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IMB photo

Unchanging message

By Julie Payne
The Alabama Baptist

Arab Woman Today Ministries continues to equip, empower believers despite Arab world conflict

The Arab Spring, Syrian refugees fleeing from the country's conflict into Jordan and other surrounding countries by the thousands. The release of the anti-Muslim film trailer "Innocence of Muslims" that has recently sparked protests and violence around the globe.

Today's world news is brimming with stories about happenings in the Arab world and the currents of transition running through many countries

since the first uprising in Tunisia began the Arab Spring in 2010. And while the Christian population is falling in some Arab countries as some believers try to emigrate, those remaining often feel less secure because of rising tensions.

But in the face of political uprisings, protests and change, Arab Woman Today Ministries (AWT), based in Jordan, continues to press forward with its unchanging vision to equip and empower Arab women, and most importantly provide a platform to share Jesus' love even in the midst of tumultuous times.

The ministry initially began in 1999 as "a radio program for the purpose of reaching and encouraging Arab women with the love of Jesus Christ through the medium of radio." It has since grown into a multifaceted ministry with a website magazine, training seminars and

networking opportunities for Arab women.

According to Ruba Abbassi, founder and director of AWT, the ministry reaches women over the air, on the ground and online.

Use of social media

Social media was implemented in the ministry in 2011, and Abbassi reported that the interaction on Facebook has been "so encouraging." Already, 5,000 members are following AWT's Facebook women's group.

Because social media provides a platform for people to express opinions and feelings, Abbassi noted it has opened up new opportunities to minister to those who reach out to AWT in the online world. When AWT is able to immediately respond to questions and find the answers people are seeking, they feel

they are cared for, she said.

With a passion to raise up Christian women leaders, one major focus of AWT is working with Christian Arab women in churches to equip and empower them — particularly those who have the potential to participate in a ministry or already lead one.

"Since 2003 we [have] invite[d] women from different countries to come to Jordan and [have] train[ed] them on leadership skills, life skills ... all the aspects that are needed for the ministry inside the church and outside the church," Abbassi said.

"If I really want to raise up qualified leaders, I work with qualified numbers," she added.

"So we work with small groups because we want to give them all of our attention and focus and care, be able to just inspire them. ... We've (See 'Ministry,' page 11)

COMMENT

The Cooperative Program Begins with You

The Cooperative Program may be Southern Baptists' preferred way of supporting missions and ministries at home and around the world. But no one should forget that the Cooperative Program starts with individuals as they bring their tithes and offerings to God's storehouse. In other words, the Cooperative Program begins with you.

Baptists understand the concept of tithes and offerings as a clear Bible teaching. The Old Testament commands tithes and offerings. In Leviticus 27:30 God said, "A tithe (one-tenth) of everything ... belongs to the Lord." Proverbs 3:9-10 teaches the tithe is the "firstfruits" of all one has. Malachi 3:8-10 instructs that tithes and offerings are to be brought to God's "storehouse" — the church.

The New Testament commends tithing. Jesus scolded the Pharisees in Luke 11:42 for scrupulously tithing but neglecting justice and love. About tithing He said, "These you ought to have done." There is no escaping that Jesus affirmed tithing as the beginning point of Christian stewardship.

But the New Testament goes beyond the requirements of Old Testament law. The apostle Paul told the Christians in Corinth, "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart" (2 Cor. 9:7). One does not give out of compulsion, he adds, but because "God loves a cheerful giver."

Going beyond the tithe

To the Ephesian leaders, Paul quoted Jesus as saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Offerings go beyond the tithe. Offerings please God. Offerings bring the blessings of helping others. Offerings help develop a cheerful heart in the giver.

Tithes and offerings also help undergird missions and ministries, proclamation and worship, education and benevolent work, and much, much more at home and around the world. It all begins with individual Christians who understand the biblical teaching of presenting their tithes and offerings to God through the church.

How the funds result in work around the world is part of the genius of the Cooperative Program. The Cooperative Program is a partnership that begins with individuals, includes the local church and reaches to the farthest corner of every state and to the ends of the earth itself.

After individuals have given their tithes and offerings, local churches decide what percent-



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

age of those monies will be sent beyond the congregation for missions and ministry. Those who originated the Cooperative Program envisioned local churches sharing 50 percent of undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program, but that has never been the case. Generally speaking, churches have been urged to "tithe" their undesignated receipts to missions and ministries beyond themselves through the Cooperative Program. That would mean a minimum of 10 percent, and even that has been a reach for many congregations. The average percentage of local church undesignated receipts given to missions and ministries through the Cooperative Program stood at 5.62 percent for 2009-2010 (the last year of SBC records).

Churches, however, do not make decisions. Individual members make decisions. Church decisions are the composite of decisions made by members. That means individuals reflect their priorities not only as they give their tithes and offerings but also as they decide the percentage of those tithes and offerings to be invested in the kingdom of God locally and the percentage to be invested in their state and world through the Cooperative Program-supported missions and ministries.

Dividing receipts

Once that decision is made, funds from cooperating churches are forwarded to the state Baptist convention office. Once again a decision has to be made about how to divide the receipts between the kingdom of God as expressed in the state and missions and ministries supported by the Cooperative Program nationally and worldwide.

Again, state conventions do not make decisions. Individuals make decisions. Decisions reached by state conventions reflect the priorities of the majority of the individuals who participate in the annual business meeting. State convention business meetings are not composed of churches; they are composed of individuals. A church cannot even instruct participants from that church how to vote on issues. That is why decisions by state or national conventions are not binding on local churches. All decisions re-

flect only the composite positions of those individuals who helped make them.

It is the individuals who give their tithes and offerings — who help local churches decide what percentage to contribute to missions and ministries through the Cooperative Program — who decide how to divide funds between state needs and those beyond the state. Just as these people understand the needs of their local churches best, they also understand the needs of their state best.

As Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions Executive Director Rick Lance often says, "Only Alabama Baptists are responsible for reaching Alabama." Forty-one other state and regional conventions voice similar commitments concerning their state or region.

SBC missions and ministries

Once state convention decisions are made, Cooperative Program funds from the 42 cooperating conventions are forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) for SBC missions and ministries. Again individuals make the decisions about how to use the funds. In annual business sessions individuals consider proposals and adopt budgets that send certain percentages to the International Mission Board, the North American Mission Board, the six cooperating seminaries and other entities.

Once again individuals make up the annual business meeting of the SBC. Neither local churches nor state conventions can instruct individuals how to vote on any issue. Decisions reflect only the composite will of the individuals participating in the annual business session.

As in a local church, there are committees who study issues in greater detail than ever presented on the floor of a state or national convention business meeting. As in a local church, committees offer recommendations for the body to consider. And, as in a local church, it is the majority will of the individuals who make up that voting body who finally decide how Cooperative Program dollars will be divided among SBC causes.

From the moment tithes and offerings are placed in the offering plates of local churches until the moment those funds are translated into missions and ministries, it is individual Baptists who make the decisions and guide the process related to the Cooperative Program. That is why the Cooperative Program is a partnership of individual Baptists expressing their priorities by their personal giving through local churches, state conventions and the SBC.

The Cooperative Program begins with you as an individual giving tithes and offerings to God and it ends with you building up the kingdom of God through your local church, your state convention and the SBC.

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@drbobterry



"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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"We finished 3 percent ahead of our budgeted goal and only slightly under last year's CP total. This is hallelujah territory! To God be the glory."

President Frank Page
Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee

'Hallelujah territory'

CP ends year 3 percent above SBC budget; downturn may be reversing

The Cooperative Program (CP) ended its fiscal year 3 percent over budget and at 99.41 percent of last year's contributions.

Church giving hopefully has dipped as low as it will from the U.S. economic downturn and may be ready to stabilize or climb, Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee (EC) President Frank Page said.

"Those who research these things tell us that church giving usually lags one to two years behind the general economy," Page said. "God's people are not immune from the hardships associated with this life. Our Lord reminded us, 'He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust' (Matt. 5:45). It should come as no surprise, then, that church giving has been deeply affected by the nation's four-year recession.

"With that in mind, the Executive Committee sought to achieve a balance between faith and realism when it set this past year's budget," Page said.

The SBC received \$191,678,994.28 in CP gifts during the fiscal year Oct. 1, 2011–Sept. 30, 2012, or \$199,650.88 less than the \$191,878,645.16 received during the last fiscal year. This year's giving is \$5,678,994.28 above the budget goal of \$186,000,000.

"We finished 3 percent ahead of our budgeted goal and only slightly under last year's CP total. This is hallelujah territory! To God be the glory," Page said. "Based on our approved CP Allocation Budget goal, [the] International Mission Board (IMB) will receive 51 percent of the \$5.6 million overage, providing additional resources for reaching the nations with the gospel. Our other ministry entities will receive their allocated portions of the overage as well, with the overage portion coming to the EC falling to only 2.4 percent."

The CP is a channel of giving, begun in 1925, through which a local church can contribute to the various ministries of its state convention and the missions and ministries of the SBC through a single contribution. Monies include receipts from individuals, churches, state conventions and fellowships for distribution according to the 2011–12 CP Allocation Budget.

'1% Challenge'

The budget outlook comes at a time when the SBC is aiming to bolster the CP in local churches. For the past two years Page has challenged Southern Baptist churches to increase their CP contributions by 1 percentage point of their budgets. The "1% Challenge," Page said, would generate an additional \$100 million for Kingdom work.

SBC President Fred Luter Jr. is featured in a series of video messages addressed to state conventions that encourage support of the "1% Challenge."

"Imagine if we take on the '1% Challenge' that's given to us by Dr. Frank Page, that each

Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee Receipts

(Oct. 1, 2011–Sept. 30, 2012)

Top ten conventions in CP giving

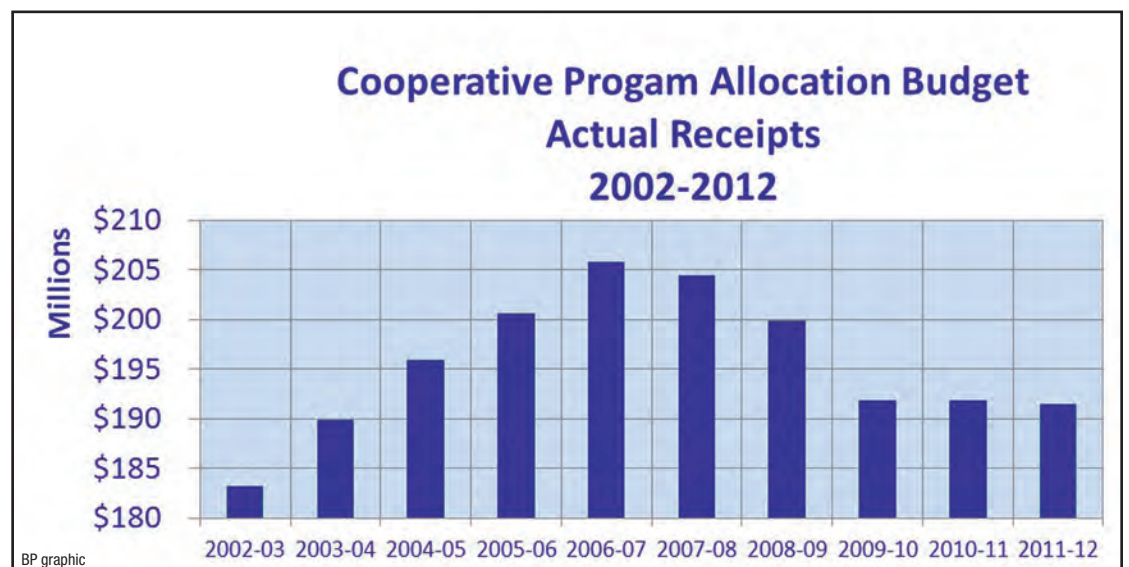
Georgia	\$18,871,247.07
Alabama	\$17,719,982.12
Tennessee	\$14,730,099.62
Texas — SBTC	\$14,625,469.57
Florida	\$12,878,495.64
South Carolina	\$11,646,769.34
Mississippi	\$11,465,331.64
Texas — BGCT	\$11,392,056.83
North Carolina	\$10,392,319.24
Oklahoma	\$10,195,034.90

Source: Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee

of our churches would give an additional 1 percent — \$100 million, imagine that," Luter has said. "One percent would equal over \$100 million to do the work that we've been challenged to do through the Great Commission by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

In designated giving, the fiscal year's total of \$190,744,940.28 is 0.59 percent below the previous year's \$191,878,065.75.

The convention-adopted budget is distributed as follows: 50.2 percent to international missions through the IMB, 22.79 percent to North American missions through the North American Mission Board, 22.16 percent to theological education, 3.2 percent to the SBC operating budget and 1.65 percent to the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. Because the convention exceeded its annual budget goal of \$186 million, IMB's share goes to 51 percent of the overage in CP Allocation Budget receipts. Other ministry entities of the SBC receive their adopted percentage amounts while the SBC operating budget's portion is reduced to 2.4 percent. (BP)



BP graphic



IMB photo

For Muslim women, turning to Christ — away from Islam — is not an easy choice. After believing in Christ they may face persecution, abandonment and even death.

A hard road

By Ava Thomas
International Mission Board

Young Muslim women face adversity after turning to faith in Christ

Sadiqah has heard plenty of stories about what sometimes happens when people in her country turn from Islam to Christ.

She heard once about some whose family tortured them with electricity and told them that's what it will feel like when they burn in hell.

One young couple was burned to death.

Another young man was put in a mental institution. One young woman was fatally poisoned by her family, and another was forced into a marriage with a Muslim.

This is what the climate was like when 26-year-old Sadiqah approached Lisa Langworthy in a McDonald's and asked her how to know Jesus.

"I went to a university where there were Christians, and when I heard the girls going to pray and read, I wanted to know what they were doing, but no one would tell me," Sadiqah said. "They're very afraid that someone might be from government security."

When she saw Langworthy — a Christian worker — eating in the McDonald's where she worked, she had been waiting four years for someone to tell her who Jesus really was.

"I felt something that made me know I wanted to talk to her, and when I did, I finally met the Messiah," Sadiqah said.

She has a small group of friends who also have come to faith in Jesus since she shared what she believes with them. In the country where they live, it's not easy — renouncing Islam comes at a cost, she said.

Sadiqah still wears a head covering — something required for Muslim women — because she feels it would draw too much attention if she stopped. When another young woman she'd heard about chose to follow Jesus, her mother cut the girl's hair short and scratched her arms so she would be forced to cover her head and wear sleeves.

For most women in her country, the No. 1 goal in life is to find a good man to marry, she said.

"But the ideas in men's head[s] are really difficult, and I don't think that will change unless someone makes it right," she said.

"There are so many examples. A small one is that if a man is riding by on a motorcycle, it's OK for him to slap a girl on the rear."

It's also OK for a woman's husband to ask if one of her friends is pretty — and if she is, it's OK for him to sleep with her, Sadiqah said.

Sometimes women do think differently than cultural traditions dictate, she said. "But when you see a girl with forward thoughts, it's always because of outside reasons — she's studied or traveled."

Freedom in Christ

Despite Sadiqah's passion for the plight of women in her country, her greatest desire is that they and the men they marry come to know freedom in Christ. And she's starting with her own family.

"It's hard for girls who turn to Jesus," Sadiqah said. "They have a hard time finding husbands who believe in Him."

When the man who became Sadiqah's husband started pursuing her, she didn't tell him right away that she was a Christ-follower — she sent him emails anonymously sharing the gospel for a while, then sent one of her Christian friends to go talk with him.

"When she spoke with him, he told her he wanted to believe, and he asked if she could also tell me about it so that I would believe," Sadiqah said. "I knew then I could marry him." They have been married for three years.

Please pray for the young women turning to Jesus Christ in Northern Africa and the Middle East:

▶ that these young believers will have the courage to follow Christ whatever the cost.

▶ that they will boldly and wisely share their faith with friends and family members, and that their numbers will grow.

▶ that all of these young women will discover that true happiness is not found in finding the right husband or securing greater freedoms but in knowing Jesus Christ.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Names have been changed for security reasons. ☞



Talladega's Hepzibah Baptist marks 175 years

Hepzibah Baptist Church, Talladega, celebrated a milestone 175th anniversary Sept. 16.

Beaver Tinsley, who worked closely with Freddie Green, coordinated the anniversary planning committee that included several members of the Coosa River Baptist Association church.

According to Shirley Ferguson, a church member who served on the planning committee, the two-hour service began at 10 a.m. and was hosted by Hepzibah Baptist Pastor Keith Wrenn.

He introduced several former pastors who each spoke to the congregation, and former ministers of music in attendance led hymn singing.

Congregational music was steered by the praise team and worship choir under the leadership of minister of music Kevin Brooks, and church members performed a duet.

Special presentations included the plaque given by Sonja Adams, representative from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, as well as separate presentations made by Talladega Mayor Larry Barton; Fran Pope, president of the Greater Talladega and Lincoln Area Chamber of Commerce; and Talladega County Commissioner John Luker.

A letter from Gov. Robert Bentley also was recognized during the service.

Other special elements were the note burning ceremony — which Ferguson said signified the church's debt-free status after its loan was paid off to build some new church facilities — and the opening of the cornerstone that was sealed on the church's 150th anniversary in 1987. The contents were displayed in the "memorabilia room," which was set up in the church parlor.

A 20-minute DVD Karen Burk and Ferguson produced traced the history of the church from 1837 to the present with photos as well as graphics that Burk created.

Ferguson said a "wonderful" meal was served that afternoon in the Christian Life Center.

"It was a joyful occasion," she reflected, adding that more than 300 were present for the day's festivities.

According to Wrenn, who began serving at the church in August, the anniversary provided the opportunity to meet former pastors and learn more about history of the church.

He said Hepzibah Baptist, which is beginning to put its Acts 1:8 Challenge team together, has a long, rich heritage in the community and is "hoping to extend our ministry from the crossroads [of County Road 207 and Renfroe Road]" and impact the world.

(Julie Payne)

FBC Garden City celebrates 100th anniversary

First Baptist Church, Garden City, in West Cullman Baptist Association celebrated its centennial Sept. 9.

Following the two regular morning worship services, approximately 100 attendees commemorated the milestone during a luncheon in the fellowship hall and reconvened in the sanctuary for a 2 p.m. anniversary service.

During the anniversary service the praise band led worship, the youth sang and there was much congregational participation, Leneta Pender said.

Pender, along with Becke Arnold and Teresa Goodwin, served on the anniversary's planning committee.

Dale McAnnally, a former member of the church and current pastor of Bethlehem East Baptist Church, Hanceville, and Glenn Pender, pastor of Happy Home Baptist Church, Leeds, both spoke to the congregation.

A slideshow presentation of 225 photos featured church members and events throughout the years, including weddings, baptisms and Bible school.

Nancy Beasley, representative for the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented a plaque to the church.

A "testimony tree" was displayed, and attendees were each given a paper leaf to write messages on and place on the tree. The leaves will be stored in the church's time capsule to be opened in 25 years.

"Our vision is to reach the community for Christ" and we need to be doing all we can ... for the glory of God, said Pastor Bill Ellis. "Our ... main purpose" is to know God, love others and make Him known, he added, noting the church has a great legacy and they are looking forward to a bright future.

(Julie Payne)

Empty Nest Syndrome



Empty Nest Syndrome: A popular term that refers to feelings of depression, sadness and grief experienced by parents and caregivers after children leave home (“the nest”) for college, career or marriage.

Psychology Today definition

A few months ago Jim and Alice moved their youngest son to college. They were excited by the new challenges before him but a little sad to see their “baby” move away from home. And they

were a little anxious for themselves. For the first time in 23 years it would be just the two of them again. What would life be like?

Driving home they chuckled about the college president’s humorous advice about staying so busy you have to “try and miss your child.” They determined not to get caught in what the president called the “Empty Nest Syndrome.” They were going to stay busy and spend time together doing some of the things they had talked about but never did because of responsibilities with the children.

A week later the pastor called and asked Alice if she would accept a new responsibility at church. He said he knew she would be looking for some way to fill her extra time. And Jim’s job seemed to be taking more time. Almost immediately he began spending extra hours at work. Alice and Jim were busy but uneasy. Instead of more time at home, they had less time. Instead of spending more time together, they spent less. Alice and Jim each seemed caught up in separate worlds.

Now, in moments of reflection, which are not many, each senses that something is wrong but neither is sure what it is. Alice wonders if she is just filling time with busy work. Jim asks himself why he is working so hard with the children already raised and cared for. Privately each asks if this is all there is to look forward to. And what about their relationship with each other? Each longs to be nurtured, to be loved, but that doesn’t happen at home. Alice and Jim are physically and mentally tired and distracted by all the other things going on in their lives.

Shared dreams are dying. They are drifting apart. They are caught in a midlife crisis. What can they do? (Read response on page 6)



Photo courtesy of Samford University

Lisa Rooks helps her freshman daughter move in to Vail Hall on Samford University’s campus in Birmingham.

A real issue

By Sondra Washington
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

“A lot of people get divorced after children leave the home. ... Some people even describe it as a death.”

Stephanie Wynn, family psychiatric nurse practitioner and associate professor at Samford University



istockphoto.com

Determination, focus on priorities important for parents dealing with children leaving home

Even in the delivery room parents are warned, “Don’t blink, or your baby will be all grown up.” This well-intentioned advice encourages parents to cherish every moment with their children who will too quickly become adults and fly the coop.

Once that time comes, many parents feel a great void in their lives and have considerable difficulty dealing with the emotions it causes. This is the dread of the empty nest, but there is hope.

According to Stephanie Wynn, a family psychiatric nurse practitioner and associate professor at Samford University in Birmingham, 50 to 75 percent of people will suffer from Empty Nest Syndrome, the depression or sadness parents feel when their children leave home. While there is no scientific research linking Empty Nest Syndrome to chemical imbalances or other psychological problems, it is a common separation stress with symptoms varying in severity from family to family.

“It is a real issue,” Wynn said. “People can be vulnerable to alcoholism, fighting with their spouses or little things that are happening because the child left. A lot of people get divorced after children leave the home. ... Some people even describe it as a death.”

Rod Marshall, president and CEO of Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries, calls the empty nest syndrome a stage of life event.

“However, for some of us — probably

about 10 percent — when we go through stressful times, we may discover that our neurochemistry is primed for depression or anxiety,” he said.

In severe cases, empty nesters may have trouble coping with their emotions without counseling or medication.

Dealing with depression

“If this sadness becomes unbearable or lasts more than a few weeks, or if you feel sad most of the time, most days of the week, most weeks of the month, it would be a really good idea to schedule an appointment with your physician and talk to them about being screened for depression and to talk to a professional counselor about some strategies for dealing with depression,” Marshall noted.

Wynn added, “If a person feels like they

can’t go on in their life, starts staying at home and not doing normal things that they did before the child left, can’t find means to satisfy that loneliness with hobbies and other things that they can do, that’s when they start getting into trouble.”

She noted that often these severe signs may prevent sufferers from seeking help.

“That’s why it’s important to have some type of support system, be it your family or friends,” Wynn said.

Marshall believes the empty nest issue has become increasingly complicated over the years.

“Historically there were cultural norms on how children leave the home and those lines have been blurred,” he said.

“Some leave to go to college. A lot of kids leave and come back. ... There used to be a declaration of independence, but now

people could be in their 40s and still have a box full of stuff at their parents’ house.”

Despite how families transition into this period of life, both Wynn and Marshall believe it can be difficult to endure without determination.

“So many parents have spent their child’s adolescence and their time centered around their child’s activities that it becomes almost as demanding as their career,” Marshall said.

A challenging time

“When the child leaves, they have to figure out what they want to do with the last half of their lives and sometimes people are confused about what they want to do,” Marshall added.

“It can be a challenging time of stagnation instead of growth. Sometimes the parents can feel stuck and not sure what they want to do with the available resources and time that had previously [been] devoted to taking care of the lives of their children.”

Much of the dread regarding the empty nest is focused on fear of children striking out on their own in the world after leaving the parental home, Wynn said.

Many parents in today’s society want to make sure their children have the things they felt like they went without, and this becomes their mission in life instead of focusing on how to help their children succeed as they mature and leave. Instead of dreading this occurrence, she said parents should accept this as a necessary part of life.

“It’s what they are supposed to do,” she said.

“I think empty nest is just like any other time of life. We just have to focus on what our priorities are and make sure we are moving toward the goal we want to achieve.”

Rod Marshall, president and CEO
Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries

Marshall said parents also can experience regret wishing they had raised their children differently.

"It is always tempting to look at one's life and to be the 'Monday morning quarterback,'" he said.

"With the benefit of hindsight, it becomes very obvious which of our decisions were our best decisions and which of our decisions were our worst decisions," he said. "The problem is that sometimes we become fixated upon decisions that were not our best decisions. If we have made hundreds of very good decisions and a few bad decisions and maybe even one really bad parenting decision, we tend to lose sight of the hundreds and become fixated upon the one we wish we could do over. The reality is that we do not get a 'do over' in life."

He noted that parents can do two things to help them cope with these types of emotions.

"First, we can choose to focus our energies on the things we are proud of and feel good about (which will almost always outweigh our poorer choices) and, secondly, we can learn from any mistakes we might have made, repair any damage we might have caused and decide to make better choices in the future," he said. "Sometimes, the repair might even involve apologizing to our young adult children to restore those relationships."

Another complication can occur when children continue to return to and leave from the parents' home.

Wynn said in some cases, this can trigger a sort of relapse for empty nesters who had difficulty with the first separation.

"It could possibly trigger a relapse like one compared to a substance abuse or another kind of mental disorder," she said.

"The child could fill that void (which made the parent depressed and lonely) and the parent becomes happy again, but when the child moves out again it could trigger more intense feelings of grief or loneliness than it did the first time. In cases of relapse, every relapse is usually worse than the one before."

The attempt to avoid this type of pain may be why some children in today's society are staying home longer than ever before in history, according to Wynn.

Preparation

"They're comfortable their parents are comfortable and there is not a big push for them to leave," Wynn said. "Your focus as a parent should be on what you can do to help your child succeed."

It is this kind of preparation that Wynn said can help alleviate some of the stress associated with the child leaving home as an adult and the parent worrying about not being there to do various things for them.

Marshall added that the key to overcoming the difficulties of the empty nest lies in redefining your purpose.

"If parents have focused on the spiritual growth of their adolescents and youth discipleship, once the child is not there anymore, the adult will have to choose if they are going to continue being active in their

church or if they are going to be less active," he said. "Are they going to focus on their own spiritual development or stop focusing there? ... It's a great opportunity for spiritual growth or an opportunity to become spiritually lazy. It depends on what decisions you make when you're in the midst of it."

Marshall noted that once empty nesters' children are out of the house, the couple can go on missions trips or volunteer in service or ministry areas that they were not able to be involved in before.

"I know a couple who became foster parents while both their kids are in college ... with no hope of adopting ... just taking care of children that need to be cared for," he said.

New opportunities

"Rather than being despondent about their kids leaving, they are thrilled to have this new opportunity for ministry," Marshall said.

This type of focused thinking also applies to other areas of life, including marital relationships.

"Unfortunately some people neglect their marriages in an effort to do an outstanding job as a parent, and they don't realize that the best thing you can do for your children is have a good marriage," Marshall said.

"This is a time to reignite intimacy and passions and shared goals and shared values. ... If they've (a married couple) grown in different directions, they have to choose to come back together once they have that opportunity."

Wynn said parents should prepare for and accept the timing of their children leaving home.

"Devote that extra time to your marriage or some kind of personal interest or hobby," she said.

"You can start planning ahead so you

can take those things up when they leave the home. If you continue to have a difficult time, seek some type of support. It could be loved ones, close friends or others (in similar situations). ... A lot of times people need people to listen to them and confirm [that] what they are going through is real and in time that will pass."

Most of all, Wynn and Marshall believe parents should think positively about their children's development and continue to have a close relationship with them even when separated.

"Every stage in your child's life is different but every stage has things about it that you can really celebrate and enjoy," Marshall said.

"It's definitely going to be different, but different doesn't mean worse. I think empty nest is just like any other time of life. We just have to focus on what our priorities are and make sure we are moving toward the goal we want to achieve."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Starting January 2013, The Alabama Baptist will begin a bimonthly series called Faith and Family, which will focus on family-related issues. The series will feature expert advice and practical tips on the psychological, theological and relational issues affecting today's family. ❧

Use 'midlife' as time of renewal

The "midlife" crisis is fairly common in our culture. For many people between the ages of 40 and 60, several dynamic life changes simultaneously occur that can be challenging, confusing or rewarding. Midlife often happens when one's career trajectory has plateaued, one's children are going off to college and one's parents are beginning to suffer from the maladies of aging. It can sometimes feel overwhelming. It also can be a great opportunity for a midcourse evaluation and, if needed, course correction.

Perhaps the author of the book of Ecclesiastes was facing his own midlife crisis when he penned such words as, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (Ecc. 1:2); "there is no new thing under the sun" (Ecc. 1:9); "I hated life; because the work that is wrought is grievous" (Ecc. 2:17).

Recharge your life

There are times when our own lives can become so overwhelming that we might think all is vain or when things become so routine that we begin to feel as if we hate our lives. However, midlife also is a great time to recharge our lives and to restore our joy. We have greater wisdom from experience in midlife than we had in our youth. We have fewer obligations in midlife, perhaps allowing us

By Rod Marshall

President and CEO
Alabama Baptist
Children's Homes &
Family Ministries



to reclaim control over our schedule and our finances.

After a season of painful soul-searching, the author of Ecclesiastes reached this conclusion: "Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." An effective strategy for facing midlife is to ensure that our lives are purposeful. By attending to our relationship with God and service to our neighbors, midlife can be a time of personal renewal and revival. Moses was 80 when called into service to deliver the children of Israel from bondage. His life was two-thirds over. Yet his obedience allowed him to become the deliverer of his people. As you look at your own midlife, ask yourself what God may have for you to accomplish in your midlife prime that might have been impossible in your youth. ❧

Tips for thriving in midlife

- ▶ **Be careful of your focus.** Acknowledge and enjoy your past, but focus on your future.
- ▶ **Be aware of your potential.** You may be able to afford going on that missions trip that you could not previously afford. You may have time for volunteer work in your church or with a local ministry.
- ▶ **Make a list of things you would like to accomplish in the next decade.** These may be financial, personal, relational or spiritual accomplishments. Periodically check yourself to see how you are doing at accomplishing these goals.
- ▶ **Invest in other people.** Be a good steward of your relationships. Look for ways to rekindle your relationship with your spouse. Find things you can enjoy doing with your adult children. Be intentional in socializing with friends.
- ▶ **Make sure your life has a purpose.** Create your own personal purpose statement and use it as a filter to make decisions. Make sure what you are doing is consistent with your self-proclaimed purpose.
- ▶ **Make an intentional effort to be physically healthy.** Begin or continue an exercise program. Get annual physicals. Drink more water and eat less sugar and fat. Be cautious of caffeine consumption.

A New Prayer Circle

Donor gifts build new Princeton Chapel

By Jennifer Jackson

Living out a faith-based mission is at the very core of Baptist Health System (BHS). And being in the unique position of ministering to patients — physically, mentally and spiritually — is key to delivering quality care at all four of the System's hospitals. At Princeton Baptist, quality Christian care has been in practice for more than 90 years. And that expression of faith is getting a new focal point — a new Princeton Chapel.

When planning for Princeton Baptist's East Expansion began, all involved with the project knew it would be necessary to relocate the existing chapel. With the new construction came an opportunity to put the chapel front and center, welcoming visitors as they entered the building and offering a quiet, peaceful place for prayer and reflection.

Whether or not to build the chapel was never in question; it had to be done. But as the construction budget got tighter, there were concerns over whether the bold vision for the chapel could be realized. But the generous donors to the Capital Campaign “answered the call” and provided the funds to make sure the full impact of this special place is achieved.

“We are proud of our Christian values and our ministry of faith-based care,” said Mark Belcher, president of the Foundation and BHS chief development officer. “This

chapel is not tucked away in a corner or hidden down a long hallway. We very intentionally made it the centerpiece of our lobby and, in essence, are affirming that our faith is central to how we deliver care. I am grateful to our donors for this

“This chapel is not tucked away in a corner or hidden down a long hallway. We very intentionally made it the centerpiece of our lobby and, in essence, are affirming that our faith is central to how we deliver care.”



The form of the new chapel at Princeton Baptist Medical Center takes shape, thanks to generous donors.

incredible gift for any and all to enjoy.”

Keith Parrott, former president of Princeton Baptist and now executive vice president and chief operating officer of Baptist Health System, believed in the power of this project and the need for these additions at Princeton. “The culture at Princeton is consistently in harmony with the BHS mission statement — the staff is committed to living out the mission in everything they do. This chapel is an amazing opportunity to showcase the Christian care and compassion of everyone at Princeton.”

And showcase it will. Upon entering the new lobby, visitors will notice the chapel immediately. A focal point in the round, stone-enclosed, two-story chapel is the centerpiece of the open concept lobby and second floor waiting area. The chapel provides an inviting

atmosphere for patients, families and visitors of all faiths. Intended as a refuge from the stressful circumstances that bring people to the hospital, designers TRO|Jung Brannen hope visitors will find a beautiful chapel that offers an atmosphere of rest, recovery and respite all within a reverent setting.

The chapel will also serve as an important venue for the Princeton staff and the community. The new space offers the chance for chaplains to expand their programs and services, as well as a place for staff to reflect and reconnect. Within the greater community, the chapel could be used for weddings, christenings — the opportunities are limitless. And this new chapel, like the rest of the hospital, allows Princeton Baptist to continue caring for others — for the next 90 years and beyond.

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2012
2:00 P.M.

AT PRINCETON BAPTIST MEDICAL CENTER



What is the role of a leader?

Think about your various roles in life. One role you may have may be wife, or another mother. You may be colleague or chairman. All of these roles come with some kind of leadership.

What is the role of a leader? Think of the leaders you know.

I am thinking of a person who sees leadership as implementing her own ideas. She is very creative and her creativity is one reason why people look to her. She helps people see new ways of doing things.

I am thinking of another person who sees leadership as solving problems. Seeking an efficient workplace, she dedicates herself to identifying problems and solving issues. She jumps into problems with tenacity until they are resolved.

I am thinking of a third person who sees leadership as accountability. She believes accountabil-

*A Thought
for Women*

By Jean Roberson
jroberson@wmu.org



ity is integral to everyone doing his or her best, so she is aware of what everyone is doing and is quick to ensure everyone knows what is expected.

You can take several tests and read many books on leadership: how to effectively lead, determining your leadership style, etc. However, the bottom line, role and purpose of leadership stay the same.

Remember in Romans 12 where Paul talks about the body

of Christ. His point is that each person is unique and brings different gifts and skills to the table. When each person is excelling in utilizing those skills and talents, a complete body is formed.

All the views of leadership listed above are valid and accurate. But what good does it do to use those if we are unable to motivate and allow each member to excel in his or her gifts and abilities?

Leadership, in its most basic form, is working for the success of those we lead. It is our job to cast a vision, to motivate others, to provide accountability, to advocate and solve problems. Yet we do so with the goal of empowering others to succeed in mind.

Sometimes we teach. Sometimes we discipline. Sometimes we encourage. All the while we are seeking their growth, their achievement and their sense of satisfaction in their work.

So consider the people you lead: your children, your colleagues and your church members. How are you encouraging their success? Remember, it is only when each member of the body is fulfilling their function that the body can operate as a whole and can achieve what it was meant to achieve.

Our job is to help each one thrive in their function.

A Takeaway Value . . .

Leadership is ensuring the success of others.

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

Pastors reject pulpit endorsements for political candidates

Nearly 90 percent of pastors believe they should not endorse candidates for public office from the pulpit, according to a recent survey by LifeWay Research. The survey also revealed that 44 percent of pastors personally endorsed candidates, but did so outside of their church role.

The survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors found that only 10 percent believe pastors should endorse candidates from the pulpit. Eighty-seven percent believe (71 percent strongly and 16 percent somewhat) pastors should not endorse candidates for public office from the pulpit. Three percent of pastors are not sure.

Differences emerged between pastors who consider themselves "evangelical" and those who self-identify as "mainline." Eighty-six percent of evangelical pastors believe pastors

should not endorse a candidate from the pulpit, compared to 91 percent of mainline pastors.

An amendment to the IRS tax code in 1954 prohibits tax-exempt organizations such as churches from endorsing political candidates for public office.

The LifeWay Research survey also found that less than half of Protestant pastors (44 percent) personally endorsed candidates this year outside of their church role.

Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research, noted that only one-third of pastors strongly disagree that they have endorsed candidates outside of their church role.

Pastors of churches with less than 50 members were the most likely (56 percent) to say they had personally endorsed candidates for public office outside of their church role.

While there were no differences between

evangelicals and mainline pastors endorsing candidates outside of the pulpit, differences emerged among party affiliation.

Self-described Independents (34 percent) were least likely to say they endorsed candidates outside their church role, compared to Republicans (51 percent) and Democrats (54 percent).

The survey also revealed only 17 percent of pastors believe the election cycle has been too religious, compared to 77 percent who said it has not been too religious and 5 percent who are not sure.

Party affiliations again reveal differences in opinion on this issue. Among pastors who call themselves Republican, only 9 percent believe the election cycle has been too religious, as compared to 20 percent of Independents and 39 percent of Democrats. (LifeWay)

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CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR PASTOR: First Baptist Church of Vernon in the Lamar County Association is prayerfully seeking a full-time senior pastor. Please send resumés to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 430, Vernon, AL 35592.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Church seeking bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: New Beginning Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1376, Alexander City, AL 35011.

MINISTER OF MUSIC: Fairhope Avenue Baptist Church in Fairhope, Ala., is searching for a music director. This is a part-time position with preference in traditional and blended leadership. Some contemporary music is acceptable. Please send resumés to: Fairhope Avenue Baptist Church, ATTN: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 1086, Fairhope, AL 36533, or fabc@att.net.

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MISCELLANEOUS

JUDGMENT DAY EVANGELISTIC DRAMA: Cottage Hill Baptist, Pleasant Grove, AL 35127. Oct. 27, 6-10 p.m. Oct. 28-31, 6-9 p.m. Reservations: 205-744-8521 or cottagehillbaptist.org.

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Want to know God?

By Pastor Scotty Hogan
Westmeade Baptist Church, Decatur

How does one really "know" God? Perhaps through some act of service. One woman answering that question responded, "I know I am saved because I played the piano at church when I was a girl." Really! That is how you "know" that you know God? The Bible clearly declares in Matthew 7:22-23, "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you!'" Good works are wonderful and every believer should be careful to do good works. However, works follow in response to our knowing God, not as a means to know Him.

Perhaps "knowing" God comes through some religious formula or prayer such as the sinner's prayer. Many people have prayed such a prayer and yet candidly confess that they neither know God nor have any desire to serve Him. At the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in New Orleans in June 2012, a resolution regarding "the sinner's prayer" garnered much debate for this very reason. Words alone do not guarantee a person's salvation, as clearly expressed in Matthew 7:21.

Perhaps one of the worst rationales for knowing God came from a 20-year-old man who expressed that his mother knew the time and place when he supposedly was saved. This young man had struggled with knowing God and being certain of his salvation for many years.

How then does one "know" God for certain? For the man mentioned in the previous paragraph it wasn't until he heard the call of God in his heart and responded in repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus and His finished work on Calvary. God had to show him that he was lost before he could ever be saved. Romans 10:9-10 states, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION PROGRAM

'FutureFocus'

Nov. 13–14, 2012 • Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery

TUESDAY MORNING

PIANIST Frank Jones
 WORSHIP LEADER Ed Cleveland
 8:30 Pre-session Music FBC Montgomery Music Ministry
 8:45 Call to Order Mike Shaw
GREETINGS
 Montgomery Baptist Association Ken May
 Vaughn Forest Baptist, Montgomery Lawrence Phipps
 Congregational Music Ed Cleveland
 Invocation Paul Moore
 8:55 Enrollment of Messengers Mary Sue Bennett
 9:00 Committee on Order of Business Rusty Sowell
 9:05 Committee Appointments Mike Shaw
 9:10 Memorial Service Don Campbell
 9:20 Alabama Baptist Ministers Benefit Society ... Mike McLemore
 9:25 Introduction of Resolutions Jerry Henry
 9:30 Congregational Music Ed Cleveland
 9:35 Miscellaneous Business
 9:50 **RECOGNITIONS**
 Recognition of Former Convention Presidents... Rick Lance
 Recognition of New Pastors and New Church Staff
 Members W. Robert DuBois
WORSHIP
 Congregational Music Ed Cleveland
 Special Music FBC Montgomery Music Ministry
 10:05 FutureFocus Wade Rials
REPORTS ON CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION
 10:30 Education Commission Rick Marshall
 10:40 Board of Aid for Students in Church Related
 Vocations Bill Goodwin
 10:50 University of Mobile Mark Foley
 11:00 Samford University Andrew Westmoreland
 11:10 Judson College David Potts
 11:20 Presentation of Convention President Rick Lance
 11:25 Special Music Paula Kornegay
 11:30 President's Address Mike Shaw
 11:55 Benediction Scott Bush

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

PIANIST Frank Jones
 WORSHIP LEADER Josh Spivey
WORSHIP
 1:30 Pre-session Music Thorington Road Ladies Ensemble
 & Worship Choir
 1:45 Congregational Music Josh Spivey
 Invocation Pat Andrews
REPORT OF STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS
 1:50 Report of Executive Director Rick Lance
 2:25 State Board of Missions Jim Cooley
 Cooperative Program Recognitions Jim Swedenburg
 Report of Inter-Baptist Fellowship Committee... Bobby Hopper
 Recognition of Volunteer of the Year Reggie Quimby
 3:30 ALCAP Report Joe Godfrey
REPORTS OF CONVENTION COMMITTEES
 3:40 Audit Committee Rick Gibson
 3:45 Insurance Committee Charles Ed White
 3:50 Resolutions Committee Jerry Henry
 4:00 Miscellaneous Business
 4:10 Committee on Boards and Commissions.. Lawrence Phipps
 4:20 Committee on Committees Roger Willmore
 4:30 Time, Place, and Preacher Committee Allan Murphy
 4:40 Benediction Jim Minor

TUESDAY EVENING

WORSHIP
 6:45 Pre-session Music ASM Brass
 6:50 Invocation and Recognitions Don Dixon
 6:55 Special Music Combined Choirs
 Alabama Singing Men — Directed by Dr. Thomas Smith
 Alabama Singing Women — Directed by Gayle Smith
 FBC Pelham — Directed by Paula Kornegay
 Vaughn Forest Baptist — Directed by Matt Address
 Message Phil Waldrep

WEDNESDAY MORNING

PIANIST Frank Jones
 WORSHIP LEADER Matt Address
WORSHIP
 8:30 Pre-session Music Vaughn Forest Praise Team
 8:45 Congregational Music Matt Address
 Invocation Jorge Camacho
REPORTS OF CONVENTION ENTITIES — PART I
 8:50 Alabama Woman's Missionary Union.. Candace McIntosh
 9:00 The Baptist Foundation of Alabama Barry Bledsoe
 9:10 Alabama Baptist Christian Life Commission .. Kenny Hatcher
 9:20 Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center.. Buster Taylor
 9:30 FutureFocus Chris Crain
 9:50 Election of Officers
REPORTS OF CONVENTION ENTITIES — PART II
 10:05 Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers... William H. Austin
 10:15 Alabama Baptist Historical Commission..... Lonette Berg
 10:25 *The Alabama Baptist* Bob Terry
 10:35 Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family
 Ministries Rod Marshall
 10:45 Resolutions Committee Report Jerry Henry
 10:55 Previously Scheduled Business/Election of Officers
 (if needed)
WORSHIP
 11:05 Congregational Music Matt Address
 11:10 Introduction of Convention Preacher Mike Shaw
 Special Music Vaughn Forest Praise Team
 Scripture Sammie Reid
 11:25 Convention Sermon Lawrence Phipps
 11:50 Introduction of Convention Officers Rick Lance
 11:55 Benediction — Adjournment Bill Franks

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Ministry helps Arab women, reaches out to Syrian refugees

(continued from page 1)

been doing this for years now and it's been really bringing [about a] wonderful outcome ... with the women."

The theme of equipping and empowering women with relevant life skills can be seen through much of AWT's offerings, like the self-defense course developed in 2009. In cooperation with the local police department in Jordan, each three-day course educates high school and college-age girls and those who have been victims of sexual harassment about daily risks they may face and the practical skills needed to defend themselves.

"It's been successful because many of them [have] opened up a lot of hidden stories that they've had for many years, and we're still working with them, helping them to overcome ... problems," Abbassi explained.

AWT also offers a networking conference for Christian women leaders. Abbassi expects about 50 women to attend the upcoming conference in November.

In addition to AWT's many projects geared toward women, the current unrest in Syria has sparked aspirations to minister to refugees entering Jordan.

According to news reports about 300,000



Ruba Abbassi is founder and director of Arab Woman Today Ministries (AWT) in Jordan. Her husband, Nabeeh, is a teaching pastor at West Amman Baptist Church in Jordan, provost of Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary and former president of the Jordan Baptist Union.

Syrian refugees have fled into neighboring countries including Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. Abbassi reported that thousands of Syrians are staying in refugee camps in Jordan and others are scattered throughout the northern part of the country. "We're working on [a] project now to provide hygiene products for 300 [refugee] families," she noted.

Anti-Islam film trailer

Also prevalent in many parts of the Arab world are the protests stemming from the recent release of the anti-Islam film trailer, "The Innocence of Muslims." Abbassi said generally Muslims in Jordan felt "very up-

set" about the film, and evangelicals wrote an article in the newspapers condemning the film. She hopes it will not affect the relationships between Christians and Muslims in Jordan.

When asked what she would say if she could speak directly to the film's producer, Abbassi said she would tell him that "he needs to stand up and apologize" to the Muslim nation for his act because "he offended Muslims all over the globe and offended us as Arab Christians because it hurt the feelings of our friends, neighbors and colleagues." She added that because they live in the tension, Christians in the Arab region will be the first to be affected.

As she moves forward in her ministry Abbassi looks to the future with hope. "God has been providing [for the ministry] since 1999," she said. "It's an opportunity for me to wait upon the Lord and see how He will show His glorious provision and how He will be glorified through what we do — this is the most important thing."

AWT is preparing a TV program, which they hope to broadcast early next year.

Due to the ministry's recent growth, AWT moved into a new building in May. "The new building is really a blessing from God," Abbassi shared, adding it offers a training center with full facilities for women.

But because the building's loan must be paid off in three years, AWT is currently looking for 300 donors to give \$1,000 each. "This way we can finish everything without losing the building," she said.

Abbassi also asked for prayer for the ministry as it works in "different fields" and that the people they minister to will "become disciples and tomorrow's leaders."

Visit www.awtministries.com to support the ministry or contact WMU (Woman's Missionary Union) Foundation, www.wmufoundation.com. ☞

Across Alabama's Associations



BALDWIN

► **Fish River Church, Fairhope**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 21, 11 a.m. Former pastor Kenneth Hale will speak. Lunch will follow. For information call 251-928-0402. Terry Blair is pastor.

BESSEMER

► **Grace Life Church, McCalla**, will hold Pumpkin Patch at Shadow Lake Oct. 18-21 and 25-28, Thursdays and Fridays 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; Saturdays 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sundays 1 p.m.-5 p.m. There will be face painting, hay

rides, inflatables and more. A petting zoo will be open daily. There will be baked goods and concessions on Saturdays and Sundays. The church also will hold trunk or treat at Shadow Lake Oct. 31, 5 p.m. There will be candy, hot dogs, drinks and inflatables. For information call 205-428-1786. Joel Frederick is pastor.

BETHEL

► **Thomaston Church** will celebrate homecoming Oct. 28, Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. and worship service at 10:30 a.m. Q.T. Curtis will speak and Mit-

zi Gates will provide music. A covered-dish lunch will follow. For information call 334-627-3288. Brooks Barkley is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Breck Ladd** resigned as pastor of **Lakeside Church, Birmingham**, Aug. 3 to become senior pastor of Fairview Church, Columbus, Miss. **Richard Trader** is interim pastor. ► **Dawson Memorial Church, Birmingham**, will host the "Science, Religion, and the Church" interdenominational conference presented by the Samford University Center for Science and Religion Oct. 20, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Karl Giberson will open the conference with a keynote address on the question, "Is Science at War with Christianity?" Lunch will be provided for up to five ministers and members per congregation if registered by Oct. 12. For reservations call 205-871-7324. Gary Fenton is pastor. ► **Westwood Church, Birmingham**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 14, 10:30 a.m. Cecil Sewell will speak and a covered-dish lunch will follow. Steven Potts is pastor.

BLOUNT

► **Pleasant View Church, Holly Pond**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 21, 10:30 a.m. Lunch and a singing featuring New Ground from Scottsboro will follow. There will be no service that evening. For information call 256-796-5986. Randy Burtram is pastor.

CAHABA

► **Pine Flat Church, Suttle**, will celebrate its 177th anniversary and homecoming Oct. 21, 10:30 a.m. Former pastor Brent Page will speak and former pastor Kenny Hatcher will lead music. Michael J. Brooks is pastor.

CALHOUN

► **First Church, Piedmont**, will hold Judgement House Oct. 24-31, 6-10 p.m. every night except Friday, 10:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m. For reservations call 256-447-9546 or visit piedmontjudgementhouse.org. Philip Cooper is pastor.

CHILTON

► **Maplesville Church** will celebrate homecoming Oct. 21, 10:30 a.m. Larry Felkins will speak and a covered-dish lunch will follow. Terry Harris is pastor. ► **Larry Felkins**, director of missions for **Chilton Association**, was honored for 15 years of service during the association's annual meeting Oct. 3.

COFFEE

► **Eanon Church, Jack**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 21,

11 a.m. A covered-dish lunch will follow at noon and gospel singing will begin at 1:30 p.m. Mark Ward is pastor. ► **Hillcrest Church, Enterprise**, will hold revival Oct. 21-24, 6:30 p.m. nightly. Charles Roesel will speak and Jeff Askew will lead worship. During the revival, children grades 1-6 can meet with John Yates at the church. Hillcrest also will host Missions Fair Oct. 27-28, Saturday 6 p.m.-8:30 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. Michael Mynatt is pastor.

COLBERT-LAUDERDALE

► **First Church, Cherokee**, will celebrate its 150th anniversary Oct. 21, 10 a.m. For information call 256-359-4325. Scott Livingston is pastor.

CONECUH

► **Brooklyn Church** will celebrate homecoming Oct. 14, 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow. Jack Williamson is pastor.

COOSA RIVER

► **First Church, Sylacauga**, will host a Judgement House live performance titled "Remember the Magic: A coach teaches more than basketball" Oct. 27-31, 5:30 p.m.-9:10 p.m. nightly. Not for children 10 years old and under. Reservations recommended but walk-ins are welcome. For more information visit www.afterjudgementhouse.org. For reservations call 256-245-6301. Tim Childers is pastor.

DALE

► **Post Oak Church, Ozark**, will hold revival Oct. 24-28, 7 p.m. nightly and morning service Sunday. Matthew Wright is pastor.

MARSHALL

► **Marshall Association** will celebrate the 125th anniversary of the association's annual meeting Oct. 15 at Gilliam Springs Church, Arab. The first session will begin at 2:15 p.m. and the second session at 6 p.m. Voices of Mobile will present music performances at both sessions. Jamey Pruett, pastor of Gilliam Springs, will speak at the first session, and Robert Smith, professor at Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, will speak at the second session. Randall L. Stoner is director of missions.

MONTGOMERY

► **Trinity Memorial Church, Montgomery**, will host Glory-Bound Bluegrass in concert Oct. 14, 6:30 p.m. For information call 334-285-5112. Stan Holt is pastor.

RUSSELL

► **Seale Church** will celebrate

its 140th anniversary Oct. 14, 10:30

a.m. Former pastor Jack Kinley will speak and Scott and Peggy Fowler will lead music. Wayne Burns is interim pastor.

ST. CLAIR

► **Spring Valley Church, Springville**, will hold "The Persecution," a live dramatization about following Jesus even while facing persecution, 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Oct. 20, 21, 27 and 28. For information call 205-567-2567. Barry Britt is pastor.

TALLAPOOSA

► **Wayside Church, Alexander City**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 14, 11 a.m. A covered-dish lunch will follow. Heath Tyree will speak and Louis Johnson will provide special music. Jason S. Rodgers is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **Ross Kilpatrick** is the new pastor of **Central Church, Opelika**. He is a native of Samson. He holds a master's degree from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and is currently working on his doctorate in leadership. He and his wife, Amy, have three children.



KILPATRICK

WALKER

► **Farmstead Church, Jasper**, will hold a Judgement House walking tour Oct. 14-17 and 21, 6 p.m. (stairs are involved). For group reservations call 205-384-3501. Ages 8 and above. No child care. Ernie Price is pastor.

WASHINGTON

► **Reed's Chapel Church, McIntosh**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 14. The Taylor Family and the Johnstons will provide music. A covered-dish lunch and church video will follow. Rickey Turner is pastor.

WEST CULLMAN

► **Jim O'Dillon** resigned as minister of education and outreach for **First Church, Cullman**. His last Sunday was Sept. 30. He is available for pulpit supply and interim work, 256-734-3846. ► **Ed Hayes**, senior pastor of First, Cullman, announced his upcoming retirement. He will serve as senior pastor through Jan. 27, 2013.

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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European Baptist Federation supports IBTS move to Amsterdam

Leaders of the European Baptist Federation (EBF) voted overwhelmingly Sept. 28 to move the International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS) from Prague to Amsterdam as an international Baptist studies and research center with close ties to the Union of Baptist Churches in the Netherlands.

The EBF council approved three recommendations from seminary trustees at their annual meeting Sept. 26-29. The proposals respond to changing needs for theological education, costs of maintaining an aging campus in the Czech Republic and loss of donor support in a poor global economy.

According to European Baptist News Service, the EBF council voted 92 percent in favor of selling the Prague cam-

pus for the best possible price. Eighty-nine percent favored moving to Amsterdam and converting a little-used Baptist church into a "Baptist House" with studies planned to begin in the fall of 2014.

IBTS was established by Southern Baptist missionaries in 1948 in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, to help unite Baptists in Western Europe in the aftermath of two world wars. It relocated to Eastern Europe in 1997 amid financial struggles and changing educational needs after the end of the Cold War.

Declining donor income and rising maintenance costs brought on an economic crisis. In 2011 IBTS operated at a deficit of 306,000 euros, the equivalent of about 394,000 U.S. dollars. (ABP)

'Instantly connected'

UMobile's Peer Leaders help incoming freshmen adjust

By Kayla Dutruch
UMobile Media Relations Intern

Morgan Menkedick, a freshman from Greensburgh, Ind., has come a long way from home and had problems adjusting to living away from her parents. One thing that helped her get through this situation was her Peer Leader at the University of Mobile (UMobile).

"I can talk to my new friends here, but my Peer Leader is more mature and knows more than they do. After talking to her, I felt 100 percent better," Menkedick said.

This is what the new Peer Leader Program at UMobile is all about.

UMobile started the Peer Leader Program for the 2012-2013 school year to help new students and get them involved in campus activities their first semester.

The Peer Leader Program, part of the Student Success Center, is designed to have 12 upperclassmen help incoming students and give them advice their first semester.

Peer Leaders assist faculty and staff instructors teaching Freshman Seminar classes, help plan lectures and outside activities, and aim to get new students involved and building relationships with others.

The upperclassmen know how intimidating and different coming into a new school environment can be.

Kelsie Ruff, a senior, said she

is a Peer Leader because she "wants to help students start the school year knowing there are people all around who support them and are here to make their college experience one they will enjoy. I would like for incoming freshmen to feel instantly connected and be able to get involved."

Being involved with campus activities is one of many things that tie the campus community together at UMobile, along with a shared faith in Christ.

"Remember that every opportunity you are blessed with at UMobile is a chance to seek the Truth — to seek Jesus Christ — and to know Him more intimately than you did before, whether that is in your dorm, at True Spin (campus Bible study), at a campus activity or in the classroom," Sara Dye, a senior, said of the Christian environment.

Peer Leaders try to impress upon the new students that education is important and requires effort.

But freshmen should not ignore the fun aspects of college life and the lessons to be learned from involvement in organizations and events.



Photo courtesy of UMobile

SUPPORT — Peer Leader senior Sara Dye (left) talks with freshman Morgan Menkedick on the University of Mobile's campus.

Jeremy Crews, a senior, said, "Do as much as you can, but remember that you're here for an education."

"Don't let your education suffer, but remember that you only have a few years at the school. Don't waste a second of it."

Daniel Moore, a freshman from Winston-Salem, N.C., said the Peer Leader Program has helped him get more involved.

"My Peer Leader has kept in contact with me through Facebook and texting. She helps me with my studies and took the whole Freshman Seminar class out for frozen yogurt. My best friends are in ... my Freshman Seminar class. It's great because I automatically have friends."

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 14

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

LIVING WITHOUT FEAR 1 Peter 3:13-22

Focus on Your Blessings (13-14)

Living as a Christian can involve suffering for righteousness' sake. In fact, the more zealous the Christian is to impact people with the gospel, the greater the risk of opposition. Peter asked a rhetorical question: "Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?" Well, Satan and people influenced by him persecute Christians all through the world today. Check out persecution.com and you will be able to read about current situations around the world where our brothers and sisters are facing extreme persecution because of their Christian faith. Are you zealous for what is good? Are you determined to do good even in the face of persecution? Are you faithfully witnessing for Jesus?

The point of the rhetorical question is that no one will harm believers on the day of judgment, for God will reward them for their faithfulness. Even if believers suffer for Jesus' sake in this world, they need not fear because God will preserve them and reward them at the judgment.

Peter was not promising that believers would escape harm in this Genesis 3 world. Suffering stalks the believer until this present evil age comes to an end. But Peter did assure believers that nothing could ultimately harm them as they continued faithfully serving Jesus, that the pain inflicted on them then was only temporary and that they would be vindicated by God on the last day.

Keep a Clear Conscience (15-17)

The fear of the Lord conquers every other fear. As the Christian regards or sets apart Christ the Lord as holy, he need not fear. In the face of misunderstanding and opposition believers should treat Jesus as Lord in their hearts. The heart is not simply one's inner, private life, hidden from others. The heart is the origin of human behavior and from it flows everything people do. Setting apart Christ as Lord in the heart

is not merely a private matter but will be evident to all when Christians suffer for their faith.

When Jesus Christ is Lord of our lives, each crisis becomes an opportunity for witness. Every Christian should be able to give a reasoned defense of his hope in Christ, especially in hopeless situations. A crisis creates the opportunity for witness when a believer behaves with faith and hope, causing unbelievers to sit up and take notice. The Christian should always reply with gentleness and respect and not with arrogance and a know-it-all attitude. We are witnesses, not prosecuting attorneys.

We also must make sure our lives back up our defense. Peter did not suggest that Christians argue with lost people, but rather that we lovingly present to the unsaved an account of what we believe and why we believe it. The goal is to win not the argument but the lost person for Christ.

How does a good conscience help the believer in times of trial and opposition? A good conscience fortifies the believer with courage because he knows he is right with God and men, so that he need not be afraid. A good conscience also gives us peace in our hearts. And when we have peace within we can face battles without. A good conscience removes from us the fear of what other people may say about us or do to us. Is your conscience clear? If we are to maintain a good conscience, we must deal with sin in our lives.

Claim Victory in Christ (18-22)

This difficult paragraph has three main points. First, Christ suffered for the unrighteous to bring believers to God. Second, by the power of the Spirit He was raised from the dead and proclaimed victory over demonic spirits. Third, Jesus is now exalted on high as the resurrected and ascended Lord and has subjected all demonic powers to Himself. Christians have no need to fear that suffering gets the last word, for they share the same destiny as their Lord, whose suffering has secured victory over all hostile powers.

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

FROM FAILURE TO DIRECTION Genesis 15:4-6; 16:1-5; 17:3-6, 15-19

Trust God (15:4-6)

Trust me, I know what I'm doing. Trust me, I know where we are. Trust me, this is the best deal you'll find anywhere. Trust me — two infamous words that none of us like to hear because they mean the opposite of what they're supposed to convey. Instead of instilling trust they provoke distrust and suspicion. But why? Because we are uncertain about the person's character or ability.

Unfortunately we have a habit of transferring this inherent distrust of others onto God. Few of us want to admit publicly that we can struggle with trusting God. The reasons why we may waver in that trust can be many and varied, but underlying every reason is doubt about the character or ability of God. Actions speak louder than words because actions are the evidence of what we really believe.

What do we discover about Abram in this short passage? We find that he trusted the character and ability of God to bring about what He promised, and in Abram's case God's promise was nothing short of incredible. Abram had no children — his wife was barren. Yet God promised a child, and not just a child but descendants as innumerable as the stars in the sky. Did Abram have all the facts? No. Did Abram know when this promised child would come? No. Did Abram have any experience with God providing children up to this point? No.

Abram did not need to know the whole plan to trust God and neither do we. God is the same yesterday, today and forever, and His faithful, fatherly love for Abram is the same as His faithful, fatherly love for you.

Don't Take Matters Into Your Own Hands (16:1-5)

Now, let's take care not to put Abram on a pedestal. Even though he believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness, he was still susceptible to temptation,

doubt and sin. Sometime after God promised Abram a son through his wife, he and Sarai decided to provide themselves with a son through another woman. "But wait a minute, wasn't the plan Sarai's idea?" Yes, but let's not forget that Abram "listened to his wife" and went on to have a very important part to play in this plot.

Does any of this sound familiar? It should. This is very similar to what happened in the Garden of Eden. Eve failed to trust the promise and warning of God, doubting His character, and Adam simply went along with the plan. You may have noticed that Adam and Eve's disobedience has had a negative effect on the subsequent history of humanity. So too with Abram. Scattered throughout the Bible we find references to troubles that can be traced back to Abram and Sarai's single act of distrust in God's promise.

Here is a stark reminder for us of the superiority of trust over both logic and mutual consent. Sarai may have thought her logic was sound, but whenever logic contradicts the word and promise of God that is an excellent indicator that our logic is, in fact, not sound at all.

We also see here that mutual consent must be compared to the Word of God. Two people may agree on a course of action, but two wrongs never make a right. All decisions must be submitted to the authority of God's perfect Word. He alone determines what is right and true because He alone is holy.

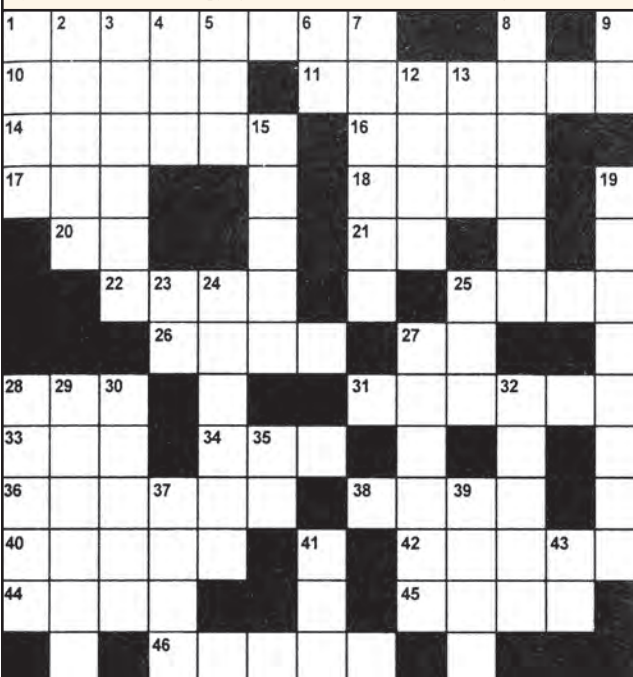
Refocus on God's Plan (17:3-6, 15-19)

So what do we do when we have gone our own way and failed to follow God? The same thing Abraham did thousands of years ago — fall on our face in worship. We seek God's face, trust in His Word and obey Him.

Worship is one of God's provisions for maintaining focus on Him and His Word. If you want to remain a faithful servant, remain faithful in worship.

Christian Crossword

By Valerie Barrett Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- Joseph's firstborn. (Gen. 41:51)
- Kings of armies did flee _____. (Ps. 68:12)
- Then ____ my present. (Gen. 33:10)
- _____ with her suburbs. (Josh. 21:32)
- Cut off the ropes of the _____. (Acts 27:32)
- Do they not ____ that devise evil? (Prov. 14:22)
- Gather a certain ____ every day. (Ex. 16:4)
- Greatly ____ be praised. (Ps. 48:1)
- Built there an altar, and called the place ____ beth-el. (Gen. 35:7, KJV)
- Had devils long time, and ____ no clothes. (Luke 8:27)
- Noah begat three sons, ____, Ham and Japheth. (Gen. 6:10)
- Puttest thy ____ in a rock. (Num. 24:21)
- ____, every one that thirsteth. (Isa. 55:1)
- Judge me, O God, ____

- plead. (Ps. 43:1)
- Shechem which is in the land of _____. (Gen. 33:18)
- For the ____ that is in the land of Assyria. (Isa. 7:18)
- Ye shall not ____ my face. (Gen. 43:3)
- They ____ to and fro. (Ps. 107:27, past tense)
- Thou art Simon the son of _____. (John 1:42)
- Driven up and down in _____. (Acts 27:27)
- As the ____, because he cheweth the cud. (Lev. 11:4)
- Benjamin's ____ was five times. (Gen. 43:34)
- Men shall ____ him out of his place. (Job 27:23)
- ____ was concubine to Eliphaz. (Gen. 36:12)
- Down
- I will ____ thy seed to multiply. (Gen. 26:4)
- Thou shalt set ____ unto the Lord. (Ex. 13:12)
- There were ____ windows. (Ezek. 41:26)
- To pass his ____, his
- strange act. (Isa. 28:21)
- Israel went into the midst of the _____. (Ex. 14:22)
- ____, Judah's firstborn. (Gen. 38:7)
- Two men of the ____ strove. (Ex. 2:13)
- An adder ... that ____ the horse. (Gen. 49:17)
- They shall ____ ashamed. (Hosea 4:19)
- Having a live ____ in his hand. (Isa. 6:6)
- Thou shalt not ____ of it. (Gen. 2:17)
- The ____ of the children of Israel. (Ex. 28:9)
- They shall call his name _____. (Matt. 1:23)
- ____ unjust man is an abomination. (Prov. 29:27)
- Cast them into the _____. (Ex. 10:19, 2 words)
- And thou his ____, O Belshazzar. (Dan. 5:22)
- Sons of Reuben: ____ and Phallu. (Gen. 46:9)
- So ____ departed, as the Lord had spoken. (Gen. 12:4)

- As though he ____ anything. (Acts 17:25)
- The roebuck, and the fallow _____. (Deut. 14:5)
- The similitude of ____ transgression. (Rom. 5:14)
- The children of Gad called the altar _____. (Josh. 22:34)
- Whithersoever the governor ____eth. (James 3:4)
- Heber's wife took a ____ of the tent. (Judg. 4:21)
- Cast down your slain _____. (Ezek. 6:4)
- The abbreviation for the 17th book of the Old Testament.



World Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Attacks on free expression rise in new Tunisia

TUNIS, Tunisia — Increasingly, critics say, free expression — a cornerstone of Tunisia's 2011 revolution that kicked off the Arab Spring — is now under attack.

For example, an art piece by Nadia Jelassi featuring busts of three veiled women surrounded by stones was met with a riot from Islamic extremists, who have called for Jelassi's death and the deaths of other Tunisian artists.

Unfortunately, rights advocates and artists have said, the government is doing little to protect freedom of expression.

In May the owner of Tunisia's private Nessma TV channel was fined for showing a movie that ostensibly offended Islam; earlier in the year two bloggers were sentenced to prison on the same grounds.

Critics complain the government does little to rein in religious extremists. And more broadly, they fear the ruling Islamist Ennahda party will capitalize on the religious divisions — and the elections expected next year — to pass a law to criminalize blasphemy.

Tunisia's last two strongman leaders, who together ruled the country for more than half a century, cracked down on human rights even as they sealed strong ties with the West. They banned even the moderate political Islam of Ennahda, jailing many party members and sending others into exile.

But now, critics claim, Islamists are pressing women to conform to their views. On the streets of the capital, hijabs and the face-covering niqab are more common than just a year ago.

In a separate campaign, rights advocates are pushing to scrap a clause in Tunisia's draft constitution that describes women as "complementary" but not equal to men. Jelassi views the two pieces of draft legislation, on blasphemy and on women's rights, as twin fronts in the same battle.

"There's a deliberate effort to roll back our gains," Jelassi said. "It's very worrying."

Conspiracy theory over anti-Islam film continues

LOS ANGELES — Respected news outlets unwittingly sent a lie around the world on Sept. 12: a Jew backed by 100 Jewish donors made a film insulting Islam's Prophet Muhammad.

Within a day the lie unraveled. But the damage to the Jewish community had been done, and Jews will continue to suffer for it, say Jewish civil rights leaders.

"This is another blood libel that's in place," said Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, referring to a history of conspiracy theories that have fueled anti-Semitism for centuries.

In much of the Muslim world the myth persists that Jews made the film.

A radical Islamic group that took responsibility for the Sept. 21 killing of an Israeli soldier later put out a statement that said it was motivated by the offensive film.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) also has been tracking instances in which the video continues to be blamed on Jews.

ADL National Director Abraham Foxman noted that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad blamed "Zionists" for the video on Sept. 25, the night before he addressed the United Nations.

For Foxman, it is the most recent lie that makes it easier for anti-Semites to justify the persecution of Jews. "Jews were blamed for the plagues, for communism, for fascism, when things go wrong, when things go well," Foxman said. "Look how easily the lie that Israelis were responsible for Sept. 11 took hold."

Polls taken years after Sept. 11 show that large minorities in several Muslim-majority countries believe Israel plotted the attacks.

Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, the Egyptian-American man behind the film, (see 'LA police arrest man behind anti-Islam film,' page 16) was arrested and detained in Los Angeles on Sept. 27.

Turkmen officials raid home of Baptist family

DASHOGUZ, Turkmenistan — Police and other unidentified officials who raided the home of a Baptist family in the northern Turkmenistan city of Dashoguz, dragged the father of the family, 77-year-old Begjan Shirmedov, from the house by his collar and beat the hands of his 68-year-old wife until they bled. About 15 church members were questioned and religious literature seized.

The raid came two weeks after a raid on another Protestant meeting in the city, with fines on three participants. One of those fined — Oleg Piyashev — was revisiting his homeland from Russia. A Russian and Turkmen citizen, he was banned from leaving Turkmenistan at Ashgabad airport Sept. 23. The Russian Embassy said it is awaiting an explanation from the Turkmen Foreign Ministry. ☞



JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson College Awarded 'Military Friendly Schools' Title from Victory Media Inc.:** Victory Media Inc., the premier media entity for military personnel transitioning into civilian life, has named Judson College part of the "Military Friendly Schools" (MFS) list.

The 2013 MFS list honors the top 15 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools in the country that are doing the most to embrace America's military service members, veterans and spouses as students.

"Inclusion on the 2013 list of Military Friendly Schools shows Judson's commitment to providing a supportive environment for military students," said Sean Collins, director for G.I. Jobs and vice president at Victory Media.

The MFS website, military-friendlyschools.com, features the list, interactive tools and search capabilities to help military students find the best school to suit their unique needs and preferences.

The 1,739 colleges, universities and trade schools on this year's list exhibit leading practices in the recruitment and retention of students with military experience.

In its fourth year the 2013 MFS list was compiled through research and data-driven survey of more than 12,000 Veterans Affairs-approved schools nationwide. The survey results that comprise the 2013 list were independently tested by Ernst & Young LLP based upon the weightings and methodology established by G.I. Jobs.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **University of Mobile to Exhibit Sarah Wiseman's Art-**

work; Artist Lecture Oct. 18: Sarah Wiseman, an artist from New Orleans, La., will have artwork on display at Martin Hall Gallery at the University of Mobile (UMobile) Sept. 24 through Oct. 26.

The public is invited to an artist lecture Oct. 18 at 1:30 p.m. followed by a reception at 2:30 p.m.

Wiseman's work has been exhibited nationally including at the Art Museum of the University of Memphis in Memphis, Tenn.; Box Heart Gallery in Pittsburgh, Pa.; and Sabatini Gallery in Topeka, Kan.

For more information contact Phillip Counselman at 251-442-2283 or email pcounselman@umobile.edu.

► **UMobile Placed in Top Lists by Institutional Research & Evaluation:** The University of Mobile has been named as one of "America's Best Christian Colleges" for the 16th consecutive year and in "America's 100 Best College Buys" for the fourth consecutive year.

UMobile is one of 89 colleges and universities nationwide to receive the 2012-2013 designation as "best Christian college," one of only four colleges in Alabama to receive the "best college buys" designation and the only private university to receive it.

The results of the 22nd Annual National College Survey were conducted by Institutional Research & Evaluation, Inc.

UMobile enrolled 1,788 students in undergraduate and graduate programs in 2011.

To be considered for the designation "100 best college buys," an institution must be an accredited four-year college or university offering bachelor's degrees and residential facilities including residence halls and dining services. It must have had an entering freshman class in the fall of 2011 with a high school grade point average or

SAT/ACT score equal to or above the national average for entering college freshmen. It must have an out-of-state cost of attendance in 2012-2013 for three quarters or two semesters below the national average cost of attendance, or not exceeding the national average cost by 10 percent.

The same requirements apply to be considered for the designation "best Christian colleges," but SAT/ACT scores must be equal to or above the national average for all freshmen entering Christian institutions and the institutions must be affiliated with a recognized Christian denomination or be interdenominational and incorporate Christian principles and beliefs into their curriculum or environment. The financial aspects do not apply for this designation.

For more information visit www.umobile.edu or call 251-442-2225.

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Preview Day Set At Samford:** Samford University will hold its next Preview Day Oct. 20. Prospective students and their parents can learn more about the school during the event. Check-in will begin at 8 a.m. in Wright Center.

The program will begin at 8:30 a.m. and will include campus tours, information sessions on scholarships and financial aid, and visits with admission counselors. A "community fair" will provide a glimpse of campus life and activities. The schedule will conclude with lunch at 12:30 p.m. in the Samford dining hall.

For information and online registration, visit admission.samford.edu or call the office of admission at 205-726-3673 or 1-800-888-7218.

The final Preview Day of 2012 will be held Nov. 17. ☞

Samford's school of pharmacy receives \$865,568 grant

Samford University's McWhorter School of Pharmacy in Birmingham, will receive an \$865,568 federal grant to assist with an initiative to reduce avoidable hospitalizations among Medicare-Medicaid dual enrollees in 23 Alabama nursing home facilities.

The grant from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is part of a program led by the Alabama Quality Assurance Foundation (AQAF).

The Samford pharmacy school and nine other healthcare-related partners will provide enhanced onsite services and support to nursing facility residents. The nursing homes are located in 14 counties in

central and north central Alabama.

Pharmacists at Samford's Global Drug Information Service (GDIS) will provide evidence-based decision support for healthcare providers and educate healthcare professionals regarding the rational use of medications, said GDIS director Maisha Kelly Freeman.

"The pharmacists will implement quality improvement projects to reduce the risk of adverse events and avoidable hospitalizations related to use of high-risk medications," Freeman said.

The initiative will be run collaboratively by the CMS Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office and the Center for Medicare and Med-

icaid Innovation, both created by the Affordable Care Act to improve healthcare quality and reduce costs in the Medicare-Medicaid programs.

Nearly two-thirds of nursing facility residents are enrolled in Medicaid, and most also are enrolled in Medicare. Research has found that about 45 percent of hospitalizations among Medicare-Medicaid enrollees could have been avoided. Total costs for these potentially avoidable hospitalizations were estimated to be 7-8 billion dollars for 2011.

AQAF received a total \$15.2 million in grant money from CMS for the project. (Samford)

Former big leaguer and cancer survivor Brett Butler, although garnering this year's Triple-A title, underscores to players, 'I'm more concerned about your character and integrity [than your baseball career].'

The power of God



BP photo

Top minor league manager survives cancer, gives God glory

Minor league manager Brett Butler stood before his players in the visiting clubhouse after the Reno Aces won the Pacific Coast League (PCL) championship series against the Omaha Storm Chasers. He spoke about the importance of character and integrity — a theme that is familiar to his team.

Every year he starts the season with a team meeting, saying, "You're a baseball player for a short period of time, but you're a man, a father and a husband for the rest of your life, and I'm more concerned about your character and integrity [than your baseball career]."

As he brought that theme full circle while holding the championship trophy in mid-September, Butler wanted his players to savor the moment but also to remember that wins and championships are fleeting.

Butler, 55, knows something about the tests and difficulties they will face in life.

He played 17 years in the big leagues for the Braves, Indians, Giants, Dodgers and Mets from 1981–97. The scrappy outfielder played in the 1991 All-Star game and batted a career .290 while picking up 2,375 hits and stealing 558 bases. Toward the end of his career he was diagnosed with throat cancer, and it made him think about what is important.

"As I was laying in the hospital thinking I was dying, I wasn't concerned about how rich or famous I was or how much money I made," Butler said. "Instead I thought about my relationship with God, my relationship with my family and what kind of positive impact I was going to leave on this world when I leave."

Butler became a Christian as a sophomore in high school after attending a Fellowship of Christian Athletes event. He said he placed too high a priority on baseball early on, but hardship taught

him to open his hands to God and accept His will — no matter what it might be.

He survived his first bout with cancer and then was diagnosed with prostate cancer in the mid-2000s. He survived that and in 2007 suffered a mild stroke. He was able to resume his managerial career in the minor leagues, but he came out of his latest health concern with a message.

"Adversity and trials are either going to take you away from God or toward Him," Butler said. "And I can tell you that my faith has only gotten stronger through the adversity I've gone through."

Butler started managing in the minor leagues in 2004. He has managed the Gulf Coast League Mets, the Lancaster JetHawks, the Mobile Bay-Bears and, since 2009, the Aces (the Triple-A affiliate of the Arizona Diamondbacks).

After Reno won the PCL Championship Series, the Aces defeated the Pawtucket Red Sox 10–3 Sept. 18 to win the Triple-A national championship game.

A few days earlier, before his team won the PCL title, Butler put everything into perspective — the numbers he put up in the big leagues, his health problems and, now, being on the verge of winning a league championship.

"As I look back [at my playing career], it was like another life," Butler said. "But more than anything I think about the awesomeness of God — that He could take a kid who was 5 feet tall and weighed 89 pounds and couldn't start on his high school baseball team and put him in the big leagues for 17 years. And then [that God could let him] go through a bout of cancer and still allow him to come back."

"That's just the power of the living God. He has a plan for my life and His plan included me being involved in baseball. So the glory, the praise goes to Him." (BP)



BP photo

A wristband of faith reflects the life experience of Brett Butler, a former big leaguer who has survived throat and prostate cancer and a mild stroke.

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

New California law bans therapy for gay teens

SACRAMENTO — California's governor has signed a controversial bill banning therapy for gay teens who want to change their sexuality, a move that already has drawn promises of lawsuits from two groups who say the new law violates religious liberty.

Gov. Jerry Brown, a Democrat, announced Sept. 30 on his website he had signed the bill.

Championed by gay rights groups and gay legislators, the law asserts that "being lesbian, gay or bisexual is not a disease, disorder, illness, deficiency or shortcoming" and that "sexual orientation change efforts can pose critical health risks to lesbian, gay and bisexual people."

"Under no circumstances shall a mental health provider engage in sexual orientation change efforts with a patient under 18 years of age," the law states. Any mental health providers who attempt such counseling could lose their license.

Pacific Justice Institute and Liberty Counsel say they will file suit seeking to overturn the law, which is set to go into effect Jan. 1.

"Of all the freedom-killing bills we have seen in our Legislature the last several years, this is among the worst," Brad Dacus, president of Pacific Justice Institute, said in a statement. "This outrageous bill makes no exceptions for young victims of sexual abuse who are plagued with unwanted same-sex attraction. ... We are filing suit to defend families, children and religious freedom."

Liberty Counsel said it will file suit on behalf of counselors, parents and their minor children and the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality.

"The California governor and Legislature are putting their own preconceived notions and political ideology ahead of children and their rights to get access to counseling that meets their needs," said Mat Staver, Liberty Counsel founder.

LA police arrest man behind anti-Islam film

LOS ANGELES — The Egyptian-American man reportedly behind the anti-Islamic video that sparked weeks of Muslim protests worldwide was arrested and detained in Los Angeles on Sept. 27 over a federal probation violation.

Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, a 55-year-old Coptic Christian, was placed in federal custody by U.S. Central District Chief Magistrate Judge Suzanne Segal over eight alleged probation violations stemming from his 2010 check fraud conviction.

Nakoula's probation violations include the use of aliases and lying to probation officers; with new charges, he may serve another two years on top of the 21 months he served after the 2010 fraud conviction. Nakoula also had been barred in that case from going online or using computers for five years without probation officer approval.

Nakoula admitted he was the producer of the film, "Innocence of Muslims," which depicts Islam's Prophet Muhammad as a child-molesting, adulterous fraud. Muslims worldwide have protested the film since a trailer posted on YouTube was broadcast in Egypt.

As the controversy erupted, Nakoula first told reporters he was a Jewish real estate agent named "Sam Bacile." Now imprisoned until his next federal hearing, Nakoula had been in hiding since the onset of protests Sept. 11.

The few American Muslim protests against the film, including one in Dearborn, Mich., have been peaceful.

Most Americans doubt Scientology is real religion

WASHINGTON — Most Americans do not believe Scientology is a real religion, according to a recent poll by "60 Minutes" and *Vanity Fair*. The survey, conducted by CBS News, found that 70 percent of Americans say that Scientology is not a true religion; 13 percent believe it is; and 18 percent either do not know or do not care.

Out of the more than 1,000 people polled, Christian Americans were even more likely to question Scientology's status as a religion — 79 percent of evangelicals, 74 percent of Protestants and 72 percent of Catholics surveyed responded they did not think Scientology was a religion.

L. Ron Hubbard, a science fiction author, established Scientology in 1952, and the Church of Scientology has been acknowledged as a religion in the United States since 1993. Scientology is known for its celebrity followers such as actors Tom Cruise and John Travolta.

It is not certain how many people practice Scientology in the U.S., but the church's website claims growth of more than 4.4 million adherents each year.