

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



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Future Focus

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Nigerian massacre targets Christian students

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Photo by Caroline Summers

(L to r) Spencer Bachus, Andy Westmoreland and Jonathan C. Davis chat in the Wright Center lobby following the announcement of the U.S. Department of Justice's grant Oct. 19.

OCTOBER
is Domestic
Violence
Awareness
Month.

'SAFETY' in numbers'

Samford, 4 others receive US Department of Justice grant to support campus safety

Samford University in Birmingham, has received a \$499,551 U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) grant that will support a new campus safety initiative at Samford and the four other schools in the Birmingham Area Consortium for Higher Education (BACHE).

Samford will take the lead in the "Safety in Numbers" project, a coordinated community response to promote safety for women. The other BACHE member schools are Miles College, the University of Montevallo, Birmingham-Southern College and the University of Alabama at Birmingham. All together, the schools have a total student population of about 30,000.

The goal is to promote safety for women through prevention education

and to develop effective policies and appropriate responses at the campuses, according to Samford family studies professor Jonathan C. Davis, who will coordinate the project.

"The education supported by the grant will help improve communication concerning gender, power and other key topics that impact our relationships and health," Davis said of the highly competitive three-year grant that begins this month and runs through September 2015. The release of the grant award was timed by the DOJ to coincide with Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

"We can be proud that five of our outstanding institutions in the Birmingham area have come together for a project that will serve as a national model for promoting student safety and particularly the safety of women," said U.S. representative Spencer Bachus, who represents Alabama's 6th congressional district. "This is a unique approach to personal safety that involves not just traditional campus security and law enforcement, but the expertise of human services and counseling

agencies in the community.

"It recognizes that the best way to deal with violence is to prevent it in the first place, and there is every reason to believe that young lives will be saved by the initiative being announced here at Samford University today," Bachus said.

Working together

The five BACHE campuses will work collaboratively with seven community partners to establish a Campus Coordinated Community Response Team (CCRT) at each school. The CCRTs will coordinate training sessions for new students, campus safety personnel and disciplinary boards on their respective campuses.

The community partners are the Crisis Center, Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Jefferson County Family Violence Coordinated Community Response, YWCA Central Alabama, SafeHouse of Shelby County, City of Montevallo Police Department and the Jefferson County district attorney's office.

One emphasis, Davis said, will be to train students in bystander

intervention. "When citizens take action, we can prevent untold trauma and improve the health of our community. On campus, this can increase safety and learning for our students," said Davis, adding that the educational component will benefit all students, especially those in health care, ministry, law, pharmacy and other professions that may work with victims of violence.

The grant will fund a campus coordinator who will lead education efforts and strengthen campus services for victims. The coordinator will be based at the Crisis Center.

Davis, a licensed marriage and family therapist, points out that the initiative will serve a valuable need in prevention, education and community relations. "The project title itself, 'Safety in Numbers,' reflects our cohesiveness as a community and the value of collaboration," he said.

"Our community needs this initiative to bring us together, make us healthier and give us ethical ways to respond to these challenging issues. This is a way our community can come together to support those in need." (SU)

COMMENT

Supporting SBC Causes Through the Years

An editorial writer once said he didn't like to research a story because the facts often failed to support his conclusions. That can be a problem. For example, it is true that total Cooperative Program (CP) receipts supporting missions and ministries across the nation and the world are off about \$48 million from five years ago. It is also true that the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) portion of those CP dollars are down, falling from about \$205.7 million to \$191.7 million.

Those two facts seem to support the argument that SBC-related missions and ministries are in dire circumstances. Who would disagree with that conclusion? With a lost world that needs the opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ, fewer dollars for missions and ministries is a tragedy.

The Great Commission Resurgence is part of the response of Southern Baptists to this need as Baptists across America see what can be done to reach more people for Jesus Christ in this nation and around the world.

A different light

Additional research through information provided by the SBC Executive Committee puts the sliding number of CP dollars for SBC causes in a different light. Looking only at this information, one could conclude that CP causes have seldom had it so good, because their portion of the SBC pie is almost a record portion.

The SBC's first reliable records indicate that in 1930, five years after missions giving for state and national causes through the CP was adopted, the SBC received 32.03 percent of all CP receipts. That year cooperating Baptist churches gave \$2,890,587 in missions giving through CP with the SBC receiving \$925,722. Just for comparison, for the last year of record, cooperating churches received \$8,911,796,522 in undesignated receipts. Total CP giving is reported at \$500,410,514 with the SBC receiving \$191.7 million.

For the 80 years on record the average percentage of CP receipts underwriting SBC causes



THOUGHTS
By Bob Terry

has been 36.45 percent. Today the percentage is 38.32.

It is enlightening to follow the percentage from year to year and remember world events. For example, one can see a slide in the percentage of CP funds for SBC causes during the Great Depression but by 1940, the figure was up slightly from its 1930 mark to 32.77 percent. At the end of World War II, the SBC portion of CP receipts jumped to an all-time high of 40.51 percent in 1950 only to begin a 25-year downward slide. Ten years later, the percentage was 34.83. By 1975, CP funds for SBC causes stood at 33.24 percent of the total, a modern-day low and only slightly above its beginning point.

From 1975 the graph turns upward for almost 20 years. In 1980, SBC causes received 35.60 percent of all CP funds. A modern-day high was reached in 1987 when 39.12 percent of CP funds went for SBC causes. The percentage stayed above 38 until 1991.

It is also remarkable that this climb occurred alongside the Conservative Resurgence, which brought strife and conflict to Southern Baptist life for more than a decade.

From 1991 statistics show a drop of almost four percentage points by the year 2000 — down to 34.75 percent. This was during the years when the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship formed and subsequently became a separate Baptist body distinct from Southern Baptists.

The SBC portion of CP receipts regained lost ground during the first decade of the 21st century and closed in 2010 at 38.32 percent.

The gain for SBC causes is more remarkable because it occurred while CP giving by the churches fell. The Great Recession, which began in 2008, caused a drop in undesignated giving to the churches by nearly \$200 million. That resulted in a nearly \$50 million drop in total CP giving for state and national causes. Despite this downturn the percentage of CP receipts

for SBC causes grew, which meant smaller declines in total dollars for national ministries while state conventions lived on fewer dollars and a shrinking percentage.

Alabama Baptists provide an example of the increased emphasis on SBC causes. Alabama Baptists began the decade giving 42.3 percent of all CP funds to SBC causes. We ended the decade giving 43.5 percent. When one looks at these facts of history, the situation for national and worldwide missions and ministries might not be as dire as it could be.

But there is still more research to consider. Even though the CP remains the preferred means of supporting missions and ministries at home and abroad for Southern Baptists, churches are giving a smaller and smaller percentage to missions and ministries through the CP.

For the last two decades missions giving through the CP has failed to keep pace with the growth in undesignated receipts by the churches. In the 1990s undesignated giving in the churches grew by 4.91 percent, according to SBC Executive Committee statistics. Total CP income (state and national causes) grew by 2.68 percent.

For the first decade of the new century, undesignated giving grew 4.82 percent while total CP giving grew less than half of that — 2.23 percent.

During the last five years church undesignated receipts grew 2.51 percent. Total CP giving decreased 0.8 percent.

In the 1980s total CP missions causes received 10.5 percent of undesignated receipts of cooperating churches on average. That fell to 8.73 percent during the 1990s and was at 6.80 for the first 10 years of this century.

The last three years

More telling is the percentage of the last three years — 6.08 percent for 2008; 5.87 percent for 2009; and 5.62 percent for 2010.

The research shows church members giving tithes and offerings to God through their churches. From 2006 to 2008, undesignated gifts grew from \$8.3 billion to \$9 billion. When the Great Recession hit, giving for 2009 declined only slightly to \$8.96 billion and dropped to \$8.9 billion in 2010. The research also shows churches giving less and less to missions and ministries through CP.

If that trend continues the percentage of the CP pie going to SBC causes or to state causes may not matter. Both may die from financial hunger. That is a conclusion the research does support.

To see the
2011-2012

Top 5

giving

states to SBC causes

go to page 4.



"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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Building a LEGACY

By Sarah Anne Elliott
Intern, The Alabama Baptist

*"History is a vital thing for people to
know ... [because] it shapes your future."*

Alice Faye Couch

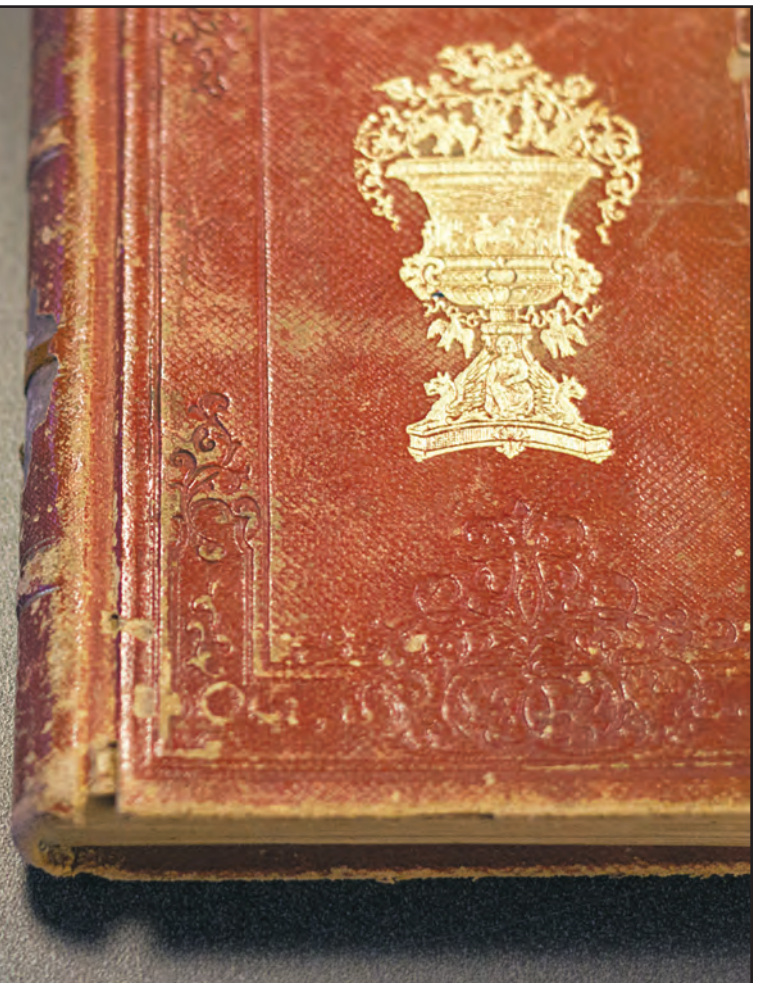


Photo by Neisha Fuson

The journal of Daniel Matthias Brindle Hassler, dating back to 1850, contains the story of Hassler's journey from Pennsylvania to Pratt City. Alice Faye Couch, Hassler's great-granddaughter, donated the journal to the Special Collection Department at the Samford University Library.

The Alabama Baptist inspires woman to give journal to historic collection

From the moment her mother gave it to her, Alice Faye Couch always knew her great-grandfather's journal was something special.

"In fact my mother kind of warned me about loaning it out when she put it in my hands," said Couch, a member of Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham.

But after reading two articles in *The Alabama Baptist* about the Special Collection Department at the Samford University Library in Birmingham, Couch is now willing to part with her prized family possession and wants the rest of the community to be able to benefit from the history the journal contains.

"You don't live forever, and I felt that I should put it in a place where others might could have the benefit of history," she said.

The Special Collection Department of the Samford University Library serves as the Alabama Baptist State Convention's source for historical information. Among other things the collection includes church records, copies of *The Alabama Baptist*, local histories and genealogical information, making it the world's most complete resource on Alabama Baptists.

According to Elizabeth Wells, the department's chair, Couch's donation is a "wonderful example of a 19th-century manuscript journal."

"We focus on people's lifestyle, and we get to see the inside of a person who tells us who we are as a people and as a state in a certain period of time," she said.

Couch said the journal belonged to her great-grandfather, Daniel Matthias Brindle Hassler, and dates back to 1850, when Hassler departed from his hometown of Chambersburg, Pa., to come south due to health reasons. It tells of Hassler's journey to Somerville, Tenn., where he married before eventually settling in Pratt City.

"He was an Aetna insurance agent, and

he calls his wife his precious 'Jenny Ray,'" Couch said.

She also said Hassler was "a man of the Word of God," and she wants people to be able to learn from a man who was so devoted to the Lord. The journal's opening lines read: "I have purchased another journal to record the kind dealings of the Lord to my soul."

Couch said, "As a senior citizen, I think it is very important that we know the life of our forebears. ... History is a vital thing for people to know ... [because] it shapes your future."

Ultimately, the journal "really shows the

daily life [of Hassler] and who this man [was]," Wells said. "When you look to Daniel Hassler's life in 1859, you also see people of 2012 — some of the same experiences he records are the same experiences we have today."

For more information about the Special Collection Department, visit library.samford.edu/about/special.html or call 205-726-2749. To arrange for your church records to be archived, call the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission at 1-800-325-9863. (Julie Payne contributed)



Photo by Neisha Fuson

Alice Faye Couch (left) signs the deed of gift document for the Special Collection Department with Kimmetha Herndon, dean of the Samford Library (center); Elizabeth Wells, Special Collection chair (right, standing); and Marian Hassler Wright, Couch's sister.

Alabama native Jason Allen elected as Midwestern Seminary's fifth president

In a 29-2 vote, Alabama native Jason K. Allen has been elected by Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (in Kansas City, Mo.) trustees as the school's fifth president. The vote took place Oct. 15 during the trustees' biannual meeting.

Allen, 35, comes to Midwestern from Louisville, Ky., where he served as vice president for institutional advancement at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and as executive director of the Southern Seminary Foundation. He had concurrently served as senior pastor of Carlisle Avenue Baptist Church, Louisville.

Midwestern's new president, who assumed the seminary's helm effective immediately, described his thoughts upon being elected.

"I think the key word that defines my state of heart is first that I'm honored," Allen said. "I'm honored by the trust this board has overwhelmingly placed in me."

Allen said he and his wife, Karen, "both have sensed unmistakably the Lord's leadership these past several months that has come to fruition and completion in many ways today. I intend to lead in building a seminary that serves all Southern Baptists, that is committed to the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention and, by God's grace, will [be] a seminary that the vast majority of Southern Baptists are both proud of and pleased with."

Allen added that throughout the process God has placed a great love in his and his wife's hearts for everything about Midwestern. "Over the last several months the Lord has given us a love for people we are yet to know and a seminary we are yet to reside at," he said. "We are zealous to get there and invest our lives [in] the Midwestern Seminary community and to see God do a great work within that community."

Emphasizing that during his administration Midwestern will be "absolutely committed to the Great Commission," Allen outlined his approach to leading the seminary into the future. "We are a denomination of the Great Commission," Allen said.

"This will be a seminary of the Great Commission, and I will be a leader that leads the seminary to fulfill the Great Commission."

Allen added that he foresees two specific ways of achieving this climate.

"We want to build a robust campus community culture," Allen said. "It will be marked by godliness, fellowship, a place [where] every square inch of the campus is family friendly and a place where there is a sense of Great Commission commonality and a sense of being here to train, to learn, to serve the local church."

Secondly, Allen said he intends for Midwestern to be known as "the school that is steadfastly committed to serving the local church."

In other ministerial roles, Allen has been senior pastor of Muldraugh Baptist Church, Muldraugh, Ky., and has worked in various positions at churches in Alabama and Kentucky since 1998. From 1998 to 2001 Allen served as assistant to then-pastor Clint Pressley at Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile.

Allen holds a doctorate and a master of divinity degree from Southern and an undergraduate degree from Spring Hill College in Mobile. Allen and his wife have five children: Anne-Marie, 9; Caroline, 8; William, 7; Alden, 5; and Elizabeth, 4.

Allen was officially announced as a nominee Sept. 5 by Midwestern's presidential search team.

Bill Bowyer, leader of the presidential search team and pastor of Crossroads Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C., added that things setting Allen apart from the other candidates included his previous seminary experience and answers during hours of discussion about numerous matters pertaining to the seminary. Ultimately, though, it was the leading of the Holy Spirit.

"Prayer, fasting and following the guidance of God's Holy Spirit led us to him to the point that seven of us unanimously agreed, 'This is the man God set aside for us at Midwestern Seminary,'" Bowyer said.

Midwestern has been in search of a successor to R. Philip Roberts since his resignation in February. Robin D. Hadaway, the seminary's professor of missions, had served as interim president since Feb. 10. (BP, TAB contributed)



ALLEN



Photo courtesy of Siloam Baptist Church

MARION'S SILOAM BAPTIST CHURCH CELEBRATES 190 YEARS OF SERVICE

Siloam Baptist Church, Marion, celebrated its 190th anniversary Oct. 7. Pictured are (back row, l to r) John Nicholson, pastor of Siloam Baptist; Bobby DuBois, associate executive director for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions; guest preacher Bob Terry, editor of *The Alabama Baptist*; Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission; (front row, l to r) Bill Wallace, DOM for Cahaba and Hale associations; David Potts, president of Judson College; Michael Morgan, assistant to Samford University's president; and Richard Harris, who represented the North American Mission Board.

Top 5 giving states to SBC causes

2011-2012

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

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

LOTTIE MOON

North Carolina	\$12,376,426.46
Alabama	\$10,803,465.18
Tennessee	\$10,792,138.77
Texas BGCT	\$10,298,804.11
Georgia	\$10,093,220.27

ANNIE ARMSTRONG

North Carolina	\$5,727,237.77
Alabama	\$5,692,798.72
Georgia	\$5,163,942.78
Tennessee	\$4,261,390.77
Texas BGCT	\$4,108,778.82

OTHER DESIGNATED

Georgia	\$1,217,248.29
Texas BGCT	\$948,694.65
Alabama	\$777,249.04
Tennessee	\$752,285.62
Kentucky	\$672,941.08

TOP 5 TOTAL GIVING FOR 2011-2012

(Percentage of state receipts going to SBC for 2011-2012 not available at press time)

Georgia	\$35,345,658.41
Alabama	\$34,993,495.06
Tennessee	\$30,535,914.78
North Carolina	\$18,103,664.23
Texas BGCT	\$15,356,277.58

Top 5 CP Giving for 2010-2011

Alabama	\$18,102,416.48	43.50%
Georgia	\$17,316,108.33	37.40%
Tennessee	\$14,913,745.00	42.08%
Texas BGCT	\$12,362,618.99	25.49%
North Carolina	\$10,460,352.42	33.07%

Source: SBC Executive Committee statistics

‘Cowardly’ action

Christian workers in Beirut ask for prayers after car bombing spurs new fears

A huge car bomb tore through the heart of East Beirut’s mainly Christian Ashrafiyeh district Oct. 19, spurring new fears that the civil war next door in Syria might cause Lebanon to slide back toward its own long-running internal conflict.

In the bloodiest such incident in Lebanon’s capital since 2008, the bombing killed at least eight people and wounded more than 90 others during the afternoon in the crowded neighborhood. It destroyed cars, seriously damaged buildings and left a large, smoking crater near Sassine Square. Residents in the area ran in panic or took wounded survivors to nearby hospitals as security forces rushed into the area.

No one had claimed responsibility for the blast by evening, but suspicion immediately fell on Syria and pro-Syrian groups in Lebanon. The bomb reportedly detonated near the offices of an anti-Syrian political group that helped force the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in 2005. According to Reuters the blast also killed a top Lebanese security official whose investigations implicated Syria in the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri. He also played a key role in the investigation and arrest of a pro-Syrian politician in Beirut several weeks ago.

Syrian government officials, however, quickly condemned the attack, calling it “cowardly” and a terrorist action.

In several parts of Lebanon there have been reports of blocked roads and gunfire in protest of the bombing.

“Pray that it wouldn’t escalate into further violence,” a Christian worker in Lebanon appealed. “It’s easy in this kind of situation for people to jump to conclusions and assume they know who did it and why. Things have been tense already.”

‘Insecure and scared’

“When something like this happens, it makes you feel insecure and scared. Pray that in the midst of it, people would be open to Jesus and seek out the real source of security.

“The other thing that comes to mind is that this happened in a Christian neighborhood. Pray that people there would respond like Christians [and] not be Christian in name only. Pray there would be forgiveness rather than speculation and retribution and revenge. Pray that people would reach out to each other and minister in the name of Jesus.”

Many Lebanese — whether Christian, Muslim or members of the nation’s numerous other religious groups — fear the Syrian



Reuters photo

VIOLENCE — Investigators work at the site of an explosion in the Ashrafiyeh district, central Beirut, on Oct. 19. A huge car bomb exploded during rush hour, killing eight people and wounding more than 90.

regime of Bashar al-Assad wants to create conflict in Lebanon and other neighboring countries to distract attention from the increasingly bloody civil war in Syria. They fear the war, which has sent tens of thousands of Syrian refugees over the border and sparked clashes in several Lebanese towns, will spill more widely into Lebanon.

The Syrian civil war has become

a struggle between that nation’s ruling Alawite sect, linked historically to Shi’ite Islam, and Sunni Muslim rebels. Some factions in Lebanon support Assad and the Alawites; others oppose him. The Syrian conflict has reopened old wounds Lebanon has been trying to heal since its own 15-year civil war that ended in 1990.

“Pray that the voice of Christ would really speak into the midst

of chaos — rather than the voices of fear, anger and hostility,” said another Christian worker. “A lot of people are looking for someone to blame and retaliate against. Pray that innocent people wouldn’t be targets, whether Syrians, Lebanese, Christians or Muslims. We want justice to be done, but not at the expense of a true expression of biblical grace. They go hand in hand.” (BP)



Photo courtesy of Birmingham Baptist Association

BIRMINGHAM ASSOCIATION NAMES VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Birmingham Baptist Association presents its annual Keith-Cross Volunteer of the Year Award to Barbara Wise (center) at The Gathering at Huffman Baptist Church on Oct. 7. She is a member of First Baptist Church, Tarrant. Pictured with her are Mike McLemore (left), executive director of Birmingham Association, and Jerry Cross, one of the men for whom the award is named.

The Alabama Baptist’s advance preview popular among church leaders

The Alabama Baptist’s Pastors Connection continues to gain in popularity among pastors and church leaders. More than 50 percent of respondents to a recent survey said they read Pastors Connection — an advance preview of the contents of each issue of *The Alabama Baptist* — every week or close to it.

A substantial number of the leaders who responded reported using the news they received through Pastors Connection. Nearly 60 percent of respondents appreciated having advance information on weekly stories. Sixty-five percent of pastors used the early notifications personally, while almost half shared the information with church members.

The Alabama Baptist’s Pastors Connection

electronic newsletter comes out each Tuesday afternoon and is delivered as a link in an email message. The Pastors Connection service is available at no cost to subscribers to the state Baptist paper.

By subscribing to Pastors Connection, church staff and ministry leaders are able to benefit from advance knowledge of information related to the work of Alabama Baptists around the state as well as news from around the nation and world.

For more information or to sign up for Pastors Connection, contact Neisha Fuson at 205-870-4720, Ext. 104, or by email at nfuson@thealabamabaptist.org. For more information about subscribing to *The Alabama Baptist*, visit www.thealabamabaptist.org. info or call 1-800-803-5201. (TAB)

PASTORS CONNECTION TIPS

To ensure you receive Pastors Connection every week, be sure to adjust the settings in your email program or service. The following items can generally be found in the settings or account section of your email.

- ▶ **ADD** news@thealabamabaptist.org to your contacts list.
- ▶ **ADJUST** junk/spam mail filter to “low” or “none.”
- ▶ **ADD** the domain name (thealabamabaptist.org) to your site domain list.
- ▶ **CHECK** your spam folder. If you find Pastors Connection there, select the email and mark “Not Spam.”

Across Alabama's Associations

BETHLEHEM

► **First Church, Frisco City**, will celebrate its 100th anniversary during homecoming Oct. 28. A meet and greet will be at 9:15 a.m. and the service will be at 10:30 a.m. Lunch and an afternoon concert will follow. For information call 251-267-3521. Mark McCullough is pastor.

BIBB

► **Ashby Church, Brierfield**, will host New Ground in concert Oct. 28, 5 p.m. For information call 205-665-1531. Stan Hughley is interim pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Deerfoot Church, Trussville**, will host a day with Henry Blackaby Oct. 28, 10:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. For information call 205-655-0798 or visit www.deerfootbaptist.org. Roger Willmore is pastor.

BLACKABY

► **Hillview Church, Birmingham**, will host Clinton Nichols from Sumrall, Miss., Oct. 28, 10:25 a.m. Nichols has performed with the New York Opera and has served several churches as minister of music. A mini concert will follow lunch. For information call 205-798-0340. Mark Barber is pastor.

► **Liberty Park Church, Vestavia Hills**, will host a 24-hour prayer vigil prior to voting polls opening Nov. 6 to seek God and pray that His will be done in the presidential election. It will begin Nov. 5 at 7 a.m. and continue until 7 a.m. Nov. 6. Prayer commitments will be for 15-minute increments and individuals may sign up for one or more increments. Arrive 20 minutes before your scheduled prayer time. For information call 205-969-1236. Scott Guffin is pastor.

CAHABA

► **Faith Chapel Church, Marion**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 28. There will be no Sunday School. A music service will be at 10:30 a.m. and the homecoming service will be at 11 a.m. Donald Harris will speak and lunch will follow. Lloyd Stockman is pastor.

COFFEE

► **New Ebenezer Church, Elba**, will celebrate homecoming Nov. 4. The Paulayers will sing at 10:30 a.m. and worship service will be at 11 a.m. No Sunday School. A covered-dish lunch will follow. Travis Johnson is supply pastor.

COLUMBIA

► **Bethlehem Church, Midland City**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 28. Sunday School will be at 9:30 a.m. and worship service will be at 10:30 a.m. Jerry Rea will speak and lunch will follow. For information call 334-793-7963. Paul Edenfield is pastor.

EAST LIBERTY

► **First Church, Lanett**, will celebrate homecoming and its 117th anniversary Oct. 28, 11 a.m. Adam Bishop will speak and lunch will follow. Bishop and his wife, Marie, will present a concert at 6 p.m. Ronnie Jordan is pastor.

ESCAMBIA

► **Pat Andrews**, director of missions (DOM) for **Escambia Association**, was honored at the association's 109th annual fall meeting. Andrews will retire from ministry in mid-December after 11 and a half years as DOM of the association and 37 years in ministry.

LIMESTONE

► The North Alabama Center of New Orleans Seminary is seeking to resume classes January 2013. The Center will offer certificate programs in Bible teaching

and pastoral ministries on Thursday evenings at **First Church, Athens**. An interest meeting for students will be Nov. 4, 3 p.m. at First, Athens. All interested students must either attend this meeting or communicate intentions to nac@fbcathens.org. For information call David Cofield, pastor of CrossRoads Church, Rogersville, at 256-247-6336.

PINE BARREN

► **W.C. Stabler** will celebrate 60 years of ministry Oct. 28, 10 a.m. at **Awin Church, Franklin**, where he has served as pastor for the past 18 years. The Southern Gospel Believers and other members of the Stabler family will sing. Lunch and an afternoon singing will follow.

SHELBY

► **Meadow Brook Church, Birmingham**, will host its annual fall festival Oct. 28, 4-7 p.m. The event includes indoor and outdoor activities for the whole family, games, face painting, a hay ride, popcorn, candy, prizes, inflatables, a photo booth, a hot dog supper, snow cones and more. For information call 205-991-8384.

► **Underwood Church, Montevallo**, will host Redeemed Oct. 28, 5 p.m. A fellowship meal will follow. Randy Hollingsworth is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **Central Church, Opelika**, GAs and RAs will hold the first annual holiday bazaar Nov. 3, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. with arts, crafts, baked goods and more for sale. For information call 334-745-2482. Ross Kilpatrick is pastor.

WEST CULLMAN

► **Fairview West Church, Hanceville**, will hold revival Oct. 28-31. Services will be held Sunday at 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. and Monday-Wednesday, 7 p.m. Wendell Wood will speak and Randy Quattlebaum will provide special music at each service. Trueman Davis is pastor.

WINSTON

► **First Church, Haleyville**, will host Evangelism Celebration Nov. 4, 5 p.m. Mike McLemore will speak and Three 4 One will sing. Jim Cooley is pastor of First, Haleyville, and Al Hood is director of missions for Winston Association.

OTHER

► **Union Hill Church, Bessemer**, will hold a community-wide prayer service Nov. 4 before Tuesday's elections, 6 p.m. Judge Roy Moore will speak. For information call 205-491-1103 or visit www.unionhillbc.com. Mickey Bell is pastor.



Empire's Temple Hill celebrates centennial

Temple Hill Baptist Church, Empire, celebrated its centennial with an anniversary service Sept. 9 at 10 a.m.

After a time of fellowship among the approximately 65 attendees, Linda Rodgers, representative from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented the church with a commemorative plaque.

Tim Shaner, former minister of music for Temple Hill and current minister of music for Spring Hill Avenue Baptist Church, Mobile, served as the guest minister of music.

According to church clerk Phyllis Green, Shaner also presented a "photo story" on a large screen — both prior to the service and again afterward — that featured photos from years past and special music. Green noted the presentation evoked good memories.

Patricia Martin and Monica Shaner provided additional special music during the service.

O.E. Langner Jr., interim pastor of Temple Hill, delivered the day's message titled "Then-Now-Until," which was based on Ephesians 2.

Lunch was served after the service in the fellowship hall and "was enjoyed by all," Green said.

Green compiled a condensed history of the Sulphur Springs Baptist Association church into a several-page program and listed Temple Hill's pastors. One portion of the program included two copied pages from a preserved church record book kept when the church was first established.

Church secretary and treasurer Sharon Burton and her daughter, Ashley, created an announcement about the anniversary service that was mailed out to church members before the event.

According to Langner, the anniversary was a joyous occasion and the participation of Shaner was a special element of the day. (Julie Payne)

North Oak Grove gives God glory for 100 years

"To God be the glory, great things He has done; so loved He the world that He gave us His Son," could be heard throughout the sanctuary at North Oak Grove Baptist Church, Millry, on Sept. 23 as the congregation celebrated its 100th anniversary and opened the day with the old hymn.

The 10:30 a.m. service was filled with worship and celebration according to Leora Gray, a former member who grew up in the church and who served on the four-membered anniversary committee that also included Pearl Grant, Doris Lee and Faye Hester.

A history of the Washington Baptist Association church was presented and descendants of founding members were recognized, as well as former pastors. Lee and Hester were recognized for the longest memberships of the church, 60 and 59 years respectively. John Reid, a representative from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented the church with a plaque.

Former pastor Jerry Estes presented the sermon, and a catered lunch was served in the fellowship hall and an outside tent to hold the more than 150 people in attendance. A slideshow of family and event pictures was also shown.

Lee said the day was an "awesome, celebrating, reminiscing, appreciative" kind of day. People came from all over the state to celebrate, she said. "I'm still basking in the glow [of the day]."

Pastor Frank Gibson said in the *Washington County News*, "I'm so thankful for being the pastor for the past three years. ... In the [past several] years He's blessed this church and this community." (Neisha Fuson)

Andalusia's Liberty Home marks 75 years

Liberty Home Baptist Church, Andalusia, celebrated its 75th anniversary Sept. 16.

Many former members returned for the anniversary service, said Elizabeth Barnes, who served on the anniversary planning committee. During the service, Margaret Maddox Edwards, the first person baptized at Liberty Home Baptist, spoke about the church's history. The Southland Vocal Band provided special music for the service, and Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative Don Donald presented a plaque to the church.

After the service, in which interim pastor Hank Roberts gave the message, the church held a covered-dish luncheon.

"We had a really great day," Barnes said. (Joseph Rhea)

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— Cary McDaniel
Prattmont Church of Christ

'A template for future ministry'

Alabama Baptists' FutureFocus Task Force to present proposal at upcoming annual meeting

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

With the upcoming annual meeting of Alabama Baptists in November will come a report and recommendations "that will affect the future of Alabama Baptists for a time yet to come," Jim Cooley, chairman of the State Board of Missions (SBOM), said during a special-called meeting of the SBOM in Montgomery on Oct. 12.

The report and recommendations are from the state convention's Great Commission Ministries FutureFocus Task Force, which was originally called the Great Commission Study Committee.

Cooley described the proposal as "a template for future ministry, for [the] vitality of Alabama Baptists and for continued ministry partnership."

The recommendations will not

affect the 2013 budget, SBOM officials noted. They deal with 2014 and beyond.

The Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC) has been studying ministry funding for two years — similar to what many state conventions did and have done following the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) adoption of the Great Commission Resurgence (GCR) plan in 2010.

Self-evaluation

GCR challenged individuals, churches, associations, state conventions and national entities to evaluate themselves, their focus and their funding priorities to ensure a Great Commission-centered existence. Funding related to state conventions meant a push toward a 50-50 split between state conventions and the national body in Cooperative Program (CP) dollars.

In November of that year, then-ABSC President Jimmy Jackson appointed the FutureFocus Task Force, which was the already-existing SBOM executive committee, to study the issue for at least two years.

"As we begin a new decade — The Decade to Make a Difference (as Alabama Baptists are calling 2011-2020) — we want to have thoughtful and deliberate planning, to help Alabama Baptists focus our resources and conduct Great Commission ministries through the coming decade," Jackson said while announcing the new task force to the convention in November 2010.

Noting the economic pressure a new committee would put on the budget, Jackson said he decided to appoint the executive committee as the committee to save time and CP dollars.

Plus "[i]t is made up of ministers and laymen from every district of Alabama who have a close proximity to grass-roots Alabama Baptists."

During the 2011 annual meeting Jackson reported that the group continued to evaluate the question: "Is there a way we can do better in carrying out Great Commission Ministries?" He also noted the task force had heard from four SBC leaders during its 2011 meetings.

On Jan. 20, 2011, the group met with Bob White, executive director

of the Georgia Baptist Convention and a member of the SBC GCR Task Force (GCRTF) in 2009-10. "We talked about the history of the SBC and its relationship to the CP and how we minister," Jackson said.

On March 17, 2011, Frank Page, CEO of the SBC Executive Committee and a member of the GCRTF, discussed the historic working relationship of the SBC and state conventions in relationship to the CP. "We looked at what we are doing and what is being done throughout the SBC," Jackson noted.

On May 12, 2011, Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB), shared "what is going to be taking place in the years to come."

On Aug. 11, 2011, Ronnie Floyd, pastor of Cross Church, Springdale, Ark., and chairman of the GCRTF, shared the reasons behind the GCRTF recommendations and "what we can do to better serve the Lord."

'A perennial leader'

"As we did our evaluations (in 2011) we found out that Alabama is No. 1 in CP giving across the entire SBC and has been for quite some time," Jackson said. Also "Alabama is a perennial leader in SBC missions giving through Lottie Moon, Annie

Armstrong and World Hunger."

The GCRTF's main concerns were baptism numbers and missions money, Jackson said. "What we are trying to do is evaluate where we fit into that as Alabama Baptists raise our level and reach more people with the gospel."

Also factoring into Alabama's FutureFocus Task Force studies was the elimination of a large percentage, if not all, of NAMB's funding for associational missions and other work in the state.

Bobby DuBois, associate executive director of the SBOM, announced May 24 a commitment by the SBOM to assume responsibility for the funding being eliminated by NAMB over the next five years. This funding currently impacts 45 missions positions across the state.

"Those 45 missions positions will continue regardless of what NAMB does," he explained. "We are working to not allow any of the positions to go unfunded. Bottom line: We are going to do missions in Alabama."

The FutureFocus Task Force made a similar conclusion. The members, working in four subgroups this past year to develop the individual elements of the proposal, believe they have found a way to continue doing ministry in Alabama while also fostering a positive partnership with the SBC.

The proposal outlines a roadmap — through church planting, church revitalization, global missions, disaster relief and CP and stewardship development — to make this happen.

"We believe this is a win-win between Alabama and the SBC," said Tim Cox, chairman of the CP and stewardship development subgroup of the task force. "It is a fair and balanced approach today and for the days ahead."

"We are deeply committed to be SBC partners and equally committed to Alabama Baptists," he said. "Only one state convention carries the assignment for reaching the state (of Alabama) for Christ and that is the Alabama Baptist State Convention."

After hearing from the task force, the SBOM voted to affirm the report and recommendations. The presentation will formally be made to state convention messengers during the Tuesday afternoon session of the annual meeting Nov. 13 at Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery, but Alabama Baptists will have a chance to study the proposal ahead of time. A detailed description of the three-part template will be in the next issue (Nov. 1) of *The Alabama Baptist*.

To read more on the history of the task force, go to www.thealabamabaptist.org and type in "Great Commission Task Force" in the search field with quotation marks around the phrase.

COMING NEXT WEEK ...

A full report from the Great Commission Ministries FutureFocus Task Force will be in the Nov. 1 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*.

*Our God Is... Practical,
Personal, Powerful*

2012 ALABAMA BAPTIST PASTORS CONFERENCE

Monday, Nov. 12, 2012 • 8:30 a.m.-9 p.m.
Vaughn Forest Church, Montgomery

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Phil Waldrep
pastor, Phil Waldrep Ministries



Teman Knight
pastor, Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery



Jay Wolf
pastor, First Baptist Church, Montgomery



Sammy Gilbreath
director, office of evangelism, ALSBOM



Dusty McLemore
pastor, Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Athens



James Merritt
pastor, Cross Pointe Church, Duluth, Ga.



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LifeWay's 2013 January Bible Study to focus on days before Jesus' crucifixion

The focus of the 2013 January Bible Study (JBS) from LifeWay Christian Resources centers on the gripping events during what is known as Passion Week — the days leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. *The Alabama Baptist* also will print an article related to Passion Week each week in January.

"Every year more and more churches discover January Bible Study as a great way to start the year, bringing the entire church together around one biblical topic," said Dwayne McCrary, JBS team leader at LifeWay.

McCrary pointed out that in spite of the name, churches use JBS throughout the year in a variety of Bible study contexts. The 2013 study is titled, "Greatest Week in History: Luke's Account of the Passion Week."

While JBS has featured several studies from the Gospels through the years, this study will be the first in the 66-year history of JBS it has focused on the week before Jesus' death, McCrary said.

"There have been many significant events that marked time in our collective history," McCrary said.

"But, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, and the preceding week mark all of history for eternity. Those seven days serve as the foundation for both the character and substance of Christianity.

"The purpose of this study is to call people back to the cross and the events leading up to His resurrection," he said.

The seven-session adult Bible study provides commentary and interactive activities designed for an adult to gain insight into the passages being examined.

With the study material Life-

Way offers free online administrative help to give leaders assistance in planning and promotion, a sermon guide and promotional posters.

Additionally, a new feature for the 2013 JBS is an eLeader option.

"This is a PDF portfolio that offers everything in one download," McCrary said. "Everything that is on the leader's CD is available as a PDF package along with an ePub version of the leader guide."

The learner guide material for the 2013 JBS was written by Rob Futral, pastor of Broadmoor Bap-

tist Church, Madison, Miss. Timothy Paul Jones, associate professor of leadership and church ministry at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., wrote the expositor's notes and John McClendon, founder of the 4:12 Network, wrote the teaching plans.

"When a whole church can have a shared experience such as January Bible Study, it's a great thing," McCrary said. "Hearing the same story and learning the same lesson from Scripture can bring a congregation to share the same heart."

The Alabama Baptist's series will be written by longtime seminary professor Fisher Humphreys. Humphreys was professor of theology at New Orleans Seminary prior to joining the Beeson Divinity School staff at Samford University in Birmingham as professor of divinity in 1990. He remained at Beeson until he retired in 2008.

Humphreys is the author of more than 10 books and numerous journal articles, is a frequent guest lecturer at colleges and seminaries and has served as pastor of churches in Alabama, Mississippi and Illinois.

For more information, visit LifeWay.com/JBS. To find out more about *The Alabama Baptist's* series on Passion Week, email news@thealabamabaptist.org or call 1-800-803-5201. To find out more about print and/or online subscriptions to *The Alabama Baptist*, visit www.thealabamabaptist.info. (LifeWay, TAB)

COMING in January ...

The Alabama Baptist will feature a five-week series on Passion Week that can be used as a supplement resource to the January Bible Study.

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

Virginia church under fire for gay ordination

RICHMOND, Va. — A leadership committee has asked a Richmond congregation to withdraw its Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) membership in the wake of the church's Sept. 16 ordination of an openly gay man to the ministry.

If Ginter Park Baptist Church declines to withdraw by Dec. 31, the BGAV will no longer accept its financial contributions, the Virginia Baptist Mission Board's executive committee said in a letter to the church. Since contributions to BGAV ministries are necessary for membership, that action would essentially end the church's 96-year affiliation with the state association.

The executive committee reported its request Oct. 10 at the end of the Mission Board's fall meeting at Eagle Eyrie Baptist Conference Center near Lynchburg, Va.

Mission Board Executive Director John Upton said "four or five" conversations had been held both before and after the ordination between BGAV and Ginter Park Baptist leaders.

This would be the first time the 1,300-church association founded in 1823 has dismissed a church over homosexuality.

Ginter Park was organized in 1916 on Richmond's Northside and also is affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Alliance of Baptists. Another affiliation — the Richmond Baptist Association (RBA) — may be challenged at the RBA's fall meeting Oct. 21.

Other Baptist state conventions, including North Carolina and Texas, have withdrawn fellowship from congregations welcoming and affirming of gays.

The Southern Baptist Convention bans membership by churches that "act to affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior" in its constitution.

Professor describes 'dad moms' as 'man fails'

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A Southern Baptist college professor says those families in which the dad stays at home and the wife is the family's primary breadwinner do not comport with God's plan for the family revealed in the Bible.

Owen Strachan, assistant professor of Christian theology and church history at Boyce College, the undergraduate arm of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., described "dad moms" as "man fails" in an article in the Spring 2012 issue of the "Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood."

He defended that thesis Sept. 25 in a Moody Radio program debate over the question, "Are Stay-at-Home Dads Violating God's Design for Men and Women?"

"I would say both men and women bear the image of God and so are fully invested for a life of meaningful service for God," Strachan said.

"That's my starting point, but I would say then from a broad biblical theology that men are called to be leaders, providers [and] protectors and women are nurturers."

"Women follow men in the home and the church," he said. "Women are called to the high calling of raising families, given that God blesses them with children and making homes — being homemakers. These are roles that I think Scripture hands down for us pretty clearly in texts like Genesis 3."

NAMB to help engage unreached people groups

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — The North American Mission Board (NAMB) wants more Southern Baptist Convention church plants to engage unreached people groups around the globe. To do that, the entity has set aside \$1 million to help church planters.

"We want every Southern Baptist church plant to have a heartbeat for penetrating lostness here in North America and all over the world," NAMB President Kevin Ezell said. "Not only will this build a vision for global missions involvement; our hope is that it will increase the offering base for the International Mission Board (IMB) and international missions."

The new initiative will provide up to \$1,500 per church plant to purchase plane tickets for a planter and a spouse, or another team member, to take a vision trip to minister to an unreached people group.

Church planters taking part in this effort will need to complete the appropriate training with the IMB.

NAMB trustees approved funding for the initiative at their Oct. 10 meeting in Chicago. Underspendings from NAMB's budget that closed out September 30, 2012, are being used to cover the cost.



By Christine Kapurch
Correspondent, TAB

Someone You Should Know

JUDY WALLS

Ebenezer Baptist Church, Stanton
Chilton Baptist Association

FAVORITE VERSES: Philippians 4:6-7
FAVORITE HYMN: "Sheltered in the Arms of God"
HOBBIES: Reading, cooking and spending time with the

grandchildren
FAMILY STATUS: Married for 41 years to Mike; two children, Amy and Greg; four grandchildren



WALLS

Judy has been a member of Ebenezer Baptist Church since she was 9 years old. She served the role of a pastor's daughter and taught preschool for 25 years. She also was the Sunday School director for two years and has been the Bible School director nine consecutive years.

Q: What influences in your life pointed you to Christ at the beginning of your faith journey?

A: At the age of nine I joined the church that I am a member of now. My father was a preacher there for 50 years.

Q: When and how were you led into the ministry?

A: Growing up in a Christian home and being a pastor's child I was taught [that] you obey the Lord and follow His will.

Q: Why have you continued serving through the years?

A: Well I've just always found peace, joy and contentment in doing what the Lord wanted me to do.

Q: What does the ministry demand?

A: A lot of time, a faithful prayer life and the study of the Bible.

Q: What do you get from the ministry?

A: The blessings of seeing people and youth become closer to the

Lord through the ministry. I enjoy seeing the church and the people grow in their walk with the Lord. It brings joy and peace to my life. ... The Lord has done so much for me that I could never repay Him.

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

A: Well I just kind of leave that up to the Lord. Wherever He leads, that's where I hope to be.

Q: What difference will this ministry make for you in the future?

A: I feel like my ministry will make my life fulfilling.

Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions

ONE MISSION:
The Great Commission

ONE PROGRAM:
The Cooperative Program

MANY MINISTRIES:
Great Commission Ministries

FOCUS on ONE Mission

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

Invitation to a Family Gathering

As October draws to a close and a season of holidays approaches, let me invite you to and remind you about the upcoming meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

This year's meeting is at the Vaughn Forest Baptist Church in Montgomery, November 13-14. I commend to you the page on our website at www.alsbom.org/convention.

Every year's annual convention is a family reunion of sorts for leaders from our 3,200+ churches and an opportunity to hear strong inspirational speakers and ministry testimonies.

This webpage includes information about how to obtain messenger cards, the proposed order of business, a map of hotels and motels, and also information about the Monday meeting of the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference.

During the convention, messengers will elect a new president and hear the report of the

FutureFocus Task Force, which has been working diligently to bring Alabama Baptists a recommendation



designed to strengthen our ongoing missional effectiveness in our state, across the nation and around the world.

Every year's annual convention is a family reunion of sorts for leaders from our 3,200+ churches and an opportunity to hear

By Rick Lance
State Missionary
Executive Director

strong inspirational speakers and ministry testimonies. I am looking forward to messages from our Tuesday evening preacher, Phil Waldrep; the president's address by Mike

Shaw; and the convention sermon by Lawrence Phipps.

Please keep your State Board of Missions staff in prayer along with convention-elected leaders and committee members who together will seek to help Alabama Baptists have a Christ-honoring annual Convention next month.



Numbers 14:24

www.alsbom.org/convention **190th** ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE
CONVENTION ANNUAL MEETING TUESDAY
AND WEDNESDAY **NOVEMBER 13-14** VAUGHN
FOREST BAPTIST CHURCH, MONTGOMERY

2012

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NOTE NEW
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Thursday, November 1, 2012, Heritage Baptist Church, 1849 Perry Hill Rd., (I 85, exit 4) Montgomery, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. (check-in at 8:30)

"...preaching this wonderful good news of God.

It's news I'm most proud to proclaim, this extraordinary Message of God's powerful plan to rescue everyone who trusts him..." Romans 1:15-16 (THE MESSAGE)

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

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



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



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

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

ROYAL AMBASSADOR WEEK 2012

SUGGESTIONS:

- Involve the Royal Ambassadors in worship (One or both Sundays):
 - bulletin distribution
 - offering collection
 - scripture reading
- Special Wednesday night events:
 - pastor's table (like a captain's table on a ship) where church staff host all RAs for Wednesday night supper
 - "Membership Welcome Ceremony" for all RAs, especially the new boys, as they begin work in the Alabama Advancement Workbook for All Ages. Advancement involves



**SUNDAY,
NOVEMBER 4
THROUGH SUNDAY,
NOVEMBER 11**

mission projects and Bible verse memorization. The advancement workbook is available for download or for purchase at

www.alsbom.org/ra.

• Mission Projects:

- Plan one to three mission projects that week. See the Alabama Advancement Workbook for All Ages for ideas. Examples: deliver fruit baskets, Game Day at a nursing home, build bird houses for the elderly, Food Drive.

Why I Believe in the Cooperative Program



BY BILL WILKS

More than 5,600 international missionaries, more than 5,300 North American missionaries and six quality theological seminaries training more than 16,000 pastors, missionaries and future church leaders are why I believe in the Cooperative Program.

How many churches can honestly say they are a part of this kind of world evangelism effort? How many

congregations can say they support missionaries who are engaging 655 different people groups around the world? Northpark Baptist Church can say this with conviction, and so can every church participating in the Cooperative Program.

We are part of a TEAM of like-minded churches who passionately believe in the Great Commission. TEAM means Together Everyone Accomplishes More. This principle is clearly seen through the work of the Cooperative Program.

According to Acts 1:8, the last six words of Christ before ascending back into heaven were these: "To the end of the earth." Every church must strive to carry the Gospel to its own mission field — its Jerusalem. However, Jesus' words indicate that every church must also have a vision to carry the Gospel to the end of the earth. Actively supporting the Cooperative Program physically, financially and prayerfully is an incredibly

effective strategy for carrying the Gospel to the end of the earth.

Years ago, I was called to pastor a church in northeast Alabama that was carrying a load of debt. The church struggled just to pay its bills and staff salaries. There was



no money left over for the church's ministries. The church had intentions of giving 10 percent of its offerings through the Cooperative Program.

However, at the end of each month there was no money left to give.

God began to convict me and other leadership in the church about this. In a prayerful church leadership meeting, we made a faith decision to practice first fruits giving through the Cooperative Program. After each Sunday offering, the church secretary was instructed that the very first check she was to write each week was the church's 10 percent gift through the Cooperative Program.

Everyone in that church witnessed an amazing work of God. The moment we began giving off the top, weekly, in faith through the Cooperative Program, the church's finances made a miraculous turnaround. I witnessed this firsthand. God blesses first fruits giving, and He blesses churches that support the Cooperative Program.

Bill Wilks is pastor, Northpark Baptist Church, Trussville.

CHILDREN'S & HONOR & CHOIR & AUDITIONS



Deadline:

NOVEMBER 1, 2012

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

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



Tour dates:

MARCH 8-10, 2013



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



2012 ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION ANNUAL MEETING

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

FEATURING PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS,
TUESDAY MORNING

Mike Shaw

Pastor, First Baptist Church, Pelham



GUEST SPEAKER,
TUESDAY EVENING

Phil Waldrep

President, Phil Waldrep Ministries,
Decatur



CONVENTION SERMON,
WEDNESDAY MORNING

Lawrence Phipps

Pastor, Vaughn Forest Baptist
Church, Montgomery



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

*Future
Focus*

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

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

EXIT 11 (OFF I-85)

Comfort Inn & Suites

10015 Chantilly Parkway
(334) 532-4444

Rate: \$79 - \$109

Amenities: Complimentary hot breakfast, free WIFI, in-room microwave and refrigerator
Distance from Vaughn Forest Church: 3.1 mi.

Country Inn & Suites

10095 Chantilly Parkway
(334) 277-4142

Rate: Single \$69.99

Rate: Double \$79.99

Amenities: Free deluxe continental breakfast, free internet, indoor pool
Distance from Vaughn Forest Church: 3.3 mi.

Springhill Suites

1201 Townplace Drive
(334) 409-9999

Rate: \$94 (regular rate; no special rate offered)

Amenities: Free breakfast, parking and internet
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 6.5 mi.

Sleep Inn & Suites

10150 Chantilly Parkway
(334) 356-5400

Rate: \$62

Amenities: Free breakfast, free WIFI
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 2.9 mi.

Fairfield Inn & Suites

8970 Eastchase Parkway
(334) 260-8650

Rate: \$99 (king or 2 queens)

Amenities: Free breakfast, free WIFI, fitness center
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 2.9 mi.

Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites

9250 Boyd Cooper Parkway
(334) 271-5516

Rate: \$75

Amenities: Free breakfast, business center, fitness center
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 3.2 mi.

Candlewood Suites

9151 Boyd Cooper Parkway
(334) 277-0677

Rate: \$69 for suite

Amenities: Free breakfast, free WIFI
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 3.2 mi.

Microtel Inn & Suites

100 Gibbons Drive
(334) 649-4465

Rate: \$49 (single)

Rate: \$59 (double)

Amenities: Free continental breakfast, business center
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 3.5 mi.

EXIT 9 (OFF I-85)

Hampton Inn and Suites

Convention Hotel
7651 Eastchase Parkway
(334) 277-1818

Rate: \$117 Standard, King or Double

Amenities: Free hot breakfast, free internet,
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 4.2 mi.

Staybridge Suites

7800 Eastchase Parkway
(334) 277-9383

Rate: \$119 Studio Suite

Rate: \$129 One Bedroom Suite

Amenities: Complimentary breakfast buffet, free WIFI
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 3.4 mi.

EXIT 6 (OFF I-85)

Comfort Inn

5035 Carmichael Road
(334) 396-6300

Rate: \$69.99

Amenities: Free full hot breakfast, free WIFI
Distance from Vaughn Forest: 6.4mi.

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

Embassy Suites

300 Tallapoosa Street (Downtown Montgomery)
(334) 269-5055

Rate: \$119

Amenities: Free hot and cold breakfast bar, indoor heated pool and whirlpool, spacious suites.
Distance from Vaughn Forest Church: 12.9 mi.

Hampton Inn & Suites

100 Commerce Street (Downtown Montgomery)
(334) 265-1010

Rate: \$99

Amenities: complimentary full hot breakfast, free WIFI and valet parking fee is only \$5.
Distance from Vaughn Forest Church: 13 mi.

DoubleTree

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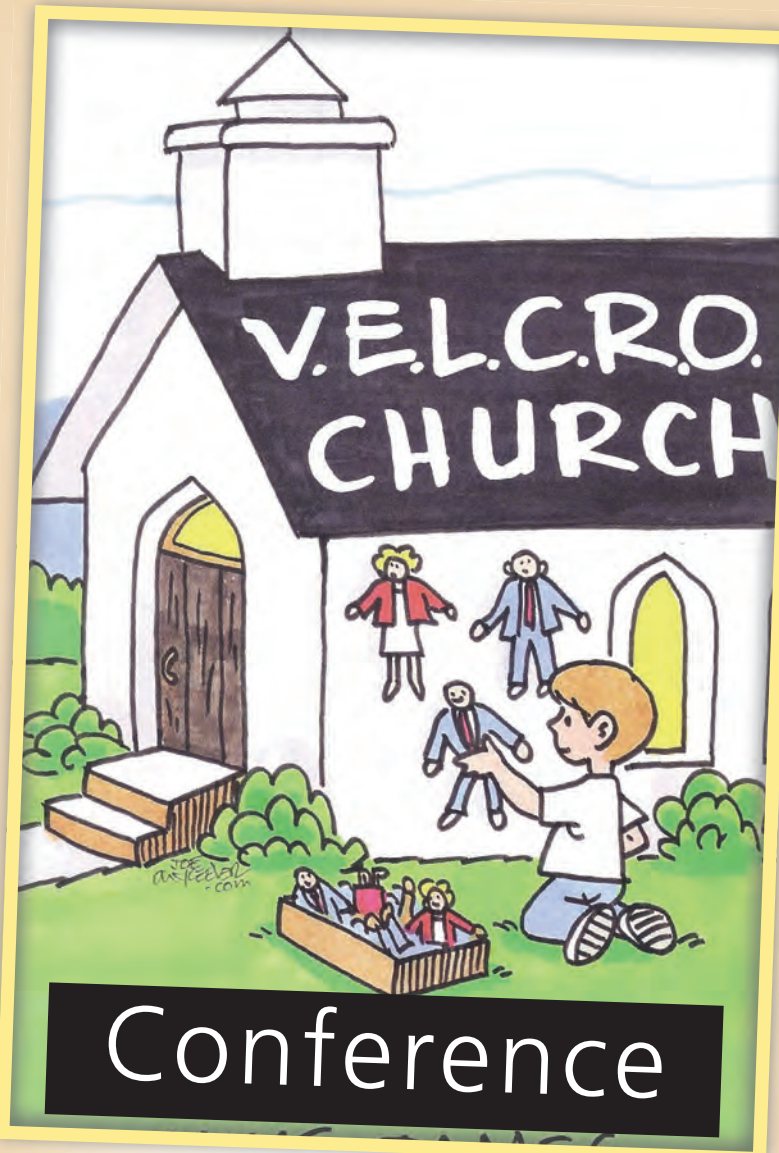


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This event is sponsored by the Offices of Sunday School & Discipleship and Evangelism and is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders

Richard Coburn

Bivocational pastor Coburn dies at 53

Richard Alan "Ricky" Coburn, pastor of Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, Plantersville, was killed early Oct. 19 in a motorcycle crash. He was 53.

Coburn grew up in the Billingsley area, graduating from Billingsley High School in 1977. He served several Alabama Baptist churches as a bivocational pastor, including Providence Baptist Church, Rockford; Mount Bethel Baptist Church, Clanton; Alpine Baptist Church, Plantersville; Poplar Springs Baptist Church, Clanton; and Mount Carmel Baptist Church No. 1, Thorsby. While serving in pastoral roles he took classes toward a certificate in Christian training through Beeson Divinity School's extension division.

He also worked as a logistics supervisor at CRH North America Inc., a manufacturing plant in Clanton.

Coburn collided with a deer that was crossing the highway while he was riding to work, Alabama state troopers said.

Coburn is survived by his wife of 32 years, Belda; two children; and one grandchild. (Joseph Rhea)

Aubret H. White

Retired Autauga DOM White dies at 89

Retired Autauga Baptist Association Director of Missions Aubret H. White passed away Oct. 9. He was 89.

White served in ministry for 69 years, leading several churches in Alabama including White Springs Baptist Church, Rainbow City; Huxford Baptist Church and Mexia Baptist Church. He also served Good Year Baptist Church, Picayune, Miss. He was the director of missions for Autauga Association from 1978 to 1986.

He earned a bachelor's degree in education from Livingston University (now University of West Alabama) and a master's degree in theology from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

White served in the Army during World War II from 1942 to 1946. He was a Navy Reserve chaplain on USS Noa (DD-841) in 1958 and began active duty with the Marines in 1962, serving in the Vietnam War. He retired from the reserves as a Navy chaplain in 1970.

White and his wife of 66 years, Florence, were members of East Memorial Baptist Church, Prattville, at the time of his death.

He is survived by his wife; three children; seven grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. (Neisha Fuson)



WHITE

Sammy Brister

Former Alabama pastor Brister dies at 66

Sammy Brister, former Alabama Baptist pastor, died Sept. 10. He was 66.

Brister, a native of Brookhaven, Miss., attended Clarke Memorial College in Newton, Miss., Whitworth College in Brookhaven, Miss., and Luther Rice Seminary in Jacksonville, Fla.

He served as pastor of Elkton Baptist Church, Elkton, Tenn., and also served as pastor of Alabama churches including Harvest Baptist Church from October 1985 to 1992 and First Baptist Church, Ardmore, from November 1992 to November 2007.

During his time at Harvest Baptist, Brister worked closely with the kindergarten committee to begin the church's Child Development Center, which opened in 1986 with nine children and increased to about 75 in 2012.

Several new programs and ministries were started under Brister's leadership at Elkton Baptist. In addition church membership grew and a new sanctuary and education building were opened December 2011.

Brister is survived by his wife, Shortie; three children; and three grandchildren. (TAB)



BRISTER

UNDER ATTACK

Nigerian massacre targets Christian students

New details from Open Doors News reconfirmed earlier reports that Christians were the focus of an Oct. 1 massacre of 29 students in Mubi, Nigeria.

Jerry Dykstra, media relations director for Open Doors, said follow-up by Open Doors workers at the site reconfirmed an Oct. 3 report that Christians were the focus of the attack.

"Many mainstream media have reported the massacre was likely the result of a political/election issue among students at Federal Polytechnic State University," Dykstra said. "But Open Doors co-workers have reconfirmed that those targeted were mostly Christians. The co-workers have talked directly to Christian leaders in Mubi and to several survivors. Christians around the area of Mubi have been targeted by the Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram for a long time."

Open Doors reported that just before midnight, the attackers called students out of their rooms and asked them for their names. Those with Christian names were shot dead or killed with knives. The bodies were left in lines outside the buildings. Students with traditionally Muslim names were told to quote Islamic scripture.

"If you succeeded, you were let go," a survivor told an Open Doors worker who traveled to Mubi, located in northern Nigeria, after the attack.

"I was asked to say my name, to which I replied that I am a Christian and that my name is Elkanah," student Elkanah Sardauna said. "They threw me to the ground and shouted 'Allahu Akbar' [Allah is greater]. I cried out to Jesus, face to the ground. They demanded that I stop calling on Jesus but I persisted. The next moment I was shot in the hand and then slashed with a knife at the back of my neck. They must have thought I was dead because they left."

Manasseh, a student who survived a gunshot and severe knife injuries, shared his ordeal.

"They asked me to recant my Christian faith to spare my life. I refused. After my Muslim roommate quoted some Islamic scripture, he was told to leave the room. They said they were only after these 'infidels' who would all die that day. Then they shot me and slashed my back. This is really a picture of the great hatred for us Christians in the region."

According to Mubi church leaders a total of 29 people, mostly students, were killed and at least five injured in the attack. Fully armed attackers suspected to be members of Boko Haram invaded the area, firing several shots into the air. They made their way to the off-campus hostels of the Federal Polytechnic State University, College of Health Technology and several private residences of Christians.

The Associated Press has reported that approximately 800 Nigerians have died from Boko Haram violence this year. Many on that list are Christians, but it also includes moderate Muslims, government military troops and police. Nigeria is ranked No. 13 on the Open Doors 2012 World Watch List of the worst persecutors of Christians.

Prior to the Oct. 1 attack Muslim extremists circulated letters to some

Christians in the area, giving believers an ultimatum to either recant their faith within two weeks or suffer fatal consequences. According to one believer, who showed Open Doors workers a letter, they were warned not to disclose the threat to anyone as any leakage of the information would result in death.

The Christian Association of Nigeria in Mubi gave the letters to security operatives in Yola. A search team was deployed to conduct house-to-house searches in Mubi. Many sophisticated weapons were seized from Muslim extremists, Open Doors reported. Police also discovered water tanks stacked with ammunition and several dry wells that were turned into storerooms for weapons.

However, these actions did not prevent the attack on the Christians in Mubi. (BP)

**"I cried out to Jesus,
face to the ground.
They demanded that
I stop calling on Jesus
but I persisted."**

**Elkanah Sardauna
student**

NYC's ban on churches meeting in schools challenged

A federal appeals court should endorse a permanent block on New York City's prohibition of religious worship in public schools because the policy violates the First Amendment, the Southern Baptist Convention's religious liberty entity and others have said in a legal brief.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) joined local and national religious organizations in an Oct. 10 friend-of-the-court brief calling for the Second Circuit Court of Appeals to embrace

a federal judge's injunction. The brief, organized by the Christian Legal Society (CLS), says the NYC Board of Education policy barring churches and other faith groups from meeting in schools transgresses First Amendment clauses protecting the free exercise of religion.

The policy not only bars religious free exercise, but it "requires the government to discriminate against a religious practice as if it were disfavored, rather than expressly protected, under our Constitution," according to the brief. "It requires

public officials and courts to entangle themselves in distinguishing between 'religious worship services' and other 'religious speech and conduct' and to discriminate among various sects in doing so."

The Second Circuit ruled in 2011 that the city's ban was constitutional, prompting a crisis for dozens of churches that used public schools for their worship services. Some moved their meetings to other facilities, but a federal judge's February ruling enabled others to continue using school buildings. (BP)

New Orleans Seminary to begin 3 online degrees

In an effort to make theological education more accessible, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) trustees approved three fully online graduate degrees during a meeting Oct. 9.

The board also voted to launch a new master's degree extension center, a doctoral teaching site and four certificate training sites.

Until recently the main accrediting agency for seminaries and divinity schools, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the United States and Canada, had not accredited fully online degrees. In a historic move this summer ATS voted to approve online delivery for a small variety of graduate degrees. The three degrees approved by the NOBTS trustees — the master of arts in biblical studies, the master of arts in theology and the master of theological studies — fit the ATS requirements for online degrees.

"We have a passion to make theological education both useful and accessible," NOBTS President Chuck Kelley said after the meeting. "With the decision of our accrediting agency to allow entirely online degrees, we are now able to add these options to our ministry training cafeteria."

Two of the degrees, the master of arts in biblical studies and the master of arts in theology, already are offered at NOBTS in a traditional classroom format. Many of the courses currently are available online, and since ATS has already approved NOBTS to offer these degrees the seminary can begin offering an online-only version immediately.

The master's degrees in biblical studies and theology are not for everyone. They require significant prerequisites to qualify, including an earned undergraduate religion degree. Because of its rigorous academic quality, it is designed to prepare students for doctor of philosophy studies.

The third online degree option, the master of theological studies (MTS), is a different type of degree. It focuses on general biblical, theological and historical knowledge and is designed to offer a basic level of training where no other option exists. NOBTS Provost Steve Lemke said the degree was developed for missionaries, pastors in pioneer areas and church planters who are far from a seminary or a seminary extension center. Lemke emphasized that the degree is not a replacement for more comprehensive ministry training degrees like the master of divinity. The MTS does not qualify students for doctor of ministry or doctor of philosophy studies without significant academic leveling work, Lemke said. The MTS degree is new at NOBTS and will require ATS approval before it can be offered. Seminary officials hope to obtain approval in time for a fall 2013 launch.

Trustees also approved a revision

in the urban ministry specialization in the master of divinity program to provide more options for students to receive practical urban missions training through internships and mentoring.

In other curriculum actions, trustees approved a partnership with the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) in Hattiesburg, Miss., which will allow NOBTS students to be dually enrolled in a seminary degree and, through USM, a master of social work degree.

New partnership

A partnership with William Carey University (WCU), a Baptist college also in Hattiesburg, was approved to offer alternative teacher certification courses on the NOBTS campus. While the program will be conducted by WCU, NOBTS students or their spouses will now have the opportunity to obtain a teaching license during their time at seminary and will receive a significant discount in tuition from WCU. This will assist bivocational ministers and church planters by supplementing their income from small churches.

Trustees approved a new graduate extension center in Olive Branch, Miss., a doctor of ministry/doctor of educational ministry training site in Spartanburg, S.C., and four certificate training sites.

Longview Heights Baptist Church will host the graduate center in northwest Mississippi just south of the Memphis, Tenn., metro area. A group of pastors in that area requested NOBTS to provide training, offering both the standard master of divinity and the newly revised urban missions specialization.

First Baptist Church, Spartanburg, S.C., will host the new doctor of ministry and doctor of educational ministry training site. Classes will be delivered to the Spartanburg site through compressed interactive video. Kelley said these degree programs help pastors and church staffers hone their ministry skills and promote excellence in ministry.

"The professional doctoral program at our seminary is designed for pastors and church staff members who want to kick their ministry up a notch by strengthening and enhancing their ministry skills and knowledge," Kelley said. "We are grateful for a new partnership with Dr. Don Wilton and the people of First Baptist, Spartanburg. When the seminary and the local church work together, everyone wins."

Two new certificate sites in Florida will offer the church leadership certificate. The Pasco Baptist Association site will meet at two locations: the associational office in Lutz, and Lighthouse Baptist

Church, Holiday. The other Florida certificate training site is hosted by the Church by the Glades, Coral Springs.

Trustees also approved two Georgia certificate training sites — one at New Calvary Baptist Church, Atlanta, and another at Mount Zion Baptist Church, Jonesboro — to offer the church leadership certificate.

Trustees voted to approve the next step in the development of the seminary's archaeology program. Thus far NOBTS has excavated the Gezer Water System through partnerships with Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Israel Nature and Parks Authority. To obtain its own permit and to meet credentialing standards for the Israel Antiquities Authority, NOBTS must establish a partnership with an archaeology lab. To that end, NOBTS trustees approved a plan to seek a cooperative agreement with the Cobb Institute of Archaeology at Mississippi State University. The nonbinding agreement,

pending approval by Mississippi State, will include access to the lab at the Cobb Institute and opens the opportunity for future training and research collaborations between the two schools.

Appointments

Kelley also announced three appointments during the meeting. Jody Dean, instructor in Christian education, will serve on the faculty as a presidential appointment. Norris Grubbs was appointed to serve as associate provost for extension centers and enrollment management, and Ron Pate will serve as director of the seminary's Birmingham extension center.

Trustees also approved initial planning for construction of a 3,500-square-foot homeschool/community building. The administration may now commission an architect and begin feasibility studies for proposed locations. Trustees will give final approval on the design, location and the cost of the building at a later meeting. (BP)

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Past and present

Samford celebrates homecoming, recognizes 5 graduates for exceptional lives, careers

Samford University celebrated homecoming Oct. 12-13 with special events and recognitions for alumni and students.

Five graduates were recognized for their exceptional lives, outstanding careers and contributions of time and financial resources to their alma mater. Alumni of the Year awards were presented to Kerry Gossett, of Springville; James Huskey, of Washington; and MaryAnn Buffington Moon and Rickie D. Moon, both of Huntsville. Patrick Devereux, of Helena, was named Outstanding Young Alumnus.

Gossett is co-founder of Anesthesia Resources Management, Inc., in Birmingham and clinical director of anesthesia at St. Vincent's Hospital. He earned

bachelor's degrees in nursing and anesthesia from Samford's Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing in 1973 and 1982, respectively.

Huskey, a career diplomat with the U.S. State Department, is counselor in the Senior Foreign Service. The 1969 graduate has served in top posts in Kenya, India, Taiwan and China.

Honored couple

MaryAnn Moon, a 1976 graduate, teaches government and politics at Huntsville High School.

Rickie Moon is a senior systems engineer at Teledyne Solutions, Inc., in Huntsville. He earned a bachelor's degree at Samford in 1977 and a master's in environmental management in 1997.

The Moons, who met as Samford students, are the fifth couple to be honored as alumni of the year. They are active members of First Baptist Church, Huntsville.

Devereux is managing pharmacist and vice president of clinical operations for Family Medical Services Pharmacy in Bessemer. He earned a doctor of pharmacy degree from Samford's McWhorter School of Pharmacy in 2005.

The late Tim Robinson, who covered the Civil Rights Movement and Watergate scandal, and Wayne Atcheson, a communications specialist who became the first director of the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte, N.C., were named to the department of journalism and mass communication's Wall of Fame. Both graduated from Samford in 1964.

Robinson, a native of Walker



Photo courtesy of Samford University

KING AND QUEEN — Samford University honors homecoming queen Abby Sander, of Jacksonville, Fla., and homecoming king Tim Foote, of Gulf Shores.

County, covered Watergate as the U.S. District Court reporter for *The Washington Post*, which he joined as assistant city editor in 1969. He died in 2003.

Lifelong achievements

Atcheson, the son of a preacher from Clanton, was named to the Billy Graham post in 2006 after tenures of service with University of Alabama sports information and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Graduates of the Ida V. Mof-

fett School of Nursing and its precursor diploma program at Birmingham Baptist Hospital capped a yearlong celebration of the school's 90th anniversary. Fifty alumni were recognized as Living Legacy award recipients for their significant impact on humanity. The honorees were cited for their contributions to the mental, physical and spiritual well-being of others.

Abby Sander, of Jacksonville, Fla., was crowned homecoming queen during halftime of the Samford football game against Appalachian State University. The senior Spanish major is the daughter of Jane and Ricky Sander.

Tim Foote, a senior religion major from Gulf Shores, was named homecoming king. He is the son of Jane and Steve Foote.

They were chosen by vote of the student body.

The homecoming court also included freshmen Greta Mosteller, of Jacksonville, Fla., and Brooks Hanrahan, of Hoover; sophomores Rachel Stanback, of Columbus, Miss., and Trey Ingram, of Montgomery; juniors Mary Elizabeth Butts, of Tupelo, Miss., and Jeffrey Ferrell, of Jacksonville, Fla.; and seniors Leah Clements, of Huntsville; Cameron Collins, of Cornelius, N.C.; David Reece, of Clarksville, Tenn.; and Sarah Waller, of Gainesville, Ga. (SU)

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Historical Highlights

from previous issues of *The Alabama Baptist*

Compiled by Kathleen Prude

50 Years Ago October 1962

Devoted Service: When Memory Leake Robinson passed away recently, he left Howard College a legacy of a quarter century of devoted service. He was an alumnus, a trustee for 23 years, chairman of the Law School Advisory Board and attorney for the college. Howard College President Leslie Wright said of Robinson, "It is completely fitting and proper that the new law building on which construction has just begun will bear Robinson's name. Memory Leake Robinson Hall will perpetuate in brick and stone a life of selfless service."

40 Years Ago October 1972

Founder's Day Speaker: Dotson M. Nelson Jr., pastor of Mountain Brook Baptist Church, Birming-

ham, delivered the principal address at the annual Founder's Day Convocation at Southern Seminary. The special chapel service officially opened the 114th session of the convention's oldest seminary. Nelson delivered his address in memory of William Hersey Davis, a former professor at the seminary. Nelson, a 1938 graduate of Southern Seminary, was a student under Davis. His special day of remembrance, Founder's Day, was first observed in 1906 and has been held every year since.

30 Years Ago October 1982

A Dream Come True: Emeritus Southern Baptist missionary Clyde J. Dotson, a native of Tusculumbia, died at the age of 77 on Sept. 30 in Oxford, after living to see his dream of missions across Africa come true. He and his

wife were appointed as Southern Rhodesia's first Southern Baptist missionaries. Before he retired in 1972, Dotson saw a Baptist seminary and hospital established and Baptist work started in Rhodesia's cities and 15 other African nations. In 1973, a year after his retirement from 42 years of missionary service, Samford University — where he received his BA degree — honored Dotson as Alumnus of the Year. Dotson's oldest daughter, Lolete, is a Southern Baptist missionary nurse to Bophuthatswana.

20 Years Ago October 1992

New Brotherhood Associate: Steve Stephens has assumed responsibilities as an associate in the brotherhood department of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. He replaces Jimmy Huffman, who has accepted a sim-

ilar position with the North Carolina Baptist Convention. Stephens formerly served as an associate with the State Board's discipleship training department.

10 Years Ago October 2002

Park Elected President: David Park, pastor of First Korean Baptist Church, Enterprise, was elected president of the Council of Korean Southern Baptist Churches in North America. This group represents 700 Korean Baptist churches in America, many of which balance Korean and English services. According to Richard Alford, language missions director in the associational and cooperative missions office of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, Park is doing an outstanding job addressing the multicultural climate of his congregation.

LifeWay decides against Glorieta sale to Olivet

LifeWay Christian Resources has "decided not to go forward" with the sale of its Glorieta Conference Center to Olivet University, a San Francisco-based school.

LifeWay, in announcing its decision Oct. 17, cited a study by National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) representatives. Olivet had agreed to the inquiry, which focused on the theological compatibility between LifeWay, a Southern Baptist entity, and Olivet, a school with ties to Korean Christian leader David Jang.

"LifeWay Christian Resources has reviewed the report from the National Association of Evangelicals, and decided not to go forward with the sale of Glorieta Conference

Center to Olivet University," LifeWay said in a statement. "We are appreciative of our relationship with Olivet's leadership and indebted to NAE for their thorough work. We will now renew our pursuit of viable options for the sale of the property."

Olivet's current president, former Southern Baptist missionary and seminary professor Bill Wagner, released a statement saying Olivet intends to discuss the report with LifeWay leaders in hopes of reviving the deal.

Olivet has already failed in bids to purchase Bethany University in Scotts Valley, Calif., and a 217-acre campus in Northfield, Mass.

LifeWay also has had problems selling its 2,100-acre encampment near Santa Fe, N.M.,

that has lost money 24 of the last 25 years. In July, the Baptist Convention of New Mexico turned down an offer to purchase Glorieta for \$1, after a study committee failed to come up with a viable business plan to operate the conference center as a ministry.

The New Mexico task force estimated deferred maintenance of the conference center opened in 1952 would cost \$10 million to \$20 million and that any prudent business plan would include an environmental study. New Mexico Baptists asked LifeWay to indemnify the Baptist Convention of New Mexico for any environmental liability and litigation liability. LifeWay declined and the deal was off. (BP)

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CHURCH POSITIONS

YOUTH MINISTER/DIRECTOR: First Baptist Church of Thomasville, Ga., is seeking a full-time youth minister/director. Seminary degree is preferred. Position would be primarily focused on ministry to 7th-12th grades. If interested or if more information is required, please email Reid Wylie (associate pastor of young adults and next generations) at rwylie@fbcthomasville.com.

YOUTH PASTOR: Grace Baptist Church, Oxford, Ala., has an opening for a full-time youth pastor. If interested, please contact Chris Cross at cpcross1@yahoo.com.

STUDENT MINISTER: Aliceville First Baptist Church in Aliceville, Ala., is searching for a minister of students. This is a full-time position. Please send resumés to: AFBC, 323 Broad Street NW, Aliceville, AL 35442, ATTN: Charlie Wilson, or to: therev11@centurytel.net.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH: First Baptist Hoover is seeking a part-time leader to work with students and their families. Bible study, retreats, overall church ministry, time in schools and youth activities. Vacation Bible School, Youth recreation, etc. Contact 205-823-3472 or fbchoover@bellsouth.net.

OTHER POSITIONS

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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.

Want to know God?

By Pastor John Thweatt
First Baptist Church, Pell City

In his classic book "Knowing God," J.I. Packer tells the story of a man who "had effectively forfeited his prospects of academic advancement by clashing with church dignitaries over the gospel of grace. 'But it doesn't matter,' he said at length, 'for I've known God and they haven't'" (page 20). The sheer audacity of that statement is incredible and our familiarity with that phrase is even more astonishing.

"I have known God." Can you imagine? The God of the universe! The Creator of all can be known. How is it possible that you and I can know God? How can the finite know the infinite? How can sons of Adam and daughters of Eve know the God who reveals Himself as the all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present and sovereign Lord of the universe?

The first thing we must realize is that knowing God is indeed possible, but it is only possible because God has revealed Himself to us. In John 1:14 the apostle John said, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." God has revealed Himself to us through His Son and we can know Him only through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

The second thing we must know is that God sent His Son to save us because we could not save ourselves. In Galatians 4:4 Paul said, "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." Our sin separated us from God, but God sent Jesus to redeem us. On the cross Jesus accomplished the atonement that we desperately needed, enabling us to know Him.

To sum it up: we can know God because God revealed Himself to us and because He gave His life to enable the sin that separated us from Him to be forgiven. God took the initiative in revealing Himself to us. He paid the price that His holiness demanded of us and we can know Him by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

World Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Taliban unrepentant after attack on Pakistani teen

KARACHI, Pakistan — The Taliban is threatening to kill a 14-year-old Pakistani girl whom it shot for helping other girls go to school — if she survives a wounding that has made her a hero to many Pakistanis.

Schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai, who was shot in the head and neck, was airlifted Oct. 11 to a military hospital for her own protection after the attack that also injured two of her friends. A hospital spokesman described her condition as “satisfactory” Oct. 12.

Pakistanis in government and media have expressed outrage over the shooting that happened Oct. 9 as the girls were boarding a school bus for home. Yousafzai was targeted for speaking out about girls’ education in Swat Valley in northwestern Pakistan.

The Taliban admitted to the shooting, and authorities have offered a reward of \$100,000 for the capture of the assailant. The Taliban says it is not done with Yousafzai, according to *Pakistan’s Dawn* newspaper, and has threatened her family and vowed to kill her. In 2009 Yousafzai wrote a blog under a pseudonym about living under Taliban rule for the British Broadcasting Cooperation in the Urdu language — winning a national peace prize for her efforts.

Bhutan bans religious activity ahead of election

THIMPHU, Bhutan — Political leaders in the Buddhist nation of Bhutan announced a nearly six-month ban on public religious activities ahead of the upcoming elections, citing the Himalayan nation’s constitution that says “religion shall remain above politics.”

A notification by the Election Commission of Bhutan asks people’s “prayers and blessings” for the second parliamentary election, expected in June 2013. But it also states that religious institutions and clergy “shall not hold, conduct, organize or host” any public activity from Jan. 1 until the election.

The ban comes a year after the country’s religious affairs ministry identified Buddhist and Hindu clergy who should be barred from voting to keep a clear distinction between religion and politics. Election Commissioner Chogyel Dago Rigdzin explained that the ban is a “preventive measure” to avoid mixing religion and politics.

Formerly a Buddhist monarchy for more than a century, Bhutan held its first democratic elections in 2008. The nation’s constitution, which says Mahayana Buddhism is the state religion, provides funding for Buddhist monks.

SBC ethics entity joins battle against contraception mandate

The Southern Baptist Convention’s religious freedom entity has joined the legal battle against the Obama administration’s contraception mandate in the first case to reach a federal appeals court.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) signed on to a friend-of-the-court brief filed Oct. 12 that asked a federal appeals court to reverse the dismissal of two lawsuits against the controversial requirement under the 2010 health care law. The brief supports challenges — by Wheaton College, an evangelical Christian school in suburban Chicago, and Belmont Abbey College, a Roman Catholic institution in North Carolina — to the mandate that employers provide workers with health insurance that covers contraceptives and abortion-causing drugs.

The ERLC and 10 other evangelical organizations joined by invitation in a brief filed by Christian Legal Society (CLS) in support of the colleges’ appeal to the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals. More than 35 suits have been brought against the mandate, but the D.C. Circuit is the first appeals court to consider such a challenge.

Though resistance to the mandate has been portrayed widely as Catholic in nature, ERLC President Richard Land said the case demonstrates the opposition is much more diverse than one religious body.

“This particular case is vitally important both because of the nature of the appeal concerning a very narrow definition the government is following for religious employers and secondly because of who is involved in the suit,” Land said Oct. 15. “One of the most prestigious evangelical colleges in the world — Wheaton College, of which Billy Graham is a graduate — is one of the participants in the suit, which demonstrates this is not ‘just’ a Catholic issue, but it is an issue of religious freedom across the board for all people of faith — Protestant, Catholic and otherwise.”

The lawsuits seek the overturn of a rule by the Department of Health

“This particular case is vitally important both because of the nature of the appeal concerning a very narrow definition the government is following for religious employers and secondly because of who is involved in the suit.”

Richard Land
president, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

and Human Services (HHS) that includes in employer-paid coverage drugs defined by the Food and Drug Administration as contraceptives, even if they can cause abortions. Among such drugs are morning-after pills that prevent the implantation of embryos and ella, which — in a similar fashion to the abortion drug RU 486 — can act even after implantation to end the life of the child.

Religious exemption

Though the mandate exempts churches from providing coverage, the religious exemption in the rule is insufficient to protect religious hospitals, schools and social service ministries, critics have pointed out.

The mandate’s definition of “religious employer” is narrower than a standing definition under federal law and violates both the establishment of religion and religious free-exercise clauses in the First Amendment, according to the brief.

The mandate also contradicts longstanding conscience protections in the abortion arena, the brief says. Since the same year *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion (1973), Congress has protected the conscience rights of health care workers and institutions that objected to participating in abortions or sterilization. Congress also has banned most federal funding of abortion.

The mandate’s heavily criticized exemption for a church or church-

like body covers a nonprofit that: (1) has the “inculcation of religious values” as its purpose; (2) primarily employs people who agree with its religious beliefs; (3) largely serves people “who share [its] religious tenets” and (4) is “a church, an integrated auxiliary of a church, a convention or association of churches, or is an exclusively religious activity of a religious order,” according to the Internal Revenue Code.

In September the D.C. Circuit consolidated the Wheaton and Belmont Abbey cases and expedited their appeal after federal courts ruled the lawsuits were premature.

The abortion/contraception mandate went into effect Aug. 1, but the Obama administration created a one-year “safe harbor” from that date for religious objectors to include all nonprofit religious entities. The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which represents both Wheaton and Belmont Abbey, told the D.C. Circuit the schools already are suffering harm.

Other organizations

In addition to the ERLC, others signing onto the CLS brief included the Christian Medical Association, Prison Fellowship, National Association of Evangelicals, Patrick Henry College, Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, Association of Christian Schools International and Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance.

Organizations have been filing legal challenges to the HHS mandate seemingly weekly. Among others suing the federal government are Hobby Lobby, Christian publisher Tyndale House, Colorado Christian University, Geneva College, Priests for Life and the EWTN Catholic television and radio network. (BP)

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 28

Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson

Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

LIVING IN FAITH
1 Peter 4:12-19

We Have the Spirit (12-14)

Every Christian who lives a godly life can expect to face opposition and hardship. On the job, in school, in the neighborhood, perhaps even in the family, there are people who resist the truth and oppose the gospel. No matter what a believer may say or do there are people who will find fault and criticize.

Peter warned the believers about the persecution they were going to encounter as they faithfully lived for Jesus. If they were caught off guard at the suffering that occurred, they may have been overwhelmed, concluding that God did not love them. An advance warning of suffering helped prepare the young Christians to expect difficulty so that their faith would not be threatened.

As we faithfully introduce others to Jesus there will be some people who will mock, sneer and even threaten us. We should not be surprised. Rather, we should rejoice that we are able to share Christ's sufferings because of our allegiance to Jesus. Believers imitate Jesus in their sufferings. Jesus suffered to secure salvation for sinners. Christians should be willing to suffer to spread the message of salvation to sinners. When the apostles had been beaten for proclaiming Christ, they went "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name" (Acts 5:41). Peter encouraged hurting believers by reminding them that if they suffered for the name of Christ, the Holy Spirit was at work in them. The Spirit of glory Himself was blessing them. They may have been insulted by human beings, but they were blessed by God Himself.

God Can Be Glorified (15-16)

Christians should not seek suffering of any kind. Certainly believers should not live in such a way as to invite suffering by committing sins. Christians should not murder, steal, do wrong in any form or meddle in other people's business. Believers should even refrain from acting tactlessly and without social graces. The call to renounce shame

focused on actions that were shameful. Specifically, professing Christians would act shamefully by denying Jesus before unbelievers or by failing to persevere in the faith. By way of contrast believers glorify God by confessing and praising His name publicly. They glorify God in the name "Christian" by enduring such suffering with joy, pleased that they are privileged to suffer because of their allegiance to Jesus Christ.

Our Salvation Is Secure (17-18)

While God's household was the temple in the Old Testament, Peter conceived of the Church, God's people, as His temple. Peter had already identified the Church as God's priesthood, His chosen people and His holy nation, so that blessings belonging to Israel now belong to the Church (2:9). The judgment that Peter described as beginning with God's people purifies those who truly belong to God, and that purification comes through suffering. Peter argued from the lesser to the greater. If even people who are being saved are purified and judged by suffering, then the "outcome" or result of those who reject the gospel will surely be a greater judgment. Unbelievers do not obey the gospel of God. They refuse to repent and trust Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins.

In verse 18 Peter was not saying that the righteous are scarcely saved, as if they were almost consigned to destruction. What he meant was that the righteous are saved "with difficulty." Believers are saved in the midst of suffering. God saves His people by refining and purifying them through suffering. The point is that if the godly are saved through the purification of suffering, then the judgment of the "ungodly and sinner" must be horrible indeed.

God Is Faithful and Powerful (19)

Christians suffer in accord with the will of God, for He rules over everything that happens to them. As the sovereign Creator, God also is loving and faithful; therefore, believers should entrust their lives to Him just as Jesus did when He suffered. Such trust manifests itself in doing what is good.

Bible Studies for Life

By David Hogg

Academic Dean at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

FROM FAILURE TO ACTION
John 18:15-18, 25b-27; 21:15-19;
Acts 4:13, 18-20

Denying Christ (John 18:15-18, 25-27)

If you are a parent or have had the opportunity to watch small children, you will know that from time to time children try their very best to act like grown-ups. Many of us have probably seen the toddler who has tried valiantly and innocently to help mommy with the new baby, but the help is more of a hindrance. Even as adults we sometimes do the wrong thing despite having the right motives.

But what about Peter in John 18? Did he do the wrong thing despite having the right motives? Absolutely not. Peter did something much worse. He did the wrong thing for the wrong motives. Peter was seeking to save himself and in doing so lied about his friendship with Jesus.

Here is monumental failure; failure at the most significant moment in the history of humanity. But even as we recognize Peter's fault we should be careful to remember that Jesus forgave.

Indeed, when every other disciple ran away and hid, Peter loved Christ enough to try to stay with Him. When abandonment was all Jesus received from family, friends and disciples, Peter could not bring himself to desert his Savior. Nevertheless, Peter was not strong enough to stand in the moment of truth. If the spirit was willing in the Garden of Gethsemane, it had grown fearful and timid in the court of the high priest.

So why is this story and Jesus' subsequent forgiveness of Peter included in the Gospel accounts? It is here, in part, to help us see that when God's children fail Him, even when that failure is motivated by poor motives, forgiveness is still available.

The devil may tempt us to believe that forgiveness is no longer available, that pardon is too far away, that our failure is too great to overcome.

John is telling us that the Jesus who

forgave Peter stands ready to forgive you.

Do You Really Love Christ?
(John 21:15-19)

Now it is one thing to affirm the truth that Jesus forgives us of our sin, but it is another matter altogether to live in the light of this truth. As we have just affirmed, sometimes there is a tremendous temptation to believe that with some failures we have crossed a line. What hope is there for me now? Surely I am not worthy anymore to serve Christ and His Church?

The good news to these kinds of questions is twofold. First, the good news is that you were never worthy in the first place. You did not enter into the kingdom of God by your worthiness, and you could never hope to stay in it by your own worthiness. The admission of unworthiness is a necessary part of a life characterized by humble repentance. Second, the good news is that the hope that saved you on the day you first repented and believed remains sure. Why? Because the guarantee of hope is not found in you, but in God.

Looking at these final verses in John, though, we are reminded that we need to be vigilant to match our practice to our profession. If we say that we love Jesus we must work to live a life that is characterized by obedience.

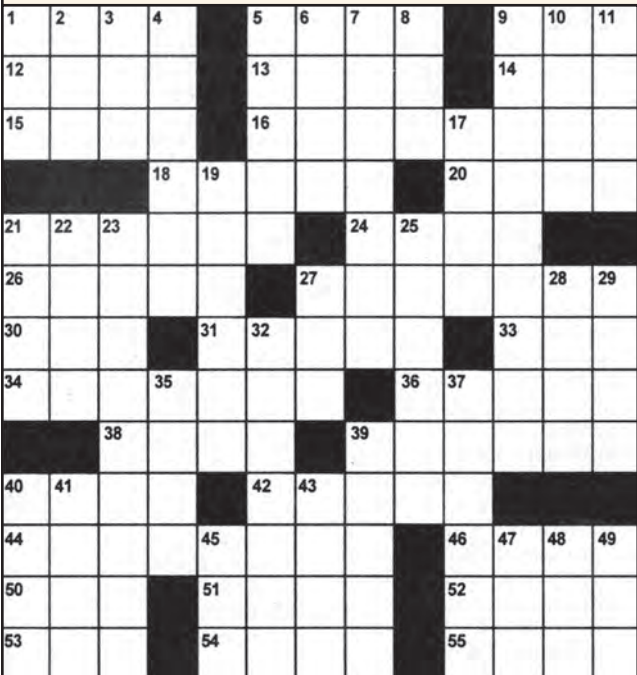
After Peter denied Christ, Jesus asked Peter three times about his love. This was a reminder to Peter that he would face similar situations in the future and eventually die for Christ. Forgiveness is available, but love and obedience are not optional.

Do You Stand Up for Christ?
(Acts 4:13,18-20)

While in John's Gospel we learn what not to do from Peter's example, in Acts we learn what to do. Yes, we must learn to speak boldly for Christ. Yes, we must speak the truth in love. But more than these we learn that our failures do not disqualify us from continuing to serve our Savior. We will fall in serving Christ, but He will raise us up that we might continue to stand for Him.

Christian Crossword

By Lee Esch Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

1. The Son of Man is come to save that which was _____. (Matt. 18:11)
5. Let down your _____ for a draught. (Luke 5:4)
9. Low-ranking soldier. (abbr.)
12. Take thine _____, eat, drink and be merry. (Luke 12:19)
13. Lengthy, lyrical poems.
14. River. (Spanish)
15. Metric unit.
16. Speaks of.
18. Blueprints.
20. Takes to court.
21. Grinned.
24. Frosted.
26. Ties one's shoes.
27. Monotony.
30. A city in Oklahoma.
31. Setting.
33. That from which metal is extracted.
34. I would that all _____ even as I myself.

- (1 Cor. 7:7; 2 words)
36. Stolen waters are _____. (Prov. 9:17)
38. Not my will, but thine, be _____. (Luke 22:42)
39. Thunderous rains.
40. _____ Stravinsky.
42. Small unclean animal. (Lev. 11:29)
44. Highway directories.
46. David dwelt in the _____. (2 Sam. 5:9)
50. For _____ have sinned. (Rom. 3:23)
51. The home of Salt Lake City.
52. He came _____ his own. (John 1:11)
53. Major football organization. (abbr.)
54. Sandwich shop.
55. Sly, suggestive look.
Down
1. Make bare the _____. (Isa. 47:2)
2. Boat paddle.
3. Social Security Administration. (abbr.)
4. For the _____ of God is holy. (1 Cor. 3:17)
5. Desert wanderer.
6. God planted a garden eastward in _____. (Gen. 2:8)
7. Stress.
8. Supersonic transport. (abbr.)
9. The Lord ... plentifully rewardeth the _____. (Ps. 31:23; 2 words)
10. I am the _____, ye are the branches. (John 15:5)
11. The waves thereof _____ themselves. (Isa. 5:22)
17. _____ men as trees, walking. (Mark 8:24; 2 words)
19. Diminish.
21. Close hard.
22. The word was _____ flesh. (John 1:14)
23. _____ things through Christ. (Phil. 4:13; 4 words)
25. Peaks.
27. For the _____ that is in the land of Assyria.

- (Isa. 7:18)
28. A city in Utah.
29. New York team.
32. Incinerate.
35. In the beginning was the _____. (John 1:1)
37. Neither have I desired the _____ day. (Jer. 17:16)
39. Japanese fish dish.
40. Tehran is its capital.
41. Country club sport.
43. Gem.
45. Wet dirt.
47. For there is _____ God. (Mark 12:32)
48. A fixed path of travel. (abbr.)
49. Rocky hilltop.



Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Jewish, Christian groups at impasse over US aid to Israel

WASHINGTON — An established interfaith group is in danger of disintegrating as major American Jewish groups and prominent mainline Protestant churches differ over U.S. aid for Israel — a long-standing argument that the group was established, in part, to diffuse.

Leaders of Reform and Conservative Judaism, the American Jewish Committee, and other Jewish groups sent a letter Oct. 17 to their Christian counterparts on the Christian-Jewish Roundtable saying they would not be attending a long-planned Oct. 22–23 meeting.

At issue is an Oct. 8 letter that many Christian leaders — from the National Council of Churches, the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and other denominations — sent to Congress, asking that U.S. aid to Israel be re-evaluated in light of the Jewish state's alleged human rights violations.

Israel has long been the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign assistance, almost all of which is military aid and contracts, according to the Congressional Research Service.

"As Christian leaders in the United States, it is our moral responsibility to question the continuation of unconditional U.S. financial assistance to the government of Israel," the letter from the Christian leaders read, criticizing Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

The Jewish groups withdrew from the planned October meeting and are now asking the Christian members of the roundtable for a different meeting: to discuss the letter and "reset the framework for ongoing dialogue."

Rabbi Noam Marans, the interfaith director at the American Jewish Committee, said, "There is no question in our minds that this is an unbalanced demonization of Israel completely lacking in context."

Billy Graham's website deletes Mormon 'cult' reference

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) removed language labeling Mormonism a "cult" from its website after the famed preacher met with Republican nominee Mitt Romney and pledged to help his presidential campaign.

Ken Barun, the BGEA's chief of staff, confirmed the removal Oct. 16.

"Our primary focus at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has always been promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ," Barun said in a statement. "We removed the information from the website because we do not wish to participate in a theological debate about something that has become politicized during this campaign."

Surveys show that most evangelicals do not consider Mormons to be Christian.

Romney met with Graham and his son, Franklin, in the elderly evangelist's North Carolina home earlier in the month. After the meeting Graham said he was impressed by Romney's business career and his "strong moral convictions."

Meanwhile, however, the BGEA's website continued to call Mormons members of a "cult" along with Unitarians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientologists, Spiritists and members of the Unification Church. The features of a cult, according to website, are acceptance of revelations outside the Bible, a belief in salvation through good works and unorthodox doctrines on the Trinity.

Dentist fined for required Scientology-based training

BEND, Ore. — State labor officials have ordered a dentist to pay nearly \$348,000 to settle allegations that he threatened to fire a dental assistant unless she attended a Scientology-related training session. The Bureau of Labor and Industries contends Andrew W. Engel repeatedly "badgered" Susan Muhleman about the three-day conference despite her concerns that it would conflict with her Christian beliefs. He also turned down her request to attend secular training instead, investigators said.

As a result, Muhleman quit AWE Dental Spa in August 2009 — weeks before the conference — and moved out of state to find a job, the state agency said.

Muhleman said she was opposed to going to the Scientology conference but worried about losing her job at the height of the recession, when the local unemployment rate was about 15 percent.

She was the only person in her family employed full time, she said.

"It weighed very heavy on me to have to make a decision like that for the future of my family," she said.



JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson College Hosts Samford Campus Minister:** Matt Kerlin of Samford University in Birmingham made his sixth visit to Judson College's weekly chapel Oct. 16.

Kerlin is assistant dean of spiritual life and university minister at Samford. He spoke on the myths of faith and encouraged students, faculty and staff to commit their lives to the truth of Scripture.

► **Judson College Equine Team Competes in First Show of Season:** The Judson College Equestrian Western team competed in its first set of Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA) shows for the 2012–2013 season Sept. 29.

The shows were hosted by North Georgia College and State University in Dahlonega, Ga.

During the first show, freshman Mary Kilpatrick, of Dothan, placed sixth in Novice, class 13. Freshman Bri Hunter, of Somerville, placed reserve. Junior Shelby Crews, of Greenville, placed reserve in class 12B, Intermediate II. Jana Davenport, of Jemison, placed first in class 12A, Intermediate I and senior Lindy Cowart, of Brandon, Miss., placed third. Sophomore Rylee Parnell, of Tibbee, placed second in class 11, Beginner, and sophomore Kayla Brasher, of Jemison, placed fourth.

During the second show, Kilpatrick placed fourth in class 13, and junior Christina Duke, of Vestavia Hills, placed fifth. Crews placed fourth in class 12. Cowart placed

second in class 12A and Davenport placed fourth.

The next IHSA show will be Oct. 20–21 at Berry College in Rome, Ga., and will feature both the Western and hunt seat divisions.

► **Judson College to Host Seventh Annual 'Treats on Bibb Street':** Judson College will sponsor the seventh annual "Treats on Bibb Street" on Oct. 31 from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

The event takes place on Bibb Street in front of the Judson campus and provides local children with a safe and fun trick-or-treating experience. It will feature carnival-style games, face painting, a haunted house and other activities.

For information call 334-683-5276.

► **Judson College to Present Jonathan Brown in Concert:** Judson College will present Jonathan Brown in piano concert Oct. 25 in Alumnae Auditorium at 7 p.m.

The program will include a number of Rachmaninoff and Debussy preludes in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Debussy's birth.

Brown joined the Judson College music faculty in spring 2009. In addition to teaching several academic courses, he accompanies the Judson Singers and has accompanied the group on two choir tours.

He is currently organist/pianist at Oakmont Presbyterian Church, Hoover.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **University of Mobile's English Department to present 'The Merchant of Venice':** The Univer-

sity of Mobile's English Department will present William Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice" on Nov. 1–3, 6:30 p.m. and Nov. 4, 2:30 p.m.

Performances will be in Moorer Auditorium located in Martin Hall.

For more information or to reserve a spot, call Jeremy Crews at 256-282-1400.

► **University of Mobile Performs Christmas Spectacular:** The 10th anniversary performance of the University of Mobile's (UMobile) Christmas Spectacular is set for Nov. 30 through Dec. 2.

Christmas Spectacular will be performed at Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, at 6:45 p.m. each night.

A dress rehearsal also is scheduled for Nov 29 at 6:45 p.m.

The annual event is a celebration of Christmas that includes more than 300 students and faculty from the UMobile School of Music and School of Worship Leadership.

Presentations of traditional and contemporary sacred and secular Christmas music will be the focus of the program.

In celebration of the 10th anniversary, this year's spectacular also will include alumni, several guests and surprises.

Renowned Nashville director Steven Yakes will film Christmas Spectacular 2012 for a television special that will air later in December on several national satellite and local stations.

For more information or to reserve a spot for one of the performances, email mbennett@umobile.edu or call 251-442-2420. The Friday and Saturday performances are already booked.

S.C. Diocese disaffiliates from Episcopal Church

The Diocese of South Carolina announced Oct. 17 that it has disaffiliated from the Episcopal Church.

South Carolina said the split was triggered by disciplinary action taken against Bishop Mark Lawrence.

Twelve lay Episcopalians and two priests brought the charges against Lawrence. The denomination's Disciplinary Board for Bishops found him guilty of abandoning the Episcopal Church and renouncing its rules in September.

In a broad sense, the split was prompted by theological differences over homosexuality. The Episcopal Church has ordained gay and lesbian bishops and voted this summer to allow the blessing of same-sex unions. Lawrence has called such moves "the false gospel of indiscriminate inclusivity." (RNS)



Photo by Anne Shumaker

MORRISON HONORED FOR SERVICE AT JUDSON

Judson College recognizes Troy Morrison (center) for 12 years of service as a trustee. He will be completing his term Dec. 31. Pictured with him are Robin Hall (left), current chair of Judson's board of trustees, and Judson President David Potts.



Photo by Neisha Fuson

Struggle for freedom

In August the high court of India's Himachal Pradesh state rejected a portion of the state's laws regulating religious conversion. Steven David, director of the Centre for Contemporary Issues, in Bangalore, provides his perspective below.

Analysis of India's narrow path to religious freedom

By Steven David
Centre for Contemporary Issues

Shimla apples are world-famous. They are grown in the north Indian hill state of Himachal Pradesh whose capital, Shimla, also was the summer capital of British India. The famous red delicious apples, though, owe their fame to Samuel Evans Stokes, who brought the special apple strains from the United States.

Stokes, inspired by an American missionary's work among leprosy patients in the Shimla hills, decided to fight poverty by transforming the economy of the region by helping create hundreds of apple orchards in the 1920s.

As apple orchards bloomed and the economy boomed Stokes married a local girl, became the only American to fight alongside Mahatma Gandhi in India's freedom struggle and converted to Hinduism.

Stokes made his decision to become Hindu freely, of his own will. Of course, in India, it's never been unpopular to convert to Hinduism. Now it seems India is testing whether it can tolerate less popular, yet equally freely chosen, conversions away from Hinduism.

A two-judge bench in Himachal Pradesh believes it must. On Aug. 30 it struck down provisions of the state's 2006 Freedom of Religion Act that required a 30-day notice period for those who intended to convert from one religion to another. To the Evangelical Fellowship of India, which brought the lawsuit, and other minority religion leaders closely monitoring the ramifications of the judges' order, the concept of free will — choice, and the freedom to choose — will be the most important legal principle to emerge from the ruling.

The judges basically noted that red flags would go up if conversion was the result of force, fraud or inducement, and if it threatened the secular fabric of India.

H.T. Sangliana, vice chairman of India's National Commission for Minorities, said this development

could have "some cascading effect across the country."

India's constitution, adopted in 1950, was drafted by B.R. Ambedkar, a Dalit who later converted to Buddhism. The charter provides guarantees and protections including freedom of religion and its propagation.

Just six years later the government formed a commission whose first job was to investigate Christian missions activities, but its report also recommended statutory restrictions against conversion.

If widely adopted, some of the commission's recommendations would leave Christians occupying the slimmest of legal territory within India. One example: "[R]ules relating to registration of doctors, nurses and other personnel employed in hospitals should be suitably amended to provide a condition against evangelistic activities during professional service."

In other words: Mother Teresa is welcome, a silent servant whose actions spoke louder than any preacher's words. Anyone who wants to actually speak up about Jesus would have much less room to maneuver. This narrow lifeline in the law, upheld and confirmed by the Himachal Pradesh court last month, is what anyone who is not Hindu must rely upon for protection.

Shimla high court judges have gone beyond the usual fusillade of anti-Christian charges against Hindutva ideologues. Political leaders of so-called secular parties such as the Congress Party have been equally responsible in fanning the anti-conversion flame over the years.

"All those involved in the work of the gospel must bear in mind the sensitivity of the situation when sharing their message," Sangliana said. "Free will is the key, not force or inducement."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Steven David was selected by the U.S. State Department for its 2005 International Leadership Program, in which he lectured on contemporary issues across the United States. He was a political journalist in India for more than 20 years. (CDN)

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Hindu extremists pressure Christian churches

DELHI, India — In towns across India, Hindu extremists continued to pressure Christian churches in September. The usual pattern: after the disruption of church or worship services, Christians were physically assaulted and sometimes arrested and jailed on suspicion of forcibly converting Hindus to Christianity.

Three of the Indian states included in this roundup — Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh — have laws against forced religious conversions on their books.

Christian prayer meeting disrupted in India

KARNATAKA, India — A mob of about 50 Hindu extremists broke up a prayer meeting held for the HIV-positive and the blind, according to the Karnataka Legal Aid Cell. Led by the president of the local Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, the attackers destroyed the dinner prepared for the worshippers and attempted to capture the pastor, identified as Raju.

They forced four worshippers, at least one of them blind, to the Arasikere Police Station, and filed a complaint accusing the pastor of forcible conversions to Christianity. The four Christians were detained through the night. Christian leaders in the area have intervened to defend the believers.

Orissa pastor injured during prayer meeting

ORISSA, India — A dozen members of Bajrang Dal barged into the prayer meeting of an independent church, chased the Christians out and seriously injured a junior pastor. Pastor Krishna Chandra Devra told Open Doors News that the Christians in the meeting ran toward the forest, but Junior Pastor Mantu Nayak fell into a ditch, where the attackers beat him so severely that he required hospitalization. He suffered injuries to the head and fractures in both arms.

Police registered a First Information Report against the attackers, arrested eight of them and continue to search for the remaining four.

Pastor, worshippers beaten; Bibles confiscated

HUNSUR, India — Four police officers stopped a prayer meeting in Kattamalavadi, near Hunsur in the Mysore district, and questioned the pastor about his license to run a church. Two members of Bajrang Dal arrived and beat the pastor and worshippers and took away Bibles and other Christian literature as police looked on.

At the police station and under questioning of the police sub-inspector, identified only as Arun, the church members said they had freely converted to Christianity. The sub-inspector reprimanded the Bajrang Dal members but did not file any charges.

Pastor, wife accused of forcibly converting people

BALRAMPUR, India — Led by Amit Dubey, members of Bajrang Dal, a Hindu nationalist group, disrupted a Sunday worship meeting in September led by Pastor Kapil Kerketta and accused him of forcibly converting people to Christianity.

The pastor and his wife, Monika, and two other couples were forced to the Shankargarh Police Station. The police determined there was no evidence to support the charge and let the Christians go.

Christians beaten, forced into Hindu rituals

KARNATAKA, India — Attackers forcefully entered the houses of five Christians from Bethel Prathanalaya Church, beat them and burned Bibles, according to the Global Council of Indian Christians. They forced the Christians into Hindu rituals at a nearby temple and threatened further violence if they did not renounce Christ. Several people were treated for injuries. Police have made no arrests.

Church building damaged in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD, India — Hindu extremists led by Ramana Reddy pounded on the doors of the Penuel Prayer Church in the Sarroornagar section of Hyderabad. They damaged the building with fireworks, according to the All India Christian Council. The pastor and his family locked themselves in the house during the incident. Police have not made any arrests.