

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

Nov. 1, 2012
Vol. 177, No. 43

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www.thealabamabaptist.org

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'Living Water'

Birmingham's Dawson helps Sudanese village

Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, has taken a costly new step in its nine-year commitment to the South Sudanese village of Akot.

On Oct. 7 the church voted to enter a five-year partnership with Living Water Community Transformation (LWCT), a 501(c)(3) organization founded to minister to the approximately 12,000-member community in Sudan. Dawson will provide \$500,000 over the coming years to help build and operate two primary schools, train pastors and provide work for women in the area. In addition the church will continue to send specialized missions teams into Akot.

Planting seeds

Those specialized short-term missions trips actually were the seed of Dawson's commitment to the village. In 2003, Southern Baptist representatives in the region near Akot invited American teams to do missions work there. The need then was massive: extreme poverty, damage from the Second Sudanese Civil War and an almost complete lack of children's education, employment opportunities and health care. The first missions teams into Akot set up medical clinics in the bush and conducted evangelism. Ongoing trips led to the creation of the Akot Medical Mission, a medical

facility still in operation today.

After the Southern Baptist representatives left the region, Dawson — in partnership with several other churches — formed LWCT to keep working in the area.

LWCT has founded two primary schools that meet under trees and grass-roof shelters. About 650 students — 90 of whom are orphans — are taught between the two schools. LWCT also has created a training center to raise pastors for the 14 Baptist churches in the area, facilitated the drilling of several water wells and employed Sudanese women in a vocational sewing center.

Grants from organizations like Baptist Global Response have provided vaccinations for the school-children and a daily nutritious meal. Several young adults also are receiving scholarships for secondary or college-level classes.

Ben Hale, minister of missions and evangelism at Dawson, spoke of



Photo courtesy of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church

A student at Living Water Primary School drinks from a community well on the school grounds in South Sudan.

the responsibility the church is taking for the Akot region. "God called us to Akot originally and seems to be leading us to a deeper level of commitment," he said. "We now know the names and circumstances of many of our Christian brothers and sisters in South Sudan."

Because LWCT is not an indepen-

dently funded group, it is in serious need of financial assistance from Dawson and from others.

"If we do not build and fund the schools in Akot, the children will not be educated. If we do not give and go to Akot, the women will very likely be left to fend for themselves. If we do not give and go to Akot, the pastors' training will very likely cease," Hale said.

Hale and Dawson leadership hope this partnership "will provide ... a renewed sense of responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission," he said.

Dawson Pastor Gary Fenton said members and leadership are excited about being part of "such a strategic ministry at such a crucial time."

"This appears to truly be a divine appointment as [Akot has] needs and by faith we are believing God will provide the resources to meet the needs," he said.

For more information on how to get involved, contact Ann Rao at arao1@tampabay.rr.com or Ben Hale at bhale@dawsonchurch.org. For more information about LWCT, visit livingwaterct.org. (Dawson, Joseph Rhea contributed)



Photo courtesy of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church

Lunches funded by Baptist Global Response are prepared and served every day at Living Water Primary School in South Sudan.

COMMENT

A Magic Bullet for Church Involvement?

Church A needed men to work with the boys in their missions education program. The church decided to share the need through an announcement during the worship service and to highlight the need in the church mailout.

Church B was starting new Sunday School classes and needed teachers. The nominating committee decided to pigeonhole selected individuals and ask them to lead the classes.

Church C needed people to work Sunday morning to help direct parking, to greet people as they arrived and to help guests get to the right places. Asking current workers to enlist one of their friends was the answer on which the church settled.

Will any of these approaches work? Will one work better than the other? Is there a “magic bullet” approach which churches should keep in mind when trying to enlist workers or increase involvement in church activities?

The answer is a clear “yes and no.”

After studying the responses of more than 7,000 participants from hundreds of churches, Scott Thumma and Warren Bird concluded in their book “The Other 80 Percent” that “options such as bulletin announcements, invitations from people they knew and invitations from people they did not know were unrelated to increased involvement.”

New responsibilities

Yet these same authors reported their study indicated that 57 percent of those who increased church participation in the past two years did so because they accepted an office or other new responsibility in the church.

Thumma and Bird also reported stories of people who read about a service opportunity in the church bulletin and volunteered.

How these apparently contradicting conclusions fit together is a story of work by the church and spiritual growth by church members.

The study found a clear four-step process for enlisting people in service through the church.



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

It begins with calling. Those who increased participation understood the church was providing them an opportunity by calling them to serve in some capacity. When they were asked, appointed or elected to a position, they were being asked to use their gifts and talents in the cause of the Lord. The volunteers equated this with a calling from God.

Called to action

Motivation was a second important factor. What prompted these to respond to the call? For some it was due to the needs of their children. For others it was because they felt more positively toward the church. For still others it was because the church had helped them identify gifts and talents that could be used in the Lord's service. Whatever the motivation, there had to be something to spur the called to action.

Ability to respond to the calling was a third important factor. Included here were such things as improved health and other changes that resulted in time being available for service. Without adequate time, the service opportunity could turn sour as people fail to fulfill the expectation they placed on themselves or that the church placed on them.

Additionally, helping new volunteers be successful in their new responsibility was important. Training and mentoring played important roles. Providing guidance and resources contributed to positive experiences. Providing support as volunteers tried new things also contributed. Without these the volunteers were simply set up to fail, a result that impacts church involvement as well as spiritual motivation.

Each of these steps relates to work by the church. Each is important, even necessary to increase church involvement, the study found. But at its core, increased involvement is “equated with a spiritual catalyst.”

The authors write of a man who said he read in the church bulletin about a service opportunity for several weeks: “I couldn't ignore it any longer so I went and volunteered. ... It was the Holy Spirit just drawing me.”

It goes without saying that the best volunteers are those for whom God's Holy Spirit confirms

the calling extended by the church. Without the spiritual motivation, all the enlistment programs of the church will fail.

Those who increased their participation in service through the church consistently included a spiritual factor in their stories. So much was this the case that Thumma and Bird concluded, “Spiritual fulfillment directly correlates with greater involvement in the congregation. ... Greater involvement helps their sense of spiritual growth. Likewise a sense of spiritual growth increases participation.”

Unfortunately there is no clear definition of what people mean when they use terms like “spiritual growth” or “spiritual motivation.” People participate in church for different reasons. People expect different things out of their church experiences. That is why there is no magic bullet for increasing church participation even though there is a clear outline of steps to be used in enlisting volunteers.

Some people want to help members deepen their personal relationship with God. Others want to concentrate on sharing the gospel with the unchurched. Some want to concentrate on worship. Others want to care for the hungry and hurting in the community. Some want to focus on global missions. Others want to promote fellowship opportunities among members. The possibilities go on and on.

Concentrating on one emphasis will satisfy some in the church but not all. It will provide spiritual motivation for some but not others.

The authors suggest a key to increasing participation in the church may be to help people do more of whatever has been providing their spiritual fulfillment in the church up to that time. Helping people serve God through the church is not a case of forcing people into a predetermined mold. It is a task of helping them become the persons God made them to be — dedicated to serving Him.

The church's role

The church has a role to play in helping increase members' participation in the church. If the church's role is relied on solely, it can quickly degenerate into manipulation based on pressure and guilt. But only waiting for spiritual motivation to bring volunteers forward can result in a lack of volunteers or volunteers serving in the wrong places. The church helps people recognize and develop their gifts and talents. And just as the call to salvation is often heard through the church, so is the call to service.

When the church is busy doing all it can to increase participation through the church and the commitment to spiritual motivation is emphasized, then the church should experience an increase in volunteers and lay involvement should grow.



DON'T FORGET
to set your clocks back
Nov. 4!



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

(ISSN 0738-7741;
USPS 011-080)

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

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

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

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A billboard on Highway 75 in Oneonta encourages Blount County voters to 'Vote No' during the county's upcoming wet/dry election Nov. 6.

Photo courtesy of First Baptist Church, Oneonta

By Julie Payne
The Alabama Baptist

Wet/dry issues

Alabama cities, counties prepare for upcoming wet/dry elections

Voting for the U.S. president is on many people's minds as the general election draws near, but for some areas of Alabama, Nov. 6 also marks the day when several wet/dry elections take place in the state.

Included in upcoming wet/dry elections are the cities of Hartselle and Boaz, as well as Blount and Randolph counties, according to known information collected by Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP). There also will be a referendum to determine whether Sunday alcohol sales will be allowed in Dallas County.

Joe Godfrey, executive director of ALCAP, encouraged voters in the state's affected areas to exercise their right to vote against legalizing alcohol sales. If people do not vote against legalizing the sales, he added, the votes of those advocating to go wet will be heard.

Larry Gipson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Oneonta, is chairman of the 501(c)(4) organization Keep Blount County Special, which was organized several years ago.

Blount County maintained its "dry" status by a vote four years ago with a percentage margin of 60-40. "This time, when we found out they [alcohol sales proponents] were trying to get signatures ... we got back together ... to fight again," Gipson said.

"I could spend all day speaking about [the] negative[s] of alcohol," he added.

"There's nothing positive attached to alcohol when you look at 79,000 deaths attributed to alcohol use" in the U.S. each year.

While speaking about the negative effects of alcohol is easy for Gipson, standing up for his position has not always been as simple. He said he has experienced written and verbal attacks from some opposed to his stance.

Gipson said when taking a stand, opposition is expected. He noted three ways he believes

Christians against legalizing the sale of alcohol should react to those who may oppose them: with compassion, courage and conviction.

Area Baptists in Boaz also are taking a stand against legalizing the sale of alcohol. According to Randall Stoner, director of missions for Marshall Baptist Association, the association is surrounded by counties that have voted to go wet. "We're trying to stand on the Word and stand on our principles that this is not a good thing for the citizens of Boaz," he said.

The association has purchased a half-page ad in the local paper encouraging people to vote Nov. 6. In addition, Stoner noted the city's ministerial association, in coordination with other denominations in the area, is opposed to legalizing alcohol sales. Yard signs that advocate voting no on Nov. 6 are being used by members of First Baptist Church, Boaz, as well as members from several other Baptist churches and denominations in the city.

Boaz residents voted to stay dry two years ago, the last time the issue was on the ballot. According to the *Sand Mountain Reporter*, 55 percent of Boaz voters rejected legalizing alcohol sales in 2010.

And while the negative physical impacts of alcohol are to be considered when this issue comes up for a vote Nov. 6, there are other factors to consider as well, say those opposed

to legalizing its sale.

According to ALCAP, for every \$1 in revenue received from the sale of alcoholic beverages, Alabamians spend about \$15 in social costs. Godfrey said that in 2006, the U.S. spent \$223.5 billion in tackling alcohol-related problems. That figure includes items such as counseling, hospitals and emergency vehicles — all

the things associated with "cleaning up the mess" alcohol leaves behind, Godfrey said.

Godfrey noted ALCAP's website is full of data related to wet/dry issues. A link on ALCAP's home page (www.alcap.com) titled "Wet/Dry Issues" is devoted specifically to the topic. "Go to that page and you will find all kinds of links with PDF files," Godfrey said. There are even instructions on how to organize for a local option election to fight legalizing alcohol sales and various statistical information and resource

materials for county and municipality use.

In addition to consulting with counties and municipalities that are fighting wet/dry elections, Godfrey said ALCAP also continues to lobby the Alabama Legislature to fight the passage of alcohol-liberalization bills.

Gipson said voters will have to decide what is right and wrong, pray and ask God to direct them on how to vote. "When all is said and done we're going to continue to serve and do what we're supposed to," he said. ☛

Facts about alcohol

► In 2008 there were 11,773 fatalities in crashes involving a driver with a Blood Alcohol Content of .08 or higher — 32 percent of the total traffic fatalities for the year. (NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis)

► In the United States an estimated 7 million children under the age of 8 grow up in an environment filled with anxiety, confusion, tension and denial resulting from an alcoholic parent. Children raised by an alcoholic parent often have sleep difficulties and suffer from depression, loneliness and stomach problems. These children are more likely to be delinquent and commit suicide. (www.alcap.com)

'Prayer is the answer'

By Kristen Padilla
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Alabama's Christian job corps volunteerism, giving on rise

Two years ago *The Alabama Baptist* ran a story about how the ministry of Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC)/Christian Men's Job Corps (CMJC) was suffering in Alabama, like so many others, because of the economy.

CWJC/CMJC is a ministry of national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) (see story, this page).

But now, two years later, there is a different story to tell, said Linda Henry, volunteer Alabama CWJC/CMJC coordinator and executive director of Marshall County Christian Services in Albertville. Despite an economy that has not improved and the 2011 tornadoes that ravaged the state, CWJC/CMJC volunteerism and giving are up, she said.

"Our giving has increased this year here (in Marshall County)," Henry said. "We have people giving who never gave before. Alabama Baptists are doing a better job supporting (us) than (they have in) the past; they really are."

"It's a God thing," she added. "Maybe it had to get really bad to humble us and get us on our knees ... to start asking Him and thanking Him. Prayer is the answer to all these things."

In 2010 four sites had closed their doors and one was on the verge. Now, in 2012, a new site has opened in Blount County, a fourth site has been added in Marshall County, a second site has begun in Calhoun County at its county jail, and Madison County is looking to expand to four sites hopefully by next year.

"What has contributed to the growth is the exposure Christian Women's Job Corps has had, and it is what our site coordinators are doing in their areas to get [themselves] on the news and promote the things they are doing," Henry said.

A second contributing factor to the exposure given to CWJC/CMJC this year is due to Alabama WMU featuring its CWJC/CMJC ministry in its annual Kathleen Mallory Day of Prayer materials in September.

"[The Kathleen Mallory Day of Prayer] reminds them about this ministry," said Pat Ingram, missions and ministry consultant for Alabama WMU. "Even if they don't have [a CWJC/CMJC site] in their area, they are praying for one."

Henry said the stories and materials published by Alabama WMU "opened the eyes" to many women across the state about the CWJC/CMJC ministry, and she saw a direct effect from the exposure.

Girls in Action (GA) groups around the state collected items and gift cards to take the CWJC/CMJC sites; CWJC/CMJC site coordinators were contacted to speak to local and associational WMU groups; and Henry received emails from women telling her they were praying for the ministry.

But one specific instance made a special impression on Henry. The logo for CWJC consists of two red hands forming the bud of a flower with a stem and one leaf com-



Photo courtesy of Calhoun Baptist Association

A woman places a bid in Calhoun CWJC's silent auction held in May. The silent auction and fashion show, which were held simultaneously, raised \$3,500 for the ministry.

ing down from the hands. One particular GA group bought plain pillowcases and drew their hands on the pillowcases to mimic the logo. Underneath the logo, each wrote a message to a woman. One of these messages said, "When I go to sleep at night, I pray for you." These pillowcases were delivered and given to participants at the group's local CWJC site.

'Great faithfulness'

"From my perspective with the Baptists in Alabama, once they learn the ministry and get involved in the ministry they have a great faithfulness to it," said Jean Roberson, ministry consultant and adult resource team leader of national WMU and director of CWJC/CMJC and International Initiatives. "They stay very faithful to stand by our sites."

One example of Baptists staying faithful to CWJC/CMJC is found in Marshall County. Director of Missions for Marshall Baptist Association Randall Stoner said that despite hard times, "efforts have multiplied."

"[CWJC/CMJC] has blown into a lot more than what we thought 10 years ago," Stoner said. "The efforts have multiplied. Food distribution is one of our major things. ... They teach these ladies how to cook."

"The churches are invested in it," he continued. "Even though these are hard times, we're stepping up together. We're doing what the Lord has commissioned us to do."

There's been a similar commitment in Calhoun Baptist Association. In 2005, Calhoun Association decided to make a commitment to help women in its area holistically, and the best way to accomplish that was to house a CWJC site in its building.

"We made a commitment to give a hand up instead of just a handout," said Sid Nichols,

Calhoun Association director of missions. "It's been a very rewarding ministry for us."

In May, as a way to get more people involved and to raise money for the ministry, the Calhoun CWJC had its first fashion show and silent auction. The event raised \$3,500, which bought three new laptops and 10 licenses for the computer program Microsoft 2010 with money to spare. But more than the financial help the event raised awareness about the ministry.

"One of our biggest needs is to have mentors," said Kathryn Nunnelle, Calhoun CWJC site co-coordinator. "We wanted to inspire the people who came to the event to

What is CWJC, CMJC?

Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC) and Christian Men's Job Corps (CMJC) is not a handout; it's a hand up," said Kathryn Nunnelle, CWJC site co-coordinator for Calhoun County.

CWJC/CMJC is a ministry of national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) that teaches job and life skills within a Christian context. Two elements that make CWJC/CMJC unique from other job-readiness programs are that each participant is required to be in a Bible study and is matched with a one-on-one mentor.

"When sin came into the world there was a brokenness with God, with each other, ourselves and our resources, and that is the basis which CWJC and CMJC work off of," said Jean Roberson, ministry consultant and adult resource team leader of national WMU and director of CWJC/CMJC and International Initiatives. "Healing and life change occur in all four areas: life, job, understanding of self and ability to relate to other people, and who you are in Christ."

"Because we address all four of those areas we are not just a job skills place; we're not going to just do a Bible study and then send you out the door," she added. "One of the attractions of CWJC/CMJC is when there are ministries that choose one path we choose to work holistically. ... I think that's attractive to people that we are willing to invest in the whole person." (TAB)

get involved. It was called 'Face-to-Face' [because it] centered around having personal relationships."

And it's because CWJC/CMJC focuses on one-on-one mentoring relationships that makes this ministry so appealing to those who get involved. "Ministering and working inside of CWJC and CMJC is a place that is not just a ministry that asks for money," Roberson said. "It's a ministry that needs your time almost more than they need your money."

"Our sites are hungry for Southern Baptists, for churches to realize they are ministries of WMU. They want churches to ... engage men and women around [them]." ❧

National WMU honors Christian

Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC) sites in Philadelphia, Miss., and San Marcos, Texas, have received this year's top honors from the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Foundation.

The two CWJCs, which each receive a \$1,800 grant, are part of WMU's national network to equip disadvantaged women for life and employment, offering weekly Bible studies and job training, while also pairing

them with mentors for encouragement and accountability.

CWJC of Philadelphia, Miss., established in 2008, offers a Jobs for Life program that includes computer basics, budget training and a clothes closet with clothing appropriate for job interviews.

Site coordinator Sandi Lewis added that the site's one-on-one mentoring sets it apart from secular training programs in the community.

"I believe in CWJC as a ministry that can really reach and meet a need."

Sandi Lewis

site coordinator, Christian Women's Job Corps in Philadelphia, Miss.

Mississippi mother dreams of opening special needs day care with help of CWJC

Bobbi Leath is one step closer to realizing her dream of opening a day care for children with special needs, thanks to her participation in Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC), a ministry of national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU).

Leath, of Rankin County, Miss., is this year's recipient of the Sybil Bentley Dove Award, given annually to a current or former CWJC participant who advances herself through life skills, academic development and faith in God. The award includes a financial grant.

Leath, whose son has cerebral palsy and whose daughter has epilepsy, knew opening a day care center would necessitate obtaining her GED and a college education. The quest for a GED brought Leath to CWJC, where she says she found so much more.

"The Job Corps was like being with a room full of sisters," Leath said. "The ladies were uplifting and seemed interested in the vision I was dreaming. They helped me see God has His hands in this dream and that I am just a vessel for His hands to work."

While all the women in CWJC were influential on her journey, Leath said Mary Callahan, director of CWJC of Rankin County, impacted her during her interview to join the program.

'I was in the right place'

"I sat and told her my story," Leath recounted. "With her uplifting spirit, I knew deep down that I was in the right place."

Debbie Boykin, Leath's CWJC mentor, described Leath as determined and optimistic.

"Bobbi has a passion and feels called to help other families that are facing the same challenges she has had to deal with," Boykin said.

"I am so proud of her accomplishments so far and know she will reach all her goals."

Leath said her life has changed in "big ways" since coming to CWJC. In addition to earning her GED, she has greater confidence in herself and a stronger relationship with God.

"He is forever changing and molding me into the person He intended," Leath said. "I have completely let Him take the reins to guide me to do His work."

Leath is pursuing a degree in child development and child care at a community college, where she earned a 3.538 GPA her first semester.

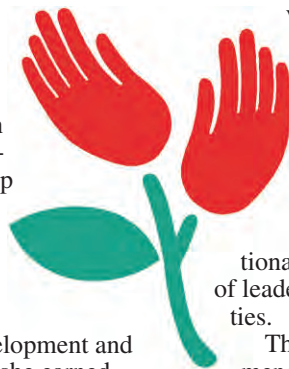
The national WMU started CWJC in 1997

to help women improve their lives,

Christian Women's Job Corps®

A Ministry of WMU®

final selection. (BP)



BP photo

Bobbi Leath (left), whose son has cerebral palsy and whose daughter has epilepsy, notes Christian Women's Job Corps mentor Debbie Boykin as one of her supporters for opening a special needs day care.

empowering them with biblical nurture, Christian mentoring and job training.

To learn more about opportunities through CWJC, visit www.wmu.com/jobcorps.

The Sybil Bentley Dove award is given annually to an outstanding CWJC graduate.

CWJC site coordinators across the country send in nomination forms telling why a graduate from their site is deserving of this award.

All nominations are reviewed by the national CWJC advisory board which is comprised of leaders in CWJC who serve in various capacities.

The advisory board then sends their recommendations to the WMU Foundation;

the WMU Foundation reviews the findings of the advisory board and makes the

final selection. (BP)

job corps sites in Mississippi, Texas

And the site's Jobs for Life curriculum "is biblically based," Lewis said, "so it addresses issues that [other skills training] programs do not."

Lewis said the site will use the WMU grant to purchase additional GED resources and computer tables for use during classes.

At the Texas CWJC site, named Hands of Hope, volunteer leaders likewise focus on job and life skills, Bible study, academics and GED tutoring. The site opened in 2005.

LaDean Williamson, a member of the Hands of Hope advisory council, said the site is the only adult education program in the San Marcos area that offers daily Bible study and a personal mentor for each student.

The San Marcos site will use its grant to fund child care and transportation needs of students, Williamson said.

"Each semester we have applicants who can't enroll in our classes because they can't arrange adequate, affordable child care," she said. "We will use this grant to

extend our ministry by making child care available and helping with transportation for participants."

Becky Ellison, state consultant for Texas CWJC/Christian Men's Job Corps (CMJC), said the grant will help Hands of Hope take the pressure off moms.

The Mississippi and Texas sites are among more than 200 registered and certified CWJC/CMJC sites across the country — all ministries of national WMU, which is based in Birmingham.

To learn more about CWJC/CMJC, visit www.wmu.com/jobcorps.

To be considered for a CWJC site award, a site must complete an application with information about their site and what the grant would be used to fund. All applications are reviewed by the national CWJC advisory board which is comprised of leaders in CWJC who serve in various capacities. The advisory board then sends its recommendations to the WMU Foundation. The WMU Foundation reviews the findings of the advisory board and makes the final selection. (BP)

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

Oxford's Lakeview Baptist pastor Starling retires

Jerry Starling, pastor of Lakeview Baptist Church, Oxford, retired effective Sept. 30.

Starling, who was pastor of the Calhoun Baptist Association church for just shy of 23 years, said, "It seemed like a good idea for me personally ... I also felt it was the right time for the church."

Starling came to Lakeview Baptist from First Baptist Church, Hokes Bluff, in October 1990. At the time the church had about 140 in Sunday School, Starling said. Over the course of his ministry the church more than doubled in size, to where a Sunday morning service would see 350-400 people.

Gary Sparks, chairman of deacons for Lakeview, said the church also built a family life center and new education space and renovated the sanctuary twice during Starling's tenure.

More than the buildings, though, Sparks said, Starling has been known for his evangelistic-mindedness. Even in his last months as pastor Starling was out making evangelistic visits and leading a FAITH Evangelism semester course from LifeWay Christian Resources.

"He retired Sept. 30 and he was back in the office Oct. 1," Sparks laughed.

Starling's last service was more of "a celebration" than anything else, Sparks said. Music for the morning service included some of Starling's favorite songs, including "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Come, Now is the Time to Worship." Starling conducted a service of the Lord's Supper; he then shared how it is a reminder of the cost of salvation and how it brings sinners into the family of God.

After the service the church held a lunch and then another service honoring Starling. A member of the pulpit committee that recommended Starling spoke about how they came to the conclusion to call him to Lakeview, and several others — including Sparks — spoke about how God had used Starling to influence them.

"He has been a mentor, a friend," Sparks said. "He's counseled me ... he's been there for me."

Starling plans to relax for the remainder of 2012, he said. He will continue teaching Sunday School and the FAITH course. Beginning in 2013 he plans to serve in interim or supply preaching roles as needed. (Joseph Rhea)

Bryant marks 40 years at Autaugaville Baptist

In a surprise service Oct. 3, Autaugaville Baptist Church recognized the 40-year tenure of Alvin Bryant, the church's minister of music.

Bryant, a pastor's son, grew up around church music, he said. One experience hearing a church choir in Birmingham ignited his passion for music. Bryant never received formal training, but was taught by the music directors of the churches his father served.

Bryant felt called to Autaugaville while serving as a deacon in Chisholm Baptist Church, Montgomery. He had never been music director of a church, but he felt God calling him to the position. "God told me I was going to lead music there ... He impressed that on me," Bryant said. He and his wife, Theresa, joined Autaugaville in 1972, when Fred Keller was serving as pastor.

The church's service to honor Bryant "was totally a surprise," he said. Autaugaville presented Bryant and Theresa with plaques and a picture with text from Isaiah 40.

Garner Clark, who has served as Autaugaville's pastor for 28 years, said the congregation is "totally supportive of his musical leadership."

"They trust him fully with worship on Sundays," he said.

Clark described Bryant as "someone who stays attuned to God's leadership in music and worship, providing a Christlike role model for the church in humility, dependability, faithfulness and steadfast loyalty."

Clark also said that Bryant's reputation had so preceded him to Autaugaville that the church called him as a deacon on the very Sunday that Bryant changed his membership to the church.

Reflecting on his time with the church, Bryant emphasized the sense of privilege he has felt "in being associated with some of the most loving, caring Christian people on the face of the earth." (Joseph Rhea)

Across Alabama's Associations

BALDWIN

► **First Church, Foley**, will host Brunch n' Bazaar Nov. 3, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Booths will include skin care products, quilts, arts, jewelry and more. For information call 251-979-1275. Billy Nale is pastor.

BESSEMER

► **Ezra Church** was voted into membership of Bessemer Association on Oct. 22 during the associational meeting. Scott Nichols is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Birmingham Association** will host its annual Singles Thanksgiving Celebration on Nov. 15, 6 p.m. at **Mountain Brook Church, Birmingham**, with turkey, dressing and all the trimmings. Reservations must be made by noon Nov. 13. For information call Margie Duncan at 205-599-3245. Mike McLemore is executive director of Birmingham Association and Doug Dortch is pastor of Mountain Brook.

DEKALB

► **Ruhama Church, Fort Payne**, will host a special Veteran's Day service Nov. 11, 10:30 a.m. The color guard from Fort Payne High School will present the colors and veterans from all branches of service will be honored. Wayne Killian will speak and lunch will follow. A memorial for all veterans will be on display in the fellowship hall. Chris Murdock is pastor.

Auburn pastor advocates for 'Red-Hot Monogamy'

By Michael McEwen

News and information specialist, SEBTS

Pastor Al Jackson turned to Proverbs 5 for a Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary chapel message on "Red-Hot Monogamy: God's Design for Sex."

"I would like to submit this morning that a single act of adultery is one too many," said Jackson, pastor of Lakeview Baptist Church, Auburn, "and no one on this side of heaven is beyond the reach of its power. In fact, the only time we are safe from matters of adultery is when we reach the boundaries of heaven."

"God's design for sex is that a man's wife captivate her husband and that the husband would captivate his wife," he said.

"There are two principles worthy of our attention found in Proverbs 5: We are to be aware of the deadly danger of adultery and also to not be naïve of the fact that we are all candidates of adultery."

Throughout Proverbs, Solomon speaks from experience to his son. Solomon teaches his son about the

GENEVA

► **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will host The 39er's C.L.U.B. (Christians Living Under the Blood!) nondenominational luncheon Nov. 13, 11 a.m. Nan Weaver will speak on the theme "Why do bad things happen to good people?" To make reservations by Nov. 6 call 334-684-9617. Mike Shirah is pastor.

HALE

► **Rhodes Chapel Church, Greensboro**, will celebrate its 80th anniversary Nov. 4, 10 a.m. Albert Lyles, pastor of Piney Grove Church, Tuscaloosa, will speak. Lunch will follow the service. Jim Roberts is pastor.

MONTGOMERY

► **Dalraida Church, Montgomery**, senior adults will host Christian humorist/musician Brother Billy Bob Bohannon on Nov. 8, 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow. Rick Evans is pastor.

NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Aaron Calvert** is the new minister of music for **Central Church, Gardendale**. He is a graduate of the University of North Alabama and previously served as minister of music for Friendship Church, Killen. He is married to Erica. Harold McClendon is pastor. ► **Joseph Givens** is the new associate pastor and minister of youth and children for **Mount Zion Church, Corner**. He is a graduate of the University of Alabama and previously served at First

Church, Mount Olive. He and his wife, Lorie, have one child. Sammie Reid is pastor.

SARDIS

► **Sardis Association** will host a discipleship rally Nov. 5, 6 p.m. at the Sardis Association building in Kinston. Otis Corbitt, director of missions for Covington Association, will speak. James Preachers is director of missions.

SELMA

► **Elkdale Church, Selma**, will celebrate its 60th anniversary Nov. 4, 10:30 a.m. Jerry Henry, pastor of First Church, Fairhope, will speak. For information call 334-872-3456. Cory Horton is pastor.

SHELBY

► **Kenneth Phillips** is the new pastor of **Oak Mountain Church, Pelham**. He holds an associate degree in sacred literature and a bachelor's degree in ministry from Covington Seminary in Fort Oglethorpe, Ga. He previously served as the director of college and career ministries at First Church, Birmingham. He also served as youth minister of Raleigh Avenue Church, Homewood. He and his wife, Louise, have two children.



PHILLIPS

TUSCALOOSA

► **Buhl Church** will host Gold City Quartet in concert Nov. 8, 7 p.m. For information call 205-339-1844 and leave a message. Alfred Banks is pastor.

importance of wisdom and folly in light of sin.

"Solomon is saying, 'Listen to the words that I speak, son. Stay on the straight and narrow.' Likewise, Jesus echoes this teaching in the Gospels: 'Narrow is the path for those who seek righteousness.'"

"So husbands, be careful to distance yourselves from enticement and sin, and wives, continue to 'flirt' with and love your husbands."

A growing fascination with a person is usually one of the first signs that an individual is on the road to physical adultery, Jackson said.

"An emotional adultery," Jackson said, "opens the door to physical adultery. We must remember that sexual adultery and, yes, even pornography is before the all-seeing eyes of God."

Concluding his Sept. 21 message, Jackson asked: "What does Proverbs 5 teach us about 'red-hot monogamy'? ... Husbands and wives should keep the fire of romance burning always and ... purpose your love relationship with God with all your heart."



FBC Falkville celebrates 125th anniversary

First Baptist Church, Falkville, celebrated 125 years with a Saturday cookout, fellowship, special music and Sunday morning service Sept. 22-23.

Wayne Coots, who served on the five-member anniversary committee, said there was a "good turnout" at the Saturday fellowship time. On Sunday the church welcomed Jerry Reeder, a former member, who shared the morning's sermon based on the universality of the gospel message. Nancy Beasley, an Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative, presented the church with a commemorative plaque. Dorothy Clark, a member for 83 years, was recognized as having the longest membership. Geraldine Rowe, a member since childhood, spoke about her experience growing up in the church.

Coots said, "It was a special time for us. A lot of churches don't make it [to 125 years]. We're very proud."

Greg Burcham, who has served First, Falkville, as bivocational pastor for almost four years, said the weekend's atmosphere was "very friendly and very exciting."

At least 200 people filled the sanctuary, Burcham said, including the balcony and the choir loft.

Burcham said he hopes the Morgan Baptist Association church continues to grow and to meet the needs of the community. He was pleased to share that by mid-October three baptisms had already taken place and one family joined the church as new members.

(Neisha Fuson)

FBC Arab marks 100 years of God's work

First Baptist Church, Arab, marked its 100th anniversary with a celebratory weekend. On Sept. 22 the church held a picnic in its fellowship hall during which Marshall County's state Sen. Clay Scofield spoke and Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative Pat Musselwhite presented a plaque to the church.

Keith Hibbs, director of the office of worship leadership and church music for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, led music for the Sept. 23 morning worship service. Chuck Kelley, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, gave the message. He spoke from First, Arab's, original pulpit, which was made by the church's founding pastor. His message called the church members to look back and remember God's faithfulness, but also to look forward to the work of God in the church's future.

The church also baptized five young people that day.

After the service the church held a lunch for all attendees. "It was tremendous fellowship," Pastor Paul Murphy said.

The church held a concert featuring Larnelle Harris for its evening service.

(Joseph Rhea)



Photo courtesy of FBC Brewton

FBC BREWTON NAMES JOHN FINKLEA PASTOR EMERITUS

FBC Brewton deacon Michael Rowell (right) presents John Finklea (left) with a framed portrait commemorating Finklea's being named pastor emeritus Oct. 14. Finklea retired in 1999 as senior pastor of the church after more than 25 years of service. Jack Fitts is the current pastor.

Under fire

Billy Graham faces backlash over Mormon 'cult' removal on website

For evangelicals, berating Billy Graham is like Catholics dissing the pope. Through his globe-trotting crusades and passionate preaching, the nearly 94-year-old evangelist has led countless Christians to the Lord and almost single-handedly ushered evangelicalism into the modern age.

But when Graham had the "cult" language about Mormonism pulled from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) website in mid-October, he confirmed some conservative evangelicals' fear that GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney's rise would lift his Mormon church to acceptance within mainstream Christianity.

Kevin Blackwell, pastor of Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown, said, "While I have great respect for Dr. Graham and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, the truth remains that the Mormon faith has fundamental differences in regards to soteriology, the inerrancy of Scripture and the doctrine of the Trinity, among many other things. We must call Mormonism for what it is: a religion that promotes great morals but terrible doctrine."

Most evangelicals do not consider Mormons Christian because Latter-day Saints revere Joseph Smith as a prophet, consider the Book of Mormon on par with the Bible and conceive of the Christian Trinity as three separate gods.

Mormons acknowledge those differences but insist they are Christians.

The scrubbing of the "cult" language followed Romney's pilgrimage to Billy Graham's mountaintop home in Montreat, N.C. After the Oct. 11 meeting Graham pledged to "do all I can to help" Romney, according to a campaign aide. The BGEA said it cut the language "because we do not wish to participate in a theological debate about something that has become politicized during this campaign."

Concern remains

And while the site still identifies those things that mark a group as a cult — which would define Mormonism as a cult if the description were applied — some conservative Christians remain concerned because all direct references to the Mormon faith were removed from the site.

"Evangelicals cannot begin thinking of Mormonism as a mainstream Christian denomination, and Dr. Graham's association has taken a step in that direction," Blackwell noted. "That being said, this political decision is not to elect a priest, pastor or religious leader. We are electing a president, and ... we can support Mitt Romney's politics while rejecting his theology."

Bob Waldrep, president of Crosswinds Foundation for Faith and Culture in Birmingham, agreed.

"I have been researching, writing and speaking on new religious movements and pseudo-Christian groups such as the Mormon Church for 20 years now and I cannot ever recall a time when Christians — evangelicals, in particular — were trying so hard to not call one of these groups a cult, or as being outside the Christian faith," he said.

"My fear is some evangelical leaders have become less outspoken in their concerns about Mormonism from fear they may negatively impact Mr. Romney's chances of being elected," Waldrep said. "We must be mindful that in the attempt to legitimize Mr. Romney, we may also be legitimizing the Mormon Church. Once we have rung that bell it will be hard, if not impossible, to un-ring."

"Giving one's support to, or casting one's vote for a Mormon, should not mean we should no longer tell the truth about what the Mormon Church believes and teaches," he said.

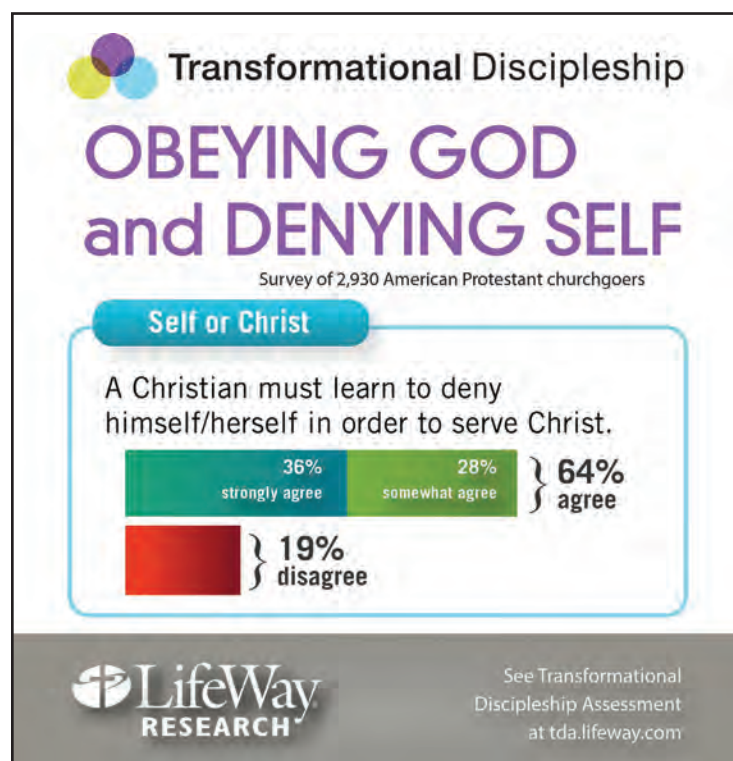
"It is never wrong to point out error, especially when it comes to those who proclaim a false gospel," Waldrep said. "As Christians we know the governance of our nation is important; however, advancing the kingdom of Christ should have much greater significance."

The BGEA did not respond to a request for comment. (RNS, TAB)



RNS photo
Billy Graham (center) and his son Franklin (right), meet with GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney (left) in a meeting at the evangelist's North Carolina home Oct. 11.

Believers find obedience challenging, LifeWay Research shows



Making personal, sacrificial decisions in order to better obey Christ is a key attribute to an individual's spiritual growth, according to a survey of American churchgoers by LifeWay Research.

"Obeying God and Denying Self" is one of eight attributes of discipleship identified in the Transformational Discipleship study conducted by LifeWay Research.

Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research, said the obeying God and denying self attribute "does not measure a specific list of sins to avoid. Rather it gauges whether an individual has an obedient posture."

The survey reveals 64 percent of churchgoers agree with the statement: "A Christian must learn to deny himself/herself in order to serve Christ." Nineteen percent disagree with the statement.

The survey measures confession of sins and asking God for forgiveness as one component of

the obeying God and denying self attribute. When asked how often, if at all, they personally "confess ... sins and wrongdoings to God and ask for forgiveness," 39 percent indicate every day and 27 percent say at least a few times a week. Eight percent of respondents say they rarely or never confess sins and wrongdoings to God and ask forgiveness.

The survey also asked individual churchgoers how proactive they are in avoiding sin with the statement: "I try to avoid situations in which I might be tempted to think or do immoral things." Three-fourths agree with the statement, but only 32 percent strongly agree. Eleven percent disagree, and 16 percent responded indifferently.

The survey also examined an individual's inclination to adjust his or her attitude through the statement: "When I realize my attitude does not please God, I take steps to try to fix it." More than 80 percent agree with the statement, but only

32 percent strongly agree. Fifteen percent neither agree nor disagree, and 4 percent disagree.

The survey also reveals other actions that can positively impact the scores of individuals on the obeying God and denying self attribute:

- ▶ Attending a worship service.
- ▶ Making a decision to obey or follow God with an awareness that choosing His way may in some way be costly.
- ▶ Being disciplined or mentored one-on-one by a more spiritually mature Christian.
- ▶ Reading the Bible or a book about what is in the Bible.
- ▶ Praying for the spiritual status of unbelieving acquaintances.
- ▶ Setting aside time for prayer of any kind.

The findings on obeying God and denying self are part of the largest discipleship study of its kind. Results from each of the eight attributes of spiritual maturity will continue to be released over the coming months. (BP)



Great Commission Ministries FutureFocus Task Force Report

The Task Force has identified II Chronicles 7:14 as the foundation of both this report and of what we can accomplish together

*as Alabama Baptists. Without the power of prayer and the presence and blessing of God, our best plans will make little Kingdom impact. The key component of our FutureFocus is to call our convention to prayer. The goal is to launch a prayer focus, called **Praying Across Alabama**, in the spring of 2013 with a Day of Prayer on February 24, followed by a series of prayer gatherings on the steps of every courthouse in Alabama lasting through May 2. Praying Across Alabama will be a joint effort between state missionaries, directors of missions and local pastors/church leaders. It will be a prayer event where we seek God's help in taking the Gospel from Alabama to the ends of the earth. We know a series of 30-minute prayer times is not enough, but we believe it will be a starting point where the demands and promises of II Chronicles 7:14 can be claimed as the foundation of our FutureFocus. Dates, times and locations for the prayer meetings are available through www.PrayingAcrossAlabama.org and your association office.*

FutureFocus on Church Planting

AFFIRMATIONS

1. The most effective church planting strategy is for churches/associations to birth churches.
2. Church planting efforts are needed in Alabama since more than 50% of our population is unchurched.



Philip Morris

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To increase our total number of churches by 1% annually through church planting efforts
2. To plant all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people in partnership with local churches, associations, the State Board of Missions, and to whatever extent possible, the North American Mission Board

EXPLANATIONS

Church planting has been and will continue to be a priority for Alabama Baptists. The reasoning behind this is very

simple, and that is to plant churches to reach the more than 2,000,000 lost and unchurched people in Alabama with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our state is also more diverse in ethnicity than ever before as the world has come to our doorstep. As a result, we need all kinds of Alabama Baptist churches to reach all types of people based on language, worship style, culture, affinity, etc.

The success of these new churches begins with a partnership between the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, local churches and associations, and where possible, the North American Mission Board. Each church and association is challenged to plant new churches in response to Jesus' command in Acts 1:8, so that every person in Alabama has an opportunity to know Christ as his or her personal Savior and to grow in His likeness.

FutureFocus on Church Revitalization

AFFIRMATIONS

1. Revitalization is often necessary for churches to become what the Lord intended for His church and is critical for reaching Alabama and the world for Christ.
2. Plateaued or declining churches can be revitalized and therefore become healthy and effective.



John Gates

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To make available a self-assessment tool designed to aid pastors and church leaders in identifying areas of need
2. To provide coaching assistance through specialized state missionaries and other trained leaders for churches as requested

EXPLANATIONS

The Task Force affirms the autonomy of the local church. We also understand that, statistically speaking, many SBC and Alabama

Baptist churches are plateaued or declining. How can we assist our churches who are in need of help and/or hope?

First, we propose that the pastor and/or church leaders perform a self-assessment to determine the current health of the congregation. A questionnaire is available to assist in this assessment. If it is determined by the church that help is desired, the State Board of Missions will become a mentoring resource to help the church chart its future course.

Church Revitalization will not happen as the result of one conference. It will require weeks and months of prayer, energy and effort to seek the face of God and determine a course of action.

FutureFocus on Global Missions

AFFIRMATIONS

1. Messengers to the 2011 State Convention approved the Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections strategy to begin in January 2013.
2. This strategy marks a shift from a geographic partnership model to a partnership with the more than 400 missionaries from Alabama wherever they serve in the nine affinity groups.



Greg Pouncey

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To provide opportunities for Alabama Baptists to be involved in missions by connecting with IMB and NAMB missionaries from Alabama through prayer, partnership and people groups through vision journeys and other means coordinated by the Office of Global Missions
2. To develop a State Board of Missions security policy and training system to support Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections

EXPLANATIONS

The Task Force affirms the fulfilling of the

FutureFocus

Great Commission by churches as they give financial support through the Cooperative Program and also send mission teams to support personnel on the field. At last year's Alabama Baptist Convention, the messengers approved Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections, a new strategy for partnering with more than 400 missionaries who have ties to the state of Alabama. This mission effort is not meant to replace churches' giving through the Cooperative Program but to support our personnel through prayer, partnerships and engaging people groups.

First, we propose that our Office of Global Missions continue to plan vision journeys connecting Alabama Baptists with missionaries around the world who have Alabama ties. This will allow churches to become involved in engaging people groups through praying and going, but it will also motivate them to remain strong in Cooperative Program giving.

Second, the Task Force recognizes that as volunteer teams go to the ends of the earth, there is a need for them to be trained in issues of safety and security. As the trend for churches to get more personally involved continues, we can assist volunteers in receiving the training needed to make their involvement successful.

FutureFocus on Disaster Relief

AFFIRMATIONS

1. More people are open to the Gospel in times of disaster and this will be true in the future when other disasters take place.
2. Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers continue to make a Kingdom impact by serving these victims and their families during crisis experiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To provide training opportunities for credentialed and spontaneous volunteers, including collegiate and campus ministers, enabling them to function through our disaster relief network
2. To encourage Alabama Baptists to give financial support to the annual disaster relief offering

EXPLANATIONS

The Task Force recognizes that times of disaster open the door to minister to people's needs and often open their hearts to the Gospel. In the past, Alabama disaster relief volunteers have done an amazing job meeting needs and sharing the Gospel with those who need to hear it.

First, we propose that we continue training disaster relief participants, giving special attention to training spontaneous volunteers and college students. Our credentialed volunteers have done a great job, but during the crises related to the tornadoes, we discovered the need to provide some training for the many Baptist volunteers who showed up ready to work without the necessary training. Also, we noticed that our college students were willing to help, and we need a plan to train them and have them ready.

Second, we propose that we support the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Offering among our churches so that we will continue to be prepared in a state where tornadoes and hurricanes are an ever-present reality.

FutureFocus on Cooperative Program and Stewardship Development

AFFIRMATIONS

1. We affirm the mandates of the Great Commission and Acts 1:8.
2. We are missions giving pacesetters.
3. We have always accomplished more together than independently.
4. We are faced with financial challenges associated with our national economy and changing relationships initiated by NAMB, but we continue to be good stewards of God's resources.
5. We have an abiding commitment to remain faithful partners with the SBC and we are equally committed to the ministry responsibilities we have in Alabama Baptist life.



Tim Cox

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To encourage Alabama Baptist churches to accept the challenge to increase their Cooperative Program giving of undesignated receipts by .25% (1/4%) annually for the next four years
2. To adopt a shared ministries model with an amount not to exceed 10% of the base budget
3. To equitably divide (50/50) remaining funds between the state and national conventions by 2023, the Alabama Baptist Convention's 200th anniversary

EXPLANATIONS

The 1% Challenge Assuming a \$1 Million Increase

The net result for the SBC in 2014:

- + SBC receives 50% of CP increase: \$500,000
- + SBC receives \$105,000 from Samford Allocation
- + SBC receives 50% of any gifts beyond CP Base
- + New SBC % in 2014: 43.41% (from 43.0% in 2013)
- + A \$\$ increase of \$605,000 for SBC Ministries

The net result for Alabama in 2014:

- + Alabama receives 50% of CP increase: \$500,000
- + Alabama re-allocates \$105,000 from Samford to SBC (\$105,000)
- + Alabama receives 50% of any gifts beyond CP Base
- + New Alabama % in 2014: 56.59 (From 57.0 in 2013)
- + A \$\$ increase of \$395,000 for State Convention missions causes

SUMMARY EXPLANATIONS FOR 2014

Assuming Churches Accept the 1% Challenge...

- + A win-win for SBC and Alabama missions causes
- + The SBC receives a 60.5% increase for missions causes
- + Alabama receives a 39.5% increase for missions causes

EXAMPLES OF PARTNERSHIPS WITH SBC IN SHARED MINISTRIES:

North American Missions in Alabama
Guidestone Financial Services
Cooperative Program Development
Alabama WMU
Global Missions Partnerships

Church-planting network sued for alleged abuse cover-up

A controversial church-planting network with ties to a Southern Baptist Convention seminary has been sued in Maryland for allegedly covering up allegations of sexual abuse of children in the 1980s and 1990s.

According to The Associated Press, the lawsuit filed by three unnamed female plaintiffs claims that Sovereign Grace Ministries did not report abuse allegedly committed by church members to

police. The lawsuit says church leaders counseled suspected pedophiles about how to avoid prosecution and forced victims to meet with and “forgive” their abuser.

Sovereign Grace Ministries, which moved its headquarters recently from Gaithersburg, Md., to Louisville, Ky., released a statement at press time saying officials had not yet received a copy of the lawsuit and were in no position to comment on the allegations.

Christians ignoring abuse?

A Christian radio host says it is time for evangelical churches to wake up to an “epidemic” of sexual abuse of children going on in their midst.

“I don’t know how long evangelicalism can ignore this problem,” Janet Mefferd said Oct. 18 on her syndicated radio show from Dallas that airs on over 100 stations across the nation. “I really don’t.”

The segment included an interview with Susan Burke, the attorney representing three anonymous women in a lawsuit alleging a cover-up of sexual abuse by Sovereign Grace Ministries (see story this page), a church-planting network.

Mefferd said she was not talking just about the Sovereign Grace lawsuit — those allegations are

unproven — but about the “appalling” number of hits that can be generated on the Internet any day by typing terms like “sexual abuse” or “sexual assault” along with “pastor,” “minister” or “church.”

“This is an epidemic going on in churches,” Mefferd said. “I’m looking at these other stories and I’m thinking, ‘When are evangelicals going to wake up and say we have a massive problem in our own churches?’”

“So much ink was spilled on the Catholic Church abuse scandal, and it should have been, but we act as if it’s not happening in our own churches,” she said. “It’s happening in our own churches every single day, and I am finding it harder and harder to find people who will talk about this.” (ABP)

“Child abuse in any context is reprehensible and criminal,” said Tommy Hill, the organization’s director of finance and administration.

“Sovereign Grace Ministries takes seriously the biblical commands to pursue the protection and well being of all people, especially the most vulnerable in its midst: little children.”

The scandal comes at a particularly bad time for Sovereign Grace, a 30-year-old network of about 80 churches at the center of a multid denominational Neo-Calvinist movement that emphasizes God’s sovereignty and downplays human free will.

Last year Sovereign Grace President C.J. Mahaney went

on leave of absence for several months while his board investigated accusations of dictatorial conduct that estranged former members.

One of Mahaney’s staunch defenders throughout the ordeal was Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and, alongside Mahaney, a leading figure in the “new Calvinism” church movement.

Mahaney has in the past spoken in chapel at Southern Seminary. Mohler and Mahaney are listed as council members of The Gospel Coalition, a group concerned about moral and theological relativism among evangelicals. (ABP)

Want to know God?

By Pastor John Thweatt
First Baptist Church, Pell City

When we truly know God we can trust Him. When Job lost everything the Bible says in Job 1:20-21, “Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshipped. And he said, ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.’”

It is interesting to note that Job grieved. He tore his robe, he shaved his head and he fell on the ground. Job grieved, but he worshipped God in the midst of his grief. Job knew God and he trusted God. Do we know God like that? Do we know Him with such intimacy that we can also trust His providence?

Most Christians are very familiar with Romans 8:28. We know the verse and can quote it to those who are suffering, but do we believe it? Do we truly know that all things work together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purposes?

When we know God in this way — when we can trust Him in the “shadow of death” — we will find what Paul called the “secret of contentment.”

In a little book titled “The Life of God in the Soul of Man,” Henry Scougal spoke of the joy of losing ourselves in the delight of God. In the midst of that discussion he said, “Chastisements, though they be not joyous but grievous, would hereby lose their sting, the rod as well as the staff would comfort him — he would snatch a kiss from the hand that was smiting him, and gather sweetness from the severity — nay, he would rejoice that God did not the will of such a worthless and foolish creature as himself, yet he did His own will, and accomplished His own designs, which are infinitely more holy and wise.”

When we truly know God, we can trust Him and find His goodness at the table set before us in the presence of our enemies. He is good when His oil runs from our head. He is good when our cup “runneth over,” and He is good when we experience His rod and His staff. When we know Him we can trust Him.



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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@fbcthamasville.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 resumes 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.

BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH DIRECTOR: Mount Joy Baptist Church in Curry, Ala., is seeking a bivocational youth director to begin Jan. 1, 2013. Send resumes to: Ronnie Hays, 5640 Smith Lake Dam Road, Jasper, AL 35504.

OTHER POSITIONS

CHURCH PIANIST: Valley View Bap-

tist Church in Leeds, Ala., is currently seeking a pianist. This position includes playing with an accomplished praise band, worship choir and special events. Worship style is blended and includes contemporary praise and worship music, upgraded and traditional hymns, contemporary Christian music, various choral anthems and other styles of music. Please send resume to: Andrew Lewis at andrew.lewis@valleyviewbaptist.com.

PART-TIME CHURCH SECRETARY: Hanceville First Baptist is currently accepting resumes for the position of part-time church secretary. Responsibilities for this position include accounts payable, data entry, church publications and social media. Experience with computers and graphic art is strongly recommended. Please include with your resume a recommendation letter from your current pastor. Applications can be sent to resume@hancevillefirstbaptist.com.

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RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

by Jennifer Davis Rash • executive editor • jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

Brushing extraneous emotions aside

Every time an election cycle rolls around I find myself weary before it is actually time to vote. The constant bickering and one-upmanship played out in the mainstream media is exhausting enough, but add to it the conversations at family gatherings, the workplace and even church. In many cases people on all sides of the issues are working hard to demonize the other sides rather than calmly and factually lobbying for their stands.

We absolutely should be discussing the issues and we should be hammering out all sides in an attempt to have the best government and nation possible. We also should be truly attempting to understand the issues and hold our elected leaders accountable. But is it possible to do these things without tearing each other to shreds? Is it possible to respect each other as human beings while we talk through the issues and actually listen to one another's reasoning? Is it possible to stick to the facts and acknowledge when we don't know the answer or when we make a mistake?

Everyday situations

And what about in everyday life outside of the elections? Could we operate in a similar fashion of mutual respect or are we unwilling to admit we may not have all the answers?

How often do we spend more time trying to pull emotional strings and/or exaggerate the truth in order to come out on top, win an argument or be in control?

It seems to happen pretty regularly within the work environment.

I've experienced it personally, and I've been a part of

numerous conversations with family members and friends who have experienced it. In all cases, emotionally driven discussions are far more frustrating, unproductive and exhausting than factually focused ones.

Similar situations also arise within families — married couples deal with it, siblings face it and parents and children definitely experience it.

Stewardship of time

Think about all the wasted minutes and hours of our lives related to these types of situations. And it is not only the time spent in the conversations; we also have to count the time spent later recounting the experience to others as we "vent."

While time spent dealing with these types of situations frustrates me, I am not without fault. I have been the person pulling the emotional strings before and remember how upset it would make me when the other person wouldn't take my side.

I'm also the person learning more and more each day about how much more productive it is to stick to the facts, stay aboveboard with our comments and actions, and truly listen to all sides before taking action or making a decision.

I'm also learning not to leave God out of the equation. Once all the facts are understood and all the extraneous emotions are brushed aside, then we need God's wisdom and direction. Seeking Him and listening to that soft, still voice rather than reacting emotionally without careful contemplation can truly make a difference for all individuals involved as well as what happens with the situation.

If every believer were to make this a routine practice, it might even change the way of our world.

So whether it be an elected official, our longtime co-worker or ourselves, it starts with accountability and discipline. If we expect better, practice better and only allow what is better, then how can it not be better?



Rashional EXTRAS...

What topics are on your mind?

Email jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

Health tips from '40 Days to Better Living — Optimal Health'

By Dr. Scott Morris
Church Health Center of Memphis
www.churchhealthcenter.org

► Nutrition setbacks happen. We give in to the temptation of a doughnut or eat too much at a friend's birthday dinner. The next temptation is to starve the day after to "make up" for the setback. Instead just get back on track eating a healthy and reasonable diet.

► Start a food journal to help you set nutritional goals, and begin writing down those goals.

► Make a list of your favorite foods and see if any need to be modified to a healthier version of that food.

► Begin reading labels on the food you buy and eat. Take note of sodium content and the ingredient "high-fructose corn syrup."

► Make a grocery list that looks forward. Include plenty of whole grains, fresh or frozen vegetables and fruits, and limit the prepared and processed foods.

► Don't drink your calories. Substitute water for sweetened drinks such as tea or soda. If you want something fizzy, try drinking seltzer water instead of plain water.

► If you feel like snacking, try unsalted nuts or dried fruit instead of sugary or salty snacks. Make sure you enjoy the proper serving size.

► Move the unhealthy snacks out of reach. Set them on a high shelf in the pantry or throw them out entirely. Move healthy snacks into easy-to-grab places.

In response to the Sept. 6 Rashional Thoughts "Recalling the 'grand' moments," John Fuson, of Michigan, wrote on Facebook:

"Being a grandparent is sometimes hard to accept, as growing old sort of sneaks up on you. Until you find yourself in one of those unexpected conversations you described in your post. I have been privileged to participate in one or two with my grandchildren and hope to have [a] few more. Our roles change as life progresses, but the joy of sharing special moments with your children never gets old. And when you find yourself in the moment with a grandchild, well it's golden!"

"A lot of things are shouting at us in life but, as believers, we have the ability to be led by the spirit of God to know what we are supposed to do ... and to know that everything else is additional."

Rev. Ollie Gunn
Christian Walk Baptist Church, Bessemer

"The heart is not simply one's inner, private life, hidden from others. The heart is the origin of human behavior and from it flows everything people do. Setting apart Christ as Lord in the heart is not merely a private matter but will be evident to all when Christians suffer for their faith."

Jay T. Robertson
University of Mobile

"The acid test of Christianity is how we react to the difficulties of life and the words we speak in response."

Michael Brooks
Judson College

TRY THIS OUT
Instead of reaching for that cup of coffee first thing in the morning, try drinking a glass of water. The brain has been without water all night and is a bit dehydrated. You will wake up faster with water than coffee.

A sobering finding

Teens dependent on marijuana show loss of IQ, risk of long-term dangers

New evidence of marijuana's negative effect on intelligence and its still-increasing use by teenagers shows the need to educate young people and prevent the drug's legalization, a Southern Baptist ethics leader says.

Individuals who use marijuana during their teenage years have an average drop in IQ of eight points and are vulnerable to mental health problems, according to a study by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) released in August. This news followed a May report that showed marijuana use among teens has grown by 21 percent since 2008.

The PNAS study "adds additional support to the necessity of keeping marijuana out of the hands of adolescents," said Barrett Duke, vice president for public policy and research at the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "The significant impact marijuana can have on the IQ of teens is alarming. We must redouble our efforts to educate young people about the dangers of marijuana use."

The study's release came as more states prepare to vote on whether to legalize marijuana use.

Voters in Colorado, Washington and Oregon will determine Nov. 6 if they want to legalize marijuana for recreational use. Arkansas and Massachusetts voters, meanwhile, will decide whether to legalize marijuana for medical use. Medical marijuana already is legal in 17 states and the District of Columbia.

Teens' use of marijuana will increase even more if it becomes legal, Duke said.

"Legalization of marijuana will assure its greater availability," Duke told Baptist Press (BP). "Too many teens are already limiting

their futures by using marijuana. We shouldn't do anything to add to their numbers. Rather we should do all we can to prevent the tragic results of marijuana use."

Researchers in the PNAS study tested the IQ of more than 1,000 New Zealanders from the city of Dunedin over a 25-year span, once at age 13 and again at age 38. The study found 5 percent of the study group was dependent on marijuana, referred to as cannabis by researchers. Those 5 percent showed a decline of eight IQ points from age 13 to 38.

We must deliver "to the public the message that cannabis use during adolescence can have harmful effects on mental abilities," said the study's lead author, Madeline Meier, a psychologist and postdoctoral researcher at Duke University in Durham, N.C.

Eight points lowers a person from an average IQ of 100 to 92, dropping him or her from the 50th percentile to the 29th percentile of intelligence, according to PNAS. This drop will affect the person's education, income, health and abil-

ity to have a longer life. Users who quit smoking marijuana cannot fully reverse the neurological damage, according to the study.

Lower IQ ratings are not found in all marijuana users — just primarily those who use the drug during adolescence. Users who began marijuana use in adulthood showed no marked neurological change, according to the study. It concluded the brain is more vulnerable to drug abuse while it is still developing.

That is a sobering finding, since more than half of marijuana users are teenagers, according to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA).

Among studies showing rising teen use or acceptance of marijuana:

► A 2011 survey showed 2.6 million individuals age 12 and older use marijuana, with nearly 58 percent of those under 18, according to SAMHSA.

► Two of five teens have tried marijuana at least once in the last year — an increase from 31 percent in 2008, according to the Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS) released in May and sponsored by the MetLife Foundation.

► Heavy, past-month use of marijuana by teens has grown to 27 percent from 19 percent in 2008 — a 47 percent increase, according to the PATS study.

► Nearly three-fourths (71 percent) of teens say they have friends

who smoke pot regularly, PATS reported. While 61 percent of teens say they disapprove of their friends' drug use, only 51 percent say they see "great risk" with marijuana use.

"Adolescents are getting the message that cigarettes are dangerous but marijuana is not, which again highlights the importance of getting the message out to adolescents that cannabis is not harmless," Meier told BP.

IQ decline

"There should be public service announcements targeting adolescents that state clearly and simply that cannabis use in adolescence can lead to IQ decline," Meier said.

Westley Clark, director of the Center for Substance Abuse Treat-

ment, said children are not "emotionally and intellectually predisposed" to focus on marijuana's ill effects while their minds are constantly changing and developing.

"Throw in alcohol, throw in marijuana, throw in prescription drugs and then what do we get ... a decline in mental functioning," Clark told BP.

Parents must be more involved in their children's lives to stop them from abusing drugs, Clark said.

Adolescents need to prepare for their future and be equipped to find jobs, he said. If marijuana interferes with their cognitive development it should be discouraged.

"This is a world where competition rules, and you don't want to give up that edge," Clark said. (BP)

"Throw in alcohol, throw in marijuana, throw in prescription drugs and then what do we get ... a decline in mental functioning."

**Westley Clark
director, Center for
Substance Abuse Treatment**

What is reverse mortgage?

By Jimmy Dixon

A reverse mortgage is a loan sponsored by the U.S. Government that enables senior homeowners (62 and older) to convert part of the equity in their homes into tax-free money or pay off an existing mortgage. Increasingly, older homeowners are using reverse mortgages to supplement their retirement incomes, pay for health care, make home improvements and create cash reserves for emergencies.

The reverse mortgage is an excellent planning tool that has been used by homeowners from all walks of life to enhance their retirement years. The growing popularity of the product is evidence of its benefit in an array of financial circumstances. To be eligible for a reverse mortgage you must be 62 years old and be a homeowner with some eq-

uity in your home. You may qualify even if there is an existing mortgage on your home.

How much you can get depends on a few factors, including your age, the value of your home, the amount of equity in it and interest rates.

There are several options available for how you receive the money from a reverse mortgage. You can receive the money in an upfront lump sum, a line of credit, fixed monthly amounts or a combination of options.

Like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy Dixon covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives. He is Bible study director and a deacon at Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown.

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— Correction —

The article "Alabama native Jason Allen elected as Midwestern Seminary's fifth president" in the Oct. 25 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* named the incorrect pastor under whom Jason Allen served at Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile. During Allen's service from 1998 to 2001, Steve Lawson was pastor.

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Baptist World Alliance addresses Pakistan's blasphemy laws at UN council meeting

The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) participated in a review of Pakistan's human rights record at a recent meeting of the United Nations (U.N.) Human Rights Council (HRC).

The HRC's second Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Pakistan took place in Geneva, Switzerland, on Oct. 30. As a nongovernmental organization in consultative status with the U.N., the BWA submitted its own report on the situation in Pakistan.

The BWA report takes particular issue with Pakistan's blasphemy laws, which have led to the persecution of Christians and other minority groups. "The exploitation, violence and persecution against religious minorities are on an increasing curve across the country," the report states.

Among the abuses highlighted by the BWA are extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, violence against women, misuse of blasphemy laws, injustices at the workplace against religious minorities and attacks on places of worship.

"A climate of impunity exists" in Pakistan, said Raimundo Barreto, BWA director of freedom and justice. "Perpetrators are not held accountable and police often

do not act to prevent abuses or apprehend attackers."

Well-known consequences of the blasphemy laws include the case of Asia Bibi, a Christian who was convicted and sentenced to death in 2010 by a Pakistani court for allegedly blaspheming against the prophet Muhammad. It has been reported that the accusation against Bibi stemmed at least partially from a property damage dispute that Bibi had with a neighbor.

In August this year Rimsha Masih, a 14-year-old Christian girl, was arrested for allegedly desecrating pages of the Quran. In early September a local imam was arrested on suspicion of planting pages of the Quran in Masih's bag. She was subsequently released on bail.

Officials in the southern Asian nation have been killed for opposing these laws. Salmaan Taseer, governor of the province of Pun-

jab, was killed in January 2011 by his own security guard, who disagreed with Taseer's opposition to the blasphemy laws. Shahbaz Bhatti, a Christian who was Pakistan's minister for minorities af-

fairs, was assassinated in March 2011 for his vocal criticism of the nation's blasphemy laws.

Christer Daelander, BWA representative at the U.N. in Geneva, claims "thousands of people have been accused of blasphemy" since the laws were first introduced into Pakistan in 1986. "Since then hundreds have been

judged and condemned for blasphemy."

In September the BWA participated in a hearing on blasphemy laws in Pakistan organized by the World Council of Churches and attended meetings held by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom on human rights violations in Pakistan.

"The BWA will continue to reach out to key countries that can raise these concerns at the HRC," Barreto explained. "We urge the global Baptist family to pray for this important UPR session and encourage Baptist leaders in different countries to write or contact their governments and bring this concern to their attention."

(BWA)

**"The exploitation,
violence and per-
secution against
religious minorities
are on an increas-
ing curve across
the country."**

Baptist World Alliance report



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 4

Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson

Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

LIVING IN HUMILITY

1 Peter 5:1-9

In Roles of Leadership (1-4)

Peter addressed the elders (pastors) because as leaders they would likely face the brunt of persecution first. He wrote to encourage the pastors, identifying himself as a “fellow elder.” The word “elder” suggests a man of dignity, respect and wisdom.

Peter wrote to encourage his fellow elders as they encountered hard times. Peter began this chapter by describing three ways pastors can find much-needed encouragement. As you serve Jesus it is important for you to receive encouragement from your ministry partners.

A pastor is not to be the Lone Ranger. Pastors also should receive encouragement from their perception of the sufferings of Jesus. The more pastors talk about Jesus and what He has done for them, the more fired up they become.

Pastors, like all Christians, need to preach the gospel to themselves regularly. Pastors can find encouragement by rejoicing in their salvation (Luke 10:20). Pastors should rejoice that they have been saved. They should be men of prayer and the Word. They should experience sweet daily fellowship with God.

Expectations of the pastors are described in vv. 2-3. Pastors are to “shepherd the flock of God.” The words “flock of God” remind the pastors that the congregation does not belong to them. It is God’s church and they are given the privilege and responsibility of shepherding it.

Pastors provide, protect and reproduce the flock of God. Pastors also supervise the flock of God by “exercising oversight.” Pastors are to lead and direct the members and ministries of the church. Pastors discharge this duty voluntarily, eagerly and humbly. Pastors are not to enter ministry so they can boss others around but so they can exemplify the character of Jesus to those they serve.

Peter reminded the pastors that they would be rewarded when the chief Shepherd appears. The designation of Jesus as the

chief Shepherd reminds the leaders that they are fundamentally servants, not autocrats. As shepherds they serve under the authority of the chief Shepherd, doing His will rather than theirs.

In Relating to Others (5)

Peter instructed those who were younger to submit to the leadership of the pastors. The purpose is not to encourage obedience no matter what leaders might say, for if leaders give counsel that contradicts God’s moral standards or violates the gospel then they should not be followed. Nor is the verse suggesting that leaders are exempt from accountability before the congregation.

The entire church needs to adorn itself with humility. Humility is the oil that allows relationships in the church to run smoothly and lovingly. Peter grounded his admonition for humility with a citation from Proverbs 3:34. Christians should heed the injunction to be humble because God sets His face against the proud, but He lavishes His grace upon the humble. Those who submit to God’s sovereignty in humility will find that He will lift them up and reward them.

In Relating to God (6-7)

Since God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble, believers should humble themselves under God’s mighty and sovereign hand in their suffering. Humility also manifests itself in handing over our worries to God. Worry constitutes pride because it denies the care of a sovereign God. The remedy for pride is believing in and resting in God’s care for His children. Christian, note carefully the truth Peter wrote: “because He cares for you.” God cares for you even in the midst of suffering. God loves you with a never-stopping, never-giving-up, unbreak- ing, always-and-forever love.

In Resisting the Devil (8-9)

Remain vigilant and alert because the devil seeks to destroy the faith of believers. The devil roars like a lion to create fear among God’s people. Resist the devil by remaining firm in the faith. Christians triumph over the devil as they continue to trust God.

Bible Studies for Life

By David Hogg

Academic Dean at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

PRAY WITH DEPENDENCY

Acts 4:23-31

Embrace God’s Plan (23-28)

If you have been active in the church for long enough to become involved in discussions about theological matters, you have more than likely heard someone cite the first part of Deuteronomy 29:29: “The secret things belong to the Lord.”

Usually when this passage is quoted it is in response to some deep mystery of God’s revelation such as the relationship between free will and predestination. The one area to which we rarely apply it, however, is to our lives.

How many of us have said or thought that we wish we knew more about God’s plan for our lives? We want to know our future; we want to know how long we have to live; we want to know particular details. Perhaps like Hezekiah of old (2 Kings 20) the reason the Lord does not show or tell us more about His plan is that we are not able to receive it. The distance from humble to haughty is a good deal shorter than many realize.

In the early church the apostles knew only what Jesus had charged them to do and that their obedience would be costly; yet they were content. How can we tell they are content? Look at their prayer in vv. 24-26. After being harassed and threatened by the authorities, Peter and company praised God in prayer in a rather unique way. First, they began with the sovereignty of God. They did not question God’s goodness or power or guidance; instead they opened their prayer with an acclamation about God’s power and sovereignty over all creation. Knowing God is enough. While some of us would be inclined to complain about how we had been treated, Peter and the church were able to embrace God’s work even when met with hostility because they had embraced God. Satisfaction with God’s plan for our lives and His leading begins with trusting and resting in Him.

Second, the early church was content and able to embrace God’s plan because they

recognized that His purposes and power cannot be thwarted. One of the signs of maturity among God’s people is that they focus less and less on themselves in prayer and more and more on God. Citing Psalm 2, this congregation did not focus on their problems, struggles and difficulties, but on the power of God to accomplish His purposes. Sure, there are obstacles in our way, they said, and yes, the authorities are going to make spreading the gospel message difficult and painful; but God cannot be stopped, and we are His servants who will bring about what He has “predestined to take place.” Notice that no one was expressing confidence in themselves as servants; rather, they were expressing supreme confidence in God.

Pray for God to Work (29-30)

Wonderfully, this early congregation of believers recognized that confidence in God’s activity did not mean laziness or negligence with respect to their own. Predestination and responsibility are addressed in the same breath because the foreordained means by which God will accomplish His eternal purposes is through His people, the Church.

As much as we like to protect and preserve our own comfort, we need to see as the early church did that our prayer is not for a lighter load to bear but stronger backs to bear it. We do not need less of a burden; we need more of Jesus. As verse 30 points out, it is through Jesus that marvelous works of all kinds are performed for the sake of the Kingdom.

Experience God’s Power (31)

Does God answer prayer? Yes. Does God give us what we need in time of need? Yes. Is God able to help us overcome those who oppose the gospel? Yes. We should therefore always pray with expectation. But in praying with expectation, we must also remember that God answers according to His wisdom, which means our prayers will not always be answered in the same way. You may never feel your house or church shake, but the power of the Holy Spirit to fill you and work through you remains undiminished.

Christian Crossword

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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45				46				47

Across

1. The name the angel called him. (Luke 2:21)

6. She bore a son, and called his name _____. (Gen. 4:25)

10. Why, what ____ hath he done? (Mark 15:14)

11. ____ of Tarsus. (Acts 9:11)

12. Cossack leader.

15. In the song, Jesus is ____ing on my heart strings.

16. The shorter version of the name Joshua.

18. The ninth book of the Old Testament.

20. The prophets prophesy ____ in my name. (Jer. 14:14)

22. When they saw the ____, they rejoiced. (Matt. 2:10)

23. ____, Lord! God! (Jer. 4:10)

25. ____ is the kingdom of God. (Mark 4:26)

26. Written not with ____,

but with the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:3)

27. This man denied Jesus three times.

29. East central state. (abbr.)

31. The abbreviation for aluminum.

33. The first three letters of the alphabet.

35. ____ handmaid bare unto Abraham. (Gen. 25:12)

38. This woman was given to her husband as a reward for conquering a city. (Judg. 1:12)

41. A rodent.

42. My ____ is at hand. (Matt. 26:18)

43. It's not a he or a she, it's an ____.

44. Cast ballot.

45. All unrighteousness is _____. (1 John 5:17)

46. And a certain woman named ____, a seller of purple. (Acts 16:14)

47. No man putteth ____

wine into old bottles. (Luke 6:37)

Down

1. And ____ bowed his head. (2 Chron. 20:18)

2. Adam's wife.

3. ____ on my right hand. (Heb. 1:13)

4. A city in southwest Germany.

5. The opposite of yes.

7. The seventeenth book in the Old Testament.

8. The nineteenth letter in the Greek alphabet.

9. Very big.

13. Cain's brother.

14. Found the ____ tied by the door. (Mark 11:4)

17. Prefix meaning "saliva."

19. Fed you with milk, and not with _____. (1 Cor. 3:2)

21. Cursed is the ground for thy _____. (Gen. 3:17)

22. Reaping that I did not _____. (Luke 19:22)

24. ____ is not here.

(Luke 24:6)

28. ____ had stolen the images. (Gen. 31:19)

30. This woman was banished by a king. (Esther 1)

32. And when ____ saw it, he built an altar before it. (Ex. 32:5)

34. The man who killed Abel.

36. Ye that love the Lord, ____ evil. (Ps. 97:10)

37. A type of soup.

39. The abbreviation of centimeter.

40. First ____ kit.

42. Seventh note.

M	E	N	A	I	D	A	T	N	I	S
E	J	O	A	V	I	T	E	M	E	T
R	A	T		H	V	S	H	A	C	H
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PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Grenade hits Nairobi church: kills boy, injures others

NAIROBI, KENYA — Speaking just after her Oct. 9 return from the funeral of 9-year-old John Ian Maina, Sally Gatei was in a reflective mood.

Gatei was in the room when a grenade exploded at about 10:30 a.m. on Sept. 30 at St. Polycarp's Anglican Church in Kenya. The explosion killed the boy and injured eight other children.

"Many Christians, including myself, thought that something might happen. Every week we'd wonder 'What if it's this Sunday?' But we'd still go to church," Gatei said.

On Sept. 30 an explosive device was hurled at the Sunday School building. Six boys and one girl between the ages of 6 and 10 were rushed to the hospital. Two of them were taken in for immediate surgery while one was admitted to the intensive-care unit.

Church leaders were quick to appeal for nonretaliation.

"This is a cruel provocation, but I appeal to Christians not to feed violence with violence, either in word or deed, because we are called to overcome evil with good," said Archbishop Wabukala of the Anglican Church of Kenya.

"The life of an innocent child has been taken and others have been cruelly injured and traumatized in what should be the safest of places," Wabukala said. "The sanctity of life has been heartlessly breached in a sanctified place. Such acts seem to be designed to spark civil unrest and intimidate the Christian Church. In the face of such an outrage we ask, with the prophet Habakkuk, 'O Lord, how long?' ... Let us trust that God in His mercy will bring justice and relief as we cry out to Him."

The assailants escaped on foot via a nearby path. Three men were later arrested by the police and released after a few hours.

Churches in Kazakhstan pressured over re-registration

ASTANA, Kazakhstan — Shortly before the Oct. 25 re-registration deadline for all of Kazakhstan's religious communities, officials pressured nearly a quarter of the signatories on the re-registration application of Grace Protestant Church in Karatyrky to remove their names.

"It seems the authorities especially chose to target those founders who are of Kazakh and Uygur ethnicity," Pastor Zhursyn Koshkinov said.

One of the officials noted, "We only did what we were asked by the District Internal Policy Department (DIPD)." The DIPD reported the instruction came from the government's Agency of Religious Affairs (ARA).

ARA official Zhumagali Alimbekov refused to say how the authorities can demand that the Grace Church signatories reveal whether or not they are active in the church or write statements to reveal their beliefs when this is not required by the Religion Law. Jehovah's Witness communities have been raided "to make sure we are registered," while a Protestant church's worship was interrupted by the head of a state-backed "anti-sect" center.

CAMPUS News



JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Commissioner Twinkle Cavanaugh Speaks at Judson College:** Alabama Public Service Commissioner Twinkle Cavanaugh

spoke at Judson College's chapel Oct. 24. Cavanaugh, a graduate of Auburn University, holds place one on the commission. She and her husband, Jeff, are members of First Baptist Church, Montgomery.

Cavanaugh spoke about principles for success including forming meaningful relationships with a wide variety of people, "thinking outside the box" and knowing how the adversities of life define us.

► **Photographer Margaret Hiden Featured at Judson College Exhibition:** The Judson College art department will present the photography of Birmingham-based photographer Margaret Hiden through Nov. 23.

Hiden holds a B.F.A. in photography from Birmingham-Southern College and graduated at the top of her class with an M.F.A. in photography from the Savannah College of Art and Design in Atlanta. She has worked with the Society for Photographic Education and the College Art Association. Hiden also participated in The Creatives Project artist-in-studio residency and was mentor to youth in One Love Generation's studio.

Images of the work may be viewed at margarethiden.virb.com.



CAVANAUGH

For more information about the work or the artist contact Jamie Adams at 334-683-5251.

► **Chronicler of Black Belt Civil Rights Struggle to Speak at Judson College:** Former Marion resident Lila Quintero Weaver will return to Judson College Nov. 7-8 as a guest lecturer in several classes and do a book-signing for "Darkroom: A Memoir in Black and White."

"Darkroom," a graphic novel, focuses on the racial attitudes that Weaver encountered as a child and the civil rights events her family witnessed during the 1960s.

Weaver will speak at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Nov. 7 and at 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. on Nov. 8.



WEAVER

The book signing will be in the Gladys Dunkin Parlors from 10 to 11:30 a.m. on Nov. 8. Born in Buenos Aires, Weaver immigrated with her family to the United States in 1961. She received her bachelor's degree from New College at the University of Alabama and resides in Northport with her husband, Paul.

For more information, contact Joann Williams at 334-683-5135.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **UMobile Presents Piano Ensemble Concert:** The University of Mobile's annual fall Piano Ensemble performance was held Oct. 30 at 7 p.m. in Moorer Auditorium in Martin Hall on campus.

Pianists included 10 faculty members, seven stu-

dents and four alumni.

Music was performed on four grand pianos in duet style, duo style and double duet style. Eight players were on stage at one time in double duet style.

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Lauren Hunt Named Miss Samford University 2013:** Lauren Hunt, a sophomore journalism and mass communication/public administration double major from Dothan, was crowned Miss Samford University 2013 on Oct. 19.

Hunt, 19, will represent Samford in the Miss Alabama scholarship pageant in June. Her pageant platform is Swim Safe and the American Red Cross. Hunt, daughter of Lisa and Lewis Hunt, also won the swimsuit competition at the pageant.

A graduate of Providence Christian School, she is a member of Calvary Baptist Church, Dothan.

Finalists were Ellen Hardy, a junior theatre major from Anniston, first runner-up; and Katy Flinn, a junior journalism and mass communication major from Carrollton, Ga., second runner-up.

Flinn also received the Spirit of Samford award.

Catherine Thompson, a junior psychology major from Huntsville, won the talent competition for her vocal performance of "Think of Me" by Andrew Lloyd Webber.



HUNT

Judson College Equestrian Western Seat, Hunt Seat teams celebrate personal achievements



Western Seat Equine Team

Photo courtesy of Judson College

The Judson College Equestrian Teams competed in both hunt seat and Western shows in October at Berry College in Rome, Ga. In the hunter show, junior Olivia Breimhorst, of Gardendale, placed first in class 2A, section 1 — beginner, walk, trot and canter. During the Western show, freshman Mary Kilpatrick, of Dothan, placed first in novice, class 13. In the second hunter show, Veronica Primavera, of Deatsville, placed first in class 2B — advanced, walk, trot and canter. Junior Faith Williams, of Crossville, competed in the hunt seat division — novice equitation and novice over fence classes. (JC)



Hunt Seat Equine Team

Photo courtesy of Judson College

Living for Christ

BayBears' Nick plays baseball knowing 'Christ has already won the victory'

By Bill Sorrell
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

When a Bible verse hits home with David Nick, he engraves it on his bat. This season Nick, the Mobile BayBears' second baseman, engraved Romans 8:37: "We are more than conquerors through him who loved us." "That is one of my favorites," he said. "That means we go into battle already won. Christ has already won the victory for us. We have nothing to lose."

He uses a broken bat as a witnessing tool, giving it to a young fan who might ask his parents what Romans 8:37 is about. "He can open up the Word, and that can lead him to Christ right there," Nick said. Another verse in Romans (10:9) was instrumental in leading Nick to Christ. When he was 7 or 8 years old he began asking his parents, Tom and Anita Nick, how he could be saved. "I wanted to be sure of my salvation and know I was going to heaven when I died," said Nick, a member of Mars Hill Church, Santa Ana, Calif. "I knew there was a verse that said if you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, you will be saved. At that point I prayed with my parents. I think the Lord has had a hand in my life since I can remember. It's been awesome."

Growing up in Foothill Ranch, Calif., his baseball career was influenced by his father, who is head baseball coach at Calvary Chapel High School in Costa Mesa, Calif.

In high school Nick played against players who are now pros. He was an All-American and won the national Rawlings Gold Glove award his senior season as a middle infielder, an award that went to only nine players in the United States.

He had committed to play at the University of California, Los Angeles, before being drafted by the Arizona Diamondbacks in the 2009 first-year player draft. He went 126th overall in the fourth round. Nick has been an All-Star in three of the four leagues he's played in: with Missoula, Mont., in the Pioneer League, with Visalia in the Advanced-A California League and this season as a mid-season Southern Leaguer.

"It is always a process," Nick said regarding baseball. "You never fully arrive, like when Paul says in Philippians 3:13-14: 'Forgetting what lies behind, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which

God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.'"

With a Sunday schedule that doesn't provide time for church services, Mobile manager Turner Ward, hitting coach Jay Bell and pitching coach Dan Carlson lead a team Bible study. Former Mobile pitcher Bryan Henry, now with Reno's AAA minor league team, said the study strengthened players' faith. He noticed Nick reading the Bible and how active he is in his faith. "The way he carries himself and the way he acts, you can tell he is living for Somebody and Somebody is living in him," said Henry, who is

a member of City Church, Tallahassee, Fla. "Everything we do, we do to glorify Christ. That is the way David plays the game."

Mobile first baseman Matt Davidson, who has played baseball with Nick since they were 14, said Nick's positive attitude rubs off on other players. "He has a good aura about him," Davidson said. "He prepares the best as he can, and he leaves it up to the Lord. He understands there are going to be highs and lows and it is all part of the journey."

As he takes long bus rides through the South, Nick listens to Bible studies, hymns or praise songs. He reads Christian authors and checks in with "Christian brothers" in California to stay accountable.

"He has got me wanting to get closer to the faith and read the Bible more," said Davidson, a member of

Wildwood Calvary Chapel, Yucaipa, Calif.

Earlier this season Nick went to a place where he has not gone before — the disabled list, sidelined for two weeks with a concussion. He said the Lord sustained him and taught him to persevere through that "learning experience."

When he is fatigued he finds strength in Christ. "The Lord showed Himself strong on my behalf," he said. "God is faithful. His strength is made perfect in my weakness. The fact that Christ died on the cross for my sins and what He went through for me, any struggles I might be going through, any feelings of pain or weakness, I remember what He went through on my behalf."

Going forward Nick plans to listen to God's call in his life. "Right now that is playing AA baseball in Mobile," he said. "My dream and goal is to have a career in the major leagues, but whether I have a 15-year career or get hurt tomorrow and can't play anymore, I want to be faithful wherever He is calling me and trust Him for the rest." ■



Photo by Chip English/Body Shots

David Nick

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Election Day Communion aims to bridge partisan breach

WASHINGTON — Come to me, all ye who are weary of negative political ads and burdened by the wounds of a brutal campaign season. I will give you rest.

That twist on the call of Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew is resonating this year as more than 400 local churches prepare for a new tradition: Election Day Communion. As voting winds down Nov. 6, people of every political stripe will leave their respective partisan bunkers and line up side by side to receive the sacrament.

"We'll be saying to people: 'Look around. There's probably someone here who voted for the other guy,'" said Justin Barringer, an editor who is helping organize an ecumenical service at a homeless shelter in Lexington, Ky.

What began in 2008 at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va., has now snowballed into a movement. Churches representing more than a dozen denominations will host evening services in 46 states.

The effort reflects the work of young pastors and laypeople — many in their 20s and 30s — who have parlayed a \$35 budget into a website: electiondaycommunion.org.

For organizers, Election Day is ideal for remembering the church's nonpartisan mission: to bridge personal divides, refocus allegiance to God and work for justice beyond the ballot box. But whether the goal is to restore a church corrupted by partisan politics or to help mend a torn nation will depend on local interpretation.

"Our participation in the party system, Democrat and Republican, has caused us to be passionate about things that look very different from the passion of Jesus," said Mark Schloneger, who led the first Election Day Communion service four years ago and now serves as pastor of North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. "That's where I believe we need to repent."

Chick-fil-A sees increased visits, revenue after criticism

ATLANTA — Visits to Chick-fil-A restaurants increased by 2.2 percent in the third quarter, apparently driven by those supporting the restaurant in the face of criticism over the issue of gay "marriage."

Research specialist Sandelman & Associates reports that across the board — from consumer use to market share to ad awareness — Chick-fil-A's numbers were up in the July-September period, a span that includes Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day in which hundreds of thousands of people flocked to the restaurant Aug. 1. *USA Today* and several other national outlets reported the data.

The appreciation day was a way for Chick-fil-A's supporters to speak out in light of the criticism the restaurant was receiving after its president, Dan Cathy, defended the biblical definition of marriage.

Jeff Davis, president of Sandelman & Associates, said the controversy was "something that brought Chick-fil-A to the forefront of peoples' minds."

Sandelman surveyed more than 30,000 fast-food customers and found that Chick-fil-A's market share was up .6 percent and its ad awareness up 6.5 percent.

It is an "unusual situation," Davis told ABCNews.com, for a company to struggle in the public relations realm and to come out ahead in support.

Study shows record number of gay TV characters

NASHVILLE — The new broadcast television season apparently will have the highest percentage of gay and lesbian characters ever, according to an annual report by a prominent gay group.

The "Where We Are on TV" report by the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) shows that 4.4 percent of all characters on broadcast scripted programs during the 2012-13 season will be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered. That is an increase from 2.9 percent in 2011, 3.9 percent in 2010, 3 percent in 2009, 2.6 percent in 2008 and 1.1 percent in 2007. In total 48 characters on scripted programming are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered, GLAAD said.

ABC leads the way with 5.2 percent of its characters identifying as gay on programs "Grey's Anatomy," "Revenge," "Scandal," "Mistresses," "Happy Endings," "Malibu Country," "Suburgatory," "The Middle" and "Modern Family."

Fox is second in the number of gay characters (5.1 percent) on programs "Bones," "American Dad," "Glee," "The Cleveland Show" and "The Simpsons."