



INSIDE



Killian, Coleman unopposed; Cooley defeats two for second VP

◆ Page 3



Pastors challenged to shake off fear, become 'fools for Christ'

◆ Pages 8-9



Volunteer of the Year: Tuscaloosa native longs to 'make positive impact for Christ'

◆ Page 11

'A win-win' situation

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Messengers unanimously approve 'template for ministry and missions'

Two years' worth of listening, researching and writing culminated in a collective sigh of relief for a couple dozen Alabama Baptist leaders when messengers to the state convention annual meeting Nov. 13 approved a new "template for ministry and missions." Convention messengers also approved the 2013 Cooperative Program (CP) budget, launched a prayer emphasis and honored a variety of pastors across the state.

Overall it was the much-anticipated proposal of five strategic initiatives dealing with the work of the convention as well as how to finance the work that captured the most attention during the two-day annual meeting at Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery. With the approval of the report dealing with church planting, church revitalization, global missions, disaster relief and CP and stewardship development, convention leadership now has a general direction for how Alabama Baptists will focus on the Great Commission going forward.

"We believe this template for ministry and missions offers a win-win," said Jim Cooley, chairman of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) and pastor of First Baptist Church, Haleyville. "It is a model for working with our national partners as well as keeping a presence within the borders of our state."

Members of the SBOM's executive committee made up the Great Commission Ministries Future-Focus Task Force, which drafted the report proposed to convention messengers. The task force was appointed by then-state convention president Jimmy Jackson in 2010 to determine how Alabama Baptists would address the Great Commission Resurgence goals approved by Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) messengers in June of that year.

'Wise planning'

Jackson, pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, was not present for the 2012 vote because of health issues but was encouraged by the report's passage.

"I was very pleased to read the report of our task force. They did a thorough job of research and wise planning for the years to come for Alabama Baptists," he told *The Alabama Baptist*. "Our people have always been leaders in carrying out the Great Commission. We now have a well-thought-out, balanced and proactive plan to follow as we move forward together to honor our Lord."

While specific dollar details are not yet available, the CP and stewardship development aspect of the newly adopted template calls for Alabama Baptists to work toward a goal of 10 percent for shared ministries beginning in 2014. The remaining 90 percent would be divided 45 percent to the SBC and 45 percent to the Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC).

By 2023 or before, SBC and ABSC should be able to evenly split all CP dollars remaining after the amount (up to 10 percent) is taken out for shared ministries, said



Graphic courtesy of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

Bobby DuBois, associate executive director of SBOM.

Shared ministries are ministries from which the state convention and national convention both benefit, he explained. Examples would be missions efforts in the state that have traditionally been encouraged and funded by the North American Mission Board, retirement benefits paid for pastors and church staff members through GuideStone Financial Services and Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). WMU remains the primary supporter and promoter of CP, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO) for International Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (AAEO) for North American Missions.

The first step toward the new percentages begins with Alabama Baptist churches, said Rick Lance, executive director of the SBOM.

"Frank Page, chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee, has challenged all Southern Baptist churches to engage in and be a part of the 1 percent challenge

(of increasing giving through the CP by 1 percent)," Lance said. "This is a broad invitation ... and in Alabama we are making (the increase of undesignated receipts) in bite-size pieces with 1 percent coming over four years."

Increase giving

The challenge for Alabama Baptist churches is to increase their CP giving of undesignated receipts by .25 percent annually for the next four years.

Assuming Alabama Baptist churches accept and achieve the challenge, it would mean more than \$1 million in new money the first year (2014) of the new template, Lance said. Of that money, the SBC would receive \$500,000 and the ABSC would receive \$500,000.

Also, because Samford University offered to draw down its CP funding, \$105,000 more dollars will go to the SBC — an amount reallocated by the ABSC.

The SBC would receive 60.5 (See 'Committed,' page 2)

'Committed'

FutureFocus template promotes 'cooperation'

(continued from page 1)

percent of new money raised by the 1 percent CP challenge with the ABSC receiving 39.5 percent. All of this, of course, is assuming Alabama Baptist churches give more through the CP in coming years.

"The more churches that buy into the 1 percent challenge, the quicker we can get to the 50-50 split between the SBC and the Alabama Baptist Convention," Lance noted. "These ... recommendations are fair and balanced, vetted by our partners at the SBC and task force and have been affirmed by the State Board of Missions."

Recommendations

As far as the strategic initiatives dealing with the work of the convention, messengers voted to recommend the following:

- ▶ Plant new churches in the state at the rate of 1 percent annually. This would mean 32 churches at the current count of 3,200-plus Alabama Baptist churches.

- ▶ Plant "all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people" and work in partnership with local churches, associations and the SBOM to plant the churches.

- ▶ Provide a tool for churches to determine if they have areas needing revitalizing and provide coaching assistance for those churches who ask for help.

- ▶ Grow the Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections global missions strategy and develop security training (see the Nov. 29 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* for more information).

- ▶ Expand disaster relief training to include spontaneous volunteers and college students and promote the annual disaster relief offering.

"We are committed to cooperation" — to the churches, associations, state convention entities and larger SBC family — Lance said. "We are not junior members. We are not a farm team. We are part of the main team."

"We are ultimately committed to reaching Alabama, our missions field, but we also will do what we can to supplement the work of our North American missions and missions enterprises around the world," he said. "Our greatest challenge and goal is to increase the population of heaven and de-

crease the population of hell.

"Do you believe that?" he asked the messengers as amens were voiced around the sanctuary. "Then we can work together."

While the new ministry and missions template meant messengers had to think in terms of 2014 and beyond, other business kept them focused on the next 14 months with the adoption of a reduced Cooperative Program (CP) budget from \$43 million in 2012 to \$42 million 2013.

Lance reported in August that the budget proposal was reduced because the 2012 goal is going to come up short.

"We have to be reasonable and responsible," he said in August.

The \$1 million decrease in the budget will be absorbed by state convention ministries and entities and the SBC across the board.

Messengers also approved a SBC/state causes budget of \$700,000 and a \$1 million challenge budget for 2013. All dollars coming in over the base goal are divided equally between the SBC and the ABSC.

Special offering goals for 2013 also were approved by messengers:

LMCO — \$11,600,000

AAEO — \$6,100,000

Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries — \$2,600,000

World Hunger Offering — \$800,000

Disaster Relief Offering — \$200,000

In his report prior to the SBOM report, Lance officially launched the 2013 Praying Across Alabama emphasis.

"Great Commission Ministries are powered by prayer," he said. "Without prayer, we can't do anything."

Praying Across Alabama

"There are 67 counties in Alabama and some have two courthouses. ... Between the dates of Feb. 24 and May 2 ... we are going to hold brief prayer services at every one of those venues," Lance explained.

It starts with a day of prayer in the churches Feb. 24 and concludes with the National Day of Prayer on May 2.

"On the courthouse steps, in other venues, join with others in Alabama to pray for revival to ignite right here in Alabama,



Troy L. Morrison Awards for Leadership and Church Health

Photo by Neisha Fuson

Pastors Scott Reynolds (far left) of North River Baptist, Tuscaloosa; Jim Tate (second from left) of Memphis Baptist, Dothan; and Ralph Henderson (far right), of Oswichee Baptist, Fort Mitchell, stand with Troy L. Morrison after receiving awards for leadership and church health.

flame across North America and reach the entire world," Lance challenged Alabama Baptists.

In other news:

- ▶ The auditor's report for the SBOM for the year ending Dec. 31, 2011, was approved.

- ▶ The state's top CP giving awards were presented to:

Danny Wood, pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, for the top dollar amount — \$737,472.

Harold Arnold, pastor of Pisgah Baptist Church, Selma, for the top per capita giving — \$333.23 per resident member.

- ▶ Outstanding Alabama Baptist Volunteer of the Year award was presented to Ford Nixon (see story, page 11).

- ▶ Troy L. Morrison Awards for Leadership and Church Health were presented to:

Jim Tate, pastor of Memphis Baptist Church, Dothan, for established work.

Scott Reynolds, pastor of North River Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, for new work.

Ralph Henderson, pastor of Oswichee Baptist Church, Fort Mitchell, for bivocational work.

In the only item of miscellaneous business during the convention, a motion



CP giving awards

Photo by Neisha Fuson

Pastor Danny Wood of Shades Mountain Baptist, Vestavia Hills (left), and Pastor Harold Arnold of Pisgah Baptist, Selma, are recognized as top Cooperative Program giving churches.

requiring the convention's Christian Life Commission to file an amicus brief against the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) was referred to the CLC. Tom Stacey, a messenger from Elkdale Baptist Church, Selma, offered the motion, saying Alabama Baptists should intervene in the suit because the act "(violates) our freedom of conscience by funding abortion, abortifacants and birth control through requiring this insurance."

ABSC President Mike Shaw referred the motion to the CLC, noting the standing rules of the convention called for automatic referral to that entity of any motion dealing with the internal administration and operation of a convention entity. ☞

FutureFocus Theme Interpretation

'He's going to build His church,' Rials says in FutureFocus sermon

Jesus will build His church. Believers just need to stay focused on their purpose of proclaiming the Truth, said Wade Rials, pastor of Thorington Road Baptist Church, Montgomery.

"People are desperate for the Word of God. People are longing for the Word of God. Your people come to hear you proclaim the Word of God," Rials told pastors during the Tuesday morning theme interpretation — FutureFocus — of the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 13. "When we are faithful to proclaiming His truth, I am convinced He's going to build His church."

Preaching from Matthew 16:13-19, Rials reminded Alabama Baptists that the mission of the church is the gospel, not programs.

"Everything that happens within the church should

be centered on that mission," he said, noting the church structure at Thorington Road is Sunday morning church with singing and preaching, Sunday School and Wednesday night discipleship training. "We don't do anything else," he said.



RIALS

"For those of us who are working in the church, I believe we make it too difficult," Rials said. "Instead of conferences we need Bible study tools and time in prayer. ... It is not about me and not about what our church is doing. It is about our faithfulness."

"Jesus says, 'On this faithfulness ... on this rock ... I will build my church.'"

Baptists are numbers people, Rials said. "We measure buildings, butts and budgets."

But "we need to re-understand and revitalize what our purpose is — to see transformation happen in the church of

Jesus Christ," Rials explained. "We need to redefine what victory is."

"Jesus says, 'I'm going to build my church,' and we have some responsibility [as well]."

"Our responsibility is not to turn our church services into postmodern therapy sessions but to proclaim the Word of God," Rials said. "The Word of God transforms lives from the inside out."

"If we are going to see the revitalization of our nation, it is not in Washington or a political structure," he said. "The only hope is in the autonomous structure of men preaching the Word of God."

"We are called to be faithful to preach the Word. ... What is most desperately needed are men of God who are called by God, who stand in the pulpit, who proclaim not their thoughts and opinions but God's Word with authority."

(TAB)



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

(ISSN 0738-7741;
USPS 011-080)

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

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

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

**DR. BOBBY S. TERRY
EDITOR**

Jennifer Davis Rash
Executive Editor

Grace Thornton
Assistant Editor

Neisha Fuson
Editorial Assistant
for Online Communications

Julie Payne
News Writer

Lauren C. Grim
Designer

Wanda Bergeron
Local Editions Coordinator

Linda Harrison
Financial Administrator

Bill Gilmore
Advertising Director

Debbie Campbell
Director of Circulation
and Public Relations

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

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

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

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

as judged by
Evangelical Press Association &
Religion Communicators Council

New slate of officers

Killian, Coleman unopposed; Cooley defeats two for second VP

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

When John Killian looks around Alabama, he sees a lot of love.

He also sees a lot of discouragement.

"I've preached around the state in the last several years, and I sensed a great loving spirit," said Killian, pastor of Maytown Baptist Church in Bessemer Baptist Association. "But there is so much discouragement — it's difficult out there. The culture has changed. People don't believe in absolutes. Evangelism isn't like it used to be. And people are leaving their churches."

So Killian, the newly elected president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC), said if he could do one thing over the next year it would be to encourage his fellow Alabama Baptist pastors.

"They need to know that they're important and have a role in things. Even if a pastor is a small-town boy like me, God can use him right where he is," said Killian, whose church averages about 200 in attendance each Sunday.

Unopposed nomination

He was elected president of the ABSC Nov. 14 after being nominated unopposed.

"John loves pastors, new and seasoned, and I don't know any man with a broader circle of friends," said Chris Crain, senior pastor of South Roebuck Baptist Church, Birmingham, who nominated Killian for president. "He loves the people of Maytown Baptist Church, and they love him. He has never run from a challenge, and he's been a man for the times. He is committed, and he is the best man for the job."

Being elected state convention president is "humbling," said Killian, who grew up in the Wylam community of west Birmingham and spent most of his life in Alabama.

He has served as pastor of Maytown Baptist for more than 14 years.

"I look forward to meeting more people. I think we have a great group of pastors around the state, and I'm thankful for the friends I've been able to make through the years," he said. "If I can encourage them in some small way, I wish to do so."

Before being elected to this position, Killian served as ABSC first vice president from 2010 until 2012 and second vice president from 2008 to 2010. In 2006, he was Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference president.

Killian said if he could see Alabama Baptists rally around one point this year, it would be a "stronger commitment to Scripture and the authority of Scripture," he said. "We need to have unity around the Word of God and sound doctrine."

Killian said he believes the strong love Alabama Baptists have for each other and for missions seems to have outweighed the difficult economic times.

"Our drop in Cooperative Program (CP) giving is more based on debt issues and economy issues than anything else," he said. "I'm hoping we can focus this year on strong CP giving and support in Alabama."

Also elected during the annual meeting was Travis Coleman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Prattville, as first vice president — without opposition.

"Travis has served directly with our state Baptist convention in too many committees to mention, including the executive committee," said Rick Marshall, senior pastor of Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery, who nominated Coleman. "He is not a stranger to us and has served us well in exemplary leadership. He has had 30 years of service in our state and is respected for his commitment and his spirit."



Photo by Neisha Fuson

OFFICERS — Elected at the state convention annual meeting were John Killian (center), president; Travis Coleman (right), first vice president; and Jim Cooley, second vice president.

While the president and first vice president races were uncontested, the race for second vice president had three candidates. This was expected early on until Dusty McLemore, pastor of Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Athens, removed his name from consideration Nov. 1. This left Lawrence Phipps, senior pastor of Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery, and Jim Cooley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Haleyville, as the expected nominees. But a surprise third candidate — Paul Hicks, associate pastor of North Gardendale Baptist Church, Gardendale — was also nominated.

After a vote between the three, Cooley received 149 votes, Phipps 125 and Hicks 99, leaving Cooley and Phipps in a runoff. Cooley defeated Phipps 160 to 141.

"[Cooley's] spiritual DNA is full of Alabama Baptist life, and he represents Alabama Baptist churches," said John Nicholson, pastor of Siloam Baptist Church, Marion, who nominated Cooley. "Most of our churches are off the

interstate and along the two-lane roads of Alabama. This is where Jim Cooley has chosen to spend his life and ministry."

Cooley also has a strong commitment to missions, to helping struggling families in the community and to Alabama Baptist work, Nicholson said.

"Jim gave leadership to the unanimous adoption of Future-Focus (see story, page 1) and I believe he will continue that legacy of leadership."

Other elections

In other elections, Mary Sue Bennett of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) was re-elected as recording secretary. Bobby DuBois, also of the SBOM, was re-elected to the position of statistical secretary, a role now combined with the position of registration secretary, which was formerly filled by Billy Austin. Austin, president of Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers, announced his retirement during his report Nov. 14 (see story, page 13).



Photo by Neisha Fuson

State Board of Missions officers

Tim Cox (second from right), pastor of Liberty Baptist Church, Chelsea, was elected chairman of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions on Nov. 14 following the close of the state convention annual meeting. Elected vice chairman is Chip Starnes (far right), pastor of First Baptist Church, Bay Minette. State missionary Mary Sue Bennett (second from left) continues to serve as SBOM secretary.

These officers work alongside Rick Lance (far left), SBOM executive director, and with about 125 Alabama Baptist leaders who serve on the SBOM of the state convention. (TAB)

Judson College determined to continue missions legacy

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

The story of Judson College students Sau Nam and Ja Htoi started 200 years ago when another young woman, Ann Judson, got on a ship in Massachusetts and sailed to Burma (now Myanmar).

"She was a young woman who left with her husband to go across an ocean to a life of the kind of hardship, adversity and loss that's unknown to most of us," said David Potts, president of Judson College in Marion. "Any hostility we face today pales in comparison to the sacrifice of Adoniram and Ann Judson."

Their legacy is not lost on Nam and Htoi.

"I said goodbye to my parents and my family when I came to Judson, but I know I'm going back in four years," Nam told messengers to the state

convention via video. "But when the Judsons left their family, they didn't know what would happen to them. They had so much confidence in God. They just obeyed God."

And now there are millions of Burmese Christians, said Judson senior Paula Fendley.

"God said, 'Go,' and the Judsons said, 'OK.' They were faithful," said Fendley, who is studying missions at Judson. "God will be faithful to multiply the fruit of your labor."

Potts said over the past dozen years or so Judson has had the privilege of hosting students who are "the spiritual beneficiaries of the work of

Adoniram and Ann Judson."

The college also has fostered an environment bent on continuing their legacy, he said.

Last year 85 percent of Judson College undergraduates participated in service-learning, reaching out to the people around them in Perry County and around the world.

Students and the college's missionary-in-residence worked over spring break to help families from more than 60 countries living in a housing complex in Nashville.

This was one of many missions efforts over the academic year, according to the Book of Reports.

Because of its efforts, Judson College earned a place on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll "with distinction," a designation only given to three of the seven Alabama colleges

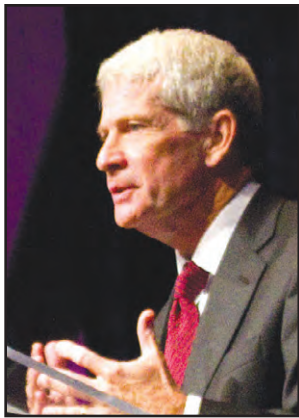
on the list.

And to commemorate the Judsons' departure in 1812, Fendley, Nam and Htoi traveled to Salem, Mass., earlier this year.

"We enjoyed the history and the legacy," Nam said. "It touched my heart. I asked God, 'Please help me obey you like Adoniram and Ann obeyed.'"

Those three students, as well as many others at Judson, are "laser-focused" on sharing the gospel, Potts said.

"Be faithful, Alabama Baptists," he said. "As the Judsons would say, 'Bless God and take courage.' Thank you for all you do to keep the Judson legacy alive to the world."



POTTS

Investment 'taken seriously' by Audit, Insurance committees

You can have confidence that stewardship of the Cooperative Program dollars invested in the entities of the Alabama Baptist State Convention is taken seriously," Bobby DuBois assured messengers attending the annual meeting of the state convention in Montgomery.

DuBois, associate executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, spoke in behalf of both the Audit Committee and the Insurance Committee of the state convention. He said a group of six Baptists, all certified public accountants, met with the leadership of each state Baptist entity to review that entity's audit and management letter.

The process offers counsel to

the entities and assures the state convention that the financial affairs of the various entities are being handled in a responsible manner, DuBois said.

The Insurance Committee also met with entity representatives to review property and casualty insurance, look for gaps in coverage and make sure entities are managing their resources responsibly.

In its written report, the Insurance Committee said, "The committee affirms the insurance coverage in place among all entities interviewed and commends the State Board of Missions and entities of the Alabama Baptist State Convention for their careful attention to the protection of their operations." (TAB)



Photo by Neisha Fuson

'JOY AND PRIVILEGE' — Mike Shaw, outgoing Alabama Baptist State Convention president and pastor of FBC Pelham, shares his last president's address with messengers at the annual meeting Nov. 13.

'We all owe a debt'

Shaw encourages gratitude to Jesus, love 'to the least'

By Julie Payne
The Alabama Baptist

A healthy dose of humor and a grateful spirit were both evident during Mike Shaw's address as president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

"These last two years have really been a mixed bag," he said during his introduction. "There have been a lot of blessings and a lot of heartaches."

Shaw spoke about the April 2011 and January 2012 Alabama tornadoes as well as the recent havoc caused by post-tropical cyclone Sandy in the United States. "These past two years, we've had some of the worst tragedies as far as weather we've ever had," he acknowledged. But even then, he said, "Alabama Baptists have stepped up" in disaster relief efforts.

Briefly touching on some statistics regarding debt, Shaw transitioned into his message titled, "The Debts We Never Can Pay," based on Romans 1:13-16.

Paul knew a little bit about debt, Shaw said — in this passage Paul said he was a debtor, he was ready to preach the gospel and he was not ashamed.

"We all owe a debt to the Lord," Shaw noted, for the love Jesus showed in seeking us.

Shaw then pointed to a gospel song written by Arthur Smith. The first thing in that song, he said, is "in love He sought me."

Shaw noted that in Mark's Gospel when a man asked what he must do to inherit eternal life, Mark says in that moment,

"Jesus beholding him loved him."

"We can say to every man, woman, boy and girl ... that when Jesus looks at you, He loves you," Shaw said. "He died to save you."

The second part of the gospel song states, "with blood He bought me," Shaw said. "Don't take the blood out of the gospel or it won't be the gospel anymore," he added.

The last part of the song says, "I've been with Jesus and now I'm whole." "When we get saved God changes us ... we're not the same person we were," Shaw said.

Debts to others

Another debt we owe is to our leaders — past, present and future, Shaw continued. He acknowledged several past leaders that made a significant impact on his life, including his mother and father who were saved shortly before he was born; his mother- and father-in-law; pastors who taught him to love the Word of God; and several friends and mentors.

Shaw then pointed to present convention leaders such as Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. "We have a great missions team in Alabama and we owe a debt to them," Shaw noted.

He also recognized the leaders of schools, entities, commissions and boards who are supportive of each other.

He particularly highlighted Bob Terry, president and editor of *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper. "If you don't have *The Alabama Baptist* in your budget, you ought to put it there, and I mean that," Shaw said. He noted several impacts he believes the state Baptist paper

has made, including informing readers about the recent storms and investigative reporting on gambling issues in the state.

Shaw said "we [also] owe the gospel to ... lost people," and that "we must never forget" that Jesus said the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. Shaw urged pastors not to give up on things like revivals and Vacation Bible School to spread the gospel.

A debt is also owed to the least, Shaw said, citing Matthew 25:40.

Noting he believes in church planting, Shaw spoke of several churches First, Pelham, has helped plant over the years and how when a church plant begins it can be in a struggle to survive. Sometimes in that struggle to survive, he said, church plants may have a passion for the lost but they forget about the least.

Shaw shared a poem about a "debt of thanks" penned by the late Thomas Cortis, retired president of Samford University in Birmingham. The words in that poem "echo my heart," Shaw said.

"I owe a debt of thanks to you," he then said as he looked out across the audience. "Thank you, thank you, thank you, for allowing me to serve as your president. And I mean this with all my heart — I love you, I love you, I love you. God bless you, God bless your family, God bless your church, God bless the Alabama Baptist State Convention, God bless America and let's win the world for Jesus Christ."

Top tier of its peers

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Samford shares of growing enrollment, new face of religion department

Andrew Westmoreland said there's "nothing more dangerous than a college president walking around with an open mic on a Tuesday morning."

As the Samford University president walked the aisles at the state convention annual meeting — "going rogue," as he said — he joked with messengers before introducing someone specific.

Jeff Leonard, assistant professor of religion at Samford, stepped into the aisle at Westmoreland's invitation.

"Alabama Baptists, meet the future of the department of religion at Samford University," Westmoreland said.

Leonard, who grew up at First Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove, and gave his life to Jesus at Vacation Bible School, said he was "snatched by the neck by God" in 1980. In the same week, he said he met his wife and felt the call to ministry.

Fighting tears, he told messengers he had walked across Samford's campus in Birmingham many times while doing Ph.D. research at the university library.

"I would say, 'Dear God, please — this (teaching at Samford) is what I want to do,'" Leonard said. "It finally happened. I really am the happiest man around."

Westmoreland said throughout Leonard's time as a teacher at Briarwood Christian School and his first year of teaching at Samford, he "never had a single negative



Photo by Neisha Fuson

Andrew Westmoreland (left), president of Samford University, introduces messengers to Jeff Leonard, assistant professor of religion at Samford, during his report to the convention Nov. 13.

comment" on student evaluations of him.

"My heart is to help students find the answers they are looking for," said Leonard, a member of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham. "This is an age group that is vitally interested (in faith-related conversations) because they are on the cusp of losing their faith."

Leonard said college students are in a place where they need solid answers to their faith questions, and Samford can help with that.

The breadth of influence Samford has is only expanding, according to the Book of Reports. The university set a fall enrollment record with 4,758 students, pushing Samford to a 9 percent total increase in the student body in the past decade. It's on track to set another enrollment record this year.

It's a student body interested in missions, according

to the Book of Reports. Dozens of students contributed personally to missions efforts in Alabama, 10 other states and at least 30 other nations.

The university invested more than \$4.8 million in Co-operative Program dollars in scholarships last year. It also celebrated the 90th anniversary of the founding of its Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing and the 50th anniversary of Cumberland School of Law's move to Alabama to unite with Samford.

The university also received a number of accolades last academic year. Kiplinger named it one of the 100 best values in four-year universities. *USA Today*, Princeton Review and *Forbes* also recognized Samford for affordable value. And *U.S. News & World Report* ranked it in the top tier of its peer group, according to the Book of Reports. 📖

Same-sex 'marriage,' abortion, 'Sinner's Prayer' stances affirmed

By Bob Terry
The Alabama Baptist

Cultural shifts that brought victory to same-sex "marriage" proposals in the Nov. 6 elections did not stop Alabama Baptists from affirming their continued opposition to same-sex "marriage" during the 190th session of the Alabama Baptist State Convention held Nov. 13–14 in Montgomery.

In a unanimously adopted resolution messengers declared, "Southern Baptists have consistently affirmed our support of the biblical definition of marriage as the exclusive union of one man and one woman."

And while the resolution leaves no doubt of state Baptists' opposition to gay "marriage," the resolution also calls on churches to deal compassionately with homosexuals. The resolution expresses "our love for those who struggle with same-sex attractions and who are engaged in the homosexual lifestyle." It also condemns gay-bashing, disrespectful attitudes, hateful rhetoric and hate-incited actions toward gays.

At the same time messengers urged pastors to "preach the truth of God's Word on human sexuality, marriage, purity and love with all boldness and without fear of reprisal" and encouraged churches to "proclaim that Christ offers forgiveness of sin for

Resolution No. 1
affirming pro-life legislation and supporting women's health bill

Resolution No. 2
on same-sex 'marriage,' affirming marriage as one man, one woman

Resolution No. 3
affirming human needs ministry and community involvement by churches

Resolution No. 4
affirming the 'Sinner's Prayer' as 'sound' and 'significant' to evangelism

Resolution No. 5
on appreciation to Joe Bob Mizzell for 21 years of service at State Board

Resolution No. 6
on appreciation for annual meeting host church, leaders and volunteers

those who turn from their sins."

Other resolutions declared support for the Alabama Pro-Life Coalition (APLC), supported the use of the "Sinner's Prayer" in evangelism and urged churches to support human needs ministries.

The Alabama Baptist Christian Life Commission and Alabama Citizens Action Program are both members of APLC. The approved resolution announced APLC's intention to introduce bills in the Alabama Legislature to raise standards of health care for women at abortion clinics and to protect employees of Alabama businesses who refuse to perform abortions or engage in human embryo research or cloning.

The resolution called for support of the Women's Health and Safety Act (the health

standards proposal) and thanked Gov. Robert Bentley for his "unwavering support for the right to life of the unborn."

The "Sinner's Prayer" resolution commended "the use of a 'Sinner's Prayer' as a biblically sound and spiritually significant component of the evangelistic task of the church." The resolution also stated there is no one uniform wording of a "Sinner's Prayer" in the Bible and that a "Sinner's Prayer" is not "an incantation that results in salvation merely by its recitation."

Concerning ministry to human needs, messengers agreed "the work and ministry of Jesus involved both proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom and demonstrating the love of God." The resolution also noted the long history of Alabama Baptists of

response such as disaster relief, physical assistance and advocacy for the oppressed.

The resolution expressed support for Baptist ministries to human needs and urged churches and associations to "engage the needs of its community with a strong gospel witness in words, accompanied by a corresponding witness of deeds."

Messengers also thanked Joe Bob Mizzell, who retired earlier this year after 21 years of service at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions as director of Christian ethics. Appreciation was also expressed to Vaughn Forest Baptist Church and others in the Montgomery area who worked to host the annual meeting. 📖

837
messengers

69
associations

373
churches

190th
annual session

UMobile puts 'laser focus' on capturing heart, soul of Generation Y for Christ

By Julie Payne
The Alabama Baptist

We're not in Kansas anymore," Mark Foley, president of the University of Mobile (UMobile), told messengers to the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 13.

The church in America is no longer making a substantive impact on the nation with the culture of Jesus Christ, he said. "So we've been asking ourselves, 'What then is the solution that (UMobile) can bring?'"

"I was reminded of that classic line out of the 1939 movie, 'The Wizard of Oz,'" he shared, alluding to what Dorothy says to her dog when she first sees the land of Oz: "Toto, I don't think we're in Kansas anymore."

"Somewhere along the line this nation that we have loved and served changed and we don't live in 'Kansas' anymore," Foley said.

He asked UMobile leadership to help determine a solution of "how we influence 'Oz,' because that's where we [now] live."

"The solution, we think, is hands-on engagement with the hope of Jesus Christ through genuine care with a laser focus on



FOLEY

100 million young Americans ... who are called Generation Y."

Foley shared that he asked Joe Savage, executive dean of UMobile's School of Christian Ministries, and his colleagues "to figure out how we prepare the leaders of the church" who would capture the heart, mind and soul of Generation Y for Jesus Christ.

From day one "we not only give [students] the classroom education," but "we also begin to integrate them into ministry settings" where they can learn from people around the country on how

to reach the lost, Savage said.

The school is creating internships "literally from New York to Boston to Vancouver, Canada, and across the country" where students will take a semester or summer doing hands-on work with people in ministry, Savage added. This integrates the classroom with learning from those who are effectively sharing Christ, he said.

According to the Book of Reports, this fall marked the opening of The Timbers, "a new apartment-style residence hall that will help meet the growing demand for on-campus housing. The UMobile apartments bring on-campus housing capacity to 655, more than doubling the number of residential students since 2004."

The Book of Reports also described the new Bedsole Commons, a central gathering area for students on the renovated first floor of J.L. Bedsole Library, and recently enhanced campus areas including a lighted intramural field with moveable bleachers, a renovated science lab and more.

Foley also noted enrollment continues to grow at UMobile and the school is operating in the black.

TBFA's 'Big Jar Giving' makes 'big' impact

Her name was Grace. She was not a wealthy person, but she had a large heart for Kingdom work. And now, two years after her death, the Kingdom continues to be impacted by her generosity.

She left a large portion of her estate to God's work, explained Jay Wolf, pastor of First Baptist Church, Montgomery.

As part of a video presentation during The Baptist Foundation of Alabama (TBFA) report to state convention messengers Nov. 14, Wolf said Grace's gifts have

helped build churches in India and provide scholarships for people to go on missions expeditions to Africa, among other things.

This was just one testimony about TBFA's "Big Jar Giving" concept, said Barry Bledsoe, TBFA president. According to the Book of Reports, TBFA has been using the acrostic TEAM to make sure all Alabama Baptists know about TBFA and its ministry opportunities.

T — Teaching. The team has been teaching a Bible study,

"Stewarding Your 'Stuff'" in churches across Alabama.

E — Equipping. The No. 1 focus in the area of development is to equip the local church to create and maintain an effective stewardship ministry.

A — Assisting. TBFA vice president Tom Randall and his team continue to "be Jesus" to many senior saints as they minister to their needs during the last stages of life.

M — Managing. The foundation is responsible for managing more than \$200 million in assets. (TAB)

FutureFocus Theme Interpretation

Crain urges pastors to respect, reach, respond

By Grace Thornton and
Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Church revitalization is biblical, doable and real, said Chris Crain, senior pastor of South Roebuck Baptist Church, Birmingham.

Delivering the Wednesday morning theme interpretation — FutureFocus — to the Alabama Baptist State Convention, Crain said, "A church can die of atrophy — lack of exercising spiritual muscles and living on work of the past."

While humans have a natural gravitation toward death, churches should work against that, he said. "We as pastors and leaders of our churches are called upon to wave the smelling salts of the Great Commission under the nose of the swooning church."

Preaching from Revelation 3, Crain said the letter to the church at Sardis "is particularly timely" for churches today.

"Sardis was an archetype of the church that had stopped living out her purpose," he explained. "Jesus didn't notice any major theological problems in the church or persecution the church was facing, but He also didn't see anything good the church was doing."

"The church had fallen into the pattern of existing in order to exist," Crain said. "It was indicted by Jesus Christ as being a dead church."

But the church was not the victim of a population bust, Crain said. "The city of Sardis was populated with all kinds of people. ... It was a busy place. ... The temple of Artemis was there. Many unbelieving Jews lived in the city. There were plenty of people who needed to hear about Jesus Christ."

"There were plenty of people who needed to be reached with the gospel and yet they were in this cycle," he said.

The Sardis story is still true today, Crain said, noting the scenario of repeating the same routines over and over again.

"We were semi-comatose," Crain said. "We didn't know what to do. But God took a Sardis church and shook it back to life. ... All of our trying and our struggling — there is no consultant, no resources that can help us like the Lord Jesus can."

"Think about each Sunday morning where you drive into the parking lot of [the] church, turn on the lights, do some variation of the same worship service, turn out the lights and drive away — Sunday after

Sunday."

Jesus described the church at Sardis as *nekros* in Greek, which means unable, ineffective, dead, unresponsive to life-giving influences, inoperative to the things of God. "Jesus chose to use the term 'dead' in this letter," Crain said.

But in modern-day terminology, the term "zombies" may be the best analogy for some churches, he said. "They look alive but a zombie church is dead — dead in missions, dead in evangelism, dead in compassion."

But just as Jesus called the church at Sardis to wake up, zombie churches of today should do the same, Crain said, noting he has looked a potential zombie church in the eye and shaken it back to life.

"My church and I were scared to death of death," he said. "We knew that an unfavorable response to the changing demographics of our community could mean the death of our church. ... Many of the churches in our community had relocated, transplanted."

But Crain was committed to keeping the church where it was and helping it find vitality again. The words to the church at Sardis "kept ringing in my ear ... your works are not complete."

"I didn't know what to do. ... We called consultants. ... They sent us demographics and some of the best information you could ever want," he explained. In the end, South Roebuck Baptist learned to "respect an aging congregation, reach the next generation and respond to a changing community."

"We decided to get back to our roots," he said, noting the Birmingham community where the original church sits was thriving when the church was planted. South Roebuck Baptist also worked with Birmingham Association to plant a church where needs were identified in the nearby community of Margaret. South Roebuck Baptist now consists of four congregations on two campuses.

"We were semi-comatose," Crain said. "We didn't know what to do. But God took a Sardis church and shook it back to life. ... All of our trying and our struggling — there is no consultant, no resources that can help us like the Lord Jesus can."

"Think about each Sunday morning where you drive into the parking lot of [the] church, turn on the lights, do some variation of the same worship service, turn out the lights and drive away — Sunday after

"We were semi-comatose," Crain said. "We didn't know what to do. But God took a Sardis church and shook it back to life. ... All of our trying and our struggling — there is no consultant, no resources that can help us like the Lord Jesus can."

"Think about each Sunday morning where you drive into the parking lot of [the] church, turn on the lights, do some variation of the same worship service, turn out the lights and drive away — Sunday after



CRAIN



Photo by Doug Rogers

CONVENTION WRAPS UP PARTNERSHIPS WITH UKRAINE, GUATEMALA, MICHIGAN

Alabama Baptists wrapped up their official partnerships with Baptists in Ukraine, Guatemala and Michigan during the SBOM meeting Nov. 12. Reggie Quimby (left), director of global missions for the SBOM, hosted (l to r) Larry and Sarah Plyler and Carol Bercian, representing Guatemala; Bobby Gilstrap, Michigan; and Shannon Ford, Ukraine.



Photo by Neisha Fuson

A mass choir and orchestra made up of the Alabama Singing Men, the Alabama Singing Women and musicians from First Baptist Church, Pelham, and Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery, provide more than an hour of music and time for worship at the Tuesday evening session of the annual meeting.

Alabama Baptists have 'tried it all' when only prayer will work, Waldrep says

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Evangelist Phil Waldrep said he's preached in every county in Alabama — in Low Hope Baptist, Little Hope Baptist and No Hope Baptist.

"When will revival come to Alabama? What will make it happen? In 37 years, I've watched Alabama Baptists try it all," Waldrep told the crowd at the Tuesday evening session of the state convention annual meeting Nov. 13.

Waldrep's message followed more than an hour of music by a mass choir and orchestra made up of the Alabama Singing Men, the Alabama Singing Women and musicians from First Baptist Church, Pelham, and Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery.

The music left many on their feet shouting, and at the end of Waldrep's message, dozens filled the altar and aisles on their knees, praying for revival to come to Alabama.

"For a while we thought that if we just increased activity, if we just got Christians busy enough, we would have revival," Waldrep said.

But it didn't happen, he said. "Mary had a little lamb, it should've been a sheep. But then it joined a Baptist church and died from lack of sleep."

Education didn't bring revival, and neither has politics,

Waldrep said. "We have far too many Alabama Baptists who believe if we elect the right people, revival will come," he said. "Revival isn't in the donkey of the Democrats or the elephant of the Republicans. Revival is in the Lion of Judah."

Entertainment hasn't brought revival either, he said. "We have all kinds of entertainment, and most of it is healthy and good," he said. "But we are trying to have revival through feasting and playing when the Word says it's only going to come through fasting and praying."

Getting serious about prayer

There's only one way Alabama is going to have revival, Waldrep said — prayer.

"If we can get serious about praying, we can see revival come," he said.

Preaching from Romans 1:8–12, Waldrep said Alabama Baptists needed to pray like Paul did.

"Paul prayed primarily for others," he said. "But most of the time we don't spend time praying for others when we don't have any personal interest in the outcome."

Paul also prayed consistently every day, and he was willing to be part of the answer to his own prayers, Waldrep said.

"Sometimes we pray and we pray and we pray when God wants us to be the answer to our own prayers," he said.

God answers prayers — we know that but we often don't live it out, Waldrep said. He noted that as state Baptists prepare to kick off a new initiative, Praying Across Alabama, the time has come to back our words with prayers.

Praying Across Alabama will encompass two months of prayer beginning with a statewide day of prayer Feb. 24. State Baptist leaders aim to have a prayer meeting on the steps of every county courthouse in the state during that time period.

"Is this going to be just another campaign in words, or are we going to be serious about praying for our state? Join me tonight in a commitment to pray across Alabama," Waldrep said.

One way Waldrep has prayed for the state for years is to divide up a map of the state and pray for a few counties each day of the week, as well as for the people he knows in those counties.

"Will you make a commitment tonight to lead your people to pray? Revival will not come through activity, politics or entertainment," Waldrep said as a number of pastors placed commitment cards on the altar. "If we aren't praying and leading them to pray, our people won't pray."

For more information about Praying Across Alabama, visit www.alsbom.org/upcoming-events/praying-across-alabama. 📖



Photos by Neisha Fuson

(Left): During the Nov. 13 evening session, evangelist Phil Waldrep shares that prayer is the only path to revival for Alabama and invites attendees to pray at the altar. (Right): Tom Smith leads portions of the night's worship from a mass choir and orchestra including musicians from the Alabama Singing Men.



RAINER



KNIGHT



GILBREATH



MERRITT



WOLF

Pastors 2012 Alabama Conference

By Julie Payne and Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Baptist pastors challenged to shake off fear, root ministry in love for people

Thom Rainer says he would give himself a D+ grade as a pastor, maybe even lower for the day he made a bride cry.

She'd picked the same day as a certain college rivalry game in the middle of football season, and Rainer had advised her against it, as had her dad. Probably a lot of people wouldn't come, Rainer told her gently.

"She said, 'Pastor, I just can't believe that a football game ... would keep people from coming to a wedding,'" he said.

But it did. And waiting for the first half to end delayed her dad bringing her down the aisle.

If that weren't enough for the bride, Rainer delivered the final straw when he

was secretly watching a tiny TV tucked in the pulpit and accidentally said, "Run, fool, run!" into the microphone in the middle of the ceremony.

"It was stupidity," he said. "It's a funny story now, but it wasn't funny then when the bride started crying, when I ruined her wedding day. Through my choices I didn't show love at all."

Rainer, president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, told those at the closing session of the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference on Nov. 12 that ministry has to be rooted in love.

Preaching from Philemon 8-9, Rainer pointed out that even though Paul could speak out of boldness, he chose to approach his message on the basis of love.

"Do we share the gospel based on love? It is possible that, in the course of our lives, the conflict, challenges and work so consume us that we forget we are first to demonstrate the *agape* love that was given to us on the cross."

Michael Cassity, Pastors Conference president and pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Montgomery, said he hoped the conference encouraged the nearly 400 people present to draw away from the things that consume them on a daily basis and get refocused.

"We wanted to love you and lift you up as you make glorifying God the number one priority in your churches," Cassity said.

As pastors make glorifying God their main focus they become "fools for Christ," said Dusty McLemore, pastor of Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Athens. He cited various passages in 1 Corinthians as he outlined what made Paul "foolish."

Paul did not rely on his own ability, McLemore said — he relied on Jesus Christ.

"When you speak, you can't do it, [but] God can," he said, adding that when we learn to depend on God, He takes over.

In relying on Christ, pastors can also rely on God's Word, which is "sufficient to exhort those who are sincere about God," said Adam Dooley, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, preaching from 1 Thessalonians.

"It is ... a sacred privilege to teach the Word of God to others," Dooley said. "God's primary means of changing people's lives is through the pages of His Word."

He encouraged pastors in their preaching

of the Bible. "Our people will read the Word of God the way we teach the Word of God," he said. "Paul was willing to tell people what they needed to hear, not what they wanted to hear."

Dooley said the Bible is not a book about how to increase self-esteem or discover financial success. "The Bible is a book about how to find Jesus Christ," he said.

And the Bible is sufficient to encourage those who are suffering for God, Dooley said.

That's helpful in a world that is a battleground full of storms and suffering, said Jay

Wolf, pastor of First Baptist Church, Montgomery.

"Friends, we know that in this fallen world you will encounter storms. I don't care who you are or what you've done ... you will encounter storms and you need to be prepared," he said.

Preaching from Mark 4, Wolf charged the pastors to keep themselves anchored to God's Word and God's people. He said the Word of God is everything — it is living and active. He also said he could not imagine navigating the storms of life without his family and friends.

'We need Jesus'

"The storms are coming ... and remember, we need Jesus and we need each other," Wolf said.

Our effectiveness in ministry is determined by how we relate to and love each other, said evangelist Phil Waldrep.

Believers in the early church loved Paul because Paul loved people, he said. In Ro-



MIKE CASSITY
Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference 2012 President

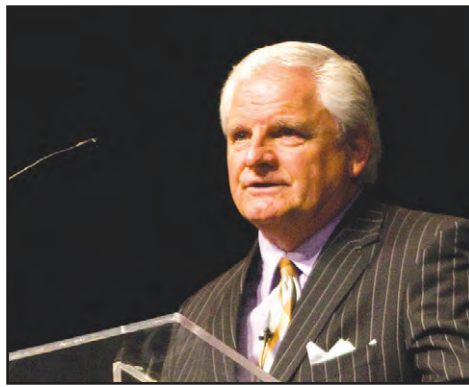


Photos by Neisha Fuson

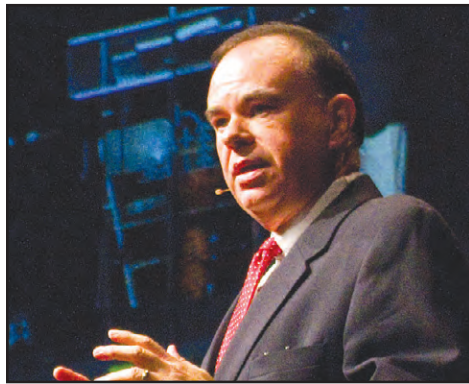
Christopher Colee, son of FBC Montgomery's minister of music Chip Colee, leads worship with FBC Montgomery's high school choir during the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference Nov. 12 at Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery.



DOOLEY



McLEMORE



WALDREP

Baptist nce

people, become sold-out 'fools for Christ'

mans 16, Paul expressed appreciation to people — and at least half of the names listed there were those of women or slaves. These two groups had no standing in that time, but Paul took time to appreciate them, Waldrep said.

And Paul took time to acknowledge people, which is one of the highest expressions of love, Waldrep said. Paul also affirmed them.

Making an impact

“That, my friend, is the secret to making a powerful impact in the lives of people — loving people like Paul loved people,” he said.

Temam Knight, pastor of Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery, said fear can overwhelm pastors as they seek to lead God’s people.

Preaching from Joshua 1:1–10, Knight said Joshua had a lot to fear in leading the people of Israel — having to come behind Moses as leader, dealing with the Jordan in flood season and confronting Jericho.

“And pastors face a lot of obstacles too — a fear of failure, of what others might think, of lack of success, of disappointment, of what the future holds, of moral failure,” he said. “Most of all, you may fear letting God down.”

How do you overcome fear and lead God’s people into the promised land?

“What we need is a plan from God — a move of the Spirit and His will for our lives,” Knight said.

“It will only come when we are savoring God’s Word, meditating on it and obeying it.”

Sammy Gilbreath, director of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said if we don’t live in obedience we get accustomed to the dark and lose sight of our passion for the Light.

“When we get used to the dark we lose our burden, our sense of urgency and our dream,” said Gilbreath.

He said that in 1 Peter 2:9, we are told God calls us out of the darkness and into marvelous light.

“I believe that if we could get Alabama lost, we could get Alabama saved,” Gilbreath said. “We don’t believe our grandkids are lost. We don’t believe our neighbors are lost. I love y’all, and I believe if you really believed it, you would tell them.”

But we get lulled into a comfortable place and crippled by fear, he said. “We need to rediscover our passion.”

James Merritt, lead pastor of Cross Pointe Church, Duluth, Ga., said passion comes from going “all in” for Jesus. In Luke 9:23, Jesus makes it clear that we are to die to ourselves, taking up our cross and following Him, Merritt said.

“If you ever saw anyone carrying a cross back then, they weren’t going to a party.

They weren’t going to church, and they weren’t going to a convention. They were going to a funeral — theirs,” Merritt said.

Before you think that’s too high a price to pay, he said, remember that all Jesus is asking of us is to do for Him what He’s already done for us.

“Bet the ranch and be all in,” Merritt said. “You will never be happier in your life than when you die to yourself.”

Also during the conference at Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery, pastors recognized president-elect Fred Lackey, pastor

of Westside Baptist Church, Jasper, (who will serve as president for the 2013 conference) and treasurer Mark Smith, pastor of Eastside Baptist Church, Birmingham. Pastors elected Kevin Blackwell, pastor of Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown, as president-elect and Dooley as vice president. Smith was re-elected treasurer. ❧



FRED LACKEY
Alabama Baptist
Pastors Conference
2013 President

CONVENTION SERMON

Living HOPE

Share Christ in hard times, Phipps urges

By Julie Payne
The Alabama Baptist

Hope — it was a word Lawrence Phipps, pastor of Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery, had on his mind as he took the stage for the convention sermon at the close of the annual meeting Nov. 14.

“I want to talk about finding hope today, and the fact that we need to find hope is because we live in a world where there is just an incredible amount of despair,” Phipps said.

“I’ve watched people lose their jobs, I’ve watched people lose their homes, I’ve watched people lose their families,” he said. “It’s a despondent time for a lot of people ... and it’s a despondent time for a lot of churches.”

And people in the world are looking for answers.

“They’re not looking for somebody who looks as sad as they do and is as despondent as they are” — they are looking for someone whose countenance is lifted up, he said.

“What they’re looking for is real hope,” and Phipps said he wanted to talk about where that hope comes from.

He then pointed to Peter’s message on the day of Pentecost beginning in Acts 2:22, particularly where Peter quotes from Psalm 16. Our hearts need to be glad and our bodies need to be living in hope, Phipps said.

“I ... want to talk about where I think hope comes from” and where we go with that hope, he said, presenting the audience with the acrostic HOPE.

The “H” stands for humility. Hope is fostered by humility, Phipps said, adding that our nation has been humbled.

There are businesses built on pride that have been humbled, churches characterized by pride that have been humbled and Christians living in pride who have been humbled, he shared. “What do we know about 2 Chronicles 7:14?” he asked. “We know

that we as a nation are going to have to be humbled, we as Christians are going to have to be humbled if our land is going to be healed,” he said, adding that James said “if we will humble ourselves God will lift us up.”

Phipps pointed to the Great Commission and explained how hope is furthered with obedience, which is the “O” in HOPE.

“Living out what Jesus has to say is pretty tough, but it’s the heart of who we are,” he shared. “That obedience is so important because that is what furthers our hope — obedience to Jesus.”

He added, “That’s when we have to say, ‘Jesus, I’m going to follow You. I’m going to do what You tell me to do. I’m going to go where you tell me to go. ... This is about following You and finding out what You want to do with my life and what You want to do in Your world. Jesus, that’s where I’m going to go.’”

The “P” is prayer. “You see, hope’s foundation is found in prayer,” Phipps said. “We spend a lot of time talking about talking to God ... (but) ... [w]e need to either be speaking or listening to God 24 hours a day. Most of the time we need to be listening.”

The “E” stands for evangelism. He said two things are killing today’s evangelism. The first is lifestyle.

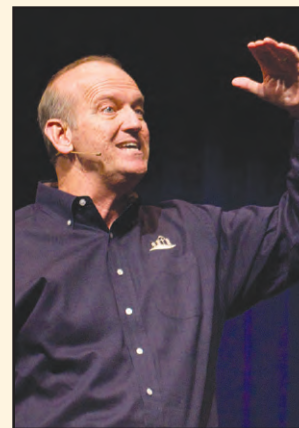
“People won’t listen to what we have to say because we’re not living the way we need to live,” he said. The other problem is what he dubbed “pure laziness.”

Christians are not meeting those people who need a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

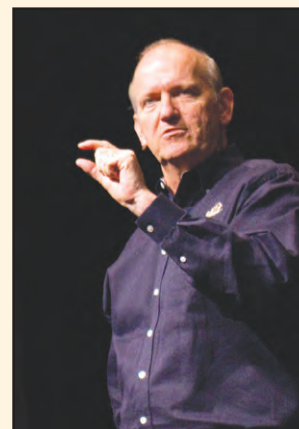
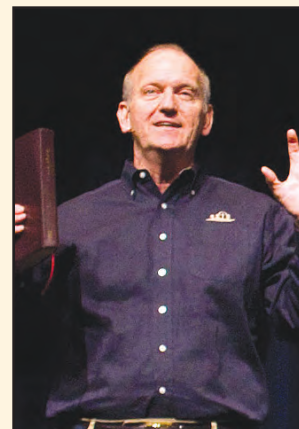
“At some point you have to get out and be willing to share Jesus with others,” he said.

“Our hope is in our humility, our hope is in our obedience, our hope is in our prayer and our hope is in our evangelism.

“People are looking for hope,” Phipps said. “They want to hear about hope. And you know what? We’ve got it.” ❧



PHIPPS



Alabama Baptists tapped for service

During the 190th annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, Baptists from across the state were elected to serve on the governing boards of convention-related entities. Also approved by messengers were individuals to serve on the committees of the convention.

The Committee on Boards and Commissions nominates members to serve on the executive committee, the State Board of Missions (SBOM) and convention entities. The Committee on Committees names members to convention committees. The following is a complete list of individuals approved for service during the annual meeting. The list was provided by the SBOM. An asterisk (*) before the name indicates a layperson.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairperson: John Killian

District: Jimmy E. Jackson, Robert Gamble, Philip Morris, Michael E. King, Danny Wiggins, Ronnie Boulware, Greg Pouncey, Scott Stevens, John P. Gates, Gene Balding, Timothy M. Cox, *Patti Shoemaker

Members at large: *Sammie Barstow, Chip Starnes, Mike McLemore, John A. Nixon Jr., James S. Watkins, Scott Guffin, Derek Staples

Ex officio members: Executive Director, Rick Lance; Chairman of SBOM, Tim Cox; President of convention, John Killian; Past President of convention, Mike Shaw; First Vice President, Travis Coleman; President, Alabama WMU, *Becky Luther

STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

Terms to Expire 2015: *Roger Humphreys, Alabama-Crenshaw; *Wayne Horton, Bibb; Christopher W. Crain, Joel L. Farrow, Scott Guffin and Randy G. Atkinson, Birmingham; *Danny Alldredge, Blount; *Keith Pugh, Bullock-Centennial; Sidney W. Nichols and Derek Staples, Calhoun; W. Ernest Fike, Chilton; Tony Dye, Coffee; Doug Farris and *Helen W. Mininger, Colbert-Lauderdale; Bill Pritchett, Covington; Robert F. Crawford, East Cullman; Anthony Copeland and Craig Carlisle, Etowah; Scott Davis, Fayette; Mike Shirah, Geneva; Benton Goodman, Lamar; Ray Stonecypher, Limestone; Eric G. Fuller and John Robert Burt, Madison; Mack Morris, Mobile; *Patti Shoemaker, Montgomery; Charles L. Autery, Pine Barren; *Elaine Bricken, Pleasant Grove; Cade H. Farris, Randolph; Rick Hayes, Sa-

lem-Troy; *Edsel E. Bonds, Sardis; Clarke Skelton, Selma; Timothy M. Cox, Shelby; Ed A. Steelman, Sipsey; *Gene Hill and Michael E. King, Tuskegee Lee; Dennis E. Trimble and Michael L. Jones, West Cullman; Ronald Horton, Winston

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Chairperson 2012–2013:

William M. Hand

Chairperson 2013–2014:

Michael D. Miller, First, Columbiana

Terms to Expire 2014: Ken Allen, East Side, Cullman; *Bruce Phillips, First, Oneonta; Cade Farris, First, Wedowee; *Keith Pugh, Mount Carmel, Union Springs; Johnny Fain, First, Dothan; *Maarah B. Marks, First, Monroeville; *John Abston, Gilbertown, Gilbertown; Cory Horton, Elkdale, Selma; Earnie Burfitt, First, Jasper; *LeAnn Long, First, Tusculumbia; Rick Evans, Dalraida, Montgomery

CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION

Terms to Expire 2015: Jim Graham, Coosada, Coosada

Terms to Expire 2016: Tom Cleveland, Dawson Memorial, Birmingham; Paul McGuire III, Greensboro; Robert T. Griffin, Highland, Clanton; Robert Smith, Enon, Moulton

BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Terms to Expire 2016: *R. Morrell Dodd, Hunter Street, Hoover; *Rick Gibson, First, Tuscaloosa; *Larry E. Newman, Dawson Memorial, Birmingham; *Bill Harper, Eastern Hills, Montgomery; *Diane Kennedy, Dauphin Way, Mobile

EDUCATION COMMISSION

Terms to Expire 2016: D'Linell Finley, Southlawn, Montgomery; *Betty Baggott, Eastern Hills, Montgomery; Sammie Reid, Mount Zion, Warrior; Ken May, First, Montgomery

BOARD OF AID

Terms to Expire 2013: Wayne Cunningham, College Park, Mobile

Terms to Expire 2016: Dino Danzey, Citronelle Memorial, Citronelle; Kenneth Fuller, Centreville, Centreville; *Tammy Simms, University, Huntsville; *Robin Smith, First, Brewton

INTER-BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

Chairperson 2012–2013: Bobby Hopper, Linden, Linden

Terms to Expire 2015: Randy Hagan, Eastaboga, Talladega; Lonnie Hinton Jr., Covenant of Peace, Ethelsville; A.B. Jackson Sr., New Good Hope, Birmingham

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Terms to Expire 2013: *Sonja J. Adams, Heflin, Heflin

Terms to Expire 2016: *Jennifer Blair Foster, Heritage, Montgomery; *Mavis M. Gates, Shades Mountain, Birmingham; *Linda Rodgers, Hunter Street, Hoover; *Johnie W. Sentell Jr., Dawson Memorial, Birmingham

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

Terms to Expire 2015: Lawrence H. Phipps, Vaughn Forest, Montgomery

Terms to Expire 2016: Travis Coleman Jr., First, Prattville; *George Foust, Mount Zion, Huntsville; *Ken Megginson, Moffett

Road, Mobile; *Helen Mayo, Liberty Park, Vestavia Hills

CHILDREN'S HOMES

Terms to Expire 2016: *Reynard McMilian, Sixth Avenue, Birmingham; *Lana Hawkins, First, Arab; *Les Myers, Shades Mountain, Birmingham; *Randy Winton, First, Brewton

JUDSON COLLEGE

Terms to Expire 2016: *Charles F. Dunkin, Shades Mountain, Birmingham; *Gary C. Wyatt, Dawson Memorial, Birmingham; *Daphne Rudicell Robinson, Daphne, Daphne; *Sonya Wintzell, Willowbrook, Huntsville; *Eugenia G. Anderson, Mountain Brook, Birmingham; Roger D. Willmore, Deerfoot, Trussville

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

Terms to Expire 2013: *Jimmy S. Holland, York Terrace, Sheffield

Terms to Expire 2014: *William T. Robinson Jr., First, Gulf Shores

Terms to Expire 2016: *Lindsey Boney III, Jubilee, Daphne; *J. David Greene, Dauphin Way, Mobile; *Ronnie B. Holladay, Benton, Benton; *David J. Conner, First North Mobile, Saraland; Mike Holcomb, Iron City, Anniston; *Richard Mark Gaal, Spring Hill, Mobile; *Owen Bailey, First, Fairhope; Kevin C. Wilburn, First, Scottsboro; *James E. Daniel, Deerfoot, Trussville

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

Terms to Expire 2016: John E. King Jr., Sixth Avenue, Birmingham; *Mazen Sahawneh, First, Mobile; Gary Fenton, Dawson Memorial, Birmingham; *Albert L. Shumaker, First, Centre; Gerald Hallmark, First, Alexander City; *Mary Johnston Shaw, First, Pelham; *Linda Bevell Bachus, Hunter Street, Hoover; *Pete Hanna, Liberty Park, Vestavia Hills; *Zeke W. Smith, First, Trussville

SHOCCO SPRINGS

Terms to Expire 2016: Mark Anthony Wilson, Coosada, Coosada; F. Max Croft, Agape, Scottsboro; Chip Colee, First, Montgomery; Saint Green, Grace Life, Bessemer

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Chairperson 2012–2013: *Rick Gibson, First, Tuscaloosa

Terms to Expire 2015: P. Christopher Duncan, Deerfoot, Trussville; *Melissa Sahagun, First, Trussville

RETIREMENT CENTERS

Terms to Expire 2016: *Grover Jacobs, Taylor Road, Montgomery; W. Ray Burdshaw, First, Montgomery; *James B. Peek Jr., First, Roanoke; Carl Head Jr., Lakeview, Montgomery; *James Kimbrough, First, Troy

MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

Chairperson 2012–2013:

Joe Bob Mizzell, Hopewell, Marion
Terms to Expire 2013: Ken Clement, Nazareth, Rainsville; Jimmy Garner, Skyland Boulevard, Tuscaloosa; *Polly Ireland, Green Valley, Birmingham; Sammy B. Taylor, Mountain View, Phil Campbell

INSURANCE COMMITTEE

Chairperson 2012–2013:

*Charles Ed White, Heflin, Heflin
Terms to Expire 2015: *Mike Colquett,

Shaw names committees

Two committees, the Credentials Committee and the Tellers Committee, were appointed during the state convention's opening session Nov. 13. The Committee on Committees also was named during the Tuesday sessions.

State convention President Mike Shaw, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pelham, in Shelby Baptist Association announced the appointments 30 days prior to the annual meeting in accordance with bylaw requirements, but messengers had to ratify the appointments during the meeting.

The convention Credentials Committee helps with problems regarding registration and seating of messengers.

Serving as chairman of the committee was Jim Graham, Coosada, Coosada. Serving with him were Ben Birdsong, First, Pelham; Charlie Dale, First, Indian Springs; Dean Finch, Taylor Road, Montgomery; W. Greg Hyche, Brent, Brent; Jim Jackson, First, Tallassee; and Kip McKee, Silver Run, Seale.

Tellers Committee members helped convention officers tabulate convention votes.

Brad Bakane, Gilbertown, Gilbertown, served as chairman. Other members were Mike Allums, James Memorial, Gadsden; Art Long, Eastmont, Montgomery; Ernie Price, Farmstead, Jasper; Steven Scarborough, Refuge, Tallassee; *Patti Shoemaker, First, Montgomery; and Jay T. Stewart, Dwight, Gadsden.

The following also were elected to serve on the Committee on Committees until 2015: Buddy Champion, First, Trussville, chair; Johnny Fain, First, Dothan; and Teman Knight, Heritage, Montgomery. (TAB)

First, Monroeville; *Skip Roberts, Farmstead, Jasper

RESOLUTIONS

Chairperson 2012–2013:

John W. Nicholson Jr., Siloam, Marion
Terms to Expire 2013: Glenn Brock, Parkview, Eufaula; John T. Brock, Highland, Florence; Craig Carlisle, Twelfth Street, Gadsden; *Mitchell E. Gavin, First, Alexander City; Matt Haines, Sixth Street, Alexander City; Franklin L. Kirksey, First, Spanish Fort

TIME, PLACE, PREACHER

Chairperson 2012–2013: Rob Jackson, Central, Decatur

Terms to Expire 2013: Chip Colee, First, Montgomery; Robert Heard, Brooks Memorial, Atmore; Jerry Light, First, Selma; Sidney W. Nichols, Hill Crest, Anniston; Scott Stevens, Fairhaven, Demopolis; Mark Stokes, Camellia, Prattville

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Chairperson 2012–2013: Henry H. Cox, Durant Chapel, Bay Minette
Chairperson 2013–2014: Morgan Bailey, Canaan, Bessemer

Term to Expire 2015: Kevin Blackwell, Valley Creek, Hueytown

Time, place, preacher report

The 2013 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting will be held at Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, in Madison Baptist Association on Nov. 12–13. The convention preacher for the 2013 annual meeting will be Kevin Wilburn, pastor of First Baptist Church, Scottsboro, in Tennessee River Baptist Association.

Alternate preacher is Tim Cox, pastor of Liberty Baptist Church, Chelsea, in Shelby Baptist Association.

Messengers voted for Whitesburg to also be the site of the 2017 annual meeting, which will take place Nov. 14–15 of that year. (TAB)

Volunteer of the year

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Tuscaloosa native longs to 'make positive impact for Christ'

You might say that Ford Nixon's call to missions began on the baseball field.

Nixon attended his first baseball camp at Baseball Country in Northport as a 6-year-old slugger. Baseball Country teaches more than just athletic skills. Players at the camp practice the fundamentals of hitting and throwing, but they also hear the gospel in daily devotions and prayer times.

Year after year Nixon went back to camp, and when he got too old to be a camper he became a coach. That, he said, was his first experience with local missions.

"You go to Baseball Country to learn about baseball and have fun, but the main focus is on Christ," Nixon said.

In 2005, Nixon's relationship with Kenny Burns, director of Baseball Country, provided him an opportunity to accompany Burns and others on a missions trip to the Dominican Republic. The trip was organized by SCORE International, a missions organization headquartered in Chattanooga, Tenn., and the team's primary evangelism tool was

baseball. The team went from town to town, playing against local baseball teams and sharing the gospel with the opposing team and their fans.

"That trip was when I realized missions was something I was passionate about," Nixon said. "I felt I was fulfilling part of

the Great Commission, and I realized I wanted to do as much of this as I can."

Now 24, the Tuscaloosa native works as a firefighter in his hometown, but missions has continued to be a big part of his life. During his college years at the University of Alabama he became a mentor to two young brothers in Tuscaloosa through Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

"It's pretty cool how the relationship has evolved over the last four years," Nixon said. "I keep a check on them and talk to their mom on a weekly basis, and we really consider them part of our family now."

Nixon's commitment to international missions has stayed firm as well. After his first trip to the Dominican Republic, he returned in 2007 and 2008 with SCORE. In 2010, he participated in his first summer missions



Photo courtesy of Ford Nixon

Ford Nixon is the 2012 Alabama Baptist Outstanding Missions Volunteer of the Year. He is pictured here on one of his missions trips.



Photo by Neisha Fuson

Ford Nixon (center) was named the 2012 Alabama Baptist Outstanding Missions Volunteer of the Year and recognized at the annual meeting Nov. 14 by Reggie Quimby (left). Nixon's grandmother, Frances Crow (right), nominated him.

trip to Honduras with his church, Valley View Baptist, Tuscaloosa, in Tuscaloosa Baptist Association. The annual trip focuses primarily on evangelism and medical/dental clinics. Nixon returned in 2011 and 2012, and this past summer he had the opportunity to preach during the tent revival services held in the small town of Teupasenti.

"We give away shoes and clothing and we set up a pharmacy and an eyeglasses clinic as part of our work, but our main goal is to make sure these people hear the gospel," Nixon said.

Developing relationships

Nixon's most recent missions trip was to an orphanage near Kampala, Uganda. Nixon said the trip was different from others because he spent most of his time ministering to the young residents.

"On other trips we might see 2,000 kids in one week, but in Uganda we saw the same kids for two weeks and developed relationships with them," Nixon said. "By the end, they were kind of like my little brothers and sisters."

Those who wrote in support of Nixon's nomination for the 2012 Alabama Baptist Outstanding Missions Volunteer of the Year

praised his ability to connect with others. They all agreed that above all, Nixon's spiritual maturity makes him an excellent choice for the award.

"Ford is a young man who is amazing and refreshing," wrote Mark Seagle, former associate pastor at Valley View Baptist.

"He simply takes his everyday, ordinary life and infuses that life with the name and fame of Christ ... whether it be in his job, at Baseball Country or on a ball field on another continent," Seagle wrote.

Family friend Rex Shanner, a member of Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, in Tuscaloosa Baptist Association, has known Nixon since he was an infant. Shanner praised Nixon's lack of prejudice and his "servant attitude" and said he considers it a great blessing to see the "godly man" Nixon has become.

Though honored to be recognized for his missions work, Nixon said his sole motivation is his desire to be obedient to God's call to share the gospel.

"God has blessed me in a huge way, and I know that nothing I can do can repay the price he paid for me," Nixon said. "I want to do all I can to make a positive impact for Christ and to lead others to Him." ❏

**CD or IRA
Maturing?
Just Say No**
To Low Rates on Your Money

Learn the Safe and Secure Way to Earn Stock Market Linked Returns Without Market Risk to Your Principal.

CALL NOW for More Information

L.D. O'Mire

Financial

Services

1.800.844.3254

Alabama WMU points Baptists to 'life of missions, ministry'

By Neisha Fuson
The Alabama Baptist

The woman's bloodcurdling scream is forever etched in Candace McIntosh's mind. As the sounds of the South Asian city quieted down during her recent missions experience there, McIntosh remembers vividly the scream that shattered the silence.

"The scream to me represents the cry of the nation that desperately needs to know the love of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ," McIntosh, executive director of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), told convention messengers during the WMU report Nov. 14. "Alabama Baptists, we carry within us the answer to the hurting and helpless who live in our neighborhood, our state, our nation and our world. We have the answer to their desperate cries. "God is calling us to a new level

of obedience. He expects us to be His mouthpiece. He expects us to go," she said.

Alabama WMU has helped train and motivate Baptists of all ages to "live a life of missions and ministry for the purpose of expanding His Kingdom," McIntosh said.

Deeper obedience

"Will you accept the challenge of a deeper obedience to the Great Commission?" she asked convention messengers. "Do you hear the voice crying out in the night?"

McIntosh also pointed to WMU's full report in the Book of Reports, which highlighted the 20th birthday of WorldSong Missions Place, the summer camp owned and operated by Alabama WMU. The celebration year in 2011 concluded with "Christmas Around the World," which more than 1,200 people attended and

saw examples of Christmas in Guatemala, Haiti and Ukraine.

In 2012, WorldSong officials hosted 270 children and their leaders at Fall Missions Festival during two weekends in October and more than 740 campers in five weeks of summer camp. During summer camp 12 campers accepted Christ and five people sensed God leading them to full-time missions service, according to the Book of Reports.

In addition 17 nurses were trained through the Parish Nursing program of Alabama WMU; 50 volunteers were trained in Disaster Relief Temporary Child Care (DRTCC) and 20 site coordinators were trained for Christian Women's Job Corps.

"Celebrate Kids," a new ministry of Alabama WMU, allowed more than 80 children and DRTCC workers to minister to children

of Hackleburg in April, one year after they were affected by tornadoes.

More than 2,200 children and their leaders participated in Children's Missions Explosions held at six different locations: Hartselle, Trussville, Selma, Bessemer, Dothan and Montgomery.

Alabama WMU also trained more than 539 leaders through "Equip ... for Missions, for Ministry, for Life," a statewide event held at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega July 20-21 and two regional trainings at First Baptist Church, Albertville, and Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery.

Alabama WMU officers are Becky Luther, president; Laurelle Stoudenmire, vice president; Sonja Adams, recording secretary; and Kristy Carr, chair of the board of trustees. ❏

ABCH seeks to bring 'hope, healing, wholeness'

Four-year-old Tammy's foster mother kept finding Tammy's bed empty at night and the little girl curled up in the smallest chair in the living room.

Over time, as her foster mother began to share about the love and protection of Jesus, Tammy began to sleep in her own bed.

"Through our foster care ministry, we have the amazing privilege to share Christ, who is their very present help in times of trouble," said Bobbi Olson, a Montgomery-area social worker for Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH). "They have many needs ... but we can be the hands and feet of Christ to them, offering them a hope and a future."

Rod Marshall, ABCH president and CEO, said the ministry's goal is to "protect and restore families through Christ-centered services."

ABCH has nearly 100 foster homes across the state as well as Pathways Professional Counseling, a Family Care program and group homes. Altogether ABCH served 3,769 children and families in need — 167 more than last year, according to the Book of Reports.

More than 150 of those were foster care children.

'God will provide'

But there are 6,400 foster children in the state, and "it's a shame that any child has to be in a non-Christian foster home in a state with so many Baptists," Marshall said. "If the Baptist Children's Homes took in all the children, it would bankrupt us. But I'm not worried about that."

God will provide, he said, and ABCH continues to recruit and train foster parents.

"Please pray for us as we equip

those laborers," Marshall said.

In the past year ABCH has seen "tremendous growth in the area of foster care," according to the Book of Reports.

ABCH also said goodbye in January to longtime president Paul Miller, who had served Alabama Baptists and the children of Alabama for nearly 40 years. Marshall, a 17-year employee of ABCH, stepped into the role Feb. 1.

"We seek daily to bring hope, healing and wholeness to children and families through a loving heavenly Father," Marshall said. "We seek to reflect the image of God to our foster care children."

At least 26 children chose to follow Christ last year while in the care of ABCH, according to the Book of Reports.

For more information, visit alabamachild.org. (TAB)



Photo by Neisha Fuson

Rod Marshall became Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries president and CEO on Feb. 1.

Board of Aid awards 204 scholarships in 2011-2012

The Board of Aid awarded 204 student scholarships in the amount of \$259,552 for the 2011-2012 academic year, Bill Goodwin, chairman of the Board of Aid for Students in Church-Related Vocations, reported to the state convention Nov. 13.

The board, which is comprised of Alabama Baptist pastors and lay members throughout Alabama Baptist churches, serves students at Samford University, Judson College and the University of Mobile (UMobile) and also awards scholarships to "students enrolled in the Samford University Extension Division," according to the Book of Reports.

Ninety-nine students from the extension received \$9,360 worth

of scholarships while eight students from Judson received scholarships totaling \$16,184 and 16 students from Samford received \$50,840 in scholarship money. The largest amount of scholarships — \$183,168 — went to 81 students at UMobile.

The scholarships are specifically for students entering vocational ministry.

'Makes me proud'

"It makes me proud as an Alabama Baptist to see how we can do some amazing things like this when we come together as Baptists to support these young students in pursuit of their education and preparation for ministry," said Goodwin, pas-

tor of Lincoln Baptist Church.

"It is a pleasure for us to be able to help students prepare for the Lord's work whether they serve here in one of our fine Alabama Baptist churches or on mis-

sion around the world," according to the Book of Reports. "We are always mindful that the work we do is the result of the generosity of Alabama Baptists and the Cooperative Program." (TAB)

The Living Christmas Tree

December 7 • 7 PM
December 8 • 4 & 7 PM
December 9 • 4 & 7 PM

Tickets: Call 334.241.5156 or order online at www.montgomeryfbc.org

No offering will be taken during the presentation. \$5 per ticket suggested.

First Baptist Church | 305 South Perry St | Montgomery, AL 36104

MARKET PLACE

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT PLACING A CLASSIFIED AD, CALL THE ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST, 205-870-4720, EXT. 102, OR EMAIL ADS@THEALABAMABAPTIST.ORG. COPY DEADLINE IS TWO WEEKS BEFORE PUBLICATION.

CHURCH POSITIONS

PART-TIME MUSIC/YOUTH DIRECTOR: Rock Mountain Lakes Baptist Church, a growing church in western Jefferson County, is seeking to fill a part-time music/youth director position. Check us out at rmlbc.org. If interested, mail resumé to: RMLBC, c/o Joni Holt, P.O. Box 1305, Bessemer, AL 35021, or email them to: joniholt@bham.rr.com.

BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP/YOUTH LEADER: Townley First Baptist. Worship primary concern, part-time. Send resumé to: T.F.B.C. Search Committee, 228 Alabama Avenue, Townley, AL 35587 or richarda2375@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER/DIRECTOR: To lead the youth ministry program for Autaugaville Baptist Church. If interested, please send resumé to: Dr. Garner Clark, 245 First Street, Prattville, AL 36067.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS: Bessemer Baptist Association is prayerfully seeking God's man for our director of missions. We are looking for someone with ministry experience, strong lead-

ership skills and a vision for the future of our association. We will be receiving resúmes through Feb. 15, 2013. Resúmes may be submitted to: Bessemer Baptist Association, 1331 Fairfax Avenue, Bessemer, AL 35020, or admin@bessemerbaptist.org.

ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONARY: Baldwin Baptist Association is seeking a new associational missionary. Please submit resúmes to: Baldwin Baptist Association, P.O. Box 459, Silverhill, AL 36576, or email to: bbaoffice@gulftel.com no later than Dec. 31.

INDEPENDENT SALES ASSOCIATE CONTRACTOR: The 170-year-old *Alabama Baptist* is an award-winning statewide weekly newspaper with more than 200,000 readers. Baptists comprise the largest Christian denomination in Alabama with membership of more than a million. *The Alabama Baptist* is seeking contract sales people with the ability to develop advertising partnerships with businesses and organizations interested in reaching the key demographics of our readers and growing their business. As an independent sales associate contractor, you would work from your home office with no territory restrictions. *The Alabama*

Baptist, Inc. provides a unique working environment. We are partners with the churches of the Alabama Baptist State Convention working together for the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Each employee is expected to manage his/her personal and professional life in accordance with this relationship and consistent with the traditions of *The Alabama Baptist*. Send resúmes and inquiries to: bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org.

BUSINESS

AFFORDABLE BUSES: GRI Motors, Gadsden, has affordable buses to fit your needs. Call 256-442-7335. Let us help you find your next church bus. This week's special: 1991 International 25-passenger, \$3,995.

CHURCH SIGNS: Reliable Signs offers design, fabrication, installation and service. All types of signs from electronic messaging to traditional. Statewide coverage. Christian-owned. Many church references available. www.reliablesigns.com 800-729-6844, 205-664-0955.

MOVING? LOCAL, STATEWIDE OR LONG DISTANCE: Coleman Ameri-

can/Allied Van Lines. Special rate and programs for Alabama Baptist ministers, staff and church members. Call Gary Washington at 205-540-7470.

CHRISTIAN VALUES BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY: Christian Values Green Technology Company seeks mature business professionals for high-income opportunity. Home-based office. Hands-on support and apprenticeship-style training. For complete information, call Paul at 888-710-6994.

CHURCH CONSTRUCTION

CHURCH BUILDING PROJECTS: Let Webb Builders help your church expand its facilities. Large or small projects. Your plans or use our custom-design building services. State licensed with 25+ years experience. Call Webb Builders Inc., 334-285-9302. Millbrook, Ala. Numerous church references available.

TRAVEL/VACATION

LOG CABIN: Lake Guntersville area, beautiful view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log on to www.paradisevista.net to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.

Want to know God?

By Pastor Donald Payne
Forest Lake Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa

Last year my wife and I spent a few days in the Colorado Mountains. It was a nice vacation after having been in the troughs of disaster recovery for several months at our church.

Our city was one of the hardest hit by the tornado of April 26, 2011. Block after block were leveled around our church campus and the storm almost destroyed our church buildings. I spent most days in a daze, reeling from the suffering around me. So when offered the chance to get away for a few days of respite, we welcomed it.

Driving through the Rocky Mountains, for me, was no small feat. The majestic tops of those peaks surrounded us at every turn.

Though the valleys were beautiful, I wanted to climb higher to catch a glimpse of the area from above. My problem was direction. I didn't know which road to take to help me out of the valley. Fortunately the hotel staff did. Positioned in the lobby each morning was an assistant who offered maps, favorite tourist spots, first-hand knowledge of the sites and, most importantly, directions. Before long we were winding our way up the mountains to a breathtaking view of God's creation for miles around.

When the storms hit our city last year, I saw a lot of people looking for direction. Those who suffered through the trauma of the storm were confused. All the familiar landmarks were gone. Their immediate response to the destruction was to search for God. It was not that God was lost, but somehow they were.

Our church and many others like it were flooded with storm victims. They didn't really know what to do, but they knew what they needed. They needed God, and somehow felt they could find him in a church building.

I am glad to say that many people found God through faith in His Son, Jesus. Since that day, the victims keep coming to our church for help, and our church members keeping pointing them to Christ.

If you want to know God, look to Jesus, for it was He who said, "I am the way." (John 14:6).

Retirement Centers purchases Fairhope property; president to retire

I'm happy to report that all of our retirement centers are healthy, alive and functioning well."

Billy Austin said he thought those were the best words that could come out of his mouth just before he gave the next bit of news to messengers Nov. 14 — Austin, who has served Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers (ABRC) for more than two decades, announced his retirement from the presidency effective the end of July 2013.

He became manager of Clara Verner Tower in Tuscaloosa — an Alabama Baptist facility until 2007 — in 1988 and served there until becoming president of ABRC in 1991.

"I enjoyed my time immensely — it's been one of the best experiences a person could have," Austin said.

Ray Burdeshaw, chairman of the board for ABRC, expressed "deep appreciation" for Austin's leadership.

"A search committee will be

appointed to find his successor," Burdeshaw said.

All of ABRC's facilities — Baptist Village and Hutto Tower in Dothan, Eastview in Montgomery and Knollwood in Roanoke — are doing well, Austin said.

"We have outstanding managers at those facilities. We always have had, and we do today," he said.

He also said that, to flesh out a long-time dream to expand, ABRC has purchased the property formerly owned by Faith Baptist Church, Fairhope.

"God laid on our heart to look into the area of south Alabama," Austin said. "We now have that property, and we are looking forward to it being a first-rate retirement community in that area.

"We ask your prayer that it will become a monument to God's work among senior adults."

For more information, visit albrc.com. (TAB)



AUSTIN

'Be salt and light'

Social, political, economic responsibility encouraged by CLC

The Alabama Baptist Christian Life Commission's (CLC) purpose is to "make known to [Alabama Baptists] moral issues that affect our life, our liberties and our purposes as Christians," said Kenny Hatcher, CLC chairperson, during the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 14.

"[I'd like to] remind you that we cannot put ourselves forth as the righteous if our lives do not match the testimony we hold," Hatcher told messengers. "We must be salt and light in this dark and sinful world."

The 16-person organization tries to raise awareness of various issues in part through the quarterly newsletter "Christian Life Report," which has 6,000 subscribers. Through it the CLC encourages social, political and economic responsibility that impacts

the world for Jesus Christ and seeks to address issues of interest to Alabama Baptists, according to the Book of Reports.

The CLC also promotes special Sundays throughout the year including: Sanctity of Human Life, Racial Reconciliation, Substance Abuse Prevention, Citizenship and Religious Liberty, Social Issues, Anti-Gambling and World Hunger Sunday.

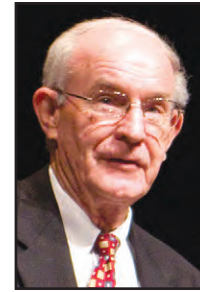
Alabama Baptists gave \$863,227.13 to the World Hunger Offering in 2011.

Hatcher commended Joe Bob Mizzell for his 21 years of service as CLC liaison and his "tireless efforts (to help make) Alabama Baptists rank at the top of World Hunger offerings."

"We thank you for that great work you did," Hatcher said to Mizzell, who retired as director of the office of Christian ethics at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions in August.

Hatcher presented Mizzell and his wife, Peggie, a commemorative plaque and gift and announced the proposed resolution in Mizzell's honor, which was later approved by messengers during the Resolutions Committee report.

Mizzell said, "Without the help of Almighty God and [the] cooperation of Alabama Baptists I could never have accomplished what I've been able to do with bringing good moral conduct to Alabama. Thank you for honoring me." (TAB)



MIZZELL

Education Commission commends Alabama Baptist schools

Alabama Baptists "have no finer place to send their children for higher education" than the three Baptist schools supported by the state convention — Judson College, Samford University and University of Mobile — said Rick Marshall, pastor of Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery.

Marshall, chairman of the Education Commission, said the commission members met with each of the schools' presidents during the past year.

"We have no governing author-

ity over these institutions, but we serve in an advisory capacity," he said, noting the commission assesses financial health, student life and academic issues at the schools.

"Even through the most challenging of economic times, our schools are on sound financial foundations," Marshall said. "Student life is vibrant, exciting and appropriate to the mission.

"We also applaud their efforts of community involvement. ... They are modeling how to be Christian citizens and sending them out into their communities," he noted. "They have a Judea, Jerusalem, Samaria mindset ... and are touching over 30 countries over the course of a year. Students are

finding many ways to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Alabama Baptists enjoy a remarkable relationship with each of these schools and the leaders ... are highly capable.

"First and foremost they are committed to the Lord Jesus Christ and see their role as keeping with their calling as a follower of Jesus Christ," Marshall said. "They are unique entities led by the highest caliber of leaders perfectly suited for those institutions for this day and time."

According to the Book of Reports, the Education Commission seeks to be an effective advocate on behalf of Alabama Baptists for Christian higher education in Alabama. (TAB)

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



university of
mobile

LEARNING | FAITH | LEADERSHIP

How will you know what college is like?

VISIT CAMPUS!

Earn a \$2000* scholarship by attending a University of Mobile Visit Day!

• November 30, 2012 • February 15, 2013 • March 15, 2013**

**Overnight stay is available only to high school seniors or transfer students on these Visit Days. Additional visit days are available any weekday — just call for an appointment

Schedule your Visit Day today at

www.umobile.edu/visit

800.WIN.RAMS | 251.442.2222



*A \$2000 scholarship is available to new traditional undergraduate students who attend a UMobile Visit Day, apply for admissions, and enroll at UMobile. This scholarship awards \$250 per semester for up to 8 consecutive semesters, excluding the summer semester. Only one UMobile Visit Day Scholarship is available per person.

ALL ABOARD THE SANTA SPECIAL

Friday, Nov. 23
and Saturdays
Nov. 24, Dec. 1,
Dec. 8, Dec. 15



Take a train ride with Santa and tell him what you would like for Christmas! Special gift for each child! Bring your camera for a photo with Santa!



For Tickets and Information:
www.HODRRM.org
Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum
1919 9th Street, Calera, AL 35040
205-757-8383



MOOSE HOLLOW LODGE

Luxurious. Spacious.

VACATIONING AT ITS BEST



Indoor private pool • Theater
Full arcade • Mountain views
Chapel for weddings and worship
Sleeps 56 • 9 bedrooms • 8.5 baths

301-238-5133

MOOSEHOLLOWLODGE.COM

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 25

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

LIVING WITH ASSURANCE 2 Peter 3:3-14, 17-18

Resist and Rest (3-7)

Peter concludes his letter emphasizing perseverance. Perseverance is about the last day. There is a little too much emphasis in our day on the first day.

People focus on their wedding day, having children, trusting Jesus for their salvation. Perseverance is about being a finisher, a closer, a concluder. The last day matters the most.

Perseverance produces assurance. If you are going to persevere in the Christian life, you must persevere in the Scripture. You need to read and study the Bible. If you are going to get the Bible into you, you first have to get into the Bible.

If you love Jesus, read your Bible and live for His glory, then you should expect people to mock you. You can respond either with the fear of the Lord or the fear of man.

If you fear man you will deny Christ, disown Christ or diminish Christ.

If you fear the Lord you will not allow scoffers to define you or destroy you or discourage you or dissuade you.

Scoffers will arise asking, "Where is the promise of His coming?" They will ask, "Where is the Messiah?"

The Old Testament had prophesied that God would send judgment upon the world. Jesus came but He did not set the world on fire or send everyone to hell.

The scoffers of the last days will espouse an ancient form of naturalism. There is no God, no spiritual nature. We are just atoms and molecules. There is no before and no after.

The astronomer Carl Sagan used to say, "The cosmos is all there is, or ever was or ever will be."

The scoffers, however, deliberately overlook the fact that God did judge the world at the flood described in Genesis 7. Their problem is with the implications of the facts. It is not so much intellectual objec-

tions as it is moral objections. Most people's problem with Christianity is not with the facts but with the implications of the facts. If Jesus is Lord you cannot just do whatever you want to do.

Do not close your eyes to the evidence God has set before you. God is Creator. He spoke and created the world. God sustains the universe. God is Judge. No matter how unpopular this belief may be, it is biblical.

No one will get away with anything. Your sins were either judged on the day of Jesus' death or they will be judged on the day of your death. Resist the scoffers and rest in the promises of God.

Be Aware and Behave (8-13)

Even though the Lord has not returned yet, one should not conclude from this that He will never return.

God does not reckon time like we do. What seems agonizingly long to us is a moment of time to Him.

Peter explains that Jesus has not yet returned because God is being patient so people can have an opportunity to repent. Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of life.

Today is the day of salvation for everyone who will call upon the name of the Lord. But Jesus will return suddenly and unexpectedly like a thief in the night. He will be the Judge of humanity (John 5:22-24).

Because Jesus will come again the Christian should live a life characterized by holiness and godliness. Holiness is living a life of submission to God, particularly His revealed will in His written Word. Godliness means "to worship well." Godliness is to live all of life to please God.

Work and Watch Out (14, 17-18)

As we wait for Jesus to return, work to be pure in character and on guard against false teaching. The key to finishing well is keeping your eyes on Jesus.

Do not kill time. Fill time with the things that help you grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

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

HIT THE STREETS Acts 17:16-31

Go Where People Are (16-21)

The wonderful thing about spreading the gospel is that we can do it wherever we are. There are some vocations that require us to have particular plans and be in particular places at particular times. Evangelism, however, cannot be thwarted by unexpected changes to a plan or moving from place to place. There is no shortage of people who need to hear the gospel anywhere in the world. Although Paul did not plan or expect his hasty departure from Berea to Athens, he did not mope around the city bemoaning the fact that he should have been somewhere else. He recognized that the value of a soul does not change in relation to where it lives. People in every city and town and village are equally in need of Jesus.

Know What People Believe (22-23)

Now, saying that everyone, everywhere is equally in need of Jesus is not the same thing as saying that everyone, everywhere should be treated the same way. People have different backgrounds and different experiences and hold different values and beliefs. The most effective evangelists and apologists, indeed, the most effective Christians, will be those who spend a great deal of time listening and understanding others before uttering a single word. Did you notice how Paul began his address to the people in the Areopagus? He began with their own experience and knowledge.

Paul did not begin by declaring them fools or mocking the inherent ignorance in erecting an altar to an unknown god. Instead, he recognized that even in their error there was a way to use their unbelief to draw their attention to God and right belief. Some apologists have called this the point of contact. The point of contact is an idea or belief or conviction that someone greatly values. Today, some might value human rights, creation care, the proper use of authority or the need for justice. Each of these can be used as a starting point for talking with unbeliev-

ers about the sufficiency and satisfaction that comes in all these areas through knowing the living God. For Paul, he was able to confront the pagan Athenians with their own unbelief and error by identifying the one God they admitted they did not know.

It is also worth noting how winsome Paul must have been. Paul appears to have found a way to give voice to his message that raised the curiosity and interest of those gathered around. This part of Acts brings 1 Peter 3:15 to mind. In that passage Peter calls Christians to be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in them. Have you ever considered that the expectation underlying this statement is that unbelievers will initiate the conversation? Peter assumes that our lives will be so markedly different from all others that the question of what makes Christians different will be natural. At this point we need to be ready to give an answer with gentleness and reverence. Back in Acts 17, it seems Paul had learned how to wed his demeanor and his message in such a way that he was asked to give a defense of his beliefs. In common parlance, this is called maturity. It is vital that what we profess matches what we practice.

Point People to God (24-31)

As Paul addresses his audience you will notice that he begins with God as sovereign Creator, then moves on to the sinfulness of humanity, then on to the possibility of salvation in Christ and ends with the coming judgment. If you have ever struggled with the question of what to say to an unbeliever or how to share your faith, here is a good outline to follow. God is the sovereign Creator of all things and is holy and righteous. Men and women are sinners and live in perpetual rebellion and disobedience to their Creator. But on account of God's deep love and mercy, rather than wiping us all out, God sent His Son to take the punishment of sin we deserved — death — in order that by believing in Him and seeking forgiveness we might have eternal life and be saved from judgment. The only hope in a hopeless world is Jesus. Let's live and speak in a way that point unceasingly to our Savior.

Christian Crossword

Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- To carry something.
- Call thy land ___ ah. (Isa. 62:4)
- Shish___ob.
- Seen his star in the _____. (Matt. 2:2)
- Him only shalt thou _____. (Matt. 4:10)
- To go on a _____.
- Also.
- Thy word ... I will _____ it. (Ps. 119:105-106)
- Anna. (var.)
- Just a little bit.
- Samuel ran unto _____. (1 Sam. 3:5)
- Printer's measure.
- That my joy might _____ in you. (John 15:11)
- Gives medicine to.
- In the country of _____. (1 Kings 4:19)
- Praises.
- A little while, and ye shall not _____ me. (John 16:16)
- To tie a rope off.
- As he _____ pure. (1 John 3:3)

Down

- Not B.C.
- They _____ the ship aground. (Acts 27:41)
- To exist.
- Give _____, all ye inhabitants. (Joel 1:2)
- Parent Teacher Association. (abbr.)
- A two-year college degree.
- Medical specialty. (abbr.)
- To rest.
- Better ... he were _____ into the sea. (Mark 9:42)
- Or the _____, be not darkened. (Eccles. 12:2)
- I have fed you with _____. (1 Cor. 3:2)
- Professional engineer. (abbr.)
- _____ of the bow. (2 Sam. 1:18)
- Light. (abbr.)
- When I _____ silence. (Ps. 32:3)
- Or touch the _____. (Ex. 19:12)
- Length of time.
- To perform something.
- Cut off his right _____. (Luke 22:50)
- Lord of lords, and _____ of kings. (Rev. 17:14)
- Cast the _____ on the right side of the ship. (John 21:6)
- When fowls came Abram drove them _____. (Gen. 15:11)
- Ephlal begat _____. (1 Chron. 2:37)
- Office of Strategic Services. (abbr.)
- _____ men that were lepers. (Luke 17:12)
- Thy word is a _____ unto my feet. (Ps. 119:105)
- That we may _____ with him. (John 11:16)
- Jesus _____.
- So shall thy _____ be filled. (Prov. 3:10)
- Egyptian sun god.
- Rolled _____ the stone. (Matt. 28:2)
- Jesus also suffered without the _____. (Heb. 13:12)
- Estimated time of arrival. (abbr.)
- Snake.
- New Testament. (abbr.)
- Not A.M.



ALCAP celebrates 75 years of 'fighting back,' heading off problems in society

When Joe Godfrey left the state convention annual meeting Wednesday afternoon, he drove across town to fight an attempt to loosen drug laws in the state.

"There has been a bill filed to legalize medicinal marijuana in Alabama," he said. "I've been asked to speak at the hearing. This is where it begins — they aim to keep pushing until they get what they want."

Fighting back is what Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP) has been doing for 75 years, ever since it began in 1937 as Alabama Temperance Alliance, said Godfrey, ALCAP executive director.

ALCAP celebrated its 75th anniversary during the state convention annual meeting Nov. 13 and was given a plaque by the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission

during the State Board of Missions meeting Nov. 12.

"I want to share my gratitude for all who have been involved with ALCAP over the years," Godfrey said during his report to convention messengers. "We are your missionaries to the government."

Some victories

According to the Book of Reports, legislators found time to pass many alcohol-liberalization bills introduced but "ran out of time" to pass most of the pro-life bills during the 2012 regular session.

But ALCAP did gain some victories. Bills broadening the sale of farm wines and home-brews failed to pass. A bill passed allowing Alabama to opt out of the abortion mandate in Congress' Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care

Act. A law was enacted making the production of meth more difficult in the state.

And on a school level, ALCAP's partner ministry American Character Builders continues to teach middle school and high school students to say no to meth, marijuana and cocaine and addresses the issues of alcohol, tobacco and bullying, Godfrey said.

"Folks, we are here to help through American Character Builders," he said. "Where we have the wonderful ministry of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries picking up the pieces of broken lives and broken homes, [ALCAP] is trying to head it off on the front end."

For more information, visit alcap.com or americancharacterbuilders.org. (TAB)



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

DIRECTORS OF MISSIONS ELECT NEW OFFICERS

During their meeting Nov. 12, associational directors of missions elected Hugh Richardson (center), Shelby, president; Bobby Hopper (right), Bethel, president elect; and Jim Jackson, Elmore, secretary-treasurer.

Historical Commission preserves 'story of God's grace'

The Geneva Bible is called the Breeches Bible for a reason, Lonette Berg said.

"It says that when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, they sewed leaves together and 'made themselves breeches,'" said Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission (ABHC).

The Geneva Bible, printed in 1595, is one of many artifacts of Alabama Baptists' spiritual history that they can view as part of Samford University's Special Collection, she said.

"As we preserve and celebrate our heritage, we are able to look

forward to the future," Berg told messengers to the state convention annual meeting Nov. 14.

She quoted Psalm 102:18, "Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the Lord."

So far this year, the historical commission has celebrated more than 75 anniversaries with Alabama Baptist churches and associations and state convention entities, Berg said.

"These celebrations represent 7,500 years of Alabama Baptist service," she said. "Thank you for your invitations to serve and celebrate with you.

For six years in a row, the historical commission has been present for a celebration in every association, Berg said.

She thanked Alabama Baptists for their gifts through the Cooperative Program, which "make it possible for Alabama Baptist Historical Commission to support churches in preserving our great history and heritage."

And she thanked churches "for entrusting us with your very precious materials."

Last year, more than 81,000 pages of Alabama Baptist materials were microfilmed through the historical commission's ministry,

according to the Book of Reports.

"When we microfilm records, we are preserving for the future the story of God's grace and faithfulness," Berg said.

The ABHC also preserves photos and digital media.

"As Alabama Baptists, we are standing on the promises, and we look to the future to what God has for us. As long as we keep standing on those promises, our future is bright," Berg said.

For more information about the ministries of the ABHC, contact Berg at 1-800-325-9863 or llberg@samford.edu or visit abhconline.com. (TAB)

Shocco helps campers 'get more of God'

You all might think you do all this work and it most likely isn't changing anyone's life at all ... just know that it changed mine," a summer camper recently wrote to officials at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega. "Going to camp isn't about getting more of God; it is about God getting more of you. I want y'all to know that God got more of me this week."

That letter sums it all up, Buster Taylor, executive director of Shocco Springs, told convention messengers Nov. 14. "Our mission is to provide a distinctly Christian environment, a place where our guests can experience spiritual transformation and renewal," he said. "We are so appreciative of your faithful partnership which has enabled Shocco Springs to carry on (its) mission for over 60 years."

This past year, there were 2,560 registered decisions at Shocco, according to the Book of Reports. Taylor added that Shocco hosted more than 40,000 people in 2011.

A number of building and expansion projects were done last year, according to The Book of Reports.

The report also notes while Shocco's partnership with the Guatemala Baptist Convention's Camp Eden ends in 2012, the concern for the ministry and improvements to the camp continue. During the five-year partnership, Shocco helped complete a security wall around half of their grounds and assist with other building projects. The August 2012 team was invited to share Bible stories in the local public schools, explain how to become a Christian and to "show the children just how much we cared," according to the Book of Reports. (TAB)



Photos by Debbie Campbell

EDUCATION AND MUSIC ASSOCIATION ELECTS NEW LEADERS, PRESENTS ANNUAL AWARDS

The Education and Music Association (EMA) elected as its new officers Nov. 12: (l to r) Johnny Arnett, vice president; Larry Morrison, treasurer; Guy Anderson, president; Bill Carr, secretary; and Greg Hollis, president-elect. EMA also honored Mark Messick with the Christian Educator of the Year Award and Robby Head with the Paul Stewart Excellence in Music Ministry Award.



MESSICK



HEAD

Convention

Life



Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries Communications Manager Erin Webster Tunnell (left) helps with the traditional Tuesday afternoon popcorn.



The worship team of Thorington Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, is part of the Tuesday afternoon session.



Don Campbell, minister of worship and discipleship for The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla, introduced the memorial service video.



Alabama Woman's Missionary Union Executive Director Candace McIntosh (center) visits with attendees in the exhibit hall.



Ed Cleveland (left) and Frank Jones perform a duet during presession music Nov. 13 at Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery.



Former Alabama Baptist State Convention presidents were honored during the annual meeting. Pictured in the order in which they served are (l to r): Dan Ireland, Harper Shannon, Charles T. Carter, Fred Lackey, Mike McLemore, Joe Godfrey, Henry Cox and Roger Willmore.

Photos by Neisha Fuson