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BALANCE

spiritual
physical
mental
emotional

Healthy balance vital for those in leadership roles

By Grace Thornton and Joseph Rhea
The Alabama Baptist

It was a sobering phone call for Dale Huff — a conversation with a pastor in his 50s “who normally could have another 20 years of ministry but is on disability right now,” Huff said. “His ministry’s cut short because of physical disability.”

It’s not always a pastor’s fault when this happens, but in many cases it can be helped, he said.

These issues also reach beyond the ministry and are concerns of anyone in high-stress and/or leadership positions. Many leaders would benefit more from losing 50 pounds than by getting a doctorate, said Huff, director of the office of LeaderCare and church administration of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. “We’re always scrambling for degrees to pack our resumé full, but when people see us, they get turned off because we’re 100 pounds overweight,” Huff said.

Sedentary lifestyle

Being a pastor, he said, is often a sedentary lifestyle. “We’re not out building fences and doing physical labor,” Huff said.

So ministers have to work extra hard to stay healthy and keep a healthy balance in life, he said. Pastors might not be able to start running, but walking for 30 minutes four times a week is a good place to start, he said.

The physical stuff affects the spiritual, Huff explained. So does the emotional.

“We talk about the different aspects — spiritual, physical, mental, emotional — as if they’re separate components, but you can’t separate them from each other. They flow together,” he said. “It’s all bound up together within the skin.”

Huff said if he were a “Baptist bishop” and had the power, he’d make every minister get a “checkup from the neck up” from a trained Christian counselor.

Because of frequent criticism and disappointment, many pastors stay on “a slippery slope” and carry around low-grade depression, he said.

And, he explained, it’s possible for ministers to become so emotionally depressed that they fall into spiritual depression too.

“He should make sure that on a weekly and daily basis, he has some (time to) pull away,” he said. “He must strive to protect, and churches must insist on, taking a day off.”

Often churches don’t actively help their pastor take care of himself,

Huff said. And even nice gestures from church members, like providing meals or fellowships, can hurt sometimes — “they can make it hard to help a pastor keep his weight down,” Huff said.

Most church members don’t understand the stress a person in leadership is under, Huff said. “They have no idea what it means to live in the ‘head shed,’ the amount of pressure and stress that comes with being in ultimate responsibility.”

‘Worn flat out’

For instance, a pastor may not be out building fences, but it’s been said that 20 minutes of public speaking is as exhausting as eight hours of physical labor, he said.

“Most preachers will say that we’re exhausted after preaching, worn flat out after that with our desire to bring some word from the Lord that has some kind of effect,” Huff said.

Pastors need rest. They need days in their pajamas. They need hobbies and they need friends, Huff said.

But oftentimes pastors think that taking time to care for themselves isn’t compatible with serving others — that self-care means “self-ish,” said Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell, research director for the Duke University Clergy Health Initiative, according to Faith & Leadership.

“Clergy recognize the importance

Jesus provides model to avoid ‘dry well’

Jay Wolf takes his cue for staying well-balanced right from the top.

“Jesus balanced His life with intellectual, physical, spiritual and social pursuits,” said Wolf, pastor of First Baptist Church, Montgomery. “My Scriptural model comes from the description of Christ’s life in Luke 2:52, which tell us that ‘Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature as He increased in favor with God and with man.’”

The constant temptation for pastors is to focus their attention totally on “the bottomless needs of ministry,” Wolf said.

But “God calls us to be balanced disciples who take care of the temple of our body with common-sense maintenance, stoke the fires of our intellect with continual learning, nurture our human relationships with time expenditures and develop an intimate walk with the Lord,” he said.

Balance, Wolf said, keeps life fresh and prevents burn-out.

“It is important to balance work with recreation. It is imperative to balance ministry with family time. It is crucial to balance your work for the Lord with your walk with the Lord,” he said.

Wolf said he makes it a priority to walk in God’s presence each day, something that gives him refreshed energy, perspective and joy. “People will not long visit a dry well,” he said. (TAB)

of caring for themselves, but doing so takes a back seat to fulfilling their vocational responsibilities, which are tantamount to caring for an entire community,” Proeschold-Bell said. “They feel they need permission to take the time to attend to their health.”

They should consider that permission granted, Huff said — it’s vital to their ministry.

For more information, contact Huff at dhuff@alsbom.org or 1-800-264-1225, ext. 263. ☞

COMMENT

Ridding Alabama of Illegal Gambling

It finally happened. The State of Alabama filed suit to stop illegal slot-machine type gambling sponsored by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. Some observers said it would never happen but on Feb. 19, it did.

On the same day, law enforcement officers from Attorney General Luther Strange's office and the Department of Public Safety struck another blow against illegal gambling in Alabama. They closed down VictoryLand, the cornerstone of Milton McGregor's gambling empire in the state, and seized hundreds of electronic gambling machines. When McGregor reopened his casino in December 2012, he argued his new gambling machines met the requirements set by the Alabama Supreme Court for legal bingo but state law enforcement agents found otherwise.

Hitting illegal gambling another blow would be more of a victory if the Republican-dominated state Legislature had followed through with its promise to make possession of illegal gambling devices a felony rather than a misdemeanor in state law.

Bills dead on arrival

Alabamians can be thankful the new majority in the Statehouse means pro-gambling bills are now dead on arrival rather than bogging down the legislative process as they did in former days. Yet attempts to strengthen Alabama laws against illegal gambling also appear dead on arrival.

Last year legislative leaders agreed to make possession of illegal gambling devices a criminal offense — a felony — rather than a misdemeanor, which means only a fine. But midway through the legislative session the agreement fell apart and the penalty for McGregor or anyone having hundreds of these machines is only a fine. There is no criminal penalty.

Part of the reason the coalition fell apart was pure politics.

Some leaders feared the attorney general would get too much political credit if the penalty was changed because his office proposed



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

the legislation, sources revealed. Once that was known, insiders say, an updated version of the bill has not even been reintroduced in the current legislative session. No Republican wants to buck the leadership.

That leaves the state attorney general to plead in news releases that "The Legislature must change the weakness in our law and create a badly needed deterrent for large-scale illegal gambling by increasing the penalty for operating an illegal slot machine casino to a felony."

More troublesome are rumors that are beginning to swirl around the state capitol about new efforts by gambling advocates. This time, according to the gossip, the plea is for the new power brokers to do nothing, just let the cat and mouse game between law enforcement and illegal gambling go on as it is. The results mean big paydays for the gambling moguls and no help for law enforcement.

We pray the reports are false. Surely there is more integrity in Montgomery than that. Surely legislative leaders know the best ways to help themselves in future races is to do everything they can to help Alabama now and that includes strengthening state laws against illegal gambling.

While this issue plays out in the Legislature, an equally and perhaps more important issue will play out in the courts — the battle against gambling sponsored by the Poarch Band.

They have scoffed at efforts by Alabama of-

ficials to curb their ever-expanding gambling. Their casinos have electronic gambling machines that are illegal everywhere else in Alabama.

Poarch Band gambling officials claim they are exempt from Alabama laws because their activities are governed by the National Indian Gaming Commission.

That claim may now be in trouble. In 2009, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Carcieri v. Salazar* that only Indian tribes recognized by the federal government prior to 1934 could benefit from the Department of the Interior's effort to set aside state land for Indian use. The Poarch Band was not recognized by the federal government until June 1984 — 50 years after the deadline set by the *Carcieri* decision.

In the *Carcieri* decision, the Supreme Court voided actions taken by the Department of Interior related to Indians in the state of Rhode Island.

The same outcome may happen here. In a related brief, Alabama's attorney general wrote, in part, "To be sure, the United States recognized the Poarch Band of Creek Indians in June of 1984, and the Secretary of the Interior purported to take certain lands into trust on the Tribe's behalf ... in the years since 1984. But unless the Poarch Band was 'under federal jurisdiction' as of 1934, the Secretary had no authority under federal law to take the Poarch Band's landholdings into trust, and its actions were null and void."

'Carcieri fix'

The Poarch Band and other tribes in the United States are so fearful of the impact of the *Carcieri* decision they are working in Congress to legislatively overturn it. During the final weeks of 2012, many tribes lobbied for what they called the "Carcieri fix," legislation that would validate actions of the Department of the Interior for groups like the Poarch Band.

Thankfully 21 state attorneys general, including Alabama's attorney general, joined together to convince legislators that "A 'Carcieri fix' would be bad for the people of the state of Alabama. Taking land into trust deprives local units of government and the State of the ability to tax the lands and calls into question the power of the state and local governments to enforce civil and criminal laws on the land," as the Alabama attorney general wrote elected officials.

The Poarch Band sponsors gambling that is patently illegal under Alabama law. It needs to be stopped.

Thankfully, Alabama's attorney general is trying to close down all illegal gambling in the state. We pray his efforts will succeed. And we pray the state Legislature will provide the tools necessary to help in this process.

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

WE NEED CP, TAB

In response to the Feb. 14, 2013, article "Adjusting to Current Realities," it is my hope that *The Alabama Baptist* will need to do very little "adjusting to current realities" other than what has already been done. The use of the Internet to deliver an enhanced version of *The Alabama Baptist* and Archives and Resource Center are certainly good changes.

Unfortunately, it is true that some

Baptist churches are reducing their Cooperative Program giving and subscriptions to *The Alabama Baptist*. This tends to isolate those congregations from the family of Southern Baptist churches in Alabama. The impact of cooperative activities of Southern Baptists will be reduced because of the reduced funds and decreased participation by church members. Also, the isolated congregations can more easily be misled to become assemblies that

are not recognizable as Southern Baptist churches.

We need the Cooperative Program and our Baptist newspaper because, as the apostle Peter wrote, "The devil, like a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour."

Gary Briscoe
Hoover, Ala.





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

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An ongoing BATTLE

By Julie Payne
The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Brian Harris

Several moving trucks enter VictoryLand Casino on Feb. 19 after a search warrant was issued by Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange's office.

Machines, cash seized at VictoryLand; lawsuit filed to stop Poarch Band casinos

Illegal gambling efforts in the state were hit hard by law enforcement and the Alabama Supreme Court in late February.

Milton McGregor's VictoryLand casino in Macon County was raided by Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange's office and the Alabama Department of Public Safety on Feb. 19. The Poarch Band of Creek Indians also learned of a lawsuit filed against them by Strange that day. And Center Stage Alabama in Houston County didn't receive the news they wanted from the state Supreme Court Feb. 22.

The raid on VictoryLand resulted in the seizure of several hundred gambling machines and an undisclosed amount of cash. The items will be held as evidence and will be subject to a forfeiture procedure in the Circuit Court of Macon County, according to a news release from Strange's office.

"Today's actions are the culmination of an investigative process over the last several months," Strange said in the news release.

Strange also noted that his office "worked to try to resolve this matter with minimal controversy," he said. "Unfortunately, the VictoryLand casino was operating in open defiance of the rule of law and we have been left with no alternative but to treat this as we would any other law enforcement matter."

VictoryLand lawyer Joe Espy said in an al.com news report that VictoryLand tried to stop the Feb. 19 raid, but Macon County Circuit Court Judge Tom Young set a hearing for March 19.

"No court and no expert have ever ruled that the machines used at VictoryLand are illegal gaming devices," Espy said in the al.com report.

As far as the Poarch Band is concerned, Strange filed a lawsuit in the Circuit Court of Elmore County to stop the operation of slot machines at their casinos in the state.

He said other efforts to stop the Poarch Band's gambling activities have failed and state officers cannot seize gambling devices on Indian land.

"Unlawful gambling is a statewide problem, and I have worked with local authorities to enforce Alabama law consistently and fairly throughout the state," Strange said in a news

release. "I have sent two letters to the National Indian Gaming Commission, asking them to stop the Poarch Band's unlawful gambling, but the Commission has refused to do anything about it. The Commission's inaction has left me with no choice but to file this lawsuit."

Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP), noted ALCAP is pleased that Strange is "upholding the laws of Alabama concerning illegal gambling operations. The closing of VictoryLand and the filing of a lawsuit that we hope, if upheld, will close the illegal casinos on tribal lands is good news for the citizens of Alabama."

"These gambling operations are predatory in nature, preying on the people who can least afford to gamble away their money with false promises of winning big. The only real winners are the casino owners," Godfrey added.

In Houston County, Center Stage (formerly owned by Ronnie Gilley and known as Country Crossing) officials received news Feb. 22 that the Alabama Supreme Court had denied their second request to have the trial judge removed from their case.

In July 2012, law enforcement agents served a search warrant at the newly named Center Stage after it reopened with new machines that state law enforcement agents determined were illegal, according to a news release from Strange's office.

After the raid, Center Stage reopened with games it contends do not play "electronic bingo."

The *Dothan Eagle* reported Feb. 20 that officials with the Houston Economic Development Association (HEDA) — the entity that operates bingo at Center Stage — said they are not worried about a new raid at Center Stage.

In the *Dothan Eagle* report, Ernie Hornsby, an attorney representing HEDA, said games at Center Stage are different than those seized from VictoryLand and different from the Center Stage machines seized last July.

HEDA has claimed the Center Stage machines were seized illegally last July, and facility officials had filed an application for a

rehearing before the Alabama Supreme Court, according to the *Dothan Eagle*.

When the Alabama Supreme Court denied Center Stage's request to have the trial judge removed from the case, "the casino immediately filed another motion asking the Supreme Court to reconsider the decision," Deputy Attorney General Sonny Reagan said Feb. 22.

'Casino's delaying tactics'

"The Supreme Court denied the second and final request from the casino on Feb. 22," Reagan said. "The attorney general's office has opposed the casino's delaying tactics at every turn and will now prepare for a trial in Houston County after this most recent Supreme Court decision that has cleared the way for the judge to proceed."

Also in 2012, Strange's office obtained a final judgment for the State of Alabama in a so-called "electronic bingo" case arising out of the execution of a search warrant at White Hall Entertainment Center.

In March 2009, pursuant to a warrant, the State seized more than 100 so-called "electronic bingo" machines from White Hall Entertainment Center and more than half a million dollars in cash proceeds from illegal gambling at the casino, according to a news release from Strange's office about the case.

In 2012, Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge Robert Vance declared the seized money forfeited to the State's General Fund. On Nov. 26, Vance declared that the illegal gambling devices also be forfeited to the State.

Meanwhile in Greene County — where gambling has been big business — sources in the area tell *The Alabama Baptist* that Greentrack remains in operation on some level.

According to an al.com news report, the center resumed operating bingo machines in August 2011 after a raid by the attorney general's office and state police.

The attorney general "continues to litigate four separate cases involving illegal gambling in Greene County," Reagan said. The attorney general's office is "pursuing the recovery of \$75 million in unpaid taxes from Greentrack" and "continues to litigate two cases against the Greentrack casino where slot machines and cash were seized on two occasions; one in 2010 and the other in 2011."

Litigation also continues against another Greene County casino, Frontier Bingo, after agents seized nearly 300 slot machines there in 2011, Reagan said, adding the Greentrack and Frontier Bingo cases from 2011 are pending in the Alabama Supreme Court. ❧

**"Unlawful gambling is
a statewide problem,
and I have worked with
local authorities to
enforce Alabama law
consistently and fairly
throughout the state."**

**Luther Strange
Alabama Attorney General**



NAMB photo

North American Mission Board Week of Prayer missionary Victor Thomas (left) speaks with Simon Fraser University student Kyle Meeking. The Point Church reaches many students on the Vancouver university campus.



NAMB photo

Victor Thomas (left), pastor of The Point Church in Vancouver, meets with Sam Woo.

Planting the gospel

4-month research project in Vancouver turns into long-term missions endeavor for South African couple

Victor and Candice Thomas landed in Vancouver, British Columbia, promising they'd never stay — that was five years ago. They arrived in 2007, so Victor could start a four-month stint as a researcher at Simon Fraser University — what Victor called an extended honeymoon for the newlyweds. His study focused on environmental science and poverty. But the young South African entrepreneurs found a new calling in Burnaby, a quick train-ride from downtown Vancouver.

Three weeks before they were to return to Cape Town, Thomas walked the Burnaby campus of Simon Fraser, his eyes seeming to open for the first time.

"I saw these students with blank looks on their faces, and I started to tear up. For a South African male that's not cool," Thomas said. "It was as if God was saying, 'Isn't this the poverty I've called you to?'"

From a family with seven generations of pastors, Thomas told his friends he'd never be a pastor. And indeed he'd stayed true to this for more than two decades, though he always served the poor alongside his dad. He also started a company consulting on construction projects in environmentally sensitive areas.

"Life was good back in Africa," Thomas said. "I'd just hired a friend and we had several big contracts. We'd never intended to stay in Canada."

As God began to draw the Thomases to the work of The Point Church, a long drive with then-planter of The Point, Kelly Manire, sealed the decision.

"He told us he was moving on," Thomas said, "and that he wanted me and Candice to take over."

The Point, a Canadian National Baptist Convention

church, had started years previous but had dwindled to a small Bible study. Taking over The Point would amount to a relaunch of the church. As Thomas saw it, this also meant launching additional campuses in Coquitlam and in downtown Vancouver.

Thomas is just one of several church planters serving in the greater Vancouver area and is helping to achieve the vision of Send North America: Vancouver. Send North America is the North American Mission Board's strategy to mobilize and assist churches and individuals in hands-on church planting and evangelism throughout Canada and the U.S.

The annual Week of Prayer for North American Missions, March 3-10, and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, provide support for the Thomases' work and missionaries who serve on behalf of Canadian and Southern Baptists in North America. With a goal of \$70 million, this year's offering theme is "Whatever It Takes — Reaching the One."

"Giving to Annie is essential to help church planters plant the gospel in North America," Thomas said. "Financially helping us to plant the gospel in metro Vancouver, by starting new churches and helping us with outreaches, is critical."

The Point, which initially started as a university church, has grown to reach the surrounding

communities in Burnaby, Coquitlam and Vancouver.

In the beginning a dozen people would show up for Bible studies. But as the Thomases realized the potential for reaching surrounding communities of families, they started a Sunday morning service.

Now during the Sunday service about 40 attend in Burnaby, nearly half of them students. Today across The Point's

four sites more than 90 people gather for weekend services.

"That has continued to grow as we've hosted community festivals," Thomas said. "When God broke our heart for the city it was for the whole city, not just for Burnaby Mountain."

"God laid on our hearts a few parts of the city. Coquitlam for one was an area that's been on my heart a lot. It is the least church area of metro Vancouver, which means it's one [of] the least-churched areas of North America."

It also happens to be one of the fastest-growing areas of the city. Soon it will be included on the SkyTrain line and last fall a new work began with a Bible study group.

"I sent a semester missionary over there a couple of times to find a person of peace but he came back and said, 'No one wanted to talk to me and I think security was following me,'" said Thomas, recounting what he'd soon reveal as a miracle. "So I went with him and we prayed we'd find the right person to talk to for starting a student group."

"Sure enough we turned down a random corridor and came across a lady taking a picture. We started talking. Usually I'm a little reticent to come out and tell people what we're doing, but I felt God saying 'Just tell her.'"

Thomas explained their idea of starting a Bible study on campus.

"It turns out that not only was she in charge of student groups at the campus, but she also happened to be from South Africa and had dated one of my uncles," Thomas said. "She told us she'd help us work it out."

Since that amazing day, Bible study groups at Coquitlam and in downtown Vancouver have been welcomed by the campus officials and have grown both in size and in stories.

"One lady heard about Jesus for the first time and said, 'Wow. He seems like an amazing person. Where can I learn more about Him?' I told her there's a whole book about Him called the Bible," said Thomas. "She went home and read through the New Testament in a couple days and gave her life to Christ."

"She said, 'I wonder why no one ever told me about Him before,'" recounted Thomas. "I was amazed she had never heard the name Jesus."

For more information on Victor Thomas, visit anniearmstrong.com/victorthomas. For more information about how you can get involved in reaching Vancouver with the gospel, visit namb.net/Vancouver. (NAMB)

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'To serve God or country'

Gay 'marriage' opponents make their case to Supreme Court

Foes of same-sex "marriage" are warning the Supreme Court that lifting state or federal restrictions would threaten their own economic and religious freedoms and lead to social and political upheaval.

In about three dozen briefs filed in recent weeks, groups ranging from U.S. Catholic bishops and evangelicals to state attorneys general and university professors, argue that upholding gay "marriage" could lead to penalties against objecting employers, military officials and others.

Briefs from supporters of gay "marriage" are due by early March.

"If the Constitution were construed to require government affirmation of same-sex relationships as 'marriage,' it would seem a short step to requiring such affirmation as a condition of receiving government contracts, participating in public programs or being eligible for tax exemption," the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said in its brief.

"Those who disagree with the government's moral assessment of such relationships would find themselves increasingly marginalized and denied equal participation in American public life and benefits."

Organizations that certify chaplains for the armed forces phrase it in stark terms. If gay "marriage" is recognized by the fed-

eral government, they said, chaplains and other military officers will face conflicts between duty and religious conviction, forcing them "to serve God or country."

Those are among the many arguments made by opponents as two landmark cases testing barriers to same-sex "marriage" approach their days in court in late March.

The case getting the most attention from opponents focuses on California voters' 2008 ban on gay "marriage," known as Proposition 8, which was declared unconstitutional by two lower courts. More briefs have been filed in that case, *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, because the threshold issue is the right of gays and lesbians to marry.

National implications

The other case, *U.S. v. Windsor*, involves a challenge to the federal Defense of Marriage Act which, while more likely to have national implications, applies to the benefits available to same-sex couples who already are married.

Several trends appear to be working against gay "marriage" opponents: Recent public opinion polls, lower court rulings, voter initiatives and policy declarations by President Obama and others have given gays and lesbians momentum as the high court prepares to hear the two cases.

For that reason, the arguments raised by



Photo courtesy of Lisa Padilla on Flickr

opponents in friend-of-the-court briefs could be critical. They break down into several categories:

Procreation and child-rearing: Groups defending Proposition 8, led by California's ProtectMarriage.com, argue that marriage is intended largely for having children and raising them with a mother and father.

"Recognition of same-sex 'marriages' would not promote either of the principal interests on the basis of which opposite-sex marriage is a protected institution," said a brief submitted by the conservative Family Research Council.

Several briefs criticize the original ruling of the Federal District Court of the Northern District of California for its emphasis on marriage as a commitment among adults. The Catholic bishops labeled that definition "incoherent" and "wildly over-inclusive."

Opponents will have a tough time winning if the justices decide that laws based on sexual orientation deserve heightened scrutiny, as have those dealing with race.

Although the high court declared bans on interracial marriage unconstitutional in its 1967 *Loving v. Virginia* decision, opponents of same-sex "marriage" such as the Coalition of African-American Pastors said that doesn't set a precedent.

Others argue that gays' sexual orientation is a choice, rather than genetically immutable. One brief tells the stories of four "ex-gays" now in heterosexual relationships.

Long arm of history: Several briefs recite centuries of scholarly and religious literature defining marriage as between a man and a woman. The California petitioners quote British jurist William Blackstone's 18th-century writings and cite others ranging from John Locke to Noah Webster. Among the books most often quoted: the Bible.

"Before 2003, same-sex 'marriage' had never existed in the United States, and it still is comparatively rare," said a brief from the Marriage Law Foundation, representing a variety of university professors. "Indeed, before 2000, it had never existed in human history."

States vs. courts: Changing the definition of marriage should be left up to the democratic process, such as Congress' 1996 law defining marriage for federal purposes and California voters' 2008 initiative.

Because 37 states have banned gay "marriage" and nine have legalized it in recent years, opponents said, the court should let the national debate continue rather than set a sweeping precedent in favor of gay "marriage."

The role of the states

Nineteen Republican attorneys general argue that the court should defer to "states' historical, near-absolute dominion over marriage." And 37 law professors and government scholars argue that the court should "respect the role of the states as laboratories of democracy in the development of emerging conceptions of liberty and equality."

The Catholic bishops' brief said that if the Supreme Court declares a constitutional right to gay "marriage," "it is unclear where the logical stopping point would be." They suggest legalizing marriage among minors, relatives or polygamists could follow.

"If this Court mandates genderless marriage," a brief from the Coalition for the Protection of Marriage, a Nevada group, said, "the resulting social divisions and political contentions will probably equal and may surpass those resulting from *Roe v. Wade*." (RNS)

'Unsung hero' minister nominations sought

The University of Mobile School of Christian Ministries is seeking nominees for the prestigious Order of the Shofar award. This award honors Alabama Baptist State Convention ministers for faithful service that might otherwise go unrecognized.

This is an award for unsung heroes in ministry, according to Douglas Wilson, dean and professor of Christian ministries at the Baptist-affiliated university.

Anyone may nominate a minister for consideration.

Download nomination forms at www.umobile.edu/academics and go to School of Christian Ministries for a link, email dwilson@umobile.edu, or call the School of Christian Ministries office at 251-442-2406 to receive a nomination form.

Deadline for nominations is March 15. (UMobile)



Photo courtesy of Circlewood Baptist Church

CIRCLEWOOD GIVES NEW CAR TO PASTOR

Circlewood Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, in Tuscaloosa Baptist Association honors Pastor Herb Thomas (right) by presenting him with a new car for his many years of dedicated service. Pictured with him is his wife, Virginia.

Across ALABAMA'S Associations

To submit news items, email news@thealabamabaptist.org or call 205-870-4720, ext. 112, at least three weeks prior to the event.

BIRMINGHAM

► **First Church, Hoover**, will hold a gospel concert and community indoor picnic March 10. The picnic will be at 5 p.m. and the concert will be at 6 p.m. Randy Atkinson is pastor. ► The women's ministry of **First Church, Trussville**, will sponsor an evening of Shabby Chic and Laughter on March 11, 6 p.m. in the gym. The B-Team Angels will be the featured guest and Kristy White will lead praise and worship. The Chocolate Biscuit will provide the meal. For ticket information call Debbie Arrington at 205-228-1006 by March 7. Buddy Champion is pastor. ► **Wayne Scott** will be recognized as pastor emeritus at **Deerfoot Church, Trussville**, on March 3, 10:30 a.m. Scott also will preach the sermon that day.

CALHOUN

► **Grace Church, Oxford**, will host the 3rd annual CAMO Ministries Banquet and wild game dinner March 16. Dinner will be at 6 p.m. and Troy Ruiz will speak at 7 p.m. Crimson Ground will provide music. For ticket information call 256-239-3032. Jason King is pastor of Grace Church.

COFFEE

► **First Church, New Brockton**, will hold spring revival March 10–13, Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. and Monday–Wednesday at 7 p.m. Ronnie Smith will speak. Hal Yarbrough will lead worship Sunday and Wednesday, Tim Willis will lead worship Monday and Lloyd Helms will lead worship Tuesday. Nathan Sims is pastor.

COLUMBIA

► **Michael Douglas** is the new pastor of **Taylor Church, Dothan**. Douglas holds a master of arts degree in biblical studies and a bachelor of arts degree in ministry from the Baptist College of Florida in Graceville, Fla. He previously served as a supply pastor in various churches in Columbia and Judson associations and was an interim pastor at Liberty Church, Pansey. He has been on several missions trips including New Mexico, Brazil, Haiti and Peru. He and his wife,



DOUGLAS

Sylvia, have one daughter and one grandchild.

LIMESTONE

► **Clements Church, Athens**, will hold its Spring Training event March 9, 8 a.m.–noon. Breakout sessions will be available for ministry leaders working with babies to adults, special needs, greeter and hospitality ministries, pastors and ministers of education. Elmer Towns will speak. For information visit www.springtraining-n-action.org or call 256-729-1328. Tim Anderson is pastor.

SIPSEY

► **Arbor Springs Church, Northport**, will host the Sipsey Baptist Evangelism Rally on March 2, 6 p.m. A covered-dish meal will be at 5 p.m. Kevin Hamm, pastor of Gardendale First Church, will speak. Angela Stamps and the Arbor Springs choir will provide special music. Ted Sessoms is pastor and Steve Stamps is associational evangelism director.

ST. CLAIR

► **Evening Star Church, Vincent**, will hold an all-day singing with The Jordan Family on March 10, 10 a.m. Ricky Alldredge is pastor.

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

Prattmont honors Smith for 50 years in ministry

Prattmont Baptist Church, Prattville, honored Howard L. "Chip" Smith Jr. on Feb. 10 for his 50 years in preaching ministry.

Randall Tucker, pastor of Prattmont Baptist, presented Smith with a commemorative plaque with Romans 1:16 engraved on it.

Smith, who said he accepted Christ at the age of 8, felt the Lord "speaking to his heart" when he was 12 and shared this ministry calling with his pastor, Henry L. Lyon, at Highland Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery. Lyon encouraged Smith to participate in the jail ministry Highland Avenue Baptist was involved in at the Montgomery City Jail, and Smith gave his first sermon to the "black section" of the jail, since it was still segregated at the time, he explained. It was 1963 and Smith was 13 years old.

After a few years of sharing at the jail and also at a local nursing home, Smith publicly shared his desire to become a pastor when he was 16.

He attended Samford University in Birmingham and began to lead Cubahatchie Baptist Church, Shorter.

Smith and his wife, Elise, became Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board) missionaries in Vacherie and Labadieville, La., while Smith attended New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary to earn his master of divinity degree.

After graduation in 1975, Smith became the pastor of Sweet Water Baptist Church, his first full-time pastorate. He later served Catoma Baptist Church, Montgomery; First Baptist Church, Midfield; First Baptist Church, Geneva; and Glynwood Baptist Church, Prattville.

In 2007, Smith became a state missionary in the LeaderCare and church administration office of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) under the leadership of director Dale Huff.

Huff said Smith "brings decades of the wisdom of experience to assist churches all over the state."

"One of [Chips'] areas of specialization is church policies, especially incorporation laws and procedures. His heart is with bivocational churches and pastors," Huff said. "We are thankful for a half-century (of sharing through preaching) and trust he will add a couple of additional decades."

Smith said after 50 years of preaching he is surprised to see a reversal in his thought processes.

"When I first started (preaching) I wondered how I would have enough (material) to preach and how I would come up with all the sermons. Now after 50 years I wonder how I will have enough time to share all that I want to preach," he said jokingly.

Although Smith's been serving with SBOM for six years he still preaches at churches when they need a supply preacher, he said.

He and his wife are members of Prattmont Baptist and have two children and three grandchildren. (Neisha Fuson)

Day named Beeson M.Div. alumna of year

Norfleete Day has been named 2013 Distinguished Master of Divinity Alumna by Samford University's Beeson Divinity School. She was presented the award by Beeson Dean Timothy George at a service Feb. 5.

Day was a member of Beeson's first entering class of students in 1988. She received her master of divinity degree in 1993 and later earned a doctorate in New Testament from Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

She returned to teach at Beeson in the areas of biblical studies, including Hebrew and Greek, and spiritual formation until she retired in 2009. The U.S. Navy veteran also holds a master's degree in library science from the University of Alabama.

In presenting the award, George cited Day for her "exemplary and faithful service in the academy and in the church of Jesus Christ." (Samford)



DAY

SBOM creates office of communications, technology services, names Rogers director

A new Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) office was created and a director named in action taken by the SBOM members at their Feb. 25 meeting at First Baptist Church, Trussville.

The office of communications and technology services was created by combining the areas of communications services and computer services. Both were formerly part of the office of information services.

"The creation of this new office is a result of a ministry audit relating to the previous work of two areas of ministry in the office of information services," said Rick Lance, SBOM executive director. "Communications services and computer services were led by separate coordinators for a number

of years. With the ministry audit of these areas of ministry, we felt a combining of them with one director was a more efficient way of doing the ministry assignments and it was a cost savings move as well."

Doug Rogers, currently coordinator of communications services for the SBOM, was named director of the new office, effective March 1. Rogers came to the SBOM in 1999 as an associate and was made coordinator in 2000.

Prior to arriving in Alabama, Rogers served as audiovisual manager at the South Carolina Baptist Convention and minister of activities and media at Southside Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.

Rogers received his bachelor of science degree in business from Florida State University in 1984



ROGERS

VOICE YOUR OPINION

SPEAK UP on issues in the Baptist world by writing a letter to the editor of *The Alabama Baptist*.

Remember to:

- Include your name and address
- Focus on issues, not people
- Be as concise as possible

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Located in the central square of Sochi, the Olympic countdown clock recently showed there is one year left to prepare before the world arrives in Russia for the 22nd Winter Olympic Games.



IMB photos

Randy Lind (left), worship and music specialist for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, shares the gospel with a young skier on the slopes where several Olympic events will be held in February 2014.

Mass EVANGELISM

Alabama, other Baptists prepare for Olympic ministry through Engage Sochi

Excitement is mounting in the Olympic host city of Sochi, Russia, where the countdown clock in the central square recently displayed only 365 days until the Opening Ceremonies of the 22nd Winter Olympic Games.

Russian dignitaries and Olympic officials celebrated the event in the recently completed Bolshoy Ice Dome in nearby Adler. Several thousand Sochi residents gathered to watch the countdown at one of the live Olympic viewing sites in their city's downtown area along the coast of the Black Sea.

Olympic officials and Sochi residents were not the only ones in the area watching as the clock clicked down to the one-year mark. Southern Baptists from Oklahoma and Georgia joined International Mission Board (IMB) representatives in the city as preparations for Olympic ministry continue.

The Engage Sochi project is an IMB initiative that mobilizes Southern Baptists to reach the people of Sochi through broad sharing of the gospel and planting of churches before, during and after the Olympics in February 2014 and the Paralympics in March 2014.

The project is a natural fit for national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) because WMU already had a partnership with the city, said Kristy Carr, a member of Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham, and WMU ministry consultant.

In fact, the first official WMU team to work with Engage Sochi leaves for the city March 4. The team is working

with International Initiatives to reach out to the city with International Women's Day (March 8) celebrations.

"It's a huge outreach opportunity for the women in the area and a far greater celebration in that area than any we would have for Mother's Day," Carr said.

If all goes well, another WMU team will go back next March to do the same thing, she said.

While the staff members and volunteers from Oklahoma and Georgia Baptist conventions were in Sochi recently, they joined Engage Sochi project leaders to plan for more than 400 people to share the gospel during the Games.

Strong church-planting element included

"I think it is important for conventions to be leading out in Olympic ministry," said Georgia Baptist Convention staffer Marty Youngblood, who is a veteran of Olympic ministries. "It allows us to reach the world in a much more responsible way, as far as our resources go."

Unlike other Olympic ministry projects, Engage Sochi focuses on more than broad gospel-sharing. At its core is a strong church-planting component. While volunteers will have the opportunity to share the gospel with those people around the world, the primary focus is to reach individuals who live and work in the Olympic city.

Youngblood said the intentional church planting at an Olympic event makes the project unique. "We are going to be focusing on the people of Sochi," he said. "Mass evangelism is good. It's important to focus on the people from around the world. But when we focus on the city and the people of Sochi we leave more of a lasting influ-

ence than we usually would during the Olympics."

With just under a year remaining before the kick-off of the Olympics in Sochi, much of the city and surrounding area is covered in a cloud of construction dust that can be seen from a nearby mountaintop. Just as Russian officials are preparing the city of Sochi to host the Olympics, the Engage Sochi team and scores of volunteers have much to do as well.

Youngblood said he believes all Southern Baptists should be praying in earnest for the Engage Sochi ministry team and logistics coordinators. "This may be one of the most difficult Winter Olympics that I have ever come to know and see as far as logistical planning is concerned.

"I think God is going to do something spectacular here ... maybe even more than anything we have ever experienced in Olympic ministries," Youngblood said. "I am convinced that this is going to be a time where we see the Lord move in mighty ways in the community of Sochi, with the churches here and with people from around the world."

While many Baptists in the United States are already deep into the planning of their Olympic ministry trips to Sochi, they and IMB representatives pray that other Southern Baptists will get just as involved in Engage Sochi.

Updates and other information, including video features, can be found at EngageSochi.org or by emailing TellMeMore@EngageSochi.org.

For information about how to join a WMU team traveling to Sochi, email Carr at kcarr@wmu.org. (IMB)

SBC business items

Scout leadership criticized; LifeWay, NAMB adapts work

The Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Executive Committee unanimously passed a resolution Feb. 19 that criticizes Boy Scouts leadership for trying to change the policy on homosexuality but also urges the Scouts' voting members to uphold the current policy in May. The Executive Committee also approved two SBC entities' requests to adapt their work in other countries.

The Boy Scout resolution, which also commends the Southern Baptists' Royal Ambassadors program "irrespective" of what the Scouts ultimately decide, states:

"[W]e call on and urge the representatives ... of the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America courageously to stand strong on their moral convictions and vote to reject the proposed resolution from the national Scouting leaders, retaining the current policy of moral rectitude that has marked the Boy Scouts of America for more than one hundred years."

The Executive Committee expressed "its deep dismay and disappointment at the conduct of any Boy Scout leader who ... built support for their proposal to reverse the ... position on this issue, thereby alienating conservative religious bodies that sponsor the vast majority of Boy Scout units."

'At odds'

Further, if the Boy Scouts change their policy, it would place them "at odds with a consistent biblical worldview on matters of human sexuality, making it an organization that would no longer complement, but rather contradict, belief in God and His moral precepts that serve as the

basis for our Christian faith."

In dealing with SBC entity requests, the Executive Committee members unanimously approved a request by LifeWay Christian Resources to form LifeWay Global, a for-profit subsidiary that will make Bibles, Bible study materials and training materials available to churches and Christians in China.

Although China will be the only country initially impacted, the request also allows LifeWay Global to provide the materials to other countries. The for-profit status is necessary because China is reluctant to grant registration to international nonprofits, Executive Committee members were told. The goal is for LifeWay Global to be self-funding.

Executive Committee members also unanimously approved a request by the North American Mission Board (NAMB) to form NAMB Canada, a nonprofit corporation that will make it easier for NAMB to continue to expand its church planting work in Canada. Currently, NAMB must direct its Canadian ministry efforts through the Canadian National Baptist

Convention. Forming the nonprofit will allow NAMB to directly hire employees, rent office space and purchase property as needed.

Gerry Taillon, the Canadian National Baptist Convention's ministry leader, expressed support for the proposal. The corporation will be funded solely by NAMB and will have five board members — three Canadian citizens and two U.S. citizens.

In other business, the Executive Committee:

► approved a 2013-14 Cooperative Program Allocation Budget of \$191,500,000 for recommendation during the June SBC annual meeting in Houston.

► approved a recommendation from GuideStone Financial Resources that would allow it to offer its investment and insurance products and services to like-minded individuals. Under the proposal, to be placed before messengers at the SBC annual meeting in June, GuideStone would begin making its mutual funds available to Southern Baptist church members and other eligible evangelical Christians in 2014. (BP)

"[W]e call on and urge the representatives of the approximately 1,400 voting members of the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America courageously to stand strong on their moral convictions."

US Congress joins call to release imprisoned Iranian-American pastor

Calls are intensifying for the U.S. to pressure Iran to free pastor Saeed Abedini, a U.S. citizen of Iranian descent who is being tortured in an Iranian prison and persecuted for his Christian faith.

More than 80 U.S. Congress members from both parties signed a Feb. 12 letter urging Secretary of State John Kerry to "exhaust every possible option to secure Mr. Abedini's immediate release."

Alabama congressmen Robert B. Aderholt, Mo Brooks, Spencer Bachus, Jeff Sessions and Mike Rogers signed the letter.

The letter joins an online petition by the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) urging Presi-

dent Obama, Kerry and Congress to "take all available diplomatic and legislative action to pressure Iran to respect religious freedom and release Pastor Saeed." The petition had more than 283,000 signatures as of Feb. 22.

The ACLJ's European arm has called on the United Nations Human Rights Council to intervene. The nonprofit ACLJ is representing Abedini's family in the U.S., where his wife, Naghmeh, and their two sons have expressed fears that she might not hear from Abedini for eight years, the length of his current sentence. Abedini has been held since September 2012 in the notorious Evin Prison in Tehran.

In the letter, 84 Congress mem-

bers applauded Kerry for saying that Abedini's imprisonment represents "a violation of the universal right of freedom of religion," and said the case is particularly troubling in light of Abedini's U.S. citizenship.

Calls for Abedini's release come as Iran shows no signs of relenting in its persecution of Christians and their defenders.

Pastor Benham Irani continues to languish in prison under a six-year sentence for "acting against the interests of national security," according to International Christian Concern, a Washington advocacy group for the persecuted church.

For more information or to sign the ACLJ online petition, visit save-saeed.org. A video from advocates like Michael W. Smith and Steven Curtis Chapman also can be viewed on the site. (BP)



ABEDINI

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

Pastors appointed to serve refugees in Myanmar

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. — Two hundred years after missionary Adoniram Judson's 1813 mission to Burma, American Baptist Home Mission Societies has appointed two missionaries to serve refugees from the Southeast Asian country also known as Myanmar.

The appointments of pastors Saw Ler Htoo, of Laurel, Md., and Ronald Charles Nunuk, of Milwaukee, Wis., mark the first time that Burmese pastoral leaders will serve as staff at the national level. The duo will be commissioned at the 2013 biennial meeting of American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), scheduled June 21-23 in Overland Park, Kan.

Htoo brings a resumé that includes roles as pastor of Calvary Burmese Church, Washington, since 2001 and as executive secretary of Karen Baptist Churches USA since 2009. He also serves on the Burma Refugees Task Force.

Nunuk is well known for roles including founding senior pastor at Carson Chin Baptist Church, Milwaukee, and trustee and youth coordinator of Chin Baptist Churches of USA. He has served as a board member of American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin.

"These historic appointments confirm the Home Mission Societies' longstanding commitment to refugee resettlement and advocacy on behalf of immigrant peoples in general and to the peoples of Myanmar in particular," said Aidsand Wright-Riggins, executive director of the domestic-missions arm of the 1.3-million-member ABCUSA.

Historically Baptist missionary work in Burma bore fruit by establishing Baptists as the country's largest Christian group, with 1.5 million members grouped in 18 language and regional conventions.

Since 2006, American Baptist Home Mission Societies has worked vigorously to meet needs of thousands of refugees of Karen, Chin, Kachin, Karenni, Mon, Shan, Lisu and other ethnicities who have fled 50 years of civil conflict in their homeland to settle in 30 ABCUSA regions across the United States.

SBC considers merging DC, Md.-Del. conventions

WASHINGTON — Leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) will vote in June on a proposal to no longer recognize the District of Columbia Baptist Convention as a qualified state entitled to representation on SBC governing boards.

Staff of the SBC Executive Committee said Feb. 19 the proposed change is in response to complaints that current trustees are chosen from only a small number of D.C. churches actively involved in Southern Baptist life, creating impressions of favoritism. A single congregation, Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, has provided 40 of 65 D.C. Baptist representatives during the past 10 years, according to background materials provided to committee members.

While leaders said there have been no complaints about the service of the trustees from Capitol Hill Baptist, the trend goes against an unspoken tradition of trying to choose representation from as broad a number of congregations as possible.


A proposal set for vote at the Executive Committee's pre-convention meeting in June would establish a new territory merging the D.C. convention with the adjoining Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware.

The new arrangement would alter connections that make the District of Columbia convention uniquely aligned not only with Southern Baptists but also with other Baptist groups including American Baptist Churches USA. Historically the arrangement was presented as a unified witness that unlike other cities, the nation's capital transcends geography and belongs to all U.S. citizens.

The SBC once funded the DC convention to the tune of \$475,000 a year. That ended in 2003, when D.C. Baptists turned down a cooperative agreement giving the SBC North American Mission Board greater control over how those funds would be expended.

CBF elects Paynter executive coordinator

AUSTIN, Texas — Suzii Paynter of Austin, Texas, was elected Feb. 21 as the third executive coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF).

The CBF Coordinating Council unanimously elected Paynter, whose nomination was announced Jan. 17 after a year-long search, during the opening session of a two-day meeting at First Baptist Church, Decatur, Ga. She currently works as director of both the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission and Advocacy Care Center of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. 

FOCUS on One Mission

Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions

ONE MISSION:
The Great Commission

ONE PROGRAM:
The Cooperative Program

MANY MINISTRIES:
Great Commission Ministries



ONE Mission

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



praying **ACROSS** alabama

II Chron. 7:14

60 Days Of Prayer February 27 - April 27, 2013

Seeking God through prayer for revival and spiritual awakening across our state

Visit www.PrayingAcrossAlabama.org for prayer gatherings across the state (see page 12), 60 Days of Prayer sign-up and additional information.

This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

Alabama Association of Baptist Secretaries Conference

As we approach our AABS Conference, **MARCH 3-6**, we have several breakout sessions that will help us "Be Joyful, Faithful and Prayerful" in our ministry positions.

Professional Certification classes in leadership and ministry will be offered. Occupational classes will be available, such as: Excel, QuickBooks, Grammar, iPod, Google and Ministry, Publisher, Advanced PowerPoint, What's New with Tax/Finances Issues, Basic Financial Policies and Retention Schedule, Charitable Contributions and Emergency Response.

Available also will be GuideStone retirement and

health plan opportunities to review. Spiritual and personal classes will be available, including: "A True Walk with Christ," "Miracles out of John," Grief, Importance of Ministries, Encouragement, Sandwich Generation, Men and Women Getting Along, How to Clear Clutter out of Your Life and Jewelry Making.

We pray that any one of these breakout sessions would be a benefit to our ministries as each person follows God's direction in the lives of our personal and ministry opportunities.

For updates and other details, please go online to www.alabamabaptistsecretaries.com.

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

SPRING SENIOR ADULT RETREAT April 15-17, 2013 Shocco Springs

Theme: PRESS ON — *Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.* Philippians 3:13-14 (NAS)

Preacher: Gary Miller, Westview Baptist Church, Opp

Celebration Leader: Jamey Pruett, Gilliam Springs Baptist Church, Arab

Musician: Ed Cleveland, First Baptist Church, Montgomery

Registration/Costs: www.shocco.org or 1-800-280-1105 (The cost per person is based upon choice of lodging at Shocco.)

Spring is the perfect time of year to get out, get away, retreat from the normal routines of life, spend time reflecting on God's goodness and seek anew His direction for our lives. Join many other senior adults as we worship and praise God and share a joyful time beginning with lunch on **Monday, April 15**, and ending with lunch on **Wednesday, April 17**.

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

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

DEADLINE FOR AUDITION FORM/CD:  MAY 13

ROCKSOLID CHRISTIAN COVER BAND

RockSolid Christian Cover Band is an auditioned group of young people, grades 9-12, from Alabama Baptist churches. Vocalists; a percussionist (trap set); keyboardists; rhythm, lead and bass guitarists; and horn players will be selected from the audition CDs and applications. This group performs a wide variety of secular and contemporary Christian music and will be touring in Alabama July 1-4 and July 14-15, 2013.

For other information, please go online to www.alsbom.org/rocksolid or contact State Missionary Keith Hibbs at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 217, or (334) 613-2217, khibbs@alsbom.org, or Ministry Assistant Sharon Cleveland at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 279, or (334) 613-2279, scleveland@alsbom.org.

Why I Believe in the Cooperative Program

BY CHIP STARNES

While growing up in Mississippi, I attended and later became a member of a Southern Baptist church.

During these formative years, I was privileged to not only have instruction in God's Word but also to be introduced to mission and ministry opportunities.



Even at a young age, I distinctly remember the focus upon the Great Commission of Jesus Christ to all believers. Our mission leaders, church staff and teachers stressed the importance of partnership missions and of the collaborative effort of churches through the Cooperative Program to fund ministries and missions for fulfillment of the Great Commission. Believers can indeed accomplish more together than they can accomplish as individuals.

For the past 87 years, Southern Baptists have promoted the partnering together of churches in giving through a cooperative effort entitled the Cooperative Program. It is with great joy that I have witnessed the effect of Cooperative Program efforts in the lives of both North American and international missionaries. What a blessing to know our dollars are helping students in seminaries, providing quality leadership to the



churches in our state through the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, aiding in serving as a voice on issues of morality and ethics, and supporting many other vital ministries and mission opportunities. Within the Southern Baptist family, there are times when we hear discussion

concerning Cooperative Program giving. We do well to realize that we are not giving **to** the Cooperative Program; we are giving **through** the Cooperative Program to advance Kingdom work.

As I view the ministries and missions of the Southern Baptist Convention, I feel a sense of partnership and participation in these endeavors. A sense of fulfillment comes to my mind when I think of how the money I give is joined with the money other Southern Baptists give to fund the ministries and missions of the Southern Baptist Convention.

I still believe in the Cooperative Program as a vital means to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and to support the Acts 1:8 mandate of serving as His witnesses locally, in surrounding areas and around the world. *Chip Starnes is pastor, First Baptist Church, Bay Minette.*



BRIDGING THE GAP

Understanding the Challenges Our Students Will Face in College & How to Prepare Them

Thursday, April 25, 2013, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery

Cost: \$10 per person (includes conference, lunch and materials)

A Drive-In Youth Ministry Training Event presented by the Office of Collegiate & Student Ministries, featuring **Tommy McGregor**. Tommy is the author of *Lost in Transition: Becoming Spiritually Prepared For College* and founder of The TransMission, a ministry that helps guide students through their senior year of high school and into their first semester of college.

Registration:

www.onemissionstudents.org/bridgingthegap

For other information, please contact Ministry Assistant Lydia Patterson at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 275, or (334) 613-2275, lpatterson@alsbom.org.

praying ACROSS alabama

STATEWIDE DAY OF PRAYER, **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24**
CHURCHES ARE ENCOURAGED TO HAVE A TIME OF PRAYER FOR REVIVAL AND SPIRITUAL AWAKENING ACROSS OUR STATE DURING THEIR WORSHIP TIMES

PRAYER GATHERINGS

(listed by county, not association)

Autauga, March 26, 10 a.m.

Autauga County Courthouse, 134 North Court St., Prattville

Baldwin, three gatherings on April 16

10 a.m., Baldwin County Courthouse, 312 Courthouse Square, Bay Minette

1 p.m., Baldwin County Courthouse, 1100 Fairhope Ave., Fairhope

3 p.m., Baldwin County Satellite Courthouse, 201 East Section Ave., Foley

Barbour, two gatherings on April 16

9 a.m., Barbour County Courthouse, 303 East Broad St., Eufaula

1 p.m., Barbour County Courthouse, 201 Court Square, Clayton

Bibb, March 13, 9 a.m.

Bibb County Courthouse, 35 Court Square East, Centreville

Blount, May 2, Noon

Blount County Courthouse, Oneonta

Bullock, March 11, 8:30 a.m.

Bullock County Courthouse, 217 Prairie St. North, Union Springs

Butler, February 28, 11:30 a.m.

Greenville City Hall, 119 East Commerce St., Greenville

Calhoun, April 26, 12:30 p.m.

Calhoun County Courthouse, 25 West 11th St., Anniston

Chambers, March 5, 9 a.m.

Chambers County Courthouse, 2 South Lafayette St., Lafayette

Cherokee, April 16, Noon

Cherokee County Courthouse, 100 Main Street, Centre

Chilton, March 25, 10 a.m.

Chilton County Courthouse, 500 2nd Ave. North, Clanton

Choctaw, April 9, 3 p.m.

Choctaw County Courthouse, 100 West Main St., Butler

Clarke, April 9, 1 p.m.

Clarke County Courthouse, 114 Court St., Grove Hill

Clay, April 2, 11:30 a.m.

Clay County Courthouse, 25 Court Square, Ashland

Cleburne, April 4, Noon

Cleburne County Courthouse, 120 Vickery St., Heflin

Coffee, three gatherings

March 14, 10 a.m., Coffee County Courthouse, 200 Buford St., Elba

March 14, 10 a.m., Coffee County Courthouse, 501 South Main St., Enterprise

March 19, 11 a.m., Sardis Association Office, 806 Highway 52 North, Kinston

Colbert, March 8, 12:30 p.m.

Colbert County Courthouse, 201 North Main St., Tuscumbia

Conecuh, March 12, Noon

Conecuh County Courthouse, Jackson St., Courthouse Square, Evergreen

Coosa, March 25, 2 p.m.

Coosa County Courthouse, 100 Main St., Rockford

Covington, March 28, 11:30 a.m.

Covington County Courthouse, 1 Court Square, Andalusia

Crenshaw, March 26, Noon

Crenshaw County Courthouse, 29 South Glenwood Ave., Luverne

Cullman, February 28, 10 a.m.

Cullman County Courthouse, 500 2nd Ave. Southwest, Cullman

Dale, April 11, 10 a.m.

Dale County Courthouse, 1 Court Square, Ozark

Dallas, March 18, 9 a.m.

Dallas County Courthouse, 105 North Lauderdale St., Selma

DeKalb, March 19, Noon

DeKalb County Courthouse, 300 Grand Ave. South, Fort Payne

Elmore, March 26, 2 p.m.

Elmore County Courthouse, Courthouse Lane, Wetumpka

Escambia, March 14, Noon

Escambia County Courthouse, 314 Belleville Ave., Brewton

Etowah, April 26, 11 a.m.

Etowah County Courthouse, 800 Forest Ave., Gadsden

Fayette, March 12, 10 a.m.

Fayette County Courthouse, 113 Temple Ave. North, Fayette

Franklin, March 5, 11:30

Franklin County Courthouse, 410 Jackson Ave. North, Russellville

Geneva, March 12, 10 a.m.

Geneva County Courthouse, 200 North Commerce St., Geneva

Greene, March 12, 1:30 p.m.

Greene County Courthouse, Eutaw

Hale, March 13, 11:30 a.m.

Hale County Courthouse, 1001 Main St., Greensboro

Henry, two gatherings on April 2

10:30 a.m., Henry County Courthouse, 101 Court Square, Abbeville

1:30 p.m., Headland National Bank, 18057 U.S. Highway 431 South, Headland

Houston, March 21, 10 a.m.

Houston County Courthouse, 114 North Oates St., Dothan

Jackson, March 19, 11 a.m.

Jackson County Courthouse, 102 East Laurel St., Scottsboro

Jefferson, two gatherings on February 24

2 p.m., Jefferson County Main Courthouse, 716 Richard Arrington Jr. Blvd. North, Birmingham

4 p.m., Bessemer Courthouse, 1801 3rd Ave. North, Bessemer

Lamar, March 12, 1 p.m.

Lamar County Courthouse, 44690 Alabama 17, Vernon

Lauderdale, March 8, 11:30 a.m.

Lauderdale County Courthouse, 200 South Court St., Florence

Lawrence, March 7, 11:30 a.m.

Lawrence County Courthouse, 14330 Court St., Moulton

Lee, March 4, 11:30 a.m.

Lee County Courthouse, 215 S. 9th St., (Parksquare in front of courthouse), Opelika

Limestone, February 27, 11:30 a.m.

Limestone County Courthouse, 200 West Washington Street, Athens

Lowndes, April 28, 2 p.m.

Lowndes County Courthouse, South Washington St., Hayneville

Macon, March 11, 11:30 a.m.

Macon County Courthouse, 101 East Rosa Parks Ave., Tuskegee

Madison, February 28, 11:30 a.m.

Madison County Courthouse, 100 Northside Sq., Huntsville

Marengo, March 12, 9 a.m.

Marengo County Courthouse, 101 East Coats Ave., Linden

Marion, March 4, 11:30 a.m.

Marion County Courthouse, 132 Military St. South, Hamilton

Marshall, two gatherings on April 18

Noon, Marshall County Courthouse, 425 Gunter Ave., Guntersville

Noon, Marshall County Courthouse, 116 West Main, Albertville

Mobile, April 8, 2 p.m.

Mobile County Courthouse, 205 Government St., Mobile

Monroe, March 4, 11:30 a.m.

Monroe County Courthouse, 31 Alabama 21, Monroeville

Montgomery, March 13, 10 a.m.

State Capitol, 600 Dexter Ave., Montgomery

Morgan, March 1, 11:30 a.m.

Morgan County Courthouse, 302 Lee Street Northeast, Decatur

Perry, March 18, 11:30 a.m.

Perry County Courthouse, 300 Washington St., Marion

Pickens, March 12, 3 p.m.

Pickens County Courthouse, 20 County Road 35, Carrollton

Pike, April 4, 10 a.m.

Pike County Courthouse, 120 West Church St., Troy

Randolph, April 4, 11:45 a.m.

Randolph County Courthouse, 1 Main St. South, Wedowee

Russell, March 4, 9 a.m. EST

Russell County Courthouse, 1000 Broad St., Phenix City

Shelby, February 28, 2 p.m.

Shelby County Courthouse, 112 North Main St., Columbiana

St. Clair, two gatherings on February 27

10 a.m., St. Clair County Courthouse, 100 6th Ave., Ashville

2 p.m., St. Clair County Courthouse, 1815 Cogswell Ave., Pell City

Sumter, March 12, 11:30 a.m.

Sumter County Courthouse, 115 Franklin St., Livingston

Talladega, April 2, 1 p.m.

Talladega County Courthouse, 1 Court Square, Talladega

Tallapoosa, March 5, 11:30 a.m.

Tallapoosa County Courthouse, 125 North Broadnax St., Dadeville

Tuscaloosa, March 11, 10 a.m.

Tuscaloosa County Courthouse, 714 Greensboro Ave., Tuscaloosa

Walker, March 11, 2 p.m.

Walker County Courthouse, 1900 3rd Ave. South, Jasper

Washington, April 9, 10 a.m.

Washington County Courthouse, 1 Court St., Chatom

Wilcox, March 5, 11:30 a.m.

Wilcox County Courthouse, 100 Broad St., Camden

Winston, March 6, 11:30 a.m.

Winston County Courthouse, 25125 Hwy 195, Double Springs

REGIONAL PRAYER EVENTS

Great Commission Prayer Conference, "AWAKEN: A Prayer Experience"

March 8-9, Highland Baptist Church, Florence

One Night Prayer Rally, April 12, First Baptist Church, Albertville

One Night Prayer Rally, April 26, Hill Crest, Anniston

60 DAYS OF PRAYER, FEBRUARY 27-APRIL 27

Prayer and devotion guide and other resources are available online at www.prayingacrossalabama.org or by contacting Debbie Dickey, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 218, (334) 613-2218, ddickey@alsbom.org.



Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions

This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

FOCUS on One Mission

a gathering for girls in grades 7 through 12

complete

March 8-9, 2013
CrossPoint Church
Trussville, Alabama
Register by February 22
\$35 per person



This awesome weekend devoted to teen girls and their leaders features:

- Heart-felt worship
 - Unforgettable Bible study
 - Inspirational missionary testimonies
 - Practical life break-outs
 - Motivating missions & ministry break-outs
- ...all led by women!



a daughter of the King

Bible study with author

Erin Davis



Worship with artist

Lexi Elisha

For more information, visit www.alabamawmu.org/students, call 800.264.1225 ext. 223 or e-mail Erin Bishop at ebishop@alsbom.org.

This event is made possible by gifts given through the Kathleen Mallory Mission Offering and the Cooperative Program.

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

Renew

a day away with friends for women of all ages

March 2, 2013

Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery

9:00 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

\$35 per person

(includes lunch)

For more information:

visit www.alabamawmu.org or contact Pat Ingram at pigram@alsbom.org or 800.264.1225 ext. 292.

In this fast-paced world, it's easy to get burned out. Renew provides an environment for spiritual renewal and refreshment, while encouraging you to live a missions- and ministry-centered lifestyle. Join us for this day of worship, Bible study and breakout conferences. Bring your friends, or come and make some new ones at Renew!



Bible study with
Chandra Peele

Author and nationally sought-after speaker



Worship with
Melissa Greene

Dove Award-winning artist & former member of Avalon

This event is made possible by gifts given through the Kathleen Mallory Mission Offering & the Cooperative Program.

WHAT IS CAMPERS ON MISSION?

Wednesday through Saturday, April 24-27



Alabama COM Spring Rally • National Peanut Festival Fair Grounds, Dothan

Campers on Mission (COM) is a national fellowship of Christian campers who share their faith while they camp. Though sponsored by Southern Baptists, membership is open to Christian campers of all denominations.

The Alabama Chapter of COM sponsors a fall rally and a spring rally and more than 20 mission projects a year. Visitors who are interested in possible membership are welcome to attend the rally.

Friday night at 6:30 p.m. is a time of project reports. This would be an ideal time to visit.

What do Campers on Mission do? Projects include state fairs, motor speedways, sewing, nursing home ministry, puppets, prayer walks, Seaman Center, association camps, church construction and disaster relief.

Who can join Campers on Mission? Any adult: single or family, young or older. COM is family-friendly and provides a great way to experience the relaxation of vacation with the satisfaction of a mission project. It is a great pathway to become an on-mission family.

To become a member or for other information, please check online at www.alabamacom.org.

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Offering April 21, 2013



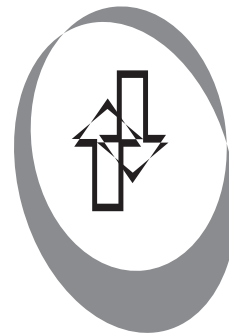
HELPING REBUILD SHARING CHRIST IN CRISIS

Funds given through the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Offering will enable the State Board of Missions, in partnership with churches and associations, to support and equip disaster relief responders and response efforts, including the purchase of needed equipment.



STATEWIDE GOAL: \$200,000
Suggested church goal: \$1 per member

For resources, call 1.800.264.1225, ext. 273, or visit www.sbdr.org/disasterrelieffoffering.



LEADERconnect FORUM

Tuesday, April 9, 2013
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery

COST: \$20 (includes course materials and lunch) Pre-registration is requested to secure materials.

LEADER FOR THE DAY: State Missionary Jim Swedenburg

TOPIC FOR THE DAY: Emotional Intelligence
"Emotional Intelligence" (EQ) refers to the personal-management and social skills that allow us to succeed in our interactions with other people. EQ addresses our responses to everyday challenges and social interactions as leaders. It involves intuition, character, integrity, motivation, communication and relationship skills. Self-understanding and healthy relationships are vital for effective leadership.

This seminar will focus on the two simple concepts that EQ draws upon: applying knowledge appropriately and applying feelings appropriately. During your day you will participate in lecture, dialogue and the use of an instrument to help you understand how you generally apply your own personal emotional intelligence.

For registration and other information, please go online to www.alsbom.org/leaderconnect or contact Ministry Assistant Jamie Allen at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 256, or (334) 613-2256, jallen@alsbom.org.

FOCUS on One Mission

Music Leadership Conference

children's choir

July 12-13 Summit

FRAMED!



An exciting, hands-on training that will allow you to

- Discover new ways to make choir a favorite for kids!
- Learn how you can use games to enhance your music program.
- Create an ideal opportunity for children to experience worship.
- Network with outstanding clinicians from across the U.S.
- Network with other people in similar situations.

Cost: \$90 per person before May 2; \$100 per person after May 2 (includes lodging, three meals, eight sessions & dessert buffet)

Registration: www.alsbom.org/children-summit or 1-800-280-1105

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

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

Mix Music Camp

Monday through Friday, July 15-19
Shocco Springs

THREE TRACKS:

- Completed grades 3-5, 6-7 and 8-10

NEXT BEST RATE DEADLINE: May 1, for \$270 per person

AFTER MAY 1: Cost is \$280 per person

REGISTRATION: 1-800-280-1105 or www.MixMusicCamp.org

FOR OTHER INFORMATION, please contact Ministry Assistant Cindy Parrish at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 230, or (334) 613-2230, cparrish@alsbom.org.



ONE MISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

April 19-21, 2013

OneVoice ALABAMA BAPTIST ALL-STATE YOUTH CHOIR TOUR

www.alsbom.org/onevoice

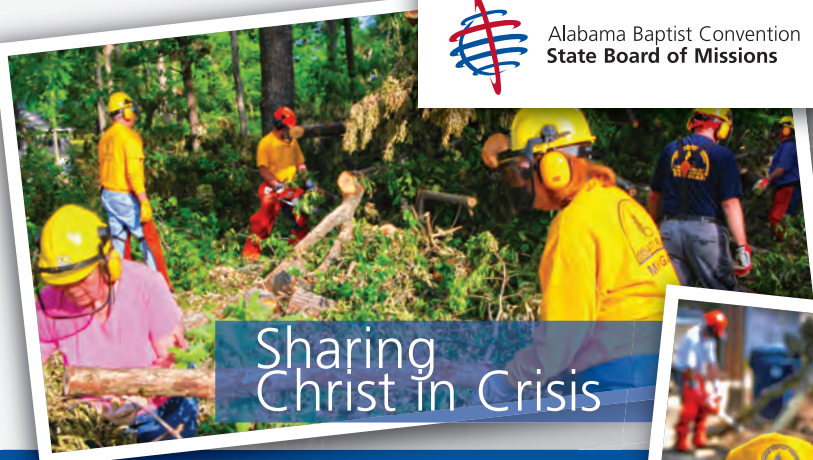
OneVoice is a group of auditioned singers and instrumentalists in grades 9-12 who actively participate in their local church youth music ministry. This year's tour will be in the Talladega and Montgomery areas, to include a concert at Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery. Lodging will be at Shocco Springs.

Cost of the tour is \$200 and includes lodging, meals, local transportation, music and shirt. Students must provide their own transportation to Shocco Springs (Friday) and home from Taylor Road Baptist Church (Sunday).

Audition Requirements: Submit a CD of an unaccompanied vocal or instrumental selection (a hymn or praise song) of your choice that will demonstrate your ability in the following areas: pitch memory, vocal or instrumental range, vocal or tonal quality, musical interpretation. Also needed are: a completed application form, a letter of recommendation from your minister of music or pastor, and a brief statement concerning your walk with Christ.

Deadline for returning the application information and audition CD is Monday, March 11, 2013. You will be notified of selection by Wednesday, March 22, 2013. Those who were members of the Alabama Baptist Children's Honor Choir, NewSong or OneVoice are automatically selected. No audition CD is necessary, but the application is still required.

For other information, please contact State Missionary Keith Hibbs at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 217, or (334) 613-2217, khibbs@alsbom.org, or contact Ministry Assistant Sharon Cleveland at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 279, or (334) 613-2279, scleveland@alsbom.org.



Sharing Christ in Crisis

Save the Date! April 5-6, 2013 State Disaster Relief Training Shocco Springs

"Involving Southern Baptists in Disaster Relief" (ISBIDR) is a prerequisite class for all specialized Disaster Relief training.

www.SBDR.org
Your Connection
to Disaster Relief

ISBIDR class will begin at 1 p.m. Friday.



The Cry Heard

Conferences: Mass Feeding • Cleanup/Recovery/Chainsaw • Disaster Assessment • Shower Unit • Child Care • Communications (ham radio license required) • Disaster Relief Chaplaincy (three-day event/April 4-6)

Re-credentialing courses will be offered for those only needing to renew badges in areas of Mass Feeding • Cleanup/Recovery/Chainsaw • Shower

Cost: \$80 per person (double occupancy; includes lodging, meals, program fee). For chaplain training, cost is \$139 per person (double occupancy; includes lodging, meals, program fee).

Registration Procedure for All Classes:

1. Each conferee must register online to reserve training space and materials. Go to www.sbdr.org/training and complete the online registration form.

2. Reservations for full lodging and meals OR commuters must also be completed. Call Shocco Springs at 1-800-280-1105. (Cost for the full conference is paid directly to Shocco Springs.)

For additional information, please contact Ministry Assistant Mondene Coker at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 273, or (334) 613-2273, mcoker@alsbom.org.

Response Assured



Disaster Relief training is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

ROYAL AMBASSADOR CONGRESS



Friday and Saturday, March 15-16, 2013

Camp Hobbs (Boy Scout camp, 18 miles north of Montgomery off County Rd. 40)



Directions: From I-65, exit 186 (US 31-Pine Level), go north on U.S. Highway 31 for 2.2 miles. Turn left on County Road 40. Go 3.3 miles. The entrance is on the right.



Begins with registration at 5 p.m. Friday, concludes at 1:30 p.m. Saturday.



Congress Events:

- Campouts
- Missionaries
- Conferences
- Over 20 field events
- Pinewood Derby
- Missions Fair
- Soapbox Derby
- Outstanding Royal Ambassadors



For other information, please contact Ministry Assistant Hannah Finch at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 227, or (334) 613-2227, hfinch@alsbom.org.

Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Parishioners sue bishop over alleged Ponzi scheme

ATLANTA — Atlanta megachurch pastor Bishop Eddie Long is facing a suit from former parishioners who said he encouraged them to invest in a company that was operating an alleged Ponzi scheme.

A dozen former members of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, Lithonia, Ga., filed suit in DeKalb County court in late January. The suit said Long's assistant had been warned that businessman Ephren W. Taylor was running a \$3 million capital deficit, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported.

After Long introduced the businessman as his "friend," the former New Birth members lost more than \$1 million investing with the self-described "social capitalist."

"If Bishop Eddie Long hadn't endorsed this they wouldn't have invested," Jason Doss, attorney for the former members, told the *Journal-Constitution*.

Long's church has urged Taylor to repay investors with interest.

"We remain hopeful that Ephren Taylor and companies related to him restore the funds that were taken from congregants at New Birth and churches around the county," New Birth said in a statement. "We continue to cooperate as the case proceeds."

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) charged Taylor in 2012 with running a Ponzi scheme, and a civil case against him is pending. SEC officials said he promised to use investments for charity and to help economically challenged areas but instead diverted the funds he received after speaking to churches, including New Birth, to pay other investors and finance business and personal expenses.

Long previously faced another suit from young men who accused him of using gifts and money to coerce them into sexual relationships. He settled those cases in May 2012.

Current economy not impacting most megachurches

DALLAS — Despite the tough economy, many of the nation's largest churches are thriving, with increased offerings and plans to hire more staff, a new survey shows.

Just 3 percent of churches with 2,000 or more attendance surveyed by Leadership Network, a Dallas-based church think tank, said they were affected "very negatively" by the economy in recent years. Close to half — 47 percent — said they were affected "somewhat negatively," but one-third said they were not affected at all.

The vast majority — 83 percent — of large churches expected to meet their budgets in 2012 or their current fiscal year. A majority of large churches also reported that offerings during worship services were higher last year than in 2011.

Even though some churches have ministries that provide other income, such as schools or wedding chapel rentals, an average of 96 percent of their budget comes from members' donations.

All of the large churches reported that they receive some of their donations electronically, including online, via bank transfer or through a lobby kiosk. One in five of them receive between 31 and 60 percent of their offerings electronically.

Most megachurches surveyed spend 10 percent or more of their budget beyond their congregation on causes ranging from local soup kitchens to world missions.

Another sign of economic well-being: Most large churches report that they expect to give staff at least a 1 percent raise in the next budget cycle. Most also expect to modestly increase staff, and hardly any — just 6 percent — expect to reduce the number of staff. The survey of 729 church leaders was released Feb. 19.

Secularism not synonym for anti-God, professor says

WASHINGTON — A conference at Georgetown University in Washington mid-February focused on cleaning up what many Americans consider a dirty word — secularism.

The goal of the conference, called "Secularism on the Edge," was, in part, to define what secularism is and what it is not. It drew participants from France, Israel and the United States — all countries with strong secular and religious strains.

"(Secularism) is a guarantee of two things: freedom of religion and freedom from religion," said Jacques Berlinerblau, a Georgetown professor, conference organizer and author of "How to be Secular."

Secularism is not, Berlinerblau continued, a synonym for godlessness or atheism or any other form of anti-religiousness. Secularism is interested in maintaining government's disinterest in religion, he said.



Photo courtesy of Samford University

Beth Thorne Stukes represents the Thorne family during the dedication program for Barbara Drummond Thorne Hall on Feb. 13. Stukes is a member of the Samford board of trustees and a member of First Baptist Church, Jasper, as was her late mother, Barbara Drummond Thorne.

'Fitting tribute'

Baptist bequest makes Samford residence hall possible

Samford University's newest residence facility bears the name of the late First Baptist Church, Jasper, member Barbara Drummond Thorne.

Construction of Thorne Hall, which was dedicated Feb. 13, was made possible in part by a generous bequest from the Barbara Drummond Thorne estate. In appreciation of Thorne's service and generosity, the Samford board of trustees voted in 2012 to give her name to the first building completed in the West Village project.

Calling all residence halls a kind of monument to life, learning and friendship, Samford President Andrew Westmoreland noted that the new building is "also a memorial to a wonderful friend of Samford."

Thorne was a member of Samford's board from 2001 until her death in 2009.

"Think of the strangers who will meet here and become lifelong friends," Westmoreland said. "Think of the food and the coffee and midnight conversations about God, human nature and the nature of the universe, free will and predestination, politics and poetry.

"[Thorne Hall] is a perfect reflection of Barbara's concern for students and her work on the trustee committees on student life and university advancement," he said.

Thorne's daughter, Beth Stukes, a member of First, Jasper, and current Samford board of trustees member, gave the family's response on behalf of

her siblings: Larry Thorne and Becky Thorne Carroll, both of Auburn, and Babs Thorne Anderson of Tuscaloosa. Two grandsons, Jacob Thorne and Samford junior Patrick Carroll, pulled the cord that revealed their grandmother's nameplate above the front entrance.

"We are grateful for the many relationships she had at Samford," Stukes said of her mother, whose life, she said "exemplified the core values of Samford. This is a fitting tribute."

Helping young people

Thorne, a Walker County native and a graduate of Auburn University, was devoted to helping young people excel. A member of the Alabama 4-H Foundation board of directors and an active community and church volunteer, she was an owner and member of the board of directors of Drummond Company, Inc.

Thorne Hall has about 34,600 square feet and can house up to 100 students in apartment-style living quarters. Each apartment has four private, single-person bedrooms, two bathrooms and a common living/kitchen area. One wing of the building is designated for men and the other wing for women.

The first new residence facility to open on the Samford campus since the early 1990s, it is part of a residential complex called West Village that eventually will include five buildings. Two other buildings are under construction and will open for the fall 2013 semester. (SU)



Photos courtesy of the University of Mobile

HISTORY — University of Mobile President Mark Foley (right) looks at memorabilia from the first five decades of the school's existence with students and faculty.



Solid foundation

UMobile seals time capsule to be opened in 50 years

By Will Drake
University of Mobile

A time capsule located in the floor of the University of Mobile's (UMobile) newest residence hall, The Timbers, will be opened in 50 years for coming generations of students to see memorabilia from the first five decades of the school's existence.

Student Government Association (SGA) president William Dorminy and student leaders placed the items in the time capsule and sealed it Feb. 13.

The Timbers is the latest of three residence halls built during the tenure of UMobile President Mark Foley as the Christian school has strategically aimed to increase on-campus enrollment.

"As a student, I am honored to be a part of a historical event for our campus in this dedication," Dorminy said during the ceremony. "My hope is that the next 50 years would build off the foundation set by the faithful men and women who have made the University of Mobile such a great environment for students to learn,

grow and be equipped to change the world around them."

Included in the time capsule were 60 photos featuring the groundbreaking of Mobile College, original faculty and staff, the first graduating class in 1967, the 50th anniversary faculty in 2011, the 2012 President's Cabinet, Miss UM 2012, the 2012-2013

SGA president and Foley at the time capsule dedication in November 2012.

Also included are several items such as the first yearbook of Mobile College in 1964, an Urban Plunge T-shirt, a stuffed ram mascot and various promotional brochures used throughout the history of UMobile.

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 MON - EMIR CANER TUE - TOMMY GREEN
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in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders, friends

Henry Bruce Wangle Former Alabama pastor Wangle dies

Henry Bruce Wangle served churches in Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia and Florida. He died Jan. 24 at the age of 75.

Wangle served 21 years in the Navy. He then attended the Baptist Bible Institute (now the Baptist College of Florida) in Graceville, Fla., and earned his master of divinity degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary before serving several churches in four states.

In Alabama, Wangle served as pastor of Pilgrim's Rest West Baptist Church, Newton; Packer Memorial Baptist Church, Eastlake (which has since disbanded); and Mud Creek Baptist Church, Adger, before retiring in September 2006. He and his wife, Carolyn, became members of Maytown Baptist Church in 2007 where he served as a Sunday School teacher for the senior adult men and later senior adult couples.

Maytown Baptist Pastor John Killian said Wangle was "a faithful man."

"He had a great zeal for the Lord and served faithfully as a pastor," Killian said.

Wangle is survived by his wife, four children, six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. (Neisha Fuson)



WANGLE

Don Rutledge Missions photographer Rutledge dies

Renowned photographer Don Rutledge, who told the global story of missions through his camera lens for several generations of Southern Baptists, died at his home near Richmond, Va., early Feb. 19. He was 82.

Traveling throughout the United States and to more than 140 countries over more than 40 years, Rutledge captured quiet moments of humanity and missions ministry in hundreds of classic photographs taken for the Home (now North American) Mission Board and later for the Foreign (now International) Mission Board. He joined the then-Foreign Mission Board as a special assignment photographer in 1980 to work primarily for *The Commission* magazine. He formally retired in 1996 but continued doing freelance assignments in the United States and overseas until he suffered a debilitating stroke in 2001.

Rutledge's survivors include his wife, Lucy, two sons and several grandchildren. (BP)



RUTLEDGE

Redus Edgar "Ed" Glaze Jr. Former Alabama pastor Glaze dies at 94

Redus Edgar "Ed" Glaze Jr. served multiple churches as pastor and interim pastor. He died Dec. 19, 2012, at the age of 94.

Glaze served as pastor of churches in Alabama, Tennessee, Indiana and Louisiana. In Alabama, he was pastor of churches such as Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Athens; Lake Catoma Baptist Church, Cullman; and Falkville Baptist Church.

He served as interim pastor of 58 churches in six states.

Glaze also taught New Testament and Greek courses at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary for 32 years before retiring in July 1988. He then taught at the New Orleans Extension Center in Birmingham for eight years and then at the Samford Extension Center in Cullman for 11 years.

Glaze is survived by his wife, Grace Ashley; four children; 11 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren. (Neisha Fuson)



GLAZE

'Holy Spirit always moves me'

Beijing native joins faculty at Judson, shares about communist China

Judson College has had a number of unique teachers and staff over the years, but now the school lays claim to one who protested against the Chinese government at Tiananmen Square in 1989.

"When the protest began I was teaching at Peking University," Kathy Chen said.

"To protect my students I became involved in the student movement. I left Tiananmen Square on June 3 to meet a group from the U.S. Lutheran Church who

w[as] visiting Beijing. When they arrived at my home that evening, the situation was very tense. Three hours after they left, the massacre started. I was dismayed by how the Chinese government handled dissent. With the help of the Lutheran Church, I resigned my job and came to America."

Most recently moving from Salt Lake City, Utah, Chen now lives in Marion and began her role at Judson as director of Judson's distance learning program in February.

Chen was born in Beijing but



CHEN



Photo courtesy of Judson College

Kathy Chen (white shirt behind the banner) participates in a student protest against the Chinese government at Tiananmen Square in 1989. Chen was teaching at Peking University at the time and wanted to protect her students.

grew up in Inner Mongolia with her family. Her father earned a scholarship to the University of Chicago to study economics and later studied at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, Mass.

'Chinese Siberia'

The new communist government didn't trust him so he and his family were exiled to what Chen called the "Chinese Siberia."

"It was actually good to be in another country since many of the exiles were learned people," she said. "It was a great place to be and to be stimulated intellectually."

Chen earned two degrees at the Inner Mongolia Teachers Univer-

sity and taught language arts at Peking University.

With the scholarship provided by the Lutheran Church, she immigrated to America in 1990 and studied at California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks, Calif., earning a master's degree in curriculum and instruction with emphasis on educational technologies. Then she enrolled at Utah State University to earn her doctorate in instructional technology.

In addition to her work at the University of Arkansas in Fort Smith, Chen has worked in IT at a number of businesses and industries in America.

When asked about moving to rural Alabama, Chen said she was impressed with such a "welcoming community."

"I think it's a privilege to work with young women and to help them grow," she said. "Judson students can do whatever they want and modern technology can help them achieve their dreams."

Chen said she grew up without religious training of any kind and it's a misnomer to believe that China is a nation filled with religion. "People think Buddhism flourishes there, but it's not true," she said.

'Opium of the mind'

"Communist China does not encourage religion. We were taught that religion is the opium of the mind. In the past the Chinese worshipped Mao [Zedong]. Now people worship money. It's very sad."

Chen became a Christian in 1991 and said she has a unique way of finding the right church when she takes new work.

"The Holy Spirit always moves me," she said. "When the Holy Spirit touches my heart, I know I'm in the right place. I'm at the place God wants me."

Chen said she wants the Judson distance learning program to stand out and to be the finest quality possible. She dreams of the program going international.

"Technology has changed the way we teach and the way we learn," she said. "It can help us share ideas with people around the world and learn from them."

(JC)

REVERSE MORTGAGE NEWS

You Can Beat FHA's Deadline

By Jimmy Dixon

Please PAY ATTENTION. FHA is about to pull the fixed rate standard reverse mortgage off the shelf. This is the reverse mortgage that currently gives more money to the homeowner.

If you need this product then you have about a month to get things lined up so I can get your FHA case number prior to April 1. If you don't have your case number before then and if we cannot close your loan before July 1, then we will have missed the deadline.

In order to get an FHA case number, I need a completed application and you will need to have a certificate from a HUD approved reverse mortgage counselor. These two things take time, so if you wait until the last week or two of March to contact me, you may have missed the boat.

This is no scare tactic. If you

would like to see the letter we received from FHA, I'll be glad to send you a copy, or you can find it by contacting HUD or FHA directly.

This product will be replaced by the fixed rate saver. On a median priced home, this product will approximately pay \$10,000-20,000 less. The variable rate standard will still be around, but it currently pays out less because it has an origination fee and does not have any lender credits.

Remember, like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives. He is Bible study director and an active deacon at Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown. For a free brochure, quote or DVD, call him direct at 205-567-4800 or email jdixon@mcgowinking.com.



Jimmy Dixon



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Historical HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



50 Years Ago February 1963

State Brotherhood Leaders: The State Baptist Brotherhood Convention met at First Baptist Church, Cullman, Feb. 14-15. Officers elected at the closing session were Jimmy Paul, Birmingham, president; Randy Mears, Huntsville, vice president; and Clarence Peacock, Hartford, secretary. Pastors serving as advisers are Hugh Chambliss, Gadsden; Sam Granade, Evergreen; and John Warner, Sylacauga.

40 Years Ago February 1973

Christian Emphasis Week: Three Judson College graduates and a missionary to Jamaica are on campus to live with students and participate in Christian Em-

phasis Week. They are Marjorie Bullock Hankins, Judson '56, a former educational director now living in Atlanta; Mary Carol Rogers Day, Judson '62, wife of the pastor of First Baptist Church, Ruston, La.; Grace McCain Lee, Judson '57, wife of the executive secretary of the Louisiana Baptist Convention; and Mrs. Dan Carroll, missionary to Jamaica.

30 Years Ago February 1983

Alabamian Chairs SBC Annuity Board: Billy C. Austin, president of Guaranty Federal Savings and Loan Association of Alabama in Birmingham, has been elected chairman of the SBC Annuity Board. He has been on the board since 1977. Austin is a former chairman of the board of dea-

cons at Mountain Brook Baptist Church, Birmingham.

20 Years Ago February 1993

Pharmacy Professor Honored: Samford University pharmacy professor Tea Sam Roe has been named 1993 recipient of the school's George Macon Memorial Award. A native of Korea who earned his Ph.D. in pharmaceuticals at Seoul National University, Roe has taught students at Samford for 25 years.

10 Years Ago February 2003

McIntosh Elected WMU Executive: Candace McIntosh, Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) consultant to students since 1999, was unanimously elected execu-

tive director of Alabama WMU Feb. 21. While working with Alabama WMU ministries, McIntosh coordinated the partnership work of Alabama WMU with Venezuela and Impact Northeast and organized and/or led women's evangelistic teams to Venezuela, among other things. She is looking forward to helping women "understand how God is working and join Him in ministry and missions."

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Want to know God?

By Pastor Joey Cannady
Solitude Baptist Church, Albertville

When personal struggles, health problems or financial issues challenge our lives, we are prone to ask the inevitable question: "Why?" For those of us who are people of faith, we fear that God is mad at us, that we've done something wrong, that we have brought these travails upon ourselves. This kind of thinking evolves from an ingrained sense that if we are believers in Christ, everything in our lives will be good; life will be nice and easy. We cling to the hope that we can control the situation, that if we know why it is happening, we can find a way to make it stop.

In 1 Thessalonians, Paul told the church they were going to suffer various kinds of afflictions. As the afflictions came, the Thessalonian church members grew discouraged and reached out to Paul for help and comfort. Paul responded, "for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this" (1 Thess. 3:3). Trials and tribulations are an integral part of life, some are worse than others, some people seem to have more than others, but for all of us, one day they will come.

When suffering comes to our lives, we can be sure God has not abandoned us. This is simply another part of our spiritual pilgrimage on this earth, providing us with an opportunity to strengthen and develop our faith. I witnessed just such an experience in our church when members were killed in a tragic van accident in 2002 while returning from a missions trip. Despite the loss, the suffering and the pain of that tragedy, I witnessed God's amazing grace as it brought new opportunities and renewed faith to other church members.

If you are facing a time of suffering and affliction in your life, be sure that God has not abandoned you, is not mad at you or punishing you. The results of this experience may provide the greatest opportunity for God to work in and through your life. God desires that we stand strong, so that others may see our faith and come to know Him. May God use our suffering to be a source of goodness, to bring better days ahead in life and to draw us even closer to His boundless love.

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

PASTOR: First Baptist Church, Hackleburg, Ala., is prayerfully seeking a pastor to lead this conservative small-town church of 300 members. A bachelor's degree from a Baptist college or seminary degree is preferred. Send resumes to: First Baptist Church, Hackleburg, P.O. Box 128, Hackleburg, AL 35564, or email to: hfbcoffice@gmail.com by March 31.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Hillside Baptist Church in Wetumpka, Ala., is searching for a Southern Baptist pastor. If you feel led to respond, please send your resume to: Hillside Baptist Church, ATTN: Connie, P.O. Box 297 Wetumpka, AL 36092, or email to: cgantt@hillsidebaptistal.net.

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP LEADER: Northwood Hills Baptist Church in Northport is seeking to hire a paid contemporary worship leader for a new service that will launch on Easter Sunday. We are launching a new work to reach the lost and unchurched young families, singles and others in our area. For information, please call or email the pastor, Rusty Selman, at 205-339-3196 or rusty@northwoodhillschurch.com.

WORSHIP LEADER/STUDENT MINISTER: Camellia Baptist Church in Prattville is currently seeking a God-called individual to serve in this combination position. Seminary degree is preferred, previous experience required. Please send resumes to: 201 Woodvale Rd. Prattville, AL 36067, ATTN: Personnel Committee.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC: Pineywood Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational minister of music. Send resume to: 498 Pineywood Road, Gardendale, AL 35071 or office@pineywoodonline.com.

BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER: Center Grove Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking God's man to lead our choir and congregation in blended worship services. Email resumes to: peejinx@bellsouth.net, or mail to: Worship Search Team, 4607 Co. Rd. 1545, Cullman, AL 35058.

STUDENT PASTOR: First Baptist

Church of the Islands in Savannah, Ga., is seeking a full-time student pastor to lead their student ministry (grades 6-12) in a growing and thriving church setting. The ideal candidate has a sense of God's specific call to reach and minister to middle and high school students. Strong personal skills in relating to students and families will be expected along with a desire to invest life and time in the lives of students. Ability to oversee a variety of facets of student ministry is a must. This position will oversee approximately 60-80 students with potential for incredible growth. Please send resumes with cover letter and references to: searchteam@fbcislands.com, or to: Search Team, FBC Islands, 6613 Johnny Mercer Boulevard, Savannah, GA 31410.

YOUTH MINISTER: Central Heights Baptist, near Florence, Ala., is seeking a youth minister for grades 7-12. Please mail resume to: randall.huckaba.ctr@mda.mil or huckabar@saic.com. Mail: 10090 County Road 15, Florence, AL 35633, ATTN: Randy Huckaba.

PART-TIME STUDENT MINISTER: Cahaba View Baptist, Leeds, is seeking a part-time student minister to lead and minister to our students. Send contact information or resume to: Neal Bruce, pastor, at cahabaviewbc@gmail.com, or 1441 W. Riverview Road, Trussville, AL 35173.

BIVOCATIONAL/PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER: Union Hill Baptist Church of Oneonta is searching for a bivocational/part-time minister of youth. We are a growing Southern Baptist church with two morning services and a worship attendance of about 250-300 people. If you know of a person we might prayerfully consider, please ask him to send a resume to: Search Committee, 2919 Co. Hwy. 39, Oneonta, AL 35121, or email to: bbarnett@otelco.net.

TWO POSITIONS AVAILABLE: Dwight Baptist in Gadsden is prayerfully receiving resumes for two vital ministries of the church - full-time minister of youth and part-time minister of music. Please send resumes to: jaystewart@comcast.net or call 256-546-2847.

TWO POSITIONS NEEDED: East

Side Baptist Church in Cullman, Ala., is seeking a part-time music director. A pianist is also needed. Please respond by March 22. eastsidebaptist@bellsouth.net or 256-734-6144.

OTHER POSITIONS

ADMINISTRATOR & EDUCATION DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOL & CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER: Send resume to: Government Street Baptist Church, 3401 Government Boulevard, Mobile, AL 36693, or to: education@governmentstreet.org. Call 251-660-7444.

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JUDSON COLLEGE

► Judson College Equine Students Place at Georgia Show:

Judson hunt seat equine students Katie McQuaig, of Alpharetta, Ga.; Madelyn King, of Collierville, Tenn.; and Olivia Breimhorst, of Gardendale, traveled to Braselton, Ga., on Feb. 9–10 to compete at the Valentine’s Classic hosted by the University of Georgia. All three riders competed in class 2B, advanced walk, trot and canter. During the Feb. 9 competition, King placed fourth and Breimhorst placed sixth. In the Feb. 10 competition, King placed third and Breimhorst reserve.

► Judson Hosts Intercol-

legiate Horse Show and Earns Recognition: Judson College Equestrian Team hosted the Alabama Intercollegiate Horse Show Association shows Feb. 16.

In the first show, freshman Mary Kilpatrick, of Dothan, placed third in novice horsemanship. Junior Jana Davenport, of Jemison, placed fourth; junior Shelby Crews, of Greenville, placed fifth; senior Lindy Cowart, of Brandon, Miss., placed sixth and first time competitor and junior Kaleigh Young, of Tuscaloosa, placed sixth in intermediate horsemanship.

Freshman Caitlin Autrey, of Selma, placed first in beginner horsemanship, and sophomore Brianne Culp, of Brunswick, Ohio, placed sixth. Sophomore Rylee Parnell, of Tibbie, placed reserve.

In the second show, Cowart and Crews placed first in novice horsemanship and Kilpatrick placed second. Davenport placed third and Young placed fifth in intermediate horsemanship. Autrey placed third in beginner horsemanship, Parnell placed fourth and Culp placed reserve. Overall the Judson equestrian team took second place at the second show earning the title of reserve champion.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► UMobile Presents ‘Night of Classical Masters’: The University of Mobile (UMobile) Center for Performing Arts will present the “Night of Classical Masters” at Dauphin Way United Methodist Church, Mobile, March 18, 7 p.m.

The vocal and instrumental performance will include “The Barber of Seville Overture” by Gioachino Rossini; “Clarinet Concertino in E-Flat Major” by Carl Maria van Weber; “Ave Verum Corpus” with the choir; “Symphony Number 40 in G minor” by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart; and “Lux Aurumque” with the a cappella choir by Eric Whitacre.

Featured soloist is Wilbur Moreland, adjunct professor of woodwinds at UMobile.

Guest conductor is Teresa Cheung, of New York, who earned her master of music degree in conducting from the Eastman School of Music.

Cheung is music director and conductor of the Altoona Symphony Orchestra in Pennsylvania, resident conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra in New York and music director of Bard

College Orchestra in New York.

Cheung has conducted many symphonies including the American Symphony Orchestra, the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, the Mobile Symphony, the Nashville Symphony and the Stamford Symphony.

For more information, contact Lisa Davis at ldavis@umobile.edu or call 251-442-2232.

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► Theatre and Dance Series to Present ‘The Trip to Bountiful’:

Samford University’s Michael J. and Mary Anne Freeman Theatre and Dance Series will present Horton Foote’s “The Trip to Bountiful” on Feb. 28–March 2 at 7:30 p.m., and March 3, at 2:30 p.m. All performances will be in Samford’s Harrison Theatre. Stage veteran Margie Bolding, the department of theatre and dance’s 2013 guest artist, will take the lead role of Carrie Watts.

Foote’s signature voice of love and humanity permeates this beautiful family drama set in rural Texas in the 1950s.

Foote, who died in 2009, received a Pulitzer Prize for his play “The Young Man From Atlanta,” and won Academy Awards and Writer’s Guild of America honors for his “To Kill A Mockingbird” and “Tender Mercies” screenplays. His screenplay for “The Trip to Bountiful” earned him a third Academy Award nomination.

For tickets, call 205-726-2853 or visit www.samford.edu/arts.

► Kettering Foundation’s David Mathews To Speak at

Samford: Kettering Foundation president and CEO David Mathews will give the 2013 James A. Auchmuty Lecture at Samford University on March 7, at 10 a.m., in Reid Chapel.

He will speak on the topic, “Leadership in the Company of Strangers.” The public is invited.

Mathews, a former U.S. secretary of health, education and welfare and president of the University of Alabama, was named to his Kettering Foundation post in 1981.

Mathews has written extensively on such subjects as education, political theory, southern history, public policy and international problem solving. His most recent book, “Reclaiming Public Education by Reclaiming Our Democracy,” focuses on the relationship between the public and public education.

A graduate of the University of Alabama with majors in history and classical Greek, Mathews earned a Ph.D. in history from Columbia University in New York. He grew up in Grove Hill.

The James A. Auchmuty Lecture, sponsored by Samford’s Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence, honors the emeritus pastor of Shades Crest Baptist Church, Birmingham. A 1957 Samford graduate, Auchmuty served the church for 27 years.

As part of his Auchmuty lecture visit, Mathews will address a University Fellows class in Samford’s Brooks Hall room 105, March 6, 3 p.m., and will give a brief presentation at a 6 p.m. prayer meeting at Shades Crest Baptist. He also will speak to a 7 a.m. social entrepreneurship class at Samford on March 7.

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Tebow cancels appearance at FBC Dallas

After recent criticism, New York Jets Quarterback Tim Tebow has canceled a scheduled appearance at First Baptist Church, Dallas.

Tebow announced the cancellation in a series of tweets Feb. 21.

“While I was looking forward to sharing a message of hope and Christ’s unconditional love with the faithful members of the historic First Baptist Church of Dallas in April, due to new information that has been brought to my attention, I have decided to cancel my upcoming appearance,” Tebow wrote.

First, Dallas, issued a statement in response to Tebow’s cancellation: “The leaders and congregation of First Baptist Church, Dallas, are disappointed that New York Jets’ Quarterback Tim Tebow has announced he will no longer speak

and news media who grossly misrepresented past comments made by our pastor, Dr. Robert Jeffress, specifically related to issues of homosexuality and AIDS, as well as Judaism.”

Tebow had been criticized by liberal publications for scheduling the April 28 talk at the church, which the Huffington Post news site described as “virulently anti-gay, anti-Semitic.” Jeffress appeared on a radio show Feb. 21, defending his beliefs against what he said were “false, blatant statements about me.” Jeffress told the morning show of 105.3 The Fan that he and Tebow “had a pleasant conversation on the phone” since then.

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TEBOW

The statement continued: “We are saddened that Mr. Tebow felt pressure to back out of his long-planned commitment from numerous New York and national sports

(BP)

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For March 3

Explore the Bible By Dale Younce Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

FOLLOW SOUND DOCTRINE 1 Timothy 1:3-17

Many adults, even Christians, consider truth to be relative. In society both religious truth and moral teachings are widely thought to be merely personal and subjective.

In some churches, the idea of a biblical standard of sound doctrine may be either deemphasized or outright ignored. This neglect may open the door to erroneous (or even heretical) teachings being accepted. In other churches, persons are required to subscribe to beliefs and practices that have no biblical warrant. Christianity stands strong only when believers rely on the standard of sound doctrine revealed in the Scriptures.

Today's lesson helps us understand that all teachings are to be analyzed in the light of the Scriptures.

Goal of Spiritual Instruction (3-7)

After his release from his first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:30), the apostle Paul visited several of the cities where he had previously ministered, including Ephesus. Leaving Timothy at Ephesus to handle the problems that had arisen in the church, Paul went on to Macedonia and wrote this letter to guide Timothy in his task of managing the church.

Timothy was dealing with false teachers who were busy trying to lead Christians astray. There were teachers of false doctrine in Paul's day just as there are today and Paul took them seriously as so should we. Paul's concern is seen in the directions he gives: Do not teach strange doctrines, different from what Paul taught, different from apostolic doctrine (Acts 2:42), and related to the gospel of salvation.

Apparently these men were teaching another gospel (Gal. 1:6-9) and not the gospel of God's grace. Paul labeled this false teaching as "fables and endless genealogies," that is, myths, legends and fanciful stories manufactured from elements of Judaism as well as allegorical or fictitious

interpretations of Old Testament genealogical lists, leading people away from the truth, causing division, hypocrisy and all sorts of problems. The true goal of Christian instruction is Christlike character: love, purity, a good conscience and sincere faith.

Value of Sound Doctrine (8-11)

The basic reason for the false teaching was the misuse of the Old Testament Law. The false teachers did not understand the purpose of God's Law. Paul lists 14 kinds of people who are condemned by the Law. The correct (or "lawful") use of the Law is to expose, restrain and convict the lawless. The Law's value, when properly used, is to identify all types of ungodly behavior. The Law cannot save lost sinners; it can only reveal their need for a Savior. When a person trusts Jesus, he is freed from the curse of the Law and the indwelling Holy Spirit meets the righteous demands of the Law as the believer yields himself to God.

Example of the Transformed Life (12-16)

These verses are Paul's autobiographical testimony to the power of God's grace. He was Exhibit A to prove that the gospel of God's grace really works. He self-consciously called himself an "example" for later believers, a pattern for others of Jesus fulfilling God's saving purpose in a believer's life. By this means, Paul set forth three responsibilities for the church: (1) proclaiming the gospel, (2) teaching sound doctrine and (3) living a Christ honoring life. We show our commitment to evaluate all teaching in the light of the Scriptures by recognizing the centrality of Jesus' saving purpose in individual lives.

Praise to God (17)

God receives all the praise for saving Paul and for saving us. In this brief doxology, Paul glorifies God for His attributes as King. We show our commitment to evaluate all teaching in light of the Scriptures by praising the King revealed in the Scriptures.

Bible Studies for Life By Scott McGinnis Associate Professor of Religion, Samford University

TRADITION OR GOD'S WORD? Matthew 15:1-11, 17-20

How should a person decide what God would have them do? The Scriptures are filled with commandments, proverbs, poetry and stories that instruct us. If only it were as easy as separating our options neatly into God's demands and human traditions, then perhaps there would be less debate. However as this focal passage from Matthew's gospel demonstrates, many times those who would follow Christ are called upon to judge between competing goods. By what standard should they decide?

Follow Scripture, Avoid Hypocrisy (1-9)

The Mosaic Torah prescribes many practices to maintain ritual cleanliness. Hand washing was required for priests prior to making sacrifices (Ex. 30:17-21) and by males following certain bodily discharges (Lev. 15:11), but there is no universal requirement. The Pharisees, a lay reform movement begun about two centuries before the time of Jesus, promoted the study of Scripture in synagogues and personal piety for all. They sought to obey the commandments of God above all. The Pharisees were generally opposed to the Temple establishment — priests, Sadducees and other power brokers in Jerusalem. Instead, they understood the entirety of Israel as a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6) and thus often adopted priestly practices, such as the ritual washing here debated.

Rather than answer the question put to him, Jesus takes the opportunity to call out the Pharisees for their hypocrisy in applying the commandments. We should note that Jesus is not rejecting the Law itself but self-serving interpretations of it. Indeed, in Matthew Jesus does not condemn but rather endorses the Law (5:17-20). He even endorses the teaching authority of scribes and Pharisees, while in the same breath condemning them for using God's commands as a way of showing themselves to be more important and righteous than others (23:1-11).

The example in the focal passage concerns the conflict between the commandment to

honor one's parents and the Pharisaic practice of dedicating something to God as an offering. On the surface, both seem commendable, so why the conflict? The issue apparently arose when Pharisees dedicated something to God as a way of escaping family commitments. To put it into a modern context, should a person make a large pledge to the church capital campaign if it means ignoring the needs of aged parents?

In Matthew's gospel, intent is everything. Thus lust is not judged to be different from adultery or anger from murder (5:21-30). What is demanded from those who would follow Jesus is careful discernment of our obligations to God and one another, as well as a close examination of our motivations. One can imagine the husband and father who deludes himself into thinking he is fulfilling his Christian duty by spending countless hours volunteering at church while ignoring relationships with his children, or the woman whose eager devotion to church friends becomes an excuse to avoid care for her parents. In each case what passes for the good becomes an excuse to avoid the spirit of God's instructions.

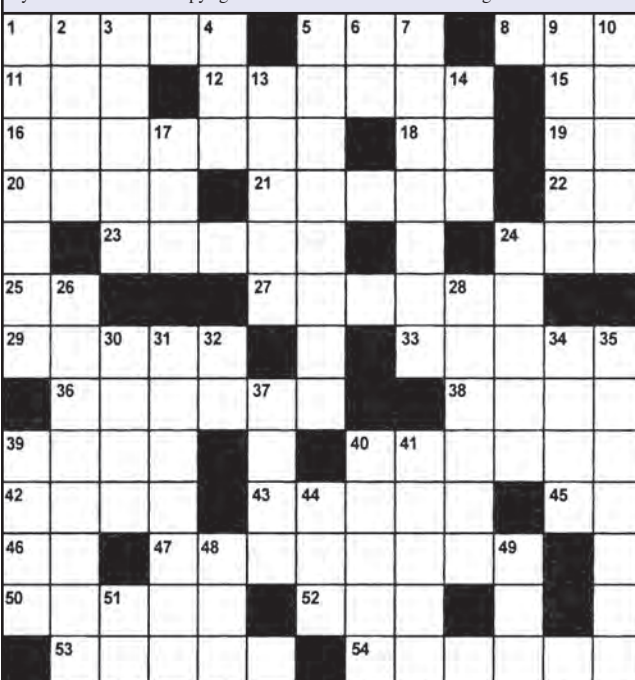
Clean Your Heart (10-11, 17-20)

As Jesus turns His attention from the Pharisees to the surrounding crowds, He returns to the original question concerning ritual cleanliness. It is not what goes into the mouth but what comes out from the heart that defiles a person. In Hebrew thought the heart was not, as in our modern usage, the seat of a person's emotions but rather his moral decision-making. As such it was the root of human conduct, which conversely serves as the best marker of those who seek to follow God. "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matt. 22:37).

At the conclusion of the passage Jesus returns to the Pharisees' original question, and by now the answer is obvious. There is nothing wrong with seeking to live a holy life, but to do so involves more than simply taking on the trappings of purity or being obsessed with the purity of others.

Christian Crossword

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Across

1. Seek ye the Lord while He may be _____. (Isa. 55:6)
5. Go and _____ no more. (John 8:11)
8. In the beginning _____. (Gen. 1:1)
11. When we come to the _____. (Gen. 43:21)
12. In Gaza, in Gath, and in _____. (Josh. 11:22)
15. The second tone of the diatonic scale.
16. Cunning in knowledge, and understanding _____. (Dan. 1:4)
18. University of Iowa. (abbr.)
19. Pennsylvania. (abbr.)
20. Son of Canaan. (Gen. 10:15)
21. O come let us _____ Him.
22. God, who _____ sundry times. (Heb. 1:1)
23. And the tree of the field shall _____ her fruit. (Ezek. 34:27)
24. An exclamation of relief.
25. Road. (abbr.)
27. The power of _____ and Media. (Esther 1:3)
29. Heard me out of his holy hill. _____. (Ps. 3:4)
33. Another name for Mount

- Sinai. (Deut. 4:10)
36. Christ _____ in me. (Gal. 2:20)
38. Thy will be _____ in earth. (Matt. 6:10)
39. White starchy grain.
40. It will _____ (s) him to powder. (Luke 20:18)
42. Shall bake your bread in one _____. (Lev. 26:26)
43. Borrow money take _____ (2 words)
45. Southeast. (abbr.)
46. Today shalt thou _____ with me in paradise. (Luke 23:43)
47. Paul studied at the feet of _____. (Acts 22:3)
50. Who concerning the truth have _____. (2 Tim. 2:18)
52. In the beginning _____ the Word. (John 1:1)
53. A well from which Joab called Abner. (2 Sam. 3:26)
54. Baruch's father. (Jer. 32:12)
- Down**
1. I will make you _____ of men. (Mark 1:17)
2. It is appointed unto men _____ to die. (Heb. 9:27)
3. Endeavoring to keep the _____ of the Spirit.
- (Eph. 4:3)
4. A son of Jacob by Bilhah. (Gen. 30:5-6)
5. Whoso _____ man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. (Gen. 9:6)
6. Identification. (abbr.)
7. I will _____ you, and your little ones. (Gen. 50:21)
9. Naomi's daughter-in-law. (Ruth 1:14)
10. _____ is swallowed up in victory. (1 Cor. 15:54)
13. God shall wound the ... hairy _____. (Ps. 68:21)
14. Blessed are the dead which _____ in the Lord. (Rev. 14:13)
17. One of the sons of Benjamin. (Gen. 46:21)
24. Moses' brother. (Ex. 4:14)
26. The angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him, and _____ them. (Ps. 34:7)
28. A nonmetallic chemical element used in medicine.
30. The third plague. (Ex. 8:16)
31. Still the enemy and the _____. (Ps. 8:2)
32. _____ restoreth my soul. (Ps. 23:3)
34. He shall be great unto the _____ of the earth. (Micah 5:4)
35. I _____ you therefore, brethren. (Rom. 12:1)
37. A group of people playing together.
39. Jonathan stripped himself of the _____. (1 Sam. 18:4)
40. One of the cities of refuge. (Deut. 4:43)
41. The Lord shall _____ him up. (James 5:15)
44. It is written in the _____ of Moses. (1 Kings 2:3)
48. A woman's name.
49. A garland of flowers.
51. Rhode Island. (abbr.)



PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Hindu extremists beat, threaten 2 pastors

KORLAHALLI, India — Pastor Mallik Arjun knew something was wrong when he received a call from the mobile phone of his friend and fellow pastor in Gadag District, Karnataka state — but it was a stranger on the other end of the line.

The stranger told him that Pastor Nagesh Naik was being held at a hotel near Korlahalli village and to come and find him.

“I went with three church members on two motorbikes, and we were looking for such a hotel all the way and could not find one,” Arjun said. “Finally we found a mob swelling up in a temple, and that was where they kept him — and as soon as we reached the temple, they accused us of forceful conversion and started to attack me, Pastor Nagesh and the other three Christians.”

At a temple in Korlahalli village the Hindu extremists beat and kicked the Christians, threatened to set them on fire and tried to force them to worship Hindu idols.

Earlier some 200 Hindu extremists had stopped Naik as he made his way home after leading a worship service at a Christian’s home in Sugar Factory quarters, near Sharanahalli village, according to attorney Moses Muragavel. They then took Naik to the temple before calling Arjun, Muragavel said.

At one point during the ordeal, Arjun said, he knelt down in a corner of the temple and began to pray.

Arjun received treatment for injuries to his right ear, back and nose, as did Naik for injuries to his head and neck, as well as bruises covering his body. The other three church members received minor bruises.

Algeria upholds conviction of convert from Islam

TIGZIRT, Algeria — An Algerian judge under pressure from Islamists to uphold a Christian’s conviction for alleged proselytizing rescinded his one-year prison term but doubled his fine, an attorney said.

Mohamed Ibaouene was convicted in absentia July 4, 2012, by a court in Tizirt, sentenced to one year in prison and fined \$635 on a charge of pressuring a Muslim to convert.

Ibaouene was convicted of “inciting a Muslim with pressure to change his religion” under Algeria’s controversial Law 06/03, which places restrictions on the religious practice of non-Muslims. The decision on the appeal of his sentence was to be announced Feb. 6, but the judge delayed the verdict until Feb. 13 without explanation.

Ibaouene denied the charge and said Abdelkrim M., a machine operator at the company where he worked as a manager, was the one pressuring him to change his religion. The 27-year-old machine operator, known to be an Islamic extremist, leveled the accusation only after Ibaouene, a convert from Islam, refused to renounce Christ, Ibaouene said.

Ibaouene’s attorney said the case provided a long-sought sentencing of a Christian under Law 06/03, with the case resolved quickly compared with delays in other such cases.

The judge’s verdict was brief: Ibaouene was sentenced to pay the \$635 fine thereby revoking the one-year prison sentence.

Muslim villagers attack church in Egypt

TAMIYYAH, Egypt — Muslim villagers in Egypt’s Fayoum Province attacked a church, pelting four Christians with rocks, setting parts of the church building on fire and tearing down a cross atop the structure.

The second assault on property of the province’s Coptic Christians in a little over a month, the attack on the Church of Mar Girgis began Feb. 15 at 3 p.m. after the church’s worship services in the town of Tamiyyah, 64 miles southwest of Cairo.

About 20 to 30 villagers, most from an extended Muslim family in the village, gathered outside the church and began pelting it with rocks and smashing windows. Eventually the mob threw Molotov cocktail-type explosives at the building, trying to set it ablaze but only starting small fires. They then pushed their way into the building through a hole they had knocked in a wall.

Once inside, the Muslims were able to destroy icons, crosses and enough of the support structure of the church’s dome that part of the dome collapsed. Four people, including a priest, suffered minor injuries from stones the mob hurled.

Book Reviews

By Martine Bates Sharp, Ed.D.

Cold-Case Christianity: A Homicide Detective Investigates the Claims of the Gospels

J. Warner Wallace. *Colorado Springs, Colo.: David C Cook, 2013. 288 pp. (Paperback).*

Since the New Testament was written about 2,000 years ago, no eyewitnesses are alive to attest to its claims. We have no audio, video or photographic proof of the events described in the Gospels. It makes perfect sense, then, to examine the Gospels as if they were a cold case: to look for evidence to support or refute the claims using the same techniques a detective would use in examining a case from the past.

Homicide detective J. Warner Wallace characterizes himself as “an angry atheist, a skeptic” who decided to examine the Gospels using the same methodology he used in his investigations. To his surprise, he soon concluded that the Book of Mark was an authentic eyewitness account. He became a Christian and an apologist for the Christian faith.

In “Cold-Case Christianity,” the author lays out the principles of investigation one by one, then painstakingly applies historical and scriptural evidence to form a strong case for the accuracy and authorship of the Gospels. It is a fascinating read that will strengthen your faith and give you tools for defending what you believe.

True North: Christ, the Gospel, and Creation Care

Mark Liederbach and Seth Bible. *Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2012. 173 pp. (Paperback).*

According to the authors of “True North,” attitudes and actions regarding the environment

have too often been formed, even among Christians, according to personal beliefs and preferences. Instead, the authors argue, any discussion of ethics, in this case environmental ethics, should be fixed according to an unchanging point outside oneself; the focus must be on “the supremacy of Jesus Christ over the entire created order, the corporate body of Christ and lives of every individual Christian.”

Heavily footnoted, replete with scriptural references, “True North” provides guidance to the Christian who may be unsure of the position he should adopt on caring for God’s creation. The book carefully steers clear of political agendas and specific policies, leaving the reader with a framework for engaging environmental questions “from a distinctively Christian point of view.”

Mark Liederbach is professor of Christian Ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., and Seth Bible is director of Student Life at Southeastern Seminary.

The Joshua Code: 52 Scripture Verses Every Believer Should Know

O.S. Hawkins. *Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012. 271 pp. (Hardback).*

“The Joshua Code” is a devotional book that offers more than just a quick uplift for the day. Actually, it is not broken down by days, but by weeks, offering 52 passages — most single verses — for the reader to meditate on and memorize.

The title comes from Joshua 1:8, in which the reader is exhorted to meditate on the Scriptures, “that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it.” In this book, author O.S. Hawkins, former pastor and current president of Guidestone Financial Resources,

has selected 52 passages that he feels all Christians should be familiar with. He presents the passages along with a commentary, with the suggestion that the reader memorize one per week over the course of a year.

This is a beautiful little book, no doubt written with the idea in mind that people might give them as gifts. With its red embossed cover, beautiful inside presentation and challenging content, it would make any recipient happy.

Journaling with Jesus: How to Draw Closer to God

Carol Round. *Bloomington, Ind.: WestBow Press, 2012. 68 pp. (Paperback).*

Who doesn’t think prayer journaling is a great idea? Who would like to journal, or even tries, but keeps falling off the journaling wagon? Me too. The author of “Journaling with Jesus” seems to understand and share our struggles; she does little to try to convince the reader of the value of journaling and does a lot to motivate us all to start, re-start or continue journaling.

Carol Round, a speaker and syndicated columnist, points out in this small, easy to read volume that prayer journaling can help us trace our spiritual journey, recognize how God is dealing with our hearts and clarify our own thoughts, among other things. She issues a challenge to readers to try prayer journaling for 40 days, providing biblical illustrations, practical suggestions and a host of other resources. Although the book stands on its own well, there is a companion volume in the form of a 40-day journal designed to help kick-start the reader and put him or her on a rewarding prayer journaling journey.

Islamic extremists suspected in killing priest

Suspected Islamic extremists shot and killed a Roman Catholic priest on the Tanzanian island of Zanzibar on Feb. 17, area sources said. Two assailants on a motorbike approached Evaristus Mushi as he arrived in his car to the Mass he was about to officiate in the Mtoni area outside Zanzibar city shortly after 7 a.m., area pastors said.

The 56-year-old Mushi was shot in the head and chest, they said. He was rushed to a nearby hospital but confirmed dead on arrival.

Bishop Obeid Fabian, head of the Zanzibar Pastors’ Fellowship, said several pastors attended Mushi’s burial in Kitope village Feb. 20. “We have constantly appealed to the government to step up

security for the church in Zanzibar, especially for the pastors on the Muslim-majority island in recent months, but nothing much has been done,” Fabian said.

Mushi served in the Diocese of St. Petersburg, Fla., for a few years starting in 2001.

Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete ordered police to work with specialized investigators from neighboring countries if necessary. Three suspects were said to have been arrested, but their names were not revealed.

The murder comes nearly two months after the shooting of another Catholic priest, Ambrose Mkenda, that seriously injured him. Members of the separatist group Uamsho (Re-awakening) were sus-

pected. Uamsho, the Association for Islamic Mobilization and Propagation, has threatened Christians since October 2012. The archipelago is more than 97 percent Muslim.

In the Dec. 25 attack, Mkenda was shot as he was heading to his residence in Tomondo four miles from the capital.

Uamsho had left leaflets threatening to kill church leaders of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Tanzania Assemblies of God and Pentecostal church denominations. The Islamist group is fighting for full autonomy of the Zanzibar archipelago; it arose after Zanzibar’s primary opposition, the Civic United Front, formed a government with the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi party in 2010. (MS)

Selfless giving



Sam and Janis Morgan

BP photo

Sunday suit ministry reconnects Oregon pastor to home church in Mississippi

Sam Morgan calls himself a “boots and blue jeans type of person,” but last year he realized he needed a new suit.

Since moving from the Bible Belt in 1991 to become pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Creswell, Ore., Morgan had heard about the Mississippi Baptist Convention’s men’s ministry sending new suits to pastors in new work areas.

“The offer had come many times over the years,” Morgan said. “I’ve always declined. I’ve always thought somebody else could use it. This time I thought I really could use a suit, so I accepted.”

He completed an application, filling in his height, weight, suit size, waist, inseam length and chest measurement. He sent it in by the Aug. 31, 2012, deadline.

A couple of months later in Mississippi, George and Ann Underwood learned of the suit ministry when they attended their state convention as messengers from First Baptist Church, Coldwater. They picked up brochures at the men’s ministry booth and shared the information with their Sunday School class when they returned home.

‘Excited about the project’

“The class was excited about the project and decided overwhelmingly to send a gift,” Underwood said.

The collection that morning reached \$200 quickly, and then something amazing happened.

“A class member named Russell said that something had prompted him to carry extra money to class that day even though he did not know why. Without further explanation he reached into his pocket and produced two \$100 bills, which immediately doubled the gift,” Underwood recounted.

George, assistant teacher of the class, and Ann, class treasurer, sent the \$400 to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in early November.

In December the Underwoods contacted Deanna Vail with the Mississippi convention’s men’s ministry to ask how they could contact the recipient of their suit in order to pray for him, his family and his ministry. They were told the suit went to an Oregon pastor named Sam Morgan.

Meanwhile, Morgan received his new suit, along with a \$125 gift card for his wife Janis and a check for \$150. He also contacted Vail, wanting to know whom he could thank. He was told the suit came from a Sunday School class at First, Coldwater.

Morgan was silent. He asked Vail to repeat the name of the church. For clarification, he asked exactly where that church was, what county and association it was in. As she answered his questions, he could hardly believe what he was hearing.

“That’s our home church,” Morgan said. “That’s where we surrendered to ministry.”

Morgan had been working for the phone company in Senatobia, Miss., and living in nearby Coldwater. He was 29, married and had two children. They wanted to get the children into church, so they began attending First, Coldwater. Soon, Sam and Janis Morgan were saved and began serving in the church.

“I struggled with God’s call for three years, then surrendered,” Morgan said.

A key factor in hearing God’s call was when Morgan went on an associational missions trip in 1981 to Billings, Mont., to do construction work. In the summer of 1982, he and Janis made public their call to missions at First, Coldwater. The church ordained him the next year.

“We thought it would be foreign missions,” Morgan said, “but I didn’t have a college or seminary degree. I also needed three years of pastoral experience to go as a missionary with the Foreign Mission Board [now International Mission Board (IMB)].”

Morgan gave notice to the phone company in August 1983, sold his home and moved to Blue Mountain College to start his “race against the clock,” trying to fulfill requirements for becoming a missionary before his oldest child turned 13, another mission board restriction.

Meanwhile, a country church called Morgan as pastor and he told them he could only stay three years because he was preparing for international missions.

“They were glad because no one else had stayed more than one year,” he said.

After finishing college and a few semesters of seminary, Morgan realized he was not going to complete his master of divinity in time to go as an international missionary. He and Janis began exploring pioneer missions areas in the United States.

‘Where we were supposed to be’

In 1991 he was called as full-time pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, Creswell, Ore. He has completed 21 years as their pastor.

“The first time I walked into the sanctuary, I knew that was where we were supposed to be,” Morgan said.

He, Janis and their now four children moved to Oregon.

The church was averaging 60 people for worship and Morgan began using Sunday School to help the church grow.

Worship attendance rose to 150, and their meeting space grew from 6,900 square feet to 18,000 square feet.

Now the church has hit a space barrier and is looking at

multiple Sunday School times, off-campus classes and other means to continue to grow. They recently started an off-campus class with 14 people.

First, Coldwater, will always be special to the Morgans. It was the church where they were saved and called to ministry. It was the church that ordained him and sent them out.

“That church helped us get through college and seminary and supported us during our first pastorate,” Morgan said. “They paid the hospital bill for our fourth baby.”

They also paid for Morgan’s tuition and books all the way through college.

“They sent us money every month,” he said. “I was able to focus on my studies and my pastorate and Janis was able to stay home with the kids.”

Although they were unable to go overseas as missionaries, serving in the missions field of the Northwest has been a wonderful experience, Morgan said.

“I’ve had some amazing opportunities that would never have happened had we stayed in Mississippi,” he said.

Among those opportunities were serving as second vice president of the Northwest Baptist Convention in 2004, preaching their annual sermon in 2002 and serving a year on the Southern Baptist Convention nominating committee.

And from 2001–09, Morgan served as a trustee of the IMB.

“I had a sense of guilt that we never made it overseas,” Morgan said. “Janis went with me to my first meeting as a trustee, at Glorieta during [international

missions week]. It was tremendously emotional and I would find myself weeping during the services as we heard missionary speakers and leaders. It was the Lord dealing with my grief, saying to me, ‘You didn’t make it overseas, but that wasn’t My plan.’”

Since 1964 the Mississippi Baptist Convention has challenged individuals and church groups to donate money to provide a suit for a pastor serving in the Alaska, Iowa and Northwest Baptist conventions.

“Many of these pastors have no suit nor have the extra money to purchase one,” Vail said. “By sending them a suit we are letting the pastors know that we care about them and that we support their work. If funds are available, we will send a gift certificate to the pastor’s wife.”

“Often they go without things that they want or need to support their husband’s ministry,” she said. “This is a wonderful way to show them that they are not forgotten and that the support they provide their husband is truly appreciated.” (BP)

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**Deanna Vail
Mississippi Baptist
Convention**