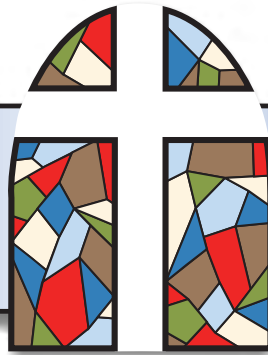


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'Not Today' press room

Cameramen shoot a scene with Persis Karen as Annika in 'Not Today' in a trash heap in Hyderabad, India.

Opening eyes

New faith-based film 'Not Today' depicts 'redemptive story' of modern-day slavery

The numbers are staggering. There are more people in slavery today in the world than there were in the days of the transatlantic slave trade. An estimated 27 million people — men, women, boys and girls — are enslaved, held against

their will, in brothels, factories and fields around the world at this very moment.

The soon-to-be released film "Not Today" is the first feature-length, faith-based film to tackle the issue of human trafficking. It opens in about 40 theaters April 12 and will move to other cities in the following weeks.

In the movie, Caden Welles, the film's lead character, is unexpectedly introduced to a world few Americans know still exists: a thriving human-trafficking trade that often involves children. Welles, who is played by Cody Longo, travels to India and meets his opposite. Welles has access to material abundance and lives a carefree life; his counterpart has no resources, no voice and struggles to survive.

The film, which was shot on location in Hyderabad, India, highlights the startling dehumanization of the Dalit people, who are considered "untouchables" within India's caste system.

Motivation to act

The International Mission Board (IMB) is one of 13 global partners in the movie's promotion, highlighting ministry in the region through its South Asian Peoples website (<http://southasianpeoples.imb.org/NotToday>).

An IMB representative in South Asia called the movie an "eye-opener to the depth of the issues related to trafficking and modern-day slavery." The film "should motivate Christians to act," the representative said.

Baptist Press recently spoke with Brent Martz, the film's producer.

BAPTIST PRESS: *This movie is really a story of redemption. Let's talk about the story itself and how you begin in a high-end neighborhood in Southern California with a Lamborghini and you end up in the slums of India.*

MARTZ: It was important for us to show the stark contrast between the blessings that we enjoy here in the United States and the total poverty that the Dalits live in in India. The Dalits are the untouchables of India, some 250 to 300 million people, roughly the population of the U.S., that live in virtual slavery every day. It is the worst poverty I have ever seen in my life. So in the (See 'Huge issue,' page 3)

COMMENT

CP Taking It on the Chin

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders deserve kudos for their efforts to put a good face on a bad situation. At the end of the last budget year, SBC Executive Committee President Frank Page said Southern Baptists were in “hallelujah territory” because Cooperative Program (CP) receipts for the year had topped the budget goal.

Little attention was called to the fact that CP receipts were actually \$200,000 below the previous year’s receipts. In fact, the 2011–2012 receipts also were below CP totals for each of the past two years. Giving is near the 2003–2004 level.

Through the first six months of the SBC fiscal year (Oct. 1–Sept. 30), there is little reason for optimism. CP giving is down 2.47 percent, or \$2,412,536, according to SBC statistics.

In Alabama things are no better. CP receipts have declined annually since 2007 sliding from \$44,958,759 to \$39,853,810 in 2012. That is a total decline of more than 11 percent in five years. In that same time period undesignated receipts of churches have grown by 2.3 percent, from \$566,581,204 in 2007 to \$579,499,154 in 2012. The percentage of undesignated receipts given to missions causes through the CP by Alabama Baptists has declined from 7.94 percent in 2007 to 6.88 percent in 2012.

Decline in giving

For the first quarter of 2013, CP giving is short of its goal by \$169,091 and that is based on an annual goal reduced by \$1 million from last year. In addition, the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions has already adopted a proposed 2014 goal that is \$1 million less than the current goal.

Even though Alabama continues to lead all SBC states in CP giving through the first half of the SBC budget year, there is no escaping the conclusion that the CP is taking it on the chin here and across the nation.

The question observers are asking is why? Most troublesome is the fact that in 2012 churches in Alabama and elsewhere, as a whole, experienced a rise in income. Yet the decline in CP giving accelerated.

Some say not to worry. Giving to churches normally lags about 18 months behind economic trends. Although the economy collapsed in



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

the fall of 2008, it was not until the 2009–2010 year that CP receipts suffered their biggest drop. Recovery, these observers say, will come the same way. If true, church finances and CP giving should both improve this calendar year.

Others believe the SBC has made a fundamental change in the way ministries and missions are supported and contend that CP giving will never be as prominent in SBC life as it was in the past. These observers point to the 2011 SBC decision calling all missions giving by a church Great Commission Giving (GCG). As a result, they say, a growing number of churches are redirecting missions giving away from CP and using it in direct missions efforts.

Other churches are giving directly to their favorite ministry or missions effort and dropping support for the state and national “program” part of the CP and still calling it Great Commission Giving.

Hard evidence for this position is difficult to find since only one full SBC budget cycle has passed since that decision. That means most of the concern is based on anecdotes such as one megachurch reporting more than \$3 million in GCG but only 27 percent of that was CP giving. A number of churches have adopted special missions projects — local and international. To finance them, many of these churches reduced CP giving.

There are some snapshots of church giving that lend credence to this view. For example, according to information from the SBC Executive Committee at the halfway point of this SBC budget year, four of the five largest CP giving states from last year (including Alabama) show a decrease in CP giving but an increase in designated giving. The fifth state has a decline in both but its CP decline is nearly three times larger than its designated giving decline.

Again, these are only snapshots of giving. Not

enough time has elapsed to demonstrate trends and reliable conclusions.

Doubtless some will ask why the concern about the channel of giving rather than celebrating the total giving. The answer goes back to the reason the GCG decision was careful to emphasize that CP giving was the preferred method of supporting ministries and missions among Southern Baptists.

CP giving is important because of concern for efficiency and effectiveness.

Southern Baptists should never forget that hard experience taught us that working together is better than working alone. A single church can do a missions project in a foreign land. A few churches can establish a missions program in that place. Still fewer churches can manage multiple on-going programs but none can take the gospel into the whole world alone. Baptists

need each other and we need other evangelical Christians, too.

Hard experience also taught us that direct service needs a network of infrastructure to be effective over time. Volunteers for ministries and missions have to be called out. They have to be trained. They have to be equipped and supported. Reports of their work have to be shared so others can support them in prayer.

Those hard lessons are why Southern Baptists have an infrastructure that includes helping churches do the work of the church; training facilities for church vocational volunteers and Christian laypersons so they will be able to see and

serve a needy world; a communications network through which information is shared to keep Baptists informed about what God is doing around the world; and so much more.

The infrastructure

All of this is part of the “Program” in the Cooperative Program. It is the infrastructure that makes ministry and missions possible decade to decade.

When CP takes it on the chin then all the infrastructure that helps churches do direct missions take it on the chin as well.

Yes, a favorite cause may prosper for a season, but over time all that Baptists do together will suffer. If Southern Baptists are to do our part in reaching North America and the world for Christ, we need more than direct service. We need more than designated giving. We need the Cooperative Program.





"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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'Huge issue'

Director Jon Van Dyke and Persis Karen review steady cam footage in Mumbai, India.



'Not Today' press room

Film producer says human trafficking motivated by poverty

(continued from page 1)

film we take this affluent college student from Southern California, and we have him go to India to party with his friends — to have the experience of a lifetime. Well, he has the experience of a lifetime but it's not at all what he had planned.

BAPTIST PRESS: Tell us about the Dalit people that are featured in "Not Today."

MARTZ: The Dalits aren't even considered worthy to be in the caste system. They have never even heard the word "dream," because for them to dream means nothing because there is nothing that they can do in their culture to better their lives. It is a tragic, tragic situation, especially when you consider 90 percent of the people trafficked in India, which truly is the epicenter of human trafficking, are Dalits.

BAPTIST PRESS: You mentioned that the Dalit people are India's most trafficked people group. I've read that more than 1.2 million children in India across that nation are trapped in human trafficking as prostitutes. This is as many children as people who live in Dallas, Texas. This is a massive issue, isn't it?

MARTZ: You know, it is a huge issue. I have three kids: two daughters and a son. To put myself in an Indian father's place, to be forced to choose between feeding my children, if I could only afford to feed two, what do I do with the third? I can't even imagine that situation. So when I think of people selling their children, I used to be judgmental, but now I realize it is truly a life and death issue. To a great deal, the issue of human trafficking is motivated by poverty.

BAPTIST PRESS: What types of slavery are you talking about?

MARTZ: Human trafficking can mean many things. The first thing that pops into our minds is the idea of sex slavery, but in reality, most people that are trafficked today are in bonded labor. They are forced to work 12- to 16-hour days in inhumane conditions, sweat shops, you might say, and it is not just in India, it is around the globe. Bonded labor and sex trafficking are the two most prominent forms of human trafficking today.

BAPTIST PRESS: Now tell us about the little girl who plays the character Annika in the film. She is the one, not to give it away, who is trafficked.

MARTZ: She is actually a 7-year-old girl who attends one of the schools our church (Friends Church in Yorba Linda, Calif.) built in Hyderabad, India. Her real name is Persis Karen. I flew to India and auditioned 10 to 15 young girls from that school who had never acted before. Our director chose her to be Annika in the film. Her family had never traveled outside of their village, they had

never been in a plane, never been to a hotel, so it was incredible to watch this young Dalit girl and her family travel across the country of India with us as we were filming. She does a fantastic job and her eyes definitely capture you and draw you into the story.

BAPTIST PRESS: You mentioned the film was shot in India. I wonder how much more powerful did that make it as contrasted with shooting the film on a back lot in Hollywood?

MARTZ: You know it was important to us that we filmed on location for many, many reasons. Just getting to India was an incredible challenge because we were told it would take three weeks to get our permit to shoot in India and it ended up taking nine months. That should have been an indication of what we were getting ourselves into. India is an incredibly beautiful country but it is also a very challenging country. The people are so amazing but it is a totally different culture. Every day was an opportunity for God to do another miracle.

BAPTIST PRESS: Now the issue of human trafficking is not just an international issue; it is an issue in the United States. Let's talk about that for a few minutes.

MARTZ: Unfortunately human traffick-

ing affects probably every major city in the U.S. I wish we could say that it didn't exist here. It is easy maybe to put our head in the sand and say, that's a problem that is halfway around the world, but it is happening here. We are hearing stories of human trafficking — bonded labor and sex slavery — right here in the U.S. nearly every week.

BAPTIST PRESS: Without even knowing it perhaps, to some degree most of us are already enmeshed in the trafficking issue, aren't we?

MARTZ: We all deal with human trafficking every day. I said that one time and someone said they thought it was an overstatement. It is true because every day we are out there buying clothes, buying cell phones and other items. Yet in many cases these things are being sewn and put together by 4-year-olds, 5-year-olds, women, men, around the world in inhumane conditions in factories. They are selling the products to us at a cheap price so we can go to our favorite stores and buy them. There is a price to be paid for that, and whether it is clothes, chocolates, diamonds or the components of your cell phone, we may not be actively involved in sex slavery but we are involved in supporting things like human trafficking. Most of the time we are completely unaware of it. (BP)

Global fund to address human trafficking

White House advisory council of religious leaders called for a global fund to address human trafficking and urged a new labeling system to help identify consumer goods that were not created with slave labor.

With a 36-page report released April 10, the President's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships hopes to build awareness of the estimated 21 million people worldwide who are subjected to sexual exploitation or forced labor.

"Abraham Lincoln said if slavery is not wrong then nothing is wrong, and we know that sadly 150 years later slavery still exists," said Susan K. Stern, chair of the council and an adviser to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. "Today with this report we say, 'Enough.'"

The 15-member council made 10 recommendations to the White House, saying what they've learned about the scope of trafficking has driven them to galvanize national action.

One recommendation calls for a "Global Fund to Eradicate Modern-day Slavery," modeled on a fund that combated AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

The council recommended a label for

products similar to "Energy Star," which identifies energy-efficient merchandise, to counter sales of goods produced with slave labor. That would build on President Obama's executive order last fall that made it harder for federal contractors to engage in trafficking-related activities.

Other recommendations include a national summit that could better coordinate the anti-trafficking work already being done by religious and secular nonprofits. Council members also hope a toolkit, an Ad Council campaign similar to Smokey the Bear and a designated hotline will help build awareness and strengthen prevention efforts.

'A noisy gong'

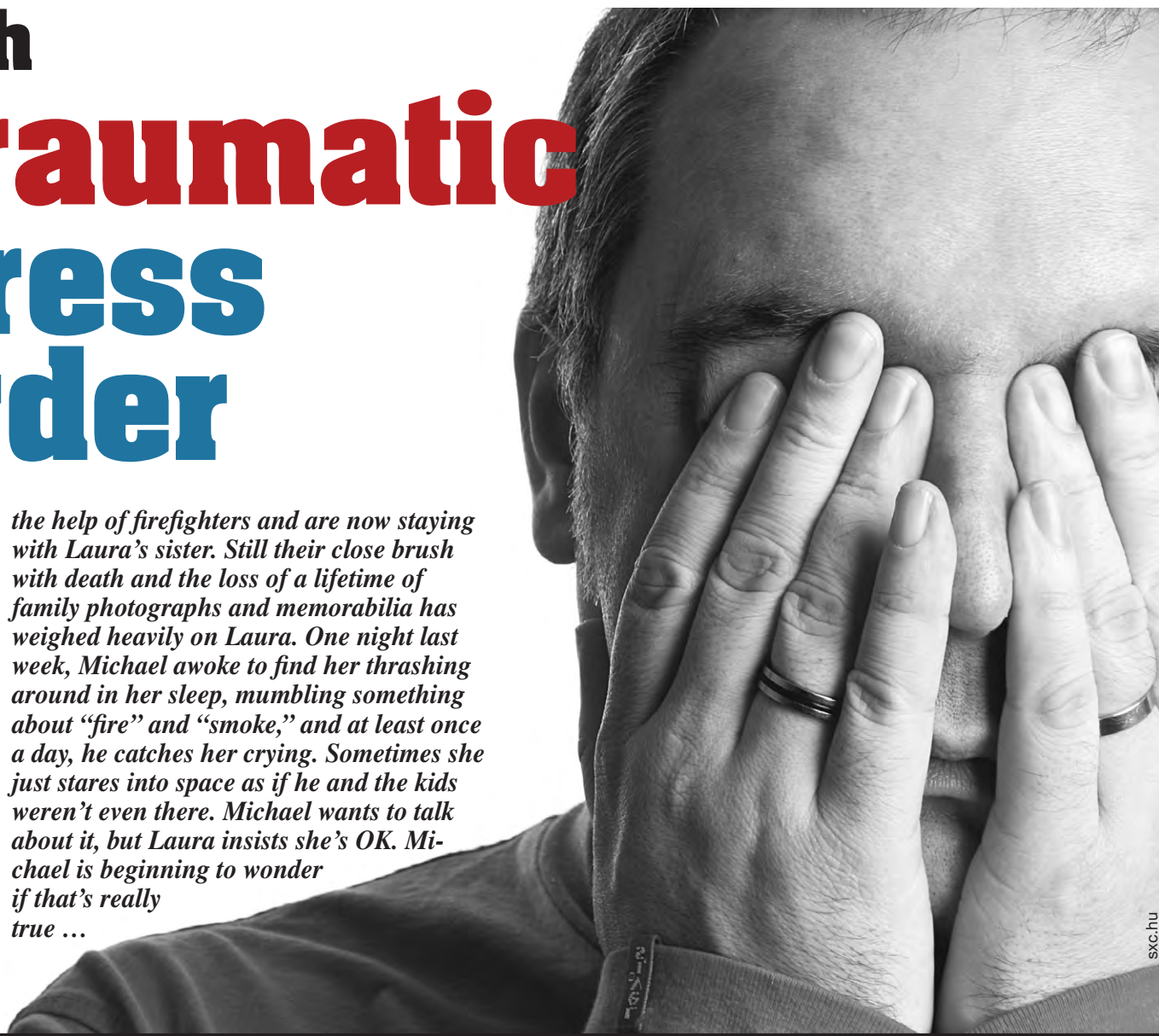
Referring to the Bible's Book of 1 Corinthians, the administration's ambassador-at-large for trafficking, Luis CdeBaca, said the White House would be "a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" if it did not execute the group's recommendations.

"We want to make beautiful music with you and we want that music to be music of freedom," said CdeBaca, whose State Department office was recommended for upgrading to "bureau" status by the advisory council. (RNS)

Dealing with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Michael sighs as Laura jumps out of the car and runs back into the house. He is certain the stove and toaster are off, especially since they only ate cereal for breakfast. But since her parents' house burned last month, Laura has been obsessive about checking to make sure nothing has been left on that might overheat and catch fire. Michael has even heard her get up in the middle of the night to check the kitchen, the utility room and the kids' bedrooms. The dark circles under her eyes are evidence of her restless nights. Michael doesn't really understand why Laura is so anxious. We have so much to be thankful for, he thinks. Grandma and Poppa escaped their burning home with

the help of firefighters and are now staying with Laura's sister. Still their close brush with death and the loss of a lifetime of family photographs and memorabilia has weighed heavily on Laura. One night last week, Michael awoke to find her thrashing around in her sleep, mumbling something about "fire" and "smoke," and at least once a day, he catches her crying. Sometimes she just stares into space as if he and the kids weren't even there. Michael wants to talk about it, but Laura insists she's OK. Michael is beginning to wonder if that's really true ...



After tornado, accident, abuse, etc., victims need help turning off body's 'alarm system'

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Alabamians are very familiar with the destruction tornadoes and hurricanes can bring. When severe weather threatens, the whoop of a siren or the alarm of a weather radio can trigger fears and memories of past storms we thought were buried long ago.

"In some ways, traumas become a measuring stick in our lives," said Ted Embry, director of the northeast Alabama region for Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH). "Trauma is no respecter of person — it impacts Christians and non-Christians alike and cuts across the fabric of a community."

And traumatic events are not limited to natural disasters. The National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, classifies traumatic events into three types. Disasters, both natural and man-made terrorist events, comprise one category. Trauma experienced by military personnel and their families is a second category. Violent acts, including rape, child sexual abuse, workplace assaults and school or community violence, as well as accidents like plane and motor ve-

hicle crashes, fall into a third category.

What distinguishes a traumatic event for another stressful situation is the life-threatening nature of the situation, according to Renay Carroll, a counselor with Pathways Professional Counseling (a ministry of ABCH) who serves Cullman and Blount counties.

"A traumatic event is usually defined as an event in which a person's life was threatened or endangered or when one witnesses another person's life being threatened or endangered," Carroll said. "The traumatic

response to the event results from the individual's feelings of intense fear, helplessness and horror."

Stress response

As the PTSD categories indicate, many common experiences can bring on a heightened stress response. House fires, for example, can have a threatening component and cause an increased perception of threat. Car accidents can be traumatic for those involved, but first responders or witnesses can be traumatized by the event as well.

Because severe trauma can result from many different events, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) estimates that almost 40 percent of Americans will experience a traumatic event during their lifetimes. While such situations often involve grave physical danger, the threat such incidents pose to mental health can persist long after the physical injuries have healed.

"There are some horrific traumas that we would all recognize as hard to come away from unscathed — wars, tsunamis, Hurricane Katrina (or the April 2011 tornadoes). The difference is the response of the individual and that person's own perception of what that trauma means to him or her," Carroll said.

In his work, Embry has seen the effects of trauma on both children and adults. He believes that many factors influence an individual's response to extreme stress.

"Personality comes into play, as do past experiences and certainly a person's faith," he said.

In the aftermath of a traumatic event, Embry said it is important for the victim to get control of the situation, a process he called "normalizing."

"When an individual experiences a traumatic event, it's usually bigger than anything they have ever experienced before," Embry said.

Sometimes a victim might use phrases like "I'm losing control" or "I'm going crazy" as they try to process their feelings, Embry said. Working with a trained counselor can help a

Symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

- ▶ Re-experiencing the trauma through flashbacks, nightmares or frightening dreams (sometimes the content of the nightmare will not be obviously related to the traumatic event. A child who was involved in a tornado may have dreams about wolves).
- ▶ Avoiding reminders of the trauma.
- ▶ Reenactment play or repetitive traumatic play in children.
- ▶ Hypervigilance: A constant state of being on "high alert."
- ▶ Irritability, angry outbursts, aggression.

(Source: Melanie Howard, Pathways Professional Counseling)

- ▶ Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep.

Strategies that interfere with giving support

▶ **RUSHING** to tell someone that he or she will be OK or he or she should just “get over it.”

▶ **ACTING** as if someone is weak or exaggerating because he or she is not coping as well as others.

▶ **DISCUSSING** your own personal experiences without listening to the other person’s story.

▶ **GIVING** advice without listening to the person’s concerns or asking the person what works for him or her.

▶ **STOPPING** the person from talking about what is bothering him or her.

▶ **TELLING** the person he or she was lucky it was not worse.

(Source: Psychological First Aid, Field Operations Guide, 2nd Edition, National Child Traumatic Stress Network, National Center for PTSD — www.ptsd.va.gov)

victim understand that their response is not unusual.

“The phrase that captures it is this: ‘You are a normal person having a normal reaction to an abnormal event in your life.’ Then they think, ‘maybe I can handle this,’” Embry said.

Fear, guilt and anger are normal emotions, as is anxiety, Carroll said. Sometimes people want to label severe and lasting anxiety as PTSD, but Carroll said that is not usually the case. One of the most important factors that determines the difference is time.

For most people, the stress of a traumatic situation usually diminishes in time, often with the help of counseling and/or medication. However, if the symptoms persist or if the traumatized individual begins to experience flashbacks and other symptoms that interfere with daily life and relationships, Carroll said an evaluation by a qualified physician or mental health professional is necessary.

According to the “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV),” the primary reference for mental health professionals in the United States, PTSD involves a much farther-reaching and longer-lasting response to trauma than its clinical

predecessor, Acute Stress Disorder (ASD). The symptoms of ASD occur within a month of a traumatic event, but with treatment, ASD also abates more quickly. If symptoms of ASD are left untreated, worsen or reoccur, PTSD may develop.

Carroll noted that symptoms of PTSD, even years after a traumatic event, should not be ignored. Even unrelated stressful situations can cause excessive anxiety and flashbacks to the trauma, Carroll said. Sometimes it takes years for the experiences that have settled in someone’s memory to emerge. For example, a victim of child sexual abuse might get through childhood with no specific memory of the abuse until something, like seeing a child spanked, reawakens the memory.

Restoring order

The goal of counseling is to help the affected individual learn to restore order and “calm their system down,” Carroll said. The body’s “alarm system” works in much the same way as a home security system. If a homeowner fails to put in the correct code to turn off the alarm upon returning home, the alarm goes off — even if the homeowner is the one in the home.

“Much the same way, the body’s alarm system is activated when the traumatized person’s stress level is high,” Carroll said. “Putting in the behavioral code for treating anxiety and trauma response helps to ‘turn off’ the body’s alarm system.”

Ultimately, Carroll said, it is important to realize that thousands of people are affected by trauma each year, but each of those individuals responds to stress differently. Not all affected by trauma will experience a disorder, she said.

Likewise, there is no “one-size-fits-all” recovery plan, according to Ian Jones, professor of psychology and counseling and Baptist Community Ministries’ Chair of Pastoral Counseling at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

“Each individual requires different engagement depending on their relationship to themselves, their level of stress, the way the body is reacting and what you have in terms of voluntary control and involuntary response to trauma,” Jones said. “After a trauma, a person’s hormonal and chemical balance can get all topsy-turvy, and with PTSD, actions and thoughts are outside the

individual’s physical and cognitive control. In those situations, there is a need for more than someone sitting down and saying everything will be alright.”

Experienced counselors agree that when a trauma occurs, victims need to process the event as soon as they are able. A solid support system — counselors, family members, friends, pastors and others — equips a traumatized individual or community with the tools to navigate through an extremely difficult experience and come out on the other

side, Embry said.

In addition to offering counseling services in satellite offices around the state, Pathways counselors are trained in critical incident debriefing and are available to come into communities when a natural disaster or crisis occurs. For more information, contact the statewide administrative office of Pathways Professional Counseling at 1-888-720-8805 or 205-982-1112. ☞

“Trauma is no respecter of person — it impacts Christians and non-Christians alike.”

**Ted Embry
Alabama Baptist Children’s
Homes & Family Ministries**



sxc.hu

God provides comfort, guidance for how to recover from trauma

By **Carrie Brown McWhorter**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The Christian’s response to trauma challenges us like few other aspects of our faith. In the aftermath of tragedy, we may wonder how God could allow such suffering. We may doubt God’s existence. We may blame Him for our pain.

What we must remember is that in every situation, God is present, even when it does not seem so, said Ian Jones, professor of psychology and counseling and Baptist Community Ministries’ Chair of Pastoral Counseling at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Consider the example of Paul and Silas, Jones said. In Acts 16, they are beaten, falsely charged and tossed into an Ephesian jail. Even in those bleak circumstances, what are Paul and Silas doing? Singing.

“In a secular context, that doesn’t make sense,” Jones said. “A secular counselor would say, ‘Paul, you have a disconnect. The last thing you should be doing is singing.’ But in that response, we begin to understand that God is working in that situation, in every situation, to bring His peace and presence.”

In his book “The Counsel of Heaven on Earth: Foundations for Biblical Christian Counseling” (B&H 2006), Jones examines one of the most traumatic events in Christian history — the crucifixion — and finds that those nearest to Jesus reacted in a variety of ways to the traumatic events they witnessed, including:

▶ **Confusion.** The disciples deserted Jesus and fled from the scene in fear.

▶ **Denial.** Peter denied Jesus three times.

▶ **Anguish and Mourning.** The believers who gathered at the cross cried out in their pain and despair.

▶ **Repentance.** One of the thieves acknowledged his sins and recognized Jesus’ innocence.

There were other responses as well. The first thief mocked Jesus. Judas committed suicide. The disciples on the road to Emmaus needed to talk through their intellectual and theological questions. Others sought solace in nature — they went fishing. Joseph of Arimathea responded in a very practical way — he took care of the funeral arrangements. Mary experienced secondary trauma as she sought

the missing body. In each situation, Jesus responded by meeting the individual where they were.

“Jesus shows Mary His resurrected body. He comes alongside those on the road to Emmaus and beginning in Genesis shares all the passages that refer to what was going to happen,” Jones said. “To Thomas, who needed to touch, He insists that he touch.”

The personal response to suffering is one God used in response to the first biblical trauma — the fall — when God’s first words to Adam are “Where are you?”

“It’s a location question: Where are you in relation to me? In each case, His presence gives them a purpose and a hope,” Jones said.

Just as there are different responses to trauma, there are different approaches to counseling. Often, a traumatized individual needs a multi-leveled response, Jones said. Consider Elijah, who overcomes the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel and then immediately receives a death threat from Jezebel.

“Elijah flees — there’s a trauma there,” Jones said. “God has just taken care of everything and now Elijah is acting like God is not present at all.”

When God comes to Elijah, the first thing He does is respond to his physical need — He feeds him. Then He addresses Elijah’s spiritual and intellectual issues, Jones said.

‘Comforting presence’

“God comes as a comforting presence in the wind and corrects Elijah’s thinking by assuring him that he is not alone,” Jones said. “God identifies specific things He is going to supply for him. In the valley of the shadow, God is the shepherd who leads him out. We see multiple levels of response here.”

Because we live in a broken world, suffering is part of the human experience, Jones said, including the suffering of innocents.

“One day we will understand more fully but we may not this side of heaven,” he said. “What we do understand is that God understands pain and suffering and trauma — He experienced it as incarnate God.”

“To bring that kind of comfort is extremely important,” Jones said. “God is a loving God who can say, ‘I know. I understand.’” ☞

When trauma strikes

Whether children or adults, coping looks different for everyone, can take time

By **Carrie Brown McWhorter**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Just as trauma can result from many different events, an individual's response to the trauma can vary in both severity and duration. The signs of traumatic response may only be obvious to those closest to the affected individual, so it is important to be aware of changes in the behavior and mood of someone who has experienced a traumatic event.

"When an individual acts out beyond normal expectations or limits, that behavior becomes a clue that the person is dealing with a traumatic experience," said Ted Embry, director of the northeast Alabama region for the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries.

Children who have experienced severe trauma, for example, may often bring up the event in everyday conversation or engage in risky behaviors or violent play. Toddlers who have experienced trauma may seem more stubborn or controlling than before and act out by hitting other children or caregivers. Like adults, children may also withdraw and lack interest in activities they previously enjoyed. They may have trouble sleeping or be overly fearful for their own safety and the safety of others.

"Children might have frightening dreams or seem disorganized or agitated, or they might reenact the trauma," said Renay Carroll, a counselor with Pathways Professional Counseling (a ministry of the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries). "The response varies from child to child and person to person."

Responses vary

Ian Jones, professor of psychology and counseling and Baptist Community Ministries' Chair of Pastoral Counseling at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, agreed.

In his book, "The Counsel of Heaven on Earth: Foundations for Biblical Christian Counseling" (B&H 2006), Jones writes about the Sept. 15, 1999, mass shooting at Wedgwood Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas. Seven people, four of them teenagers, were killed during a Wednesday night youth rally when Larry Ashbrook walked into the church

and began shooting. At the time, Jones was a professor at nearby Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and responded to the crisis. In the years since, he has interviewed many who were at Wedgwood during the shooting. Each individual involved in a traumatic situation responds differently, he said, because each one experiences the event in a different way.

For example, during the shooting, some students thought the shooter was part of a skit — some students were laughing and trying to catch the bullets while others were diving under the pews.

"Each person in that sanctuary was having a different experience," Jones said. "In the aftermath, some people move on a little faster, but for those who do not recover from the trauma as quickly, the process can be confusing and upsetting."

One student, for example, was very upset by her inability to concentrate on her schoolwork after the shootings. Two brothers who were in the sanctuary began fighting after the shootings. A minister at the church was speaking about the tragedy at a missions conference in Africa two years later and began weeping inconsolably.

In each case, Jones said, the individuals were responding normally to an event that did not fit with anything they had experienced before. The student had witnessed the death of a friend. The older brother had thrown his body over his younger brother to protect him. The minister had jumped in to counsel others without taking the time to process his own grief. Because each experience of the trauma was different, each individual expressed their anxiety in different ways and at different times, Jones said, which is why no single

approach to trauma counseling works with everyone.

"We have to come to each person in a way that brings comfort and assurance," Jones said. "They need to understand that it is normal to react and give them the tools to deal with their response."

Children also may sense the pain of their caregivers and experience secondary trauma, even if they themselves were not directly affected. For example, after a tornado hit in Cullman on April 27, 2011, Carroll met with several children who were experiencing trauma. After talking with one of the students, Carroll realized that his grandparents' house had been damaged in the storm.

"He went to their house after the storm and saw them and their house, which triggered some trauma symptoms," Carroll said.

The boy's symptoms were alleviated by helping his grandparents pick up branches in their yard. Carroll said that when children can do something with their feelings, they often feel better.

"Doing something to help allows children to see life getting back to normal, and getting back to a normal routine helps children respond to trauma in healthy ways," Carroll said.

Still, parents and caregivers should be alert for triggers, like a weather radio alarm or a tornado siren, which can awaken their fears, Carroll said.

Adults may respond to sensory triggers of their trauma in adverse ways as well. Reminders of a traumatic event might include smells, sounds, feelings or even the time of day, according to the "Psychological First Aid Field Operations Guide" published by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Stories that cover similar events or that "look back" to the tragedy also might trigger fears.

Like children, adults may experience jittery behavior, excessive anger and sleeplessness in response to traumatic events. Some turn to alcohol or drugs to cope. According to the website of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), warning signs like substance

abuse and talk of suicide are signs that an individual needs immediate professional help. In the aftermath of trauma, however, the APA suggests that one of the most important things a friend, family member or co-worker can do for a loved one is to be an "active and supportive listener."

"Listening is a critical part of the healing process," Embry said. "A traumatized person needs to be able to tell their story in a safe, nonjudgmental way."

Jones said some people may be able to talk early, others may take a long time. In either case, friends and family members should not step in and start dictating to the victim of trauma. In most cases, the ministry of presence can be the most comforting response a loved one can provide.

"It doesn't help to say words like 'I know how you feel' because the fact is, you don't, even if you've experienced something like this," Jones said.

Avoid 'miserable comforters'

"In ministry, we don't have to come with all this knowledge to help people but instead we can direct them to the word of God and bring the spirit of God into the relationship through affirmation, a prayerful attitude, a gentle touch, a nod of the head," Jones said.

Jones said we can learn much from Job's trauma and the response of those around him. In the beginning, Job's counselors were just sitting with him and providing a comforting presence — and then they opened their mouths. By Job 16, he calls them "miserable comforters."

"We're often not aware of the importance of listening because we don't know how to do it, but there's power in just sitting and praying with someone who is hurting," Jones said.

To guide caregivers to be supportive listeners, the APA offers the following suggestions:

- ▶ Listen patiently and nonjudgmentally as the person tells his or her story.

- ▶ Avoid offering direct advice other than encouraging him or her to find healthy ways — such as exercise — to cope with stress.

- ▶ Discourage damaging ways of coping, such as excessive use of alcohol.

- ▶ Realize that it takes weeks, months and sometimes years before a survivor of trauma is able to put the disaster behind him or her. At times people who have resolved their symptoms following the trauma have a recurrence of traumatic symptoms during stressful times in their lives, such as retirement, divorce or loss of a loved one.

- ▶ Be patient. While it is common for loved ones to become impatient and puzzled over the traumatized person's inability to get on with life, it is especially important at these times to persevere and continue to listen patiently.

- ▶ Do not try to "fix it" for your traumatized loved one. Again the best "fix" is nonjudgmental listening. ☞

When your support is not enough

▶ Let the person know that experts think that avoidance and withdrawal are likely to increase distress, and social support helps recovery.

▶ Encourage the person to talk with a clergy counselor or medical professional and offer to accompany them.

▶ Encourage the person to get involved in a support group with others who have similar experiences.

▶ Enlist help from others in your social circle so that you all take part in supporting the person.

(Source: www.ptsd.va.gov)

"A traumatized person needs to be able to tell their story in a safe, nonjudgmental way."

Ted Embry
Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries

Treating traumatic stress

Cultivating relationship with God can calm response to triggers

By **Renay Carroll**
Pathways Professional Counseling

Children who experienced the April 2011 tornado outbreak may relive the traumatic experience especially during times of severe weather through frightening dreams, reenactment or repetitive play of the trauma, or disorganized/agitated behavior (Diagnostic Criteria from DSM IV). Children can also be secondarily traumatized by a loved one's trauma as the child who experienced symptoms of trauma when her sister's toys were destroyed in the tornadoes.

Other symptoms are sleep issues, outbursts of anger, difficulty concentrating, anxiety and exaggerated startle response. The symptoms occur after the traumatic event and reoccur during periods of stress. Stressors such as personal relationships, work-related issues, financial and health stressors can cause anxiety symptoms and sometimes flashbacks of the trauma. Flashbacks may be triggered on a conscious level as we remember the traumatic event. We "feel" like the trauma is still happening as a particular piece of trauma memory such as a smell or any other sensory experience triggers the experience all over again. For instance, witnessing a child being disciplined in public can trigger trauma of child physical or sexual abuse, watching a movie involving domestic violence can trigger the trauma of rape, seeing a car accident can trigger the memory of our own car accident or hearing fireworks can resemble gunfire for our war veterans. Trauma may reoccur subconsciously in our dreams and nightmares.

Trauma is any life-threatening situation.

A traumatic event is usually defined as an event in which a person's life was threatened or endangered or the witnessing of another person's life being threatened or endangered. Traumatic symptoms result from feelings of intense fear, helplessness and horror to the traumatic event.

Treating traumatic stress is often found in the grieving process or process of grieving the loss of the trauma. Medication therapy is often recommended for clients with PTSD and trauma response. Behaviorally we seek to process further the traumatic event if needed and to reduce anxiety levels caused by the stress, which is triggering the trauma. Anxiety is that free-floating fear that something is wrong or is going to go wrong.

Often stressors trigger a traumatic response by our subconscious "what if" thinking. When a traumatized person under stress begins thinking "what if ... happens" stress hormones such as adrenaline, cortisol and others are released into our systems and alert a person that danger is here. Traumatized persons can learn to put a behavioral code in their thinking to "turn off" the body's alert system. When a person feels danger is near, the fight, flight or freeze response will deploy. The word "danger" is the word "anger" with a "d" and often when a traumatized person does not feel safe, trauma anger is the response.

Many of us have security systems in our homes. If we fail to put in the code to turn off

the alarm upon returning home the alarm goes off even if the home owner is the one in the home — not an intruder. Much the same way, the body's alarm system is activated when the traumatized person's stress level is high. Putting in the behavioral code for treating anxiety and trauma response helps to turn off the body's alarm system.

In treating anxiety and trauma response we

know that relaxation helps calm the body's defense system. Stopping the "what if" thinking, staying in the present moment and deep breathing allow the body's alarm system to relax and return to normal response. Practicing daily relaxation or recreation allows the mind and emotions to "recreate" and much like a computer to "restart" a healthier perspective of thinking and feeling response.

Our faith response of Bible study, prayer and meditation is not only calming but reas-

sureing that God is sovereign and in control. Our faith response also helps with the "what if" thinking as many clients report putting their anxiety and fear in God's hands allows them to trust God deeper with the uncertainties of life.

Developing a safe plan with the traumatized person helps prepare for the "if and when this kind of trauma event might happen again." Often in trauma a person is unaware of the impending danger before the trauma occurs so preparation is at a minimum at the moment of trauma. This is not always true as in tornado preparedness and some other forms of trauma preparedness such as for workplace violence where a plan may be in place. Developing a safe plan for what a person would do to respond to the impending danger of a similar trauma is often a safety net for when the next trauma should occur. Depending on the type of trauma, the safe plan would correspond to how to keep a person safe in the event that the same trauma would occur in the future.

All of us quite likely will experience some form of trauma in our lifetime. Processing the traumatic event as soon as possible after the event with a doctor or counselor can help in preventing or treating the stress disorder we call PTSD. Earliest intervention of a traumatic event is recommended for the best possible outcomes. Pathways Professional Counseling counselors have been trained in Critical Incident Debriefing of traumatic events such as natural disasters and school/church traumas and are available to come to your setting to assist in processing the traumatic event. Counselors also are available in satellite offices around the state.

For more information about Pathways or to contact a counselor, call 205-945-0037 or visit www.pathwaysprofessional.org.



Photo by Tori Farris

Many homes in Pleasant Grove were severely damaged by tornadoes that tore through the area April 27, 2011.

Faith response

Renay Carroll, a counselor with Pathways Professional Counseling, says that resuming normal activities, including Bible study, prayer and meditation, can help victims of trauma calm the body's defense system.

"Our faith response reassures us that God is sovereign and in control," she said. "When they are able to put their anxiety and fear in God's hands, many clients report that they are able to trust God deeper with the uncertainties of life."

Carroll said one resource she uses with children is a book titled "Brave Bart: A Story for Traumatized and Grieving Children" by Caroline H. Sheppard.

Other books recommended by various counseling sources are:

- ▶ "The Hurt" by Teddi Doleski
- ▶ "A Terrible Thing Happened: A Story for Children Who Have Witnessed Violence or Trauma" by Margaret M. Holmes and Sasha J. Mullaff
- ▶ "Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing after Loss" by Pat Schwiebert and Chuck DeKlyen (TAB)

How to help a friend or child

- ▶ Help ensure the trauma survivor is eating and sleeping on a regular, healthy schedule.
- ▶ Help ensure the trauma survivor is getting regular exercise.
- ▶ Help the trauma survivor develop a "safety plan" for what to do in the event of another, similar traumatic event.
- ▶ Be purposeful about helping the person relax. Encourage adults to breathe slowly and deeply. Blowing bubbles with

children is a fun way to practice controlled breathing.

- ▶ Allow the person to grieve the losses they have experienced.
- ▶ Pray for and with the trauma survivor.

▶ Regulate your own emotional response. A child's reaction to a traumatic event is greatly influenced by the parents' reaction. The more calm the parent, the more calm the child.

(Source: *Melanie Howard, Pathways Professional Counseling*)



CARROLL



While his most unique specialties are mitral valve repair and replacement, Dr. Lewis and his team offer a range of surgical services for heart patients at Princeton Baptist Medical Center, including bypass operations, repair of holes in the heart, and tumor resection – all using a robotic, minimally invasive approach.

State-of-the-Art Heart Services

Princeton Baptist heart patients benefit from robotic technology and expertise

By Jennifer Jackson

As the Princeton Baptist Medical Center expansion began to take shape with massive steel beams and two-story glass panels rising up from the east end of the campus, plans were coalescing inside the hospital to add more pioneering technology to Princeton's already acclaimed heart services.

To complement the hospital's new, state-of-the-art surgery suite and add a new dimension to robotic technology, the team at Princeton Baptist knew they

needed an additional heart surgeon with years of expertise and experience. Dr. Clifton Lewis, Sr. was the ideal fit to join Princeton's outstanding cardiothoracic surgical team, bringing his extensive understanding of minimally invasive robotic operations along with a specialty in robotic mitral valve repair and replacement surgery to the hospital.

Advanced technology and expertise

Fifty years ago, when Dr. Lewis' father was a small town internist, the iconic

black doctor bag was the only thing needed to diagnose and treat most diseases. Today's practice of medicine is much different. Now there are multitudes of technological advances that aid in diagnosis and treatment, particularly when working with the heart.

Prior to the arrival of Dr. Lewis, valve surgery at Princeton Baptist was limited. Because high-tech robotic equipment was already in place in the new surgical center, Dr. Lewis and his

staff were able to immediately fill a range of surgical needs for Princeton patients.

"We brought a whole team to support this effort, and we were up and running with no learning curve," says Dr. Lewis. "The environment provides us everything we need to perform these highly specialized surgeries; it's a turnkey operation, and we are proud to offer the most experience in the state of Alabama and Southeast here at Princeton."

Commitment to patients

Integrating cutting-edge technology with the most knowledgeable and skilled staff is what propelled Princeton President Betsy Postlethwait to recruit Dr. Lewis and his team.

“A commitment to our patients is what drives us at Princeton Baptist,” says Postlethwait. “As we added the latest and greatest technology during our expansion project, we knew we also needed the best in the practice of robotic surgery to use these tools to their fullest potential.

“What intrigued me about Dr. Clifton Lewis was not only his extensive expertise but the passion he brings to his profession,” Postlethwait adds. “With approximately 700 robotic heart operations and more than 1,500 minimally invasive cardiac operations performed over the last nine years, Dr. Lewis’ experience and reputation makes him a leader in the field of robotic heart surgery.”

Excellence in technology and staff

Dr. Lewis conducts the most intricate operations using one of Princeton Baptist’s da Vinci robots. Located within the hospital’s newly constructed, state-of-the-art surgery center, this equipment is the latest in robotic technology. Dr. Lewis says this was a motivating factor for relocating his practice, “Princeton has the most modern, most technologically-advanced operating suites in the state. The environment provides us everything we need to perform these highly specialized operations.”

Along with the latest technology, Dr. Lewis knows that it’s the people who are the pulse of any hospital. He credits the nursing leadership of Regina Yarbrough (Princeton’s chief nursing officer) and her exceptional staff as another important factor in his decision to move his practice to Princeton Baptist.

“The nursing leadership here is head and shoulders above any other in the city,” says Dr. Lewis. “They organize this talented and dedicated nursing staff

better than any I’ve seen before and, in turn, that allows nurses to flourish.”

How does it work?

Patients are intrigued by the robot and want to know about the relationship between the surgeon and robotic technology. “One of the most common questions I hear is ‘does the robot do the surgery?’” remarks Dr. Lewis. “Nothing could be further from the truth. Really, the robot is just a fancy, complex, very advanced instrument that is under the complete control of the surgeon and his assistant at the patient-side cart.”

Advantages of the minimally invasive robotic approach include quicker recovery, reduced bleeding, infection risk nearly eliminated and superior aesthetics related to incisions and scarring. [see sidebar “Robotic Surgery: How it Works”]

Advancing innovation

“Improving through innovation is a driving force at Princeton Baptist and throughout Baptist Health System,” says Postlethwait. “As we grow and adapt to changing times, we continue to seek new ways to better serve our patients.”

And Dr. Clifton Lewis agrees. It is his commitment to his patients that keeps him passionate about his work. “If you know you can offer the most advanced, least invasive, most modern surgery available, and provide excellent outcomes – that feels good. Especially when we’re able to extend our reach to patients who may not have been able to otherwise be served.”

“As we added the latest and greatest technology during our expansion project, we knew we also needed the best in the practice of robotic surgery to use these tools to their fullest potential.”

Robotic Surgery — How it Works

The da Vinci Surgical System enables surgeons to perform delicate and complex operations through a few tiny incisions with increased vision, precision, dexterity and control. The system consists of several key components, including:

- an ergonomically designed console where the surgeon sits while operating,
- a patient-side cart where the patient lies during surgery,
- four interactive robotic arms,
- a high-definition 3D vision system,
- and proprietary

EndoWrist® instruments.

Da Vinci is powered by state-of-the-art robotic technology that allows the surgeon’s hand movements to be scaled, filtered and translated into precise movements of the EndoWrist instruments working inside the patient’s body.

Along with the benefits to patients, surgeons appreciate the improved dexterity and range of motion, superior optics and superior three-dimensional views available to them with the use of the robot.

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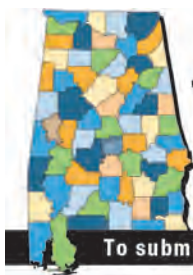
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BALDWIN

► **Mifflin Church, Elberta**, will hold a yard sale, rain or shine, April 20, 8 a.m.–noon. For information call the church office at 251-987-5112. Mike Keech is pastor.

BETHEL

► The 1 p.m. singing following homecoming services at **Nicholsville Church, Sweet Water**, May 5 has been cancelled. Steve Trader is interim pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Brian Lee** is the new pastor of **Shades Crest Church, Bluff Park**. Lee holds a bachelor of science in psychology and religion from



LEE

Belmont College, a master of divinity degree from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and a doctor of ministry degree from Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. He previously served as pastor of Lafayette Church, Fayetteville, N.C., since 1988. He and his wife, Clella, have two children. His first Sunday will be April 28. ► **Hilldale Church, Center Point**, will hold The Story — The Musical on April 21, 10:30 a.m., hosted by featured soloist Julie Peterson. Jonathan Key will also be featured soloist. Ron Pate is pastor.

CAHABA

► **Hopewell Church, Mari-on**, will celebrate homecoming April 21 with special music at 10 a.m. and worship service at 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow. Billy Austin, former president of Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers, will speak. Joe Bob Mizzell is pastor.

COFFEE

► **Bethany Church, New Brockton**, will celebrate homecoming April 28. Sunday School will be at 9 a.m. and the worship service will be at 10 a.m. Former pastor Lane Harris will speak and Gunter Akridge will lead music. Everyone is invited and lunch will follow the service. Tony Dye is pastor.

MUD CREEK

► **Crossroad Church, Hueytown**, will host Hueytown Women's Conference Sowing in Tears — Waiting in Hope on May 11, 8 a.m.–noon. A continental breakfast will be served. Maegan Harris Roper, a speaker and worship leader who is following the Lord's call to grow a ministry for women who have suffered infant loss, will speak. To register call 205-401-4405. Allen Drew is pastor.

SHELBY

► **Meadow Brook Church, Birmingham**, will host a concert

by pianist Russell Davis on April 25, 7:30 p.m. All are invited.

SIPSEY

► **Arbor Springs Church, Northport**, has called **Mitch Grissett** as youth pastor. He currently teaches Old Testament Bible at American Christian Academy in Tuscaloosa. He played football for the University of Alabama and graduated in 2003. He and his wife, Jessica, have two children. Ted Sessoms is pastor.

TALLAPOOSA

► **Daviston Church** will celebrate homecoming April 28. Master Clay will sing at 10 a.m. and Jack Womack will speak at 11 a.m. Lunch will follow. Everyone is welcome. Shane Dye is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **First Church, Salem**, will host Christian humorist/musician Bro. Billy Bob Bohannon on April 28, 6 p.m. The public is invited. Jay Webster is interim pastor. ☞

Want to know God?

By Pastor Clarke Skelton
Valley Grande Baptist Church

In Luke 15, Jesus told a story about a father who had two sons. He told this story to help people understand how they could know God.

The younger son in the story decided he wanted his inheritance before his father died so he asked for it early. He then traveled to another country where he spent everything he had on wild parties. As soon as his money was gone, there was a severe famine. To survive he found a job feeding pigs, and he was so hungry that he wanted to eat the pigs' food. Realizing that his father's hired laborers ate better than he did, he swallowed his pride and began his journey home. As he traveled, he prepared himself to ask his father to forgive him and to make him a hired servant. However, when the younger son reached home, his father ran to him, hugged him and threw a party because his son had come home.

When the older son returned from the family farm and discovered his father was throwing a party because his brother had come home, he was so angry that he refused to go into the house. Even when his father came out and begged him to join the party, he still refused.

Jesus' story demonstrated that both sons had broken their relationship with their father and needed their father's forgiveness. Yet, only the younger son experienced forgiveness. The older brother never experienced forgiveness because he never acknowledged his need for forgiveness.

Jesus' story revealed God as a loving father who longs for us to return home. Just like the father in the story, God is ready to forgive all who acknowledge sin and return home. Whether we identify with the older brother or the younger brother in the story, we all need to return home and experience the father's forgiveness.

When Jesus died on the cross, God drew the world a road map showing the way home. All who recognize that their sin has separated them from their Heavenly Father can come home and find God's grace (John 3:16–18). If you want to know God, you must ask for God's forgiveness and trust your loving Father to guide you. ☞

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CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR: Calvary Baptist Church of Scottsboro, Ala., is prayerfully seeking to call a senior pastor to lead this conservative Southern Baptist church located in northeast Alabama about 45 miles east of Huntsville. Candidates who feel led by God to this calling should submit resumes to: Calvary Baptist Church, Search Committee Chairman, 107 Chywonah Drive, Scottsboro, AL 35769, or cbcalabama@gmail.com by June 1.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Bethel Baptist Church in Brent, Ala., is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumes to: Bethel Baptist Church, Mr. Danny Russell, 298 Tabernacle Road, Brent, AL 35034.

MINISTER OF WORSHIP/EDUCATION: First Baptist Church, Palatka, Fla., accepting resumes for minister of worship/education. 5+ years experience, bachelor of music desired. Send resume to: bryanhelms1111@gmail.com.

MINISTER OF MUSIC/ASSOCIATE PASTOR: Ozark Baptist Church is searching for a full-time minister of music/associate pastor. Please send your resume and preferably a DVD of leading worship: OBC Search Committee, 282 S. Union Ave, Ozark, AL 36360, or email: pastorsteve@ozarkbaptist.org. Visit us: ozarkbaptist.org.

PART-TIME CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP LEADER: First Baptist Church Pinson, is seeking a part-time leader of contemporary worship music. Please send your resume to: sandysuttles@fbcpinson.org, or P.O. Box 310, Pinson, AL 35126, c/o Sandy Suttles.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF WORSHIP: Clearview Baptist Church in Pinson, Ala., is seeking a part-time minister of worship. Please send resumes to: Clearview Baptist Church, ATTN: Pastor Robbie Weems, 5271 Old Springville Road, Pinson, AL 35126, or send via email to: [\[clearviewbaptist.com\]\(http://clearviewbaptist.com\). You may also call Pastor Robbie at 205-854-2027 for more details about the position.](mailto:connie@</p>
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BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC: Rainsville First Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational minister of music whose responsibilities would include leading choir and worship. RFBC enjoys blended worship, leaning toward praise and worship. Send resume to: P.O. Box 585, Rainsville, AL 35986 or firstbaptist@farmerstel.com. Call 256-638-3141.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC: Cedar Grove Baptist in Leeds is looking for a part-time minister of music. We have both a traditional and contemporary service. Send resumes to: steven@cedargroveleeds.org.

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

PART-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR: Baptist church is seeking a part-time youth director to plan, coordinate and promote youth programs of the church, special youth projects, assignments and events for grades 7–12. Experience is preferred. Please email resume to: secretary@nbccbaptist.com.

MINISTER TO PRESCHOOL & CHILDREN (BIRTH–5TH GRADE): Ridgecrest Baptist, Tuscaloosa, is prayerfully seeking a God-called person for this 30 hour per week position. Send resumes to: 912 31st St. East, Tuscaloosa, AL 35405, or email to: rbcscotth@comcast.net.

OTHER POSITIONS

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wide weekly newspaper with more than 200,000 readers. Baptists comprise the largest Christian denomination in Alabama with membership of more than a million. *The Alabama Baptist* is seeking contract sales people with the ability to develop advertising partnerships with businesses and organizations interested in reaching the key demographics of our readers and growing their business. As an independent sales associate contractor, you would work from your home office with no territory restrictions. *The Alabama Baptist, Inc.* provides a unique working environment. We are partners with the churches of the Alabama Baptist State Convention working together for the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Each employee is expected to manage his/her personal and professional life in accordance with this relationship and consistent with the traditions of *The Alabama Baptist*. Send resumes and inquiries to: bjilmore@thealabamabaptist.org.

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Alabama Baptist GIVING



Year to Date through March 31, 2013

MARCH

CP Challenge Budget Goal	\$3,558,333
CP Challenge Budget Gifts.....	\$2,791,103
Under Goal for Month.....	\$767,230

YEAR TO DATE

CP Challenge Budget Goal	\$10,674,999
CP Challenge Budget Gifts.....	\$10,505,908
Under Goal for Year.....	\$169,091

The total given monthly and year to date gifts include CP base, CP state causes and SBC causes.

Immigration reform support rises

Support for immigration reform is growing among Southern Baptists and other evangelical Christians. That was the message from a Southern Baptist Convention leader in recent news conferences.

"[A]s I've gone around the Southern Baptist Convention, I've found significant support and growing support for comprehensive immigration reform in Southern Baptist life," said Richard Land, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, in a news conference call April 4.

The Evangelical Immigration Table, a coalition of evangeli-

cal Christian leaders, announced sponsorship of an ad campaign beginning the same date in four states: Colorado, Florida, North Carolina and Texas.

50 radio stations

The ads, which urge listeners to pray for and encourage their elected representatives to support immigration reform, are scheduled to run on 50 Christian radio stations.

Recent public opinion polls showed white evangelicals trailing behind other religious groups in supporting a path to citizenship or legal status for

undocumented immigrants.

A Pew Research Center survey found 62 percent of white evangelicals said immigrants in the country illegally should be allowed to stay — with 40 percent saying they should be able to apply for citizenship and 20 percent for permanent residency. That total trailed the responses from Catholic and other Protestant groups in the poll results announced March 28.

Overall, 71 percent of Americans favored immigrants in the country illegally being able to remain but only 43 percent for citizenship. (BP)



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About the 2013 Mixed-Asset Target 2025 Funds Award (three year): Classification averages are calculated with all eligible share classes for each eligible classification. The calculation periods extend over 36, 60 and 120 months. The highest Lipper Leader for Consistent Return (Effective Return) value within each eligible classification determines the fund classification winner over three, five or 10 years. The GuideStone MyDestination Fund 2025-GS4 won for the three-year period ended 11/30/2012. 92 funds were eligible for this award.

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Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Offering • April 21, 2013

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'1Cross' app spreads gospel via multiple-language testimonies

God brought it all together that day in the pickup. Nathan Lorick was driving back to Malakoff, Texas, wondering how in the world he could do the job if the Lord called him to it, yet he was flat-out stoked by the bigger-than-Texas-sized challenge of it all.

Twenty-six million people, 300-plus languages, urban, suburban, rural and all shades of ethnicities. And mostly lost.

Two years earlier on a missions trip to Thailand, Lorick had witnessed to a man in his language using a video testimony and had used it several times to share the gospel when communication broke down. Now, as Lorick was driving, that experience began to mesh with the challenge of venturing into evangelism strategies for an increasingly melting pot culture.

Turns out, the Lord did call. Last year, 31-year-old Lorick left the pastorate of First Baptist Church, Malakoff, to lead the evangelism initiatives of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC) — a task that calls for a statewide strategy to marshal the efforts of 2,400 congregations to share the gospel message statewide, from Pecos to Paris, and beyond.

'40 languages so far'

What God laid on Lorick's heart debuted March 5 as the "1Cross" app — a free download for mobile devices that allows users to access three-minute gospel testimonies in video form using native speakers of 40 languages so far, with a goal of every known language spoken in the United States being available.

"God has given us a gift in that He is bringing the world to us. It's a huge missionary opportunity," Lorick said.

According to the Washington-based Migration Institute, 2011 Census data shows 35 percent of Texas residents age 5 and up speak a language other than English, with about 90 percent of im-

migrants speaking what missiologists call a "heart language" other than English.

Some estimates say more than 300 distinct languages and dialects are spoken among the 26.5 million Texans, with large metro areas such as Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth having nearly all of those represented.

So far, the app has been downloaded about 2,500 times with very little promotion. Inside the app, if a user chooses a language from a video menu, he will see a professionally videotaped testimony in black and white, three to four minutes long, from native speakers of Spanish, Arabic, Japanese, several dialects of Chinese, Farsi, French, Hindi and various others.

Each speaker, after sharing a personal testimony, offers a simple prayer of faith and repentance if a user is led to pray along. The converted are encouraged to register their faith stories so that the SBTC may help them connect with the nearest church of their language.

The day after Lorick announced the app at the Texas convention's

Empower Evangelism Conference in Irving, a pastor called the SBTC office to tell how a church member who downloaded the 1Cross app already had led a woman at his workplace to Christ after he shared with her in Spanish.

"Many Christians out there are uncomfortable sharing their faith, but I really believe people general-

ly desire to share their faith. This is a tool whereby anyone can share the gospel with anyone else regardless of background, language or nationality," Lorick said.

"When you survey the different languages," Lorick said, alluding to the app's name, "there is only one cross that can transcend all language barriers with the saving message of Jesus."

"Our prayer is that pastors would engage with this technology and mobilize their members with the ability to share the gospel regardless of language and cultural barriers," Lorick said.

By late March, the app had been downloaded in 10 countries.

The app is available for iPhone devices and for Android. To download, visit 1Cross.com. (BP)



BP photo



Thinking About Tax Burdens

By Jim Williams
Special to The Alabama Baptist

April is an appropriate month to pause and think about tax burdens. For Alabamians, the story has pluses and minuses. While our state and local taxes remain low, they are not always fair; and we share with other states the burden of federal taxes and deficits.

Each year a Washington think tank named the Tax Foundation estimates "tax freedom day." This is the calendar day when taxpayers across the country have earned enough income to pay all federal, state and local taxes for the year.

The 2013 tax freedom day for the nation is April 18. This means that 107 days or more than 29 percent of the calendar year will be spent working to pay taxes for all levels of government.

Over 70 of those days are required for federal taxes, which is two-thirds of the nation's total tax burden.

Annual deficit

Federal taxes don't cover all of the federal government's spending, creating a deficit each year. It's a sobering thought, but another 21 days would be required to eliminate the current year's deficit and balance the federal budget, pushing tax freedom day well into May.

For Alabama, tax freedom comes sooner than for the nation as a whole. This year the date is April 5 or the 94th day of the calendar year. Alabamians will work less than 26 percent of 2013 to pay all our

taxes, well below the national average.

A key reason for this is that Alabama has the lowest property taxes in the U.S., particularly for homeowners. The Tax Foundation compared residential taxes to household income for all counties above 65,000 population.

Median tax rate

The median tax rate in Alabama (0.9 percent of income) is lower than in neighboring Mississippi (1.7), Tennessee (1.8), Georgia (2.3) and Florida (3.2), as well as other states.

Alabama ranks 37th per capita among the 42 states with personal income taxes, according to the Census Bureau.

We are one of only six states allowing a deduction for federal income taxes, which produces a tax burden that is heavy for lower-income taxpayers and light for higher-income taxpayers, when compared to other states.

Among the 45 states with sales taxes, Alabama ranks 30th in per-capita revenues. Two features detract from sales-tax fairness: Alabama and Mississippi are the only states without some kind of exemption for groceries; on the other hand, Alabama's narrow tax base excludes most services.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jim Williams is executive director for the nonprofit, nonpartisan Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama. Jim may be contacted at jwillia@samford.edu.

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JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson Student Completes Study in Los Angeles Film Industry:** Judson College senior Corey Finlay, of Oxford, attended the Los Angeles Film Studies Center, a "BestSemester" program of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, during the 2012 fall semester.

The Los Angeles Film Studies Center is designed to train students to serve in various aspects of the film industry with both professional skill and Christian integrity. Finlay will graduate in June with a business major and minors in equine science and web design. She plans to pursue a career in film/video production and remain active in the equine hobby.

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Samford's Students Elect New SGA Leaders:** The Samford University student body recently went to the polls to vote in the Student Government Association's

(SGA) spring elections. Eight students campaigned for the four open positions on SGA's 2013-2014 Student Executive Board.

Cameron Thomas, a junior religion major from Goodwater, will serve as president. This will be Thomas' second consecutive term as president.

Sophomore Caison Moore will serve as vice president for senate. Moore is a business major from Charlotte, N.C. He will run senate, as well as organize senate and class officer elections in the fall.

Sophomore journalism and mass communication major Madison Miles will serve as the vice president for events. Miles is from Duluth, Ga. She will oversee the Student Activities Council, which plans student events like Homecoming, Spring Fling and Harry's Coffeehouse.

Josh Heath will assume the position of vice president for development. Heath is a sophomore French major from Rossville, Tenn. Heath will serve Freshman Forum and class officers.

The new Student Executive Board will be sworn in at the SGA Inauguration Ceremony on April 23.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **University of Mobile Presents 'Pirates of Penzance':** The University of Mobile (UMobile) Center for Performing Arts and School of Worship Leadership will present the comic opera "Pirates of Penzance" at Saraland Performing Arts Center at Saraland High School. Performances will be April 19 and 20 at 7 p.m. and April 21 at 2 p.m. Directed by Patrick Jacobs, associate professor of music at UMobile, "Pirates of Penzance" is a comic opera about a young man named Frederic who serves an apprenticeship to a band of pirates until his 21st birthday.

Many students will be featured in this opera, including Benjamin Folsie, junior musical theater major, of Coden, as Frederic. The role of Mabel will be played by both Hillary Vest and Mary Laura Boyett. Vest is a sophomore vocal performance major from Destin, Fla., and Boyett is a senior vocal performance major from Laurel, Miss.

For more information, call 251-442-2420 or check the calendar of events on www.umobile.edu.

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A Unique Way to Serve Your Members

We are passionate about the overlooked concept of viewing estate planning through the lens of Biblical stewardship. As we think about stewardship, tradition and habit drive us to think only about our income. We confine our understanding and practice of stewardship to our "first fruits" or in modern terms our income.

According to the IRS, the average American has about 9% of their net worth in cash and 91% in assets. Assets include items such as the equity in our home, life insurance proceeds, farm, etc. Fred Smith with The Gathering states 96% of every gift to the evangelical church comes from cash assets. If that statistic holds true for Alabama Baptists, then we collectively only give 4% from our largest asset over which we are stewards—our estate.

Just imagine what would happen if we as Alabama Baptists collectively and consistently viewed estate planning through the lens of Biblical stewardship. I am convinced we could radically impact the world for Christ. If this is true, why has the church overlooked this important stewardship opportunity? The reasons are many and varied. However, I am pleased to tell you a number of churches have overcome these obstacles and are effectively serving their members as they view estate planning through the lens of Biblical stewardship. As these churches have launched their estate stewardship ministries, they have all acknowledged the following beliefs and strategies:

CORE BELIEFS

- We believe:
- God is owner of ALL things.
 - It is God's desire that we be

good stewards of all He has entrusted to us: time, talent and treasure.

- God-focused, strategic estate planning is the largest act of financial stewardship most of us will ever undertake.

STRATEGY

- We desire to serve the church members by providing access to Christ-centered comprehensive estate planning services. We will NOT focus on obtaining gifts. By serving our members in this manner and providing Kingdom impacting gifting opportunities, we believe gifts will be a natural outcome for committed believers.
- We will help establish funds within the church that provide gifting opportunities for Christ-centered ministries outside of the operating budget of the church. This would in-

clude ministries such as missions, benevolence, scholarships, building acquisition and maintenance, etc.

- We will routinely help promote the idea of Christian estate planning and how we can collectively impact the world for Christ through the collec-

tive stewardship of our estate assets.

For more information on how you or your church can become involved, contact Bill McCrary or Rodney Bledsoe of The Baptist Foundation of Alabama at (334) 394-2000.



SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For April 21

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

BE STRONG IN GOD'S WORK

2 Timothy 2:1-10, 14-15, 22-26

"No pain, no gain." Athletes are well acquainted with that saying. In most occupational fields, there is a direct relationship between the effort expended and the results obtained. What about the Christian life? Some believers adopt an attitude that not much personal effort is required to be successful in either living like a Christian or doing the work of the Lord. Other believers have endured hardships and are intentional about staying strong in their Christian life and service. All these believers can benefit from paying attention to Paul's teachings about what it means to be strong in the Lord.

Pass On the Faith (1-2)

Paul urges Timothy to be strong in the grace that is found in Christ. He wants Timothy to be courageous with the strength that God's grace provides. Not only is Timothy to strengthen himself, but he is to encourage the spiritual strengthening of others.

Timothy was to take the divine revelation he had learned from Paul and teach it to other faithful men, men of spiritual depth and character, who would in turn pass the truth on to the next generation. From Paul to Timothy to faithful men to others comprises four generations. This process of spiritual transmission and reproduction is valid for today and the future. Teaching others biblical truth helps them become strong in their faith so they can make disciples of others.

Stay Focused (3-10)

Paul gives three illustrations of the kind of person these faithful men must be. These illustrations would be readily understood by everyone in the first century. This trio of illustrations encourages Timothy to stay focused on Jesus and on declaring His gospel.

(1) A soldier. This metaphor pictures the Christian life as warfare against the world, the flesh and Satan. Just as a soldier who is called to active duty must sever his activities with the normal civic life and focus steadily on his task, so the believer must not allow the things of the world to distract him.

(2) An athlete. This pictures the effort and determination needed to participate in an athletic event. The athlete's hard work and discipline will be wasted if he does not compete according to the rules. Just so, the believer must discipline himself and obey God's Word for spiritual victory.

(3) A farmer. The backbreaking labor and long hours in all kinds of weather conditions are necessary if the farmer is to produce a good harvest. Timothy is not to be lazy but to labor intently with a view to the spiritual harvest.

We will be stronger in our work for the Lord when we stay focused on the task (like a soldier), on discipline (like an athlete) and on the harvest (like a farmer).

Teach the Truth (14-15)

Paul refers, in a general sense, to all Timothy's hearers and, in a special sense, to those who teach strange doctrines. Apparently there were those in Ephesus who made great issues over certain technical words, leading to undermining the faith of some. Timothy is to give his maximum effort to impart God's Word completely, accurately and clearly to his hearers. This is crucial to counter the effect of false teaching. Precision and accuracy are required for biblical interpretation. By correctly teaching ("rightly dividing"—KJV) the truth Timothy will prove to be a teacher approved by God.

Be Gentle and Patient (22-26)

The last illustration Paul uses in this week's lesson is that of a slave. Paul frequently uses the term "slave" (Greek *doulos*) to refer to himself positively as one owned by and indebted to Jesus. With this term here Paul points out Timothy's need for sexual purity and for gentleness in ministry. Although Timothy must contend for the truth, he must not be contentious or argumentative. Gentleness, patience and humility are to characterize his relationships with people who have been misled and need to return to the Lord. We will be stronger in our work for the Lord when we serve with purity and gentleness.

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

LIVING IN HOLINESS

Leviticus 18:1-5, 20-26; 20:6-8

Although the cultural setting of Leviticus is distinct from our own, the book contains important themes echoed throughout Scripture, notably the affirmation of things leading to life, wholeness, and deeper communion with God and one another.

Separate from Society's Standards (18:1-5)

Leviticus required Israelites to distinguish themselves from the Egyptians they left behind and the Canaanites who inhabited the land they were to occupy (v. 3). This distinctiveness was manifested in their conception of God—Yahweh alone deserves worship—and their cultural practices. Thus, Israel should reject Canaanite laws in favor of those Yahweh revealed. By so doing, they "shall live" (v. 5). The direction to follow God's laws over all others challenges modern believers who do not live in the kind of theocratic state imagined by Leviticus. What should a Christian do when she finds herself faced with civil laws she judges to be at odds with God's instructions? For instance, if one opposes war on the basis of Jesus' teaching on nonviolence (Matt. 5:39), should she reject paying taxes, a portion of which fund the military? How should she reconcile this with Jesus' teaching on "rendering to Caesar" taxes due? (Matt. 22:17-21)

Striving to live in a way that connects us more deeply to God and one another requires careful discernment by every believer.

Separate from Sinful Practices (18:20-26)

Chapter 18 is chiefly occupied with restrictions of various sexual unions. Verses 6-18 proscribe incestuous relationships, described from the male point of view: no relations were allowed with one's mother, father's wife (assuming polygamy), daughter, sister-in-law, wife's sister, etc. All such relationships were deemed disruptive of familial harmony.

Verses 19-23 forbid five practices: (1) sexual intercourse with a woman during her monthly period; (2) sexual intercourse with a neighbor's wife; (3) sacrifice of children to

Molech; (4) sexual intercourse between men; and (5) sexual intercourse with animals, by both men and women.

The grouping of these practices may be viewed in relation to themes of life and wholeness. Israelites associated both blood and seminal emissions with life. Loss of blood or wasting of semen was understood as a diminution of life, and contact with either rendered one ritually unclean (Gen. 9:4, Lev. 15). Therefore, sexual relations with a woman during her period (the least fertile time), between men, or between humans and animals all violated this principle since they do not lead to the creation of life. Sexual relations with a neighbor's wife might produce children but violated familial harmony.

Sacrifice of children to "Molech" was known in Israel (2 Kings 16:3, Jer. 7:31). The word is a corruption of the Hebrew "melek," or "king," and scholars differ as to whether Molech worship involved sacrificing children to Yahweh as king or to a Canaanite deity. The former is perhaps more likely given the practice would "profane the name of your God" (v. 21). In either case, killing children to honor a god works as the deepest and most profane level against the principle of life.

Separate from False Spirituality (20:6-8)

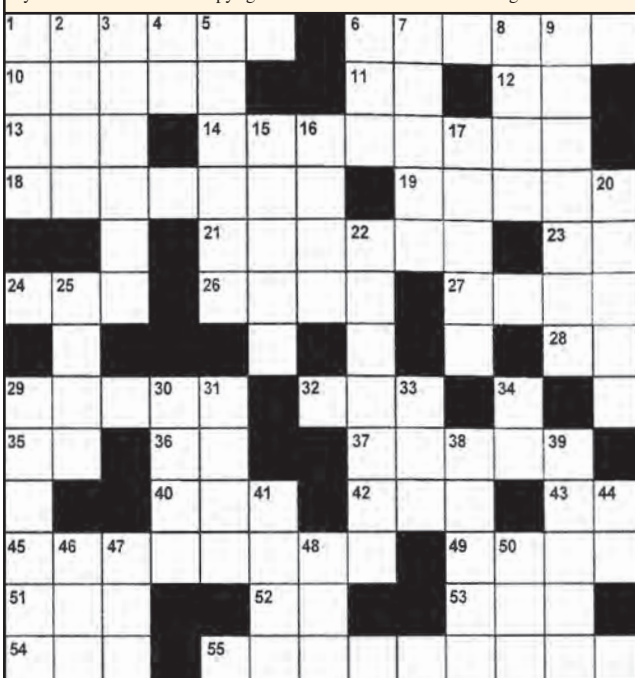
Molech worship results in one being "cut off," either a reference to expulsion from the community or a euphemism for the death penalty. Similarly, witchcraft or consulting mediums resulted in punishment for both seeker and practitioner (vv. 6, 27).

The remainder of chapter 20 addresses other sins punishable by death or being "cut off," including incest and all the sexual unions outlined above. Scholars find little evidence the death penalty was actually practiced in such cases then, and few would advocate for such punishment today, a fact that only heightens the interpretative questions for Christians who would read these passages in light of the gospel.

Then as now, holy living requires discernment and commitment, loving God with all our mind so that we may know how to love our neighbors as ourselves (Luke 10:27).

Christian Crossword

By Deborah Justice Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- Ahiam the son of _____. (2 Sam. 23:33)
- _____, whose name was Belteshazzar. (Dan. 2:26)
- She bare unto Amram _____ and Moses, and Miriam their sister. (Num. 26:59)
- Bring _____ offering, and come into his courts. (Ps. 96:8)
- Glass. (abbr.)
- Compete.
- And they following _____ helped him. (1 Kings 1:7)
- And _____, and Gibbethon, and Baalath. (Josh. 19:44)
- I bear up the pillars of it. _____. (Ps. 75:3)
- Confounded be all they that serve graven _____. (Ps. 97:7)
- Negative.
- Doctor of Dental Surgery. (abbr.)
- Created.
- Salt Lake City is the capital.

- Not applicable.
- Daniel, _____, Joel.
- If the _____ be on the fleece only. (Judg. 6:37)
- Associated Press. (abbr.)
- In the twinkling of _____ eye. (1 Cor. 15:52)
- There came two angels to _____. (Gen. 19:1)
- Samantha. (nickname)
- A little water _____ vessel. (1 Kings 17:10)
- A tool with a sharp blade.
- And the lot fell upon _____. (Acts 1:26)
- Pointed piece of metal.
- A period of time.
- Tensile strength. (abbr.)
- Crown. (abbr.)
- His father saw him, and had compassion, and _____. (Luke 15:20)
- The twentieth to _____. (1 Chron. 24:16)
- Down
- And to _____ that which was lost. (Luke 19:10)
- And there followed _____ and fire. (Rev. 8:7)
- The governor under _____ the king. (2 Cor. 11:32)
- Nickname for Rosemary.
- A people great, and many, and tall, as the _____. (Deut. 2:10)
- Why did _____ remain in ships? (Judg. 5:17)
- Of mint and _____ and cummin. (Matt. 23:23)
- _____ the son of Nathan. (2 Sam. 23:36)
- _____ the son of Jaareo-regim. (2 Sam. 21:19)
- And _____, greet you. (Col. 4:14)
- Jamin, and _____, and Jachin. (Ex. 6:15)
- God's Son.
- His father saw him, and had compassion, and _____ king of Hebron. (Josh. 10:3)
- _____, Exodus, Leviticus.
- To let fall.
- A hand tool used for pounding or driving in.
- Opposite of west.
- _____ the daughter of

- Zibeon. (Gen. 36:2)
- Gained victory.
- _____ the Mount of Olives. (Luke 22:39)
- A time to mourn, and a time to _____. (Eccles. 3:4)
- Northern state.
- Til thou hast paid the very last _____. (Luke 12:59)
- Extra large. (abbr.)
- And Pispah, and _____. (1 Chron. 7:38)
- Light yellowish brown color.
- A type of tree.
- Prepared an _____ to the saving of his house. (Heb. 11:7)



RESOURCES:

Your Guide to Today's New Music and Literature



Sound Bites

By Rick Sharp and Adam Borden

TODD BALLARD

Anthems

New Day Christian Distributors

Todd Ballard, founding pastor and worship leader at Red Rocks Church, Golden, Co., just released his debut national project, "Anthems." True to its name, the record is an impressive collection of praise anthems driven by an equally impressive lineup of players, writers and producers.



Otto Price produced the new project, with mixing by Ainslie Grossor and mastering by Brad Blackwood. Ballard wrote or co-wrote all the songs on the new CD, except for his touching cover of Delirious' "Find Me in the River." The song "Closer to Me" takes a little different direction than most of the album, thanks to beats from producer DJ Frank E.

It would be a mistake to assume Ballard's new project is a remake of his worship leading style at Red Rocks Church. Ballard de-

scribes the songs as "anthems from the heart ... each song is an anthem of the way I love God." Time will tell if we agree with Ballard's vision.

Overall, Ballard has produced a solid debut album. (Sharp)

HARPER FAMILY

Changes

Crossroads Music/Pisgah Ridge

Gaylon and Katrina Harper and their musical whiz kids, Dalton, Dillon and Hannah, would like to introduce themselves to you on their Crossroads Music debut, "Changes." Here's the thing — they all pick and sing. There are no soundtracks, no stacks — just singing and playing.



The Dave Williford song, "Born to Sing," features Gaylon pickin' Merle Travis-style guitar while Dillon sings lead with Katrina and Hannah harmonizing. Harper family daughter, Hannah, smokes the tires singing lead on the very next

track, "Count Your Blessings." Daddy Gaylon gets in on the act with his nimble banjo work before the last chorus. Follow that with incredible stringed acrobatics and Katrina's great vocal rendition of the Carter Family classic "Troublesome Waters," and you will definitely have to sit a spell.

If you have an affinity for great lyrics and honest music from folks of godly character, check out the Harpers on "Changes." (Borden)

MARK TRAMMELL QUARTET

Lifetime

Daywind Records

I spoke to Mark Trammell just prior to the taping of a tribute to "master producer" Lari Goss. At the time Goss also was working with the Mark Trammell Quartet as producer of a new CD. With the combination of one of the best quartets and the potentate of producers, I could not wait to hear the result, "Lifetime."

Trammell takes the lead on the first radio single, "Way Past Ready." The song from the pen of Rodney Griffin tells us that the outlook of believers should be an

upward look toward the rapture of the Church. After all, there is a crown for those who "love His appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).

One of my favorite bass singers, Pat Barker, proves he has graduated from "Southern Gospel Quartet University" on the classic Lee Roy Abernathy song "Wonderful Time Up There."

Barker's quartet classmate at the time of the recording, tenor

Eric Phillips, takes the lead on the tag on a snippet of the celebration song "Shoutin' on the Hills of Glory." This is tight quartet singing at its finest.

Barker takes an unexpected turn on a re-arrangement of "Touring That City," which proves great songs retain their greatness no matter the style.

Phillips comes powering back on "I'll Meet You in the Morning." The only way to make sure to attend that meeting is to have your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life. The Mark Trammell Quartet and yours truly want to meet you there. (Borden)



Christian Marketplace Top Ten Best Sellers

Nonfiction

1. Pursued, Jud Wilhite (FaithWords)
2. Jesus Calling, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
3. Not a Fan, Kyle Idleman (Zondervan)
4. Heaven Is for Real, Todd Burpo (Thomas Nelson)
5. The 5 Love Languages, Gary Chapman (Moody)
6. Jesus Calling, Large-Print Deluxe Edition, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
7. Torn, Jud Wilhite (Waterbrook/Multnomah)
8. The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven, Kevin Malarkey and Alex Malarkey (Tyndale)
9. Jesus Today, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
10. Jesus Calling, Deluxe Edition, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)

Youth

1. The Action Bible, Sergio Cariello (David C Cook)
2. Jesus Calling, 365 Devotions for Kids, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
3. God Gave Us Easter, Lisa Tawn Bergren (Waterbrook/Multnomah)
4. Jesus Calling Bible Storybook, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
5. The Jesus Storybook Bible, Sally Lloyd-Jones (Zondervan)
6. The Beginner's Bible, Kelly Pulley (Zondervan)
7. Heaven Is for Real for Kids, Todd Burpo (Thomas Nelson)
8. Jesus Calling — Teen Edition, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
9. The Action Bible New Testament, Sergio Cariello (David C Cook)
10. Story of the Easter, Thomas Nelson (Thomas Nelson)

Book Reviews

By Martine Bates Sharp, Ed.D.

All Things Considered ...

E. Byron Davis. Bloomington, Ind.: Crossbooks, 2012. 123 pp. (Paperback).

I didn't particularly relish the idea of reading another memoir by a retired Alabama Baptist preacher. They are often too didactic, talking down to the reader from lofty experience, and too personal, giving details that only family can fully appreciate. Many of them, while wonderful treasures for family and friends, are simply not of general interest to someone who doesn't know the author. (Yawn.)

What a refreshing surprise this book was. Byron Davis, a pastor who grew up on Sand Mountain and served as pastor or interim in a number of Alabama churches, wrote this collection of short vignettes, mostly autobiographical, but so devoid of conceit or self-aggrandizement that the book was a delight to read. The stories are entertaining and exceedingly well told, in no obvious order — just a string of short episodes from the author's life. Many are funny, all are interesting, and most contain a pointed, easy-to-accept message of God's grace.

I hope Davis has more stories to share.

Once Upon a Time: Growing Up in an America Forgotten

Bura Randolph Freeman. Northport, Ala.: Christian Pathways, 2012. 137 pp. (Paperback).

Northport native Bura Randolph Freeman takes readers down memory lane in this memoir that spans his childhood years. He tells interesting stories about life before televisions, indoor plumbing and refrigerators — a life that he portrays as idyllic and far superior to modern-day life. The book includes his memories from early childhood into his high school years.

Those who grew up in the same area (or era) as Freeman will no doubt enjoy the reminiscences about the "good old days" in rural Alabama.

Singing Over Me

Danielle C. Stammer. Bloomington, Ind.: WestBow Press, 2012. 92 pp. (Paperback).

April 27, 2011. Readers of *The Alabama Baptist* will recognize

that date, and we all have stories of our experiences. Even those of us who did not experience the tornadoes directly remember the horror of that day.

May 22, 2011. While you may not recognize the date, you will certainly remember the Joplin, Mo., tornado that hit while hearts in Alabama were still raw with our own grief. Danielle Stammer and her family were driving in a safe area when they heard the tornado warnings. They decided to turn around and head for shelter at a hospital. Unfortunately, the tornado was headed straight for the hospital, too.

None of Danielle's family was badly injured, but their house and van were destroyed and their lives were changed forever. This book shares the family's story. The book is not your usual "this happened, then that happened" narrative, though. It is written more creatively, as the author goes back and forth in the events, leaving scenes before they are quite complete — and omitting details I would have liked to know. But then, the book would not have had the same flavor. I think I like the book just the way it is. ❧

'Desperate need for Christ'

Unlikely pastor starts church for broken in Chicago

Marcus Randle didn't plan to be a pastor. He never dreamed he would start a church. A lifelong Chicagoan, Randle was happy as a social worker. God had another idea.

After their kids had moved out of the house, Randle and his wife, Mattie, opened their home to women who needed help recovering from addictions, launching Resurrection House in 2005. As committed followers of Jesus, the Randles used biblical principles to help and disciple the women.

"I oftentimes say, if you really want to see God laugh, tell Him your plans," Marcus Randle said. "So the women began to ask us more about spiritual things. They began asking us if they could go to church with us."

Though they were part of a great church, Marcus Randle realized that Chicago needed more churches — many more churches. Southern Baptists currently have 275 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) congregations in a Chicago metro area of 8.7 million. That's one SBC church for every 31,791 people in Chicago. Only a little more than 9 percent of the population is affiliated with an evangelical church.

Marcus Randle had a particular group of people in mind for this new church. It would be specifically for the broken and hurting people he was accustomed to seeing as a social worker. While their ministry to broken women continued, Resurrection House Baptist Church was born.

Fitting into church life

"Coming out of the Resurrection House and social services, I've seen a lot of people who have been addicted to drugs and alcohol and maybe been to prison or were HIV positive," Marcus Randle said. "They don't know how to fit in. They've had some knowledge of God but couldn't really fit into mainstream church life."

The Randles love the city that has been their life-long home.

"It's a melting pot; it has what we call nowadays a 'glocal' feeling to it," Marcus Randle said. "It's global but local at the same time. I don't have to get on a long plane and go to Indonesia to do ministry or missionary work. All I have to do is go to one of the universities here or go to any corner."

Marcus Randle's love for the city has opened his eyes to its great needs, too. Though the city has churches, many with long histories there, the Windy City's desperate need for Christ can be seen in all its corners. Marcus Randle believes new evangelical churches are needed to break down walls of skepticism toward organized religion.

"We're primarily seeing in the city of Chicago that a lot of people are skeptical," Marcus Randle said. "They understand the gospel, but the institutionalized church keeps them away. I believe part of our mission is to break down some of the barriers. I think that sometimes we make it much too hard for people to enter into our churches."

People like Deidre Davis often get left out. Davis came to the Resurrection House before the Randles started the church.

At rock bottom and near desperation, she longed for deliverance from alcohol and drug addictions. While she was at the Resurrection House, the Randles frequently invited her to their nearby church. Occasionally she'd accept.

After she left the Resurrection House and the program was complete, she would be tempted — like many other recovering addicts — to cut ties with those who had helped. But she never did. God kept drawing her back to the house and the Randles.

When she found out the couple was starting a church at the house, she came for the very first service. She accepted Christ and was never the same again.

While she appreciated Alcoholics Anonymous and other programs that helped her on her journey, she believes God did what no program could have done — He rescued her from her addiction.

"I believe it was a stepping stone to something far more greater," Davis said. "And I know it was only the power of God. No human power could have alleviated this addiction."

After Davis began a relationship with Christ through the ministry of the Randles, Mattie Randle began to teach her what it means to have a relationship with Christ. Today, Davis teaches a class on prayer at the Resurrection House.

"I believe that the one thing that Deidre offers to the world is to say that faithfulness pays off," Marcus Randle said.

"It doesn't mean it is going to automatically turn around. It doesn't necessarily mean that your life is going to get dramatically better, but if you stick to it, if you just don't give up, if you don't throw in the towel, it will be worth it all." (NAMB)



RANDLE

World of Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Women's prayers at Western Wall spark tension

JERUSALEM — The ultra-Orthodox rabbi in charge of the sacred Western Wall assured a government emissary April 4 that Jewish women will not be arrested if they try to recite the mourner's prayer at the holy site, despite a warning from Israeli police.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has tapped Natan Sharansky, chairman of the Jewish Agency, with defusing the conflict and ensuring "that every Jew in the world can pray in the manner that they are accustomed to at Judaism's most important national and religious site."

Sharansky met with Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, the caretaker of the Western Wall, April 4, three weeks after the Israeli police told the Women of the Wall prayer group that their recitation of the Kaddish mourner's prayer at the site would be grounds for arrest.

The Kaddish mourner's prayer is the newest flashpoint in the ongoing dispute; ultra-Orthodox Jews say women should not sing or pray aloud in public because their voices are provocative to men. Because the mourner's prayer traditionally is recited only when a quorum of 10 men is present, a group of women reciting the prayer in public is doubly offensive to traditionalists.

Sharansky went into the meeting "to express his shock" at the March 14 police letter, but "Rabbi Rabinowitz assured Sharansky that, contrary to the letter, no woman would be arrested for reciting Kaddish at the Western Wall," the agency statement said.

Rabinowitz could not be reached for comment.

Members of Women of the Wall, a group of Reform, Conservative and modern-Orthodox women, have been praying at the Western Wall for more than two decades despite objections from the ultra-Orthodox religious establishment, which has attempted to put further restrictions on the women's prayer options.

New testing dates Shroud of Turin to era of Christ

TURIN, Italy — New scientific tests on the Shroud of Turin, which went on display March 30 in a special TV appearance introduced by the pope, date the cloth to ancient times, challenging earlier experiments that dated it only to the Middle Ages.

The burial shroud purports to show the imprint of the face and body of a bearded man. The image also purportedly shows nail wounds at the man's wrist and pinpricks around his brow, consistent with the "crown of thorns" mockingly pressed onto Christ before his crucifixion.

Many experts have stood by a 1988 carbon-14 dating of scraps of the cloth carried out by labs in Oxford, Zurich and Arizona that dated it from 1260 to 1390 — well more than 1,000 years after the time of Christ. The new test, by scientists at the University of Padua in northern Italy, used the same fibers from the 1988 tests but disputes the earlier findings. The new examination dates the shroud to between 300 B.C. and 400 A.D., which would put it in the era of Christ. It determined that the earlier results may have been skewed by contamination from fibers used to repair the cloth when it was damaged by fire in the Middle Ages.

The new tests also supported earlier results claiming to have found traces of dust and pollen on the shroud that could only have come from the Holy Land. The latest findings are in "Il Mistero Della Sindone," or "The Mystery of the Shroud," by Giulio Fanti, a professor of mechanical and thermal measurement at the University of Padua, and journalist Saverio Gaeta.

Desmond Tutu wins prize for work on forgiveness

WEST CONSHOHOCKEN, Penn. — Desmond Tutu, the former Anglican archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, who won a Nobel Peace Prize for his battle against apartheid, has won the 2013 Templeton Prize, the most significant award in the field of spirituality and religion. Tutu, who has not been afraid in recent years to criticize leaders in his country and across Africa for humanitarian and political shortfalls, was cited for his work in advancing the cause of peace and the spiritual principles of forgiveness.

"By embracing such universal concepts of the image of God within each person, Desmond Tutu also demonstrates how the innate humanity within each of us is intrinsically tied to the humanity between all peoples," John M. Templeton Jr., the president and chairman of the John Templeton Foundation, said in a video statement released April 4 announcing the \$1.7 million award.

"Desmond Tutu calls upon all of us to recognize that each and every human being is unique in all of history and, in doing so, to embrace our own vast potential to be agents for spiritual progress and positive change. Not only does he teach this idea, he lives it," Templeton said.