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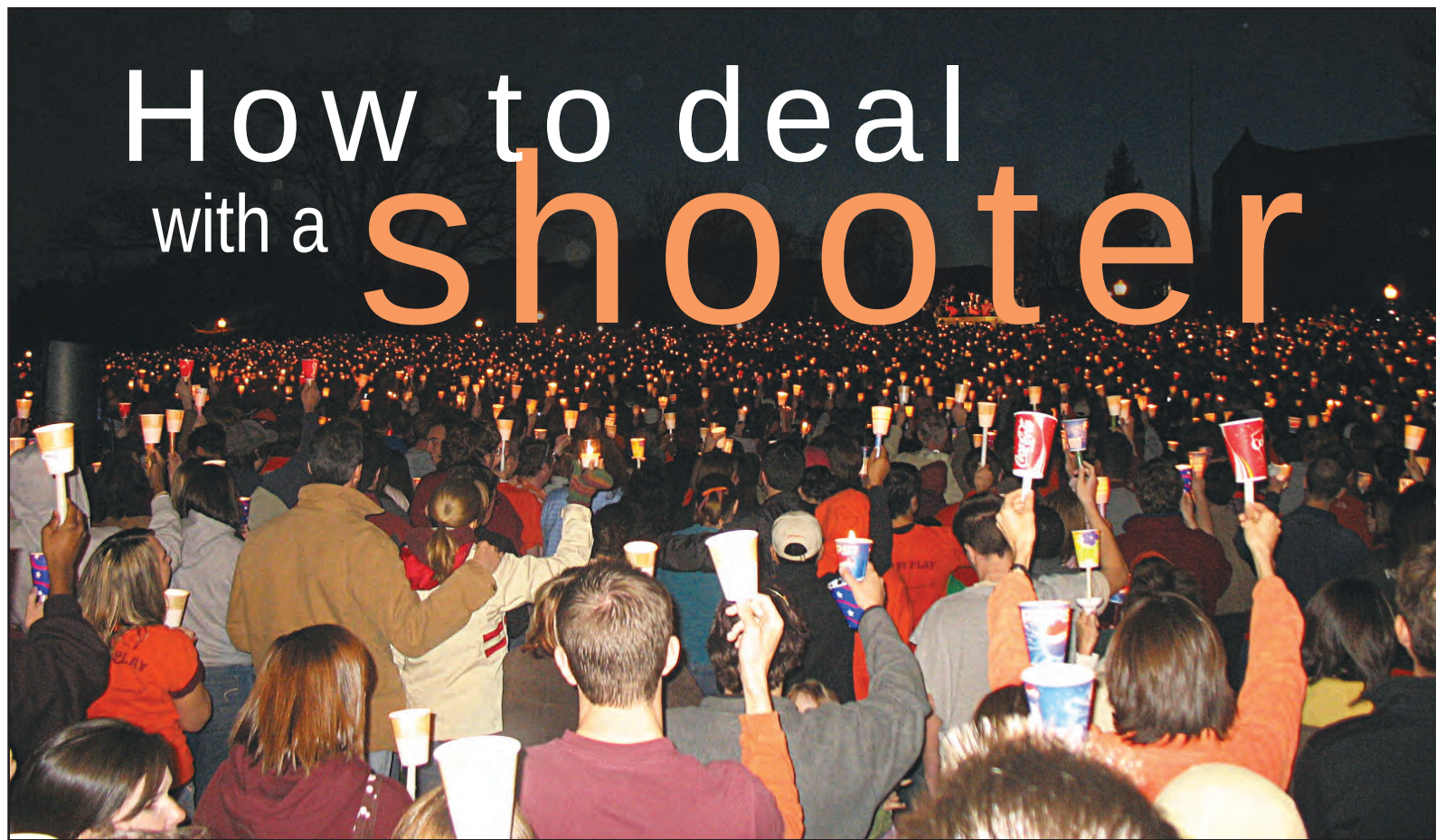
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George Beverly Shea, longtime singer at Billy Graham crusades, dies at 104

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How to deal with a shooter



BP photo

About 30,000 people attend a candlelight vigil April 17, 2007, after a gunman killed 32 people on the campus of Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg.

Steps for handling violence in your church, workplace

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

It was the most benign of scenes — hundreds of “normal” runners finishing up the Boston Marathon in front of stands of cheering friends and family.

Within seconds, it turned to a bloodbath as two explosions rocked the finish line April 15.

The bombing happened the day before the sixth anniversary of the shootings at Virginia Tech, which left 32 dead on campus. It was five days shy of the 14th anniversary of the Columbine High School massacre.

Americans are no strangers to random and sudden violence at any place — schools, movie theaters, even churches.

Baptists grieved with First Baptist Church, Maryville, Ill., when a gunman walked into the worship service and shot and killed Pastor Fred Winters in March 2009. Ten years prior, a gunman walked into a youth rally at Wedgwood Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, and

opened fire, killing seven.

Shooters are hard to predict and can cause devastation in seconds, said Lt. Curt Carpenter of the Hoover Police Department.

“Your actions will play a large part in the effects that the shooter has on your facility,” he told a

group during a workshop put on by Samford University’s Brock School of Business on April 12.

Once law enforcement arrives on the scene — usually within minutes — they are “rapid and aggressive,” but until they arrive, those in

(See ‘Follow,’ page 17)

Baptists minister in Boston after bombings

It was a close call for Melanie Stevenson.

Her husband, Ali, had just crossed the finish line of the Boston Marathon on April 15, and she had left her seat to go meet him.

As they turned back to walk toward the finish line, the section where she had been sitting exploded. It was followed by a second explosion 12 seconds later.

“My wife, Melanie, was sitting in the same exact spot (where the explosion occurred) for five hours,” Ali Stevenson, head cross country coach for the University of Mobile, said in an interview with al.com. “She got up and left when I finished the race. Had I run slower, it might have been a different ball game.”

The Stevensons were spared, but many were not.

A scene meant for celebration had turned to

cruel carnage in seconds.

Three people were killed, including an 8-year-old boy, and more than 170 were injured, some critically.

After the bombs, pastors and other leaders urged people to pray for Boston as the city grapples with the questions that arise from tragedy.

“I would say first of all to just pray for Boston. This was a huge shock,” said Jim Wideman, executive director of the Baptist Convention of New England.

“Patriot’s Day is a state holiday and a day that the Boston Marathon is always run. It’s an

(See ‘Pray,’ page 17)



STEVENSON

COMMENT

An Insight into the Downward Drift?

Recent news reports seem to confirm that American society is drifting downward when judged by biblical principles. What was unthinkable behavior a few short years ago appears to be the new norm. Actions the Bible calls sin a majority of Americans now say are acceptable.

Perhaps recalling the impact of repeated exposures to media violence on a person and on society will provide insight into why this downward drift is happening?

In a 2011 article, the journal *Social Psychological and Personality Science* reported, “The more children are exposed to violence, the more they think it’s normal. ... Unfortunately, the more they think violence is normal, the more likely they are to engage in aggression against others.”

In a study titled Long-Term Effects of Repeated Exposure to Media Violence in Childhood, researchers Huesmann and Miller report, “The existing empirical studies do provide support for the conjecture that the current level of interpersonal violence in our societies has been boosted by the long-term effects of many persons’ childhood exposure to a steady diet of dramatic media violence.”

‘Statistically significant’

Huesmann and Miller concluded the relationship between exposure to media violence and aggressive and violent behaviors toward others is “statistically significant and substantial by the standards of personality measurement.”

A study by Susman and Shibley was more specific. It reported, “We know that exposure to violence is linked with aggression, depression, post-traumatic stress symptoms and academic and cognitive difficulties.”

In short, repeated exposure to media violence numbs one’s conscience to violent behaviors allowing one to tolerate aggressive behavior in others as well as to act aggressively and violently toward others.

Given the amount of media violence to which children have been and are exposed, is it any wonder that among developed Western societies, the United States for decades has scored at the top of most objective measures of interpersonal violence?

The impact of media violence confirms the corrupting nature of what the Bible calls sin. Like a moral whirlpool, once sin has a grip, it



THOUGHTS
By Bob Terry

inexorably pulls an individual or a whole society deeper and deeper into itself. Jesus said, “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light ...” (John 3:19–20).

The deeper into the vortex of sin one goes, the blacker the sin seems to become because “men love darkness.”

Consider the nation’s march toward approving same-sex “marriage.” A study by Pew Research Center released in March reported 49 percent of the nation’s citizens approved of same-sex “marriage.” Opposing was 44 percent. In 2004, those opposed made up 60 percent of the American public and those favoring, 31 percent.

Few people question that the Bible condemns homosexual relations. But biblical teaching is not deemed an important factor in establishing social policy by many. Perhaps that is why 77 percent of religiously unaffiliated persons reported support for same-sex “marriage” in the Pew Research Center poll.

Among white mainline Protestants, support for same-sex “marriage” stands at 55 percent, an all-time high. Among Catholics, support has dropped from more than 50 percent in each of the last two years to 48 percent.

Support for same-sex “marriage” among white evangelicals has doubled in the past 10 years; from 12 percent in 2003 to 24 percent currently. Among black Protestants, support has grown from 15 percent to 34 percent.

In a paper titled “Portrayal of Homosexuality in the Media” by Adam Shapiro et al, the authors wrote, “The new century has brought about various changes to the growing world. Among the most talked about topics is the issue of homosexuality. ... Perhaps the greatest reason for this is because of the rise of new shows on American television that feature gay individuals.”

The paper cites the media’s “immense impact on how gays are viewed” and the media’s power of persuasion that “has always shown throughout the decades.”

Does the power of media have anything to do with the fact that 70 percent of Millennials (those

born since 1981) support same-sex “marriage” while Baby Boomers (those born 1946–64) have almost that percentage against it?

Another Pew Research Poll released recently brought more disturbing news. For the first time, a majority of those polled (52 percent) favored legalizing marijuana. Ten years ago support registered at about 32 percent.

Again no one seriously questions the results of smoking marijuana. Several articles in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* support the finding related in the article “Prevalence of Marijuana Use Disorder in the United States.” The authors reported, “As joints smoked per week increased, performance decreased on tests measuring memory, executive functioning, psychomotor speed and manual dexterity.” The studies found impairment even after subjects were off the drug for 28 days.

Still the recent poll found “support for legal weed (marijuana) use has increased across age groups, genders, education levels, ideologies and ethnic backgrounds ...”

Marijuana has been the most common illicit substance used in the United States for several decades. Almost half of Americans (48 percent) say they have tried marijuana at some point and almost the same percentage (50 percent) say smoking marijuana is not a moral issue.

Among Baby Boomers who came of age during the “Hippie Culture” of the 1960s–70s, support for legalization is about the same as it was in 1978 (47 percent in 1978; 50 percent in 2013). The anti-drug campaigns of the 1980s–90s have not stopped 54 percent of Generation X (ages 33–48) from supporting legalization. With same-sex “marriage,” it is the Millennials who provide the most support — 65 percent.

Judged as least offensive

Among the array of drugs available today, marijuana is judged the least offensive. Enforcing laws against marijuana is said to be “too expensive.” For many, personal experience reinforces the conclusion that “it isn’t that bad.”

As with media, can experience numb the conscious? Can it cause the harmful to be called good and the dangerous accepted?

In the background of all the noise over these issues, evangelical Christians cannot help but hear the words of Jesus when He said, “Men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.”

The only way to overcome this darkness is through the Light that has come into the world (John 1:4). That Light shines in the darkness and invites all to come into the light and to live according to God’s truth.

Unless one comes to the light, that soul, that society, is caught in the inexorable downward drift caused by sin.

Follow Bob Terry on

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"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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Enforcing^{the} law

Senate bill would increase penalties for illegal gambling operations

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Political enthusiasts in Alabama know that one way to stir up a firestorm of debate is to attempt major moves in the area of legal and illegal gambling. Each decade since the 1970s has had its own battle — horse racing, dog racing, lotteries and most recently slot machines labeled as electronic bingo.

The past two years have been a bit quieter on the gambling front than the previous two years were, but the constant ebb and flow of what is legal and illegal continues to create confusion for law enforcement officials, judges and political figures.

Is it possible this year's legislators might pass a bill related to gambling that all sides can agree on?

Sen. Bryan Taylor, R-Prattville, thinks it is. Senate Bill (SB) 446 — which would increase the penalty for promoting, conspiring to promote or possessing an illegal gambling machine from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class C felony for those making profits over \$10,000 — should be embraced by gambling opponents and gambling proponents alike, he said.

'Focused on the big fish'

"This bill is not whether we are for or against legalizing gambling. It is whether we are for or against enforcing the law. ... And it's focused on the big fish, not the [small mom-and-pop shops or gas stations] where someone might not understand the law.

"If you are for gambling, bring a piece of legislation to legalize it ... that's your prerogative as a legislator," Taylor noted. "But we have casino bosses, casino lawyers and some of the largest out-of-state casino machine makers in the world who are mocking Alabama's law because it has no teeth."

Attorney General Luther Strange agrees. Since coming into office in 2011, Strange has attempted to fight the electronic bingo gambling battle in the courts rather than by confrontation. But the problem he keeps facing is the weak penalties connected to breaking the law in this area.

Until the Alabama Legislature acts "to create an effective deterrent for large-scale illegal gambling, individuals will continue to engage in illegal gambling activity and openly defy the law. These individuals stand to make thousands of dollars in illegal gambling profits while risking only a slap-on-the-wrist misdemeanor charge," he said.

"Law enforcement will continue to be forced to expend valuable resources to deal with the growing problem," Strange added. "The Legislature must change that weakness in our law and create a badly needed deterrent for large-scale illegal gambling by increasing the penalty for operating an illegal slot machine casino to a felony.

"I urge members of the ... Senate as well as the House of Representatives to pass [SB 446] as soon as possible," Strange said. "This is my

top legislative priority."

Taylor said he has proposed similar legislation since 2010.

"This year's bill is very simple — if you are running an illegal casino in the state, there will be real penalties, not a slap on the wrist," he said, noting it would include machine manufacturers and businesses that transport the machines as well as the operators and owners. "It would be for anyone in the chain of the commercial enterprise," he said.

In fact, SB 446 basically restores the original form of the law outlining punishment for illegal gambling operations that was passed in 1977, Taylor added.

The felony penalties were reduced to misdemeanors in the 1980s. "That's when we began to see gambling interest take a hold in Alabama."

When the punishment for illegal gambling operations is not a deterrent, it is worth the risk for those in the business, Taylor said. "They know they will eventually get shut down, but they can make up to \$1, \$2 or \$3 million a week in the process."

"By creating a felony and restoring the original felony penalties, we hope the casino

lawyers will finally tell their clients that they aren't sure they can keep them out of jail. ... With a misdemeanor, the risk was affordable. But with a felony, I think it will serve as a deterrent."

Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program, urges Alabamians to talk to their legislators about SB 446.

"It's urgent. We've got to get this taken care of. Otherwise we are going to continue to have these bingo halls opening up, the big operations like VictoryLand and others continuing to thumb their nose at law enforcement," he said. "We are wasting valuable manpower and resources for law enforcement.

"This is an opportunity for us to become proactive and shut down these operations in an even stronger way. ... Many have become apathetic to the situation,

but we need people to hang with us to get this bill passed. It is a long-term solution to shutting down these illegal electronic gambling halls on a more permanent basis."

Taylor agreed the public is exhausted with the electronic bingo debate.

(See 'Gambling,' page 4)

**"We have casino bosses,
casino lawyers and some
of the largest ... casino
machine makers in the
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Alabama's law because it
has no teeth."**

**Sen. Bryan Taylor
R-Prattville, bill sponsor**

New regulations set for abortion clinics

Many Alabamians are applauding the new safety regulations put in place for Alabama's abortion clinics.

The legislation — known as the Women's Health and Safety Act and sponsored by Rep. Mary Sue McClurkin, R-Indian Springs — was signed into law by Gov. Robert Bentley on April 9.

The new law, which goes into effect July 1, requires doctors used by abortion clinics to have hospital admitting privileges in the same city where they perform abortions and will require clinics to meet the same building safety code standards as ambulatory surgical centers. In addition, strong enforcement procedures are included in the bill for doctors or clinics that do not comply with the new standards, according to a press release from Bentley's office.

Noting the legislation has been attempted for several years, McClurkin said she wants to provide women with a safe environment. "You can take your cat or dog to the veterinarian" and they have more health regulations than abortion clinics, she noted.

The bill has faced some opposition, par-

ticularly among opponents who contend the legislation would shut down the state's five abortion clinics.

Those supporting the legislation are careful to note their focus is on the care of the patient.

Don Wallace, Northport certified public accountant and former Tuscaloosa County commissioner, said, "While we might regret that any mother would choose to end the life of her unborn baby, we should certainly expect that rules should be in place to provide for the basic medical safety of the woman involved in the procedure.

"I would hope we can all agree that an abortion clinic that does not meet high safety standards should not be in business any longer in our state," he said. "When we go to a hospital or local medical center, we expect those facilities and their physicians to adhere to high safety and medical standards."

Bentley said, "As a physician, and as a governor, I am proud to sign this legislation. This bill provides appropriate standards of care. It has been endorsed by pro-life groups across Alabama." (TAB)

Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

BESSEMER

► The Gospel Singing Ministry of Southcrest Church, Bessemer, will host Scrap Iron Quartet and The Campbells on May 3, 7:30 p.m. Scott Bush is pastor.

BETHEL

► Nicholsville Church, Sweet Water, will hold a singing with Shannon Knight after homecoming services May 5, 1:15 p.m. For information call 334-636-0073.

BIRMINGHAM

► Eastside Church, Birmingham, will host Body 4 Believers for a two-day health seminar May 3-4. For information call 205-833-3463 or email akrier@ebcbirmingham.org. Mark Smith is pastor. ► A 5K run May 11 sponsored by J.R. Millington Dentistry in Trussville will benefit Serving You Ministries, a nonprofit food and financial assistance ministry, housed at Northpark Church, Trussville. The ministry is supported by several Birmingham-area churches and individuals. The run will be held in Clay with Clay May Days. Registration begins at 7 a.m. and the race begins at 8 a.m. For registration costs and other information, email Keri Edwards at kerimedwards@gmail.com.

lation, email Keri Edwards at kerimedwards@gmail.com.

COVINGTON

► Red Oak Church, Florala, will celebrate homecoming May 5, 10 a.m. Former pastor Jim Duck will speak and Dudley Maddox will direct music. There will be no Sunday School. Lunch will follow the service and everyone is invited. Eugene Meadows is pastor.

FRIENDSHIP

► First Church, Oneonta, will host the annual National Day of Prayer Rally on the front steps of the Blount County Courthouse on May 2, noon. Lunch will follow in the church fellowship hall. In case of rain, the rally will be moved to the church sanctuary. For information call 205-625-3191. Everyone is invited. Larry Gipson is pastor.

HALE

► Gallion Church will celebrate homecoming April 28. Sunday School will be at 9:30 a.m. and the worship service will be at 10:30 a.m. Colby Mouchette will speak. Special music will be presented by Gail Oakes, Byron Randall, the Bill Baker family and the GBC Adult Choir. A covered dish

lunch will follow. All friends and former members of the church are welcome. Hank Atchison is pastor.

MADISON

► Fred Luter, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of Franklin Avenue Church, New Orleans, La., will speak at West Mastin Lake Church, Huntsville, on April 25, 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Willie L. Hinton Sr. is pastor.

ST. CLAIR

► Coosa Valley Church, Cropwell, will celebrate homecoming May 5, 10:30 a.m. New Ground from Scottsboro will sing and lunch will follow at noon. Gordon Lee is pastor.

TENNESSEE RIVER

► Teen Challenge of the Mid-South will lead worship May 5, 5 p.m. at First Church, Stevenson. The Teen Challenge Gospel Choir and Creative Evangelism Team comprised of students from Teen Challenge of the Mid-South will share through music, testimony and drama the story of how they experienced freedom through Jesus Christ from various types of bondage. Joshua Posey is pastor.

Gambling interests 'afraid of the bill'

(continued from page 3)

"The gambling interests have been successful in reframing the whole issue ... saying the law is unclear and that we need to vote on it," he said. "But clearly they are afraid of the bill. Casino lobbyists who haven't been around all session were sitting front and center at the committee meeting when this bill was discussed. "The amount of unexplained opposition in the Legislature is an example of how hard the gam-

bling bosses are working behind the scenes to kill this legislation," he noted. "I am very confident that ... a vote to block this bill or a vote against cutting off the filibuster (that will surround this bill) is a vote for the gambling interest and Las Vegas-style casinos in this state."

To read the full wording of the bill or to find out how to contact your senator or representative, visit www.legislature.state.al.us.

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Photo by Grace Thornton

NEW ALABAMA COSBE OFFICERS

The Alabama Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists elected new officers during the State Evangelism Conference in February. The officers are (l to r): James Messer, president; Bo Shedd, vice president; and Bob Smith, secretary-treasurer.

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

1 Peter 1:22

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

Former Alabama Baptist 'cowboy' pastor sentenced

WAXAHACHIE, Texas — A former Alabama Baptist "cowboy church" pastor was sentenced to 50 years in prison without the possibility of parole after a Texas jury found him guilty April 5 of continuous sexual abuse of a child.

According to the *Corsicana Daily Sun*, Mark Allen Green, 42, will not be eligible for release from prison until he is 92 years old. Green was arrested May 31, 2012, on charges of sexual assault of a 13-year-old girl in Waxahachie, Texas. The news disrupted the Cowboy Church of Marshall County, which fired him after only a couple of months as pastor.

The *Alabama Baptist* previously reported that Randall Stoner, director of missions for Marshall Baptist Association, released a media statement that said, "We are saddened by the circumstances surrounding his termination but cannot comment further due to legal issues involved."

In September 2012, a grand jury in Ellis County, Texas, returned a "no bill," or refusal to indict. Another grand jury in neighboring Navarro County, however, handed down an indictment in July. According to the local newspaper report, a Navarro County jury of six men and six women returned a guilty verdict after one hour and 15 minutes. Deliberations over the sentence took 30 minutes. In addition to time in prison, he was fined \$10,000.

BWA sends aid to refugee fire victims in Thailand

WASHINGTON — The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) sent an initial sum of \$20,000 to assist Karenni refugees whose homes were badly damaged or destroyed in a fire in a refugee camp in Thailand, killing 37 persons. The Karenni are a subgroup of the Karen people living mostly in Kayah State (formerly Karenni State) of Myanmar. Many of the refugees fled conflict zones in Kayah and Karen states. The fire, which occurred March 22 in the Ban Mae Surin camp in Mae Hong Son province of northern Thailand, was extinguished about two hours after it began. Approximately 200 people were wounded and hospitalized. At least 2,300 persons were left homeless.

"Our prayers are with the people who have lost families and loved ones and we ask the Baptist family to continue to support them in their prayers," said Baptist World Aid Director Rothangliani Chhangte. "Some children have been left orphaned and there is need for our continued prayers and support for the people."

Blooming Night Zion of the Karen Women's Organization (KWO) told the BWA that among the facilities destroyed and damaged were a church, a clinic, a hospital, two schools, two food warehouses, KWO offices and many houses.

Mae Surin camp is one of 10 refugee camps on the Thai-Myanmar border, housing a total of about 130,000 refugees.

Land to lead Southern Evangelical Seminary

NASHVILLE — Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), confirmed to Baptist Press on April 11 that he has been selected as president of Southern Evangelical Seminary. The seminary, based in Charlotte, N.C., was co-founded in 1992 by Norman Geisler, longtime seminary professor and apologist, and Ross Rhoads, former evangelist and then-pastor of Calvary Church, Charlotte.

Land's selection was tweeted by Geisler on April 11: "I wish to commend the Board of Southern Evangelical Seminary for its excellent choice of a new president Dr. Richard Land."

Land, 66, announced his retirement from the ERLC on July 31, 2012. At the time, he scheduled his retirement to be effective Oct. 23, 2013 — 25 years from the date he assumed the ERLC's presidency in 1988. ERLC trustees, on March 26, elected Russell Moore as the Southern Baptist Convention entity's new president, to be effective June 1. Moore, 41, currently is dean of the school of theology and senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

LifeWay launches new curriculum, offers free samples

NASHVILLE — As LifeWay Christian Resources prepares to launch a new and improved Bible Studies for Life curriculum series in the fall, individuals and churches are able to get a sneak peek at three sessions through free online downloads.

"By giving away three sessions of the new Bible Studies for Life, we are excited for people to give them a try and send us their feedback," said David Francis, managing editor of Bible Studies for Life. The sessions give access to 13 age groups from children to adults. They are available at LifeWay.com/FallPreview.

Where are they NOW

On April 27, 2011, nearly 50 Alabama Baptist churches were damaged or destroyed. The next four pages represent 15 of the most heavily damaged churches and where they are now. Many of them are celebrating the completion of new buildings, while others are still in the rebuilding process.

**Boone's Chapel Baptist and Faith Chapel Baptist were hit April 15, 2011.*



Photo by Carol Fowler

BOONE'S CHAPEL Baptist Church, Prattville*

A tornado hit First Baptist Church, Albertville, when Mike Johnson was serving as its pastor in 2010. He moved to Boone's Chapel Baptist Church, Prattville, and four months later — April 15, 2011 — it too was hit by a tornado.

It's been hard — especially the death of some of the church's neighbors during the storm — but God has been good in the midst of heartache, Johnson said.

"The Lord provided a quantum leap for this church," he said of Boone's Chapel Baptist. "It would've taken us a decade without the storm to accomplish what's been done in a year's time."

After the storm took out the sanctuary — which the church was already beginning to outgrow — it began meeting in its multi-purpose building, which survived the storm.

"Before, 200 was pretty much our max in attendance," Johnson said. "But recently we had to order 450 pew chairs, and we're running two worship services."

Much of that growth is due to the new preschool and children's space the church was able to build after the tornado, he said.

"We chose to go that direction because we as a church are pretty heavy in ministering to the community," he said. "We have gained a lot of new families through this."

And the church is baptizing new adult

members "at least about every other week," Johnson said. "There are a lot of people coming to faith in Christ."

The church dedicated its new facility April 14.

"It's unbelievable," Johnson said of all that's happening at Boone's Chapel. "It's the Lord's doing." 🙏



Photo by Chris Mills



Photo courtesy of Concord Highland Baptist Church

CONCORD HIGHLAND Baptist Church, Hueytown

Concord Highland Baptist Church, Hueytown, marked its first service in its new church building Easter Sunday 2013. The former church facilities were destroyed when a tornado hit April 27, 2011. The tornado removed the entire back side and steeple of Concord Highland's building and all the windows were blown out.

The church broke ground on its new building May 2012, and Pastor Richard Larson noted the building was completed a couple of weeks before Easter Sunday. The new building is located across the street from the former building, and the sanctuary seats about 250.

The first service in the new building, which includes the sanctuary, fellowship hall and classrooms, had an overflow crowd. "It was just a fantastic day," Larson said.

To celebrate the opening, the church held an open house April 14 and invited people from the community to visit the new building.

In addition, a dedication service will be held April 28 at 11 a.m.

According to Larson, many people who helped Concord Highland rebuild will attend. 🙏



Photo by Jason Bergeron

PILGRIM REST Baptist Church, Centre

Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, Centre, has seen a lot of tragedy in the past two years. Its building was largely destroyed by an EF4 tornado that lifted the building off its foundation and set it down again.

That was April 27, 2011.

On July 3, 2011, Pastor Steve Tierce was

paralyzed in a car accident.

And Feb. 1 of this year he passed away.

Tierce's wife, Patty, said the outpouring of love from the community and church family has been "amazing" during the difficult time of recovery and in her husband's passing.

For now, Pilgrim Rest Baptist continues to meet in a mobile chapel provided by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

The church is planning to rebuild soon. 🙏

MAMRE Baptist Church, Wellington

Mamre Baptist Church had only been in its brand new building two years when a tornado demolished it April 27, 2011. Not to be discouraged, the church rebuilt — a replica of the same building — and dedicated it in November of the same year.

In the time since, the church has constructed a Christian life center and an awning to connect it with the main building, both of which were completed in the last couple of months.



Now

Photo courtesy of Joyce Hartsfield



1-year mark

Photo courtesy of Mamre Baptist Church



Then

Photo by John Swain

CULLMAN First Baptist Church

By the first anniversary of the tornado, First Baptist Church, Cullman, had replaced the roof, ceilings, walls and stained-glass windows destroyed in its sanctuary by the storm. The tower for WCQT Channel 27 was rebuilt, and the gymnasium roof was repaired.

Now the last piece is in place — a new steeple, completed in fall 2012.



Now

Photo by Jennifer Tanner



1-year mark

Photo by Neisha Fuson



Then

Photo by Neisha Fuson

Now



Photo courtesy of Marion Baptist Association

EMMANUEL Baptist Church, Hackleburg

After an EF5 tornado destroyed Emmanuel Baptist Church, Hackleburg, the congregation and Pastor Gene Thomas decided they weren't going anywhere. The church rebuilt, with the help of several volunteers and Carpenters for Christ, and dedicated their 5,000-square-foot building in November 2012.

Since then, the church has welcomed new members and baptized three new believers, Thomas said.

"We're doing good. ... The Lord has blessed us," he said. "People are enjoying the facility and the (new) building. Some of us still stand in awe about what we've got and how we got it. We haven't forgotten that God used a lot of people to do this for us."

Emmanuel Baptist's van ministry,

which began after a van was donated to the church in 2012, runs every Sunday and picks up about 12 adults and children for Sunday morning services.

Thomas said the church also is looking forward to Vacation Bible School and a new sports ministry in summer 2013.



Then

Photo courtesy of Dana Crow

FAITH CHAPEL Baptist Church, Marion*

After the April 15, 2011, tornado hit Faith Chapel Baptist Church, Marion, the church had to postpone the renovations and additions it had been planning for several years in order to focus on making repairs.

But after May 2011 repairs were complete and the church continued with its plans to renovate and add on to the existing building. Now the fellowship hall, classroom, kitchen, dining area and two handicap accessible bathrooms are nearly complete.

Pastor Lloyd Stockman said the new addition should be finished by mid-May and a dedication service will follow.

Stockman said previous years of Vacation Bible School (VBS) had to be held outside under tents due to a lack of space but the church is ready to have its first VBS inside the building this summer with the extra 1,500 square feet it will have when the addition is complete.



Now

Photo by Ben Lee

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

ALBERTA

Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa

The rebuild of Alberta Baptist's building is "in the relatively early stages," but it's "coming along good," said Pastor Larry Corder.

After an EF4 tornado basically destroyed the church's facilities two years ago, Alberta members took 40 days to pray and seek God's direction on whether to relocate, merge with another facility or rebuild on the same spot.

"We decided that if we didn't go back to Alberta, there would be a void there," Corder said. "We have been able to meet a lot of needs (after the tornado), and it has broken down a lot of barriers in the community."

The church has spent a lot of time moving soil and preparing the new building's foundation, he said. Footings have been poured, and the support columns are up for the new sanctuary.

The church hopes to be in its new building debt-free sometime in January or February of 2014. 📅



Photo courtesy of John Matthews



Photo by Doug Rogers



Photo courtesy of Mika Marcum

FULTONDALE

First Baptist Church

The roof on the south side of First Baptist Church, Fulton-dale, was torn off in the April 27, 2011, tornadoes. The church also lost its steeple and all of its windows on that fateful day.

But that did not deter the congregation from rebuilding and moving forward, even while they were without a pastor.



Photo by Eric Harrison

In September 2012, First, Fultondale, called Mika Marcum as the new pastor and continued to transform the church inside and out as they began to "wipe the church of the 'used to,'" Marcum said.

A new welcome center, offices and Sunday School rooms were completed in March 2013 and a multipurpose room, more offices and some landscaping are close to being finished.

The church plans to hold a dedication service in late May. 📅



Photo courtesy of Ken Allen

EAST SIDE

Baptist Church, Cullman

East Side Baptist Church, Cullman, is weeks away from moving into its new nearly 21,000-square-foot facility.

After the previous building was demolished in an April 27, 2011, tornado, East Side Baptist began meeting in Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church, Cullman.

East Side sold its old property and bought new land to build on. The new building, complete with "ample bathrooms and a large fellowship gathering area" is set to be complete around June 1. East Side will host several events as the church "reintroduces" itself to the com-



Photo by Neisha Fuson

munity, Pastor Ken Allen said, including a dedication service June 23; a family weekend June 29; an open house July 14 and a return to regular services and Bible studies July 21.

Allen said the major thing that happened after the tornado was the opportunity to "go back to the basics" of what the Bible says about church. "We really have been able to cast a new vision and go back to the biblical meaning of what it means to make disciples," Allen said. 📅

MOUNT HEBRON EAST

Baptist Church, Eclectic

Only the foundation slab from the fellowship hall was left at Mount Hebron East Baptist Church, Eclectic, after an EF4 tornado hit its buildings April 27, 2011.

The church had to start over, and they "accepted the challenge and had the vision," Pastor Bob Williamson said.

Instead of building a 60-seat sanctuary like before, they built one that seats 140.

"We have more Sunday School rooms than we did, and we have a baptistry and paved parking, two things we didn't have before," Williamson said.

People from six states have donated money, and "a lot" of Alabama churches have stepped up to help with the rebuilding.

"It's been a coming together of God's people to see the church built back so it can do ministry out there," Williamson said.

The church will dedicate its new sanctuary April 28. 📅



Photo courtesy of Bob Williamson



Photo by Joni B. Hannigan

Now



Photo courtesy of Tyler Pair

STAMP

Baptist Church, Valley Head

Stamp Baptist Church, Valley Head, was back in its repaired sanctuary less than a year after a tornado damaged its buildings. It also completed a fellowship hall before the first anniversary of the storm.

"We're back to normal in that respect," said church member Tyler Pair. "We are stronger now than before."

But they haven't forgotten the brutal storm. "We had a member pass

away because of it," Pair said.

Stamp Baptist will remember her during its regular church services for the second anniversary of the tornado, as it did last year. 🕊

Then



Photo courtesy of Tyler Pair

Now



Photo by Steve Bell

MOUNTAIN VIEW

Baptist Church, Phil Campbell

Two years after an EF5 tornado wiped out three of its buildings, Mountain View Baptist Church, Phil Campbell, is "working hard to bring our rebuild to completion," said Pastor Sammy Taylor.

The goal is not far away, as the church sign and steeple have just been added to the finished building. Builders for Christ under the direction of Lawrence Corley provided most of the labor. The church is waiting on dry weather to pave the parking lot. 🕊

Then



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Now



Photo by Nichole Harris

MOUNTAIN VIEW

Baptist Church, Sylvania

Only rubble was left when a tornado hit Mountain View Baptist Church, Sylvania, but less than a year later, they dedicated a new building.

And now, the church is celebrating more than just a new building — it's celebrating a "wonderful spurt of growth," said church member Deborah Greeson. "We're doing great."

Mountain View Baptist has added 19 new members since Oct. 1, 2012, Greeson said. 🕊

Then



Photo by Rebecca Farmer

Now



Photo by Steven Lee

WELLINGTON

First Baptist Church

Members of First Baptist Church, Wellington, breathed a sigh of relief when a tornado passed by to the north a few weeks ago.

The tornado that destroyed its building April 27, 2011, was the second to hit the church in the last three years, and they were thankful there wasn't a third — especially since they had just dedicated their new building in November.

"We got it completed, and we're doing well," said church member Julia Heathcock.

The church had been meeting in the

Then



Photo by Lisa Patterson

family life center — which was untouched by the 2011 tornado — ever since the storm. "It's good to be back in the sanctuary," Heathcock said. 🕊

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Dinosaurs or Disciples?

The raging debate in popular culture is focused on so-called same-sex marriage. The U.S. Supreme Court is hearing cases concerning the issue. The talking heads of the news media are enamored with the topic. Television commercials, even on the more conservative Fox News Channel, are now openly advocating a complete acceptance of same-sex marriage.

For many of us, this is most troubling. There was a time when such discussions were not even considered proper for small group or more private conversations. Now it is an open discussion with highly-charged opinions on various sides.

Evangelical Christians, who hold fast to a traditional view of marriage, are often depicted as dinosaurs representing a long past epoch in history. This caricature leads to a sometimes venomous response from Christians. This makes for some unhealthy debate.

My response to all this chatter is multi-faceted. I really would like to cover my ears and pretend it is not happening. I would rather not hear such discussion or engage

in it. The other response is to be distraught and disturbed by the debate to the point of anger and hostility.

Obviously, neither response is a good one. We cannot pretend that this change in cultural perception and interpretation is taking place at a rapid speed. To become angry and hostile is to fall into the trap of fulfilling the mischaracterization of the opposition who see evangelical Christians as dinosaurs roaming around the landscape, reminiscing about days long past.

To become angry and hostile is to fall into the trap of fulfilling the mischaracterization of the opposition who see evangelical Christians as dinosaurs roaming around the landscape, reminiscing about days long past.

What is our best response? As always, we are at our best when we look to the example of Christ

and seek to be Christlike, even when our own instinct is to withdraw from public debate or to become angry participants in it.

We are called to be disciples of Jesus, which means He is our Teacher and our Guide in living the Christian life. The

By Rick Lance
State Missionary
Executive Director



old adage, "What would Jesus do?," is an excellent introspective question for us. What would Jesus do?

I. What would Jesus do? I believe He would call sin, sin!

Jesus would not be a part of compromising the biblical nature of our understanding of marriage. He would hold high the standard we now call traditional marriage. In the language of the Apostle Paul, we are all sinners. We all have come short of the glory of God.

In our current society, the issue is self-esteem, not righteous living. Supposedly, when a newspaper reporter asked G. K. Chesterton what was wrong with the world, the apologist skipped over all the likely culprits of his day and ours. He did not talk about crooked politicians or nations seeking advantages through war. He did not discuss the failure of education

or the structural evils of his time.

What is wrong with the world? As the story goes, he surprised the newspaper reporter with a two-word answer: "I am." Chesterton understood our basic human nature is one of sin. As a writer recently noted in *Christianity Today*: What happened in Eden did not stay in Eden. This was the fall of all humankind.

When we understand that truism, we are certainly better able to respond to the continued encroachment of popular culture on biblical values. Left to our own devices, we will act out our sin. Extramarital affairs, pornography, homosexual behavior, greed and a multitude of other sins will abound. That is where the Bible comes in as our guide for Christian living. The Bible tells us about our sin, not just in proclamations but in illustrations from the past. The Old Testament is replete with these illustrations and proclamations, and the New Testament is not quiet about the subject either.

II. What would Jesus do? I believe He would love with God's love.

Jesus did not love in the abstract. He loved people

continued on page 10

continued from page 9

personally and sacrificially. This was His mode of operation in His earthly ministry, and it still is today.

He loves us all, even while we are in our sin. Sin is destructive, His love is constructive. Sin tears down lives, His love builds up lives. Sin separates us from God, His love brings us to God. Sin stains our lives, His loves cleanses our lives. We could go on and on describing the difference between sin and love. His love makes the ultimate eternal difference.

The woman caught in adultery and brought to Jesus is a relatively familiar passage. What I note from examining this account of our Lord's ministry is that He did not condone the sin of the woman. He did not take sin lightly but seriously. Nor did He condemn her to be consigned to her sin. No, Jesus challenged her "to go and sin no more."

The enemies of this woman were the enemies of Jesus too. He knew their motives were not pure. He knew that there was no one present who was without sin. That is why He declared, "He who is without sin, cast the first stone." That should be a reminder to us today as well.

Disciples of Christ love others like Christ did. The opponents we face in any discussion are also loved by Christ. Yes, we take a stand for what is right, but we do so with the admonition of Paul ringing in our ears: "Speak the truth in love." When we speak the truth alone, without love, we sound harsh and hostile. When we speak only in love, we come across as spineless and without conviction.

Jesus was described by the Apostle John as being "full of grace and truth." This is exactly what Paul was referencing in his admonition to speak the truth in love. When we are full of our Lord's grace and truth, we certainly stand on solid ground. To do otherwise is to do a tremendous disservice to our witness for the Lord.

III. What would Jesus do? I believe He would pray for all people involved.

Jesus loved the discipline of prayer. The so-called Lord's Prayer is just one illustration of this fact. Our Lord's High Priestly Prayer in John 17 is another. His practice of prayer in His earthly ministry reminds us of the importance of prayer.

The Apostle Paul captured the importance of prayer in I Timothy 2:1-7. He underscores the priority

of prayer by citing it first: "Therefore, first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving thanks should be done for all people." Notice the word "first." Before we debate, before we challenge others, before we offer our opinions, we are to first pray!

Consider the statement "for all people." That means everyone, including those with whom we disagree. Those who represent the exact opposite of what we see as the Christian worldview should be the focus of our prayers. That is the biblical way. That is Christlike conduct, and that is the duty of all disciples.

We have two little boys who live next door to us. They are often at our house to play with "Miss Pam." I don't know who enjoys it more: the boys or the surrogate grandmother.

The other day the youngest one made a strange statement. He said, "If I don't pray, will I shrink?" Apparently, something had been said in Sunday School about prayer helping us to grow and a lack of it causing us to shrink, not grow. The little fellow, like most children, took it literally. He was scared to death that he would shrink if he did not pray.

Perhaps, as adults, we ought to have a healthy fear of shrinking in our Christian witness and growth if we do not pray. Paul said, "Pray without ceasing." Maybe he had this in mind when he declared that simple imperative. Pray and you grow. Cease to pray and you shrink.

The world may view us as dinosaurs no matter what we do. However, our audience is not the world, it is our Lord! As faithful disciples, we need to follow His sacrificial example. He paid the price for our sins on the cross, but His love goes beyond us. He wants others to come to know Him as Lord and Savior. How we live in the wayward world can make an eternal difference in the lives of those who have yet to experience the love of Christ and the gift of life through Him.

To Christ, we are His disciples. To the world, we may be dinosaurs. Yet, I believe His disciples will always be present and dinosaurs no longer remain. I will accept the moniker of dinosaur as depicted by the world, as long as I am seeking to be a faithful disciple of Christ in an unchristian culture.



1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NKJV)

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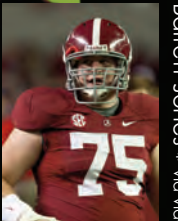
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DEADLINE FOR AUDITION FORM/CD  MAY 13

ROCKSOLID CHRISTIAN COVER BAND

RockSolid Christian Cover Band is an auditioned group of young people, grades 9-12, from Alabama Baptist churches. Vocalists; a percussionist (trap set); keyboardists; rhythm, lead and bass guitarists; and horn players will be selected from the audition CDs and applications. This group performs a wide variety of secular and contemporary Christian music and will be touring in Alabama June 28-July 4 and July 14-15, 2013.

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

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



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with **Johnny Hunt**



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Registration: www.alsbom.org/children-summit

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



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**MUSIC: KAREN PECK
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Get Acquainted Day

**At the Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd. in Montgomery
Tuesday, April 30, 10 am - 3:30 pm
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• Meet your state missionaries • Discover how we can partner together to fulfill the Great Commission • Tour the Baptist Building • Spouses welcome • Lunch provided

Ideal for pastors, church staff, secretaries or associational staff who are new to Alabama, new to their position, or who have never attended a Get Acquainted Day.

Register by calling or emailing Charleen Hobbs, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 231, chobbs@alsbom.org, or go online to www.alsbom.org/gad.

The 1% CP Challenge

The State Board of Missions joins with the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention in encouraging churches to give 1% more of undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program.



obtain the percentage, multiply the decimal by 100.)

Siloam Baptist Church in Marion decided to increase their CP giving by a full one percent this year. According to Pastor John Nicholson: "We are a church committed to the Cooperative Program and

hearing about the challenge gave us the opportunity to have this discussion in our church about taking on a financial challenge with the aid of God."

SBC Executive Committee President Frank Page launched the Challenge among Southern Baptists in 2011. In Alabama, churches are encouraged to meet the challenge over a four-year period, increasing annually by 1/4% the amount of each church's undesignated receipts given through the Cooperative Program.

To calculate a church's Cooperative Program percentage, divide Cooperative Program gifts by undesignated receipts. The result is a church's Cooperative Program percentage in decimal form. (To

For more information about the Cooperative Program and the 1% CP Challenge, please contact State

Missionary Jim Swedenburg at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 283, or (334) 613-2283, jswedenburg@alsbom.org



**FRIDAY AND SATURDAY,
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BAPTIST MEN'S DAY SUNDAY, JUNE 16, 2013

THEME: "STANDING OUT"

A day to recognize men who are standing out in what they do in the church and through the work of the church.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES: Stephen in Acts 6:5a, 10 and 7:59; Moses in Exodus 6:10, 7:1-2 and Numbers 12:1-3.

ONLINE INFORMATION:

www.alsbom.org/men

For other information, please contact State Missionary Steve Stephens at **1-800-264-1225**, ext. **268**, or **(334) 613-2268**, ssstephens@alsbom.org.



REACHING THE MANY FACES OF ALABAMA



2013 THE SUMMIT:
FOR CHURCH LEADERS

Shocco Springs
Friday and Saturday

AUGUST 2-3, 2013
ONE WEEKEND ONLY

The Summit takes place at Shocco Springs, Friday and Saturday, August 2-3. This is training for all church leaders who work with any age group. Featured are seven one-hour training sessions on many different topics in church life and a worship time with State Missionary Bobby DuBois speaking on Friday afternoon.

If you have multiple responsibilities in your church, you will have a unique opportunity to grow in your knowledge about each of the areas in which you work. For example, someone who is an adult Sunday School teacher and also has an interest in learning about how to be involved in the evangelism aspect of the local church might attend an adult Sunday School leader session on Friday afternoon and then an evangelism session on Saturday.

Training will also be offered in discipleship, global missions, Woman's Missionary Union, men's ministries, Royal Ambassadors, church music and worship, and many other areas.

Online Information: www.alsbom.org/summit

Registration: www.shocco.org or 1-800-280-1105

For other information, please contact Ministry Assistant Ramona Noah at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 312, or (334) 613-2312, rnoah@alsbom.org.



LEADER LAB

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SPEAKER,
Luke Johnson

WORSHIP LEADER,
Bethany Barr Philipps



Bethany Barr Philipps



Luke Johnson

ALABAMA BAPTIST BOYS CAMPS 2013



Southwest Alabama/Baldwin Baptist Camp, Foley:

- May 27-31: 1st-6th grade Boys Camp. An association-sponsored camp. Contact (251) 945-5112 for information.



Southeast Alabama/The Vineyard Christian Retreat, Ariton (near Ozark):

- June 24-27: 4th-12th grade Boys Camp. Cost \$150.
- June 27-29: 1st-6th grade Lad & Dad or Mom Camp. Cost \$160.



Northeast Alabama/Marshall Retreat Center, Guntersville:

- July 8-11: 4th-12th grade Boys Camp. Cost \$150.
- July 11-13: 1st-6th grade Lad & Dad Camp. Cost \$160/pair. Contact (256) 582-4994 for more information.

Northwest Alabama/Earle Trent Baptist Assembly, Florence:

- July 15-18: 3rd-7th grade Boys Camp. An association-sponsored camp. Contact (256) 383-7021 for information.
- July 18-20: 1st-6th grade Lad & Dad Camp. Cost: \$140/pair.



Central Alabama/WorldSong Missions Place, Cook Springs:

- July 22-25: 4th-12th grade Boys Camp. Cost \$150.
- July 25-27: 1st-6th grade Lad & Dad or Mom Camp. Cost \$160/pair.



The State Royal Ambassadors Camp staff includes a college-age counselor for every 5 to 7 boys. Church chaperones are not required at these camps, but they are welcome.

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

Follow the steps called A.L.I.C.E.

Alert. Lockdown. Inform. Counter. Evacuate.

(continued from page 1)

harm's way only have seconds to act, he said.

To know how to act, churches need to prepare, Carpenter said.

To prepare, they should:

► **Conduct a thorough risk assessment and site survey.**

"Who do you deal with every day at your facility? Do large numbers of people come and go? Do you have a large group of children?"

Questions like these help you determine the risks, Carpenter said. For example, if a church has a large children's program or day care, an estranged parent could potentially show up to try to take a child by force, he said.

Identifying these risks and knowing the strengths, weaknesses and layout of the facility can help in preparing a plan of action should a shooter show up, Carpenter explained.

"Based on your site survey, have pathways planned to hit fresh air within a few feet," he said. "Know exit strategies for all areas, even the parts of the building you aren't normally in."

Decide whether it's best for people in each area to run out or lock themselves in, he said, and have assembly plans in place for designated areas outside for those who do run.

► **Develop effective plans that will**

work under stress.

For instance, escape routes should be simple to navigate, Carpenter said. "It needs to be really simple things, like your back door doesn't need to have a combination lock that you have to fumble with while a gunman is walking down the hall toward you."

► **Train your staff in these plans. Repeat.**

Seconds count when responding to a shooter, so train your staff to react quickly, Carpenter said. "As he walks down a hall, acting quickly can mean the difference between him finding an empty room or a room full of people frozen in place."

► **'Do repetitive action'**

Handing staff an employee manual is not training, he said. "Do repetitive actions over and over. One drill is good. Eleven is better. Thirty is even better. Police do drills, so do football players. They have a purpose. Muscle memory works."

► **Coordinate with law enforcement before a crisis.**

"Talk to your local police and ask what they want you to do if there is an active shooter, and then develop and interface your plans with theirs," he said.

► **Prepare yourself mentally and emotionally as best you can.**

Know that, if a shooter appears, he will come when you least expect it, Carpenter



RNS photo

Mourners place memorials for the 26 children and adults who died at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., on Dec. 14, 2012.

said. "Expect it to be loud and have an immediate physical effect on your body. Expect others to flee or freeze — don't expect them to be a hero and help you, because they may or may not. Expect to see blood."

And most of all, expect to see your loved ones again when it is all over, Carpenter said. "Don't settle for anything else. Make it happen."

And that starts with having procedures and sticking to them, he said.

If a shooter enters your church, Carpenter said following steps — called A.L.I.C.E. for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate — should be in your plan. The basic idea is to "run, hide, fight," he said.

► **Alert.**

It can be by code or plain talk, but make sure everyone knows of the danger immediately, he said. React when you hear shots.

► **Lockdown.**

If you decide evacuating is not possible, lockdown is the best option, Carpenter said. "Secure the room. This is a semi-secure starting point from which you will make survival decisions."

He explained that it is "semi-secure" because windows and doors are oftentimes breakable, so you shouldn't let your guard down even after you're locked in.

To make it as difficult as possible for him to break in, barricade the door, Carpenter said. Use desks, tables and whatever else is available. He noted that companies such as Wedge-It make small pieces that can be used to wedge doors shut from the inside.

Belts can also be looped into a lasso, pulled tight and wrapped around door arms (the metal at the top of doors that opens like scissors) to impede the shooter's progress into the room, Carpenter said.

Once you've barricaded the door, get to where you can't be seen, he said. "Seek concealment or cover if you can. Concealment blocks you from his eyesight, and cover can potentially stop bullets. Choose what you hide behind with that in mind."

Be quiet, silence cellphones and breathe deeply, Carpenter said. "If you aren't getting enough oxygen to your brain, you'll lose cognitive and motor skills quickly, and you need those to react."

If anyone in the room with you is wounded, begin caring for them as best you can, Carpenter said, recommending that churches train their staff in first aid.

"Anything is better than sitting there watching the blood flow," he said. "Use anything you can — feminine products, T-

shirts, socks — to apply direct pressure to the wound."

You can also use T-shirts, shoelaces or belts as tourniquets by wrapping them tightly around an arm or leg above the wound to stop the blood flow, he said.

Ideally churches could have a first-aid kit designed for gunshot wounds already stashed in the room as part of their crisis preparation plan, as well as snacks, water bottles and a bucket — perhaps even one filled with kitty litter — for use as a latrine if lockdown lasts for a while, Carpenter said.

For churches building new buildings, planners are available to look at your building plans with an eye for surviving crisis situations. They can help you ensure, for example, that you have good exit paths and the type of door windows that make it more difficult for a shooter to get into a locked room, Carpenter said.

► **Inform.**

As the situation evolves, use any means necessary to pass on real-time information, Carpenter said.

► **Use wisdom**

But there have been times in crisis when everyone in a room called 911 to report the same incident and jammed the phone lines, he said. Use wisdom in deciding how much is needed in the situation.

► **Counter.**

If you face the shooter directly, use "simple, physical techniques" to confront him, Carpenter said.

"If you choose to fight, you have to be violent and energetic. Don't swing a purse. Go completely Neanderthal and take him out," he said.

And if possible, make it a team effort, Carpenter said.

Choose blunt weapons instead of sharp weapons, as the goal is to knock him unconscious if possible, he said. "A knife fight is designed to make you eventually bleed to death. Blunt weapons are designed to immobilize you."

Use book bags, computers, telephones, potted plants — whatever will knock him out, he said.

► **Evacuate.**

"Remove yourself from the danger zone as quickly as possible," Carpenter said.

The idea of all the preparation is that, through knowing the plan, at the end of the day as many people as possible go home to their loved ones, he said. ☛

'Pray for healing, that God would use this for revival and for His glory,' says Steckel

(continued from page 1)

exciting day for Boston. Up here, this far north, it really marks the beginning of spring for us.

"So it's a day that everybody looks forward to, and this action was calculated, I believe, to cause as much confusion as possible. It has left the city in shock," Wideman said.

Amid that shock, a group of young adults from Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas, were making themselves available to talk with and pray for passersby on the streets near the site of the bombings.

The group had been in town since April 11, working with Hope Fellowship Church, a Southern Baptist congregation about three miles away in Cambridge.

On April 15, the Prestonwood missions team handed out gum and invitations to Hope Fellowship to people who were watching the marathon.

"Some of our people actually walked down toward the finish line," Josh Steckel of Prestonwood said.

That night Hope Fellowship opened its doors for people to stop in and pray. Though residents of Boston were encouraged to stay home following what is being investigated as a terrorist attack, a few people from the neighborhood who aren't normally part of the church showed up to pray and to be prayed for, the church's pastor, Curtis Cook, said.

Steckel's team from Prestonwood was back out on the streets the day after the bombings, handing out granola bars, this time with signs on their bags that said, "Need prayer? We are available." That simple invitation afforded several opportunities to pray with people and share the hope of Jesus, he said.

"Pray boldly in Jesus' name that the gospel-centered church planters and pastors here would have more opportunities to share the gospel and love on the people of Boston," Steckel said. "Also pray for healing, that God would use this for revival and for His glory." (BP, TAB)

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in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders, friends

Richard Garland Crowe

Retired pastor, DOM Crowe dies at 94

Retired pastor and director of missions Richard Garland Crowe died April 11. He was 94. Crowe, a Southern Baptist pastor for 75 years, was a native of Courtland and grew up in Tuscumbia. He was baptized at First Baptist Church, Tuscumbia, where he was ordained and preached his first sermon. He later served there as interim pastor.



CROWE

He was director of missions for Coffee Baptist Association and interim director of missions for Colbert Lauderdale Baptist Association. Crowe served as pastor of many churches in Alabama, including First Baptist Church, Albertville, Montevallo Baptist Church and Central Baptist Church, Florence, and as associate pastor of Woodward Avenue Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals.

He also served churches in Kentucky, Iowa and Kansas and as interim pastor in Colombia and Peru. At the time of his death, Crowe was a member of Shades Crest Baptist Church, Bluff Park.

He graduated from Howard College (now Samford University) and earned a master of theology degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Samford conferred upon him the honorary doctor of divinity in 1958 for his volunteer work in the Howard College Extension Division.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 62 years, Margaret Speake Crowe, and one daughter. He is survived by three daughters, five grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. (TAB)

George Beverly Shea, longtime singer at Billy Graham crusades, dies at 104

George Beverly Shea, whose signature baritone voice was a standard feature of Billy Graham crusades for more than half a century, died April 16 at age 104.

He died after a brief illness, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association announced.

Shea, who was 10 years older than Graham, met the famous evangelist seven decades ago when he was working at Chicago's WMBI, a Moody Bible Institute radio station. The evangelist heard him singing on the program "Hymns from the Chapel" and asked Shea to sing on his new radio program.

"I've been listening to Bev Shea sing for more than 70 years, and I would still rather hear him sing than anyone else I know," the ailing Graham said in a statement. "I have lost one of the best friends I have ever had, but he and I look forward to seeing each other in Heaven relatively soon."

Shea, who lived about a mile from Graham in Montreat, N.C., sang before Graham preached as they traveled the globe, often "I'd Rather Have Jesus" or "Victory in Jesus."

"I have sometimes said that I would feel lost getting up to preach if Bev were not there to prepare the way through an appropriate song," Graham said in his autobiography, "Just As I Am."

In 1955, Shea made a couple of wording adjustments to the classic hymn "How Great Thou Art" — one of Graham's favorites — that have endured. He changed "consider all the works thy hands have made" to "consider all the worlds thy hands have made" and modified "I hear the mighty thunder" to "I hear the rolling thunder."

"I got a bang when I used to hear Elvis Presley sing my two words," he told Religion News Service in a 2004 interview.

Known for one song

Graham spokesman A. Larry Ross said Shea — who was the oldest living recipient of a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award — sang "How Great Thou Art" during each crusade, accompanied by a choir.

"He had his albums but he was primarily known for singing one



RNS photo

LOVE FOR MUSIC — Grammy-winning gospel singer George Beverly Shea was the man behind the booming voice that for decades rang out at Billy Graham's crusades, and then years after Graham stopped holding big public events.

song at each Billy Graham service," said Graham biographer William Martin. "That endeared him to everybody who went to his services or who saw them on the broadcasts for all those years."

Shea, who won his first Grammy in 1965 and was a 10-time nominee, recorded more than 70 albums of hymns. He was inducted into the Religious Broadcasting Hall of Fame in 1996 and the "Hall of Faith" of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists in 2008.

In his book, "How Sweet the Sound: Amazing Stories and Grace-filled Reflections on Beloved Hymns and Gospel Songs," he recalled the Graham crusades' unofficial anthem, "Just As I Am," and a harrowing flight out of Newark, N.J., in 2000 when he wasn't sure if he would ever touch the ground again.

Clutching his wife's hand, he started to pray the text of the hymn. "If this was our time to meet the Savior," Shea wrote, "that's the song I wanted to be singing."

Born in Winchester, Ontario, Shea was raised on church music, with his mother singing it as he awoke on school days. He took the bass line around the dinner table when his family sang the Doxology — beginning with the words "Praise God from whom all blessing flow" — in harmony. As his

father preached in their Houghton, N.Y., church, he would flip through the pages of the church hymnal.

"The rustle of the pages might have been a little distracting, but I know he forgave me," Shea wrote in his book.

'I'd Rather Have Jesus'

At age 23, he wrote the song "I'd Rather Have Jesus," which became another staple of Graham crusades. A few years later, the song's message inspired him to decline an offer to sing with a secular singing group.

Franklin Graham, who succeeded his father as the president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, recalled how "unassuming" the musician was.

"Even though Bev was 10 years older than my father, he never acted his age," Franklin Graham said. "He was absolute fun to be with."

In 2004, when he was sidelined by a heart attack, Shea had to miss Graham's event in Kansas City, Mo. It was the first time in 57 years that he had missed a crusade.

One of his last public appearances with Graham was in 2010, when the ministry celebrated its 60th anniversary, Ross said.

Even in his later years, Shea awed listeners with his continuing ability to sing his signature songs. Martin heard him sing in Dallas in 2002, when he would have been 93.

"I commented on how remarkable it was," Martin recalled, "and he said, 'I think I sounded better when I was 90.'" (RNS)

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Historical HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



50 Years Ago April 1963

WMU Officers Elected: Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) officers elected at the recent annual session of Alabama WMU are: Mrs. Alex H. Hall of Anniston, president; Mrs. J.E. Weeks of Florence, vice president; and Mrs. D.C. McAtee of Birmingham, recording secretary. Elected to the state WMU executive board were: Mrs. Albert J. Smith of Monroeville, Mrs. Wallace Fuller of Five Points and Mrs. R.C. Payne of Montgomery.

40 Years Ago April 1973

Longtime Chairman Elected Emeritus: At the annual meeting of the Samford University board of trustees, Frank P. Samford requested that he be relieved of the responsibility as chairman of the board where he has served for 34 years. In deference to his wishes, the trustees unanimously elected Samford as chairman emeritus and named Ben B. Brown of Birmingham to succeed him as chairman. Re-elected officers of the board were Lamar Jackson, vice chair-

man and A. Gerow Hodges, secretary. Jackson is pastor of Southside Baptist Church, Birmingham, and Hodges is vice president of Liberty National Life Insurance Company.

30 Years Ago April 1983

Alabama Pastor Receives Award: Harper Shannon, pastor of Huffman Baptist Church, Birmingham, is one of three Southern Baptists selected for the 1983 Alumni of the Year Awards by Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Shannon, a 1957 graduate of the seminary, has been pastor of Huffman Baptist since 1973. He has also served churches in Dothan and Montgomery.

20 Years Ago April 1993

Medical/Dental Fellowship: The Alabama Baptist Health Care Fellowship held its annual meeting April 3 at Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills. Members include nurses, doctors, medical technicians, dentists and other health care professionals. The meeting honored the late Daniel Merck, a founder of the Alabama

fellowship, as well as the national Baptist Medical/Dental Fellowship. New officers are: Bill Powell, Birmingham, president; Oliver Harper, Warrior, program coordinator; David Taunton, Birmingham, secretary-treasurer; and Johnnie Stevens, Birmingham, music director.

10 Years Ago April 2003

Judson Singers at Carnegie: The Judson College choir, the Judson Singers, presented a concert at

New York's Carnegie Hall. This is the first time a Judson music group has been requested to perform at Carnegie Hall and the students put in additional daily practices in order to prepare for the event. The Judson Singers performed a solo concert and then joined seven other choirs, including one from First Baptist Church, Dothan, to sing Mozart's Coronation Mass. Judson faculty member Betty Campbell said, "God was honored that night in New York."

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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.

MINISTER OF MUSIC: Albertville First Baptist Church is seeking a full-time minister of music. Our worship style is blended and includes the use of multiple instruments and a worship choir. Please send resumes to: music@albertvillefbc.org, or to: First Baptist Church, 309 East Main Street, Albertville, AL 35950.

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:

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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.

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Want to know God?

By Pastor Franklin Kirksey
First Baptist Church, Spanish Fort

The crux of Christianity is a call repeated throughout the Gospel of John. Christianity without discipleship is not genuine Christianity, according to the Bible. "Follow Me" is one of the central themes of Jesus' ministry recorded by John.

We see the invitation of discipleship. In John 1:43 we read, "The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow Me.'" Make certain that you have accepted Jesus' invitation to follow Him or you will have eternity to regret it.

We see the illumination of discipleship. From John 8:12 we read, "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'"

We see the identification of discipleship. Jesus said in John 10:27, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

We see the itemization of discipleship. Jesus sets down the particulars of being a disciple. We find another particular of discipleship in John 12:26, where Jesus says, "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor."

We see the immigration of discipleship. John writes in John 13:36, "Simon Peter said to Him, 'Lord, where are You going?' Jesus answered him, 'Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.'" Only genuine believers will immigrate to heaven, unbelievers will immigrate to hell. In John 14:6 Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." You will never get to heaven unless you follow Jesus.

We see the isolation of discipleship. In John 21:19 we read, "This He spoke, signifying by what death [Peter] would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, 'Follow Me.'" Jesus calls us to follow Him individually.

Some are better disciples than others, but all genuine believers are disciples. Therefore, Jesus' call to "Follow Me" is the crux of Christianity.

'False Teacher\$'

Christian rapper Linne warns of prosperity gospel preachers

Christian rapper Shai Linne said he has never been against naming names. He doesn't want to be hasty, but it's been a decade since he last rapped about the prosperity gospel — ample time to see the fruit of "false prophets."

So on his latest single, "False Teacher\$," Linne calls out 12 preachers by name — Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, Benny Hinn and nine others — each followed by "is a false teacher."

The song has lit up the Christian blogosphere and elicited responses from at least one of the preachers named in the list.

In a seven-minute video blog posted by Linne's label, Lamp Mode Recordings, he said he wrote the song to warn "brothers

and sisters" in Africa "who may not have access to the resources that we have here in America."

Stadiums packed with 100,000 people in Africa who are "impoverished like crazy" are hearing the prosperity gospel preached and "buying into it, thinking this false theology is their way out of poverty. They figure, 'Hey, it must work because it's working for these guys in America,'" Linne told Wade-O Radio.

'I noticed a pattern'

Before Linne wrote the song, he spent several days watching the teachers he named in the song.

"As I listened, I noticed a pattern," he said in the video blog.

"The preacher would maybe make a reference to the Bible, and then they would just go on and on about the good stuff that God

wanted to do for people. It usually involved money or healing, and it was always centered on self as though God exists for us instead of the other way around."

The preachers "work the crowd up into this emotional kind of frenzy" and then ask them to "sow a seed" financially, Linne said.

"Before you know it, people are rushing the stage to throw money at the preacher," he said. "It's just, it's a straight-up scam. And these ministries are pulling in hundreds of millions of dollars."

In the song, Linne accused them of "treating Jesus like a lottery ticket," noting that those who use Jesus as "a means to an end" in order to live "your best life now" are "headed for hell."

"Do you wanna know what all false teachers have in common? It's called self-ism, the fastest



Shai Linne

Photo courtesy of Lamp Mode Recordings

growing religion. They just dress it up and call it Christian," he raps in the song.

In the video blog, Linne challenged listeners to read Matthew 7:16 and 2 Peter 2:1-3 and use the Word of God to recognize false teachers.

"Study your Bible," he urged. "Look at all the passages that deal with false teachers and just notice what they have in common and then compare it with what you see from prosperity preachers."

Preachers named in the song were Osteen, Meyer, Hinn, Paula White, Creflo Dollar, TD Jakes, Fred Price, Kenneth Copeland, Robert Tilton, Eddie Long, Juanita Bynum and Paul Crouch.

The song elicited a quick response from Bradley Knight, Paula White's son, defending Paula White Ministries and stating Linne's claims are unfounded. He also chided Linne for publicly criticizing his mother's work.

"I pray you re-evaluate your stance," said the letter, the full text of which is available on wadeoradio.com. "As of now, you are not operating according to the guidance of Matthew 7:16. You are instead falling into the trap that Titus 3:10-11 and Romans 16:17 warns us against."

But evangelical leaders stepped out to back Linne. Theologian and pastor John Piper tweeted, "My,

my, Shai, this is good," on April 7, referencing the song and linking to the video blog that explained the rapper's conviction to speak boldly.

And Thabiti Anyabwile, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Grand Cayman in the Cayman Islands, wrote in a blog on thegospelcoalition.org that the evidence itself backed Linne publicly.

Public influence

"Not one of the teachers listed in Shai's song could be called 'unknown' or 'low key' or otherwise 'anonymous,'" he wrote. "These are some of the most high-profile figures in the evangelical (I use the term loosely) world. Their collective public influence is massive."

And their teaching is public record, Anyabwile wrote.

"They have not taught these things in a corner, and the proliferation of books, websites and other resources means that a very public alternative and response needs to be given. We need a higher profile opposition to these high profile errors," he wrote. "I'm thankful to Shai for the part he has played in doing this."

Christians need to "grow up a little and accept the public accountability that's necessary to guarding the gospel and guarding God's people," Anyabwile wrote. (TAB)

"Do you wanna know what all false teachers have in common? It's called self-ism, the fastest growing religion."

Shai Linne, Christian rapper

Someone You Should Know

SS
Y&K

By Julie Payne
The Alabama Baptist

JOY VARNELL

Northpark Baptist Church, Trussville
Birmingham Baptist Association

FAVORITE SONG: "I Am"
HOBBIES: Art and gardening
FAMILY STATUS: Married for 19 years

to Tim; four children: Adrian, Alethia, Monique and Shallon



VARNELL

Joy Varnell (www.joyvarnellart.com) is an artist and muralist who specializes in live event art. Varnell began drawing as a child and started painting after college. With her live event art, she paints on the spot for various events such as weddings, parties and corporate milestones. She also does worship painting at churches where she paints on stage while music plays.

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

A: My mother. ... Everything she did, everything she experienced, she related it to Christ. That's what I remember most about the way she influenced me in that way. She could look at something as simple as a flower and say, "Who could look at that and not believe?" She saw Christ in everything.

Q: What does your work demand?

A: Basically what I'm doing now as far as getting up in front of [a] congregation at church or at weddings, it ... gets me out of my comfort zone a bit. (Also) I have to be ... disciplined to get everything packed up and ready to go.

Q: How do family members support you in this work?

A: I have children, and any time I do [a painting] at one of the churches usually I'll have one or two show up because they want to see it. My whole family has been very encouraging about it — they're all very supportive.

Q: What do you get from this work?

A: It's very fulfilling to me. ... When I paint at churches that's my witness. Sometimes people will ask for the painting ... or I've

had people to be very emotional about it, especially someone who has never seen it before. It keeps people in mystery when you first start painting ... where you are going with it ... and usually they are very surprised.

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

A: Basically where it has led for me now is doing the weddings and that type of thing. ... It's just something I can do to contribute, and when I talk about it I smile.

Q: What difference has Jesus Christ made in your life?

A: He has completed my life. Without Him I didn't know where I was, I didn't know where I was going, I didn't have any purpose for my life. And He has completed all of that.



PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Muslim rioters attack, kill Coptic Christians in Egypt

CAIRO, Egypt — Coptic Christians attending a funeral service for four Coptic Christians killed in an anti-Christian rampage were in turn attacked themselves by at least 200 Muslim rioters.

The incident, which started with a few dozen men pelting the mourners with stones, escalated into an attack against Christians at St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral involving firearms, flash-bang grenades, tear gas, fire bombs and other improvised weapons. Police took more than an hour to respond and did nothing to stop the attack. Almost three dozen Coptic Christians suffered injuries in the attack, and one is thought to have been killed.

During afternoon prayers, an imam in Khusus called for anyone who had a weapon to "kill the Christians and cleanse Al Khusus" of "infidels." A mob formed over a couple of hours, according to numerous residents, and then swept through a Christian part of the neighborhood. As they screamed "Allahu Akbar (God is great)," the mob attacked a Baptist church building and then moved on to a Coptic Orthodox Church. The Baptist church building was not significantly damaged, but a preschool nursery run by the Church of St. George was destroyed. The mob also destroyed several Coptic-owned homes and looted several Coptic-owned businesses.

Pakistani court overturns death sentence of Christian

LAHORE, Pakistan — A court in Pakistan overturned the death sentence of a Christian convicted under Pakistan's "blasphemy" laws and ordered him released, according to an advocacy group. Younis Masih, who has languished in jail since his arrest Sept. 10, 2005, was declared innocent. The justices also overturned a 100,000-rupee (\$1,013) fine against him. Masih had reportedly suffered a heart attack Jan. 8.

On Sept. 9, 2005, he left a midnight gathering at a house after Muslims loudly singing a religious song became angry with him for requesting that they sing more quietly. The Muslims incited others against him the next day and beat him unconscious. Islamic leaders later incited mobs to burn Christians' homes, saying Masih had committed blasphemy and uttered derogatory remarks against Muhammad, the prophet of Islam.

More than 100 Christian families fled their homes. Police filed a blasphemy case against Masih and tortured him in custody. He was sentenced to death by a judge in Lahore on May 30, 2007. The appeal was filed by the Legal Aid for Destitute and Settlement, and his case was re-opened in September 2012.

Nigerian pastor, family escape village's Easter carnage

ATTAKAR, Nigeria — John Dakwat and his wife were at work in a back corner of their church building when they heard gunshots — just one in a series of attacks that killed at least 26 Christians in the border area between two states during Holy Week.

Dakwat, who identified the assailants as Muslim, ethnic Fulani herdsmen, managed to hide behind the church building with his wife. From there they were able to escape, he believes, because God kept the gunmen from seeing them. He also notes that his children — and he and his wife — likely survived because the kids were in school at the time. Many of the predominantly Christian, ethnic Attakar victims of the attacks on villages along the border of Plateau and Kaduna states were either children or the elderly.

Dakwat returned to Kirim village four days later, only after security agents finally intervened. By then, at least 26 Christians from 12 villages on each side of the border had been killed.

Baptist church in Uzbekistan raided by secret police

MUBAREK, Uzbekistan — A small Baptist church in Mubarek in southeastern Uzbekistan that has endured more than a decade of official harassment was again raided during Sunday morning worship March 24. The secret police officer who led the raid told the Baptists that "all believers are backward-looking fanatics who drag society down." Officers filmed those praying, took their names and without a warrant searched the house where the church meets. They seized personal notes and family photos, as well as all the money from the church's cash box.

The raid came two months after bailiffs seized a washing machine and other household items to cover unpaid fines handed down on church members in 2012.

CAMPUS News



SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Sermons by Samford's Carr, Spears Included in Young Preachers' Book:** A printed collection of sermons from the Academy of Preachers' 2012 national festival contains work by two contributors with Samford University ties. Samford senior Wesley Spears and 2012 graduate Aaron Carr both have sermons included in *Uncommon Sense: Jesus and the Renewal of the World*.

The volume contains 74 sermons that were preached at the National Festival of Young Preachers in Louisville, Ky., in January 2012. The young preachers ranged in age from 16 to 29, represented a variety of faith communities and hailed from all parts of the United States and Canada.

► **Samford Education School to Offer Master's, Doctoral Degrees Online:** Samford University's Orlean Bullard Beeson School of Education and Professional Studies will begin offering graduate programs online during the fall of 2013 as part of the master of science in gifted education (MSE) and the doctorate in educational leadership (Ed.D.).

Both programs are moving to an online venue but also will have some on-campus components including orientation.

"These programs will offer flexibility for working teachers and administrators," said Jean A. Box, Samford's education school dean, "but the personal emphasis will continue to be a strong component of our education programs. Students will be able to build relationships with classmates and with

faculty members through several onsite meetings, phone calls and availability online."

She added, "Both programs will provide the Samford education school opportunities to reach educators beyond the campus and to increase the school's positive impact on education in the Southeast."

Jane Cobia, director of the Ed.D. program, noted that the Ed.D. web-enhanced program would "continue its tradition of excellence with a practitioner emphasis." She added, "This program will allow (a) bit more flexibility to students and yet offer the same high-quality experiences with certified professors."

JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Three Judson College Graduates Awarded at Annual Alumnae Weekend:** The Judson College Alumnae Association recognized three members for outstanding service during its annual meeting, J-Day, at the college April 12-13.

Sue Lenox Curlee, of Odenville, and Cynthia McCaleb Gore, of Birmingham, received the 2013 Outstanding Alumnae Awards.

Curlee is a 1957 graduate who has had a successful career teaching gifted classes and was named Birmingham's "Teacher of the Year" for middle school. A preacher's wife, she has been active in church and missions efforts.

Cynthia McCaleb Gore, a 1973 graduate, spent her professional career in private medical practice at Brookwood Medical Center and retired in 2008.

Marjorie Bullock Norton, of Atlanta, received the 2013 Alumnae

Loyalty Award. Norton, a 1956 graduate, remained active in the Judson Alumnae Association and served as its president from 1980-1982. Additionally she's served on the Board of Advisors for 30 years and received an honorary doctorate from the college in 1990.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **Ram Run 5K Race in Pelham Set for June:** The University of Mobile (UMobile) will hold Ram Run 5K on June 22 at Oak Mountain State Park in Pelham.

Registration for the race can be submitted online at www.umobile.edu or at www.active.com. To guarantee a T-shirt on race day, applicants must submit their entry online or by mail by June 7.

Breakfast will be held and awards given after the race. Proceeds from the event will benefit the UMobile cross-country team.

For more information, contact Tonya Gomien at 251-442-2212 or tgomien@umobile.edu.

► **UMobile Business Students Heading to National Competition After Second Consecutive Regional Win:** UMobile's Enactus Competition Team won their second consecutive regional championship in Atlanta on April 2. The team was honored for local projects that used business concepts to improve the quality of life and standard of living of those in need.

The team earned an invitation to the national Enactus competition in Kansas City, Mo., May 21-23.

For information, contact team advisor Amy Gatlin Taylor at 251-442-2409 or email ataylor@umobile.edu.



FBC PELHAM SPONSORS COMMUNITYWIDE EASTER SERVICE

Evangelist Scott Dawson speaks at a communitywide Easter celebration called 'Empty?' on March 31 at the Pelham Civic Complex. The event was sponsored by FBC Pelham. Mike Shaw is pastor.



Chris Tomlin

Photos courtesy of The Media Collective

'Burning light for JESUS'

Songwriter, worship leader Tomlin seeks to be 'reflection of God's light'

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Growing up in Grand Saline, Texas, Chris Tomlin never expected the accolades and achievements that would come his way.

During his teenage years, Tomlin had an intense desire to be used for God and voiced

a humble prayer.

"I remember praying, 'God, whatever you want me to do, I'll do it,'" Tomlin said. "I didn't pray to be a songwriter or worship leader, anything like that. I just wanted to be God's man and be available to go wherever God would lead me."

By the time he was a junior at Texas A&M University, Tomlin felt a calling to lead others in worship.

Today he is considered the most sung artist in the world, and his newest album, "Burning Lights," debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart. Through the years, Tomlin has garnered numerous honors, including 18 Dove Awards, two Billboard Music Awards and a Grammy Award. In spite of his success and popularity, Tomlin remains focused on keeping the spotlight on God.

As the writer of praise songs such as "How Great Is Our God," "Holy Is the Lord" and "Jesus Messiah," Tomlin's work has become a staple of contemporary worship.

"I feel a responsibility to use the talent and gift that God's given me to connect people with Him

and give them a voice to worship Him," Tomlin said. "When I think about songwriting, I think about, 'What can people sing? What do they want to sing?' I'm really keeping that in mind and thinking how I can craft these songs in a way that can grab hold of people and draw them closer to God."

"I try to open up worship to everything it can be — not just my personal preference, but what can it be for the person sitting in an office, or a mom driving her kids to school, or a teenager in high school? How can I bridge all those generations and try to grab something that can help them worship and communicate with God?"

Tomlin's popularity among churches is largely credited to the humility and passion he displays while leading others in corporate worship. Despite a busy touring schedule, he leads worship on a regular basis at Passion City Church in Atlanta.

"You don't want people following you," Tomlin said. "You want people following God. I

think you see that in a great example from King David. He had a very humble heart before God and really sought after God. Whether we ever sell another record or anything, I know we'd still be doing this. ... If He never gave us another stage, I know that we would still play music, sing to Him and worship Him."

"I just want to be a reflection of God's light — a burning light for Jesus. Through this music, we're trying to help people realize that Jesus is more beautiful, more famous and more amazing than anything else." ❧



Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

Attorneys general push Obama on contraception mandate

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Thirteen state attorneys general are urging the federal government to broaden religious exemptions for private businesses under the White House's contraception mandate, claiming the policy violates religious freedoms.

Put simply, the group believes any employer who says he or she objects to contraception should not have to provide contraceptive coverage. The Department of Health and Human Services' latest proposal, unveiled Feb. 1, would require all employers to provide contraceptive coverage to workers; some nonprofit religious organizations — primarily houses of worship — that object to contraception on religious or moral grounds would be exempt. In a March 26 letter, the coalition asserted that the exclusion should be extended beyond religious institutions to include all conscientious objectors.

At least two dozen suits by private businesses have been filed against the contraception mandate, and 16 have been granted a temporary injunction while the lawsuits are pending, according to the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which is spearheading much of the opposition to the mandate. In addition, 30 lawsuits by nonprofit religious groups have been filed against the mandate, although most have been rejected as premature because fines for noncompliance do not kick in until 2014.

North Dakota laws ban abortions, set milestones

WASHINGTON — North Dakota has enacted precedent-setting laws to protect unborn children. Gov. Jack Dalrymple, a Republican, signed into law March 26 three bills restricting abortion, including two that establish new pro-life milestones:

- ▶ The earliest state abortion ban, one based on an unborn child's heartbeat, which could be as soon as six weeks into gestation;
- ▶ The first state law to prohibit abortion on the basis of a genetic irregularity in the unborn baby. This includes sex-selection.

In addition, the North Dakota House of Representatives approved March 22 a personhood amendment, making the state legislature the first in the country to pass such a measure, which would protect life at every stage of development, including in the womb. The Senate already had endorsed the proposal. The amendment will go next to the state's voters without approval by the governor to decide whether it will be added to the state constitution.

The third abortion restriction signed by Dalrymple requires an abortion doctor to be licensed by the state and have admitting as well as staff privileges at a local hospital.

Planned Parenthood lobbyist says infanticide an option

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Infanticide should be an option when a baby survives a failed abortion, a Planned Parenthood spokeswoman told stunned Florida legislators recently.

Addressing a House of Representatives subcommittee March 27, Alisa LaPolt Snow said the fate of a baby born alive after an attempted abortion should be left to "the woman, her family and the physician." A lobbyist for the Florida Alliance of Planned Parenthood Affiliates, Snow testified against the Infants Born Alive Act, which would mandate an abortion doctor provide life-saving care for a child who survives an abortion. After Snow's testimony, some subcommittee members asked what Planned Parenthood's position is in such a scenario.

"I'm almost in disbelief," said Rep. Jim Boyd. "If a baby is born on a table as a result of a botched abortion, what would Planned Parenthood want to have happen to that child that is struggling for life?"

Snow answered, "We believe that any decision that's made should be left up to the woman, her family and the physician."

History Channel's 'The Bible' a hit on TV, DVD

NASHVILLE — History Channel's "The Bible" miniseries was a hit on television and it has been a hit so far on DVD, numbering the most first-week sales of any television program on DVD within the past five years. The five-part series, received well by its target Christian audience, also is the all-time fastest-selling DVD miniseries during the first week of release. About 525,000 units were sold.

During the five Sundays it was broadcast, "The Bible" finished either first or second among cable programs. On Easter Sunday with 11.7 million viewers, the series finished second behind the season finale of AMC's "Walking Dead" (12.4 million). All total, the five-week series drew 56.8 million viewers, with more than 10 million tuning in each week.