

# THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



May 30, 2013  
Vol. 178, No. 22

Reporting. Connecting. Inspiring.

Toll free 1-800-803-5201  
www.thealabamabaptist.org

## INSIDE



**Evangelism Response Center reaches thousands, needs volunteers**

◆ Page 3



**Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers assist in Oklahoma after deadly tornado**

◆ Page 5



**Americans prone to addiction to media, need help finding balance**

◆ Pages 6-7



123rf.com

## Church revitalization strategy launched in state, 'coaches' ready

By Jennifer Davis Rash  
The Alabama Baptist

**W**hat if the more than 2,000 plateaued Alabama Baptist churches decided to change?

"What if they cried out and said, 'Would you come help us?'" asked Sammy Gilbreath, director of the office of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM). "What if a coach could come alongside them to assist them? What if they began to impact the lost in their community?"

Research indicates 72 percent of Southern Baptist churches in North America are plateaued, which equals roughly 2,330 of the more than 3,200 Alabama Baptist churches.

SBOM leaders believe revitalization is vital for effective ministry in Alabama and necessary before church planting efforts will be successful.

"Church revitalization and church planting are two wings of the same plane," said SBOM Executive Director Rick Lance. "We are not going to be successful in launching a success-

ful church planting effort in America if our churches are not renewed and revitalized. We are taking baby steps toward that ... with a new church revitalization strategy as a way to resource and assist churches in the effort."

Unveiled during the SBOM meeting May 17 in Montgomery, the strategy was officially launched during the May 21 Send North America Church Growth and Revitalization Conference sponsored by the North American Mission Board (NAMB) in conjunction with the SBOM. The conference took place at Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, with more than 250 in attendance and featured Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Ga.

### 'Awareness'

Hunt has become the face for NAMB's effort "to bring awareness" to the church revitalization effort, said Michael Lewis, executive director for pastoral relations and church revitalization at NAMB.

Hunt believes revitalization starts with the leader. "There is no leading for change until there is first a change in the leader," Hunt said. "Grow the leader first, then you can change the church."

But Lewis and Hunt both emphasized their role is strictly to highlight the issue and motivate people to action. The state conventions and local associations are the main resources for churches needing  
(See 'Church,' page 4)

## Is Your Church a Candidate for Church Revitalization?

Are your church's vital signs indicating room for improvement? The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) wants to assist you as a pastor with your desire to lead your church from where it is to where it should be. Take this SBOM quiz by answering "yes" or "no" to the following questions and find out if your church could be a candidate for a church revitalization process.

- | YES                      | NO                       |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. In the past five years, have baptisms increased?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Did your church engage in three or more outreach events this past year?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Is your Sunday School attendance growing?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. As pastor, is your vision for the church expanding?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Is your worship attendance increasing?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Is your missions giving increasing?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Are a majority of your deacons under 60 years of age?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Does your church have active missions organizations?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Would you describe your church as an Acts 1:8 congregation, committed to reaching your community and the world? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Does your church have an effective process of discovering, training and involving leaders?                     |

If you answered "no" to four or more questions, you may be a candidate for church revitalization. For more information or to begin the process, call 1-800-264-1225, ext. 263, or email Dale Huff, director of the SBOM's office of LeaderCare and church administration, at dhuff@alsbom.org. (SBOM, TAB)

# COMMENT

## What Church Is Right for You?

I doubt you ever heard of the church, but I still will not use its name. It was a church plant that received a lot of statewide publicity when it began about 40 years ago. The new work seemed to have everything going for it. It was an intentional church plant, not the result of a church split like so many new Baptist churches. State and associational leaders worked with the First Baptist Church of that community to start the new church “the right way.”

Land was purchased close to several rapidly growing subdivisions. The new work began in a house but within a year had an attractive, modern building. By this time the core group numbered more than 60 people. A seminary-trained pastor had been called to serve full time. Many of the lay leaders were strong, experienced church workers. Everyone expected the new church to become a large membership church and a leader in the association and state convention.

It never did.

### Vision of the congregation

These several years later the church remains about the size it was 30 years ago. It averages between 125 and 150 each week. About 15 years after the church began, another church plant was started about a mile away. Now the second church is considered a megachurch drawing thousands to worship every Sunday.

For years some Baptist leaders asked themselves why the first church did not grow like the second church did. Over time they realized why. The first church was possessed by a vision described by one of its early members as “never being larger than 60 people.”

The church is living proof that the vision of the congregation — not the vision of the pastor — is an important factor in determining the experience of any church.

Visions vary. Some churches want to grow



THOUGHTS  
By Bob Terry

as large as possible numerically. This is the vision commonly promoted among Baptists. It emphasizes evangelism and tying people to that congregation. Size is sometimes equated with the blessing of God.

There are different visions. Some churches emphasize fellowship. Instead of large numbers, the church attempts to develop caring relationships among the members. Other churches react to what they sometimes call “superficialism.” These churches seem to focus on theological understanding and, frequently, social engagement. Some churches want to be more like chapels than churches. They want members to have a good experience during the Sunday morning worship time and place little emphasis on the rest of the week.

Vision can be inward-focused or outward-focused. It can be about the church serving the members or about the church serving the community. Vision can be about serving age groups or music styles or the role of the pastor in the community. There is almost no limit to what the vision of a church may be, but a church must know what its vision is.

Just like every pastor is expected to be of outstanding moral character, every church is expected to have some common characteristics. Among these are Bible-teaching, Christ-

honoring worship, ministry to others, missions and evangelism.

And just like no pastor can be “all things to all people,” no church can either. One may have more satisfying music. Another may have a preferable preaching style. Still another may have a better children’s program. One may emphasize evangelism, another Christian discipleship and still another social ministries. One may be more pastor-led. One may be more committee-led.

That is why it is important to know what you are looking for in a church. Does the church reflect the theological commitments that are important to you? Are the values that you cherish reflected in the values demonstrated by the church and its activities? Can your needs and the needs of your family be adequately addressed in this particular congregation? Are you willing to invest yourself to achieve the vision and advance the values of the church?

Church members have to know what they are getting into when they join a church because church members have to work to accomplish the vision of the church. Just like the pastor, church members have to give themselves to pursuing the vision of their church. Tasks for church members may be different than the pastor’s but their commitment must be the same.

Members have to help leaders stay focused on the vision of the church. Members have to provide needed resources where leadership might not be as gifted as needed for a particular task. Members provide the substance for advancing the vision while leaders provide motivation and direction. Members keep people’s private agendas from derailing the church’s common vision.

### Not all have to be alike

At the church mentioned above, various pastors tried to emphasize growth. What they found was that key lay leaders responded mostly to fellowship, ministry and discipleship. That meant pastors spent a lot of time and energy trying to advance a vision the people did not embrace. The result was untold frustration.

This is not an indictment. The church made a difference in the Christian walk of a large number of people through the years and continues to do so. Not all Baptist churches have shared the same vision. Not all have to be alike. In fact, they should not be alike because people are not all alike. In order to make Christian disciples of all kinds of people, all kinds of churches are necessary.

That truth points again to the importance of understanding a church’s vision before planting one’s life in a congregation. Identifying with a church is a prayerful decision. It is not based on glitz or on charisma. It is based on the work of God’s Holy Spirit helping you realize the kind of church that is right for you.

## LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

### FULFILLING MINISTRY

Thank you for a lovely article “A piece of thread, a piece of cloth” in the May 2 issue.

The eight ladies who quilt every week are dedicated Christians who love to share a talent with those who need help. Thank you for the opportunity to put a needle and thread to work for the Kingdom.

The ladies who are currently involved include: June Gavette, Shirley Brannon, Mary Ellen McCormick, Mary Smith, Barbara Shirah, Gene Cline, Beverly Sparrow, Jane Drew

and Alice Smith. The churches represented are First Baptist Church, Hill Crest Baptist Church and Coffee Springs Baptist Church, all in Enterprise.

What a joy to work with these fine ladies in a project so fulfilling.

Helen Harrison  
Enterprise, Ala.

### WHY PASTORS QUIT

The article about pastors quitting too soon was informative. Put Mr. Peter’s 10 issues together and you get ... LIFE. Pastors experience nothing

different from what those in the corporate world encounter. In fact, pastors probably have it easier. The difference is that of all places these things ought not be in church.

The place where love, mercy, grace, compassion, reconciliation and forgiveness ought to be front and center is church ... but in most it isn’t. There is division in the one place there should be unity.

(See ‘Letters,’ page 8)





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

(ISSN 0738-7741;  
USPS 011-080)

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

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

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

**DR. BOBBY S. TERRY**  
**EDITOR**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
Chairman James "Jim" Warren,  
Jane Bellew, Travis Coleman,  
George A. Foust, Helen W. Mayo,  
Ken Megginson, William Melton,  
Allan Murphy, Jim Oakley, Larry  
Patterson, Amelia Pearson,  
Lawrence Phipps, Wayne  
Randall, Bradley Rushing, Judy  
Stiefel, John Killian (ex-officio),  
Rick Lance (ex-officio).

**NEWS SERVICES**  
Baptist Press (BP), Associated  
Baptist Press (ABP), Religion  
News Service (RNS), Forum 18  
(F18), Morning Star News (MS).

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

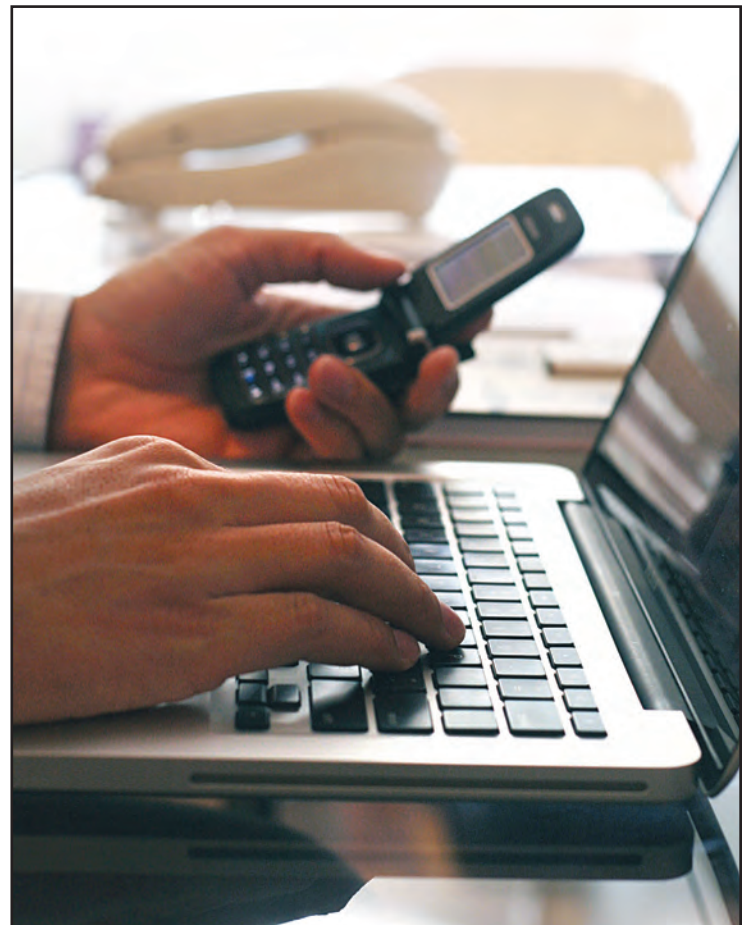
**ADDRESS CHANGE**  
Send old and new addresses,  
and name of church to:  
Circulation Department  
3310 Independence Drive  
Birmingham, AL 35209  
Allow two weeks.

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

**'Nation's Top Regional  
Christian Newspaper'**

1999, 2004, 2007, 2008,  
2009, 2010, 2011, 2012  
as judged by Associated  
Church Press, Evangelical  
Press Association or Religious  
Communicators Council

# Reaching spiritual seekers



sxc.hu

## Evangelism Response Center reaches thousands, needs volunteers

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

**F**or years, the telephone number 1-888-JESUS-2000 has been published in Bibles, newsletters, ads and other media to reach seekers in need of spiritual encouragement. Now a new generation can find that same encouragement online, thanks in part to an Alabama Baptist pastor.

The Evangelism Response Center (ERC), a ministry of the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, coordinates the JESUS-2000 phone line. A few years ago, Elbert Charpie, pastor of First Baptist Church, Citronelle, in Mobile Baptist Association, attended an ERC training at Mobile Association and heard about plans to develop a chat feature to reach seekers online.

"I got real excited about that, because I saw it as a step in using media to reach out globally," Charpie said.

So when N.S.R.K. Ravi, coordinator of the ERC, contacted Charpie and asked for his help in designing the web chat module, Charpie drew from his background in technology and got to work.

Charpie developed both the chat tool and a training program for volunteers, according to Ravi, expanding both the reach of the ERC to spiritual seekers and the witnessing opportu-

nities for ERC volunteers, called encouragers.

"The chat tool is really exciting, because it is geared to young people who are much more interested in technology," Ravi said. "It can be put on any Web page or even on smartphones and blogs."

The chat tool is easy for web designers to incorporate as well, since all that is required is cutting and pasting a code from the website, [www.numberchat.com](http://www.numberchat.com), into a webpage or Facebook profile. Many seminary students include the chat tool on their blogs, Ravi said, and he hopes more associations, churches, pastors and even businesses and individuals will add the free tool to their websites as well.

### Reaching thousands

More than 26,000 seekers called the phone lines last year alone, and Charpie believes the chat tool has the potential to reach even more because of the ever-increasing time people spend online.

"Technology keeps moving forward, and the online chat is another way to bring the timeless message of the gospel using modern technology," Charpie said.

Follow-up is important too, so individuals who make a decision either by telephone or by chat receive a Bible from the ERC and are connected with a local association or church as quickly as possible, Ravi said. Churches can partner with the ERC as covenant churches and receive referrals from the ERC, an important step in the process of reaching out to seekers.

Covenant churches agree to call or visit individuals referred by the ERC within three days, the critical period after a decision for connecting an individual to a local church, Ravi said. More than 1,200 churches across the nation have signed up to be covenant churches, 40 of those in Alabama. Like the phone and chat lines, ERC referrals are provided for free.

However, Ravi said the ERC does expect churches to follow up quickly and report that contact to the ERC.

In addition to more covenant churches and more access to the chat feature, Charpie said the ERC needs more encouragers to staff the chat line. He emphasized that both telephone and online evangelism are great for people who have never been involved in evangelism before, because "someone is coming to you who is interested in talking."

Training for encouragers is free and offered in several locations each year as well as online. Encouragers need dedication, though. Volunteers are asked to commit at least two and a half hours each month to the ministry. That means there could be shifts where no one makes contact.

"You can put a phone number up and 10,000 people may see it, but only three people may call," he said. "Online, an encourager may be available for two hours and not get a chat request. It's easy to get discouraged."

Still, he said, volunteering as an ERC encourager offers great rewards for anyone who wants to share the gospel with others and has just a little bit of Internet savvy.

"There are lots of folks who get on Facebook and surf the Web," Charpie said. "It doesn't take a whole lot more to get on the chat line, and it's something you can do for the kingdom of God."

For more information on volunteer opportunities with the ERC or instructions on how to add the chat tool to your website, visit [www.eronline.net](http://www.eronline.net) or call Linda Tramley at 770-410-6383. To find the code for the spiritual help chat tool, visit [www.numberchat.com](http://www.numberchat.com). ☞

*"Technology keeps moving forward, and the online chat is another way to bring the timeless message of the gospel using modern technology."*

**Pastor Elbert Charpie**  
FBC Citronelle

# 'Church strengthening'

## Churches needing help 'have options' through SBOM

(continued from page 1)

assistance, Lewis noted. In fact, Lewis said NAMB sends all requests for church revitalization helps to their respective state convention officials even if the church is seeking to be "taken over" and become a satellite campus of another church, such as what First, Woodstock, does as a way to save dying churches.

Hunt explained that every church he has led as pastor was one that needed revitalizing when he came.

"Thirty-five, 37, 90 and 200 (First, Woodstock) are the numbers we had when I came on board the four churches I've pastored in 37 years of ministry," he said, noting he grew each church's membership including the now 10,000-member congregation at First, Woodstock, since coming 27 years ago.

Hunt — along with executive pastor Jim Law — also has led the effort for their church to buy the property of three dying churches (including one in Florida) and make them satellite campuses of First, Woodstock. They are working with a fourth church to help it get back on its feet.

The "take overs" are working in some isolated situations, but they are not the norm, said Chris Emery, team leader for church revitalization at NAMB. The goal is to connect churches needing help with their state convention and for the state convention to assist the church in determining the best course of action, he said.

Alabama leaders prefer reviving the existing church, but there are options such as merger when there are two churches in the right situation.

"I'm not going to be ... coaching [the churches] myself," Emery explained. "Churches need to un-

derstand they have options and that there is help out there. They need someone to help them walk through the steps and this hinges on leadership. ... Alabama has a great state executive with a great team ... and [the state convention] has always been strong in what [it's done]."

"My dad (who was a pastor) said the best thing associations can do is connect churches who have resources with those who don't," Emery said. "The state convention also helps connect those churches together. ... We are not reinventing the wheel ... I'm trying to connect churches in need with our state partners. Several state conventions have a process they work through for church revitalization."

### Coaches available

It is a process, Lance said. "We like microwave, instantaneous kinds of results, but it is not going to be that easy," he said. "However, we are in partnership with [churches] ... to help [them] be as healthy as possible to advance the cause of Christ."

Dale Huff, director of the SBOM office of LeaderCare and church administration and point person for the strategy, said the Alabama approach will

provide a trained "coach" to partner with the church needing assistance for a year. Assessments, experts and various resources will be provided as necessary. The effort is "pastor focused and church strengthening," he said, noting the strategy also supports the work of the association. "This is a work in progress and will always be under construction," Huff noted. "Our goal is to strengthen churches and see every church be at its most and best for Jesus' sake and His kingdom's causes."

For information, contact Huff at 1-800-264-1225. ☎



Photo by Doug Rogers  
Rick Lance (right) and Johnny Hunt share a laugh during the question-and-answer portion of the May 21 church revitalization conference.

## Alabama updates

### People, churches making news across the state

#### Whitaker retires after nearly 39 years in ministry

Frank Whitaker has spent nearly 39 years in ministry, 13 of those as pastor of First Baptist Church, Barton. And after his retirement Aug. 11, he plans to serve in interim positions and in Guatemala on missions trips.

Whitaker, who surrendered to God's call to ministry in 1975, attended the University of North Alabama in Florence and later earned his master's degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.



WHITAKER

He served as pastor of Gilliam Springs Baptist Church, Arab, for 10 years. During that time he also served on the board of directors for *The Alabama Baptist*. He later served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Lake Wales, Fla., and then First, Barton.

Whitaker was moderator of Marshall Baptist Association, served on the board of regents for the University of Mobile and was an Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions representative for Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association.

Whitaker is active in Global Missions of Mercy (GMM), a 501(c)3 ministry started by his friend, William Carson. GMM works in Chiquimula, Guatemala, to help the "poorest of the poor" through a feeding center, a Christian school and a missions center for men and women's ministries.

During his years in ministry, Whitaker said he "learned that [a pastor's] job is to be faithful in our service to God."

"We don't take His place," he said, "We just serve Him and seek to honor Him."

Whitaker and his wife, Carol, said they look forward to spending time in Arab after retirement with their two children and three grandchildren. (Neisha Fuson)



**W**e who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.

Romans 15:1-2



Photos by Doug Rogers

## Disaster relief center construction under way

The Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Center is taking shape on property in Prattville. The 14,000-square-foot facility will be used to house disaster relief equipment and will eventually serve as a site for disaster relief training, deployment and staging.

Disaster relief personnel like Charlie Winsett, a member of Eastern Hills Church, Montgomery Association, are providing the bulk of the volunteer work on the building. After plumbing is stubbed and the foundation is poured, the building itself will be constructed in July with an anticipated completion date this fall. Responding to disasters remains the first priority for the volunteers, so if volunteers are deployed the schedule may change.

(SBOM)

# Providing HOPE

## Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers assist in Oklahoma after deadly tornado

**S**outhern Baptists throughout social media took note that NBC News anchor Brian Williams and reporter Harry Smith mentioned on air the quick response of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief workers in Moore, Okla., May 21.

"In the briefings today it was apparent there's FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) and then there's the faith-based FEMA," Williams said, standing in front of rubble left by the tornado that devastated the area May 20. "There are no fewer — I counted — than 30 churches that are banding together, and that's going to be a huge part of this recovery."

Smith added, "As you and I have seen in so many different places in this country, if you're waiting for the government, you're going to be in for an awful long wait. The Baptist men, they're going to get it done tomorrow."

Williams agreed, "They're already delivering food on the street."

The EF5 tornado, with a width of 1.3 miles at some points, swept through Oklahoma flattening entire neighborhoods, businesses and schools. At press time the death toll was 24 with at least 10 of those children. More than 230 were injured, according to news reports.

The May 20 tornado followed a near-identical path to a 1999 tornado that hit the state.

The Oklahoma Baptist disaster relief workers were familiar with how to handle the aftermath of a tornado and were in ac-

tion immediately after the May 20 tornado hit, responding with feeding units, debris cleanup and chaplains.

Sam Porter, director of disaster relief for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, said "(There are) anywhere from 24 to 40 chaplains on the ground every day all across the storm track just to give emotional and spiritual care to people and give them hope because that's where we find a great place to minister in disaster relief."

Oklahoma Baptist chaplains were on the ground at the two destroyed elementary schools with the families as they searched for their children, Porter said, and the leader of the chaplaincy effort was involved in several official notification visits.

Porter reported that 5,500 Oklahoma Baptists were trained in disaster response before the Moore tornado hit, "and today is the day. It's game-time in Oklahoma with disaster relief."

Residents of Moore were being allowed back into their demolished neighborhoods May 22.

Originally reported as an EF4, the National Weather Service upgraded the storm to an EF5, estimating its winds at more than 200 miles per hour. Early estimates indicate the cost of damage from the tornado could exceed \$2 billion.

Though security in the affected area remained tight, Oklahoma Baptist feeding and laundry units were in place. As of May 22, 105 Oklahoma Baptist disaster relief volunteers had prepared more than 9,000 meals and made nearly 270 ministry contacts.

*"The heart of Southern Baptists comes through in ministry like this."*

**Fritz Wilson  
North American  
Mission Board**



BP photo

Residents of Moore, Okla., were being allowed back into their demolished neighborhoods May 22, and the death toll from the tornado stood at 24, including at least 10 children.

"We will need cleanup assistance for four to five weeks at a minimum," Porter said. "Because of the nature of the storms there will not be a lot of chainsaw work, but the debris cleanup will be big."

Fritz Wilson, executive director for disaster relief at the North American Mission Board (NAMB), said a multistate response is expected in support of Oklahoma Baptist efforts and he anticipates out-of-state crews working in the affected areas by May 24.

Wilson asked Southern Baptists to continue praying for survivors and volunteers and to give to the efforts to help sustain the disaster relief ministry.

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief has sent emergency funds to help the Oklahoma survivors in the beginning recovery stages and are praying for the state.

"The heart of Southern Baptists comes through in ministry like this," Wilson said. "Oklahoma Baptists went into action immediately following the storm."

First Baptist Church, Moore, Okla., which served as a ministry center in response to the 1999 tornado that struck the community and has been instrumental in relief efforts from the earliest moments of this storm, is hosting an Oklahoma Baptist feeding kitchen and soon will host a NAMB command center.

Other churches in the area, like First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Okla., are serving survivors in many ways.

First, Oklahoma City, is operating a furniture bank, partnering with Good Shepherd food bank and housing volunteers from sev-



BP photo

Sam Porter (left), director of disaster relief for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, and incident commander Wes Johnson, discuss response plans to the tornado that devastated Moore.

eral areas as well as Samaritan's Purse.

William Dooley, chair of deacons at First, Oklahoma City, and a 1978 graduate of Samford University in Birmingham, said, "It is amazing to see the people of God respond and witness in the face of such a tragedy."

"Your prayers and your actions are needed now and for the next several months during the recovery and rebuilding."

President Obama is scheduled to travel to Oklahoma on May 26 to inspect the damage, visit with families and thank first responders.

To give to disaster relief funds, visit [www.sbdr.org](http://www.sbdr.org). (BP, TAB)

## Boy Scouts to allow gay youths after resolution passes May 23

By Julie Payne  
The Alabama Baptist

**I**n a vote cast May 23 by roughly 1,400 voting members of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) national convention, the 103-year-old organization overturned its longstanding membership policy on the issue of homosexuality.

The delegates met in Grapevine, Texas, during the three-day annual meeting and voted to allow youth who identify as gay to join the organization. The resolution was approved by more than 60 percent of the votes cast, according to news reports.

The resolution to allow gay youths into the Boy Scouts varied from an earlier proposal this year that would have permitted both openly gay leaders and scouts to join. The proposed change to allow only gay youths was announced April 19.

In the hours leading up to the vote May 23, many people were taking to social media to express their differing views on the issue. The vote culminated a months-long debate that had groups from both sides of the issue speaking out.

Opponents of the proposal included The Family Research Council, who launched the national simulcast "Stand with Scouts" in early May. The online simulcast urged viewers to preserve Scouting's traditional values by opposing the policy change, and organizers said the simulcast's purpose was to offer information about the significance of the proposed change and how people could become involved, according to a news report by the Baptist Press.

BSA was incorporated in 1910 and currently has 2.6 million youth members nationwide. According to the BSA website, 70 percent of all Scouting units are chartered to faith-based organizations. And with many churches hosting Scouting troops, the outcome May 23 was heavily watched.

Gary Cambron, Scoutmaster for Troop 404 chartered by First Baptist Church, Pelham, has been a registered Scout leader since 2006 and said he is extremely disappointed by the voting results.

"I feel that the core principles of the Boy Scouts of America as outlined in the Scout Oath and Scout Law have been com-

promised. We as an organization have 'sold out' our values to maintain funding on the national level, and that is wrong."

Cambron added while almost 80 percent of the leadership in the Greater Alabama Council was against the change, "it is evident that on a national level we do not hold the same values or biblical view of the issue. Our Unit's leadership will be praying for God's guidance in determining our next step in dealing with this decision."

R. Chip Turner, national chairman of the Boy Scouts' Religious Relations Committee and past national president of the Association of Baptists for Scouting, issued an open letter to Southern Baptists, noting that with the resolution's passing there are outreach and evangelism opportunities within church-based Scout units to take into account. He also noted that the Great Commission remains unchanged and no vote can alter that, adding the local church still owns its Scout units and is responsible for selecting the leadership.

The new policy will take effect Jan. 1, 2014, according to news reports.

# the need to be plugged in

***“Any habit that impairs social or occupational function is beginning to show traits associated with addictive behaviors.”***

Rod Marshall, licensed professional counselor  
and president of Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries

## QUIZ

ARE YOU ADDICTED TO MEDIA?  
**Your answers to these five questions might help you decide.**

.....  
YES NO

Do you spend more time online than with friends and/or family?

Do you get anxious when you can’t check social networking sites?

Do you sleep with your phone or wake up in the middle of the night and get online?

Does your Internet or phone usage interfere with your work?

Do you normally spend more time online than you intended to?

## Americans prone to addiction to

By Carrie Brown McWhorter  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**F**rom the color television sets of the 1950s to the smartphones of 2013, media has been an ever-increasing presence in American lives and homes, providing new entertainment and social options for each successive generation.

For many technology consumers today, however, the need to be “plugged in” has gone beyond escape and into the realm of addiction.

Media has long been used as a tool for information and entertainment. In his book “The Seven Faith Tribes,” researcher George Barna writes that many critics are quick to dismiss all media as harmful, when in fact churches often rely on technology to help deliver the gospel message.

“Media tools — such as training DVDs, movies and music — can stimulate thinking and conversation,” Barna writes.

Barna’s research also has shown that people are more likely to remember what they see in a brief, dramatic video clip than what they hear when the same information is presented in a sermon or lecture. So in the right context, Barna concludes, media can be a very useful tool. The problem is when

media consumption begins to affect normal life in negative ways.

“Any habit that impairs social or occupational function is beginning to show traits associated with addictive behaviors,” said Rod Marshall, a licensed professional counselor and president of Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries. “Impairment is what distinguishes a bad habit from a pathological behavior.”

Though terms like “Internet Addiction Disorder” and “Social Media Addiction Disorder” are often thrown around, no clinical diagnosis of media addiction currently exists. However, Barna suggests that “media exposure has become America’s most widespread and serious addiction,” estimating that a majority of Americans over the age of 12 are addicted to media consumption.

One reason for this may be that more people than ever have Internet access — and not just at their home or office. A large segment of the American population, nearly half of all adults, now own smartphones, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Study, giving them access to the Web wherever they are. Increasingly, kids also are carrying smartphones and tablets, sometimes even provided by their schools.

According to a 2010 study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, children and teens 8 to 18 are spending a little more than 7.5 hours daily (more than 53 hours a week) consuming media, including watching television, surfing the Internet, social networking and playing games.



Photo by Lauren C. Grim

## media, need help finding balance

The study also found that because kids spend much of that time “media multitasking,” like listening to music while playing games and watching TV, they actually manage to pack a total of almost 11 hours into each day. The increase in technology use explains why today’s youth have been dubbed the “Facebook generation” — a generation where web access and social networking are the rule rather than the exception.

### Negative effect

A recent poll by The Barna Group found that 44 percent of American adults say they are tempted to spend too much time with media, including the Internet, television and video games. Only procrastination and overeating ranked higher on the list of top temptations.

There are very real negative effects on people who spend too much time with technology, said technology expert Daniel Sieberg, author of “The Digital Diet: The 4-Step Plan to Break Your Tech Addiction and Regain Balance in Your Life.”

For example, digital music players can damage hearing when played too loud for too long. Headaches and body pain are often a direct result of spending too much time in front of a computer. Studies even link too much screen time for children to an increased risk of being overweight or obese. On the emotional front, voicemails and texts make it possible to avoid personal interactions, replacing “meaningful interactions with superficial ones,” Sieberg writes.

Spirituality also may suffer with excessive media consumption.

A 2009 survey of Christian college students found that more than half of those surveyed felt that social networking was leading them to neglect important areas of their lives, with 12 percent identifying their use of media as an addiction.

The survey, conducted by professors at Gordon College, a Christian liberal arts college near Boston, also found that 21 percent of students surveyed felt like their use of technology caused a conflict with their Christian values.

Bryan Auday, professor of psychology at Gordon and one of the authors of the study, said the survey results highlight the conflict between media as a useful tool and media as a problem.

“What is clear from our study is that a surprisingly high percentage of Christian students who frequently engage in electronic activities report several troubling negative consequences. But ironically they also mention many positive outcomes related to the time that is spent on Facebook or text messaging their friends,” Auday said.

Without a doubt this conflict, like technology itself, is here to stay. But in the end, Sieberg writes, managing screen addiction is not about eliminating technology altogether but rather about achieving balance.

“It’s about maintaining a healthy consumption of technology ... and searching for a ‘best practices’ approach to our love of technology.” ☞

## What can you do?

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

In a world where technology surrounds us, what can we do to become what Sieberg calls “technology users” rather than “technology addicts”? Here are some tips compiled from several sources:

### Determine your starting point.

How much time are you spending in front of screens? For one week, tally all screen time for you and each member of your family and decide where to start.

### Create media boundaries.

Set a screen-time budget for both adults and children, and then stick to it. Children pay attention to what the adults in their lives do and say. Research shows that when parents create rules and limits about media, children listen. The key is to approach the issue in the same way you do seat belts or nutrition — as an expectation, not a request. Use parental control features, apps or other technology to enforce the boundaries you set.

### Keep screens in a family area.

Keep TVs and computers in central

locations and out of children’s bedrooms. Turn media off during meal-times and when no one is watching.

### Decide what counts and what does not.

Some parents track homework, emails to Grandma, making scrapbooks or blogging about service projects separately from talking to friends, checking social networking sites or watching online videos. Think about what ideas, habits and skills you want your children to develop as you help them learn to budget their time.

### Make media a planned event.

Add media time (like social networking) to your schedule just as you would a doctor’s appointment or meeting. At home, avoid using media as background noise. Carefully choose and watch a specific show, play a game or interact with a website. Then turn it off and engage in nonmedia activities.

### Unplug if necessary.

If all else fails, remember that TVs, video game players and computers can be unplugged and put away for a while. But don’t threaten to take away media unless you are actually ready to do so. ☞

# Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

## BESSEMER

► **Union Church, Lipscomb**, will celebrate its 179th anniversary June 2. Dewey Mayfield is interim pastor.

## BIRMINGHAM

► **Billy Ray (B.R.) Johnson** is interim pastor of Huffman Church, Birmingham. Johnson holds a bachelor's degree from Samford University in Birmingham and a master's degree and doctorate from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.



**JOHNSON**

He has served as pastor of churches in Alabama, Florida, Arkansas and most recently The Lighthouse

Community Church, Harpersville. He and his wife, Charlene, have three children. ► The Woman's Missionary Union of **First Church, Birmingham**, will host guest speaker Mike McLemore, executive director of Birmingham Association, on June 4, 10:30 a.m. in the fellowship hall. Lunch will be served following the meeting. Charles Carter is interim pastor.

## MOBILE

► **Sharber Smith** is the new pastor of **San Souci Church, Bayou La Batre**. Smith has been a Baptist preacher for 49 years and a visual evangelist for 40 years.

## COOSA RIVER

► **Rick Patrick** is the new pastor of **First Church, Sylacauga**. He will begin June 2. Patrick previously served at Pleasant Ridge Church, Hueytown, for 13 years. He holds a bachelor's degree in

business administration from the University of Texas in Austin, a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and a doctor of ministry degree from Dallas Seminary. He and his wife, Karen, have two children.



**PATRICK**

## WASHINGTON

► **Pleasant Hill Church, Millry**, will celebrate homecoming June 2. Sunday School will be at 10 a.m. and the worship service will be at 11 a.m. Pastor Ron Pierce will speak. Joyful Noise and New Dawning will sing. Lunch will be at noon.

## LETTERS

(continued from page 2)

Sometimes a pastor leaves because he doesn't want an ugly fight in church. He doesn't want to be the source of Christ getting a bad name in the community. He chooses to turn the other cheek rather than fight "the opposition." He chooses to speed healing by leaving rather

than stay and disunity grow. Some pastors choose getting a black eye over giving one. The answer? Ephesians 4:29-32. Ron Ethridge Muscle Shoals, Ala.



## — Correction —

In the article "Florence's Highland, Broadway Baptist churches merge, set for growth" in the May 16 issue, the incorrect church was listed as volunteering during the community party. The church that volunteered was Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Athens.

## Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

### Floods ravage western Uganda, BWA sends aid

WASHINGTON — The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) sent an initial sum of \$5,000 to assist victims flooded out in the East African country of Uganda. At least six people have been killed while others remain missing.

A number of Baptist churches in the affected regions are sheltering people displaced by the disaster, including one that houses more than 360 people.

On May 1 and 5 heavy rains fell in Kasese District in western Uganda causing flash floods that led to loss of life and destruction of property. Almost 4,000 houses in 57 villages were affected, displacing more than 25,000.

Four rivers, Nyamwamba, Mubuku, Bulemba and Kitakena, burst their banks and destroyed surrounding homes, hospitals, gardens, roads and bridges.

Kenneth Wafula, general secretary of the Uganda Baptist Convention, told the BWA on May 6 that the "River Nyamwamba has burst its banks for the second time since last week, and has so far claimed many lives and displaced thousands of others." Baptist teams on the ground, he said, are "worried that the disaster may worsen if the river continues to flood."

Many residents heeded warnings to vacate the area but those who opted to stay were affected by the floods that sealed off a number of roads and submerged several bridges, cutting off whole communities. Mountainous areas experienced severe landslides, destroying homes and farmlands.

Wafula said there is urgent need for food and relief supplies such as water purification tablets, blankets and mosquito nets, among other items.

### Longtime editor R.G. 'Gene' Puckett dies at 80

RALEIGH, N.C. — Career journalist and champion for a free Baptist press R.G. "Gene" Puckett died May 12, months after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Puckett, 80, worked as a Baptist journalist longer than any person in the 20th century.

After pastorates in Kentucky and in Ohio, at age 25 he became editor of the *Ohio Baptist Messenger* and director of Baptist student work for Southern Baptists in Ohio in 1958. He left in 1961 to become pastor of First Baptist Church, Dunedin, Fla.

Puckett was editor of the *Maryland Baptist* from 1966 to 1979 and editor of North Carolina's *Biblical Recorder* from 1982 until his retirement in 1998. He also was a president of the former Southern Baptist Press Association.

In 1990, he and other Baptist state paper editors formed Associated Baptist Press (ABP) hours after the firing of the two top editors of Baptist Press by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

ABP recognized Puckett in 2011 with the Greg Warner Lifetime Achievement Award in Religious Journalism. Puckett credited his mentor C.R. Daley, who hired him at the *Western Recorder*, and contemporaries of Daley's like Texas *Baptist Standard* editor E.S. James; John Jeter Hurt, who edited both the *Baptist Standard* and Georgia's *Christian Index*; and Reuben Alley of Virginia's *Religious Herald* with teaching him about the integrity it took to be a Baptist editor. "The effectiveness of any democracy depends on an informed constituency, and if Baptists don't know, they can't do," Puckett said.

## Someone You Should Know

By Julie Payne  
The Alabama Baptist

### BOBBY KEITH

Dawson Memorial Baptist Church,  
Birmingham, in Birmingham Association

**FAVORITE VERSE:** Romans 8:28  
**FAVORITE HYMN:** "Amazing Grace"  
**HOBBIES:** Riding motorcycle, cycling and reading

**FAMILY STATUS:** Married for almost 50 years to Donna; two daughters; and five grandchildren



**KEITH**

Retired construction executive Bobby Keith has been taking missions trips around the world for about 20 years. He is currently involved in Living Water Community Transformation Inc. ([www.livingwaterct.org](http://www.livingwaterct.org)). The ministry's work is focused primarily in the community of Akot, South Sudan.

**Q: What influences in your life first pointed you to Christ?**

A: My church life. The influence of my mother — (she) made sure I went to church. ... I was greatly influenced by the

men in the church ... at Shades Crest Baptist Church, Hoover, who took an interest in me. When I was 14, God spoke to me and told me I needed to follow Him.

**Q: You are a former recipient of the Volunteer of the Year award from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. Can you share about receiving this award in 2000?**

A: [I received it at] the state Baptist convention. ... At that time I was working in Brazil and a couple other places like Romania and Ukraine.

**Q: What do you get from your missions trips?**

A: From (a) personal standpoint, it has done more than anything else I can think of to build my faith and my relationship with the Lord. ... I think it does that for anybody who is involved in [missions].

**Q: Do you see yourself involved in missions in the future?**

A: I hope to keep doing it as long as I can. As long as my health allows me to ... that's my plan.

## Want to see your news in The Alabama Baptist?

Email your information to [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org); fax it to 205-870-8957 or call 1-800-803-5201. Church announcements should arrive three weeks prior to the event.



## Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions

**ONE MISSION:**  
The Great Commission

**ONE PROGRAM:**  
The Cooperative Program

**MANY MINISTRIES:**  
Great Commission Ministries



# ONE Mission

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

## Strategies, Principles for Church Planting in Alabama

The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions is strategically involved in working with our associations and churches. The State Board does not plant churches. We don't assign church planters to any particular areas of the state. We don't hand out Cooperative Program money to churches or planters willy nilly!

What is this ruckus about church planting in Alabama all about, you might ask? I am so glad you asked! Lamar Duke (our Lead Church Planting Strategist) and I assist our associations and churches in targeting the areas of need in their communities, in training the planters and their core groups in how to have a healthy sustainable plant, and in assisting churches wanting to partner with other churches to plant new work

both in Alabama and outside Alabama.

The FutureFocus of the State Board of Missions includes a strong emphasis on church planting that goes beyond where we have ever been as Baptists in reaching our communities. You have heard it said that there are more than two million unchurched people

What we help associations, churches and planters do is accomplished through the teamwork of all parties involved.

living in our wonderful state. Unfortunately, we are falling behind statistically and eternally

in the obligation and opportunity that we have in reaching the state for Christ. More people are moving into our state than we are reaching.

By Rick Barnhart  
State Missionary



When we work with our associations, we help them get tooled up to be effective in making a substantial impact through church planting. In a real sense, church revitalization and church planting go hand in hand; for when churches are healthy they will be involved in the Great Commission, and that means they will be involved in multiplying their efforts toward Kingdom growth through new work.

What we help associations, churches and planters do is accomplished through the teamwork of all parties involved. We provide assessors to ensure that the planter is the right fit for the challenge of

planting. We provide training for the churches that are interested in planting churches.

We assist in purchasing property with the association's approval. We assist, through an agreement with the North American Mission Board, in salary support for two years. We assist in providing low-interest loans for the first building. We assist in sometimes providing mobile units for worship and education. Finally, we assist in ongoing mentoring and training.

The Alabama State Board of Missions is here to walk alongside you and your churches in reaching your communities for Christ.

For more information about church planting, contact the Office of Associational Missions and Church Planting at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 332.

# 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](http://www.alsbom.org/men)

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



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

# The 1% CP Challenge

BY JOHN KILLIAN

Believing that the Gospel will be spread and the Great Commission obeyed as we give through the Cooperative Program, I presented the 1% Challenge to our budget committee. As our budget team discussed the values of giving through the Cooperative Program and the small sacrifice of increasing our giving 1% over four years, our chairman replied, "This is a no-brainer."

When our church discussed the budget, the sentiment was positive and accepting. Frankly, economics have made our budget tight over the past few years. But rather than cut missions, we are believing God to allow us to increase our



Cooperative Program giving 1/4 of 1% each year for the next four years. Lord willing, we will see churches across Alabama rally to the need of our mission causes and the call to reach our world by giving through the Cooperative Program.

John Killian is pastor, Maytown Baptist Church, and president, Alabama Baptist State Convention.

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](mailto:jswedenburg@alsbom.org)



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

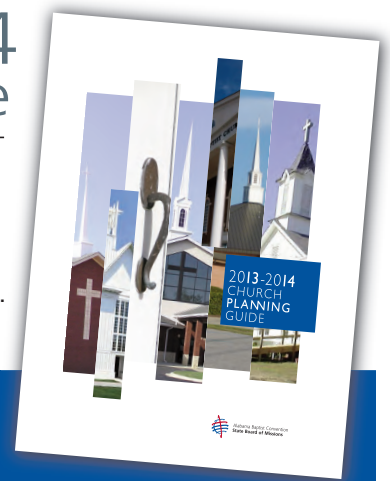


## order your 2013-2014 church planning guide

This 16-month calendar (Sept. 2013–Dec. 2014) has State Board of Missions events and emphases already printed with plenty of room for you to add your church's events.

Limit **20 COPIES** per church. To order, please **call, fax** or **e-mail** your request to Charleen Hobbs at 1.800.264.1225, ext. 231; 334.288.2693 (fax); [chobbs@alsbom.org](mailto:chobbs@alsbom.org); or **order online** at [www.alsbom.org/cpg](http://www.alsbom.org/cpg).

Be sure to **include** your name, church name, mailing address and number of guides needed (up to 20).



Alabama Baptist Convention  
**State Board of Missions**

**FRIDAY AND SATURDAY,  
AUGUST 2-3, 2013  
LAGOON PARK & FAIN PARK,  
MONTGOMERY**

**Baptist Men's State  
Softball Tournament**

- 40 TEAM MAXIMUM
- ROUND ROBIN TOURNAMENT
- ASA-SANCTIONED TOURNAMENT
- SINGLE ELIMINATION IN CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND OF 16 TEAMS

**EVERY TEAM WILL PLAY AT LEAST  
FOUR GAMES.**

**ENTRY FEE: \$135**

**FOR A LIST OF ENTRY REQUIREMENTS  
TO PARTICIPATE AND AN  
INFORMATION PACKET, PLEASE  
CONTACT MINISTRY ASSISTANT  
MONDENE COKER AT 1-800-264-1225,  
EXT. 273, OR (334) 613-2273  
MCOKER@ALSBOM.ORG.  
ALSBOM.ORG/SOFTBALLTOURNAMENT**



**LEADERLAB**  
**Tuesday-Thursday,  
July 16-18  
Baptist Building, 2001  
E. South Blvd.,  
Montgomery**

**Keynote Speaker:**  
Richard Blackaby



**Curriculum Break Outs:**

- Lead Like Jesus
- Leadership Greatness
- Coaching on the Run
- And more...

**Register by June 21st for  
early-bird rates.**

To register or for more information, visit [www.alsbom.org/leaderlab](http://www.alsbom.org/leaderlab) or contact Ministry Assistant Jamie Allen at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 256, or (334) 613-2256, [jallen@alsbom.org](mailto:jallen@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**

**FOCUS on One Mission**

**2013 THE SUMMIT: FOR CHURCH LEADERS**

Did you come to The Summit last August? If you were there, maybe you attended a class such as “How Your Church Can Win Souls and Keep Them,” “Effective Evangelism From Home” or “Moving Today’s Sunday School Outside the Walls of the Church” where you had discussions about carrying out the Great Commission through Sunday School or through the evangelism perspective. If other leaders from your church came, they may have attended sessions such as “Men Are Like Waffles, Women Are Like Spaghetti” or taken a class about using technology in your church.

Sessions were offered in worship leadership and church music, stewardship, Royal Ambassadors, Men’s Ministry and Brotherhood, special needs, deacon ministry, single adults, senior adults, and all age groups for Sunday School and discipleship leaders. New areas of leadership will be added in 2013, including women’s ministry.

— “I feel that all the conferences have had so much wonderful (and diversity of) helpful and encouraging information. I hope to bring many more people next year. Thank you; some great seeds have been planted in me and so many others.” - Rick Willis, Bellevue BC, Gadsden, Alabama

In other words, **The Summit: for Church Leaders** really is for all church leaders. Watch your mail and the website, [www.alsbom.org/summit](http://www.alsbom.org/summit), to see what other new things will be offered this year!



**WORSHIP RALLY SPEAKER:**  
Bobby DuBois, state missionary/associate executive director

SCOTTY GOLDMAN, state missionary/associate, Global Missions



REGGIE QUIMBY, state missionary/director, Global Missions

**WORSHIP MUSIC:** Keith Hibbs, state missionary/director, Worship Leadership & Church Music; Kenny Sexton, associate pastor, The Church at Lake Guntersville



KAREN GOSSELIN, state missionary/associate, Worship Leadership & Church Music

CHIP SMITH, state missionary/associate, LeaderCare & Church Administration



MICKEY CRAWFORD, state missionary/associate, Communications & Technology Services

BILLY HARRIS, state missionary/associate, Evangelism



STEVE STEPHENS, state missionary/associate, Global Missions

DANIEL EDMONDS, state missionary/director, Sunday School & Discipleship



PAT INGRAM, consultant, Alabama Woman’s Missionary Union

JIM SWEDENBURG, state missionary/director, Cooperative Program & Stewardship Development



RICK ELLISON, state missionary/associate, Leadership & Church Health

MIKE JACKSON, state missionary/director, Leadership & Church Health



LEE WRIGHT, state missionary/coordinator, Church Compensation Services



CANDACE MCINTOSH, executive director, Alabama Woman’s Missionary Union



Alabama Baptist Convention  
**State Board of Missions**  
This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

Music Leadership Conference

**children's choir**  
July 12-13 **summit**  
**FRAMED!**

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

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

**Cost:** \$100 per person (includes lodging, three meals, eight sessions and dessert buffet)

**Registration:**  
[www.alsbom.org/children-summit](http://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](mailto:scleveland@alsbom.org).

ONEMISSION:TheGreatCommissionONEPROGRAM:TheCooperativeProgramMANYMINISTRIES:GreatCommissionMinistries

# WHO KNEW? The First Three Weeks of College...

**Transitions**  
 Helping high school students take the next step in their faith journey.



What a student does during their first three weeks of college sets the pattern for his whole college career in the relationships he establishes and the patterns he develops.

Help lay the groundwork for Christlike college experiences by connecting yourself or your students with collegiate ministers by visiting [www.onemissionstudents.org/transitions](http://www.onemissionstudents.org/transitions)

Once you go to the webpage, enter contact information for yourself or your student. It takes less than three minutes and it will be networked to the campus of your choice!

**Collegiate and Student Ministries • 1.800.264.1225, ext. 275 • (334) 613.2275**

# MIX MusiCamp@Shocco

Monday through Friday, July 15-19 • SHOCCO SPRINGS

## THREE TRACKS:

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

**INCLUDES:** Uncontrollable fun and recreation, unforgettable worship, life-long friendships and awesome music!

## REGISTRATION:

[www.MixMusicCamp.org](http://www.MixMusicCamp.org)

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



Youth Evangelism Conference

# MORE THAN

Wright Center, Samford University | \$20 per person

# A GAME?

[www.onemissionstudents.org/yec](http://www.onemissionstudents.org/yec)

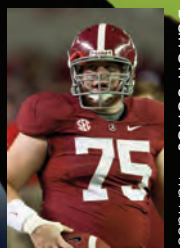
August 2-3, 2013



Chuck Hooten



Wade Morris



Barrett Jones \* via video



**youthevangelismconference**



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



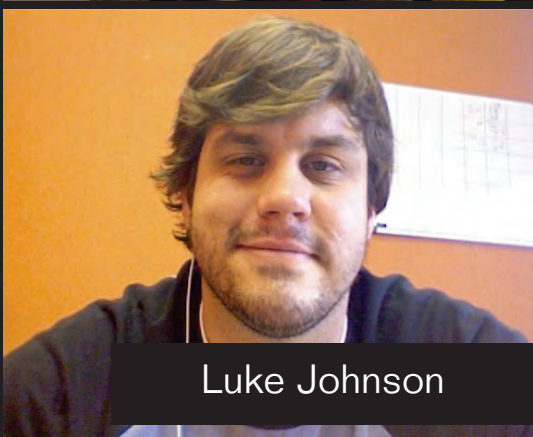
**JULY 8-12, 2013**  
Samford University

**SPEAKER,**  
Luke Johnson

**WORSHIP LEADER,**  
Bethany Barr Philipps



Bethany Barr Philipps



Luke Johnson

# ALABAMA BAPTIST BOYS CAMPS 2013



**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.



**North 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](http://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](mailto:hfinch@alsbom.org).*

More than 180 homes, six shops and two churches were burned and destroyed in the March 9 attacks on Joseph Colony, Lahore, Pakistan.



BP photo

# A servant's HEART

## Baptist Global Response helps Pakistani college students impart hope after attack

**T**he Pakistani college students stepped gingerly through the pile of bricks, barely recognizing the church building. Its once-white walls were ashen from hours of burning and heat still radiated from glowing embers.

Sarah and Vijay Cheema stood frozen, taking in the scene up and down the street, unsure of what to do. All around them, people were hurting as they sat in front of their damaged homes, 180 in all in the mostly Christian-minority community.

Sarah's attention turned to a crying 4-year-old girl who said she hadn't eaten in two days. Her family's food and money burned with their home. Sarah immediately opened her backpack and shared her own snacks.

"My heart broke," Sarah said. "It's very painful to see so many hurting at once, especially the young ones who did not understand what had happened."

An angry mob descended on Joseph Colony in Lahore, Pakistan, on March 9, wreaking havoc after accusations that a

Christian made a derogatory comment about Muhammad, an illegal act under Pakistan's blasphemy law. While Muslims are frequently accused of blasphemy, members of Pakistan's small Christian community are especially vulnerable.

And since March 9, it's only gotten worse.

A Muslim political candidate suspected of murdering a Christian has instigated calls from mosque loudspeakers for attacks on Christians, whom he blames for his May 11 election loss.

Mehr Abdul Sattar, sought by police in connection with a 2008 murder, on May 13 arranged for mosque calls for violence against Christian villages.

### 'Burn their homes'

"Burn their homes to the ground. ... Punish them such that they forget Gojra and Joseph Colony," blared village mosques in Punjab Province's Okara district, according to Younas Iqbal, chairman of the Anjuman-e-Mazareen Punjab, a peasant movement fighting for land rights.

In Gojra in 2009, eight Christians were burned alive, 100 houses looted and 50 homes set ablaze after a blasphemy accusation.

Since the recent election, Sattar has tar-

geted Christians in several villages, and police aren't offering much help, according to Morning Star News.

So Christians are doing the best they can to take care of each other in the meantime.

Sarah and Vijay Cheema, who are brother and sister, had watched news reports of angry crowds destroying sections of the small Joseph Colony and the next day decided to take friends across town to offer help.

They rallied a larger team of friends from the student body, around 18 in all, and put out collection boxes for clothes, money and food. The international relief organization Baptist Global Response (BGR), meanwhile, helped the students buy blankets, pillows, utensils and other supplies through resources provided by BGR's General Support Fund.

"We see this as an opportunity for BGR to enable local students to do what they had a heart to do. But it is more than providing aid to a hurting community," said Francis Horton, who with his wife, Angie, directs BGR work in Central and South Asia. "It's an investment in the future leaders of this country. It's an opportunity for these students to learn practical lessons about servanthood and look at the world beyond their own little circle."

The female students on the relief team quickly saw the emotional aspect of the horror. Noor Swati said there was a great need for women to just sit and listen to other women. In Pakistan, customs hold that women not talk to men, Noor explained. Since most of the relief workers from agencies and government forces were men, the women were not receiving the emotional support they needed or items specific to women such as baby clothes, diapers and undergarments.

Noor and Sarah sat for hours at a time, holding women and crying with them. Mother after mother recounted the trauma

of losing everything in their homes, especially their daughters' dowries. Families spend years collecting the clothes, linens and money that make up the wedding tradition. They had no hope of ever replacing the dowry and were worried that their daughters now might never marry.

"I really wanted to help them. They were living on the street. Some of the women were eight months pregnant living like that," Swati said. "Our Bible says that we are to love each other and show compassion. We tried to do everything we could to help."

The student relief team has made 18 visits to the Joseph Colony community, four of which involved distributing aid. The other visits have been for follow-up and investing in lives. The students even celebrated Easter with the community in the newly refurbished church.

"When we started, we had no idea it would be this much work or so hard," Vijay said. But, he said, "We have learned a lot about being servants and to be tolerant. It is important to help everyone and not just a select few."

### Relationships continue

When the team distributed blankets, pillows and household items, one Muslim man kept trying to "face off" with Vijay but the college student ignored him for fear of trouble or a fight. Finally the man managed to cut Vijay off and looked him in the eye. Then, to the students' surprise, the man thanked them for being kind to everyone — Christians and Muslims.

"Now that man and I are friends. I visit his family every time I go back," Vijay said with a smile. "Our project might be done but our relationships continue."

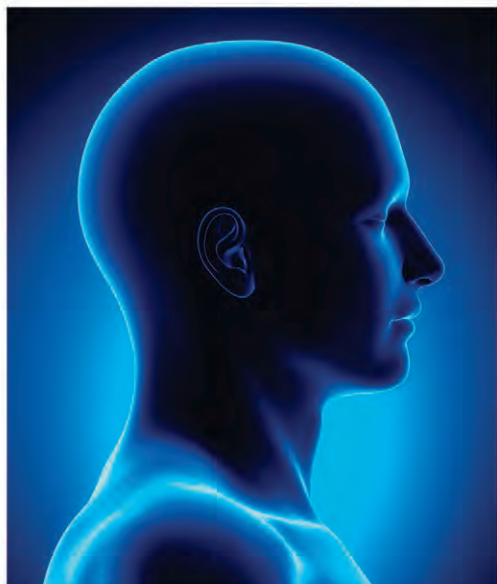
*EDITOR'S NOTE — Names have been changed for security reasons. (BP, Morning Star News)*



BP photo

Sarah Cheema comforts a child at the outset of a long-term project by Sarah and other collegians to help Joseph Colony residents recover from an attack in Lahore, Pakistan.

# New Study Links Dementia to Hearing Loss



## A Hearing Evaluation Is Your First Line Of Defense

A major study recently found that untreated hearing loss may increase the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Those with mild hearing impairment were nearly twice as likely as those with normal hearing to develop dementia. The risk increased three-fold for those with moderate hearing loss, and five-fold for severe impairment.

**The good news** — hearing aids can delay, or even prevent, dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

### Why take a chance? Get your hearing tested today!

At Beltone, we'll thoroughly test your hearing — and, be the first to tell you if you don't have a hearing loss. But, if you do need hearing help, be assured we'll find the solution that best fits your needs.

**So, don't delay, call now.**



Go to **beltone.com** to learn more about the award-winning Beltone Promise™

## Could you have hearing loss and not even know it?

Take the quick quiz.

Y N

- The voices of women and children are hard to hear.
- People ask you to turn down the TV.
- It's difficult to hear conversation when there's background noise.
- You ask people to repeat themselves.
- People say you speak too loudly.

If you answered "yes" to even one question, take action now. Why? If hearing loss goes untreated, it gets worse faster than necessary. But the good news is, treating hearing loss with high-quality hearing instruments — like Beltone Promise™ slows its progression.



**If you have a hearing loss, you may qualify for a FREE CaptionCall® phone and service!**

CaptionCall® is a new telephone that quickly displays written captions of what callers say on a large, easy-to-read screen. To learn more call **877-557-2227** or visit **www.CaptionCall.com**.



## At Beltone, we don't just talk about patient care, we guarantee it!

With a 95% patient satisfaction rating, and over 70 years of experience, we're the most trusted name in hearing care.\*

- BelCare™ — complete follow-up care for the life of your instruments
- Free annual screenings at any of our 1,500 locations nationwide
- 2-year hearing loss protection
- Outstanding product warranties



**Compassionate care plus award-winning technology — that's the Beltone difference.**

Beltone Promise™

# 20% off

The purchase of two Beltone Promise™ hearing instruments

May 30–June 7

Discount off MSRP. Cannot be combined with other offers. Previous purchases excluded.

## CALL TODAY FOR AN APPOINTMENT

**Athens:** 256-867-4200  
**Bay Minette:** 251-295-9324  
**Bessemer:** 205-277-6242  
**Cullman:** 256-841-4514  
**Decatur:** 256-286-0817

**Fairhope:** 251-272-8997  
**Florence:** 256-275-4226  
**Foley:** 888-625-1316  
**Gardendale:** 205-683-6100  
**Grove Hill:** 251-275-4901

**Huntsville:** 256-722-5299  
**Jackson:** 251-247-0071  
**Jasper:** 205-282-4527  
**Mobile (Airport Blvd.):** 251-342-7000  
**Mobile (Sage Ave.):** 251-479-9409

**Montgomery:** 334-239-7877  
**Opelika:** 334-749-1686  
**Pelham:** 205-216-4025  
**Saraland:** 251-679-0034  
**Scottsboro:** 256-218-3186

**Thomasville:** 334-636-0000  
**Trussville:** 205-383-2945  
**Tuscaloosa:** 205-409-4683  
**Vestavia:** 205-267-5032  
**Winfield:** 205-487-4300

# An informed look

## ALCAP leader evaluates 2013 state legislative session

By Joe Godfrey  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

The 2013 Alabama Legislative Session has ended and, as usual, there were some “wins” and some “losses” on the issues that Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP) follows.

The biggest win was the passage of House Bill (HB) 57, sponsored by Rep. Mary Sue McClurkin, R-Pelham. This new law requires abortion clinics in Alabama to meet the same safety standards as those required by ambulatory surgical centers in the state. In spite of threats against McClurkin’s life and security guards in the Statehouse having to stay by her side and guard her office door, the bill passed both the House and the Senate and was signed into law by Gov. Robert Bentley. If abortion clinics cannot meet these new standards, they will have to close their doors permanently.

### ‘Foreign Law Bill’

The second bill we are celebrating is Senate Bill (SB) 4, sponsored by Sen. Gerald Allen, R-Tuscaloosa. After passing the Senate earlier in the session, this bill

— referred to as the “Foreign Law Bill” — passed the House of Representatives in the closing minutes of the last day of the session (just before midnight). It is a Constitutional Amendment and therefore does not require the governor’s signature.

The amendment states that it “prohibits the application of foreign law in violation of rights guaranteed natural citizens by the United States and Alabama constitutions and the laws and public policy of the state, without application to business entities.” It will be on the November 2014 election ballot to be voted on by the people.

In the “loss” column were two bills that ALCAP tried to stop. HB 9, the “Homebrew Bill,” was sponsored by Rep. Mac McCutcheon, R-Capshaw. It passed the House and Senate and was signed into law by the governor.

This bill allows individuals to brew beer, wine or mead (a honey-based beer) in their homes (up to 15 gallons per quarter) and transport up to 10 gallons to tasting competitions and festivals. ALCAP’s concerns with this bill had to do with the inability of au-



Photo courtesy of Joe Godfrey

**‘BIGGEST WIN’** — Gov. Robert Bentley signs HB 57 into law on April 9. It requires abortion clinics in Alabama to meet the same safety standards as those required of ambulatory surgical centers in the state.

thorities to regulate this practice, the exposure of homebrewed alcoholic beverages to children in the home, the effects that transporting gallon jugs will have on the open container law in Alabama and the issue of “incrementalism” — will the home-brewers be back each year wanting the limits increased and will distillers now want the same freedom to produce their moonshine?

Another important loss was SB 446, sponsored by Sen. Bryan Taylor, R-Prattville. This bill would “provide enhanced penalties” for promoting gambling or possessing a gambling device “if the defendant profits from gambling activity in an amount exceeding \$10,000.” The bill would have permanently

shut down all of the electronic “bingo” gambling halls that keep popping up throughout Alabama because the penalty is not significant enough to discourage such operations.

### Disappointed in Dial

Sen. Gerald Dial, R-Lineville, filibustered the bill and only 18 senators were willing to cloture his filibuster (21 votes were needed). We applaud those who tried to pass this legislation and we encourage the people living in Dial’s district to let him know of their disappointment in his attempts to aid illegal gambling operations in Alabama.

Let me encourage Alabama Baptists to go to [www.ALCAP.com](http://www.ALCAP.com) and sign up to receive our “ALCAP Alerts!” especially when

the Legislature is in session. When you receive these alerts, it is important for you to call and/or email your senator and/or house member and voice your opinion. They do listen when a voter calls.

Please continue to pray for and financially support ALCAP and our educational ministry, American Character Builders ([www.AmericanCharacterBuilders.org](http://www.AmericanCharacterBuilders.org)), through direct donations and through the Cooperative Program. Without the support of Alabama Baptists, this ministry would not exist to promote pro-life, pro-family and pro-moral issues in this state.

**EDITOR’S NOTE** — Joe Godfrey is executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program. ☞

The Alabama Baptist has more than  
**200,000**  
weekly readers  
statewide.

**Partnering with The Alabama Baptist** may be one of the most effective ways for you to reach potential customers and grow your businesses. Reach more than 200,000 weekly (paid, mailed publication) readers with demographics responsible for more than 50% of all consumer packaged goods purchased in 2012, and 62% of all new automobile purchases in 2012! (Source: Nielsen “Most Valuable Generation”, J.D. Power and AARP)

Baptists make up the largest Christian denomination in the state, with membership of more than 1 million.

### Reader profile

47% are male, 53% are female.  
43% are ages 35–64.  
54% are ages 65+.  
94% are homeowners.

For advertising information, email [bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org) or call 205-870-4720, Ext. 107.



A Beautiful  
Remodeled Bath  
at a Heavenly Price



Sears Certified bathroom remodeler for Sears Home Services in the State of Alabama

Compare to Premiere and Safe Step Tubs

\$ Ask about our no money down, no interest 12 months same as cash program\*

\*Approved credit through Enter Bank Corp.



Free High Rise Toilet OR \$500 Senior Discount

Do you have a bathroom with outdated tile, mold or mildew that you just cannot get rid of, tubs and showers that are stained and look old? We can turn that ugly bathroom into a beautiful room in one day! We are specialists in acrylic bathroom remodeling that is truly beautiful and very easy to maintain and keep clean at a price that nobody will beat. It will never be out-of-date, and there is a lifetime warranty on all work and products used. We give GOD THE GLORY for our success and being able to provide a high-quality product at an affordable price to our customers across the state. **CALL CHARLIE TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE. YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID.**

Locally owned and operated in Alabama for more than 25 years

**Dream Baths of Alabama**

Call 334-312-1825 or 1-855-849-5048 (toll-free) for a free estimate.

[www.dreambathsalabama.com](http://www.dreambathsalabama.com) • [www.alabamasafetybath.com](http://www.alabamasafetybath.com)

# Historical HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



## 50 Years Ago May 1963

**New Memorial Cottage:** A new cottage honoring Kate Park Samford is to be dedicated at the Baptist Children's Home in Troy on June 2. The cottage was donated to the home by Mr. and Mrs. J.D. Samford of Auburn as a memorial to Mr. Samford's mother, Dr. A.H. Reid, executive secretary of the state Baptist convention, will be the principal speaker for the occasion, and special music will be furnished by the Children's Home choirs under the direction of Lyra Crapps and Derrell Billingsley. An extra feature of the service will be the observance of the home's 40th anniversary.

## 40 Years Ago May 1973

**Honorary Degrees Awarded:** Two well-known Alabama educators were awarded honorary

degrees by Mobile College during graduation exercises May 12. They were Vernon St. John, retired city superintendent of Opp city schools, and Edith Marcechal Murphy, retired math teacher in Mobile who is still tutoring daily at the age of 87. Both honorees are well known to Alabama Baptists. Murphy has taught Bible classes in school and at First Baptist Church, Mobile, for more than 40 years. She is the first woman to receive an honorary degree from Mobile College. St. John is now serving his second term as president of the Baptists State Executive Board, a position that few laymen have ever held.

## 30 Years Ago May 1983

**Church Secretaries Meet:** The Alabama Association of Baptist Church Secretaries met in Marion

on April 27 with the largest number of women (200) ever attending a clinic of the 21-year-old organization. Edith Lott of West Hartselle Baptist Church was elected president. Serving with Lott in the coming year are Jackie Masters of York, first vice president; Beth Delage of Vestavia Hills, second vice president; Frankie Wallace of the Morgan Association, membership secretary; and Sue Jacobs of Colbert-Lauderdale Association, membership secretary. The secretaries' association was founded at Judson College and held its first meeting there in 1963.

## 20 Years Ago May 1993

**Largest Gift:** Marian Acree Tucker, Judson College trustee emeritus, has given Judson a gift of timber — the largest gift from a living alumna in the school's his-

tory. The donation will provide for the restoration of the Alumnae Auditorium and construction of the Marian Acree Tucker Fine Arts Hall. Tucker served as a Judson trustee from 1978 to 1985 and is the school's only living trustee emeritus.

## 10 Years Ago May 2003

**ALCAP Watchdog Honored:** Dan Ireland, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP), was honored for his 25 years of service during an anniversary celebration May 19 at First Baptist Church, Birmingham. Ireland has used his position as a lobbyist to build relationships with and pray for legislators and staff at the Statehouse. Ireland said he abides by the belief of "whatever is right according to the word of God is still right. Whatever is wrong is still wrong." ❏

## Bullock-Centennial celebrates Ascension, urged to share faith

When the disciples looked to replace Judas, they had two qualifications.

He needed to be "one of the men who have accompanied us" during Jesus' entire ministry, from the baptism of John to the ascension, and he needed to be a witness to the resurrection.

"He had to be someone who had witnessed Jesus being taken up so that he would become a witness with the disciples," said Bill Cannon, pastor of First Baptist Church, Union Springs.

### 'Invest in young men'

Cannon preached that message from Acts 1 during Bullock-Centennial Baptist Association's Ascension service, held May 19 at Macedonia Baptist Church, Union Springs.

He encouraged the nearly 50 men present to "take advantage of the time to invest in the young men who are around us before our time is taken from us and be a witness for Christ."

This was the second year the association held the Ascension service, and Curtis Rich, director of missions for Bullock-Centennial Association, said he thinks it will continue on an annual basis from here on.

"We had a great service with good participation," Rich said. "And it's just a little different kind of service. We think about Easter and it's kind of over with. We celebrate that He rose, then we kind of leave it alone."

With this kind of service, the men who are leaders in the churches can focus on Jesus' ascension, His promise to return and His command to be witnesses until He does, Rich said.

Keith Pugh, a member of Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Union Springs, said it's an integral part of the life of Christ and needs to be celebrated. "This kind of service is something new for Bullock County, but we've had a lot of good response," he said. (Grace Thornton)

## Alabamians to serve at SBC

Alabama Baptists will be among those serving during the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Houston, Texas, June 11-12. Committee members were appointed by SBC President Fred Luter.

► Chip Starnes, pastor of First Baptist Church, Bay Minette, and Derek Staples, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, will serve on the Committee on Committees.

► Brad Bakane, pastor of Gilbertown Baptist Church, and Candace McIntosh, executive director of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union and a member of Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery, will serve on the Credentials Committee.

► Wade Rials, pastor of Thornton Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, will serve on the Tellers Committee. (TAB)

## MARKET PLACE

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

### CHURCH POSITIONS

**BIVOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR:** Church seeking a called bivocational youth pastor. Send resumé to: Calvary Baptist, 7570 15th Street Road, Concord, AL 35023, ATTN: Roger or boazroger@gmail.com.

**PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER:** Nazareth Baptist Church, Rainsville, Ala., is seeking a part-time youth minister. Job description available upon request. Please submit resumé to: Nazareth Baptist Church, P.O. Box 541, Rainsville, AL 35986.

### OTHER POSITIONS

**INDEPENDENT SALES ASSOCIATE CONTRACTOR:** The 170-year-old *Alabama Baptist* is an award-winning statewide weekly newspaper with more than 200,000 readers. Baptists comprise the largest Christian denomination in Alabama with membership of more than a million. *The Alabama Baptist* is seeking contract sales people with the ability to develop advertising partnerships with businesses and organizations interested in reaching the key demographics of our readers and growing their business. As an independent sales associate contractor, you would work from your home office with no territory restrictions. *The Alabama Baptist, Inc.* provides a unique working environment. We are partners with the churches of the Alabama Baptist State Convention working together for the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Each employee is expected to manage his/her personal and professional life in accordance with this relationship and consistent with the traditions of *The Alabama Baptist*. Send resumé and inquiries to: bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org.

### BUSINESS

**MOVING? LOCAL, STATEWIDE OR LONG DISTANCE:** Coleman American/Allied Van Lines. Special rate and programs for Alabama Baptist

ministers, staff and church members. Contact Gary Washington at 205-540-7470 or gary.washington@covan.com.

**FOR SALE NEW & USED STAIRLIFTS:** Lift chairs, power wheelchairs, car lifts, scooters and walk-in tubs. We service Alabama. 1-800-682-0658.

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

### CHURCH CONSTRUCTION

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

### TRAVEL/VACATION

**AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS:** Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Ala. Rent direct — Christian family owners. Lowest prices on the beach. Call 205-556-0368, 205-752-1231 or 251-752-2366. www.gulfshorescondos.com.

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

### MISCELLANEOUS

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL:** Spring Valley Baptist Church, Colossal Coaster World — VBS. June 9-13 from 6-8:30 p.m., 4K-6th grades. Address: 4193 US Hwy 11, Springville, AL 35146. www.springvalleybaptistchurch.org.

## Want to know God?

By Pastor Rick Cato

Bethel Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove

There is a huge gap between knowing and doing. One of my favorite stories along this line has to do with a university out in California that had a major termite infestation in one of its science buildings.

When they finally found the source, a huge pile of papers in the basement, they found the termites were feeding on the papers. It was a study done years before on "The Control and Extermination of Termites."

Like I said, there is a huge gap between knowing and doing.

This gap often expresses itself in people's lives spiritually as well.

Many people, including church people, know about God and about the Bible and about Jesus. But there seems to be a missing connection.

I cannot tell you how often I talk with people who are struggling with the assurance of salvation.

They know all the right words and often they can tell you the plan of salvation.

However, they have no real relationship or fellowship with Christ. Can it be the reason for the lack of connection, the sense that something is missing, is created by this gap between knowing and doing? Jesus spoke to this often in teaching His disciples.

One of His familiar stories is about a wise and a foolish man and how they built their houses. Jesus begins that story with these words: "Whoever hears these words of mine and does them." Jesus reminds us there is a difference between knowing and doing.

John in his first epistle reminds us of this same thing. He affirms the simplicity of salvation writing, "He who has the Son has the life." (1 John 5:12). One simply has to admit they are a sinner, turn to Christ in repentance and accept by faith His gift of forgiveness and eternal life. But John goes on to point out, "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments."

The gap between knowing and doing is bridged by those who have eternal life in Jesus. ❏



Photo courtesy of Samford University

**Left:** Graduates, family and friends fill the Pete Hanna Center at Samford University in Birmingham for commencement May 18. **Right:** Carolyn Maull McKinstry, president of Sixteenth Street Foundation, advises graduates to have faith in God, in themselves and in others.

# ‘Big push’ to fly

## McKinstry encourages Samford graduates to have faith, ‘soar with wings of eagles’

**S**amford University in Birmingham graduated about 900 seniors during commencement exercises in May. The largest ceremony was May 18 for seniors in the School of the Arts, Orlean Bullard Beeson School of Education and Professional Studies, and Samford’s largest school, the Howard College of Arts and Sciences.

Sixteenth Street Foundation president Carolyn Maull McKinstry advised those graduates to have faith in God, in themselves and in others.

In life, as at Samford, there will always be encouragers around to give you a “big push” to fly, she said. And faith, she said, “will not only enable you to fly after you have been pushed but will enable you to soar with wings of eagles — high, high into the sky.”

McKinstry spoke to an audience of more than 5,000 in Samford’s Pete Hanna Center.

A Birmingham native, McKinstry is a lifelong member of the city’s Sixteenth Street Baptist Church and was present in 1963 when members of the Ku Klux Klan bombed the church. Today, she is known worldwide as an itinerant messenger of the gospel, engaging in a ministry of reconciliation and forgiveness. She holds a master of divinity degree from Samford’s Beeson Divinity School and is a member of the university’s board of overseers.

During the commencement program, Samford President Andrew Westmoreland presented McKinstry with an honorary doctor of divinity degree in recognition of a life “given to hope, not anger; reconciliation, not destruction; the path of God, not the path of despair; love, not hate; humility, not arrogance.”

In her remarks, McKinstry noted that in 50 years the city of Birmingham has undergone extensive transformation “not just in ways we can see, but in ways not visible to the eye.”

“We still stand tall as a beacon of hope and as a city whose redemptive power and influence continues to be felt around the state, the nation and the world,” she said.

McKinstry underscored the importance of faith in the lives of the new graduates.

The prophet Jeremiah reminds us that God has a plan for our lives, she said, and God will cause all things to work together for good. “Many things are impossible with man, but all things are possible with God to them that believe.”

### ‘Let your own light shine’

“Faith in yourself is important — especially when no one else shares your vision and dreams,” she said, citing a quotation by Maryanne Williamson that states: When we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

And have faith in others, McKinstry advised. “When we look for the best in others, that is what we get. When we give our best, we receive the best in return.”

She said she feels the nation is losing a sense of community and connectedness. “If civilization is to survive, we must re-teach the ‘neighbor theology’ and cultivate the science of human relationships — the ability of all peoples, of

all kinds to live together, in the same world of peace,” she said.

Westmoreland presented Samford’s top student awards to: Jordan Douglas Ross, of Collierville, Tenn., the President’s Cup for the highest academic average; Justin Kyle Young, of Tupelo, Miss., the Velma Wright Irons Award for the second highest average; and Jane Marie Hutcheson, of Montgomery, the John C. Pittman Spirit Award.

Westmoreland also recognized Birmingham businessman, philanthropist and community leader Shelley Stewart as an alumnus honoris causa, making him an honorary member of the class of 2013. Westmoreland cited the president and chief executive officer of o2 Ideas corporate communications firm for his “service to community and country and commitment to the cause of education.”

Graduation exercises for Samford’s Brock School of Business, Cumberland School of Law, Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing and McWhorter School of Pharmacy were held May 17. Graduates of Beeson Divinity School received diplomas in a graduation and consecration service May 8.

During the programs eight faculty members were introduced as retiring this year: Myralyn Allgood, Joe Blackburn, Ken Brazil, Jon Clemmensen, Charlotte Coleman, Chris Gillespie, Penny Marler and Jack Nelson.

Commencement weekend activity also included a graduation prayer breakfast honoring all seniors. (Samford)

**“Faith in yourself is important — especially when no one else shares your vision and dreams.”**

**Carolyn Maull McKinstry**  
president, Sixteenth Street Foundation

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 2

## Explore the Bible

By Douglas K. Wilson Jr.  
Dean, School of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

### IS THIS REALLY HAPPENING TO ME?

**Job 1:1-3, 8-11, 20-22; 2:7, 9-10**

During the summer quarter, the Bible studies in this series are drawn from two wisdom books in the Old Testament: Job and Ecclesiastes. The first demonstrates the goodness, righteousness and mercy of God in the midst of human suffering, an issue that is often considered in Christian apologetics. The other considers the temporary nature of life from a humanistic point of view. From both books, we must discern wisely while making sense of life.

"Why ME?" is the title of the first unit, based on the Book of Job. While this may seem like a selfish question, unworthy of Christian consideration, believers must acknowledge that this is a real question asked by real believers. David asks the question in Psalm 22, and Jesus offers an Aramaic version of the same while on the cross: "Why have you forsaken me?" We are, in fact, becoming conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:28-29).

### Acknowledge Your Limits (1:1-3)

When suffering personal loss, we generally experience stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. On the other hand, when someone we know experiences difficult times, we often exhibit one of several responses: compassion, conviction, condemnation or pontification. Seldom do we recognize the limitations of our own perspectives. Frequently, we air our opinions without seeking direction from the Lord.

The opening verses of Job introduce the reader to a historical person (Ezek. 14:14, 20), a man blessed with material wealth and with a relatively large family. Job is also a man of faith, serving as a family priest, offering weekly sacrifices on behalf of his adult children (1:4-5). Though his knowledge of his children's actions and attitudes was limited, Job sought to atone for their sins. His great concern was that they had cursed God (perhaps something passed down from their mother — 2:9-10).

### Seek Heaven's Honor (1:8)

This next section offers a glimpse into the supernatural realm, a view to which Job was not privy. Neither are we when suffering or consoling those who suffer. Like Job's friends in later chapters, we must avoid the temptation to explain away suffering.

Speculation abounds regarding the nature of the encounter between God and Satan here. Details are lacking as to the actual location. Was this in Heaven or in the midst of other worshippers like Job? Who are the "sons of God" here? In Job 1:6 (also 2:1 and 38:7), the phrase "sons of God" was translated "angels" by Jewish scholars into Greek. This phrase does not always refer to celestial beings. The Greek Old Testament, for example, does not translate "sons of God" in Genesis 6:2-4 as "angels," but simply as "sons of God."

### Expect Faith's Challenge (1:9-11)

Satan is known by many names, including the "accuser of the brethren" (Rev. 12:10). Unlike the Holy Spirit, who convicts for the purpose of repentance and faith, the enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10a).

During this supernatural encounter, Satan accuses Job of reverential fear because of God's provisions. He expresses a challenge by accusing God and assuming that Job would curse God if he lost his possessions. God, knowing the end from the beginning, grants Satan permission to test Job.

### Respond with Faith (1:20-22; 2:7, 9-10)

In rapid fire succession, Job received wave after wave of bad news: your farming equipment is stolen and your crops are destroyed, your transportation is gone and your workers are dead, and you need to prepare a funeral for your 10 children. Job tore his clothing as a sign of mourning. He shaved his head to demonstrate his grief. Lifting up his hands, he worshipped. Though he lost every worldly item that he held dear, he blessed the name of the LORD. Will you? ❏

## Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard  
Assistant Professor of Religion, Samford University

### GOD BEGINS THE STORY

**Genesis 1:1, 26-27; 2:15-17; 3:6-7, 14-19, 23-24**

#### God Creates (1:1, 26-27)

What images sprang to life in the minds of ancient Israelites when they heard the story of God's creative work? As a person fascinated with the natural world, I confess that the words of Genesis 1 immediately turn my mind to the glorious vistas of creation on display in places like Yosemite Valley or the Grand Canyon or to the wondrous images of space captured by telescopes humans have placed in Earth's orbit. Even as my mind's eye savors these tremendous sights, though, I know that an ancient Israelite would have conjured up quite different images. Strange though it may seem to us, through the seven-day account of creation, that Israelite man or woman would have pictured the construction of a temple.

Scholars have noted that Israel's ancient neighbors often imagined that their gods built temples for themselves, taking seven days to do so and installing upon their completion icons of themselves that would preside over the temples in their place. In the structure of Genesis 1, Israel would have heard echoes of this seven-day temple construction. No mere temple could serve as God's dwelling place, though. As God declares in Isaiah 66:1-2, "Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?" A house fit for God could only be one He constructed. Thus He says before these questions, "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool," and after, "Has not My hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" The full cosmos itself is the temple God has constructed for Himself.

Genesis 1 is the account of God's constructing His temple. Interestingly, this text also recalls the icons placed by the gods in their temples. As the culmination of God's creation in Genesis 1, God makes human beings "in His image" and installs them to exercise dominion over His creation. Images of gods "made by human hands" receive nothing but scorn in the biblical text, but here, the man and woman are made by God Himself and reflect His own majesty.

ing but scorn in the biblical text, but here, the man and woman are made by God Himself and reflect His own majesty.

#### Humanity Rebels (2:15-17; 3:6-7)

While humanity is said in Genesis to reflect the very image of God, humans were also meant to rely on God in creaturely dependence. The focus of this dependence is found in the prohibition against eating from the tree of knowledge. The expression "knowledge of good and evil" (literally, "knowledge, good and evil") has been a source of tremendous debate. Some light is shed on the meaning of the phrase, though, by a parallel usage in Deuteronomy 1:39. There, God declares He will take into the promised land not the exodus generation but their children, "who do not know good and evil." God contrasts these children who will simply hear God's command and obey with their parents who chose to size up the land and its difficulties for themselves and ultimately disobeyed.

Unfortunately, the first couple acts in the same fashion as the wilderness wanderers. Charged to trust in God's command and obey, they instead size up the delights of the tree for themselves and ultimately choose to eat.

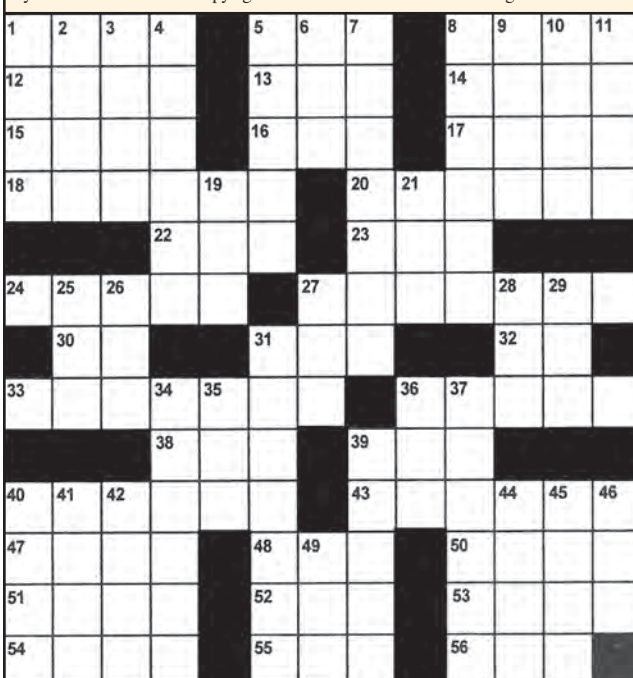
#### Sin Has Consequences (3:14-19, 23-24)

With the eating of the fruit, the bonds of dependence that once joined the humans to God, to one another and even to creation are broken. The former innocence of nakedness has become a source of shame and embarrassment. Walking with God in the garden is now replaced by hiding and accusation. Finally, the terrible effects of this ill-conceived bid for independence are sealed upon both creature and creation in the form of the curse.

It is a thoroughly depressing scene, yet it is one that is not altogether without hope. The first couple is banished, but they are not killed. The ground is cursed, but it can still be worked. And while the Tree of Life is now guarded and set beyond the first couple's reach, it remains tantalizingly present in the garden, waiting for the moment when God would once again offer its blessing of immortality to humanity. ❏

## Christian Crossword

By Janet W. Adkins Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

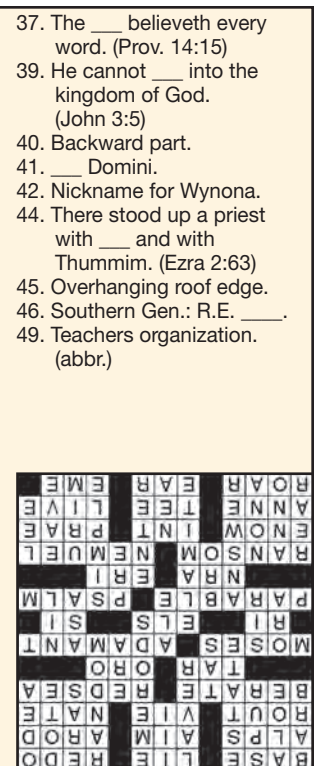


### Across

- And \_\_\_\_\_ things of the world ... hath God chosen. (1 Cor. 1:28)
- He maketh me to \_\_\_\_\_ down in green pastures. (Ps. 23:2)
- Redecorate.
- Swiss mountains.
- Intent.
- Of \_\_\_\_\_ the family of the Arodites. (Num. 26:17)
- To drive out.
- Compete.
- Nathaniel to his friends.
- Scold severely.
- King Solomon made a navy of ships ... on the shore of the \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Kings 9:26; 2 words)
- Pitch.
- Spanish gold.
- She called his name \_\_\_\_\_ because I drew him out of the water. (Ex. 2:10)
- As an \_\_\_\_\_ harder than flint have I made thy forehead. (Ezek. 3:9)
- Rhode Island. (abbr.)
- Elevated trains.
- Yes. (Spanish)
- I will incline mine ear to a \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 49:4)
- A \_\_\_\_\_ of David.
- National Rifle Association.
- A son of God. (Gen. 46:16)
- Who gave himself a \_\_\_\_\_ for all. (1 Tim. 2:6)
- And the sons of Eliab; \_\_\_\_\_, and Dathan. (Num. 26:9)
- Sufficient. (archaic)
- Money earned on account. (abbr.)
- \_\_\_\_\_torian: Roman body guard.
- British princess.
- Golf peg.
- If a man die, shall he \_\_\_\_\_ again? (Job 14:14)
- The young lions \_\_\_\_\_ after their prey. (Ps. 104:21)
- First the blade, then the \_\_\_\_\_. (Mark 4:28)
- Crisis: \_\_\_\_\_rgency.

### Down

- A cutting remark.
- Medicinal plant.
- Prod.
- That he might know your \_\_\_\_\_, and comfort your hearts. (Col. 4:8)
- Thou shalt also make a \_\_\_\_\_ of brass. (Ex. 30:18)
- Roman numeral 3.
- The hand of the Lord ... smote them with \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Sam. 5:6)
- Chosen in no specific pattern.
- Historical periods.
- A sword is upon the liars; and they shall \_\_\_\_\_. (Jer. 50:36)
- Greek auditoriums.
- British farewells.
- Equal Rights Amendment.
- Mouth.
- \_\_\_\_\_, we would see Jesus. (John 12:21)
- Pub drink.
- \_\_\_\_\_ did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. (1 Kings 15:11)
- Nothing.
- Inhabitant of Elam.
- A soft \_\_\_\_\_ turneth away wrath. (Prov. 15:1)
- Sibling.
- Earlier. (prefix)



## Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

### Vermont third state to legalize assisted suicide

MONTPELIER, Vt. — Vermont became the third state in the country to enact physician-assisted suicide when Gov. Peter Shumlin, a Democrat, signed legislation May 20.

It joins Oregon and Washington as the only states to permit terminally ill citizens to take their own lives by using lethal drug doses prescribed by doctors.

The New England state, however, is the first to legalize assisted suicide through the legislature. Oregon and Washington both approved the practice in voter initiatives.

The new law means Vermont residents with terminal illnesses “at the end of their lives now have control over their own destinies,” Shumlin said on Twitter.

Opponents of assisted suicide warned the measure threatens the freedom and lives of defenseless people. They said Vermont’s safeguards against abuse are even weaker than those in Oregon’s law, the first one to gain approval.

The law “provides incentives for physicians and even family members to pressure vulnerable people into dying for the convenience of others,” said Charmaine Yoest, president of Americans United for Life.

Oregon reported a record 77 assisted suicides in 2012.

Since the law was enacted in 1997, there have been 673 assisted suicides recorded, according to the Oregon Public Health Division.

Washington reported 70 assisted suicides after taking lethal drugs in 2011, the most recent year for which statistics are available. A total of 157 assisted suicides have been reported in the state since legalization.

### Immigration reform bill drops same-sex provisions

WASHINGTON — A U.S. Senate committee has approved immigration reform legislation without including provisions for same-sex partners opposed by Southern Baptist and other evangelical Christian leaders.

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 13–5 on May 21 for a bill designed to provide broad reform for a system that seemingly everyone acknowledges is badly broken.

The lack of enforcement of the current system has resulted in an estimated 11 to 12 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States illegally.

It appeared support for the bill from many evangelicals, conservatives and Republicans would have vanished had the controversial topic of same-sex partners been interjected by the committee.

After recognizing the threat to passage of the overall bill, Sen. Patrick Leahy, D.-Vt., chairman of the Judiciary Committee, withdrew before a final committee vote his amendments supported by homosexual rights organizations.

One of Leahy’s amendments would have recognized for immigration purposes a same-sex “marriage” that is legal in a state or foreign country.

His other amendment would have enabled a same-sex partner of an American citizen to gain legal residency in the same way a husband or wife of a citizen does.



### SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

#### ► Third Samford Student Wins Prestigious Fulbright Honor:

A third Samford University student has earned a 2013 Fulbright honor. The U.S.–U.K. Fulbright Commission has chosen freshman political science major, Beeson Exceptional Scholar and University Fellows honors student Laura Ann Prickett to take part in the 2013



PRICKET

Fulbright Summer Institute at England’s University of Bristol in June. Samford senior Chase Trautwein and 2012 alumna Samantha McFarland recently were selected to serve as Fulbright English Teaching Assistants in Germany starting in the fall.

The Fulbright Summer Institute is one of the world’s most prestigious and selective summer scholarship programs. Prickett, of Decatur, was selected from a strong applicant pool to experience the U.K. in the four-week summer program. During her stay at Bristol, she will study the slave trade with professors from all three continents involved in the historical triangular trade — Europe, Africa and North America.

### UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

#### ► University of Mobile Presents Awards to Faculty, Staff:

The University of Mobile (UMobile) presented awards to faculty and staff to commemorate their dedication and advancement of the institution

during a luncheon April 30.

UMobile presented the Emma Frances Megginson Service Award to Mattie Easter for her dedication to UMobile and service to the community. Easter is assistant professor of nursing and coordinator of nursing admissions for the School of Nursing.

The William Megginson Teaching Award was presented to Debra Chancey for excellence of teaching inside and outside the classroom. Chancey is instructor in education in the School of Education.

The Mitford Ray Megginson Research Award was presented to Ted Mashburn for published works that enhance his professional field. Mashburn is associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and professor of humanities.

UMobile also rewarded three faculty members for career advancement, granting tenure to Alan Wayne Miller, dean of the Center for Performing Arts/School of Music and dean of the School of Worship Leadership, and promoting Troy L. Henderson to associate professor of mathematics in the College of Arts and Sciences and Brenda R. Chastain to assistant professor of education in the School of Education.

Additionally, UMobile granted service awards to faculty and staff. J.B. Locke received the twenty-five year service award.

Diann Carithers, Mitch Davis, Kathy Dean, Kim Fobes, Pam Miller and Shirley Sutterfield received the twenty year service award.

UMobile President Mark Foley, Calvester Marks, Haley Rodgers and Donna Wilkins received the fifteen year service award.

Roger Breland, James Gilley, Metra Larkin, Latanya McGadney, Alan Miller, Jeffrey Quiett and Rusty Roberts received the ten year service award.

Brenda Chastain, Scott Dearmon, Danette Irwin, Lynnelle Kahal-

ley, Sarah Noble, Bob Olsen, Lesa Reed, Melanie Rice, Stephen Schuler, Brad Swiger, Dominique Tandy and D.J. “Trey” Taulbee received the five year service award.

### JUDSON COLLEGE

#### ► Judson College Lady Eagles Softball Team Celebrates Season:

Judson College softball coach Lee Jones said despite the larger number of games cancelled during this rainy spring, the Judson Lady Eagles team ended the season with a 14–18 record and ranked 10th in the United States Collegiate Athletic Association.

“Our program was young with 10 freshmen among the 22 players this season,” Jones said. “But everyone played their best and we’re proud of our team.”

The Eagles managed to play close games against several teams in the NAIA and NCAA D-III conferences. Jones said he’s busy recruiting new players for next season and believes the team will continue to excel.

► Phenix City Minister Wins Judson College Golf Tournament: Alabama Baptist ministers from around the state gathered May 13–14 for Judson College’s 51st annual Ministers Golf Tournament. The tournament was played on the golf course of Marion Military Institute.

Charles Keown, music and senior adult minister of Lakewood Baptist Church, Phenix City, placed first. Steve Walley, pastor of Myrtlewood Baptist Church, placed second. Special recognition was given to Harold Newberry, minister of pastoral care at First Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove, for attending 50 of the 51 tournaments at Judson. Plans are underway for the 52nd annual tournament May 12–13, 2014, which also will be Judson’s 175th anniversary year.

## Many churchgoers not open about their faith, LifeWay Research shows

While many Christians know Scripture proclamations such as “For I am not ashamed of the gospel” (Rom. 1:16), not all churchgoers are particularly transparent or open about their faith, research reveals.

A LifeWay Research survey of Protestant churchgoers identifies “Unashamed” as one of eight attributes of discipleship that consistently show up in the lives of maturing Christians.

Being unashamed connotes a boldness to stand for one’s beliefs in conversation and lifestyle, explained Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research.

Just 14 percent of churchgoers agree with the statement: “Many people who know me are not aware I am a Christian,” while 72 percent disagree with the statement.

However, the survey also shows churchgoers often leave important elements of faith unspoken. Nearly a third (29 percent) agree “Spiritual matters do not tend to come up as a normal part of my daily conversations with other Christians,” while 50 percent disagree this is the case.

Still, the survey reveals 57 percent of churchgoers agree they openly share about difficulties they are experiencing when they talk with Christian friends.

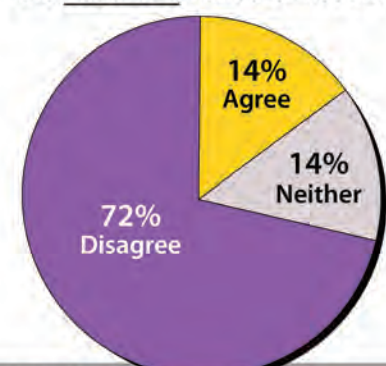
“It is easy for Christians to put their ‘church’ face on at church and pretend everything is fine,” McConnell said. “But without transparent interaction among followers of Christ, blind spots are left unattended and opportunities for change are unsupported.”

McConnell pointed out the research uncovers several characteristics that best predict being unashamed, including reading the Bible more often. Other actions that predict more spiritual maturity in being unashamed include sharing with someone how to become a Christian and being disciplined or mentored one-on-one by a more spiritually mature Christian.

LifeWay Research used the study’s data to develop a questionnaire for believers, called the Transformational Discipleship Assessment (TDA). This online evaluation delivers both individual and group reports on spiritual maturity using the eight attributes of biblical discipleship.

The TDA is available at TDA.LifeWay.com. (LifeWay)

Many people who know me are not aware I am a Christian.



LifeWay RESEARCH  
See Transformational Discipleship Assessment at TDA.LifeWay.com

# Music message



Matt Maher

Photos courtesy of Provident Label Group

## Singer/songwriter Maher shares basics of faith through music

By Leann Callaway  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

As the writer of praise songs such as “Your Grace Is Enough” and “Christ Is Risen,” Matt Maher’s work has become a staple of contemporary worship. “What I’m trying to do through music is explain the basics of faith and make it simple for people to understand why they need Christ as their Savior,” Maher said.

Through his music and message, Maher also desires to help people realize the importance of connecting with a local church and being encouraged by a community of believers.

“I think that too often people slip away from attending church regularly, because they have this lackadaisical behavior about their faith,” he said. “Many times, people don’t really understand what it means to follow Christ and live for Him.”

For Maher, ministering to college students and young adults is especially important because of his own life experiences during those years.

“In the span of like a month, my whole life changed,” he said. “When I was 20 years old, my parents were going through a divorce, and my cousin reached out and invited me to church. For the first time, I had people my age who were welcoming me into church and helping me to realize the importance of having a relationship with Jesus.”

After graduating from Arizona State University with a degree in jazz performance, Maher began leading worship at events. “When I was in college, I had some opportunities and times where I considered dropping out of school to pursue music full-time,” he said. “But I realized the best way to honor God during that time would be to stay in school and be the best student that I could be.

“By waiting and following God’s plan, I learned so many lessons in obedience, faithfulness and simplicity. I also learned that I can’t measure my life to the standard of the world, but I have to measure it by the standard of the cross.”

As doors began opening, it didn’t take long before fellow musicians were impressed with Maher’s engaging lyrics and songwriting style. In 2004,

Maher’s song “Your Grace Is Enough” started being sung in churches around the country after Chris Tomlin recorded the song on his album “Arriving.”

Since then, Tomlin and Maher have written several songs together including “I Will Rise,” “I Lift My Hands” and “White Flag.”

“With these songs, we’re looking at life through different kinds of lenses and sharing that God is most glorified when we most rely on Him,” Maher said. “I love the quote, ‘The glory of God is man fully alive.’ But I think it should actually be that the glory of God is man fully alive in Christ.

“I think songwriters and artists have a particular calling to see the beauty of God at work around them. Whether you are watching children playing, watching a documentary or reading a Scripture, inspiration can strike at any moment.”

Maher’s songwriting has garnered many awards and achievements, including two Grammy nominations. In 2009, his song “Alive Again” was selected by iTunes as the best Christian & Gospel song.

Recently, Maher recorded an updated version of the classic hymn “Holy, Holy, Holy” for a collaborative project, “Jesus, Firm Foundation: Hymns of Worship,” which features new recordings of 12 timeless hymns from recording artists such as Michael W. Smith, Brandon Heath, Newsboys, Nichole Nordeman and Casting Crowns.

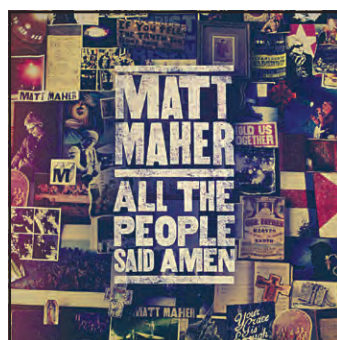
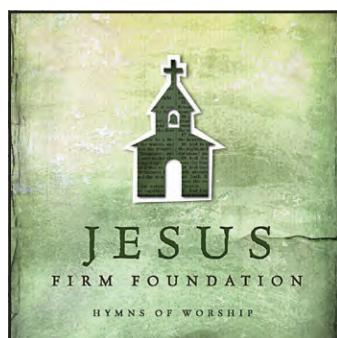
By adding a modern approach and updated style, Maher hopes young worshippers will find new meaning in traditional hymns.

“The great thing about hymns and most modern worship songs is that they are inspired by Scriptures, so we’re just re-presenting the

word of God,” Maher said.

Maher’s latest album, “All The People Said Amen,” releases April 23. This album features live versions of his most requested songs paired with studio recordings of new songs such as “Lord, I Need You” and “Burning in My Soul.”

“There’s no greater sound than hearing worshippers singing praises to God,” Maher said. “When a song engages an entire room of people, it has the ability to pull everybody together in a way that nothing else does. That is my favorite thing to experience, because God is in the midst of it all. My prayer is that these songs will be used to connect people to the message of the gospel, which is so gloriously simple that it’s simply glorious.”



## World of Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

### Canadians turning away from organized religion

TORONTO — A new national study shows that while Canada remains overwhelmingly Christian, Canadians are turning their backs on organized religion in ever greater numbers.

Results from the 2011 National Household Survey show that more than two-thirds of Canadians, or some 22 million people, said they were affiliated with a Christian denomination.

At 12.7 million, Roman Catholics were the largest single Christian group, representing 38 percent of Canadians; the second largest was the United Church, representing about 6 percent; while Anglicans were third, representing about 5 percent of the population.

Observers noted that among the survey’s most striking findings is that one in four Canadians, or 7.8 million people, reported they had no religious affiliation at all. That was up sharply from 16.5 percent from the 2001 census, and 12 percent in 1991.

The Canadian trend seems to mirror but even exceed levels of nonaffiliation in the United States. A 2012 survey from the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life pegged the ratio of religiously unaffiliated Americans at just under 20 percent.

But Pew also has found that more than one-quarter of American adults (28 percent) have left the faith in which they were raised in favor of another religion — or no religion at all.

The Canadian study showed that just more than 7 percent of the country was Muslim, Hindu, Sikh or Buddhist, an increase from 5 percent a decade earlier.

The Muslim population exceeded the 1 million mark, according to the survey, almost doubling in size for the third consecutive decade and recording the biggest increase in growth of any religion, at 60 percent since 2001.

Muslims now represent 3.2 percent of Canada’s population, nudging up from the 2 percent recorded in 2001. Immigration has largely fueled the increase, with the largest share of Muslims coming from Pakistan over the past five years, according to Statistics Canada.

Hindus made up 1.5 percent of the population (up 51 percent); and Sikhs 1.4 percent (a rise of 54 percent).

Both Christians and Jews declined as a share of the population.

### Uzbek judge sentences Protestant to corrective labor

URGENCH, Uzbekistan — Sharofat Allamova, a Protestant from Urgench in northwestern Uzbekistan, has been given one and a half years of corrective labor after being convicted of criminal charges for the “illegal production, storage, import or distribution of religious literature.”

The case’s judge, Makhmud Makhmudov, refused to talk to Forum 18 News Service.

Allamova will be placed in a low-paid state job and forced to pay 20 percent of her salary to the state during her sentence. Banned from leaving the country, she will only be permitted to travel within Uzbekistan and only with written permission.

It has been stated that the National Secret Service police compelled witnesses to make false statements against Allamova.

In other areas of Uzbekistan, fines have been imposed on people in the capital of Tashkent for meeting in a private home and having Christian literature and for carrying a personal Bible and New Testament.

Under Uzbek law, carrying a Bible is illegal.

### China now world’s largest producer of Bibles

NANJING, China — China, the world’s largest producer of textiles and manufactured goods, is now the largest producer of Bibles. In 2012, the country’s sole Bible printer, Amity Printing, produced 12 million Bibles and New Testaments.

Amity Printing started in 1988 as a joint effort of the British United Bible Societies and Amity Foundation, the charity arm of the Three Self Church. Bible production increased from 500,000 the first year to 12 million last year. Bibles are printed in more than 90 languages, and of the 88.9 million Bibles printed between 1988 and late 2011, 33.2 million were exported.

Amity’s Bibles are distributed to China’s 55,000 registered churches and anyone can purchase them there for an affordable 9.50 Yuan (\$1.50).

Christians who are found in possession of an Amity-printed Bible do not face punishment. But Christians in rural house churches far from registered congregations have a difficult time getting Bibles.