

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



June 20, 2013
Vol. 178, No. 25

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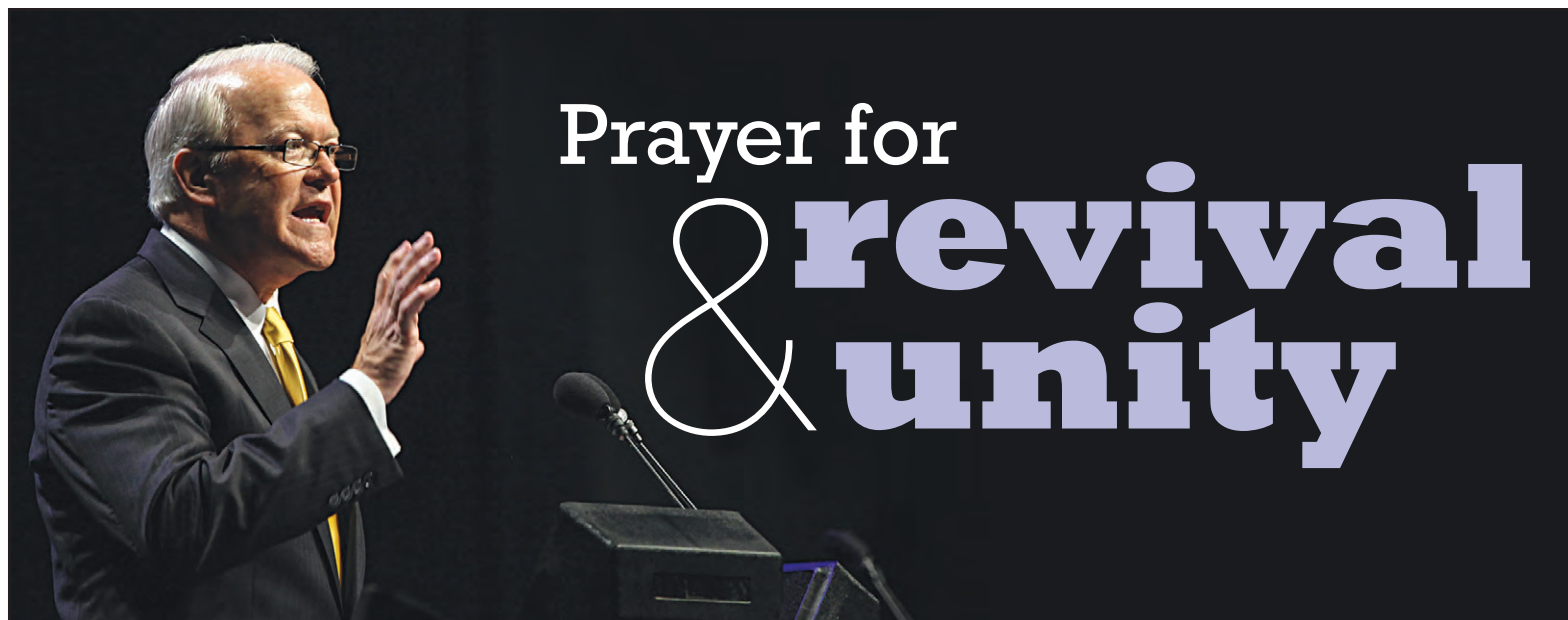


Photo by Matt Miller

Executive Committee (EC) President Frank Page gives the EC report during the opening session of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 11–12 in Houston.

Executive Committee report focuses on giving, ethnic participation, Calvinism

Instead of advancing as it ought, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in some ways is guilty of sliding backwards, declared Frank Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee (EC). The world is winning too many battles, he said, and “the evil one has splintered God’s people into so many directions that unity is at best an elusive goal.”

Page referenced the recently released information from the Annual Church Profile showing continued declines in practically every category including baptisms, average attendance and total giving (see *The Alabama Baptist*, June 13, 2013, page 7). “We desperately need the hand of God,” Page added.

Concerning giving, the issues facing Southern Baptists begin in the local church where the average Southern Baptist gives only 2.3 percent of his income to the church. The average percentage of undesignated receipts channeled to missions and ministry causes through the Cooperative Program (CP) stands at 5.41 percent.

“If the issue of biblical tithing were settled in the local church, we would not be having the issues we’re

having now,” Page said.

Earlier in the day messengers adopted a \$191,500,000 CP budget, making this the third consecutive year the proposed budget was lower than the year before. \$140 million of that total will be used by the SBC’s two missions boards; \$41.4 million will support the convention’s six seminaries and \$3.1 million will finance the work in Christian ethics and religious liberty; \$5.7 million is marked as operating budget for the EC and administrative expenses related to the annual meeting.

God’s call to tithe

If Southern Baptists were actually obeying God’s call to tithe, which Jesus confirmed, and were to give 10 percent at least and if churches were to go back to the historical patterns of giving at least 10 percent to missions causes through CP, Page said,

“friends, we would see a dramatic increase so that we could send double, triple the number of missionaries that we now do.

“If Baptists were to give just 1 percent more,” he continued, “next year we’d see \$100 million more go to support our seminaries, our mission board and all the ministries of the SBC.”

Page, who often refers to himself as the SBC’s Chief Encouragement Officer (CEO), also recapped some of the ways he has worked during the past year to help turn the convention to a more God-honoring direction in several key areas: prayer, ethnic participation and Calvinism.

Gary Frost, vice president for the North American Mission Board’s Midwest Region, and Gordon Fort, senior vice president for prayer mobilization and training at the International Mission Board, joined Page

on the platform to pray for revival and unity within the convention.

During the past year, Page has been calling for increased involvement from ethnic groups in the leadership of the convention, and he reported that he has seen some encouraging signs.

Of the Hispanic Advisory Council in particular, Page said, “Information has been received, encouragement is deepening and this fastest-growing ethnic group is stepping up to the plate in involvement in Southern Baptist missions and ministries.”

By the year 2050, Page said, there will be no majority population in the United States. Instead, everyone, including Anglos, will be part of a minority people group. “And to reach this world for Christ we need to do it together,” Page said.

Page was joined onstage by pastors A.B. Vines and K. Marshall Williams of the African American Advisory Council and professor Daniel Sanchez of the Hispanic Advisory Council to pray for unity among ethnic groups in the task

(See ‘If we will talk,’ page 7)

“To reach this world for Christ we need to do it together.”

Frank Page, president SBC Executive Committee

Trends in giving for Southern Baptists

Year	Undesignated Gifts	Total Cooperative Program (CP)	Undesignated Gifts Percentage	SBC Dollar Share of Total CP	SBC Percentage Share of Total CP
2006–07	\$8,699,869,367	\$532,705,542	6.12%	\$198,813,698	37.32%
2007–08	\$9,013,807,646	\$541,898,661	6.01%	\$198,079,154	36.55%
2008–09	\$8,961,684,260	\$520,355,537	5.81%	\$194,310,632	37.34%
2009–10	\$8,911,796,522	\$495,168,022	5.56%	\$186,520,660	37.67%
2010–11	\$9,023,216,896	\$487,884,065	5.41%	\$186,386,036	38.2%

COMMENT

‘That We May Be One’

The most important meetings that took place during the time the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) held its annual meeting in Houston, June 11–12 may not have taken place inside the meeting hall. The most important meetings may have been those sponsored by various parachurch networks that congregate around the SBC.

Inside the meeting hall SBC officials gallantly tried to emphasize traditional SBC values such as cooperation and partnership along with evangelism and missions. International Mission Board President Tom Elliff told messengers “We used to pride ourselves on cooperation. Now it seems we have lost it and we need to recover it.”

During the SBC Executive Committee (EC) report church planters and others told their stories about how God had blessed working through Southern Baptist partnerships to plant churches in underserved areas.

Repeatedly messengers prayed for these workers, emphasizing that cooperation and partnership help all Southern Baptists be a part of the evangelism and missions efforts of Baptists in the United States and around the world.

Richard Land, outgoing president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), stressed how ERLC has partnered with national Woman’s Missionary Union to provide tools to fight the spreading plague of pornography that is invading churches and destroying families. ERLC brought its information about the impact of this moral evil, and WMU provided a distribution network unmatched in SBC life.

Value of cooperation

Over and over again, SBC leaders emphasized the value of cooperation and partnership to do missions and evangelism. Even the theme Revive Us That We May Be One stressed that point.

This annual meeting was not about personalities. SBC President Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, was re-elected without opposition. There was only one candidate for first vice president and only two for second vice president. And no one seemed to be campaigning to succeed Luter when the convention gathers next year in Baltimore.

Nor were activities in the convention hall about politics — sacred or secular. Yes the messengers adopted resolutions dealing with numerous social issues now in the public square, but the tone of the resolutions was civil.

Messengers clearly stated their differences with certain policies and positions but there was no condemnation of political leaders, political parties or other Christian groups. Voices from the stage were not angry or strident. Nor did the resolutions claim that Baptists alone have a monopoly on truth.

Indeed Russell Moore, the new president of



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

ERLC, said, “We fight against demons. We do not demonize our opponents.”

Inside the meeting hall, the focus was on the program Baptists do together: on planting churches in North America; on taking the gospel message to unreached people groups around the world; on training a new generation to serve as pastors, missionaries and other Christian vocations; on providing valuable literature, study guides and training resources for church members; on helping people live out their call to missions in family life and in all other relationships; on bringing Christian values to bear on issues of society.

The value of the national convention was reaffirmed in one of the parachurch meetings. In response to a question about why we have a denomination of churches at all, David Platt, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, responded, “We would be fools not to take advantage of what we have been given.” He went on to explain that Southern Baptists sometimes lose sight of the valuable resources available to them through convention life.

Southern Baptists have resources that most Christian bodies do not have, he pointed out.

At another parachurch meeting earlier that day, the primary topic was “Truth, Trust and Testimony in a Time of Tension,” the report released in May by the Calvinism Advisory Committee appointed by EC President Frank Page to advise him as he works with Baptists of both stripes.

At the meeting, some pastors with Calvinistic leanings noted they were not sure they wanted to cooperate with non-Calvinists. It took the prodding of acknowledged SBC Calvinistic leaders Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., to move the meeting toward cooperation. Both seminary presidents acknowledged they have differ-

ences with others in the SBC but plan to cooperate as Baptists have done through the years.

Without this kind of leadership it is questionable if the study committee report would have been given opportunity to succeed. And there are still many on both sides of the question who are not sure it will work.

In these ways, the parachurch meetings were helpful to what took place on the convention floor.

Unfortunately when the conversation turned to state conventions, the responses were not as positive. Participants were told if they had to choose between participating with a state convention or the national body, to choose the national. The issues are more important and the decisions more far reaching with the national convention, panelists said.

Using his home state of North Carolina as an example, Akin said the state was becoming more supportive of the national convention. “As long as they are headed in the right direction, I am there but if they ever stop, I am gone,” he declared.

One state convention executive director who sat in on this meeting commented, “I thought I was a part of the team until this meeting.” Evidently for some, cooperation and partnership means doing things one way — their way. That is unfortunate.

It is equally unfortunate when one “partner” on the SBC team publicly questions the value, contributions or directions of

other team members. Such actions seem in direct opposition to the goal “that we all may be one.”

Southern Baptist partners include local churches, associations, state conventions and the national body. Each fulfills an important role. Appreciation and support for the role and contributions of each partner helps build cooperation and strengthen the partnership.

Roles of parachurch groups

The annual meeting of the SBC itself was a positive, uplifting meeting. It was refreshing to focus primarily on the program Baptists do together through cooperation and partnership. But a question lingers about the roles of parachurch groups that follow the annual meeting. How much are these groups using the SBC to promote their own agendas and how much are group leaders using these networks and organizations to advance their own goals?

Cooperation and partnership are important Southern Baptist values. We do our best for the cause of missions and evangelism when we encourage working together in sharing the message of Jesus Christ. Perhaps that is why Jesus prayed that His children “may be one” (John 17:31). 

**Over and over again,
SBC leaders emphasized the value of cooperation and partnership to do missions and evangelism.**



"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.

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'Lord, revive us'

SBC President Luter cries out for revival at annual meeting

America will not see revival until Christians unconditionally love the Scripture, the Savior and one another, the newly re-elected Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Fred Luter Jr. preached June 11 at the SBC annual meeting.

With his annual meeting theme of "Revive Us," drawn from John 13:34-35, Luter invoked his lyrical oration style as he called on the Lord to use Southern Baptists to birth revival.

"Therefore my cry tonight is Lord, revive us. Lord, revive us. Lord, revive us that we may be one. My brothers and my sisters, my heart's desire ... the Executive Committee's desire, is that we will cry out to God," Luter said, "Lord, revive us that our churches may be one, that our conventions may be one, that our denomination may be one."

The attentive crowd often responded with hand claps, amens and other affirmations, praising God and encouraging Luter during the 40-minute sermon.

Roadblock to revival

The roadblock to a revival, Luter said, may be that the lost world does not see Christians loving one another with the unconditional love of Christ that they profess.

"Could it be that a lot of folk do not see us loving each other?" Luter asked. "Is it possible that the reason some of the folk that we work with, that we hang out with, that we have coffee with at Starbucks, that we golf with, that we shop with, could it be that a lot of those folks are lost because they don't see the body of Christ loving one another?"

"Could it be that the reason that lost friend, that lost relative, that lost coworker, that lost neighbor, that lost classmate has not yet turned from darkness to light is because they don't see us as the body of Christ getting along?"

Friend, how is it that we say we love God, whom we've never seen, yet don't speak to our brother and sister that we see every day?"

Including the humor present in most of his sermons, Luter repeated the quaint saying, "To live above with those we love will certainly be glory. To live below with those we know, that's a whole 'nother story."

"If we want to see God revive us that we

may be one, we must have a love for the Scriptures; Southern Baptists, we must have a love for the Savior; and finally, we must have a love for the saints," he said, adding that he appreciates that Southern Baptists have long loved the Bible.

Divisions among Southern Baptists must end, Luter said, to show the world a soul-saving love.

"Because of our love for the Scriptures, we've had some strong discussion among us. Because of our love for the Scriptures, about our beliefs or what we believe in, we've had some certain things that we've had different opinions about," Luter said. "However, my brothers and sisters, the problem is while we're debating these topics, while we're discussing these topics, while we're arguing about these topics, lost men, women, boys and girls are dying and going to hell every single day.

"Our world needs to know that Jesus saves from the guttermost to the uttermost," Luter said. "So let's acknowledge the fact that there are some topics, let's acknowledge the fact that there are some issues that we just will never see eye to eye on.

"In other words, Southern Baptists, let's make the main thing the main thing. And the

main thing is that all of us must carry out the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by going into all the world and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Luter called on Southern Baptists to love across lines and categories that have been divisive.

"My brothers and my sisters, if we want to see God send revival in the Southern Baptist

Convention, I dare you ... I double dare you to start having a genuine, authentic love for each other," Luter said. "Not just those who are in your group, not just those who are in your inner circle, not just those who are in your clique, I'm talking about all the saints of God that call ourselves Southern Baptists.

"Those saints who love contemporary music, do you really love them? Those saints who love traditional music, do you really love them? Those saints who love praise songs, do you really love them?"

"Those saints who are Calvinists, do you really love them? Those saints who are not Calvinists, do you really love them? Those saints who love just a King James Version of the Bible, do you love them? Those saints who love the Holman Christian Standard Bible, do you love them? Those saints whose churches have Baptist in their name, do you love them? Those churches that don't have Baptist in their name, do you love them?"

"Do you love the saints of God enough to work together to impact lostness in America?" Luter asked. "Jesus says we should love each other like He loved us, and He loved us so much that He died for us." (BP)



Fred Luter

Photo by Thomas Graham



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Montgomery pastor Rials serves at SBC

Wade Rials, pastor of Thorington Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, collects ballots in the press room following the ballot vote for second vice president. Jared Moore, pastor of New Salem Baptist Church, Hustonville, Ky., was elected 451-223 over Don Cass, longtime pastor and denominational leader in Texas and New Mexico. Bart Barber, pastor of FBC Farmersville, Texas, was elected first vice president and Fred Luter Jr., pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, was re-elected as president. Other Alabamians serving during the SBC were Brad Bakane and Candace McIntosh (Credentials Committee) and Chip Starnes and Derek Staples (Committee on Committees). (TAB)

'The story lives on'

Wanda Lee (left), executive director/treasurer of national Woman's Missionary Union, presents Gregg Fort (far right) and his wife, Donna, International Mission Board representatives in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a book about Fort's parents, who both served as missionary doctors.



Photo by Heather Pendergast

National WMU celebrates 125th anniversary at annual meeting, celebration

Missions stories from Africa, Asia and the Americas highlighted the 125th anniversary celebration of national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) during its 2013 Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting, June 9–10 at the Hilton Americas in Houston.

In addition, 2013–14 marks the 100th anniversary of missions education for girls (Girls' Auxiliary, Girls in Action and Acteens) as well as the 25th anniversary of WMU's Second Century Fund, which was birthed at WMU's centennial to fund leadership training for women worldwide.

With the theme "The story lives on," the meeting featured testimonies of missionaries

from both the International Mission Board (IMB) and the North American Mission Board (NAMB), birthday gifts from other denominational leaders and WMU friends and video greetings from WMU partners around the world.

Gregg Fort, an IMB representative in Zimbabwe, told WMU women, "With over 200 years of missionary experience in our immediate family, [the Forts] owe a tremendous amount to WMU."

Fort's parents are Wana Ann Fort and the late Milton Giles Fort Jr., who served as medical representatives in Zimbabwe for nearly 36 years.

Gregg Fort and his wife, Donna, recounted stories of God's work in a spiritually dark area of Zimbabwe where until recently no evangelical churches existed. There are now 14 churches in the region.

WMU executive director/treasurer Wanda Lee presented Wana Ann Fort and writer Kim

Davis with an author's copy of their new book "A Thousand Times Yes," which tells about the faithfulness of three generations of the Fort family.

Randy and Debbie M., IMB representatives in South Asia, told how they distribute audio devices with recordings of the Bible in the country's native languages and follow up with discipleship training. As a result, they have seen "over 600 people come into the Kingdom and 60 people become pastors," Randy said.

Missions education

IMB representative Jackie Bursmeyer, who has served in Chile for 35 years, attended the 50th anniversary of GAs (Girls in Action) when she was 13. Now celebrating the 100th anniversary of the group, she said, "I don't think I'd be on the field today if not for your prayers and missions education."

Patrick Coats, a NAMB church planter in Homestead, Fla., said, "God tackled [him] into

the ministry." He started a community Bible study at a local theater that eventually turned into a church as more and more people began attending.

Each representative, as well as others, expressed thanks for the ways WMU touched their lives through GAs, RAs (Royal Ambassadors program for boys) and Acteens and through the prayers and encouragement of WMU members.

In other business:

► Sook Jae Lee, co-executive director of Korea Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, received this year's Dellanna West O'Brien Award for Women's Leadership, named in honor of the past WMU executive director.

► WMU representatives re-elected Debby Akerman of South Carolina as WMU president and Rosalie Hunt of Alabama as WMU recording secretary for 2013–14.

Next year's WMU annual meeting is set for June 8–9 in Baltimore. (BP)

Korean WMU leader honors Alabama WMU for investment in her life



Photo by Suzanne Reece

Candace McIntosh (right) receives an honor for Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) from Sook Jae Lee, co-executive director of Korea Baptist WMU.

Five leaders from Korea Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) extended birthday greetings from themselves and the Asian Baptist Women's Union to national WMU, headquartered in Birmingham. They also presented awards and gifts to the national office as well as Alabama WMU.

Sook Jae Lee, co-executive director of Korea Baptist WMU (KBWMU), said that since its founding in 1954 the organization has appreciated the help of Southern Baptist missionaries and partnerships with the national and state WMUs. "We always appreciate what they have done, and thank God for sending these missionaries to Korea," Sook Jae Lee said. "Thank you for your prayers and giving for missions in Korea. ... [We are] who we are today because of (the) partnerships."

"We can never pay you back for what you have done for us, but we believe God will reward you greatly," she said through tears. "We hope to pass on this blessing that you have given us to Korea, Asia and the rest of the world for God's kingdom enlargement."

Soon Shil Beck, executive director of KBWMU, presented Wanda Lee, executive director/treasurer of national WMU, with a plaque of appreciation and a gift of \$3,000 to the Second Century Fund and the WMU

Foundation. Sook Jae Lee presented another plaque of appreciation to the Alabama WMU for their sisterhood and partnership with Korea Baptist WMU from 1992–97 and a gift of \$2,000 to national WMU in honor of Alabama WMU.

Candace McIntosh, executive director of Alabama WMU, said it was humbling to receive the plaque from Sook Jae Lee.

"Twenty years after she interned with (then-executive director of Alabama WMU) Beverly Miller, she cared enough to acknowledge that internship as she is now transitioning her ministry and reflecting back on her own ministry," McIntosh said. "It was a reminder for me that the things we do matter so much, that when we take the time to invest in one person, we never know the magnitude or impact we will have."

Sook Jae Lee said to the WMU leaders, "Whenever we think of you, we are always grateful and overwhelmed because of your love and prayers for us, for the cause of missions."

"I am especially grateful for the leadership of Wanda Lee. For the past 17 years serving as the executive director for WMU in Korea, I have enjoyed getting to know her as a sister and dear friend." (BP, TAB)



Photo by Suzanne Reece

National Acteen Panelist Kelly Harris (left), a member of FBC Alexander City, shares her testimony during the national WMU celebration and annual meeting June 9.

FBC Alexander City Acteen shares at national WMU meeting

Kelly Harris, a member of First Baptist Church, Alexander City, was one of six National Acteen Panelists who addressed the national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) celebration and annual meeting June 9. She shared the following:

Acteens has definitely played an important role in my life for the past six years. It started out as another time to hang out with my friends, but it turned into so much more. We quickly realized that the point of Acteens was not to serve ourselves but to serve others. The lessons and skills I have learned in Acteens have changed my life forever.

When I joined my Acteens group, I knew we would continue missions education. Little did I know we would start to take it to the next level. Not only did we learn about and pray for missionaries, but we actually became missionaries in our school, in our community, in our state and even in neighboring states. We learned to allow God to lead us far from our comfort zones. We learned it was going to be OK because God was with us every step of the way.

Acteens also changed the way I viewed people. Through Acteens I began to see people I had often overlooked. My Acteens leader is constantly opening our eyes to things we still don't notice. For example, at our local Chinese restaurant she noticed the owner's kids running around. These three children had never seen the inside of a church before she brought them. Now they are soaking up Jesus like a sponge. We hope eventually they will accept Christ and minister to their parents and their Buddhist grandmother.

Not only am I learning to notice people different from me, I am beginning to view the people I see every day in a new light too. Sometimes we tend to steer clear from kids at school that we should be ministering to. We see their faults and the mess ups and don't want to be associated with them. But in all reality,

Jesus called us to show these kids His love and grace. I am learning to do this as well. Acteens has expanded my vision through the eyes of God.

Acteens changed my prayer life. When I started Acteens I was terrified to pray in front of other people and even more scared to share some of my prayer requests. Acteens developed my trust in fellow Christians and helped me learn how to talk to God in front of others. It also changed the way I pray when I'm alone. I used to spend all my prayers asking for things to be done or given to me, but Acteens taught me the importance of praising God, asking for His will to be done and taking time to be still and listen to Him.

Important issues

Acteens showed me two very important issues that are now dear to my heart. Through Acteens Camp we learned about refugees. Now for the past two spring breaks I have had the opportunity to work with these precious people. Acteens has also shown me the epidemic of human trafficking. I, as a girl, now know the signs and tactics people use to get girls. I also am learning how to approach and fix the problem. We must spread awareness to stop the demand but must also minister to the victims who have been rescued. Without Acteens I probably would have never realized these two groups of people existed.

Lastly Acteens changed my relationship with God. I've learned to trust God in all aspects of my life and to recognize His presence everywhere I go. I now listen and watch for Him to guide my path because I know only His path is worth following.

So if you had asked me six years ago where I thought Acteens would have taken me, I would have never dreamed this is where I'd be. ... I am thankful that He has given me the opportunity of sharing how Acteens has made me the Christian I am today and for letting me stress the importance of Acteens in a young lady's life. 🙏

Meeting needs

WMU focuses on engaging churches in missions

For 125 years, Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) has focused on a singular purpose of engaging churches in missions, Wanda S. Lee, executive director of national WMU, told messengers to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston.

"Throughout our history, addressing critical needs facing each generation has also been a part of our work," Lee said. "From hunger to AIDS to violence and more, WMU has tried to raise the level of awareness of each issue within the church while offering suggestions for how Christians should respond."

Over the past three years, WMU has focused attention and provided resources to help churches address various aspects of human exploitation, such as bullying, human trafficking and exploiting the environment.

This year, Lee said WMU is focusing on "one of the most significant issues related to human exploitation that is affecting our families and churches ... the issue of pornography."

In partnership with the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and Jay Dennis, pastor

of First Baptist Church at the Mall, Lakeland, Fla., WMU launched the Join One Million Men in the War Against Pornography campaign at the meeting in Houston.

"Through this campaign, we are calling out 1 million men to live free of pornography and challenging 1 million women to commit to pray for their spouses, sons and friends as we work together to combat this evil that is destroying our families and invading our churches," Lee said.

As a church-based initiative, the campaign includes several resources produced by New Hope Publishers, including books, prayer booklets and a DVD planning guide.

Also available are a website, www.Join1MillionMen.org; a Facebook page, www.facebook.com/JoinOneMillionMen; and a free app with access to a daily Scripture and other resources to assist individual believers in the daily war against pornography.

"You may be thinking, 'Why is WMU tackling such a difficult issue?'" Lee said. "And my response would be, 'If not WMU, then who?' Paul challenges us in Ephesians 4:1 to 'walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.'" (BP)



Photo by Bill Bangham

Wanda Lee, executive director/treasurer of national WMU, speaks about the legacy of developing women leaders.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

ROSALIE HUNT SIGNS NEW BOOK ABOUT WMU HISTORY

Alabama Baptist Rosalie Hunt (left), recording secretary for national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), autographs her new book, 'We've a Story to Tell,' during the WMU celebration and annual meeting June 9 in Houston.



Photo by Matt Miller

Mike Huckabee, former governor of Arkansas and host of the Fox News show 'Huckabee,' encouraged pastors to feed their sheep, lead their sheep and bleed for their sheep during the last night of the 2013 Pastors Conference on June 10.

'Feed them, lead them'

Huckabee focuses on moral slide of America during annual SBC Pastors Conference

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee focused on the moral slide of American culture as he headlined the June 9–10 Southern Baptist Pastors Conference in Houston.

The single most important role for pastors is to feed and lead God's sheep and be prepared to bleed for them, to make sacrifices for God's church, said Huckabee, a former Southern Baptist pastor.

"Jesus is talking about good food, biblical food," Huckabee noted, lamenting that "we are living in a time of biblical ignorance."

"People who attend church, especially young people, have an extraordinary lack of biblical depth," he said. "According to recent surveys, the kids who grow up in our evangelical churches do not really know the biblical definition of marriage, and that really does concern me."

"We need to be clear that, when holy matrimony is formed into an unholy pretzel, twisted into perversion — and when the military and the Boy Scouts become test labs for social experiments — we need to be very clear that, male and female, [God] created them," Huckabee said.

Pastors also must "lead the sheep," and that includes equipping and empowering church members to live Christ-like lives, Huckabee said.

The biblical model of leadership is seen in biblical marriage, Huckabee said. The purpose of a father and mother is to create the next generation, and then train them to become the replacements who are no longer dependent upon their parents, but who can have and train children who are independent themselves.

"Feed them, lead them. And then it's important that we're willing to bleed," Huckabee said, noting pastoral ministry requires personal sacrifice. "The toughest question of all is: Are we willing to pay a price? Are we willing to take a risk?"

'I stick with Jesus'

Clarifying that the hope of America is not in the next election, Huckabee said, "I would never suggest, ever, that you would turn your pulpit into some political podium. But I would urge that the pulpit would be a powerful, prophetic and purposeful punch in the gut to a culture that is ungodly and unholy."

Regarding evangelicals' stance on social and moral issues, Huckabee said some in the Republican Party are saying "that maybe we need to dial it back a little bit when it comes to issues like the sanctity of life and the holiness of marriage, and maybe just ease off."

The crowd erupted into sustained applause when Huckabee said, "Well, I've got a news flash for the GOP: I plan to take my last ride in life on a white horse, not on an elephant

and not on a donkey. And I will stick with the Word of God. And if the party, any party, goes a different way, I stick with Jesus. I believe He is forever."

Along with Huckabee's reminders to stand strong on moral and ethical issues, pastors also were encouraged to stick with their ministry during difficult times.

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, said affliction will come but God will provide the strength to make it through it.

Preaching from Psalm 34, Luter said even King David, who was considered a man after God's own heart, faced affliction.

"In just a few short verses, David has gone from divine preservation to human persecution," Luter said, noting that no one in ministry is exempt from hardships.

However, "when it looks like you're about to go under, God can put a 'but' in your situation," Luter pointed out. "Your affliction is temporary. ... But always remember pastors and pastors' wives, this too shall pass."

Preaching from 2 Timothy 4:9–18, Bruce Frank, pastor of Biltmore Baptist Church, Arden, N.C., acknowledged that many clergy are burned out or stressed in their ministry.

"You are going to be lonely, tired, angry and impatient at times," Frank said. "I have a question for you, though: 'Is ministry still worship for you?'"

"[A]re you in awe of Jesus and are you allowing God's message of salvation to change you daily?" Frank asked. "When Paul looks in the mirror, he sees not a pastor or a church planter, but who Christ is and what Christ has done in his life."

John Bisagno, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church, Houston, urged ministers to focus on four areas so they will finish well: moral issues, money, people and a realistic understanding of success in ministry.

Moral issues — Bisagno told ministers to guard their eyes, love their wives and maintain correct priorities.

Money — Follow Matthew 6:33 in seeking first the Kingdom of the Lord before anything else, Bisagno said. Specifically, he said not to touch church money, to have no "shady" dealings with the church credit card and never to discuss the amount of an honorarium or salary.

People — Bisagno challenged pastors to be wary of "the legalists ... faithless ... doubtful and ... self-appointed church bosses." He counseled pastors to remember their commonality, avoid their discouragement and not to re-

spond combatively. Instead, listen closely and lead wisely, he said.

Priorities — Keeping priorities in the correct order is vital, Bisagno said.

Matt Carter, pastor of Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, Texas, also picked up on the moral theme, challenging pastors to love their wives and family well.

"We want to be known as men who are not only making an impact in our ministries," Carter said, "but we want to be known as great husbands and great fathers."

Balancing family and ministry as well as leadership and preaching also garnered extra attention via panel discussions, and Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research, related statistical information to urge Southern Baptists to reclaim salt-and-light ministries and churches.

Preaching from Matthew 5, Stetzer, lead pastor of Grace Church in Hendersonville, Tenn., said salt "preserves," "creates thirst" and "needs to stay salty."

Southern Baptists were growing in the 1950s at an annual rate of about 3 percent. In the 1960s that slowed to 2 percent and then gradually to less than 1 percent in the 1990s.

Since 2000, Stetzer said: "Our growth rate is now our decline rate. This is a 50-year trend."

Stetzer said when he first started talking about this in 2003, people got angry and wrote articles criticizing him. Now, he said, "We are tracking that trend line like a Baptist tracks a buffet line."

If the trend continues, he said the SBC will be declining at 2 percent a year by 2027, and by 2050 will be down to 9 million members, the same number as in 1960.

Others speaking during the Pastors Conference were Greg Laurie, senior pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship, Riverside, Calif.; Rodney Woo, pastor of International Baptist Church in Singapore and Tim McKenzie, president and founder of On Every Word.

Gregg Matte, pastor of First Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, served as president of the Pastors Conference.

In related news, new Pastors Conference officers were elected during the meeting:

Bruce Frank, pastor of Biltmore Baptist Church, Arden, N.C., was elected president. Former Alabama Baptist pastor Clint Pressley, senior pastor of Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C., was elected vice president, and Alex Himaya, pastor of theChurch.at in Tulsa, Okla., was elected treasurer. (Compiled from BP, ABP stories)

"I would urge that the pulpit would be a powerful, prophetic and purposeful punch in the gut to a culture that is ungodly and unholy."

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee

Resolutions

approved by SBC messengers

► Recognition of Billy Graham Evangelistic Team

Encouraged participation and support for the My Hope evangelistic campaign schedule for the fall to help reach one's friends, neighbors and coworkers with the gospel of Jesus Christ as a way of expressing appreciation to Graham, George Beverly Shea and Cliff Barrows.

► Sexual Abuse of Children

Called on Southern Baptists to protect children by reporting accusations of child abuse to police and other appropriate authorities in addition to executing church discipline; urged individuals and churches to cooperate with law enforcement officials to expose and prosecute anyone who harms children and recommended churches check sexual offender databases as part of background checks done for all employees, including pastors.

► Human Trafficking

Urged churches to become informed about human trafficking and to support officials and policies that combat the problem; churches were asked to become involved in helping rescue and rehabilitate human trafficking victims.

► Mental Health Concerns and the Heart of God

Opposed stigmatization of those with mental health issues; supported research and treatment of mental health concerns and urged churches to find creative ways to minister to those struggling with mental health issues.

► Membership Policy of the Boy Scouts of America

Opposed recent changes allowing boys with homosexual preference to be members of Boy Scouts and called for removal of Scout officials who recommended or voted for the new policy; urged churches that withdraw from scouting to consider Royal Ambassadors as an alternative for their boys; and encouraged churches that remained in scouting to use the organization to present the gospel.

► Tithing, Stewardship and the CP

Encouraged Southern Baptists to tithe through their local churches in obedience to God's love and noted the financial support given through CP and special offerings underwrites Baptist missions and ministries at home and abroad.

► Recognition of the 125th Anniversary of Woman's Missionary Union

Commended WMU for faithfully supporting missions through sponsoring special offerings, through missions education and personal participation for 125 years.

► Prayer for the President

Asked churches to pray regularly and fervently for President Obama and other national, state and local officials.

► Violations of Religious Freedom and Assembly in the United States

Asked college and university administrators to stop requiring religious groups to accept leaders who do not share core religious beliefs of the sponsored group; affirmed the right of military personnel and military chaplains to worship and serve according to the dictates of their religious faith; supported employers whose religious conviction prevent them from providing employees with health care policies that include abortion and contraception.

► Danger of Age Discrimination in Health Care Rationing

Opposed any public policy that might discriminate against the elderly in accessing health care and urged churches to minister to senior adults who are homebound or in nursing homes.

► America's Growing Prison Population

Supported efforts to reduce high incarceration rates including probation and parole; affirmed efforts by churches and others to reintegrate prisoners back into society through transitional housing, vocation and drug rehabilitation and family support.

► Appreciation

Expressed gratitude to all who helped with the annual meeting.

To read the full text of the resolutions, visit www.thealabamabaptist.org and search for "SBC resolutions 2013."

'Send North America'

NAMB's Ezell calls for more missionaries, church planters

North American Mission Board (NAMB) President Kevin Ezell called on Southern Baptists to dramatically increase the number of missionaries and church planters being sent to the North American missions field.

"This year we have 600 student missionaries," Ezell told messengers during his report June 11 in Houston. "In a convention with 45,000 churches and 16 million members, that is not bad, that is pathetic. We must have 6,000 student missionaries every year."

Ezell's presentation included an overview of NAMB's strategy, spotlighted several key ministry areas and highlighted giving.

"Your generosity to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering resulted in a 1.9 percent increase in giving totaling \$57.2 million [in 2012]," Ezell said. "Thank you, Southern Baptists."

"Our mission is to penetrate lostness in North America. Our strategy is Send North America," he said.

"We seek to partner with you and your church to penetrate lostness by planting healthy, evangelistic churches," Ezell said, reporting that 929 new Southern Baptist churches were planted in 2012, with another 155 joining the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) by affiliation. He noted that 2,589 churches have become engaged in the Send North America strategy.

"Churches plant churches, and we only plant Southern Baptist churches," Ezell said. "We have raised the bar on our church planter assessment and all planters must affirm the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 and give [through] the Cooperative Program and (to) other Great Commission [causes]."

A full 81 percent of people in North America live in cities, Ezell said as he shared that NAMB has identified 32 Send North America cities on which to focus, with a missionary serving as a Send City coordinator deployed to each one.

Additionally NAMB's goal is to have at least one church-planting catalyst for each 1 million people in North America. Ezell said this is not a hard rule, noting the adjustment in Alaska with a total population of 750,000 people but with three major cit-

ies. There will be three catalysts in Alaska.

On balance, in states like Mississippi where there is one SBC church for every 1,385 people, Ezell said Southern Baptists have done well. But he said resources and priorities must recognize places like New Jersey where there is one church for every 78,760 people, or Canada with one church for every 115,040.

A combination of increasing the birth rate of church plants and decreasing the death rate of existing churches is needed, Ezell said, not for the sake of church numbers but for the people those churches will reach — people like Stephanie Barbaro of Detroit who was featured in a video shown at the convention and who came to faith through the ministry of Lakepointe Community Church and planter Scott Blanchard.

"We need a thousand more Scotts because there are a million more Stephanies," Ezell said, introducing Blanchard and his wife, Karen. Lakepointe launched in 2010 and has baptized more than 60 people.

Ezell said, "We know where the next generation of missionaries are: They are in your churches." He introduced NAMB's "Farm System," a strategy to help reach a goal of 15,000 new church plants in 10 years.

The next level in the Farm System — church planting interns — must grow from the current 125 to 3,000 annually. Church planter apprentices, NAMB's final level of training before a missionary becomes a church planter, need to increase from the current 125 apprentices to 1,500 per year in order to meet the need for 1,500 church plants each year.

To help existing churches, Ezell pointed to church revitalization. "I pray your church can come alongside [dying churches] and help bring them back to health," he said, adding that dying churches can become legacy church plants, passing on their resources.

Ezell also introduced NAMB's new prayer initiative, TenTwo, inviting messengers to join NAMB in praying Luke 10:2 at 10:02 in the morning or evening and to focus on Oct. 2 as an intentional day of prayer for workers for the harvest. (BP)



EZELL

'If we will talk to each other ... we will see a unity,' Page says

(continued from page 1)
of accomplishing the Great Commission.

Another topic of concern to the convention, Page said, has been disagreements over Calvinism that have led to serious divisions. Page assembled an advisory committee on Calvinism last year, not knowing if any progress could be made.

'Talking to each other'

The committee, Page said, endeavored to "start talking to each other and not about each other and at each other."

What they found, he said, is that there are "massive areas, shocking to see, upon which we do agree. In fact, in talking with one another we began to develop friendships

and we began realizing that we agree far more than we thought we did."

The Calvinism committee released a report in late May calling on Southern Baptists to stand together for the Great Commission despite theological differences, and Page exhorted messengers to "live by the Christ-like principles" found in the report (see *The Alabama Baptist*, June 6, 2013, pages 4-5).

"I am not naïve. I know there will continue to be problems and difficulties, but I am convinced that if we will talk to each other, together we will see a unity that will allow us to win more men, women, boys and girls to Christ than ever before," Page said.

Members of the Calvinism advisory group stood with Page on the platform.

Other EC recommendations approved by the messengers:

- broadened potential clients for GuideStone Financial Services beyond the SBC to include "like-minded individuals."

- eliminated the District of Columbia's automatic representation on SBC boards, agencies, commissions and committees. The District of Columbia is now combined with Maryland and Delaware as a "defined territory" for representation purposes.

- resolution of appreciation for Richard Land, the recently retired head of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. (BP, TAB)

International Mission Board President Tom Elliff delivers his report to the Southern Baptist Convention, giving messengers an update on missions work throughout the world.

'Totally His'



Photo by Thomas Graham

Elliff asks Baptists to commit to missions during time of greatest lostness

International Mission Board (IMB) President Tom Elliff challenged Southern Baptists to commit to being "Totally His" and cooperate for the sake of the gospel during the mission board's report at the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) annual meeting in Houston.

Now is the time of greatest lostness in the world, Elliff said, when nearly 1 billion people are likely to die without ever hearing the gospel in a way they can understand. But also during this time, access has never been easier and resources have never been more abundant.

"God has given Southern Baptists something incredible, and that is an understanding of what it means to cooperate," Elliff said. "The essence of [the Cooperative Program (CP)] is that we found out how to work together. Are we going to let that slide? Are we going to retrench in this day of the world's greatest lostness? Are we going to refuse to sacrifice?"

Elliff mentioned five new IMB engagement initiatives: Global Connect, Global Strategic Mobilization, Ready Reserves, Macedonian Project and School of Prayer for All Nations, all of which give Southern Baptists more ways to partner with IMB in reaching the lost.

'Sober reality'

Elliff thanked Southern Baptists for the \$149.3 million given to international missions in 2012 through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, the third-highest amount given in the offering's 124-year history.

Southern Baptists also gave \$96.6 million dollars to IMB through the CP. Lottie Moon and CP dollars support the 4,874 Southern Baptist representatives and their 4,000 children serving in 144 countries. But, Elliff noted, "the sober reality" is that support for CP has been declining and IMB is still short of their budget.

"If we intend to keep missions personnel on the field, it is imperative for us to learn what it means to give ... sacrificially," Elliff said.

IMB representatives and their partners saw more than 337,000 people profess faith in Jesus in 2012, more than 266,000 people confessing Christ through baptism and about 24,000 new churches planted.

Southern Baptists engaged 133 people groups for the first time in 2012, and 1,827 Southern Baptist churches and entities are in the process of committing to embrace a people group.

During his presentation, Elliff began telling a story that spans decades, lives and continents. At the heart of this story, he said, are two issues: first, people who are totally His, and second, people who have learned "the secret" of cooperating.

The story began in a church: Paramount Baptist Church, Amarillo, Texas. Sam Cordell had been taught about missions by his church and even went on two international missions trips. One day, Cordell was intrigued by his church's planned missions trip to Montana and decided to join the team.

He met his future wife, Debbie, there, and it wasn't long before the couple was doing missions together. They became church planters in Montana. Then they became burdened for the world and were appointed as IMB representatives to South America in 1991, first serving in Chile then in Ecuador where they worked with the Quichua Indians.

Gary Hollingsworth, former pastor of First Baptist Church, Trussville, and now pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark., spoke about how both churches had partnered with the Cordells in Ecuador.

For Immanuel Baptist, getting involved in missions was "our first step in terms of really going beyond giving," Hollingsworth said.

Through the work of partners like Immanuel

Baptist and the Cordells, "God began to bless among the Quichua," Elliff said. In less than a decade, Cordell had discipled and trained 200 Quichua believers to share the gospel and trained 41 Quichua to plant churches. In the process, one of the men began to stand out — Cebrián Bolívar, who planted and led 26 churches himself.

'We're to be pioneers'

After some time, the Cordells began to realize their work among the Quichua was drawing to a close, and they began to think about serving in another area of the world.

"We're not to be settlers, we're to be pioneers," Elliff said. "We're not to just settle down and enjoy the light."

When the Cordells announced they were leaving South America for southern Asia, Bolívar asked if he could come with them. Bolívar was not an obvious choice as an overseas worker — he grew up on a small farm in the Andes Mountains where farmers eke out a meager income.

But he has now been working in southern Asia with Sam Cordell for nearly two years. Even with the Quichua believers bonding together, there was not enough money to fully support Bolívar, Sam Cordell said. But Immanuel Baptist has helped support him as well.

The Cordells' story is not the story of just one church or one man and his wife, Elliff said. It is the story of Southern Baptists cooperating to touch the ends of the earth.

"Would it not be the case that if we would give ourselves to putting our hot hearts around the stackpole of international missions that God might smile on Southern Baptists and give us more days?" Elliff asked. "Oh, God, I pray that that would be the case. And I pray that you and I would decide to be totally His, absolutely surrendered to Him." (IMB)

Alabamians elected at SBC

Alabama Baptists were elected to various boards and committees during the SBC annual meeting:

► Barbara Moore, layperson and member of FBC Pelham, to serve on the 2013–14 Committee on Nominations.

► David Chambers, pastor of FBC Fairview, Cullman, to serve on the 2013–14 Committee on Nominations.

► Benjamin F. Kelley Jr., layperson and member of FBC Montgomery, to serve on the Executive Committee with term to expire in 2017.

► Danny Wood, pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, to serve on the North American Mission Board with term to expire in 2014.

► Trudie Beth Guffin, layperson and member of Liberty Park Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, to serve on LifeWay's trustee board with term to expire in 2017.

► John C. Thweatt, pastor of FBC Pell City, nominated for second term on the board of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., with term to expire in 2018.

► Mark Hindman, layperson and member of FBC Prattville, to serve on the board of Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, with term to expire in 2015.

► Don Setser, layperson and member of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, to serve a second term on the board of New Orleans Seminary with term to expire in 2018.

► Bill Morgan, director of missions for Autauga Baptist Association, to serve on the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission with term to expire in 2017.



Photo by Thomas Graham

582 decisions for Christ during Crossover Houston

A block party (left) at Bethel Baptist Church, Houston, was one of many outreach events that went on as part of Crossover Houston, held in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting.

More than 4,100 volunteers participated in more than 100 venues for Crossover Houston with most events taking place June 8. Crossover officials said 582 decisions for Christ were recorded.

Nathan Lorick, state director

of evangelism for the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, described Crossover as "a great day for the SBC and for Houston."

"Of course the greatest aspect was seeing people come to faith in Christ, that's the best result we could ever ask for," he said. "To see so many churches mobilize their people, and Southern Baptists from around the country ... it was so exciting." (BP)

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Photo by Adam Covington

Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, leads a panel discussion with members of the President's Council on Calvinism in the exhibit hall June 10.

'Next step'

Calvinism committee urges Baptists to 'stand together'

Members of an advisory committee on Calvinism say that with their report now issued, the "next step" in cooperation and unity is up to individual Southern Baptists.

Twelve of the 19 members of the committee appeared together June 10 in the exhibit hall's Co-operative Program (CP) booth, answering questions from messengers. The 3,200-word report, which urged Southern Baptists to "grant one another liberty" and "stand together" for the Great Commission, was unanimously approved and released in late May.

"It's really up to all of you as to what happens with this," committee member Tammi Ledbetter told an audience gathered around the CP booth. "We can talk it to death, and I think we probably have. What matters is what you do with

your life in the way you relate to other people. And every time you have a conversation about this document or you have a conversation about a fellow believer ... how you handle yourself will make the whole difference."

The hope, Ledbetter added, is that both sides will put the focus "back on winning people to Jesus."

'Cut out the meanness'

The advisory team — not an official committee of the convention — was assembled by Executive Committee President Frank Page in August 2012 to advise him on developing "a strategy whereby people of various theological persuasions can purposely work together in missions and evangelism." The committee was composed of Calvinists and non-

Calvinists from different walks of life.

The writing committee consisted of Eric Hankins, pastor of First Baptist Church, Oxford, Miss., and R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Mohler is a Calvinist; Hankins is not.

Hankins said he wants Southern Baptists to "grant one another liberty" and "cut out the meanness."

"We sought to have something that would call all Southern Baptists together around the gospel," Hankins said. "We sought to have something that would clearly express that there were real differences [while recognizing] we still want to partner together for the cause of Christ and the announcement of the gospel all around the world." (BP)

Convention Sermon

Akin calls for Baptists to 'get out of the barracks'

Daniel Akin, in this year's convention sermon at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, preached from Romans 15:14-24 on six undeniable marks of a Great Commission people.

Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., recounted that last year messengers approved the name "Great Commission Baptists" as a complementary designation for the convention.

"For me, the issue is not will we be called Great Commission Baptists. The real issue is — will we be Great Commission Baptists?" Akin said June 12 in Houston.

Akin reminded messengers of their priorities. "Southern Baptists do many good things, and we should. But we must keep our focus on the most important thing: Jesus Christ and His gospel," he said.

Furthermore, Southern Baptists must be a Christ-centered people who boast only in Jesus and who see the ministry of bringing the nations to Jesus as offerings of worship to the triune God.

"Paul knew that being Christ-centered would radically impact how we think, how we speak, how we act and how we live," Akin said. "The Roman church never lost sight of the centrality and nature of the gospel. Why? Paul reveals this to them in the beginning of his letter: 'For I, Paul, am not ashamed of the

gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.'"

Akin said God's people are to be consumed in getting the gospel to those who have never heard the name of Jesus. God's people, he said, "must be in those places where the name of Christ is not known."

Southern Baptists are to see themselves as a missionary people with each doing his or her part to see the task completed.

"Whether you are willing to go, give financially or pray, you are to play a part in the Great Commission," Akin said.

Akin concluded the message with a story about the late Adrian Rogers, longtime pastor of the Memphis-area Bellevue Baptist Church. Rogers told Akin that during the Conservative Resurgence, many Southern Baptists were on the battlefield fighting against a common enemy.

After the battle had been won, many retreated to the barracks and unfortunately began fighting against one another.

"What Southern Baptists need to do," Akin said, "is get out of the barracks and back on the battlefield to fight the real enemies: sin, Satan, death and hell. And by God's grace alone will Southern Baptists be an obedient, Great Commission people who fight the good fight until the day we see coming from heaven a rider on a white horse." (BP)



AKIN

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Group gets new name, structure

New 'Associational Leaders' focuses on team ministry model

The Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Directors of Missions changed its name and organizational structure during its annual conference June 9 at Second Baptist Church, Houston.

Now called the Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders, the group eliminated the offices of president, first vice president, second vice president and editor, replacing the old structure with a team ministry model that will double the number of elected leaders and include leadership representatives from the International Mission Board (IMB), the North American Mission Board (NAMB), LifeWay Christian Resources, GuideStone Financial Resources and national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU).

Focused emphasis

The new name reflects the reality that paid associational leaders are not all called directors of missions (DOM), with many carrying titles like executive director and associational missionary, according to outgoing president Johnny Rumbough.

The team ministry structure "will help the organization to be able to make decisions more expediently and put the emphasis on the missionary equipping component, which is what we're about," said Rumbough, DOM for Lexington Association in Lexington, S.C. In team ministry, leaders make decisions and carry out ministry tasks rather than making decisions then directing other people to do the work, he said.

Alabama's Ken Maddox, DOM for Mud Creek Association, attended the June 9 meeting.

"I think being involved in the group is a good thing," he said. "It is a loss not to take advantage of the resources and access to key leaders that you cannot get anywhere else."

"It helps us in the work we do," Maddox said.

Speakers at the conference included IMB president Tom Elliff, NAMB president Kevin Ezell, GuideStone president O.S. Hawkins, WMU executive director/treasurer Wanda Lee and NAMB vice president of mobilization Aaron Coe.

Among the topics of breakout sessions were "partnerships among associations," "reaching the nations that live in your association," "training pastor search committees" and "the missionary role of the director of missions."

The new organizational structure includes an executive team and a nominating team, each elected by the conference for three-year terms. A recording secretary is elected annually. The executive team will elect a confer-

ence team leader who will be responsible for planning the annual conference and appointing a team to assist him. The position of executive director-treasurer is eliminated under the new structure.

The constitution and bylaw changes that create the new structure also allow the group to hold its conference at a time not in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

Ready for growth

The changes will result in a larger team planning the annual conference in order to accommodate growth, Rumbough said. From the 1,000-plus Baptist associations in America, fewer than 200 leaders have attended the conference in recent years, but Rumbough said potential attendees number 2,000-3,000.

"The challenges that associations face are in the area of missions strategy," Rumbough said. "So we're wanting through this conference to provide the kind of equipping that will help our associational leaders be better prepared to reach the communities where they live."

"I think being involved ... is a good thing. It is a loss not to take advantage of [resources and information] you cannot get anywhere else. It helps us in the work we do."

Ken Maddox

Director of missions, Mud Creek Baptist Association

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Want to know God?

Pastor Alan T. Roggli
Carrolls Creek Baptist Church,
Northport

In our culture today there is an ever-widening gap between those who say they know God and those who really do. As born-again believers our desire is to help more people come to experience the peace and joy of living a genuinely transformed life. Perhaps the following will be of benefit to share with someone you know so they can be on the right side of the most important issue of all eternity. The question of knowing God is vast and deserves serious time and study by every serious disciple of Jesus Christ. The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." I hope to lay down just one stepping stone on the pathway leading to an eternally secure relationship with God. That stone is truth. To find truth one must first avoid being swept up in the information tsunami generated by false religions and prosperity theology books.

I met a young man in Delhi, India, who was a Muslim. I inquired about his faith and Assem told me that to be a good Muslim it was very important to pray five times a day when one is young. He quickly added that when you are old you should not pray too much because Allah may see you as greedy and cut you off. I asked him, "Assem, when is enough enough and too much too much?" Of course his, like all "work for your relationship with God" religions, had no answer.

Similarly, there are books that promise a person will have their best life now. When promises of that best life now morph into the reality of my biggest trials yet, the reader often becomes frustrated, angry or even doubting of their relationship with God. One lady who had bought into the name-it-claim-it hype said, "Brother Alan, don't you believe the Bible promises success to us?"

Now back to the issue at hand — truth. Most people we know would quickly reply, "The Bible is truth," and there has never been a truer statement. Therefore the truth about knowing God can only be found in God's Word. So for that friend who needs the truth about Truth, let me suggest pointing them to the Gospel of John and read John 14:6 first.

Church ANNIVERSARIES

Randolph's Union Springs celebrates centennial

Union Springs Baptist Church, Randolph, celebrated its centennial May 19 with a 10 a.m. worship service.

The Chilton Baptist Association church had many people from years past visit for the service, including retired pastors, said Pastor Steve Johnson.

A proclamation from Bobby Martin, Chilton County probate judge, was read, and Larry Felkins, director of missions for Chilton Association, delivered a proclamation to the church as well.

Mavis Gates, representative from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, was on hand to present Union Springs Baptist with a plaque commemorating its 100 years of ministry.

John Killian, pastor of Maytown Baptist Church and president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, was the keynote speaker and delivered a challenge for the future.

Special music was featured during the service by the church choir. A history of the church read on the church's 75th anniversary had been updated for the centennial and was read by church member Tommie Mitchell. In addition, Myrtle Hayes, the church's oldest living member, was honored and presented with a plaque. According to Johnson, about 250 people attended the anniversary service.

Johnson said Union Springs Baptist has a twofold mission: to worship the Lord and see people saved. "Missions is of big importance to us," he said, noting the church is keeping "missions on the forefront." (Julie Payne)

York's Siloam Baptist celebrates 175th anniversary

The 175th anniversary celebration of Siloam Baptist Church, York, on May 19 gave members of the Bigbee Baptist Association church the opportunity to "reminisce and visit with folks we've not seen in quite a long time," Pastor Brad Campbell said.

The service began at 10:30 a.m. and featured speaker Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, who spoke from 2 Timothy.

A presentation of photos of the church through the years was shared, and the church's history was available in booklet form for the approximately 200 attendees.

Church pianist Lynda Harwell and organist Ruth Tew were recognized for 30 years of music service to the church. There also were former Siloam Baptist pastors and a former music minister in attendance. The service included choir music and additional special music, and Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, was on hand to present Siloam Baptist with a framed certificate.

Campbell noted that music director Tom Taylor "was a big help" in planning the anniversary service.

"We would want to continue to see God's blessing on our church as we work to be the witness right there where we're supposed to be," Campbell said of his vision for the future of Siloam Baptist.

(Julie Payne)

Redan Baptist Church marks 100 years of ministry

Redan Baptist Church, Holly Pond, celebrated its 100th anniversary June 2 during a 10 a.m. worship service.

To mark the special day, a brush arbor was constructed on the church's property. The brush arbor — set up behind the church building for attendees to visit — was a recreation of the arbor Redan Baptist church members initially met under during its early years.

According to Helen Smith, chairperson for the anniversary planning committee, the East Cullman Baptist Association church's service featured special music and a welcome by Pastor Michael King.

Randy Makemson, director of missions for East Cullman Association, was in attendance, and a plaque was given to the church on behalf of the association. In addition, Nancy Beasley, representative from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented Redan with a plaque commemorating its 100 years of ministry.

DeJuan Reese, a former Redan pastor, and several other ministers who were ordained at the church each spoke to the congregation.

King estimated that between 125-150 people were in attendance for the special day.

"We have just started an outreach ministry," he said. "My vision is ... to see the church grow. That's every pastor's vision but I want it to grow spiritually most of all." (Julie Payne)



Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

AUTAUGA

► T.J. Conwell is the new interim pastor of **The Church at Pine Level, Deatsville**. He holds a master's degree in information systems and bachelor's degree in information technology from the University of Phoenix, and an associate degree in health systems from Community College of the Air Force. He previously served as pastor of County Line Church, Deatsville, and also has served as pastor of Bethlehem Church, Marbury. He retired from the U.S. Air Force after 20 years of service in October 2010. He and his wife, Michelle, have three children.



CONWELL

southern gospel concert June 20, 4 p.m. A fellowship will follow celebrating Independence Day. James Auchmuty is pastor. ► **Liberty Park Church, Vestavia Hills**, will hold a patriotic celebration and worship service June 23, 11 a.m. with flag-waving and inspirational music. Ron Burgess will speak. Scott Guffin is pastor.

CAHABA

► **Ocmulgee Church, Selma**, will host Justified in concert June 30, 7 p.m. Danny Sumerlin is pastor.

EAST CULLMAN

► **East Side Church, Cullman**, will hold a building dedication service June 23, 10:30 a.m. Those who contributed to the rebuilding following the April 27, 2011, tornado will be recognized. Ken Allen is pastor.

MONTGOMERY

► **Catoma Church, Montgomery**, will host a 5th Sunday Sing on June 30, 5:30 p.m. with Spoken For leading the service. A salad fellowship will follow in the CAC. Chad Underwood is pastor.

MORGAN

► Fellowship Quartet will sing at **Southwest Church, Hartselle**, on June 30, 5 p.m. Dewitt Crowe is pastor.

MUD CREEK

► **Sparks Gap Church, Bessemer**, will celebrate homecoming June 23, 1:30 p.m. with special singers The Laytons. Everyone is invited. Johnny Thacker is pastor.

SHELBY

► **Matt Brooks** is the new pastor of **Westwood Church, Alabaster**. He holds a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and will soon complete his doctor of ministry degree with a major in expository preaching from Southern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. He previously served as pastor of First Church, Roswell, N.M., and as associate pastor of Prestonwood Church, Plano, Texas. He and his wife, Bren, have two children.



BROOKS

SIPSEY

► **Big Hill Church, Gordo**, will hold a bluegrass gospel singing June 30, 1 p.m. Guest singers will be Brighter Day. Ralph Smith is pastor.

ST. CLAIR

► **Sulphur Springs Church, Trussville**, will present a program of patriotism June 30, 10:30 a.m., including a Salute to the Armed Forces, our national anthem played by the handbell choir, presentation of the Patriotic Memorial Wreath with "Taps." Presentation of the Colors, a Wall of Honor and musical "We Believe." Everyone is invited. Bobby Shipp is pastor.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

JACKSONVILLE STATE STUDENTS, LEADERS HELP WITH SBC REGISTRATION

Kara Coleman (left) is one of five JSU students working with their BCM leaders Gary (center) and Donna (not shown) Brittain during the SBC. They worked with eight BCM students from Tennessee and two from Texas. At the close of registration, 258 Alabama Baptists were among the 5,103 messengers registered for the meeting in Houston.

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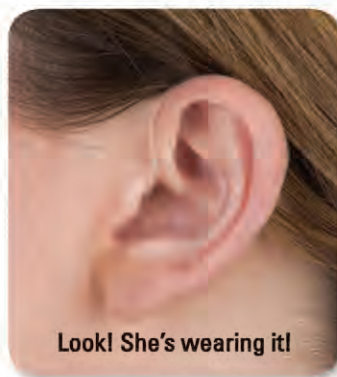
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A good cause

'Heart of GuideStone' helps retired ministers, widows

It was October 2001 and Buddy Temple was in a quandary. The retired postal service worker and court bailiff had sold a house a few months earlier and couldn't figure out where God wanted him to direct part of the proceeds. No matter how many options he looked at, he had no clear direction.

"I was trying to do something with the money that belonged to God," Temple said. "Every time I sat down to write a check, something stayed my hand. I've never had a problem giving to the Lord, but this time I just couldn't do it."

Soon after, Temple and his wife, Nora, listened to a presentation about GuideStone's Mission:Dignity ministry. It was the first time they had ever heard about the needs of several thousand retired ministers and their widows who had served in small, rural churches and now were struggling to pay for basic expenses. Immediately, Temple had the peace he had been searching for.

He made out a check to Mission:Dignity. A year later, after reading more stories about the impact his gift was making, Temple began sending a monthly gift as well and has continued ever since.

"The first check I write is for my church. The second one is Mission:Dignity," he said.

In 2008, the Temples moved their membership to Woods Chapel Baptist Church, near their home in Arlington, Texas. Two years ago, Buddy Temple told his men's class about Mission:Dignity.

"I got one of the monthly thank-you letters and there was a story about an old pastor who only got a \$39 retirement check and needed a battery for his car," he said. "We have 16 men in our class and all of us could do something."

Each month, the class takes up an offering. It started with \$5 each,

but some give more. The collections average about \$100 a month.

"These men are ready and willing to give. They even have their money out on the tables when it's our week for Mission:Dignity and I really don't even have to say anything," Buddy Temple noted.

As of May 1, 122 individuals or couples in Alabama were enrolled to receive funds from the Mission:Dignity program.

Mission:Dignity Sunday is June 23, 2013, on the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) calendar. The GuideStone report at the SBC annual meeting noted that Mission:Dignity is the "heart of GuideStone." In 2012, more than 1,500 churches participated in Mission:Dignity Sunday, more than double the year before.

For more information, visit www.MissionDignitySBC.org/Resources. (GuideStone)

Mission:Dignity
Sunday is
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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 23

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

WHOM CAN I TRUST?

Job 28:1-12, 13-16, 20-28

Three cycles of discussion have been recorded prior to today's focal passage, which is a hymn of wisdom. Within each cycle, Job has been accused of wrongdoing, wrong thinking or wrong speaking by his companions. In response, our protagonist has pointed to God as the One who holds the answer to his suffering. Here he expresses confidence in God who rules the universe by wisdom. Advocates represent diverse worldviews in popular culture. Each voice wishes to be heard, and each demands recognition as being equally valid. Like Job's friends, these voices have their own beliefs about God, man, the universe and suffering. They also believe that their perspectives must be heard.

Recognize the Limits (1-12)

Humanity has discovered secrets from within the earth. Metals are dug from the earth and are manipulated into objects for man's use. Precious jewels are mined from the depths with expert precision. From the early records in Genesis, Bible students discover that the appreciation for and management of precious materials (Gen. 2:12) and forged metals (Gen. 4:22) have been part of human activity. While such human knowledge is commonplace today, true wisdom is more difficult to ascertain. Pursuing philosophy, the love of wisdom, is a longstanding endeavor, with succeeding generations building on or arguing against the conclusions of their predecessors. Human wisdom has its limits, and even wisdom from God takes time and maturity for human comprehension. The speaker in this passage delineates knowledge from wisdom, with a lingering question where wisdom can be found. Acknowledge Wisdom's Value (13-16)

"No man can know its value, since it cannot be found in the land of the living" (28:13). In this section, wisdom is more precious than gold, silver, onyx, sapphire, glass, coral, quartz, pearls and topaz. These materials are more accessible in our affluent, opulent American culture, making it difficult for our

readers to comprehend this passage. In societies with tribal patriarchs, these items are precious commodities. True wisdom is rarer than any of them. Paul takes this concept a step further. Greek philosophers were convinced of their own brands of wisdom, which the apostle calls human wisdom, carnal or natural. He explained that "the natural man does not welcome what comes from God's spirit ... he is not able to know it since it is evaluated spiritually" (1 Cor. 2:14). Paul warns against man-centered philosophy (Col. 2:8). Seemingly counterintuitive to human reasoning, God chooses foolish, weak, ordinary people to confound the wise, strong and high-born. Believers cannot "boast in His presence" (1 Cor. 1:18-29). Seek Wisdom's Guidance (20-28)

In this passage, one can observe Hebrew parallelism at work. The terms "wisdom" / "understanding" serve as a word pair (28:20, 28), as do "hidden" / "concealed" in 28:21 and "ends of the earth" / "under the heavens" in 28:24. Why focus on these parallels? Knowledge of literary devices is impersonal, requiring little effort and no vulnerability. We are often more comfortable discussing issues that have no bearing on our lives than those that require change such as relying upon God for direction, recognizing His familiarity with our lives or repenting, which requires personal acknowledgement of need. "The fear of the Lord — that is wisdom" (28:28). Comparable words are echoed in Proverbs (Prov. 1:7; 9:10), within another subsection of wisdom literature. Unlike the short, pithy sayings of Solomon, the narrative of Job includes theodicy, which defends the righteousness of God in the midst of human suffering. This book teaches us that man is not the measure of all things and that man is responsible to God. The Lord governs the universe. While philosophers may offer solutions to the Epicurean question, the answer of suffering lies with the majestic glory of God. By design, God allows evil and suffering as means of demonstrating human need for God. Job needed God. His companions needed God. So do you.

Bible Studies for Life By Jeffery M. Leonard
Assistant Professor of Religion, Samford University

GOD INSTRUCTS HIS PEOPLE
Exodus 20:1-4, 7-8, 12-17; 24:4-8

Be Loyal to God (20:1-4, 7-8)

One of the most awe-inspiring scenes in Scripture is the theophany at Sinai described in Exodus 19-24. Often overlooked in this important text is the sustained nuptial imagery that frames the meeting between God and Israel. After courting the Israelites in the wilderness, God now proceeds to make the nation His bride at Sinai. Moses acts as messenger as God proposes ("If you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession"), and Israel accepts ("We will do everything the Lord has said"). A wedding date is set ("Be ready by the third day, because on that day the Lord will come down"), and at the appointed time the groom arrives to fetch His bride ("Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire"). The familiar Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 form the terms of this marriage between God and Israel. After establishing His credentials ("I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt"), God turns first and naturally to the matter of exclusive fidelity: "You shall have no other gods before Me." The sense of this Hebrew phrase, "before Me," is not one of priority but of geography. It is not that the Israelites must make sure the Lord ranks first among the gods they worship; they are never to worship any other god. To bring one of those gods "before Me," literally "before My face," would be tantamount to Israel's committing adultery right in the face of her husband, the Lord. The remaining instructions flow from this first command. The people are not to diminish the majesty of God by reducing Him to a physical image. They are to set Him apart as sacred by treating even His name with reverence. They are to consecrate the Sabbath to Him, trusting in God even more than their own labor to provide for their needs.

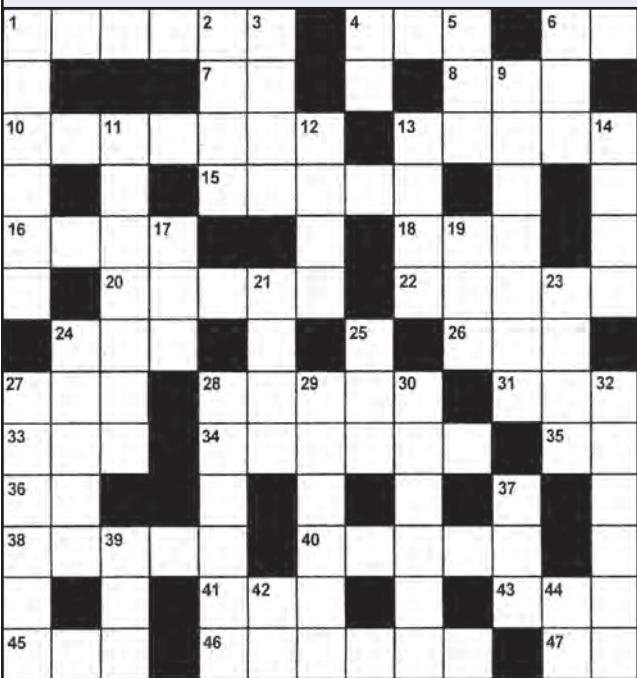
Be Respectful of Others (20:12-17)

The terms of this marriage extend far beyond the nation's expected regard for God. The God who liberated one human from another in the exodus demands respectful treatment, one human to another, among His people. Parents are not to be deprived of the honor they deserve through disrespect. One person is not to deprive another of life through murder; property through theft, false testimony or covetousness; or the joy of faithful marriage through adultery. This is to be a holy nation, bound by obedient trust to God. Be Committed to Obedience (24:4-8)

After spelling out the terms of marriage in the Ten Commandments and the laws that follow, the text returns to its nuptial framework in chapter 24. Just as rings are exchanged in weddings today as a sign binding husband and wife together, a sign is used at Sinai to mark the bond between God and Israel. When Moses offers sacrifices at the foot of the mountain, he collects some of the blood from the offerings in bowls. What he does with this blood is fascinating. Half he splashes against the altar; the other half he sprinkles on the people as they declare their vows to the Lord. God and the people are bound by the blood that marks them both. This newly forged bond between God and the people perhaps explains the moving scene in vv. 9-11. Though previously warned not to approach God, the elders now accompany Moses up the mountain, and there the text tells us they saw God Himself. They "saw the God of Israel. Under His feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli, as bright blue as the sky. But God did not raise His hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank." These two are now joined in marriage and so God does not strike the people for their audacious approach. Instead they eat and drink, and appropriately so, since what follows a wedding is a wedding feast.

Christian Crossword

By Glenn G. Luscher Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- 1. Day of rest.
- 4. Adam was the first.
- 6. Southwest. (abbr.)
- 7. Another name for Mother.
- 8. Stand fast in _____ spirit. (Phil. 1:27)
- 10. The strength of an _____. (Num. 23:22)
- 13. Nighttime movie.
- 15. A sleeping noisemaker.
- 16. Saul's father. (1 Sam. 10:21)
- 18. Used for hearing.
- 20. Built rugged.
- 22. The _____ of wisdom is above rubies. (Job 28:18)
- 24. It _____ upon each of them. (Acts 2:3)
- 26. Automobile.
- 27. Cooling device.
- 28. Abraham's original name. (Gen. 17:5)
- 31. What rabbits do.
- 33. Uninvited picnic guest.
- 34. _____ the Arbiter.

- (2 Sam. 23:35)
- 35. Another name for Father.
- 36. Road. (abbr.)
- 38. Province of Asia Minor. (Acts 16:7)
- 40. With your _____ girded. (Ex. 12:11)
- 41. Frozen water.
- 43. Container used for cooking.
- 45. Move quickly.
- 46. Mary's sister. (Luke 10:38, 39)
- 47. A preposition.
- (1 Chron. 4:42)
- 11. Without delay.
- 12. Lamech's son. (Gen. 5:28, 29)
- 13. Extending far downward.
- 14. Unable to speak.
- 17. Exceedingly warm.
- 19. A bowllike curved line.
- 21. A city of Benjamin. (Josh. 21:17)
- 23. Collected agricultural product.
- 24. Little Orphan Annie's dog.
- 25. Opposite of near.
- 27. One who raises livestock.
- 28. Son of Nadab. (1 Chron. 2:30)
- 29. One who speaks to cause injury. (1 Cor. 5:11)
- 30. A miry place. (Ezek. 47:11)
- 32. A mother or father.
- 37. A snake. (Job 20:16)
- 39. Male offspring.

Down

- 1. Peanut coverings.
- 2. Native of Tekoa. (Amos 1:1)
- 3. Tale or heavy thread.
- 4. Another name I call myself.
- 5. A conjunction.
- 6. Galilee is one.
- 9. Name of a Simeonite captain.

- 42. California. (abbr.)
- 44. Alcoholics Anonymous. (abbr.)



RESOURCES:

Your Guide to Today's New Music and Literature

Sound Bites By Rick Sharp

STOMPTOWN REVIVAL

StompTown Revival
Save the City Records

When I saw that producer/performer Brandon Bee and Circleslide front man Gabe Martinez had gotten together to create a blues-inspired Christian record, I have to say I was surprised. While Martinez, with roots in San Antonio, Texas, has some credibility as a blues harp player, I'd never noticed Bee having a down-home bluesy bone in his body. How wrong I was. They've managed to produce a very satisfying blues record by combining ripping blues harp; slide guitar that could be at home on a forties 78 record; dirty, driving guitars; moving Christ-centric lyrics; Bee's trademark acoustic guitar and clean vocals; and Martinez's raw rock voice.



It's quite a melding — one that I bet you'll like. Oh the stomptown thing comes from their use of an old blues technique of using a wooden box (a stomptbox), played with the foot, as the underlying rhythm instrument.

"Waiting for the Man," one of the standout originals, "uses the

mythology of the bluesman to describe what we're doing with the backdrop of waiting for that judgment day, the approval and presence of God to make things right," according to Martinez. A cover of "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" is like nothing you've ever heard — powerful, raw and barely recognizable as the beloved old hymn.

Give this one a listen. Whether you love it or hate it, I'm pretty sure you won't be neutral.

MISTY EDWARDS

Only A Shadow
Forerunner Music/International House of Prayer

Misty Edwards' new CD, "Only A Shadow," recorded live at the International House of Prayer in Kansas City's (IHOPKC) 2013 Onething Conference and accompanied by a DVD of the performance, debuted in the Top 10 of Billboard's Christian Albums Chart, then promptly moved to the No. 1 spot on iTunes. That shouldn't come as a surprise to those familiar with Edwards and with the IHOPKC's excellent group of musicians.

This is pure praise that's designed to move the listener into a oneness with the Holy Spirit. It's slow, trancey and repetitive, more feel and emotion than mainstream contemporary Christian

music. This is the kind of music the IHOPKC does best, and Edwards is one of their most skilled and prominent practitioners.

Here Edwards and the band flow from song to song, punctuated by spontaneous moments of worship. While this kind of music is best experienced live, if you can watch the DVD without once



having your arms in the air in pure praise to our Father, I'm surprised. This is perhaps not everyone's cup of tea, but it's great, moving music and some of the best of the genre.

SHANE & SHANE

Bring Your Nothing
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Shane & Shane released their 10th project May 14, "Bring Your Nothing." Recorded over seven days in their newly created Wellsprings Studio in Cedar Hill, Texas, with good friends Jason Hoard (Third Day), Tyler Chester (Fiction Family), Josh Moore (Caedmon's Call) and Joey Parish (Shane & Shane's drummer), all 11 songs were tracked with everyone playing together (yes, at the same time), something almost

unheard of these days. As Shane Everett said, "We just put it in the red and went for it."

Shane & Shane performed the post-production work themselves, and they've created a record that's cohesive yet diverse, full of energy, lyrically in your face and bursting with Good News.

God's grace is the thematic glue binding the project. "You



Loved My Heart to Death," a simple arrangement that tells the story of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, is one of the best. The record's first radio single, "That's How You Forgive," powerfully describes Jesus' grace toward us in an easy-to-understand message.

The title track may be the most moving recounting of God's grace on the record. As Shane Barnard says regarding the grace we receive, "You bring what you have, and what you have is nothing."

Book Reviews By Martine Bates Sharp, Ed.D.

The Song in You: Finding Your Voice, Redefining Your Life

LaDonna Gatlin and Mike Marino. Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 2012. 258 pp. (Paperback).

Not being a fan of country music, I didn't know much about the Gatlins. I didn't even know they had a sister. I always like biographies, though, so I decided to read this one. I'm not sure what I expected, but this wasn't it.

It turns out that LaDonna Gatlin is a motivational speaker, and apparently a really good one. The book is part biography — although that stays mostly in the background — and part self-help. The author draws from her musical background in the title and the organization of the book, using each note of the scale to title a chapter, a la "The Sound of Music." You remember: "Do, a deer, a female deer." Gatlin's DO is "DO the

Right Thing," followed by "REalize Your Potential," and so on until chapter 9, "That Will Bring Us Back to DO."

"The Song in You" is a light, sometimes fun, always engaging read. According to Gatlin, she and her co-author, a counselor, wrote the book as biblically based encouragement to help guide readers "through anything life throws at us." The takeaway? "God has put something unique in each of us. Don't be afraid to use your gifts and talents for His glory. In short ... sing your song."

Impact My Life: Biblical Mentoring Simplified

Elisa Pulliam. Charleston, S.C.: CreateSpace Publishing, 2012. 160 pp. (Paperback).

After reading "Imitating Jesus" by Lewie Clark, I turned to another book on discipling. While Clark's book was primarily about men dis-

cipling men, Elisa Pulliam's "Impact My Life" was about women mentoring women. Both books could apply relatively well to either gender, but the differences were pronounced.

Pulliam spends the first part of her book attempting to convince women that they are called, equipped and expected to mentor others. She counters the typical arguments — "But I'd Be a Hypocrite," "But I Lack Wisdom" and "But It Is Not My Gifting," among others, finally plunging into the nuts and bolts of what she calls "biblical mentoring." She describes biblical mentoring as a "combination of mentoring and discipleship."

The book is designed to be used either for personal or group study and has suggestions for use in both cases, as well as many other resource recommendations.

For anyone who has felt convicted to begin mentoring others, this book is a rich resource and a motivator.

Christian Marketplace Top Ten Best Sellers

Nonfiction

1. Jesus Calling, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
2. Heaven Is for Real, Todd Burpo (Thomas Nelson)
3. Jesus Calling, Women's Edition, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
4. Jesus Calling, Large-Print Deluxe Edition, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
5. Jesus Calling, Deluxe Edition, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
6. Daily Wisdom for Women, Barbour Publishing (Barbour)
7. Daily Devotions for Women, Jewell Johnson (Barbour)
8. The 5 Love Languages, Gary Chapman (Moody)
9. Jesus Today, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
10. Happy, Happy, Happy, Phil Robertson (Howard Books)

Youth

1. Jesus Calling, 365 Devotions for Kids, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
2. The Action Bible, Sergio Cariello (David C Cook)
3. The Beginner's Bible, Kelly Pulley (Zondervan)
4. The Jesus Storybook Bible, Sally Lloyd-Jones (Zondervan)
5. Jesus Calling — Teen Edition, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
6. Jesus Calling Bible Storybook, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
7. God Loves Me Baby Bible, Susan Elizabeth Beck (Zondervan)
8. How to Stay Christian in College, J. Budziszewski (NavPress)
9. The Boy and the Ocean, Max Lucado (Crossway)
10. The Tale of Three Trees, Angela Elwell Hunt (David C Cook)

'One million men'

Anti-pornography initiative calls for sexual purity

An initiative seeking commitments from 1 million men to live pornography-free lives was launched at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting June 11–12 in Houston.

Named "Join One Million Men," the initiative calls Christian men to commit to sexual purity and, specifically, to protect themselves and their families from the devastation caused by pornography. The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) and Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) jointly sponsored the initiative along with Jay Dennis, pastor of First Baptist Church at the Mall, Lakeland, Fla.

"Internet pornography is the perfect trap because it hooks men and then men don't know what to do," Dennis said.

"I am hoping that this will be the launch, the discussion-starter for pastors to go back and start having some hard discussions with their men."

The Join One Million Men website includes a place for men to register their porn-free commitments as well as a place for women to register their commitments to pray for the purity of men in their lives.

Resources from WMU's New Hope Publishing also are available at the site, including Dennis' book "Our Hardcore Battle Plan: Joining in the War Against Pornography"; the companion volume for wives, "Our Hardcore Battle Plan for Wives: Winning in the War Against Pornography" by Dennis and Cathy Dyer; and a mobile app for men that delivers daily Scriptures to their mobile devices to help in the fight against sexual sin.

The seeds of the initiative were planted in 2010 when Dennis compiled a notebook of material to help churches deal with pornography — material that brought revival to families in his church when he had preached a sermon series confronting sexual sin two years earlier. Dennis showed the notebook to Richard Land, then-president of the ERLC, and Land said the material was exactly what he had been praying for.

Land said WMU was the only organization in Southern Baptist life "that [had] the mechanism and the communication apparatus" to launch a convention-wide anti-pornography initiative, Dennis recounted. So Land contacted WMU executive director/treasurer Wanda Lee, and she agreed to support Join One Million Men.



DENNIS

Women to battle pornography with prayer

In nearly 20 years of being a pastor's wife, Angie Dennis said she doesn't remember a single instance of a young woman coming to her and saying, "Miss Angie, my husband is struggling with pornography."

Dennis, whose husband, Jay, launched the Join One Million Men movement, is hopeful women will pray up, speak up and join the fight against pornography.

"As moms and grandmothers, we should be angry — righteously angry about this," Angie Dennis said. "These pornographers are trying to steal the purity from our sons and grandsons. Every woman should be doing whatever we can to stop it."

In recent years, Angie Dennis said she sensed a growing drive within her husband, pastor of the 9,000-member First Baptist Church at the Mall, Lakeland, Fla., to minister to families struggling with a "snowballing" effect of online pornography.

Overwhelmed

Unfamiliar with confronting the issue on a personal level, the longtime pastor's wife said she quickly learned young men and women are sometimes overwhelmed with the toll of pornography and the effect it has on their relationships.

"They are embarrassed and humiliated," Angie Dennis

said of couples struggling with the issue.

Wives who know their husbands viewed pornography may ask themselves, "What's wrong with me?" Angie Dennis said, noting that self-doubt can occur whether the husband confesses or the wife discovers his sin for herself.

Angie Dennis acknowledged the road ahead is rocky for ministers' wives who can be hit by a "double whammy" when they consider that their entire livelihood could be dramatically affected if their spouse confesses his problem and seeks help.

More challenging still may be a situation in which a woman discovers her husband is looking at pornography or is involved in an affair and won't "come clean."

In a church setting, she said women are well aware of the radiating effect a secret sin may have on people who discover their pastor or other church leader has fallen. And yet, "God is going to be their support," she said. "It may be tough, but God said, 'I have never seen the righteous forsaken.'"

There is satisfaction in knowing women can "make a dent" with prayer, resources and commitment against pornography, Angie Dennis said, and that people who suffer from sexual addictions can be part of the body of believers, which is filled with people who have struggled with sin, repented and received forgiveness. (BP)

Among the advocates of the initiative is Kevin Conrad, a member of First Baptist Church at the Mall. He helped staff the Join One Million Men booth in the SBC exhibit hall and shared with others his testimony of deliverance from pornography through the power of God's Word.

Accountability 'key'

"I just simply went to the Word and bathed myself in the truth of God's Word that I can't be effective for Him if I'm tied down by the bondage of the lust of my heart," Conrad said, adding that accountability from his wife and others was a key part of his repentance.

Various Southern Baptist leaders endorsed Join One Million Men during the SBC annual meeting and auxiliary events.

Russell Moore, the ERLC's new president, said the anti-

pornography initiative confronts a "crisis in our culture and also in the churches when it comes to pornography."

Moore hopes that Join One Million Men will lead to reconciliation in many marriages.

Dennis estimated that as many as 2,000 people visited the Join One Million Men booth during the SBC Pastors Conference and SBC annual meeting. Many pastors told of the pain pornography has caused in their congregations and expressed support for the initiative.

"I pray that this time next year, when we get to Baltimore, we will have known that the majority of pastors in this convention have at least started the discussion with their churches," Dennis said.

For more information and resources for the Join One Million Men movement, visit www.join1millionmen.org. (BP)



BP photo

SALE APPROVED — LifeWay Christian Resources recently approved the sale of the Glorieta Conference Center to a nonprofit Christian group.

LifeWay trustees approve Glorieta sale to nonprofit group

LifeWay Christian Resources has found a buyer for the Glorieta Conference Center dedicated to continue use of the 2,100-acre property near Santa Fe, N.M., as a Christian camp, the Southern Baptist Convention publisher announced June 13.

A group of Christian businessmen and camping professionals funded and formed a new nonprofit corporation called Glorieta 2.0 to purchase the camp put up for sale two years ago after losing money 24 of the last 25 years.

Programming will be similar to Camp Eagle, a non-denominational Christian summer camp in the Texas Hill Country near Rocksprings, Texas, established in 1999.

'Thankful'

"We are so thankful the Lord has brought together these dedicated believers who are already involved in a similar Christian camp," LifeWay President and CEO Thom Rainer said in a news release.

"We have come to know their deep desire to build on the rich history of Glorieta and provide a path forward that

will allow this marvelous facility to reach men and women, boys and girls for Christ," Rainer said.

LifeWay will continue to hold youth conferences like Centrifuge and Student Life at the facility, while Glorieta 2.0 adds day camps, family camps, high adventure wilderness programs and church and individual camping options.

In 2012, LifeWay offered to sell the camp started by Southern Baptists in 1952 for \$1 to the Baptist Convention of New Mexico, but after study of deferred maintenance and other costs, the state's Baptists failed to come up with a viable financial plan.

Then LifeWay withdrew last fall from a deal with a Christian college following an independent study of theological compatibility by the National Association of Evangelicals.

Jerry Rhyne, LifeWay vice president and chief financial officer, said the \$1 purchase price excludes 140 acres across Interstate 25 and three acres and buildings formerly used by the now-disbanded Glorieta Baptist Church.

(ABP)