

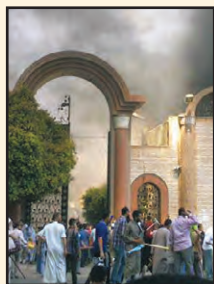


## INSIDE



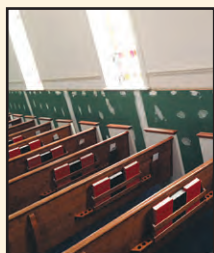
**Unity Baptist destroyed by fire after lightning strikes steeple**

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# We've a Story To Tell!



THEN: GAs from September 1970



NOW: GAs at Wilsonville Baptist Church



NOW: Alabama WMU in Haiti

## Woman's Missionary Union celebrates 125 years of missions, ministries

Left and top photos courtesy of national Woman's Missionary Union, bottom right photo courtesy of Alabama WMU

By Rosalie Hunt  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

**T**his is a year of celebration for Baptist women — remembering how God has led in missions support and endeavors since the 1800s. This year not only marks the 125th anniversary of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) but also is the 100th birthday celebration for Girls in Action, WMU's thriving organization for girls, first begun in 1913 as Girls' Auxiliary. It's a yearlong anniversary — celebrating our remarkable pioneer women and the legacy they have passed to us. Let us step into the story of WMU and see how it all started.

The official organization began in 1888, but the first steps really began in a wheelchair in Boston, Mass., in 1800. Little Polly (Mary) Webb was struck with a severe fever when only 5 and never took another step, spending her life confined to a wheelchair. But her heart soared. When the tiny 21-year-old heard a missionary sermon from her

pastor, it led her to make the Great Commission her personal directive. Webb organized the first "mite" society for missions, bringing women together to pray and to support missions. She remained group leader for an incredible 56 years and spread the message, writing thousands of letters across the country as she urged women: "Dear sisters, let us arise." Then Ann and Adoniram Judson became Baptists' first foreign missionaries, which galvanized Webb's society and the other scattered groups of women.

### Serving God

It wasn't "women's rights" that motivated these trailblazers; it was a call to serve God. And 200 years later, that is still what "lights our missions fire." Far from Boston, on the tiny island of Edisto near Charleston, S.C., beautiful young Hephzibah Jenkins Townsend accepted Christ and was baptized in 1807 by Richard Furman. Furman was destined to become the founding president of the Triennial Convention, America's first organized Baptist body, organizing for the

purpose of fulfilling Christ's command to go into all the world. The daughter of wealth and privilege, Hephzibah took as her avowal of faith from the day of her salvation: "I am a sinner, saved by grace." That adorns her tombstone nearly 200 years later. She learned from Furman that Webb had organized a "mite" society to pray for missionaries and support missions. Learning was tantamount to acting for Hephzibah.

After the wealthy young heiress married at age 15, by law her husband, Daniel, controlled her fortune. Because Daniel was not willing for money to be expended for Baptist causes, Hephzibah had to think of another way to provide support. And she was nothing if not enterprising. Hephzibah and her trusted and skilled servant friend Maum Bella took workers to a remote part of the plantation and built sturdy tabby ovens. And there they baked "Baptist gingerbread."

Every Saturday, the gingerbread and other succulent baked goods from the tabby ovens were taken to Charleston and sold. Next Hephzibah  
(See 'Spreading,' page 7)

***It wasn't 'women's rights' that motivated these trailblazers; it was a call to serve God. And 200 years later, that is still what 'lights our missions fire.'***

# COMMENT

## Looking Back at the Aug. 8 Editorial

For the past few days I have been caught in a social media storm like nothing I have experienced before in my years as editor of a state Baptist paper. On Aug. 8 and 9, about 10 times as many people came to the *The Alabama Baptist* website as usually visit each day. Practically all clicked on the Aug. 8 editorial “Why Disagree About the Words of a Hymn.”

The result was an avalanche of tweets and blogs, most condemning the editorial and claiming it denied penal substitutionary atonement — that Jesus bore the penalty of our sin and died on the cross in our stead. I was called a heretic among other things. Baptist Press news service did a lengthy story on the accusations, which the press service released two consecutive days — Aug. 12 and Aug. 13.

To all Alabama Baptists and other readers I owe a sincere apology for writing in a manner that allowed some readers to conclude that I denied such a basic biblical doctrine — penal substitutionary atonement. I do not deny that belief, as an examination of my editorials over the years will clearly show.

### Penal substitutionary atonement

Through the years I have written repeatedly affirming the doctrinal position of penal substitutionary atonement. In the March 28, 2013, editorial titled “The Hero of Easter,” I wrote, “In Christ, God Himself took on the sin of the world. He became the sin bearer. Again, Colossians 1:19–20 says, ‘For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him (Jesus), and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood shed on the cross.’”

In the April 5, 2012, editorial one reads, “Jesus was at one time both the Lamb being sacrificed — ‘He offered Himself’ — and the High Priest offering the sacrifice of atonement. That is why the writer of Hebrews referred to Jesus as ‘the Great High Priest.’ The imagery is of Jesus entering God’s presence with the blood offering of the sacrificial lamb to be poured out on the altar.”

Both examples are clear affirmations of the doctrine that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. There are many more examples. I have never written or preached anything to the contrary.

But because many readers understood the editorial differently than I intended, I scheduled a private conference with Timothy George, founding dean of Beeson School of Divinity at Samford University in Birmingham, to see if he could help me see blind spots I might have that prevented me from recognizing an inadvertent denial of penal substitutionary atone-



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

ment. For more than an hour we talked about God’s holiness, God’s love and God’s wrath.

His appraisal was kind and direct. He pointed out that I had used some “unwise and incautious” statements. He also pointed out that it is dangerous to raise a question about something so dear to people as the hymn “In Christ Alone.”

On the critical issue of denying penal substitutionary atonement, he said for the record, “Particularly, the next-to-last paragraph in the original editorial is a very clear statement of the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement. (Bob Terry) affirms both — there are two dimensions of this — he affirms both expiation and propitiation. He doesn’t use those words but what he says here in this paragraph affirms both of them.”

So why the confusion over the editorial? First, the editorial in question was never about atonement. It was about the mindset of God. It was about the false notion of God’s wrath that describes God as a vengeful and vindictive being who enjoyed punishing Jesus. The editorial tried to make a caricature out of that understanding and argued against it to show that the cross is not about vindictiveness but about God’s love.

### God’s wrath

Unfortunately some readers concluded that I believed that caricature and blogged about me holding heretical positions. I was wrong not to make more abundantly clear that I was opposing the caricature of God’s wrath and not the orthodox biblical teaching itself.

Some readers felt the editorial indicted all who love the phrase “The wrath of God was satisfied” and implied they were wrong. That was never the intention. When wrath is under-

stood as God’s punishment for sin poured out on Jesus at Calvary, that is exactly what the Bible teaches as I understand it. The editorial comments were directed only at the unbiblical understanding of God being vindictive, or a bully or having a temper-tantrum toward His Beloved Son. While to the orthodox Christian, these caricatures may seem far-fetched, they are ideas about wrath one finds in Christian history and ideas that some hold today.

Other unhappy readers charged the editorial created a false dichotomy between love and wrath. They point to the paragraphs about “expiation” as ruling out “propitiation.” Expiation is the forgiveness we have through Christ and His removing the guilt of sin. Propitiation is that on the cross Jesus experienced the righteous wrath of God against sin. I affirm both.

The editorial attempted to be a “both/and” approach when I wrote, “Whichever phrase one chooses to sing (‘the wrath of God was satisfied’ or ‘the love of God was magnified’) it must be remembered that it is God’s grace that initiated the sacrifice of Jesus to provide covering and forgiveness for our sin (expiation) and that His sacrifice satisfied the holy demands of God’s righteousness for sin to be punished (propitiation).” There was no attempt to label one right and the other wrong.

The wrath of God is a biblical teaching. But at Calvary wrath is best understood as an expression of God’s righteousness and holiness. Sin had to be punished and Jesus as “God made flesh” absorbed into Himself that punishment. God, moved by His love for us, sent Jesus to the cross to pay the price for our sin. Jesus was always the Beloved Son of God. God was never malicious or vindictive toward Jesus as some people understand human wrath.

No editorial can contain everything one believes. Hopefully readers understand a particular column in light of what has been written over the past 18 years I have been editor of *The Alabama Baptist* rather than expecting every column to express the whole of my theology. And when questions arise, please know I invite conversation to clarify understandings.

Still be assured that I will attempt to be more careful and more clear in all that I write and that I sincerely regret my unwise and incautious comments in the Aug. 8 editorial.

**“When wrath is understood as God’s punishment for sin poured out on Jesus at Calvary, that is exactly what the Bible teaches as I understand it.”**



"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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# The Lord will provide

By Neisha Fuson  
The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Sam Day

Unity Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, was hit by lightning Aug. 12, causing the steeple and roof to catch on fire. The roof eventually fell in on the sanctuary.

## Tuscaloosa's Unity Baptist sees devastating fire as 'opportunity'

**W**hen Pastor Gene Dockery pulled up to the open plot of land next to Unity Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, he was expecting to see smoke rising from the steeple, based on what a church member had told him. Instead what he saw was something "unreal."

Fire shot through the steeple and out the windows, and more than 40 church members watched as firefighters from five trucks fought the blaze.

The blaze started when lightning struck the Tuscaloosa Baptist Association church on the evening of Aug. 12.

By 10 p.m., church members who live a few blocks away had arrived at the church, called 911 and notified Dockery.

"Firemen worked so gingerly and were so organized ... to try to get the fire under control," Dockery said.

Some church members drove up to 45 miles just to be with the church body for support and to reminisce about memories made in the 1964 building that was quickly crumbling before their eyes.

"It was a great hurt and a great shock," Dockery said of the fire, which eventually caused the roof to fall in on the sanctuary, rendering the sanctuary unsalvageable. The nearby educational and fellowship building endured smoke and water damage according

to Sam Day, Tuscaloosa Association director of missions.

Day met at the church property Aug. 13 with the association's administrative committee, Dockery and other church leaders and members.

Day said he and the administrative committee were there to offer support and to help Unity Baptist think through logistics and planning.

### 'Something new'

"It's not the end of something but the start of something new," Day said. "Maybe now is when God's going to do the greatest work" at Unity.

Day said he "loved the attitude" of Dockery and the church members who said they "saw this as an opportunity."

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), also met with Dockery and church members Aug. 13 and said they were "very upbeat about the prospects of their future."

"We are going to try as Alabama Baptists to work with Tuscaloosa Baptists in helping," said Lance, who led the gathering in a time of prayer for the church family.

On Aug. 14, more than 70 people gathered under the church's picnic pavilion as Dockery shared a message of hope and faith from several passages of Scripture.

Ron Parnell, SBOM facility services coordinator, attended the evening gathering and explained how a SBOM mobile chapel will be set up in the coming weeks.

Tuscaloosa Association also will vote to approve an emergency fund to help set up water, sewage and electricity for the mobile chapel, Dockery explained.

Several churches in the area offered their buildings for Unity's use but Dockery said since there is a pavilion and a 30-by-45-foot tent on the property, members decided to meet there until the mobile chapel is in place.

Prior to the fire, Unity members had renovated the sanctuary with new paint and padded pews, as well as new concrete in areas around the property, Dockery said.

During the renovations Dockery said he thought the church was "doing a good job." But after the fire he said, "I guess God's going to show us just what a good job looks like."

Church members have been on the property since the fire doing clean up and anything they could to help, Dockery said.

He said he sensed the Lord pointing out a "hammock" at the church and he felt the Lord telling him to "get in that hammock and watch" all that He is going to do at Unity.

The Lord provided all their needs in the past, he said, so he doesn't doubt that the Lord will provide again. 🙏



TAB photo

**EDITOR BOB TERRY DISCUSSES CONCERNS RAISED BY AUG. 8 EDITORIAL**  
Bob Terry, editor of *The Alabama Baptist*, talks with ministers, laypeople and state missionaries in Montgomery following the Aug. 16 Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions meeting at the Baptist Building. Terry held the sharing session to discuss concerns raised by his Aug. 8 editorial "Why Disagree About the Words of a Hymn?" and answered questions from the group.

## State's proposed CP budget drops \$1 million for 2014

A \$41 million Cooperative Program base budget for Alabama for 2014 will be recommended to convention messengers when they meet in Huntsville in November.

The recommendation was approved by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions on Aug. 16 and reflects a \$1 million decrease from the 2013 base budget.

The recommended allocation of funds is: Alabama Missions Ministries — 46.7 percent; Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Missions Ministries — 43.3 percent; and Shared Ministries — 10 percent.

Also approved were recommendations of a state causes budget of \$300,000 and a SBC causes budget of \$400,000.

Any receipts beyond the base budget of \$41 million are to be divided 50-50 between Alabama missions causes and SBC missions causes. (TAB)

# 'Next form of genocide'

## Supporters of ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi attack Christians

In the violence that exploded across Egypt on Aug. 14, supporters of ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi attacked scores of church buildings and Christian-owned homes and businesses in response to national security forces breaking up two protest camps in downtown Cairo.

At least two Coptic Christians were killed in the reprisal attacks, which started mid-morning after the armed break-up of the camps the Muslim Brotherhood and others had occupied in downtown Cairo for six weeks. Pro-Morsi assailants attacked 27 church buildings, setting fires that gutted most of them, according to the Coptic *Watani Weekly*. This number included Beni Mazar Baptist Church in Minya.

The assailants attacked a women-only monastery along with at least two Christian schools and set at least 30 Coptic-owned homes across the country on fire, along with scores of businesses. They also destroyed three Bible Society stores in Egypt, sources said.

Wael Ibrahim, manager of the Assuit branch of the Egyptian Bible Society, watched helplessly from a distance as a group of Morsi supporters circled his store several times at 9:15 a.m., threatening to attack any Christian who approached. He left only to receive a cell phone call informing him that his store was on fire.

"I watched from afar, and I saw the Muslim Brotherhood people divide up into teams of 10 to attack anyone who approached the store," Ibrahim said. "I eventually left and I called the police because it was all I could do. I left, and half an hour later I got a call, and someone told me the Bible Society was on fire, so I quickly went

back. But I couldn't get close enough to defend the place."

Ibrahim said he watched the Bible Society structure burn down, and then the mob set fire, one by one, to every Christian-owned store in the area.

Nationwide, two Christians have been confirmed killed — Iskander Rizk Allah from Delga in Minya Governorate, said to be in his 60s, and Rami Zakria of Alexandria, of whom little was immediately known. The circumstances of Rizk Allah's murder have not been released. According to human rights workers, Zakria was shot.

### Largest assault

A pastor and his wife were kidnapped from their Seventh-day Adventist church in Assuit, according to *Watani*, but the report could not be independently confirmed.

The Aug. 14 violence in several cities constituted the largest assault on the Christian community in Egypt, though the number of casualties is still unknown. Overall 525 civilians died and 3,717 were injured, according to the Egyptian Health Ministry. Interior Minister Mohammed Ibrahim said 43 policemen also died.

Early Aug. 15 security attacked protestors at the camps they had occupied in Nasr City, an area of Cairo, since the first week on July. With the Army standing by, the non-military security forces began using tear gas and bulldozers but then quickly moved on to firearms, including long-range rifles, in what they said was a response to shooting by protestors. The security forces denied using lethal force, but several journalists documented deaths from gunfire. Numerous human rights observers have characterized the clearing of the camp as a "blood bath."



Watani photo from Morning Star News

St. George Church, Sohag, is one of more than two dozen Egyptian church buildings attacked Aug. 14.

Those gathered at the camp, including entire families, were protesting the July 3 ouster of former president Morsi, who was deposed by the military after massive nationwide protests. Millions had gathered to protest the way Morsi consolidated power among his Islamist base despite promises not to do so, alleged corruption, his handling of the economy and a trend toward ruling by unilateral and possibly illegal edicts.

Prior to the attack on the camp, leaders in the Muslim Brotherhood warned that if it were broken up, Christians would be attacked. Immediately before and after Morsi's ouster, his supporters had repeatedly blamed the Christian minority for the protests that led to his removal from office. In sermons across the country, numerous imams called for Christians to be attacked, according to human rights activists.

"I believe they are angry because they created a story where the Christians are to blame for the collapse of Morsi," said one evangelical Coptic lay pastor. "Before the protest, we were only 7 percent of the population and not worth paying attention to."

The timing of the attacks has led many Copts to speculate that they were planned and not spontaneous.

"It had to be pre-planned," the pastor said about the attack on The Church of Mar-Girgis in Assuit. "It happened at the exact time the attacks happened in Cairo."

The attacks were scattered across the country, from The Church of Mar-Girgis,

which was attacked in Arish in the northeast Sinai Peninsula, to a handful of churches in Giza outside of Cairo, to churches and religious facilities in Upper Egypt. Most of the attacks happened in Minya Governorate, with the city of Assuit following close behind. The attacks happened across theological lines; it appears no denomination was spared.

The government has ordered a curfew in most cities and declared a "state of emergency," a form of martial law. Copts are responding to the attacks with a mixture of sadness, fear and anger. Part of the anger, said Mina Thabet, spokesman of the Maspero Students Union, is the belief that the world has abandoned the Copts.

### 'World has abandoned Copts'

"They just can't see the Copts are a religious minority who are being attacked," Thabet said. "They're attacking, killing, burning ... And some [Copts] have nothing left. I am afraid for the coming days. The [Western governments] have left us unsecured. I think it's the next form of genocide."

The attacks on the church buildings have devastated the Copts most of all, even more than the attacks on their homes and businesses, Ibrahim said.

"I'm very sad — everyone is very sad," he said. "They're not just attacking Coptic-owned businesses, they are attacking our churches. ... [Everyone] is very scared. Everyone is staying at home, especially because of the curfew." (Morning Star News)

## Beeson receives grant to train pastors in intersecting faith, work, economics

Samford University's Beeson Divinity School has received a grant to train pastors to help their congregations understand the intersection of faith, work and economics. The grant from the Kern Family Foundation will provide \$105,047 to be dispersed over the next 18 months.

"The need for equipping pastors for leadership of their congregations at the intersection of faith, work and economics is immense, not least because theological curricula has largely ignored this vital subject in the formation of pastors," said project supervisor

Mark DeVine, associate professor of divinity at Beeson in Birmingham. "There has been a deafening silence in preaching and discipleship where the workaday lives of believers is concerned."

### Purposes of God

DeVine added that the goal is to educate and train pastors to affirm the work their congregants do, that it belongs to the original and ongoing purposes of God. While the church gives significant focus on the mandate to witness outside church walls, DeVine said it does not give sufficient attention to how

work belongs to God's purpose and that even though the workplace has become hostile terrain, it remains terrain that belongs to God.

"Many American Christians spend the majority of their time each week not at church and not even at home, but in the workplace," said Samford Provost J. Bradley Creed. "What they experience and how they live between Sundays is a crucial subject for people of faith. The grant from the Kern Family Foundation is a remarkable resource for equipping pastors to encourage and guide their church members in navigat-

ing the challenges of the marketplace which dominate our society and have such an impact on their lives."

The provisions of the grant will allow Beeson to host several events, DeVine said. These will include a conference on faith and work, a Beeson Pastors School focusing on the relationship between church life and economic life, and a symposium on faith and work for a select group of pastors. The grant will also pay to bring in guests to speak on the theme of faith and work in divinity chapels.

The Kern Family Foundation,

established in 1998 by Robert D. and Patricia E. Kern, seeks to enrich the lives of others by promoting strong pastoral leadership, educational excellence and high quality, innovative engineering talent.

One of the institutional goals of Beeson is to "train pastors who can preach," DeVine said.

"This grant will help current pastors and divinity students who hope to become pastors better teach their congregations how faith should influence and drive their work lives, to the glory of God." (Beeson)

# Seeing better things



Photo courtesy of FBC Cordova

FBC Cordova helps repair a Cordova resident's home in July and put on a new roof with the assistance of Holmes Baptist Association in Florida.

## FBC Cordova steps out in faith to revitalize its church, community

By Julie Payne  
The Alabama Baptist

Where buildings once stood in the city of Cordova, large concrete foundation slabs now stand in their place.

And as Mahlon LeCroix, pastor of First Baptist Church, Cordova, surveys the area, what he sees is a blank slate.

More than two years after two tornadoes left a path of destruction through Cordova in Walker County on April 27, 2011, the city's downtown district was demolished in late May to ready itself for the rebuilding process.

"It looked like we lived in a war zone after the tornadoes," said LeCroix, who in addition to serving as pastor of First, Cordova, works two part-time jobs — as a substitute teacher at Cordova High School by day and as a police dispatcher at night — and volunteers as the high school's football chaplain. "I'm always trying to find more ways to get (involved)" in the community, he noted.

It's this outlook that has led LeCroix to

impact both his church and city through various revitalization efforts, and he's enlisted the First, Cordova, congregation to help. "The city is trying to be revitalized and I'm trying to revitalize the church at the same time," he said.

### Positive attitude

Originally from Athens, LeCroix graduated from The Baptist College of Florida in Graceville and was the pastor of Beulah Anna Baptist Church, Leonia, Fla., while in school. He then became the pastor of First, Cordova, where he has served for more than a year.

Mike Gilbert, a deacon of First, Cordova, noted LeCroix's positive attitude, which has been evident from the beginning. "He saw this town was destroyed, (and) he has this great outlook ... that there's a future," Gilbert said, adding he is thankful for LeCroix's ability "to see better things" and move forward in an area that's been through its share of difficulty.

"He came in with the attitude of, 'I want to make changes' ... (and) we're taking that challenge on," Gilbert noted. "He's brought a lot of enthusiasm and excitement to the church, and it really shows."

A primary aspect of the church's own revitalization has been major renovations to the church building. "We've done a lot of reworking in the church ... remodeling it and bringing it back," LeCroix said. The church fellowship hall and children's church area have been completely redone, and a new kitchen has been completed. In addition, areas of the building are being repainted and two large TVs have been installed in the sanctuary to enable Power-Point presentations to accompany sermons.

While the majority of the building's work has been facilitated by members of First, Cordova, a group from Holmes Baptist Association in Florida offered assistance in July by pulling out paneling and installing Sheetrock. "They took us on as their summer missions project," LeCroix said.

And the revitalization work isn't stopping on the church's property. First, Cordova, also is looking outside its own walls to reach the community through various projects. During the timeframe the Holmes Association missions group was in town, members of First, Cordova, teamed up with them for community-related projects that included putting a new roof on a house and

building a new porch. "People from (our) church helped [the Florida missions team] and took them to places they needed to go," Gilbert said. "Since Bro. Mahlon has been here, he's had this on his heart to ... reach out to the community and had asked for us to participate. We've had good participation."

LeCroix said First, Cordova, intends to maintain this momentum in the community by taking on one missions project a month in the future. "We're trying to keep the fire going and keep people excited about doing missions work," he said. "I want our focus in missions to be on people who are unchurched."

### 'God is working'

Gilbert noted that members of First, Cordova, and even people outside of the church stepped up to fund the recent missions work with the Florida team.

"God is working through people we don't even know," LeCroix added, noting that he is reminded of the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000. "[Jesus] took what the boy had and multiplied it. God is moving and He's doing a lot because we're willing to step out on faith." ■

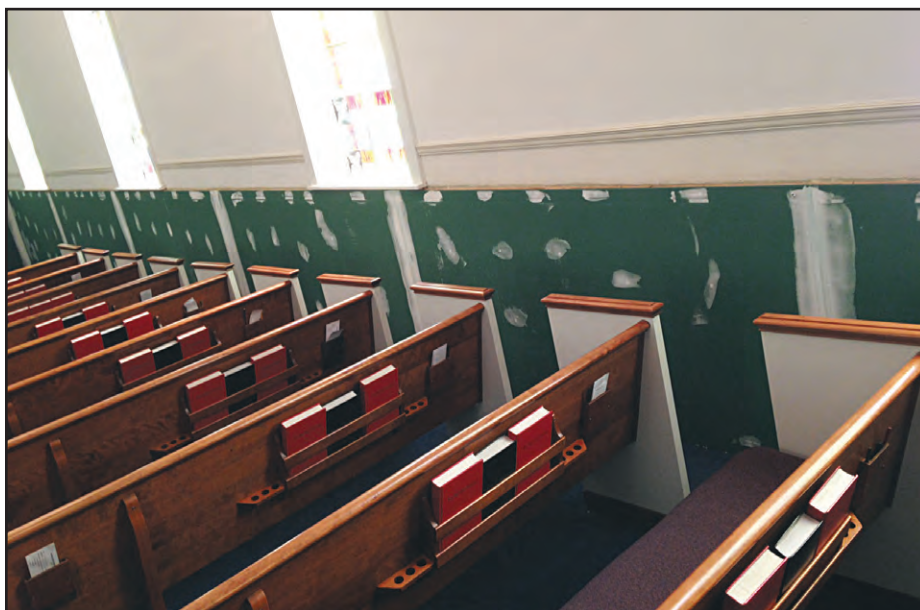


Photo courtesy of FBC Cordova

FBC Cordova put up new drywall in the sanctuary to replace rotten paneling with the assistance of Holmes Baptist Association in Florida.



Photo courtesy of FBC Cordova

FBC Cordova also remodeled a room for children's church. The church also redid the fellowship hall and completed a new kitchen.

# Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

## BETHEL

► **Pine Hill Church** will host the women's conference "In Search of the Genuine Article" on Aug. 23-24. The Friday session will be from 6-9 p.m. and the Saturday session will be from 9 a.m.-noon. The conference will be led by Jena Forehand. For reservation information call the church at 334-963-4412 or email [pastor@pinehillbaptistchurch.com](mailto:pastor@pinehillbaptistchurch.com). Child care will be provided and all ages are welcome. Chris Kynard is pastor.

## BIRMINGHAM

► **East Gardendale Church, Gardendale**, continues its August Alive 2013! Thursday Night Revival Services. The Aug. 22 event at 6:15 p.m. will feature John Hambright and Shelley Burkett. For information call 205-608-0889. Allen Davis is pastor.

## GENEVA

► **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will host The 39er's C.L.U.B. (Christians Living Under the Blood!) nondenominational luncheon Sept. 10, 11 a.m. The Brandenburg family will present a music program. For reservations call 334-684-9617 by Sept. 13. Mike Shirah is pastor.

## MADISON

► **Brownsboro Church** will host the "Living Proof Live" simulcast with Beth Moore and worship leader Travis Cottrell on Sept. 14. Doors open at 7:30 a.m. and the event will end at 3:30 p.m. To reg-

ister call the church office at 256-776-3646. Joseph Cooper is pastor.

## MARSHALL

► **Sardis Church, Boaz**, will hold Upward Basketball with practices beginning Sept. 23. There will be weekly practices and games limited to one hour each. It will be offered for children ages 4 years through sixth grade. The deadline to register is Sept. 14. For information call the church office at 256-593-7762. Michael Goforth is pastor.

## MOBILE

► **Shadow Lawn Church, Eight Mile**, will celebrate homecoming Sept. 15, 10:30 a.m. The service will include testimonies and video presentations from former staff members and missionaries of the church. A covered dish lunch, singing, testimonies of the past and vision for the future will follow. New Dawning and Girls of Grace will participate in the celebration service and afternoon singing. For information call the church office at 251-675-1447. J. Derrall Marshall is pastor.

## MONTGOMERY

► **Catoma Church, Montgomery**, will celebrate its 50th anniversary Sept. 8, 10:15 a.m. with Tommy Lee, the church's first pastor, as guest speaker. A covered dish lunch will follow. Chad Underwood is pastor.

## SALEM-TROY

► **Bethlehem Church, Brun-**

**didge**, will celebrate homecoming Aug. 25. Mach Lowery will speak. Lunch will follow. The church also will hold revival the following Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, 7 nightly. Bruce Williams will speak. Roger Waldrop is pastor.

## TENNESSEE RIVER

► **First Church, Stevenson**, will hold a women's conference Sept. 7, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. led by Laura Ford of Undeserved Ministries and author of "Seeking Purity." Susan Wiggs will lead worship. All women are welcome. For information visit [www.undeserved.net](http://www.undeserved.net), and for ticket information call Jodi Posey at 205-541-8419. Joshua Posey is pastor.

## TUSKEGEE LEE

► **Ridge Road Church, Opelika**, will hold revival services Aug. 26-28, 6 nightly. Christian humorist/musician Bro. Billy Bob Bohannon (Bill King) will perform Aug. 26. King will speak Aug. 27-28. Harvey Miller is pastor.

## — Clarification —

In the Aug. 15, 2013, article "Ransom Café ministry serves homeless population in Mobile area," the ministry was reported as giving out free food. Ransom Café does ask for donations of money or time (washing dishes or sweeping floors, etc.) from people who receive a hot meal.



Photo courtesy of Cottage Hill Baptist Church

## MOBILE'S COTTAGE HILL BAPTIST HOLDS SPECIAL BAPTISMAL SERVICE

Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, extends an opportunity for those in attendance to be baptized following the morning worship service July 21. Several people came that morning already prepared for baptism, but more than half of those baptized — 38 in total — had become believers that morning and followed through with baptism. Two pools were filled and bleacher seating was set up. Hundreds gathered to watch and celebrate the baptisms.

## Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

### Church librarian Sue Mobley retires after 44 years

When Sue Mobley became the church librarian at First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, in 1969, volunteers handwrote information for each book on 3x5 cards and filed them in the library's card catalog.

On July 28, the church honored Mobley for her 93rd birthday and also on her retirement after 44 years of service in the Tuscaloosa Baptist Association church library.

Moving from handwritten cards to a typewriter and then about 10 years ago to a computer system to catalog books are only some of the changes Mobley has witnessed in her years of service.

When she began working in the library, it was housed in a room not much bigger than a closet. The present library, on the second floor of the children's building, houses more than 2,200 books, DVDs and movies.

The explosion of Christian fiction in recent years has created a boom in the Christian book market, Mobley said. She personally enjoys fiction and biographies, but she has made it her mission to know what church members

like to read and to be able to recommend books to individuals.

"The library is a ministry to the church," Mobley said. It's also a place for church members to meet each other casually and share reading interests and develop friendships. "You can come in here and browse around and see people you might not meet otherwise," she said.

A special children's section, which Mobley calls "easy readers," has a child-sized table and chairs. "The children like to pull out books and sit at the table and read. You know, we let them pull out the books. We can always put them back. We want them to enjoy the books."

Funds for the library are included in the church budget, but church members also support the library with donations and memorials.

Gil McKee, pastor of First, Tuscaloosa, said Mobley's years of service have been invaluable. "I am so grateful for Sue's 44 years of service to the church. She has been a committed and passionate advocate of Christian education through the medium of literature and other resources. She has touched the lives of thousands of people." (Sammie Jo Barstow)

### Eubanks celebrates 30 years at First, Monroeville

Glenn Eubanks, associate pastor and minister of music of First Baptist Church, Monroeville, celebrated 30 years of ministry July 28.

What was unique about Eubanks' anniversary is that he served all of his years at the same Bethlehem Baptist Association church, something he said he was able to do because First, Monroeville, is a "very loving and accepting" church.

First, Monroeville, celebrated Eubanks' years of ministry with a special service featuring former and current choir members led by Keith Hibbs, who served as the minister of music 30 years ago. Pastor Micah Gandy spoke on the importance and blessing of serving in ministry and attendees later gathered for lunch in the fellowship hall. Eubanks also was presented with several letters and cards from friends and family.

Eubanks, who graduated from the University of Mobile, traveled with the singing group TRUTH. He later attended New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

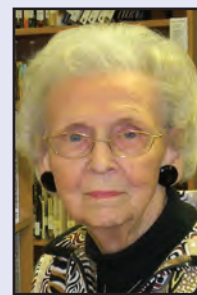
"All along the way God was speaking to me about a place in ministry, specifically in music," he said.

After seminary in the summer of 1983, First, Monroeville, asked Eubanks to serve as its minister of music and youth minister. The rest is history.

"It's been an incredible fit for me and my family," Eubanks said of his role at First, Monroeville. "God has been gracious to allow us to be here for all these years."

In his current role as associate pastor and minister of music, Eubanks works with senior adults and family ministries and helps with weddings, funerals and sometimes fills the pulpit.

Eubanks and his wife, Sherri, have three children and three grandchildren. (Neisha Fuson)



MOBLEY



EUBANKS

## WMU's 125th anniversary

**Main photo:** Girls participate in GAs in November 1960. Woman's Missionary Union released a missions magazine (small, right) for girls called 'Tell' in 1953. Pictured on the left is the current cover of 'GA Leader.'

# Spreading the missions message



Photo courtesy of national Woman's Missionary Union

## Women nationwide profoundly influence WMU throughout its 125 years of existence

(continued from page 1)

gathered together women of like heart on Edisto and nearby Wadmalow Islands, and The Wadmalow-Edisto Female Mite Society was born. By 1811 the fledgling society was making contributions to missions across the world and to the Catawba Indians. And word of Hephzibah and her society spread throughout South Carolina and the region, with small bands of women organizing to give and to pray.

Then in 1835, 17-year-old Henrietta Hall in Virginia married Lewis Shuck.

Two weeks later, the newlyweds set sail for missions work in China. The young mother of five died at age 27 in Hong Kong but left the imprint of her remarkable dedication and skills on a people far away that continues into the 21st century. Women across the South were inspired by Hall's dedication and service. They prayed and gave with renewed zeal.

State by state, the missions message spread among women throughout the South, and hundreds of "female missionary societies" began springing up. Alabama is a good case in point. The early societies didn't leave minutes and records, but at least four of the 17 known women's organizations in the state were represented by men from their churches when the Alabama Baptist State Convention was formed in 1823. Of particular interest was the presence of Nancy Lea, the mother with the missionary heart from Marion, at the state convention's organizational meeting. One of Lea's daughters helped found the first women's missionary society in Texas. Her other daughter, Margaret, also moved to Texas and began societies — and her husband, Sam Houston, became governor of Texas.

Marion figures prominently in Alabama's early missions history. Judson College in Marion organized its first missionary society in 1840 and soon named it the Ann Hasseltine Society, a forerunner of Young Women's Auxiliaries (YWAs)

across the nation in years to come.

Alabama's first foreign missionary was Eliza Sexton, a 21-year-old teacher at Judson, who married Lewis Shuck in 1846 following the death of Henrietta in Hong Kong in 1844. Once married, Eliza and Lewis went to Shanghai to do pioneer missions work. Alabama's next foreign missionary, Martha Foster Crawford, is the portrait of a woman who both encouraged and overcame a remarkable number of obstacles, both in her marriage to T.P. Crawford and in groundbreaking work in China. She was present at the 1883 informal meeting of Baptist women in Waco, Texas, and electrified the crowd of women as she told what God was doing in China. A number who heard her that day vowed that "her face lit up like an angel's." She pleaded with the women to organize to support the work of their missionaries. Reports said that one pastor, knowing that men "were not welcome there, for women would not speak in front of men," got to the venue very early that day and laid down on a far back pew where he

would remain unnoticed yet could hear the message.

Less well-known but equally remarkable women were those like Sarah Ann Chambers, leader of an early Alabama society. The Civil War had been devastating to the work of the societies. After the war, the pieces had to be put back together, along with the shattered economy and the pain of defeat. Sarah Ann reminded other women, "He who 'bought us with a price' surely has something for us to do." Strangely enough, women's missionary societies faced a climate of hostility in their own churches, as many church leaders looked on them as competitors rather than partners. In fact, just as women were making great plans to join other states in forming national WMU, the Alabama Baptist State Convention arbitrarily abolished Alabama Baptist WMU's Central Committee in 1888. Delay did not mean defeat, however, and in less than two years the committee

was reinstated and Alabama joined her sister states as part of WMU.

A stellar friend and champion of WMU through the years has been *The Alabama Baptist*, staunch supporter and advocate for the work of women in missions. Amanda Tupper Hamilton, Alabama WMU's first president, had a wonderful Baptist "pedigree." Her father was none other than Henry Tupper, head of the Foreign Mission Board (now the International Mission Board), and her mother a sister of James Boyce, founder and first president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Hamilton wrote a weekly column of missionary news for *The Alabama Baptist*, and it was used extensively by women for their programs long before the days of a WMU magazine.

Little-known names have made incomparable contributions to the formation of the world's largest missionary organization for women. Countless women in small churches across the land were never known, but they are written in the heavenly record as part of the army of women who banded together to share the gospel with the world.

### 'Mother' of WMU

Ann Baker Graves, of Baltimore, mother of Baptists' first missionary doctor to China, Rosewell Graves, was really the "mother" of WMU. She organized women to pray and to give to missions efforts. She also encouraged them to spread the message of Mite boxes to collect funds for missions. When the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) met in Baltimore in 1868, she encouraged the pastors' wives to get together informally and pray for missions. And thus it began.

Another leading light in helping shape and mold those early meetings was Sally

Rochester Ford, of Kentucky, wife of an influential Baptist editor and a skilled writer in her own right. Sally was beautiful, poised, terrific on a platform and presided at most of those early years of informal meetings, setting a classic example of how a woman can preside and lead.

### Ministry of Lottie Moon

Yet another profound influence toward organization came from a famous Baptist name: Lottie Moon of China. That tireless and articulate letter writer constantly urged Baptist women to organize, gain strength from unity and together support their missionaries in praying and giving. She, as much as any one person, is responsible for what became WMU.

Just consider those early leaders and what they faced — indifference or downright hostility from many men in leadership, diffidence and timorousness from many fellow women who desperately wanted to help but didn't know how. There wasn't total opposition from the men in the churches, however; there were many missions-hearted pastors who recognized the potential of women committed to missions support and who encouraged and assisted them in organizing. WMU will forever give thanks for the great Luther Rice, who saw from the very beginning the power of women dedicated to sharing the gospel. And there was Baptist statesman Richard Furman, whose heart focused on sharing the Good News and who encouraged women to do the same. Henry Tupper, as head of the Foreign Mission Board, constantly championed and encouraged women in their missions endeavors. Henry became a special friend and encourager to Lottie.

History reveals that the hand of God was

(See 'WMU's primary focus,' page 9)

**History reveals that the hand of God was truly at work in the formation of WMU, auxiliary to the SBC.**

# WMU today

## Did you know ...

By Jean Roberson  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

► The mission of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) is to radically involve believers in the mission of God. In other words, WMU exists to draw people into missions. Throughout history, this has been the unchanging purpose.

► Since its inception, WMU has worked to educate generations of Southern Baptists about missions. Today WMU involves Southern Baptists in missions and missional living through its organizations: Mission Friends, Girls in Action (GAs), Royal Ambassadors (RAs), Children in Action, Acteens, Challengers, Youth On Mission, myMISSION, Women on Mission and Adults on Mission.

► WMU actively promotes giving to the two missions offerings, which supply approximately half of the annual budget for the International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board. In 2012, WMU helped raise \$149.3 million — the third-highest total in the offering's history — for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

for International Missions. Since initiating the first offering in 1888, WMU has helped raise more than \$3.7 billion through this effort. Also in 2012, WMU helped raise \$57 million for missions work in North America through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. Since 1907, when official reporting began for the home missions offering begun by WMU, receipts total more than \$1.4 billion through 2012. All of the funds raised through these two missions offerings go directly to the missions boards to support field personnel as they share the gospel. WMU also continues to actively promote giving through the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention.

► WMU identifies a critical issue through its Project HELP initiative in order to educate individuals about the issue and mobilize them to address it. Past issues include AIDS, hunger, illiteracy and child advocacy, among others. In response to Project HELP:

Restorative Justice, camps and ministries to prisoners and their children began in multiple states.

► The current focus is Project HELP:

Human Exploitation, which includes human trafficking, bullying and pornography. WMU is calling 1 million men to commit to living pornography free and calling 1 million women to pray for the men and boys in their lives. Visit [NewHopeDigital.com](http://NewHopeDigital.com) or [Join1MillionMen.org](http://Join1MillionMen.org) to learn more about the Join One Million Men in the War Against Pornography campaign presented in partnership with The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission and Pastor Jay Dennis of First Baptist Church at the Mall, Lakeland, Fla.

► WorldCrafts is a division of WMU that develops sustainable, fair-trade businesses among impoverished people around the world. A WorldCrafts contact writes of the women she works with, "They've had consistent work, which is really what they need, to have an income that they can count on, that's reliable, that is consistent. WorldCrafts has been able to help us do that."

► WorldCrafts has partnered with more than 60 artisan groups in more than 30 countries. Each product represents a life changed by the opportunity to earn an income with

dignity and to hear the offer of everlasting life. Visit [worldcrafts.org](http://worldcrafts.org) for more information about artisans, products, party themes and more.

► Pure Water, Pure Love (PWPL) — a ministry of WMU — provides water filters for missionaries' home and travel use, providing a consistent clean water source. Because PWPL is funded through donations from adult and children's WMU groups, these filters are provided to missionaries at no expense. One missionary writes, "We are so grateful that WMU has always cared for us. As a physician, I know how important good water is. Every day I see and treat kids and adults [who] are suffering from bad water. A sad reality is that something as preventable as this happens."

► Within the past year, PWPL ministry provided in excess of 1,200 filters and parts. Since 2005, donations to PWPL have enabled WMU to provide more than 50 grants totaling more than \$500,000 to churches, Christian organizations and missionaries for water projects. Visit [wmu.com/pwpl](http://wmu.com/pwpl) for details.

► Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC) and Christian Men's Job Corps (CMJC) are faith-based, welfare-to-work ministries of WMU. Overall, there

**PURE WATER,  
PURE LOVE**  
A Ministry of WMU®



**WORLD CRAFTS**™

## WMU has 'tremendous impact' in lives of IMB missionaries

By Gordon Fort  
Senior Vice President, Global Prayer Strategies,  
International Mission Board

**W**e were living on a missions station in San'yati, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). I was sitting down at the breakfast table between my two youngest brothers and facing my two older brothers across the table. Momma was on my left and Dad was at the head of the table to the right. As anxious as I was to be about the day's activities, I knew there was one more step to freedom and only Dad could complete the final phase of this morning routine. I had also learned the futility of trying to rush him. The last thing we did together before the day started was the morning devotional from *Open Windows* that concluded with the reading of the names of missionaries who were having their birthdays that particular day and then closing with prayer. That was my first introduction to Woman's Missionary Union (WMU).

For 125 years WMU has been involved in a vital partnership of missions education and advocacy with the International Mission Board (IMB) and for its missionaries scattered around the world. In the early days of Southern Baptist missions, when travel and communication were difficult, WMU played a vital role in "holding the ropes" in prayer support. They formed prayer and support groups that would consistently and faithfully pray for the missionaries.

My parents were medical doctors, running a bush hospital in Zimbabwe. Many times, at a critical time of need, medical supplies were delivered in barrels that had made their way by ocean freight from a WMU group. At Christmas and on our birthdays, many times packages would arrive from WMU groups that had prayed for us and wanted to send us something for these special occasions. Sometimes these were occasions that WMU leaders used to train another generation of young women to participate in as they taught the GAs (Girls

Auxiliary) about supporting, praying and advocating for global missions involvement.

I share these personal family examples simply as representative stories because there are literally thousands of other missionaries who could share similar experiences.

Let me share some other ways that WMU plays a key role in the global missions enterprise. When our missionaries have to face the difficult day when the time comes to send their sons and daughters to the United States for college, WMU plays a key role in helping these third culture kids transition into the American culture. On a rotational schedule, state WMU groups host a re-entry and orientation retreat every year for missionary children starting college in the States. This is a key time for these young people. Thank you, WMU, for your love and care of missionary children for these 125 years.

When the time comes for every missionary to make the journey back to America for their stateside break, it is always a chal-

lenge to work out the logistics of housing and transportation for this generally temporary timeframe. Many Southern Baptist churches have sought to meet this need by making missionary housing available. There are churches and individuals who have also made places for missionaries to come for rest and vacation. These homes, apartments and facilities are scattered all over the U.S. It was becoming increasingly difficult to manage the growing needs of our missionary force as we passed the 5,000 personnel mark. Into this gap stepped WMU. They took the responsibility for organizing, soliciting and administering the housing needs of our missionaries while on stateside. Thank you, WMU, for your willingness to always step up and meet the practical caring needs of our missionaries.

Two other key components of WMU's involvement in the missions enterprise have been the role it had played in missions education and in raising financial support for global missions through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. It is impossible to calculate the global impact of these two aspects of



FORT

**1888**

• The WMU story begins in Richmond, Va.

**1921**

• WMU headquarters moves from Baltimore to Birmingham, Ala.

**1945**

• Lottie Moon Christmas Offering exceeds \$1 million for first time

**1908**

• WMU forms Order of Royal Ambassadors  
• First prayer calendars are printed

**1934**

• Offering for home missions renamed, "Annie W. Armstrong Offering"

**1952**

• Prayer calendar begins to list missionaries by birthdays

**19**  
• 50th anniversary  
• WMU transfers to International Mission Board

are 159 registered and certified CWJC and CMJC sites, and several of these serve participants in multiple locations at satellite sites. In 2012, 11,080 staff and volunteers served approximately 4,250 participants. Participants include Marceia Bonin-Turner, of Tennessee, who escaped a life of domestic violence and alcohol abuse to obtain her GED, enroll in college and work with other women suffering from addictions; and Krissy Thompson, of Arkansas, who lived in her car with her child and worked as a nightclub entertainer, now in school and an active member of her church.

▶ According to independentsector.org, the estimated value of volunteer time for 2012 is \$22.14 per hour. With more than 3.7 million volunteer hours served in 2012, CWJC/CMJC had an economic impact of more than \$82 million based on this estimate. Visit [wmu.com/jobcorps](http://wmu.com/jobcorps) for more information.

▶ Visit [wmu.com](http://wmu.com) for more information about involving members of your church in missions through WMU. For resources, visit [wmustore.com](http://wmustore.com).



**EDITOR'S NOTE** — Jean Roberson, MSW, LCSW, is a ministry consultant for national Woman's Missionary Union. She serves as team leader for the adult team and director of Christian Women's Job Corps/Christian Men's Job Corps. ☪

## 125 years

WMU's influence. Missions education at the local church level and during summer camps have led to thousands hearing and understanding the call to take the gospel to the world. After they respond, WMU has taken the responsibility to make sure we don't send them without financial support to sustain them. Millions of dollars have been raised every year for this purpose. Thank you, WMU, for 125 years of faithful service.

Without the faithfulness, advocacy and support of WMU, the missions enterprise would have been ineffective. WMU has had a tremendous impact in the lives and ministries of IMB missionaries for 125 years. For generations, they have rallied Southern Baptists to "look to the fields that are white unto harvest." They have taught and sung the song, "We've a story to tell to the nations." And long before the missions enterprise became a popular topic in the local church, WMU had been raising high the banner of missions. We congratulate them on this anniversary and with all of our heart we thank them. ☪

# WMU's primary focus on missions continues today

(continued from page 7)

truly at work in the formation of WMU, auxiliary to the SBC. W.O. Carver, the grand old man of missions and professor of missions at Southern Seminary, declared in later years that the idea of auxiliary status was nothing less than the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, preserving as it did WMU's right to work alongside the convention but to remain autonomous in its decision-making.

May 14, 1888, would have been an amazing day to visit — with the onlookers, some 150 of them, and the 32 delegates from the states boldly taking a vote to say, "Yes, we will step out on faith and organize in order to share the gospel with a needy world." Annie Armstrong and her sister, Alice, had been working quietly for years to formulate a plan that would work, and those 32 visionary delegates selected Annie to be their first "executive" secretary and Mattie McIntosh as their first president. And from that seminal day, WMU went from strength to strength, often misunderstood, sometimes even slighted and ignored, but always persevering — sharing the gospel with a world in need. The fact that WMU has survived these 125 years is a ringing testament to the soundness and faith of those founding mothers, building on the foundation laid for them all the way back to 1800.

Growth was consistent. Leadership remained consistent and capable. The remarkable Fannie E.S. Heck — who edited the first magazine and wrote the first hymn and the first history — led for an astounding 15 years as national president.

### Mission Friends

WMU officially adopted "Sunbeams" for children in 1896, and Sunbeams lives on today as Mission Friends. In 1907, Young Women's Auxiliary was formed, followed the next year by Royal Ambassadors (RAs) for boys. Then in 1913, Girls' Auxiliaries were officially organized. Those Girls Auxiliaries began as ages 9–16; then in 1970 they became Girls in Action (GAs), ages 6–11, and Acteens, ages 12–16. They have gone on to become one of the strongest of all youth groups, boasting more than 50,000 members and now celebrating an exciting 100 years of organization. There are great-grandmothers now enjoying seeing their ever-so-great granddaughters working on their GA Journeys. Just put those girls to a task and they make history, like GAs did in 2007 when they set out to raise money for Goats

in Croatia as a means of evangelizing in that nation. The initial goal was \$5,000, and in five months, GAs (with help from Children in Action and Sunday School children) raised nearly \$350,000.

### Stronger than ever

It wasn't just youth groups that were growing in WMU; every aspect of the organization was continuing to develop and expand. In 1912, Baptist women entered a new era as they elected Kathleen Mallory, the 33-year-old "Sweetheart of Alabama," as their new executive secretary. Beautiful, gracious and committed heart and soul to the task, Kathleen became the longest-serving director ever, guiding WMU for a remarkable 36 years. There was nothing easy about that period; it included massive tensions in race relations, the worst depression America has ever suffered and a massive global war. With Kathleen in leadership, WMU emerged after World War II stronger and larger than ever.

And it was due in great part to the amazing acumen of this tiny dynamo at its helm that both the Foreign Mission Board and the Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board) survived the Great Depression without the devastation of total bankruptcy. Case in point: in 1932, WMU offerings made up 70 percent of the Foreign Mission Board's income. By 1934, when WMU membership made up just 13.3 percent of total SBC membership, this small minority was supporting the majority of the work of missions. The motto adopted was "A Debtless Denomination by 1945." WMU rose to the occasion and selected Alabama state president Alma Worrill Wright to head their stewardship committee for 10 years. Alma became the Stewardship "General," and thanks to WMU the convention became debt-free in 1943 — two years ahead of schedule.

Kathleen retired at 69, leaving behind a thriving organization on the cusp of a new era. And WMU entered the period of the greatest growth in its history, choosing Alma Hunt as its new executive director. Alma Hunt became the face of WMU for more than two decades; this fashionable young woman who first refused to consider accepting the post, declaring, "But I can't speak," was also its voice. She became one of the most outstanding orators among women in Baptist history.

As a child in Roanoke, Va., her beloved pastor's wife was her leader. When she messed up her presentation before her peers, Mrs. Vines would command her, "Now Alma, just sit down and get back up and start over." Sure enough, this "never give up" philosophy became part of Alma Hunt's character and stood

her in good stead many years later in tense and often fractious meetings with forceful SBC leaders.

She led WMU to its largest membership in history, reaching 1 million members by 1951. As she led WMU in the 1950s and '60s, Alma Hunt made sure they stayed on the cutting edge of missions advance. She kept the organization firmly to its missions purpose, forever striving to increase its effectiveness. And, just as had every leader of WMU, she faced again and again the question of auxiliary vs. agency. It has been WMU's blessing to be able to serve as an auxiliary in the true helping sense of the word, never flagging in its undergirding of all denominational efforts to focus on missions.

### Staying focused

Massive denominational changes began taking place, and they naturally affected WMU. Alma Hunt's successor, Carolyn Weatherford, guided the organization through difficult waters and treacherous shoals of factional disagreements and divisions. Carolyn constantly encouraged WMU leaders not to "become involved in squabbles" but to stay focused on missions.

She was followed by Dellanna O'Brien, a former international missionary and a keen visionary. Dellanna led WMU in establishing two highly successful entities: the WMU Foundation, to ensure WMU's future in missions education and support, and Christian Women's Job Corps, which gives women a hand up in learning job skills and finding hope in Christ.

Wanda Lee followed Dellanna as executive director and has had her share of challenges as well but has led with steady purpose and finely tuned skills. Wanda is one of the primary reasons WMU has been able to maintain its identity in the midst of swirling denominational issues.

And now WMU comes to its 125th birthday. Methods have changed — technology has brought massive shifts in the ways we communicate and relate — but WMU's constant purpose has never shifted from its primary focus: missions. The rest of the story is just waiting to be told. We are the ones who will be making that story — and passing on this legacy to our children and their children.

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — Rosalie Hunt is recording secretary for national WMU. She is a retired missionary, Judson College biographer and former Alabama WMU president. ☪

1957

125th anniversary of YWA  
Royal Ambassadors RA work to the  
World Commission

1985

• First books published under  
New Hope imprint

1996

• WorldCrafts started  
• Project HELP: AIDS begun  
• 100th Anniversary of Sunbeams  
(Mission Friends)

2012

• Royal Ambassadors and Challengers return to WMU  
• myMISSION organization begins for younger women  
• First e-book titles released by New Hope Publishers

1964

• By 75th year, Lottie Moon Christmas Offering  
has collected \$100 million for missions

1991

• Missionary Housing Office begins connecting  
missionaries with furlough homes

2008

• First Children's Ministry Day in February

# Learning to be His hands and feet

## Girls in Action, Acteens celebrate 100 years of empowering girls

By Laura Wilson  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Not many organizations are rich with a heritage that spans more than 100 years, but Girls in Action (GAs) and Acteens organizations sponsored by national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) have now passed the century mark of engaging girls in missions education and involvement.

It was in 1909 — when large hats, high button-up shoes and long Sunday drives in a horse and carriage were popular — that GAs got its start. In 1907, Young Woman's Auxiliary (YWA) was created for younger women and grew to 992 organizations within two years. The missing link was involving preteen and young teenage girls in missions, so WMU began publishing literature for these girls in 1909. These missions groups were first included in a 1913 report, and that year was claimed in later years as the official start of missions education for girls through WMU.

Although the names of the missions organi-

zations for girls have changed over the years, its missions purpose remains true.

Heather Keller, children's ministry consultant for national WMU, describes GAs today as an exciting, active organization full of girls learning about and participating in missions work happening in their communities as well as around the world.



"GAs is a place where girls can experience Jesus' love and compassion while they learn to be His hands and feet," Keller said.

As a missions discipleship organization for girls in grades 1–6, members of GAs learn about, pray for, give to and do mis-

sions work.

GAs provides weekly curriculum, a Christ-centered peer group for girls, hands-on missions experiences, opportunities for girls to develop leadership skills, learning about the biblical basis for missions and godly mentors for girls.

GA Journey, an individual achievement plan, further engages girls in missions. Acteens involves girls in grades 7–12 in missions and helps them develop an

authentic faith that leads them to be compassionate and demonstrate a true servant's heart and attitude.

"Acteens is about empowering teenage girls to understand that God has a plan and a purpose for their lives and He can and will use them in His work in the world," said Suzanne Reece, student ministry consultant for national WMU.

Acteens organizations are supported with ongoing curriculum, hands-on missions opportunities and supplemental resources like MissionsQuest, the individual achievement plan for Acteens. Similar to GAs, Acteens provides a Christ-centered peer group for teens, opportunities to develop leadership skills and godly role models.

Throughout the 2013–14 church year, WMU is encouraging GA and Acteens groups across the country to celebrate their 100th birthday.

Visit [wmu.com/ga100](http://wmu.com/ga100) for more information.



*EDITOR'S NOTE — Laura Wilson is a senior at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She is serving as an intern at national WMU.*

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### CHURCH POSITIONS

**PASTOR:** Cottonton Baptist Church is seeking a pastor. Send resumés to: Cottonton Baptist Church, P.O. Box 35, Cottonton, AL 36851.

**FULL-TIME SENIOR PASTOR:** New Hope Baptist Church, Clarkdale area. Send resumés to: 6573 Highway 145, Meridian, MS 39301, NLT Aug. 31, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee.

**SENIOR PASTOR:** First Baptist Church, New Hope, Ala., a congregation size of 250 is seeking a full-time senior pastor. Send resumé to: Terry Rice, c/o First Baptist Church, 535 Bearden Road, Grant, AL 35747.

**BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR:** Liberty Baptist Church, Alliance, Ala., is seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resumés to: Liberty Baptist Church, 8218 Alliance Short Creek Road, Bessemer, AL 35023.

**BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC & MEDIA:** First Baptist Church of Mount Olive, Ala., is seeking a bivocational minister of music and media. Please email resumés to: Sheila@fbcmo.org.

**PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC:** Rangeline Baptist Church of Demopolis, Ala., is seeking a part-time minister of music. We enjoy a blended mix of worship music. Mail resumé to: Rangeline Baptist Church, ATTN: Music Committee, 5805 County Road 19, Linden, AL 36748.

**MINISTER OF MUSIC & YOUTH:** Catawba Springs Baptist Church, Brewton, Ala., is prayerfully seeking a full-time minister of music and youth/students. Please send resumés to: Catawba Springs Baptist Church, 5110

Old Highway 31, Brewton, AL 36426.

**CHOIR DIRECTOR & MINISTER OF STUDENTS:** Oak Bowery in Ohatchee is searching for a choir director and minister of students. If you are interested in either/both, send resumé to: oakbowerybaptist@att.net.

**FULL-TIME MINISTER TO STUDENTS:** Springfield Baptist Church is located about 30 minutes north of Nashville, Tenn. We average about 400 in worship and have an active student ministry. Candidates should have a minimum of two years experience and a bachelor's degree. A seminary degree is preferred. Please send resumés to: Beth Bohler at bethbohler05@gmail.com. The deadline for resumés is Sept. 13.

**MINISTRY POSITION:** Seeking a part-time minister of youth. Contact Union Hill Baptist, 2919 Co. Hwy. 39, Oneonta, AL 35121, 205-274-9232, or bbarnett@otelco.net.

**MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY:** Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Trussville, Ala., is seeking full-time director of preschool and children's ministries. Submit resumé to: 7789 Gadsden Highway, Trussville, AL 35173, or email: rcore@rbconline.net.

### OTHER POSITIONS

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:** Sav-A-Life of Troy, Ala., a nonprofit Christian pregnancy counseling agency, is seeking a qualified, dynamic individual for the position of full-time executive director. Applicant must be able to work flexible hours including some evenings. Required qualifications include bachelor's or master's degree or equivalent experience, have excellent organizational, communication, administrative,

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## Want to know God?

Pastor Bob Weber  
Camden Baptist Church

What really matters? That's a good question depending on the circumstance and who is asking the question. To some, what matters is gainful employment. To others, what matters is rescuing a rebellious teenager. To some, what matters is to be noticed, appreciated, making the team or being married. "What really matters?" It depends on the circumstance and who is asking the question.

If you are paralyzed, let's say for 38 years like the man mentioned in John 5, what really mattered would be walking. Yes, that is obvious, and that's the point. When the opportune time came for possible healing, no one helped him to the front of the line (John 5:7). What mattered then was every man for himself.

Into this sad scenario Jesus inserts Himself: "Do you want to get well?" In other words, "What really matters to you right now?" What mattered to this invalid and what mattered to Jesus were two different things. This man's obvious need revealed a much deeper and urgent condition. Jesus addressed this after taking this man to the front of the line (read about it in John 5:8–9).

The lame man can now walk, but to Jesus, there was something that mattered even more than his healing. What seems to be mission accomplished is actually mission unfolding.

Such is the beauty of helplessness. Actual wholeness deals with what truly incapacitates us — our sin. "Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." What could possibly be worse than paralysis? Unreconciled sin, according to Jesus. Strong legs cannot bear the weight of a guilty soul. Only the intervention of grace can do that.

To Jesus, that was what mattered and that is why He would offer up His own life for everyone bound and paralyzed by sin. What matters most to God is that you and He be rightly related, and that is why He has pursued you just as He did the man mentioned in John 5. Like that man, we too will report that only Jesus could have made us completely well.

## About Alabama

### Time to Think About Alabama's Highway Investments

By Jim Williams  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel are the main sources of money for building and maintaining the state's roads and bridges. The State of Alabama last raised its fuel tax rates in 1992. A number of highway improvements have been achieved in the years since, but the purchasing power of transportation dollars has eroded. Projections by the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) indicate that it is time to consider the options available to maintain and improve the state's transportation assets.

Since 1992, the state's highway system has absorbed a 33 percent rise in the intensity of travel. More than 20,000 lane-miles have been added to road capacity. The level of bridges classified as standard has dropped from 37 to 23 percent. Roads rated rough have declined, while roads rated smooth have increased. The number of highway fatalities has fallen by 17 percent.

However, a number of factors have combined to reduce the purchasing power of highway finances. Fuel taxes are collected on a per-gallon basis, and while the volume of travel has increased, so has automotive fuel economy. Furthermore, the costs of constructing and maintaining roads have risen with oil prices, but highway tax revenue does not respond to increasing fuel prices. The result has been fewer tax dollars, in relation not only to wear and tear on

the roads but also to the cost of roadwork. The Legislature also has diverted highway funds to other state services due to the recession.

The negative trends have been masked temporarily because of state borrowing for highway projects, which increases current expenditures but pledges future revenues for debt repayment. Federal stimulus funds for highway resurfacing also have been available.

ALDOT has a five-year plan that projects the ability to finance road improvements. It estimates that existing revenue sources can provide for the routine maintenance, bridge replacement and repaving needed to sustain current highway conditions in the years ahead. However, ALDOT will have a very limited ability to finance additional highway capacity. The department has identified key projects that can be built within its constraints, but many long-sought improvements are not included.

Alabama is not alone in facing this dilemma. Congress must deal with a deficit in the federal highway trust fund, and a number of states have acted to raise fuel taxes or link them to prices. It is time for our state to consider the future direction of its highway investments.

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

# 8Eighty Records

## University of Mobile launches new record label

The University of Mobile (UMobile) launched a new record label — 8Eighty Records — Aug. 16 and released its first recording Aug. 19. The first release, a live worship album recorded on campus at UMobile, is available through 8Eighty-Records.com now and on iTunes beginning Sept. 17.

The album — “Our God Is Faithful: Live Worship from the University of Mobile” — offers eight songs blending original material written by students and alumni, plus covers of popular worship songs.

8Eighty Records general manager Jeff Quimby said establishing its own recording label was the next logical step for the university's Center for Performing Arts (CPA)/School of Music and School of Worship Leadership, whose alumni include Christian music artists such as Chris Lockwood of 33 Miles and the group Big Daddy Weave. University connections include Dove Award recipients Kenn Hughes, assistant professor of music and director of instrumental studies, and UMobile alumnus Steven V. Taylor, a Nashville producer and UMobile guest lecturer.

“We are developing talented Christian artists and worship leaders as students, and we were looking for opportunities to develop them beyond graduation,” Quimby said. UMobile graduates are performing at churches and other venues throughout the region as solo artists and in groups including male vocal group Veritas.

### Scouting, developing talent

Quimby also serves as director of A&R (artists and repertoire) and will be scouting talent, producing, arranging recording sessions and signing new artists. He brings extensive experience to the project as a former A&R manager at Integrity Music. He has worked with such artists as Lincoln Brewster, Kari Jobe, Desperation Band, Michael Gungor, Jared Anderson, Nichole Nordeman, Margaret Becker and many more. As A&R for Integrity Music, his

efforts led to the creation of albums that garnered sales, critical acclaim, Dove Award nominations and Christian radio hits including the No. 1 AC single “Everlasting God” from Lincoln Brewster.

The university's move into the recording label business is part of a new academic program in the School of Worship Leadership. Students may concentrate in areas such as music business, technology, film and theatre, and church ministry. The program aims to train worship pastors, media directors, studio musicians and engineers, film and stage performers, recording artists and songwriters.

The name, 8Eighty Records, was proposed by a UMobile student who noted that the university campus encompassed 880 acres in north Mobile County.

“Our mission is to impact the church with worship and songs of faith through God's unique gifts and abilities of the student body and alumni from the University of Mobile,” Quimby said. “Our purpose is to proclaim the wonders of God through concert, performance presentation publishing, recording, radio, television and Internet communication.”

The new recording studio is under construction in Martin Hall on the UMobile campus. The studio is expected to be completed by November and include the latest technology, giving UMobile students opportunities both to record and produce CDs in the same type of professional environment they will encounter in their music careers.

UMobile artist-in-residence Jason Breland is executive director of 8Eighty Records. Additionally, Breland is a recording artist and worship pastor at First Baptist Church, North Mobile, in Saraland. He said CPA ensembles such as Voices of Mobile, Impact, Exit 13, RamCorps and Jazz Band have made international appearances and brought attention to the college's Worship Leadership and School of Music programs.

For more information, visit [www.8EightyRecords.com](http://www.8EightyRecords.com) or call 251-442-2553. Follow 8Eighty Records on Facebook and on Twitter @8EightyRecords. (UMobile)



## McDonald retires from Canaan Baptist

Canaan Baptist Church, Bessemer, honors Mae McDonald (second from right) on Aug. 11 for her retirement as a ministry assistant. A reception was held Sunday evening and McDonald was presented a commemorative plaque and other gifts from the church family. Pictured with McDonald are (l to r): Pastor Morgan Bailey; Bo McDonald, Mae's husband; Ashley McDonald, Mae's daughter; and David Steen, chairman of the deacons and personnel committee.



Photo courtesy of Canaan Baptist Church, Bessemer

## FBC Birmingham minister released after being held in conjunction with wife's death

While the investigation of Karen Shahan's brutal murder continues, interim pastor Charles T. Carter is reminding members of First Baptist Church, Birmingham, that it's OK to express anger and sadness and even harbor doubts about God and faith when faced with adversity.

“I imagine God has been bombarded by questions from Birmingham, Ala., and particularly from First Baptist Church,” Carter said during his Aug. 11 sermon. “It's OK to ask questions.”

Karen Shahan, 52, was discovered dead in her home July 23. Authorities said she had been brutally

murdered but provided no further details.

On Aug. 7, the Homewood Police Department detained Shahan's husband Richard, 53, who is First, Birmingham's children and families pastor and facilities director.

He was released from custody Aug. 9 without being charged. Police reports indicate no one has been ruled out as a suspect.

Richard Shahan also was put on administrative leave from the church “to give him time and space to focus on his family and healing at this time,” according to First, Birmingham's Facebook page. (ABP, TAB)

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# 5 Alabama Baptist churches in 100 top-attended

Five Alabama Baptist churches are in the 100 top-attended churches in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), according to a list released by LifeWay Christian Resources President Thom S. Rainer on his blog Aug. 3.

Topping the list for Alabama was The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, with an average worship attendance of 4,000. It came in at No. 52 on Rainer’s list.

Following it were Gardendale First Baptist Church with an average attendance of 3,750 (No. 56); Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover, with 3,122 (No. 72); Willowbrook Baptist Church, Huntsville, with 2,884 (No. 89); and Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, with 2,850 (No. 92).

Twenty-two other Alabama Baptist churches also made Rain-

er’s list of the 595 SBC churches with an average weekly attendance of 1,000 or more. The churches listed make up 1.3 percent of the SBC’s 46,000 churches.

“If you believe a church should be on the list but is not, the most likely explanation is that the church failed to report or chose not to report data,” Rainer wrote.

## Fewer churches report

Churches failing to report data is not an uncommon occurrence, said Jim Swedenburg, director of the office of Cooperative Program and stewardship development for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

“We have been hearing the last decade that Southern Baptists are declining in baptisms and in membership,” Swedenburg said. “At the same time, we have been declining in another critical cate-

gory, and almost without mention. Fewer of our churches are reporting their numbers or statistical information.”

Last year, the number of nonreporting churches in Alabama grew from 457 to 573 — a 25 percent drop in a single year, he said. And still more send incomplete reports.

It’s a “sobering fact,” Swedenburg said. “When churches do not send a report, they are not counted. As a result, we do not get the full picture.”

And though the worship attendance numbers of the churches that made the list are estimates and not as “systematic” a metric as Sunday School attendance numbers, “these are all wonderful churches attempting great things for the Lord,” Swedenburg said.

Other Alabama Baptist churches that made Rainer’s list were:

- ▶ No. 120 — First Baptist Church, Opelika — 2,491
  - ▶ No. 135 — Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills — 2,323
  - ▶ No. 175 — Sixth Avenue Baptist Church, Birmingham — 2,000
  - ▶ No. 204 — First Baptist Church, Montgomery — 1,892
  - ▶ No. 230 — Church on the Eastern Shore, Fairhope — 1,760
  - ▶ No. 249 First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa — 1,650
  - ▶ No. 254 — Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Dothan — 1,643
  - ▶ No. 258 — Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville — 1,615
  - ▶ No. 362 — CrossPoint Church, Trussville — 1,309
  - ▶ No. 367 — Hill Crest Baptist Church, Anniston — 1,300
  - ▶ 383 — Westwood Baptist Church, Alabaster — 1,296
  - ▶ No. 399 — Lakeview Baptist Church, Auburn — 1,260
  - ▶ No. 403 — First Baptist Church, Dothan — 1,250
  - ▶ No. 411 — First Baptist Church, Prattville — 1,243
  - ▶ No. 415 — Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa — 1,228
  - ▶ No. 419 — Golden Acres Baptist Church, Phenix City — 1,212
  - ▶ No. 445 — Vaughn Forest Church, Montgomery — 1,175
  - ▶ No. 447 — First Baptist Church, Pelham — 1,170
  - ▶ No. 450 — First Baptist Church, North Mobile, in Saraland — 1,164
  - ▶ No. 473 — NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville — 1,141
  - ▶ No. 479 — Dayspring Baptist Church, Mobile — 1,121
  - ▶ No. 488 — Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville — 1,100
- For more information, visit [www.thomrainer.com](http://www.thomrainer.com). (TAB)

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1 Corinthians 10:31-32

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 25

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

### WHAT'S THE ANSWER? Ecclesiastes 11:1-5, 9-10; 12:13-14

The final two chapters of Ecclesiastes can be summed up in this way: God is the answer. There, you have it. Discover God now; enjoy your life as a gift from Him. If not, you may grow old and regret the wasted years apart from God. If so, you may have a story to tell to your grandchildren.

My grandfather came to Christ in 1912 as the result of a sermon based on Ecclesiastes. He was 11 years old. It made quite an impression on him. He conveyed the story to me 74 years later, just one week before he died. "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth ... before the silver cord is snapped, and the golden bowl is broken" (12:1, 6).

#### Invest in Life (11:1-5)

Interpretations of verses 11:1-5 are interesting, if not entertaining. Critical scholars suggest, for example, that verse one refers to the author's plan for international shipping rather than as encouragement to invest in others by showing generosity. Personally I give verse two as a biblical reason for having six children. When all our kids are home, we give portions to eight (or more). Be diligent, be generous and be prepared. If you are gazing at the sky, you will not sow your seeds or reap your harvest. Quit your lollygagging.

The author's thoughts about clouds lead him to the magnificence of God. With all meteorological knowledge gained through science, the path of the wind is still a mystery to everyone but God. Even hurricane predictions are based on educated models, not on certainties. With all the discoveries in biology, genetics and physiology, only God can explain why twin babies, created from the same fertilized egg, have unique characteristics. The handiwork of God is a mystery to us.

#### Work Within the Boundaries (11:9-10)

Rejoice in God and be glad while you

are young. Enjoy the life God has granted you. Walk in the ways of your heart and your eyes, but remember that you are accountable to God. Avoid sorrow and pain, because you will likely have plenty of time to experience them. These two verses are a prelude.

In the passage that follows (12:1-7), Solomon paints an extraordinary portrait of life as one grows older. "Remember" carries with it the idea of rehearsing in one's mind, thinking continually upon his Creator in his youthful days. Think about God while life is relatively carefree. Hardships will be here soon enough.

Eyesight will fade. Hands will tremble; backs will no longer stand straight. Teeth will come out; ears will no longer enjoy the sweet sounds that they used to hear. Sleep becomes scarce as the older man rises early. Staying home is preferred. Hair turns gray or white. The spring in his step has sprung. Finally he passes, and his loyal friends mourn for him.

The spirit is loosed from the body like an arrow from a bow. His broken body no longer holds its contents. Adam returns to the dust. God's breath returns to Him. Is this futility? No, it reminds us that life is temporary.

#### Revere and Obey God (12:13-14)

Wisdom is worthwhile only to the person who applies it. Solomon studied, considered, "weighed, explored and arranged" wisdom literature (12:9), taught by masterful observers of human nature. Words of wisdom prod us, anchor us and remind us of our need for the Good Shepherd. In Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God is personified (1 Cor. 1:24).

Aesop's Fables are known for their moral teachings. In Ecclesiastes, the student must read to the end of the book to receive the Teacher's lesson. Revere God and demonstrate your reverence by obeying Him; this is the moral to the story. Here is the homework assignment for the rest of your life. "Fear God and keep His commands" (12:13).

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

### GOD COMPLETES THE STORY John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:1-4; 22:1-5, 12-14

#### The Plan (John 14:1-3)

If we journey back for a moment to the beginning of our series, we find ourselves at the most important beginning of them all, the beginning of creation in Genesis 1. This story of creation opens in an unusual fashion. There at the beginning, shrouded in darkness, are the waters of the great deep. For the ancient Israelites, this beginning would have struck an ominous note. Waters and darkness are often depicted in the Bible as malevolent forces, forces opposed to God's creative work. As part of a larger description of creation, Psalm 74 says, "You divided the sea by Your might; You broke the heads of the sea monsters on the waters." Psalm 89 sounds a similar note: "You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, You still them." Creation begins with water and darkness.

In the creation week, God tames these chaotic forces. He says, "Let there be light," and sets the darkness within bounds. He says, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters," and brings the waters under control. In creation God brings order out of chaos. Yet when God's creative works are completed on the seventh day, when God ceases from His labors, the waters and the darkness are still there. They are set in bounds to be sure, but they are still present, always threatening to break out again and wreak havoc in creation. Again and again the biblical authors will recall these chaotic waters as they describe their present suffering. "Save me, O God!" the psalmist calls, "For the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me" (Ps. 69).

The image of the waters controlled but still threatening captures a larger tension in the life of faith. We believe in a God who is in control, the God who gives life and order

to creation. And yet so often we experience a world that feels out of control, a world in which the chaotic waters have broken loose and overwhelmed us. Jesus' disciples would experience this tension in a profound way when they witnessed the crucifixion of their Lord. Seeing their Messiah on the cross, it would surely seem that the world was out of control. Knowing the doubts that would overwhelm them, Jesus comforts them, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me." He also assures them, "I am going to prepare a place for you, and I will come back to take you to be with Me."

#### The Place (Rev. 21:1-4; 22:1-5)

This note of hope struck by Jesus is one that finds its greatest fulfillment in the last chapters of the Bible. In Revelation 21:3-4, we read, "God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain." Alongside this expression of hope are two fascinating allusions back to the creation story. First the author says, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea" (21:1). And again, "There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light" (22:5). "No longer any sea" — the lingering chaotic waters are removed forever. "There will be no more night" — the malevolent darkness is banished altogether. The once-unfinished creation will be unfinished no longer.

#### The Promise (Rev. 22:12-14)

Until the day of Jesus' return and the fulfillment of His promise to take us to be with Him, we are left to live out the ideals of His kingdom here on earth. Through our lives now, we begin to heal the wounds of the unfinished creation. But work though we may, there will still be wounds too grievous for us to heal altogether. And so we look forward to that day when God will finally finish His creation. We hope for the day when God will make all things right.

## Christian Crossword

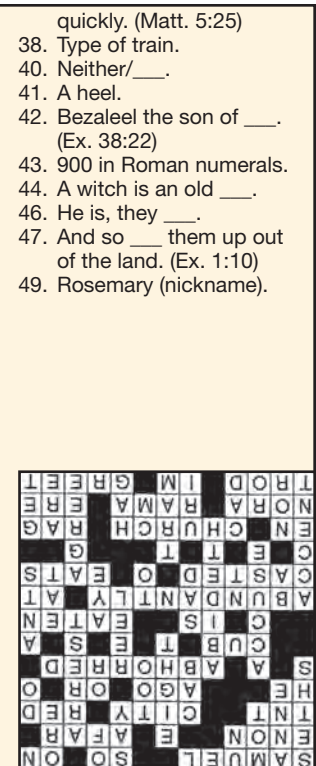
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### Across

- Hannah's son. (1 Sam. 1:20)
- For \_\_\_ persecuted they the prophets. (Matt. 5:12)
- Spirit of the Lord came up \_\_\_ David. (1 Sam. 16:13)
- John also was baptizing in \_\_\_ near to Salim. (John 3:23)
- The promise is ... to all that are \_\_\_ off. (Acts 2:39)
- An explosive.
- The \_\_\_ of God. (Ps. 46:4)
- A great \_\_\_ dragon. (Rev. 12:3)
- Whose son is \_\_\_? (Matt. 22:42)
- How long is it \_\_\_ since this came unto him? (Mark 9:21)
- Either/\_\_\_.
- Hated.
- A little bear.
- \_\_\_ it not written? (Mark 11:17)
- I have never \_\_\_ any

- thing common. (Acts 10:14)
- That they might have life more \_\_\_. (John 10:10)
- To be \_\_\_ a certain place.
- The director \_\_\_ the play.
- A carnivore \_\_\_ meat.
- Printer's measure.
- Call for the elders of the \_\_\_. (James 5:14)
- A torn-up piece of material.
- The Thin Man's wife (Nick and \_\_\_).
- In \_\_\_ was there a voice heard. (Matt. 2:18)
- Poetic for before.
- Walked.
- I am (contraction).
- \_\_\_ them that love us in the faith. (Titus 3:15)
- ye shall \_\_\_. (Luke 12:11)
- A man \_\_\_ God.
- Metal from mining.
- He that is \_\_\_ days old. (Gen. 17:12)
- To capture a lawbreaker.
- A yellow car in New York City.
- Also.
- Authority to \_\_\_ these things. (Mark 11:28)
- Firstlings of thy herds \_\_\_ of thy flock. (Deut. 12:17)
- \_\_\_ not a servant unto his master. (Prov. 30:10)
- Now \_\_\_ faith, hope, charity. (1 Cor. 13:13)
- A spool of film.
- Industrious insects.
- He was \_\_\_ at that saying. (Mark 10:22)
- Yes (nautical).
- Sat down to \_\_\_ and to drink. (Ex. 32:6)
- Slight variation in speech patterns.
- Sheep's sound.
- New Testament (abbr.).
- \_\_\_ have and \_\_\_ hold.
- \_\_\_ with thine adversary



# Express lane to missions



IMB photo

A young missionary (right) shares the gospel with a man in Latin America. A new International Mission Board missionary program, the Macedonia Project, aims to help others called to long-term missions service get to the field sooner while obtaining the theological education they need.

## IMB introduces Macedonia Project to help speed new missionaries to field

**Y**ou've recently finished college — or maybe you're a mid-career professional — and you sense an urgent call to follow Christ into long-term missions service.

You have the practical skills to make an impact. You have the motivation. You're ready to respond to the Lord's call in obedience right now, as the Apostle Paul responded when he dreamed of the man pleading, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16:9). But you need the theological training required for career missionary appointment.

The Macedonia Project might be the express lane to missions you're looking for. It's a new category of missionary service being developed by the International Mission Board (IMB) in conjunction with Southern Baptist seminaries.

The three- to four-year missions assignment, to be offered under the International Service Corps (ISC) umbrella, will allow apprentice missionaries to live and serve overseas while pursuing theological education online with one of the participating seminaries.

The first group comprises "millennials who are moving from college into the professional world and really aren't of the mindset to separate their theological education from their practical experience," said an IMB strategist helping design the program.

### Theological training

At the end of the field term, Macedonia Project missionaries will return to the United States and complete the remainder of their academic curriculum within a year, earning a master of arts degree while continuing to receive a financial stipend. After successfully completing the program, they will be eligible to apply for appointment as full-fledged career missionaries.

"They will be able to press excellent theological training through the grid of practical field experience while at the same time pressing their practical field experience through the grid of their theological training," IMB President Tom Elliff said.

"Those who qualify can complete a graduate degree, apprentice training and language study. The Macedonia Project will add to the ranks of our personnel who are viewed as some of the most passionate and skilled on the globe when it comes to effective missiological practices," Elliff said.

The approach will enable new missionaries to gain real-world experience while building the biblical foundation needed to undergird them for the long term.

They will learn theology and missiology "in the laboratory of the field experience — essentially without

delaying theological education in order to gain field experience, nor delaying field experience in order to get theological education," according to the program's introductory statement.

IMB personnel and several Southern Baptist seminaries are talking together about how to design the program while specific field assignments are developed.

The projected time frame calls for candidates to be recruited through the rest of 2013 and early 2014. Qualified applicants will be invited to a special Macedonia Project Expo in summer 2014 for screening and job matching, with as many as 40 to be recommended for ISC appointment and orientation by the fall of 2014.

The IMB is seeking two types of candidates for the program:

1. People just out of college with a long-term missions calling who want to jumpstart their training and get to the field as soon as possible.
2. Well-equipped people already in the professional arena who have valuable skills to offer in missions service but who need seminary training.

The first group comprises "millennials who are moving from college into the professional world and really aren't of the mindset to separate their theological education from their practical experience," said an IMB strategist helping design the program.

"The other group is professionals who feel called to long-term missions. They maybe have professional expertise in teaching or dentistry or medicine or nursing and they want to come with IMB," he said.

"They've got experience. They've got a professional degree. The only thing they lack is theological education. They can come via Macedonia and get the education while at the same time getting oriented to missions."

But the Macedonia Project won't be for everyone.

"It's going to be hard," he said. "We're going to give them field training, language training and theological education at the same time. So the bar is going to be high. We're going to assess you very carefully to see if you have the capacity.

"Second, we're going to match people to the right role, the right job. But what we hope to do is design the degree programs where for the first two years they're focusing on biblical studies, which will underscore their own walk with the Lord, their own personal discipleship."

### Cooperating seminaries

Participants will work to complete one seminary course per semester, or two per year, while they're on the field. The most academically challenging courses likely will come at the end of the program, when they return to complete degree work on seminary campuses.

Cooperating seminaries will be asked to provide Macedonia Project missionaries a discount in regular tuition for online classes. IMB also will provide study funds to help offset tuition costs.

And the programs won't be identical at each school. One seminary might offer a unique angle on a program that would be attractive to a particular student. Program designers are looking to have a variety of programs a student could choose from to further enrich the type of experience that student receives.

For more information, call IMB initial contacts at 1-888-422-6461 or email [initial.contacts@imb.org](mailto:initial.contacts@imb.org). Apply for the program through IMB's International Service Corps application process at <http://going.imb.org/2to3yr/isc.asp>. Indicate specific interest in the Macedonia Project. (BP)

***"Those who qualify can complete a graduate degree, apprentice training and language study. The Macedonia Project will add to the ranks of our personnel who are viewed as some of the most passionate and skilled on the globe when it comes to effective missiological practices."***

International Mission Board President Tom Elliff



sxc.hu

# 'Search for a Song'

## North Carolina Baptist minister wins song contest

**T**he minister of worship at Snyder Memorial Baptist Church, Fayetteville, N.C., is London-bound after winning a worldwide worship music contest.

On Aug. 6, Integrity Music Europe named Giles Blankenship's "You Are There" winner of its 2013 "Search for a Song" competition.

Blankenship, a 39-year-old Campbell University Divinity School graduate who is celebrating his 10th anniversary at Snyder Memorial this month, told the *Fayetteville Observer* he received notification of his winning entry while working at the church.

"One of our administrative assistants asked if I could take a call," Blankenship said. "I answered the phone and there was a guy with an English accent on the other end. That's when it hit me. I must have sounded like I was going to pass out, because he kept asking, 'Are you all right? Are you all right?'"

Blankenship said he is flying to London this weekend to record the song for future use by the company. "It's truly a dream for me and a blessing," he said.

During July more than 280 songs were submitted to WeAreWorship.com. Entries submitted from across the globe attracted more than 1.2 million Facebook likes and shares. The top five vote-getters went before a panel of performers and music engineers, who selected the winner.

Blankenship, a self-proclaimed band geek who tried his hand at writing his first songs at 16, wrote "You Are There" in 2008. He was working with Lars Gordon, a high-school student at the time who

was learning guitar. Gordon showed him a cool lick, and Blankenship began roughing out some accompaniment chords.

Blankenship had been meditating on Psalm 139 and began phrasing lyrics about God's enduring presence amid joy, pain, celebration and loss.

Blankenship, who has recorded five albums, said "You Are There" is one of a handful of all the songs he has written that have risen to the top and been affirmed by the church again and again.

He picked two songs he thought fit the contest's focus and conducted an informal poll of his friends on Facebook about which one he should enter. "You Are There" was the overwhelming choice.

Blankenship said he thinks the song gains strength because it arises from a biblical text and deals in an honest way with the psalm's theme of the ups and downs in the journey of faith.

"Sometimes we do 'rise to the highest heavens,'" Blankenship said in an email interview last month. "And sometimes — whether through a 'hell' of our own making or through no choice of our own whatsoever — we, nevertheless, find ourselves there, but we are reminded that God is with us in every circumstance."

John Cook, pastor of Snyder Memorial Baptist Church, said he was not surprised that Blankenship's song was selected winner in this year's competition.

"Giles has a voice from heaven and a heart to match it," Cook said in a statement on the We Are Worship website. "We are so blessed by his ministry with us every week and we know other local churches will be blessed as his song is shared more widely." (ABP)



BLANKENSHIP

## PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



### Islamic extremists bomb 2 churches, kill 45 people

KANO, Nigeria — Suspected terrorists from the Islamic extremist Boko Haram group set off four bombs that hit two churches in Kano city July 29, killing at least 45 people, sources said.

Ramsey Noah, chairman of the Kano state chapter of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, told Morning Star News by phone the explosive devices were planted near three churches, blasting two of them as well as nearby Christian-owned businesses. The four devices were detonated minutes apart between 9 and 9:30 p.m. in the Sabon Gari area of the city, sources said.

Christians were meeting at Christ Salvation Pentecostal Church at 41 New Road when one explosion detonated, and 39 bodies were recovered in the area, Christian leaders said. Christians also were meeting at St. Stephen's Anglican Church as another bomb went off, and an explosion apparently targeting Peniel Baptist Church did not affect the structure, Noah said.

Total deaths from the church bombings were unknown at press time, but Noah said that as security personnel moved into the area, church leaders had established that at least 45 people in the predominantly Christian area had been killed.

The pastor of Peniel Baptist Church, John Adeyemohe, told Morning Star News by phone that many Christians were killed.

"The attacks caused confusion and uncertainty in this area," he said. "I cannot for now say how many Christians have died or were injured, but I know that several deaths have been recorded as we saw military personnel moving dead bodies away to various hospitals."

### Coptic Christian girl shot dead in Egypt

CAIRO, Egypt — A Coptic Christian girl walking home from a Bible class at her church was shot and killed in early August in Cairo by an unidentified gunman, human rights activists said.

The rights representatives said 10-year-old Jessica Boulous was killed Aug. 6 while walking from the Ahmed Esmat Street Evangelical Church through a market to her home with her Sunday School teacher.

The teacher turned to buy an item at a market stall only to turn back and find Boulous lying in the dirt in a puddle of blood, rights activists said.

A single bullet had passed through her chest and heart, killing her instantly.

Nasr Allah Zakaria, Boulous's uncle, said the killing has devastated the girl's family.

No one has claimed responsibility for the killing. Zakaria, pastor of an evangelical church, said he didn't know for sure if the shooting was religiously motivated but quickly added that violence against Christians "seems to be normal" in Egypt now.

Zakaria said that, strangely, Boulous, an only child, was concerned about the violence and seemed to have a premonition of her death. She watched protests on television and urged her parents to get involved, but at the same time she was afraid enough for her safety that she asked her Sunday School teacher to escort her home from Bible school.

"She said she didn't feel safe," Zakaria said.

### Uzbek police target children's summer camps

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan — Uzbekistan is attempting to deprive the registered Baptist Union of land it owns. The state is claiming — without any apparent legal foundation — that the land was "illegally" bought in 2000.

Baptists have complained to the prosecutor-general that "the future of Uzbekistan cannot be built on the plundering of religious organizations."

An unrelated children's camp organized by local Protestants was raided. The raid on a camp of 31 adults and children involved 30 ordinary police, 20 riot police and 30 officials from the regional tax authorities, Fire Brigade, Sanitary-Epidemiological Department and the regional administration. Police "began brandishing their rubber batons and collected statements from everyone — even from small children separated from their parents."

After more than six hours of questioning and raids on the alleged organizers' homes, it is expected that charges will be brought against six Protestants. Police have refused to discuss the raid.