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Troy University officials and representatives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Mobile dedicate the John Henry Cardinal Newman Center on Aug. 18.



'Forum of FAITH'

Troy University first Alabama state school to offer faith-based dorm

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

A state university has become the first in Alabama to offer faith-based dorms to students who meet certain requirements. The dorms, which opened in August at Troy University, have brought both praise and criticism. "Over time, our students indicated in surveys that their interest in faith and spiritual issues is very high compared to students across the land," said John W. Schmidt, Troy's senior vice chancellor for advancement and

external relations. In building the dorms, the university was "meeting a need for student housing but also satisfying some of our student requirements."

The John Henry Cardinal Newman Center residence hall was built to "provide a forum for discussing one's faith," Schmidt said. "We believe we have an obligation here at the university not only to teach a person how to earn a living but also how to make a life."

The center creates a sort of "ministry corridor." The Catholic Church has rented space for a chapel on the premises and the Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) building is next door, with Methodist and Presbyterian ministries following in a row.

To live in Newman Center, a student must maintain a 2.5 GPA, submit a recommendation letter from a minister or other community leader and be engaged in some sort of community service, Schmidt said. The idea has been well received by

students, he added. "Once it became known (that Newman Center was opening), 376 students filled that residence hall almost immediately."

Facing opposition

But the dorms haven't opened without challenges. Andrew L. Seidel, staff attorney for the Wisconsin-based Freedom From Religion Foundation, wrote a letter Aug. 1 to Troy's chancellor, Jack Hawkins Jr., explaining that faith-based housing was a "constitutional concern." He wrote that "giving preferential treatment to Christian and religious students in housing decisions violates provisions of the Alabama Fair Housing Law, as well as corresponding provisions of the Fair Housing Act."

Initially university spokespersons had indicated that the dorm would give preference to Christian students, but Schmidt has since rescinded that idea.

"The housing is open to all faiths,

even to those who don't have a faith," he said, explaining that atheism is a kind of faith, "a faith that there is no God."

The dorm is intended to foster a community of discussion and diversity, Schmidt said.

Kyle Ganus, president of Troy's BCM and a member of Bush Memorial Baptist Church, Troy, said some students who live in Newman Center say they have enjoyed the atmosphere so far, especially freshman nervous about ending up in a party atmosphere. Others say it's not much different from other dorms.

But Ganus, a junior, said he believes it could also be a pitfall for Christians when it comes to sharing their faith and making disciples.

"I think it's way too easy for us to clique up when we should be spreading out and living life with the other people on campus," he said.

At least two other schools — one in Florida and one in Texas — have faith-based dorms. ☛

COMMENT

Breaking Through Media Messages

Do you feel overwhelmed by media blasts trying to influence everything from what you buy to what you watch on television to how you feel about certain social issues or for whom you vote?

The New York City marketing firm Yankelovich estimated that a person living in a city is assaulted by about 5,000 messages a day. Thirty years ago that number was around 2,000 messages a day, the firm said.

Today supermarket eggs have been stamped with the names of television shows, a *New York Times* article reported. Turnstiles bear messages from auto insurance companies. One major airline sold ad space on its motion sickness bags. Even Walt Disney Films partnered with a medical supply firm to promote DVDs of one of its movies on the paper liners of 2,000 pediatricians' examining tables.

All together it is more than the human mind can process. A London study found that most people remembered only 1 percent of the advertisements they see. A report by Fluid Drive Media found that fewer than 250 of the nearly 5,000 messages encountered during a 24-hour period actually penetrated the consciousness of the consumer and fewer than half of that number could be remembered.

Memorable messages

The right messages, the ones remembered, seem to be tied to something the consumer wants or values. For example, if one is interested in a sports car, one may notice an advertisement for sports cars but never see promotions for pickup trucks.

If all of that is true, how does one get a hearing for the gospel of Jesus Christ in a society some call post-Christian? How can the message that Jesus paid the price for our sins on Calvary and offers forgiveness and eternal life to all who will believe in Him compete with the thousands of other messages clamoring for attention?



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Is the answer more radio advertisements? More billboards? More mailouts into the home? More words?

All of these are good and have their place, but the Bible seems to point in another direction.

'The Word became flesh'

When God wanted to make Himself known in fullest fashion He took on flesh. The Bible says in John 1:14 that "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The invisible God became visible in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Of Jesus, the writer of Hebrews said, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being."

The apostle Paul added, "For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him (Jesus)" (Col. 1:19). The apostle John wrote that Jesus, "God the One and Only who is at the Father's side, has made Him (God) known" (John 1:18).

Theologians call this "incarnation." When anyone saw Jesus of Nazareth, they saw God. In the ministry of Jesus — and ultimately in His death and resurrection — they saw how much God loved them.

Noted theologian John R.W. Stott has written that "All true evangelism demands a kind of incarnation, an entering into other people's worlds, into their pain and suffering, into their loneliness and lostness and even into their thought world."

Said another way, God makes Himself visible today by making Himself seen through the lives of individual Christians and in the life of the Christian community. It is not words that Christians offer haggard humanity. It is Someone. It is not abstract theories or mechanical programs that Christians share. It is relationship — relationship with God's people and with God Himself.

Human words have to take on human flesh in order to touch the longings, the hurts, the needs, the interest and values of people without Jesus.

If God's people are God's method for gaining a hearing for the gospel then the need may not be more words or better programs. The need may be for better men and women, individuals in whom the love of God has become incarnate.

Writing to the Corinthian Christians, the apostle Paul reminded his readers that their lives were living letters "known and read by all men" (2 Cor. 3:2). Those lines illustrate the truth that some people may never read the gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke or John but the lives of believers will be read every day to see if words proclaimed match lives lived.

Perhaps that is why a statement from one of the Consultation on World Evangelization events warned, "Our witness loses credibility when we contradict it by our life or lifestyle. Our light will shine only when others can see our good works (Matt. 5:16). In a word, if we are to speak of Jesus with integrity, we have to resemble Him."

'Divine order'

The opening words of the Book of Acts give guidance. There the author wrote, "In my former book, Theophilus (lover of God), I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach." It might be expected the order would have been reversed — teach and do. Instead Luke, the physician, first emphasizes doing.

One has written that the "divine order" seems to be "do and tell" rather than the modern-day structure of "tell and do."

When humanity sees the invisible God living in and through the people of God then the methods and techniques used by the church to gain attention for the gospel will not really matter. It will be the content of the Christian's character that touches the hurts and needs, the interest and values of people bombarded by media messages.

Baptist hymn writer B.B. McKinney may have summed up this truth as well as anyone when he wrote, "While passing thro' this world of sin/And others your life shall view/Be clean and pure without, within/Let others see Jesus in you."

May the words of that hymn be true of every believer.

OCTOBER is

Pastor Appreciation
Month.

Tell us how you plan to honor your pastor and staff and/or express appreciation to them during the month. We plan to publish a story about how Alabama pastors and staff were honored and would like to consider your information as part of that story. Email details to news@thealabamabaptist.org.

Thank You



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

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'Frank conversation'

FBC North Mobile to hold men's event to discuss porn, manhood

A church in south Alabama is taking action to stop the scourge of pornography by hosting a men's event called "Battle Plan" to speak frankly about what must be done to equip believers for victory.

What they're doing, Pastor Ed Litton said, can be replicated in churches across the nation.

Litton has been pastor of First Baptist Church, North Mobile, in Saraland for nearly 20 years, and in the past five years or so he has noticed what he calls a cultural avalanche.

"I'm certain other people are seeing it too, but as a pastor I'm watching marriages in my church be ravaged and destroyed. I'm watching men become less directional about their leadership role in the home and the church," said Litton, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors Conference.

"In counseling and trying to deal with these issues, we suspected that one of the major issues for men is pornography."

About six months ago, Litton read "Closing the Window" by Tim Chester. Though he had read several books on fighting pornography, Litton said this one stood out as one that was especially practical and honest.

"The thing that I was most encouraged by with Tim's approach was that it wasn't a shame-based approach," Litton said. "One of the things I will say about the southern culture is that we are a shame and honor culture."

"I was in Japan last summer on a missions trip. That's a shame and honor culture, but I felt the whole time like I was in south Alabama in that sense," Litton said.

What he means by a shame and honor culture, Litton said, is that people refrain from talking about certain subjects openly and publicly. One such topic is pornography.

"That was the driving motivation for us to say, 'We've got to stop this.' If we hope to turn this around, we're going to have to deal honestly and frankly with this subject and lift the lid on shame," Litton said.

"This is every man's challenge at some level. We've worked really hard to present a plan that isn't the broken struggler — the guy who would identify himself that way. It's for everybody. Many of us are broken and many of us struggle."

"Our basic idea is that it's a frank conversation about porn and manhood and the ultimate beauty for which every man longs," Litton said.

So Sept. 19, from 6 to 8 p.m. men will gather at First, North Mobile, for Battle Plan: Men Fighting for Freedom. Litton will lead the discussion, along with Neal Ledbetter, director of

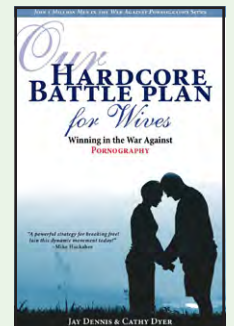
One Million Men urges men to be porn-free

Internet pornography is the perfect trap because it hooks men and then men don't know what to do," said Jay Dennis, pastor of First Baptist Church at the Mall, Lakeland, Fla. "I'm hoping [the Join One Million Men initiative] will be the launch, the discussion-starter for pastors to ... start having some hard discussions with their men."

Dennis is working with Southern Baptists' Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) to sponsor the initiative, which calls Christian men to commit to sexual purity and, specifically, to protect themselves and their families from the devastation caused by pornography.

The Join One Million Men website — www.join1millionmen.org — includes a place for men to register their porn-free commitments as well as a place for women to register their commitments to pray for the purity of men in their lives.

Resources from WMU's New Hope Pub-



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

campus life at the University of Mobile (UMobile).

Ledbetter is a member of First, North Mobile, and Litton described him as "a young man who's very sharp and really understands this generation of students and what they're struggling with."

**"Our basic idea
is that it's a frank
conversation about
porn and manhood."**

Pastor Ed Litton
FBC North Mobile

"He deals with this on a daily basis, so I went to him and told him about Chester's book. I told him, 'You need to read it and we need to sit down and talk. I'm thinking a Thursday night event, two hours where we just have an honest, frank conversation,'" Litton recounted.

Their approach will be gospel-centered, he said, and they'll talk about God's original intent in creation followed by the fall and the cross.

"Ultimately there is no hope apart from what Jesus did for us on the Cross," Litton said.

That will be covered during the first hour of the event, and after a short break the men will reconvene for a panel discussion and end with five points of the Battle Plan — "five things that they're going to need in order to be victorious," Litton said.

UMobile, which is about 3 miles from the church, is promoting the event among their

student body, and Litton hopes every man on campus and every man at the church will attend.

First, North Mobile, also will provide a live video feed of the event, and people across the country will be able to watch it on their iPads, laptops or with others.

"We've got churches that are going to show it in the auditorium, and we've got churches that are going to tune in to it in their small groups," Litton said.

Someone said recently that the antidote for shame is the phrase "me too," Litton said. People are better able to cope when they know they're not the only one struggling. But he'd add a second phrase, he said: Jesus said, "Come to Me."

"He's the source of cleansing and overcoming," Litton said.

'Be transparent'

"Pastors have got to be transparent with our people, especially our men. We've got to tell the truth about ourselves and our own struggles, whatever those are and at whatever level," Litton said.

To view a video about the Battle Plan event, visit <https://vimeo.com/73468637>.

The effort at First, North Mobile, coincides with the Join One Million Men anti-pornography initiative (see story, this page). (BP)

Churches encouraged to remember Sixteenth Street bombing anniversary

As Alabamians mark the upcoming 50th anniversary of the bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, Birmingham, area leaders are drawing attention to the Sunday School lesson that was taught that day.

When the church was bombed on Sept. 15, 1963, the scheduled Sunday School lesson was ironically "The Love That Forgives." The bomb went off at 10:22 a.m., cutting short Sunday School and

killing four girls. The planned 11 a.m. sermon was "A Love That Forgives" from Luke 23:34.

Greater Shiloh Missionary Baptist, Birmingham, is among churches encouraging places of worship around the nation to teach a lesson on love, healing and forgiveness this coming Sunday, Sept. 15.

Churches are also being asked to ring bells at 10:22 a.m. in memory of the four girls.

The 1963 Sunday School lesson came out of the The International Lesson Annual 1963 and focused on Genesis 45:4-15, which looks at how Joseph forgives his brothers after they sold him into slavery.

A copy of the lesson can be used with permission from <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B-yEOT-91aQWiSVBZLW1Zem9IbVkl/edit?usp=sharing>.

"I think this is very important,"

said Michael W. Wesley Sr., pastor of Greater Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church. "[T]his is a different community than it was. If we are going to really be the community that we really need to be, and the nation that we need to be, forgiveness is required."

The church bombing anniversary falls on National Back to Church Sunday, an annual event created to call people back to church. (TAB)

Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

AUTAUGA

► **White Pond Church, Prattville**, will celebrate homecoming Sept. 22, 10 a.m. with special music by Greg Colburn and The Men of Music from Jackson, Miss. Jimmy Donovan will speak. Lunch will follow in the fellowship hall. For information call Shirley Litaker Jones at 334-361-6229. Woodie Turner is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **South Roebuck Church, Birmingham**, will hold "The Gathering," an annual event of Birmingham Association, on Oct. 6, 6 p.m. The association will present a special documentary film highlighting the association's churches involved in ministry partnerships together as well as special music by music evangelist Bob Smith and a combined choir. Chris Crain is pastor of South Roebuck.

BLOUNT

► **Pleasant View Missionary Church, Holly Pond**, will hold a third Sunday night singing Sept. 15, 6 p.m. with Ward Family Bluegrass from Tennessee. Randy Burtram is pastor.

COOSA RIVER

► **Westview Church, Sylacauga**, will host an open cruise-in Sept. 21, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The cruise-in is open to classic cars and trucks, hot rods, new cars, tractors and motorcycles. Enjoy '50s and '60s music, great food, door prizes and more. The event will be in memory of J.R. "Speedy" Hollingsworth. Jimmie Roberts is pastor.

DALE

► **Dale Association** will honor **Kenneth Hale** and his wife, Carol, for 15 years of service at the asso-

ciation Sept. 15, 6 p.m. at Southside Church, Ozark. A reception will follow. Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and several pastors from the association will speak. Everyone is welcome, and the association is asking all churches in the association to participate. For information call the association office at 334-774-2713.



HALE

LIMESTONE

► **Clements Church, Athens**, will hold "Swan-day Sunday" on Sept. 22 featuring Dennis Swanberg, 9:30 a.m. worship service and 11 a.m. Young at Heart Luncheon (Young at Heart is the senior adult ministry of Clements Church). For luncheon tickets by Sept. 16, call 256-729-1328. Tim Anderson is pastor.

MADISON

► **Bethlehem Church, Lacey's Spring**, will hold revival services Sept. 22-25. Jackie Kay, pastor of Central Park Church, Decatur, will speak. Special music will be provided by Jamie Kay. The Sunday evening service will begin at 5:30 followed by an "Old Time Gospel Jubilee." The Monday service "Sunday School Night" will be at 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday service "Friends and Neighbors Night" will be at 6:30 p.m.; and pizza bites for children and youth Wednesday, 6 p.m., followed by "Family Night" at 6:30.

For information call the church office at 256-881-2659 or visit www.bbcls.org. Al Phillips is pastor.

SALEM-TROY

► **Greg Hughes** from Enterprise has been called as the new minister of music for **Springfield Church, Brundidge**. Donald Ash is pastor.

SELMA

► **Sister Springs Church, Tyler**, will celebrate homecoming Sept. 22. Perry Neal, of Wetumpka, will bring the message and Jack Anderson, of Montgomery, will lead music. Activities will begin with Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. and worship services at 10:30 a.m. followed by dinner on the grounds.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Unity Church, Tuscaloosa**, will hold revival Sept. 15, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. and Sept. 16-18, 6:30 nightly. Larry Draper will speak. Gene Dockery Sr. is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **First Church, Reeltown, in Notasulga**, will host singer, speaker and musical ventriloquist Lee Pitts Spooner for a special family revival "Gather the Family." The four-day revival and conferences will start Sept. 15 and run through Sept. 18. For information call the church at 334-257-4515. Josh Cook is pastor.

WEST CULLMAN

► **Fairview West Church, Hanceville**, will hold revival Sept. 15-18. Sunday services will be at 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. and Monday-Wednesday services will be at 7 p.m. Ray Davis will speak. Everyone is welcome. Trueman Davis is pastor.



Photo courtesy of Lloyd Borden

Mentone's Mount Calvary marks 60 years

Mount Calvary Baptist Church, Mentone, celebrated its 60-year anniversary and homecoming Aug. 18.

Originally established in 1940 as Mount Union Church and School, it joined Lookout Mountain Baptist Association in 1953 as Mount Calvary Baptist.

According to Lloyd Borden, the association's director of missions, the church participates in its PUSH (Pray Until Something Happens) program every Sunday and is "an active supporter of associational missions." Jack Green is pastor. (TAB)

Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

Tucker to retire from state missionary role

Accompanying her mother as she shared the love of Christ and the "three C's" — casseroles, cakes and cookies — with neighbors was one of many early influences that would point Sonya Tucker, associate in the office of Sunday School and discipleship for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), to the ministry.

And after serving 16 years as a state missionary and more than 20 years total with the SBOM, Tucker will retire from her SBOM role Sept. 30.



TUCKER

Tucker was offered an internship with the SBOM's discipleship training office, and before completing the internship in 1993 she was asked to serve as a contract consultant for discipleship.

After John Sawyer retired as director of that office in 1997, the SBOM combined discipleship ministries and family ministries, Tucker explained. The office was later combined with the Sunday School office.

Within her role as an associate in the office of Sunday School and discipleship, Tucker has equipped church discipleship leaders to help church members and their families grow in Christlikeness.

The area of Bible drill has also been an important part of Tucker's ministry. One of her favorite memories she will take away from her SBOM tenure — which has happened more than once — was to walk into a church and hear a child whisper, "That's the Bible drill lady."

Daniel Edmonds, director of the SBOM office of Sunday School and discipleship, noted Tucker has been a mentor, influencer and encourager to pastors, missionaries and leaders in discipleship.

"Her passion for making disciples and disciple-makers is evident in everything she does," he said.

The SBOM will honor Tucker on Oct. 11. She and her husband, Bill, a hospice chaplain with Alacare Home Health & Hospice and interim pastor of Pinedale Baptist Church, Montgomery, have one daughter. (Julie Payne)

President's Award given to Samford's Nunnelley

William A. Nunnelley, director of public relations and senior editor at Samford University in Birmingham, received the 2013 President's Award during an Aug. 28 university-wide convocation.

Nunnelley, who received two degrees from Samford, first joined the staff in 1964 and has served in a variety of public relations-related capacities, including sports information. In 1984, he developed and implemented the concepts for *Seasons*, the university's quarterly news magazine, and has served as the publication's only editor.

"I think the fact that this individual was the immediate and top choice of everyone on the selection committee in some small way affirms what is a lifetime achievement award," said Samford's Provost and Executive Vice President J. Bradley Creed.

Creed noted that Nunnelley had won numerous national awards for his work, including two major national awards in 2013 from the Religion Communicators Council. (Samford)



NUNNELLEY

Samford's Steward honored for teaching

Julie Sims Steward, associate professor of English at Samford University in Birmingham, received the John H. Buchanan Award for excellence in classroom teaching during an Aug. 28 university-wide convocation.

Steward was nominated by members of the 2013 graduating class and selected by a review panel of faculty and students.

In announcing Steward's selection, Samford's Provost and Executive Vice President J. Bradley Creed noted that students gave her "rave reviews for bringing energy — and even a little attitude — to discussions of great works of literature."

A native Texan, Steward joined the Samford faculty in 1999. In addition to teaching various English courses, she also was instrumental in launching a film studies program at Samford. (Samford)



STEWART



Mistrust on border security 'biggest hurdle'

Evangelicals respond to immigration reform

Reuters photo

U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agents patrol along the international border between Mexico and the United States near San Diego, Calif.

A lack of trust in the Obama administration on border security is preventing most evangelical Christians from embracing legislative reform that aids immigrants without proper documentation, a Southern Baptist public policy expert said.

"If they feel the border can be secured, and they're confident that it has been, they're prepared to do something for the 11 million folks who are here. They want to make sure that we don't do this again. And they don't trust the administration to do it," Barrett Duke told a Washington audience regarding the viewpoint of Southern Baptists and other evangelicals on immigration reform.

Duke offered his analysis in the midst of an August congressional recess that divided Senate passage of reform legislation from possible House of Representatives action in fall 2013. Senators approved a comprehensive bill in June, but House leaders have said their chamber will consider its own legislation.

Waiving requirements

The Senate-passed measure grants the verification of border security requirements — and the authority to waive the requirements in some cases — to the secretary of Homeland Security. That is a problem for many evangelicals and other concerned citizens.

The House has "to figure out a way to get it out of the hands" of the administration, Duke said at an Aug. 12 panel discussion at the Microsoft Innovation and Policy Center. He recommended Congress "set up a quasi-federal corporation whose job is to build the infrastructure" at the border. Congress, not the administration, would sign

off on its implementation, he said. "Somehow they have to create a break between where the administration is and getting that done," said Duke, vice president for public policy at the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC). "[T]hat's the biggest hurdle right now."

The ERLC is focusing on congressional districts in its efforts on behalf of legislation that includes security at the border and in the workplace, as well as a path toward citizenship for those who qualify and are willing to pay fines and to meet other requirements.

"[W]hether or not we're going to get the votes in the House really depends on the local activity, not so much the activity" in Washington, Duke said.

The ERLC will concentrate on "helping congressmen hear from their districts, churches, people in their districts, so that they understand there is a group of people within their own districts who care about" the issue, he said.

In addition to its own efforts, the ERLC works for broad immigration reform as part of the Evangelical Immigration Table (EIT), a coalition of evangelical leaders. EIT announced Aug. 20 its latest radio efforts to influence members of Congress. The coalition launched more than \$400,000 in ad buys in 56 congressional districts across 14 states.

In a phone conference call, Duke told reporters, "The rule of law and love of neighbor are both necessary values for any civilized people. They don't have to be competing values."

Other Southern Baptists speaking on the conference call were Felix Cabrera, Hispanic pastor of Quail Springs Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Okla.; Stan Coffey, pastor of The Church at Quail Creek, Amarillo, Texas; and

Bob Lowman, executive director of Metrolina Baptist Association in Charlotte, N.C.

The ERLC and EIT have promoted principles for immigration reform, but neither has endorsed any specific legislation.

The "active engagement of the evangelical community" has been "the main game-changer" between this year's stronger immigration reform effort and the most recent serious attempt in 2006, Duke told the audience at the Aug. 12 panel discussion.

Using a biblical lens

Though the ERLC backed immigration reform in 2006, Duke said, "Most Southern Baptists at that point really hadn't thought very much about the issue of immigration reform. In fact, most of what they thought about it was negative ... The biggest difference then between 2006 and now is about seven years of reflection and the opportunity then for Southern Baptists and most evangelicals to begin to think about the issue of immigration reform, not only through the lens of the rule of law but also through a biblical lens and a humanitarian lens."

Immigration reform also has become a personal matter as Southern Baptists and other evangelicals have evangelized immigrants in their communities, Duke said.

"More and more of them are in our churches, and our pastors and our congregants are getting to know them," he said. "Once you begin to get to know a people, you no longer think of them as the other, those people out there. You have a more personal understanding of them, and it becomes personal for you. And as they've begun to reflect on these immigrants as people ... they've begun to change their understanding of this issue to the point where it's no longer just a rule of law question. It's also a biblical, humanitarian question."

In 2011, messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in Phoenix approved a resolution on immigration reform that called for the advancement of the gospel of Jesus while pursuing justice and compassion (see page 7). The measure urged the government to make a priority of border security and holding businesses accountable in their hiring. It also requested public officials establish after securing the borders "a just and compassionate path to legal status, with appropriate restitutionary measures, for those undocumented immigrants already living in our country."

It specified the resolution was not to be interpreted as supporting amnesty. (BP)

"More and more [immigrants] are in our churches, and our pastors and our congregants are getting to know them. ... You have a more personal understanding of them, and it becomes personal for you."

Barrett Duke
vice president for public policy, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

What do **Alabama** congressmen & congresswomen think?



U.S. Rep. Terri A. Sewell

"As a Christian, I believe we have an irrefutable responsibility to show compassion for all of our neighbors, native-born citizens and immigrants alike. I believe we must oppose unjust laws that harm and oppress our brothers and sisters, especially those less fortunate. We must neglect any policy that accepts the idea that immigrants are the enemy and realize that we have always been a nation of immigrants. Immigration is woven into the fabric of America. It should be encouraged and recognized as a strength that allows our country to adapt and prosper in today's global economy. However we must ensure that immigration is legal, regulated and controlled through a system which doesn't disadvantage legal American citizens or reward undocumented workers. I remain committed to working together with the president and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in Congress on passing *real* comprehensive immigration reform."



U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt

"We are a nation of immigrants and our immigration system has contributed to the greatness of the United States. I think most Americans realize this. However with over 11 million illegal immigrants residing within our borders, clearly our immigration system is broken. Legal immigration is good economically and culturally but only if immigrants are here to work and contribute to the system and our society, not take from it through programs like Obamacare, food stamps and other welfare programs. Such a system would be a disservice to everyone and with our national debt over \$16 trillion, we simply cannot afford it."

U.S. Rep. Spencer Bachus

"The U.S. has always welcomed immigrants, but unfortunately we now have a broken federal immigration system that has created many adverse consequences. In my view, a comprehensive solution to this problem should address both border security and employer verification, which I have voted for, and legal status or earned and orderly citizenship for immigrants where appropriate. Many faith-based organizations, including the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, have made a case for such reform. My goal for legislation is sound public policy that is based on the rule of law and which reflects our best principles."



U.S. Rep. Mo Brooks

"The United States generously accepts more legal immigrants than any nation on earth, but we simply lack the resources to accept everyone who wishes to live here. While I feel compassion for foreigners who wish to improve themselves by coming to America, my first duty is to American citizens. I support and encourage foreigners who have unique skill sets to come into America legally and help improve our economy. I believe any legislative solution to illegal immigration must reject all forms of amnesty, require employers to use E-Verify and increase border security both to stop illegal immigration and to prevent terrorist intrusions."



U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers

"Although our country is a land of immigrants, it is also a land of laws. When people come to pursue the American dream, it should be through legal immigration. Breaking the law to enter our country illegally has become a huge problem for our country, but granting blanket amnesty or allowing illegal immigrants to jump to the front of the line when there are other folks who have been waiting to come in the right way is simply unacceptable."



U.S. Rep. Martha Roby

"There's no question our immigration system is broken and in need of reform, but it matters how we do it. I'm against offering blanket amnesty to illegal immigrants. I oppose attempts at reform that won't truly secure the border. And I don't believe adding millions of illegal immigrants to the rolls of our assistance programs will help our situation. In fact, it could make it much worse. I vote on each bill according to its merits, and I don't prejudge based on rumors. When it comes to immigration, what I'm looking for is a solution to the problem that starts with securing the border. Then we need to address our legal immigration process so that it actually works."



Group of evangelicals sign open letter to US Congress

Evangels for Biblical Immigration (EBI) is a recently formed informal discussion forum of "those seeking the whole counsel of Scripture about immigration, citizenship and how we're to honor, steward and shape our culture," according to its website.

The group — initiated in part by Kelly Monroe Kullberg, founder of the Veritas Forum, editor of "Finding God at Harvard: Spiritual Journeys of Thinking Christians" and co-author of "Finding God Beyond Harvard: The Quest for Veritas" — posted an open letter on the EBI website in June directed to the members of Congress. The letter speaks of EBI's opposition to the "Gang of Eight" immigration bill, also known as Senate Bill (SB) 744, which was passed by the Senate in late June by a 68-32 vote.

"While the Bible teaches us to be kind to the sojourner or 'resident alien,' it also teaches that kindness to the sojourner ought not to be injustice to local citizens and their unique culture," the letter states in part. "To steward

and cultivate, whether a garden or a nation, involves wisdom and discernment. We, like our Founders, want to conserve what is true, good and beautiful. We want to nurture a nation that would welcome our children as well as the well-intended sojourner. That would mean making distinctions. Lawlessness with escalating violence and incivility cannot yield peace. Freedom for one is not slavery for another unless one chooses that sacrifice for oneself. It is unkind to force the debt of servitude on millions of Americans. We should secure our borders, pay off our national debt, give jobs to millions of unemployed Americans and become a productive nation, once again, in order to sustain voluntary generosity to our neighbors and to the world. This goodness was once America's greatness."

The letter touches on EBI's economic concerns as well as "cultural costs" of SB 744. The bill's passage, the letter states, "would allow 11 million illegal immigrants to become citizens in the short-term, with likely

an additional 20 million family members as new citizens within about a decade. Cost projections vary but most agree that, given access to many U.S. social welfare services, the net price tag of S[B] 744 will be in the trillions of dollars. This net cost is in addition to our current ... national debt. ... Such escalation of debt is one way to destroy a nation."

'Cultural costs'

The letter continues, "The cultural costs of the passage of S[B] 744 are also enormous. The bill would dramatically affect the future of 300 million current citizens by reshaping America's sovereignty, economy, spiritual and moral compass, political dependencies, public safety and national security."

EBI's letter concludes in part by referencing that "just as Paul taught the Church (1 Timothy 5) to delineate among widows for whom the Church should provide, we are called to discern among 'sojourners' (like Ruth and Rahab who intend to assimilate and

bless) and 'foreigners' (who do not intend to assimilate and bless) and to welcome the former with hospitality. Observance to the whole counsel of Scripture yields growth and goodness to those in need. America is a nation rooted in the truth of God's love for the individual and for the whole world."

EBI's letter was signed by 1,200 early signers, according to its website. One of those initial signers was John Killian who signed as president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention and pastor of Maytown Baptist Church in Bessemer Baptist Association.

Killian said he has spoken on the immigration issue from a biblical perspective on several occasions. He noted that at this time, EBI is just an information gathering and disseminating forum. "We aren't having meetings," he explained of the group's structure, adding, "We want to have a Christian attitude and be kind in the process."

For more information about EBI and to read the open letter in full, visit evangelicals-forbiblicalimmigration.com. (TAB)

Evangelicals respond to immigration reform

SBC resolution on immigration offers guidance

The following Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) resolution regarding the issue of immigration was approved by messengers during the 2011 SBC annual meeting in Phoenix, Ariz.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission continues to follow the principles in this resolution as it works on legislative solution concerning immigration issues.

ON IMMIGRATION AND THE GOSPEL

WHEREAS, The Kingdom of God is made up of persons from every tribe, tongue, nation and language (Rev. 7:9); and

WHEREAS, Our ancestors in the faith were sojourners and aliens in the land of Egypt (Ex. 1:1–14; 1 Chron. 16:19; Acts 7:6); and

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ lived His childhood years as an immigrant and refugee (Matt. 2:13–23); and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures call us, in imitation of God Himself, to show compassion and justice for the sojourner and alien among us (Ex. 22:21; Deut. 10:18–19; Ps. 94:6; Jer. 7:6; Ezek. 22:29; Zech. 7:10); and

WHEREAS, The Great Commission compels us to take the gospel to the nations (Matt. 28:18–20), and the Great Commandment compels us to love our neighbor as self (Mark 12:30–31); and

WHEREAS, The gospel tells us that our response to the most vulnerable among us is a response to Jesus Himself (Matt. 25:40); and

WHEREAS, The Bible denounces the exploitation of workers and the mistreatment of the poor (Isa. 3:15; Amos 4:1; James 5:4); and

WHEREAS, The United States of America is increasingly diverse in terms of ethnicity, language and culture; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 12 to 15 million undocumented immigrants live and work within our borders; and

WHEREAS, The relative invisibility of the immigrant population can lead to detrimental consequences in terms of health, education and well-being, especially of children; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing that Romans 13:1–7 teaches us that the rule of law is an indispensable part of civil society and that Christians are under biblical mandate to respect the divinely ordained institution of government and its just laws, that government has a duty to fulfill its ordained mandate and that Christians have a right to expect the government to fulfill its ordained man-

date to enforce those laws; and

WHEREAS, The governing authorities of a nation have the right and responsibility to maintain borders to protect the security of their citizens; and

WHEREAS, Undocumented immigrants are in violation of the law of the land; and

WHEREAS, Many of these persons, desiring a better future for themselves and their families, are fleeing brutal economic and political situations; and

WHEREAS, The issue of immigration has prompted often-rancorous debate in the American public square; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, June 14–15, 2011, call on our churches to be the presence of Christ, in both proclamation and ministry, to all persons, regardless of country of origin or immigration status; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we declare that any form of nativism, mistreatment, or exploitation is inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we deplore any bigotry or harassment against any persons, regardless of their country of origin or legal status; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we ask our governing authorities to prioritize efforts to secure the borders and to hold businesses accountable for hiring practices as they relate to immigration status; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we ask our governing authorities to implement, with the borders secured, a just and compassionate path to legal status, with appropriate restitutionary measures, for those undocumented immigrants already living in our country; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution is not to be construed as support for amnesty for any undocumented immigrant; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we pray for our churches to demonstrate the reconciliation of the Kingdom both in the verbal witness of our gospel and in the visible makeup of our congregations; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we affirm that while Southern Baptists, like other Americans, might disagree on how to achieve just and humane public policy objectives related to immigration, we agree that, when it comes to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to His church, the message, in every language and to every person, is “Whoever will may come.” ☞

Biblical principles concerning immigration issues offered

By Jeffrey B. Riley
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Immigration reform is an important legal issue for the people of the United States. Passionate arguments, private interests and political posturing, unfortunately, have tended to generate more heat than light, thus impeding the resolve of legislators and law enforcement officials to find suitable, practical and just solutions to the presence of millions of undocumented immigrants living in our nation. Numerous social pundits, political analysts, alarmed bureaucrats, qualified ethicists and theologians and concerned Christians have addressed the issue from personal, social, economic, political, theological, moral and legal perspectives. My task at this point in the conversation is rather modest — to propose a simple biblical framework from which Christians can hold a theologically and morally informed conversation on the issue of immigration. In other words, how might the Bible help us to set the stage from which we can hear what God has to say about this particular issue at this particular time and be equipped to respond in ways that reflect God’s righteousness and character?

What follows is a series of propositions derived from Scripture that I believe are consistent with the story of God and the world rendered to us in the Bible and that summarize the kinds of claims that God has on His people and on the nations. I encourage readers to study the representative passages and test the principles offered below as they consider the issue of immigration. The goal is to take our politics captive to the Word of God. My prayer is that these propositions will help to orient us to God’s will regarding the issue of immigration.

► God is the Creator of heaven and earth; God is the just Judge of the laws and actions of nations; God’s plans and purposes outweigh the plans and purposes of any and all peoples. Christians can’t address the issue of immigration without reference to God (Gen. 17:4, 6; Job 12:23; Ps. 24:1; 47:8; 2 Chron. 20:6; Isa. 40:15, 17; Dan. 2:21; Rom. 13:1).

Boundaries in Scripture

► Nations, national boundaries and governments are assumed in Scripture. Boundaries, whether familial, tribal or national, are acknowledged and protected to the degree that God’s plans and purposes allow (Gen. 23; Num. 20:16–21; Josh. 13:1–22:9; Deut. 19:14, 27:17; Prov. 22:28).

► Immigration, the movement of people out of homelands and into and through foreign lands, was widely practiced in Bible times (for examples of this, see Gen. 23:4 and Ex. 1; 2:22; 18:3; 22:21; 23:9). Consequently the relationship of God’s people to resident immigrants and foreigners is both described and prescribed in Scripture. The ways that governments and citizens of a particular nation treat any group of people,

including immigrants, are judged by God.

► People of peace who sought to identify culturally with Israel, though they could not have a property stake in the land, were invited to share life in Israel and to receive benefits available to Israelites, such as equal justice under the law, fair wages, social benefits and religious inclusion (Lev. 19:33–37; 20:2; 25:35–37; Num. 15:14–16, 29; Deut. 15:1–4; 24:14–15, 19–22; Josh. 20:9).

► The primary citizenship of Christians is in the kingdom of God (Phil. 3:20; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9–17). Being a Christian denies neither nationality nor citizenship, nor should it routinely turn a person against the laws that govern a land; rather, God’s laws and commands take precedence over human laws and cultural mores. We must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

► According to Romans 13:1–7, a government has an obligation and the authority to protect its citizens. One can reasonably infer that this protection includes border security and immigration regulations.

► Submission to laws and governing authorities is the will of God for His people (Matt. 22:21; 1 Pet. 2:15). This is as true for the immigrant as for the citizen.

► O.T. laws regulated how Israelites should treat immigrants as well as how immigrants

should live in the land. Both citizens and immigrants were bound by civil, moral and ceremonial law (Amos 5:24; Jer. 22:1–5; Hab. 1:3–4; Jer. 7:5–7; Ezek. 22:7, 29; Ex. 12:19, 49; Lev. 18:26; 24:22).

► God loves the immigrant; therefore, God’s people ought to love the immigrant (Lev. 19:18, 33–34; Deut. 10:17–18; Matt. 5:43–44; 22:36–40; Luke 10:25–37; John 3:16; Gal. 5:14; 1 John 4:7–14).

► Every person, regardless of immigration status, bears the image of God and should be treated with dignity, respect and justice (Gen. 1:27–28; 1 Tim. 2:1–6). Immigrants who break the law should be punished justly according to the law of the land, whether breaking criminal law through illegal entry or civil codes through illegal presence. Even so, all persons should be treated fairly and compassionately as fellow human beings (Matt. 7:12 — The Golden Rule).

► Justice demands that laws be enforced without partiality (Deut. 1:15–17; 27:19). A legal state of affairs that ignores a cultural and economic situation that invites and supports illegal entry and illegal presence is unjust.

► The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19–20) and the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:36–40) will not allow Christians to make enemies of those to whom they are obligated to go and make disciples.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Jeffrey B. Riley is professor of ethics and chairman of the division of theological and historical studies at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He grew up attending Lakeview Baptist Church, Auburn. ☞

**The Great Commission
and the Great
Commandment will
not allow Christians
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those to whom they
are obligated to go
and make disciples.**

Love your neighbor

People groups like the Roma (Gypsies) of Europe have been outcasts in society through the ages, but they and other 'invisible people' are 'worthy and someone for whom Christ died.'



IMB photo

Reach out to 'invisible people,' show migrants Christian hospitality

By Erich Bridges
International Mission Board

Here's a handy back-to-school tip: Make friends with that pimple-faced kid sitting alone in the back of the classroom. You know the one. Nobody wants to be around him because he's weird. He doesn't belong to a group, except for maybe the losers. He smells funny. All the cool people make fun of him. The jocks push him around. If you talk to him, he either freezes up or gives you an excruciatingly detailed description of his comic book collection. Talk to him anyway. Not out of pity. Not because he might become the next Bill Gates. Do it because Jesus would. The Lord left the flock to search for the lost sheep. He associated with the lowly and He touched lepers. He endured personal rejection and shame, even unto the cross. So if Jesus were in your classroom this year, where do you think He would sit? If He lived in your town, where would He hang out?

God loves the whole world, but He has special compassion for the rejected, the forgotten and the neglected. "He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing" (Deut. 10:18).

Outcast Camp

Ten minutes outside an African city lies a place that's easy to miss. Few people talk about it. It's called the Outcast Camp. It is home to 90 women and children who have been accused of witchcraft. "The majority of these women have been abandoned by their husbands, parents and friends. They are forced to farm the chief's land in return for their safety. They are outcasts of society," a missionary writes. "We go twice a month to share Bible stories. We facilitate volunteers and churches in America coming to help ensure these women are loved and cared for. When a woman is able to leave the camp and return to her village, we help her transition back. We are excited for this opportunity. "Please pray for these women and children. Pray for

their eyes to be opened to the truths of the gospel. Pray they would know that though they are outcasts in society, in God's eyes, they are worthy and someone for whom Christ died." Whole peoples and ethnic groups have been treated as outcasts through the ages. The Jews. The Roma (Gypsies) of Europe. Bedouin of the Middle East. The Kurds, caught between multiple nations. Untouchables in caste-ruled parts of India. Tribal peoples. Mountain peoples. Mountain communities "were often isolated not only from the outside world but also from each other, even when they were not very far apart as the crow flies, but were separated by rugged mountain terrain," says economist Thomas Sowell, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, a public policy think tank located at Stanford University in California. "A pattern of poverty and backwardness could be found from the Appalachian Mountains in the United States to the Rif Mountains of Morocco, the Pindus Mountains of Greece and the mountains and uplands of Ceylon, Taiwan, Albania and Scotland." Even when they migrate to dominant cultural centers — willingly or after being driven from their traditional homes by war, persecution and other factors — forgotten people often remain invisible in plain sight.

The United States leads all nations of the world as a destination for migrants, the Pew Research Center reported in 2012. With 43 million foreign-born residents, America is home to one of every five migrants worldwide. According to missions research, nearly 600 unengaged, unreached people groups also can be found in North America. They have yet to hear the gospel in ways they can understand it and respond to it. Up to eight of every 10 refugees resettled in the United States come from unreached areas of the world.

No hospitality

Yet 20 percent of all the non-Christians in North America don't even "personally know" a Christian, according to new research from Gordon-Conwell's Center for the Study of Global Christianity. The top reason: immigration. Newly arrived Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims or nonreligious people move into ethnic enclaves — or right next door — and no Christian attempts to meet, greet or welcome them. True, churches and church folk are the main sponsors of incoming refugees and have been since at least the 1970s. But that doesn't make up for the waves of immigrants who find no hospitality at all. "Why does our compassion so often scab over in response to those closest, and most unlike us, even as our hearts burn with passion for 'those in need' who are far off?" Melody J. Wachsmuth asks in *Mission Frontiers* magazine. "Perhaps Jesus told His parable of the Good Samaritan in order to elicit a visceral reaction regarding the true challenge of loving our neighbor — a reaction we can experience today if we take out the word Samaritan and insert a neighbor with whom we share close physical proximity but try to avoid." It's not as hard as you think. It's like talking to that kid in the back of the classroom: A little kindness goes a long way.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Erich Bridges is the International Mission Board's global correspondent. 卐

Least reached US metro areas		
METROPOLITAN AREA	PERCENT OF BELIEVERS	EVANGELICAL CHURCH TO POPULATION
Provo-Orem metropolitan area, Utah	0.50%	1 to 20,300
Logan metropolitan area in Utah and Idaho	1%	1 to 7,000
St. George, Utah	2%	1 to 5,500
Pittsfield, Mass.	2%	1 to 4,700
Kingston, N.Y.	2%	1 to 4,300
Barnstable Town, Mass.	2%	1 to 4,700
Salt Lake City, Utah	3%	1 to 6,900
Providence, R.I., metro area (also in Mass.)	3%	1 to 4,800
Greater Boston	3%	1 to 5,000
Norwich-New London, Conn.	3%	1 to 3,700
Ogden-Clearfield metropolitan area, Utah	3%	1 to 6,200
Glen Falls, N.Y.	3%	1 to 3,100
Utica-Rome metropolitan area, N.Y.	4%	1 to 3,100
Springfield, Mass.	4%	1 to 4,600
New Haven-Milford metropolitan area, Conn.	4%	1 to 4,100
Portland, Maine metropolitan area	4%	1 to 3,300
New York metropolitan area	4%	1 to 4,900
Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, N.Y.	4%	Not available

Source: J.D. Payne, The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham

in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders, friends

John W. Stamps

Longtime Alabama Baptist pastor dies

John W. Stamps, who served for more than 50 years in ministry, died Aug. 31. He was 79.

Stamps graduated from Fayette High School then served in the U.S. Navy from 1952 to 1956. He graduated from Ouachita Valley Vo-Tech College in 1960. He earned his bachelor's degree, master of ministry degree and doctorate of theology from International Bible Institute and Seminary.

Stamps served as pastor, interim pastor half-time pastor or bivocational pastor of 21 churches in Alabama including Philadelphia Baptist Church, Bankston; Mulberry Springs Baptist Church, Sulligent; Barnesville Baptist Church, Hamilton; New Hope Baptist Church, Berry; Oak Ridge Baptist Church, Kennedy; Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, Fayette; Spring Hill Baptist Church, Fayette; Union Chapel Baptist Church, Guin; Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Millport; Mount Hebron Baptist Church, Northport; Hopewell Baptist Church, Bankston; and Fern Springs Baptist Church, Eldridge. He was the first person to be licensed and ordained by Grace Baptist Church, Fayette, and later served as the church's interim pastor. He also served a church in Florida.

He served as moderator and director of evangelism for Sipsey Baptist Association and as moderator for Lamar Baptist Association.

Stamps was serving as part-time pastor of two unaffiliated churches at the time of his death.

Stamps was preceded in death by his wife, Avis; one son and one grandson. He is survived by two children, six grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.



STAMPS

Christians in Middle East say Syrian regime change could force them out

As the Obama administration considers a strike in response to recent chemical attacks, the head of a global evangelical group said Sept. 4 that Christians in the Middle East oppose military intervention in Syria.

"There is major consensus amongst the Christian leaders in this region that any military intervention would have a detrimental effect ... on Christians in Syria," wrote Geoff Tunnicliffe, secretary general/CEO of World Evangelical Alliance, in a letter to the State Department, the White House and the United Nation's Security Council.

Tunnicliffe was attending a meeting of Christian leaders in neighboring Jordan that included California megachurch pastor Rick Warren, "Touched by an Angel" actress Roma Downey and her "Survivor" creator husband Mark Burnett.

The group, convened by Jordan's King Abdullah II, met with about 70 Middle Eastern Christians to discuss the challenges facing Arab Christians.

Protecting Christians

"I couldn't find a Christian leader at the conference who supported military intervention," Tunnicliffe said in an interview. "The question is, how do you protect Christians if there's a regime change?"

Tunnicliffe said two Syrian pastors told him independently that Christians have received threats from those who say a regime change would mean a takeover by Islamists who would force Christians out of the country.

Christian representatives from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan were present at the gathering, as well as a few Muslim clerics and academics. In his address,



RNS photo

FACING CHALLENGES — (L to r) Geoff Tunnicliffe, Roma Downey and Mark Burnett, World Evangelical Alliance representatives, attend the conference on Arab Christians.

King Abdullah II urged interfaith harmony.

"We are proud that Jordan constitutes a unique model of coexistence and fraternity between Muslims and Christians," the king said.

"We also believe that the protection of the rights of Christians is a duty rather than a favor."

U.S. and French leaders say Bashar al-Assad's Syrian government used chemical weapons in a Damascus suburb on Aug. 21, killing 1,429 people, including more than 400 children. In talks on military intervention, President Obama has won the support of House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, but faces significant opposition among religious and political leaders.

On Sept. 4, New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan wrote to President Obama, urging him to shun military options, saying an attack "will be counterproductive, will

exacerbate an already deadly situation and will have unintended negative consequences."

Dolan, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Bishop Richard Pates of Des Moines, Iowa, chairman of the bishops' international affairs committee, pushed the White House to "work urgently and tirelessly" for a ceasefire.

While she did not address Syria specifically in her presentation at the conference in Jordan, Downey noted her Catholic upbringing and her husband's Protestant background, and the tension between these groups in her native Northern Ireland.

Christian unity

"Our marriage is a living example of tolerance and healing and of not allowing old hurts and discrimination to live on," said Downey, who with her husband produced "The Bible" miniseries for The History Channel.

"We have come to believe that Christian unity is a critical element in responding to the global challenges we face today, including the difficulties of Arab Christians in the Middle East."

Warren, who has been largely absent from the national and international scene since his son's suicide in April, moderated a panel at the conference.

Tunnicliffe said that evangelical leaders are discussing future statements on intervention in Syria.

"I know people are aware of the crisis," Tunnicliffe said, noting that the Middle East is overwhelmed with 2 million refugees from Syria.

"I'm not sure they're aware of the extent of the crisis."

Pope Francis and King Abdullah II met at the Vatican in August, saying dialogue is the "only option" to end the conflict in Syria.

(RNS)

Want to see your news in The Alabama Baptist?

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



Union Grove #1 reaches out to local schools

Union Grove #1 Baptist Church, Albertville, has recently adopted both Asbury High and Asbury Elementary schools. The church is partnering with both schools to provide school supplies to families in need and providing prayer support for the faculty and staff of both schools. Recently members of Union Grove went to the schools and presented school supplies to both principals. On Aug. 25, Union Grove hosted "Spirit Day" at 11 a.m. The church invited the faculty and staff of the schools to attend, as well as their athletic and academic teams. In all, 223 attended the worship service with one making a decision to follow Christ. Senior Pastor Jonathan Powell, is pictured here with elementary principal Amanda Hollaway (second from right); secretary Tracey Wigley (left); and bookkeeper Beverly Bozarth (right).



Photo courtesy of Union Grove #1 Baptist Church, Albertville

Upholding 'sound doctrine'

NAMB guidelines for military chaplains updated to address same-sex unions

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) has issued new guidelines for Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) military chaplains in light of the U.S. military's recognition of same-sex "marriage." The guidelines reiterate Southern Baptist doctrine and the expectation that SBC chaplains will not participate in or attend wedding ceremonies for gay members of the military.

"Our chaplains want to uphold the authority and relevancy of Scripture while continuing to serve in a very diverse setting," said Doug Carver, the retired Army major general who leads NAMB's chaplaincy efforts. "We believe these updated guidelines will help them do that while still sharing the love and the hope of Christ with everyone."

Endorsement required

The updated guidelines are being issued in response to the military's repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the U.S. Supreme Court's abolishment of the Defense of Marriage Act. The U.S. military requires all chaplains to be endorsed by a recognized denomination. NAMB serves as

the endorsing entity on behalf of Southern Baptists.

The updated guidelines address four specific areas:

► **Doctrine** — Chaplains will be expected to conduct their ministry in harmony with Article XVIII of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000: "All ministries regarding human sexuality will reflect the historic, natural and biblical view of marriage as God's lifelong gift of 'the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime.'"

► **Pastoral care** — The guidelines remind chaplains that Southern Baptists view all sexual immorality as sin that violates God's biblical standards for purity and that "Responsible pastoral care will seek to offer repentance and forgiveness, help and healing, and restoration through the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ's sacrificial gift of love on the cross," the document states.

► **Restrictions** — The guidelines state that "NAMB-endorsed chaplains will not conduct or attend a wedding ceremony for any same-sex couple, bless such a union or perform counseling in support of such a union, assist or support paid contractors or volun-

teers leading same-sex relational events, nor offer any kind of relationship training or retreat, on or off of a military installation, that would give the appearance of accepting the homosexual lifestyle or sexual wrongdoing. This biblical prohibition remains in effect irrespective of any civil law authorizing same-sex 'marriage' or benefits to the contrary." Chaplains also are prohibited from participating in jointly led worship services "with a chaplain, contractor or volunteer who personally practices a homosexual lifestyle or affirms a homosexual lifestyle or such conduct."

► **Pluralism** — The guidelines acknowledge that SBC chaplains serve in a pluralistic setting but expect, under U.S. Department of Defense guidelines, that the rights and freedoms of chaplains will be protected so they may "preach, teach and counsel in accordance with the tenets of their denominational faith group and their own religious conscience." In addition, chaplains are expected to "treat all service members, regardless of rank or behavior, with Christ-centered dignity, honor and respect while assisting the institutional leadership in its religious mission requirements and

responsibilities as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution."

Carver said, "We are confident that our chaplains are already conducting their ministries with sound doctrine and in accordance to Baptist Faith and Message 2000."

Providing clarification

"These guidelines simply provide clarification on specific issues and give our chaplains the freedom and protection for their ministry," Carver said. "We are also obligated to communicate to U.S. military officials about the expectations we have for our chaplains."

NAMB President Kevin Ezell expressed support for SBC military chaplains and emphasized the need for Southern Baptists to remember them in prayer.

"For many members of our military — especially those deployed around the globe — our chaplains are the only pastors they have. That's why it is so important that they uphold sound doctrine while showing everyone the love and forgiveness Jesus offers. We all need to be committed to praying for them in these challenging days." (BP)

Want to know God?

Pastor Gregg Woodard
First Baptist Church, Greenhill

An elderly friend was recently diagnosed with end-stage cancer and given one to three weeks to live. This diagnosis was a shock to his friends and family as he had been in very good health up until this time. After I returned from visiting with my friend for the first time after his diagnosis, my wife asked me a very thought-provoking question: "What do you say to a dying man?" Three truths came to my mind at that moment.

One, death is the end of every person. In a real sense, every person is like my friend, a "dying man." We may not know when our time on earth is coming to an end and there may not be a prediction of weeks or months for us, but each day we live brings us one step closer to our own eventual death. From the moment we are born, the countdown begins until that day our life ends. Hebrews 9:27 says, "Just as man is destined to die once." No one escapes death. Death is the universal experience of man: it is our common destiny. It is an appointment none of us will miss.

Two, after death comes judgment. The remainder of Hebrews 9:27 says, "Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment." God's Word makes it very clear that every person will face judgment after their death. And like death, this judgment is inescapable. Every person will eventually answer to God "for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Man is born with an innate sense of this impending judgment in the hereafter. We may outwardly deny that we will answer for our decisions regarding Jesus Christ and His offer of salvation, but deep down inside every person knows they will answer to God someday.

Three, the time to prepare for judgment is now. The Bible teaches that God provided a way for man to avoid this impending judgment. Hebrews 9:28 says, "so Christ was offered once to take away the sins of many people." Jesus offered Himself on the cross to pay the price for our sins, to provide forgiveness for us. It is up to each person to either reject what Jesus has done for us or to accept it. And that decision time is now.

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PASTOR: Fayetteville Baptist Church near Sylacauga is accepting resumes from retired or semi-retired ordained ministers to pastor our small congregation with emphasis on pastoral care. Sunday morning services only. Send resume to: B.J. Wood, 5196 Childersburg-Fayetteville Hwy., Childersburg, AL 35044. Phone: 256-378-5882.

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resume to: Edgil Grove Baptist Church, 100 Edgil Grove Road, Jasper, AL 35503. ATTN: Pastor David Miller. For more information, contact the church office at 205-221-2203, Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

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Importance of EARLY retirement planning

Financial discipline in early years of career makes difference in retirement savings

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

In his late teens, pastor and author Rick Warren began to follow the 10/10/80 principle in his financial life: “Give the first 10 percent to God, save the second 10 percent for your future and then learn to live on the rest.”

As a result, he told Forbes.com earlier this year, his financial future was set long before his best-selling book, “The Purpose Driven Life,” was published in 2002. Unfortunately few young people have Warren’s financial discipline and many pay the price for their poor savings habits in their retirement years.

For recent college graduates and those in the early years of their careers, saving for retirement is often a low priority.

“Young workers are more concerned with kick-starting careers, not ending them in the long-distant future,” writes Leslie Haggin Geary of Bankrate.com.

Those early savings can make all the difference in later years, however, according to GuideStone Financial Resources.

Consider this scenario, based on a hypothetical example from GuideStone.

Sam and Teri are both 25 years old and just starting their first full-time jobs. Sam invests \$250 each month in a retirement account that earns an 8 percent annual average rate of return. Teri waits 10 years before beginning to contribute the same monthly amount to the same fund.

When Sam turns 65, those 40 years of savings will total nearly \$900,000. Teri’s 30 years of savings will be less than half that — about \$400,000. The difference? Compounded growth.

“The earlier you invest in a retirement

plan, the more time you allow your money to work for you,” according to GuideStone. “Because of compounded growth, even modest contributions can build into large savings over time.”

Fidelity Investments suggests that by age 35, an individual should have his or her annual salary saved for retirement. Five years later, that savings should be twice one’s annual salary. By following these five-year goals, an individual would have eight times his or her annual salary by age 67.

This is a minimum goal for retirement savings, according to GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins, since many in the industry suggest that retirement savings should equal 8–12 times final salary in order to replace 70 to 90 percent of pre-retirement income.

The failure to start saving early enough is one reason most Americans are ill-prepared for retirement, according to Lee Wright, coordinator of church compensation services for the Alabama

Baptist State Board of Missions. He advises individuals, especially young people, to base retirement contributions on a percentage of income rather than a fixed dollar amount, which can make saving seem less intimidating. Saving a percentage has the added benefit of going up as income increases, Wright said.

Wright recommends 10 percent of monthly income going toward retirement as a starting point, but he said the goal is to start saving, even if the monthly amount is small.

“Start where you are able and increase your savings 1 percent per year until you reach your goal,” he said. “Then consider a second goal of 15 percent and work toward that contribution level.”

***“The earlier you
invest in a retirement
plan, the more time
you allow your money
to work for you.”***

GuideStone, SBC

Additional tips

► Sign up for your employer’s retirement plan, and contribute at least enough to get any match available. If no employer-sponsored plan is available, consider an IRA. Speak to a tax professional or a certified financial planner for advice for your individual situation.

► Keep saving, and increase your savings rate if possible. It’s often quoted but true: You can borrow money for college, but you can’t borrow money for retirement.

► Keep debt to a minimum or avoid it altogether if possible. Establish an emergency fund to help with unexpected expenses that might necessitate borrowing money otherwise.

► Educate yourself. Use free resources like those available at GuideStone.org to see if you are on track with your savings.



'One nation under God'

Mass. Supreme Court weighs challenge to Pledge of Allegiance

Justices of Massachusetts' highest court examined the nature of the Pledge of Allegiance on Sept. 4 as they heard a challenge from atheists who want the pledge banned in schools statewide.

At issue is whether the pledge — and its reference to "one nation under God" — violates the equal rights amendment in the state's constitution, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of creed.

Attorney David Niose, representing anonymous atheist parents, told justices that atheist children "are denied meaningful participation in this patriotic exercise" because the language refers to God.

"Children every morning are pledging their national unity and loyalty in an indoctrinating format, in a way that ... validates God belief as truly patriotic and actually invalidates atheism," said Niose, president of the American Humanist Association.

Pledge advocates hit back. No one has to say the pledge, they noted, citing a court ruling that confirms the pledge must always be voluntary. What's more, they said, reference to "one nation under God" does not necessarily affirm theistic belief.

"It's not an affirmation of religion?" asked Associate Justice Barbara Lenk.

"It's a statement of our political philosophy," answered Geoffrey Bok, attorney for the defendants. "It's the founding thing upon which our country was founded. Our rights did not come from the king or the tsar or the queen. They come from something higher."

Oral arguments took just 35 minutes. The case pits plaintiffs

against Acton, Mass., schools and the regional district. The schools won a lower court ruling and continue to defend the pledge with support from the state.

The case also marks a new front in atheists' long battle to remove "one nation under God" from the start of children's school days. Prior efforts failed as federal courts ruled the pledge doesn't violate a constitutional ban on state-sanctioned religion and is an act of patriotism, not religious observance.

Now challengers are taking a new tack by arguing the pledge violates the Massachusetts' equal rights amendment, which provides that "all people are born free and equal," and that equality cannot be abridged by "sex, race, color, creed or national origin."

Pledge advocates say they expect to prevail but add that a loss would likely galvanize pledge opponents to bring similar suits in other states' courts.

Uphill battle

Observers meanwhile see an uphill battle for pledge opponents.

"The challenge for the plaintiffs is in showing that they're being coerced to do something that creates this separate status," said Greg Kalscheur, a Jesuit priest and expert in church-state law at Boston College Law School. "Participation [in the pledge] is voluntary. Nobody can actually be forced to participate. So I

think it's a challenging argument to make and to sustain."

Proceedings took place in a setting where public references to God have a long history. The courthouse is named for John Adams, the Founding Father, who, in 1780 wrote numerous explicit references to God into the Massachusetts constitution. When a court officer called the session to order Sept. 4, he shouted, "God save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts!" — a phrase picked up moments later by Chief Justice Roderick Ireland. "Would your client say that is

inappropriate language?" Ireland asked Niose, referring to the court officer's words.

"It can't be compared to a daily, 13-year indoctrination,"

Niose answered, "when children are, every day when they go to school, instilled with this idea that we are one nation under God and true patriots can stand up and say that."

The court's seven justices took turns pushing both sides to unpack how a patriotic observance does or doesn't violate the state's equal rights amendment.

Few supporters

Outside, opponents of the pledge outnumbered supporters. About two dozen applauded Niose on the courthouse steps. Among them was Andrew Hall, a local atheist and father who said his 8- and 11-year-old children face pressure to say the entire pledge, even though it's supposed to be voluntary.

"There is coercion involved," Hall said. "It creates two different classes of kids ... If other kids see my children not say 'under God' under the pledge, that creates a certain amount of stigma."

A decision in the case is expected within five months. (RNS)



RNS photo
Andrew Hall, an atheist and father, demonstrates outside the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

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Calvinism study committee challenged over infants-in-hell

A Baptist state newspaper editor has questioned whether the report of a Calvinism study committee implies that some high-profile Southern Baptist leaders believe that infants who die before reaching the so-called “age of accountability” are destined for hell.

Gerald Harris, editor of the Georgia *Christian Index*, voiced concern in an Aug. 22 editorial about a section of a June statement by a Calvinism Advisory Committee appointed by Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee President Frank Page that cites disagreement about what happens to children who die before they are capable of moral action.

The report stated: “We agree that most Southern Baptists believe that those who die before they are capable of moral action go to heaven through the grace of God and the atonement of Christ, even as they differ as to why this is so.”

Asking for clarification

Harris said the statement so troubled him that he asked the advisory team for further clarification about, “What Southern Baptists are there who do not believe that those who die before they are capable of moral action go to heaven?”

“I have been a Southern Baptist for 62 years and I have never met any Baptist in our convention who admitted to believing that children who die before they are capable of moral action go to hell,” Harris wrote.

“Therefore it would appear that the nebulous statement about the destiny of children would have to be influenced by a person or persons on the advisory team.”

Harris suggested he was not totally satisfied by the responses he received. Some told him the statement did not necessarily reflect the views of any member of the advisory panel but simply acknowledged a wide range of viewpoints among rank-and-file Southern Baptists. Other members did not respond to his inquiry. Some who support Calvinism said they believe the Bible teaches that all persons who die in infancy are among the elect.

But Harris said Eric Hankins, pastor of First Baptist Church, Oxford, Miss., who assisted in writing the document, indicated that the wording of the section in question was crafted to accommodate some members of the advisory team who were not comfortable with the assertion that all who die that are morally incapable go to heaven.

David Allen, dean of the School of Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, stated wholehearted agreement that all infants who die are safe in the arms of Jesus and said “to suggest otherwise represents an extreme position within a Calvinistic Baptist framework.”

“Calvinists outside the SBC have differed for centuries over whether all who die in infancy should be considered among the elect,” added Adam Harwood, associate professor of theology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. “For some Calvinists, both the Bible and the Westminster Confession are unclear on the matter. But Southern Baptists, whether Calvin-

ist or non-Calvinist, have been united on this issue — until now.”

Harris, a former pastor and Georgia Baptist Convention president who has edited the *Christian Index* since 2003, has voiced skepticism before about the growing popularity of views labeled as Calvinism, the “doctrines of grace” and “young, restless and reformed” in the nation’s second-largest faith group behind Roman Catholics.

In 2012, he editorialized about a “presumable encroachment of Calvinism” that he believes is more rigid than that held by Southern Baptist founders who were influenced by teaching at Presbyterian-affiliated Princeton Theological Seminary in the mid-1800s.

“I am getting the distinct impression that many who embrace a reformed theology in the Southern Baptist Convention are beginning to feel very uncomfortable with the new kind of Calvinism very unlike the reformed theology of Charles Spurgeon, David Livingstone, William Carey, James Petigru Boyce, Carl F.H. Henry and Martyn Lloyd-Jones,” Harris wrote in his more recent editorial.



HARRIS

Attaining salvation

The Calvinism Advisory Committee report, titled “Truth, Trust and Testimony in a Time of Tension,” said Southern Baptists are united in belief that conversion of the sinner is necessary for salvation.

“We deny that salvation comes to any-

one who has not experienced conversion,” the committee said. “We also deny that salvation comes to any sinner who does not will to believe and receive Christ.”

Article III of the Baptist Faith and Message, however, claims that men become transgressors only “as soon as they are capable of moral action.” Historically Baptists have turned to a doctrine called “the age of accountability,” which maintains that personal soul competency before God presupposes a conscious choice and does not apply to infants or others incapable of coming to faith in Christ.

‘Inclined toward sin’

Herschel Hobbs, chairman of the committee that drafted a previous version of the Baptist Faith and Message in 1963, wrote in a 1979 article in *Review and Expositor* that the result of the fall is that men inherit a “nature and an environment inclined toward sin” rather than imputed guilt.

“This, of course, agrees with the position generally held by Baptists concerning God’s grace in cases of those under the age of accountability and the mentally incompetent,” the longtime pastor of First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, who died in 1995, wrote in the article titled “Southern Baptists and Confessionalism: A Comparison of the Origins and Contents of the 1925 and 1963 Confessions.”

Meetings of the 19-member ad hoc task force — appointed to study the impact of recent seminary graduates who adhere to a “five-point” Calvinism at percentages far higher than the people in Southern Baptist pews — were closed to the press. (ABP)

NAMB

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For September 15

Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson

Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

AUTHORITY ACKNOWLEDGED

John 2:1-16

Obey Jesus (1-5)

Jesus and His disciples are attending a wedding in Cana of Galilee, located around 8 miles north of His hometown of Nazareth. That Jesus, His mother and His disciples are all invited to this wedding suggests the wedding is for a relative or close family friend. It is not impossible that Mary has some responsibility for the organization of the catering, hence her attempt to deal with the shortage of wine.

A wedding celebration could last as long as a week, and the financial responsibility lay with the groom. To run out of wine would be a dreadful embarrassment in the Jewish culture. Yet this wedding celebration ran out of wine. Mary shares this agonizing predicament with Jesus, expecting Him to do something to remedy the shortage of wine. Jesus responds to Mary: "Woman, what does this have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." Jesus' address for His mother, "Woman," is an expression of polite distance, as is His question to her. Jesus declares that His "hour has not yet come." In John, Jesus' "hour" is the time of His crucifixion and the exaltation bound up with it. At this point in His ministry, because of people's misconceptions about the coming Messiah, Jesus chooses not to reveal Himself openly to Israel. Even this miracle is done quietly.

Mary instructs the servants "to do whatever He tells you." In saying this to the servants, Mary demonstrates persevering faith. Mary does not know what Jesus will do, but she has committed the matter to Him and she trusts Him. In verse 3 Mary approaches Jesus as His mother and is politely rebuked. In verse 5 she responds as a believer, and her faith is honored. The servants obey Jesus and are witnesses of His power and glory. As Christians we acknowledge that Jesus has authority over us by obeying Him. In what area of your life do you need to acknowledge Jesus' lordship and begin obeying Him?

Grow in Faith (6-11)

Jesus has the servants fill six stone water jars "up to the brim." Jesus commands the servants to draw some out and take it to the master of the feast. He is amazed at the quality of wine the servant brought him. This first miracle, or sign, attests to Jesus' identity as Messiah and Son of God and leads unbelievers to faith. John also states that Jesus' disciples watched as Jesus turned the water into wine, understood what the miracle meant and grew in their faith in Him.

The statement that this is Jesus' first miracle indicates that Jesus did not do any miracles during His childhood or early manhood, contrary to numerous apocryphal stories outside the New Testament. In each of the signs that John includes, the emphasis is on the way in which the sign reveals Jesus' messianic identity and on the striking and exceptional nature of the miracle accomplished by Jesus. The large quantity and high quality of wine Jesus creates demonstrates that He is the Messiah.

This miracle shows the glory of Jesus as the sovereign Creator of the physical universe. It also manifests Jesus' glory as the merciful God who abundantly provides for His people's needs. As we see Jesus at work in our lives, our faith in Jesus grows. As we acknowledge Jesus' authority over us, we grow in our faith in Him.

Make Worship Genuine (12-16)

The oxen, sheep and pigeons were used in the sacrificial worship of the temple. Especially for worshippers coming from a distance it was a convenience to be able to purchase them on site rather than having to bring them from afar. The money-changers converted various world currencies into the approved Tyrian coinage.

The presence of animals for sale and money-changers in the Court of the Gentiles disrupted the worship of non-Jewish God-fearers and thus obstructed the very purpose for which the temple existed. As we acknowledge Jesus' authority over us, we remove any distraction that hinders our worship.

Bible Studies for Life

By James Riley Strange

Associate Professor of Religion, Samford University

THE PRESSURE OF PARTIALITY

James 2:1-13

In chapter 2, James shifts from a sort of introduction of the epistle to the meat of the letter.

Verse 1 is difficult to translate: both "my brothers and sisters, keep the faith of our glorious Lord Jesus without showing favoritism" and "you do not really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ by showing favoritism, do you?" make sense in context. The point of both is clear: showing favoritism does not result from faithful obedience to Jesus. James does not mention Jesus' treatment of people, but surely this is what James has in mind.

Verses 2-4

"Have you not made distinctions among yourselves?" suggests that the congregations to whom James writes are made up of both wealthy and poor individuals. James might refer to the gold ring that a male member of the Roman equestrian class wore as a sign of status. "Filthy rags" are worn by some of today's destitute too. Christians have a tendency to romanticize the poor of Jesus' day, but surely some destitute people then were just as likely to stink, fall into alcoholism and panhandle as some homeless people do today. From James' scenario we can infer that in the synagogues (your translation might say "assembly" or "church") of James' time there were seats of honor, while those of low status had either to stand or to sit on the floor where the people of status rested their feet. In some Middle Eastern cultures today, things associated with the soles of the feet are insulting and degrading; perhaps the same was true in James' time. James will mention judging again in 4:11-12. For James, to "judge" someone is to consign him or her to hell. Only God can do this, according to James.

Verses 5-7

James repeats God's plan to reverse fortunes at the end of time (see 1:9-11 and 5:1-6). He makes a shift in verses 6 and 7, casting the "wealthy" as those outside his congregations (see again 5:1-6). This is a common idea in many Jewish writings. The poor are righteous merely because they are poor. Why?

Because they rely on God alone for survival. The righteous followers of God, therefore, are often called the "poor" while outsiders are "rich." James implies that nonbelievers are abusing members of his congregations in the Roman courts. Believers in positions of power are not to abuse in return (see vv. 12-13).

Verses 8-13

James likens attending worship (obedience to the law) but showing partiality while doing so (a transgression) to remaining faithful to one's spouse (obedience to the law) while committing murder (a transgression). If one is a keeper of the law (compare "doer of the word" in 1:22), which James says is good, one must keep the whole law, not just the parts he or she prefers. James is not referring to the impossibility of keeping every single commandment. (He chooses the examples of adultery and murder from the Ten Commandments.) Like Paul, he thinks people can be "blameless according to the law" (Phil. 3:6). Rather he is warning people that to show favoritism is tantamount to violating all of Torah. This type of all-or-nothing dualism is typical for James, for whom there is no gray area: you are either faithful to God or not; you are either a friend of God and an enemy of the world, or the other way around (4:4).

The statement in verse 12 is ironic: James says everyone is about to be judged by the law of liberty.

In verse 13 we finally get to the heart of the matter. Why does James condemn favoritism so harshly? Because for a congregation to treat a poor person like an outsider — like a non-Christian — is to treat him or her as one who is condemned to hell. That is judgment without mercy. Mercy must triumph over judgment.

Christian Crossword

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Across

1. If one went unto them from the _____ (Luke 16:30)

5. Sixth month of the Hebrew calendar. (Neh. 6:15)

8. Give tribute unto Caesar, or _____? (Luke 20:22)

10. A rod of an _____ tree. (Jer. 1:11)

11. He made him to suck honey out of the _____. (Deut. 32:13)

14. A good _____ is rather to be chosen. (Prov. 22:1)

15. Satan ... smote Job with sore _____. (Job 2:7)

16. Month. (abbr.)

17. American Medical Association. (abbr.)

19. Vase or vessel.

21. The absence or reverse of _____.

23. God set them in the heaven to give _____. (Gen. 1:17)

25. _____ up thy strength. (Ps. 80:2)

28. Legislator. (abbr.)

29. A favorite.

30. His enemy came and sowed _____. (Matt. 13:25)

32. The shepherds who _____ my people. (Jer. 23:2)

35. Direction.

36. To give off or out.

37. A fine grit stone for sharpening.

38. Do you submit to _____ rules. (Col. 2:20)

39. And all the _____ of the land. (Lev. 27:30)

41. To find fault.

42. Behold, I send an angel before _____. (Ex. 23:20)

43. Wind direction.

45. _____ no man any thing. (Rom. 13:8)

48. There came two angels to _____. (Gen. 19:1)

52. _____ consider how great this man was. (Heb. 7:4)

53. Elkanah went to _____ mah. (1 Sam. 2:11)

55. _____ your heart and not your garments. (Joel 2:13)

57. It shall bring forth _____ fruit. (Ezek. 47:12)

58. Condemned, especially to hell.

Down

1. Son of Bilhah and Jacob. (Gen. 35:25)

2. Chedorlaomer king of _____. (Gen. 14:1)

3. Descendants of Lot and his youngest daughter. (Gen. 19:38)

4. Female deer.

5. Wilderness of _____. (2 Kings. 3:8)

6. Home of Abram. (Gen. 11:28)

7. Small or partial lobe.

9. At the beginning.

12. Home of Aquila and Priscilla. (Acts 18:1-2)

13. Now make us a _____. (1 Sam. 8:5)

17. The weight thereof was _____ hundred and thirty. (Num. 7:13)

18. Arizona. (abbr.)

20. Child shall play on the hole of the _____. (Isa. 11:8)

22. Either/_____.

24. Wife of Elkanah. (1 Sam. 1:2)

26. Do not _____ the Lord your God. (Deut. 6:16)

27. Fiber.

28. Third son of Adam and Eve. (Gen. 4:25)

30. To fasten or restrain.

31. Last _____. (Isa. 11:8)

33. Variant of aeon.

34. Degree. (abbr.)

38. Iron sharpeneth _____. (Prov. 27:17)

40. I shall keep it unto the _____. (Ps. 119:33)

44. But I am a _____, and no man. (Ps. 22:6)

46. They also may without the word be _____. (1 Pet. 3:1)

47. Man had nothing, save one little _____ lamb. (2 Sam. 12:3)

49. Remember the days of _____. (Deut. 32:7)

50. Sons of God saw the daughters of _____. (Gen. 6:2)

51. Strange or different.

54. Morning time.

56. Nebraska. (abbr.)

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

SBC, EC, LifeWay accused of improper sale of Glorieta

NASHVILLE — The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), its Executive Committee, LifeWay Christian Resources and a long list of trustees and staff members have been named in a lawsuit over the sale of the Glorieta Conference Center to a Christian ministry, Glorieta 2.0.

The lawsuit, filed by Kirk and Susie Tompkins, of Little Rock, Ark., claims the Glorieta property located east of Santa Fe, N.M., was not properly transferred from the Executive Committee to LifeWay after the Executive Committee received it from the Baptist Convention of New Mexico in 1950.

The Tompkins, who lease property at Glorieta, contend that the original 1950 warranty deed from the New Mexico convention remains the only deed on record in Santa Fe County, and no transfer of deed is recorded.

The lawsuit appears to assert that LifeWay erred in approving the sale of the property to the Christian camping ministry Glorieta 2.0 in June because, the Tompkins contend, an affirmative vote by messengers to the SBC annual meeting is required for two consecutive years in order for a sale to commence.

D. August Boto, executive vice president and general counsel for the Executive Committee, said LifeWay owns Glorieta and explained that the only sale of property by an SBC entity which would require convention approval — in one meeting, not two — would be if the entity proposed to sell all or substantially all of its property.

"This sale does not rise to that level," Boto said.

Marty King, director of corporate communications for LifeWay, said in a statement that "we have proper deeds for all of Glorieta and are confident Southern Baptist Convention approval is not required for this transaction."

IMB's Elliff laments Christians' callousness about lostness

ROCKVILLE, Va. — International Mission Board (IMB) President Tom Elliff is concerned that Christians have become desensitized to everyone's need for a Savior. Christians pray for others' hearts to be stirred toward Christ but they also need to pray that their own hearts are continually stirred by a deep burden for the spiritually lost, Elliff told IMB trustees during their Aug. 27–28 meeting at the IMB International Learning Center in Rockville, Va.

Elliff said he has a hard time sleeping after watching the evening news, not just because of wars, disasters and other tragedies, but because "every one of us has learned how to look at the most horrific things you can imagine and be unmoved by them."

"We know where the great tragedies are, we see people running for their lives and starving physically," he said. But most often they also are starving spiritually.

"We've learned how to be aware of lostness but not be moved by lostness," Elliff said. "We have a tendency when speaking of lostness to speak of it statistically." But statistical overload, he said, does not equate those numbers with individuals in dire need of Jesus.

The words of Proverbs 24:11 haunt Elliff: "Deliver those who are being taken away to death and those who are staggering to slaughter. Oh, hold them back."

"'Hold them back,' God says. That's our mandate," Elliff said.

Year-to-date CP contributions above year's goal

NASHVILLE — Year-to-date contributions to Southern Baptist national and international missions and ministries received by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee are 0.15 percent above the year-to-date budgeted goal and 1.36 percent below contributions received during the same time frame last year, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Frank S. Page.

As of Aug. 31, gifts received through the Cooperative Program (CP) Allocation Budget totaled \$172,597,053.36, or 100.15 percent, of the \$172,333,333.37 year-to-date budgeted amount. The total is \$2,386,200.45 below the \$174,983,253.81 received through the end of August 2012.

Designated giving of \$188,665,118.13 for the same year-to-date period is 1.23 percent, or \$2,294,814.47, ahead of the \$186,370,303.66 received at this point last year. This total includes only those gifts received and distributed by the Executive Committee.

July's CP allocation receipts for SBC work totaled \$16,332,189.31. Designated gifts received in July amounted to \$4,597,495.37.



SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► Samford's Barnette Chosen To Give Day 1's September 15 Sermon

Samford University religion professor James R. Barnette will be the speaker on the nationally syndicated ecumenical radio program, "Day 1," Sept. 15. His sermon topic, based on Jesus' parables of the lost sheep and lost coin in Luke 15:1–10, is titled "Room at the Table."

Barnette said the passage inspired him when Samford preministerial scholar and student government president Cameron Thomas preached on it in his preaching class last spring semester.

"I enjoyed it so much that I invited Cameron to preach it at Brookwood Baptist," said Barnette, who is teaching pastor at the Birmingham church and director of preministerial scholars at Samford.

When Barnette received the Day 1 invitation and saw the passage on the lectionary list, he knew he had his topic. Barnette, a Samford graduate, holds master of divinity and doctorate degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

► **Corts, Cunningham, Sledge Tapped for Alabama Men's Hall of Fame:** Longtime Alabama leaders Thomas E. Corts, Emory Cunningham and Eugene B. Sledge will be inducted into the Alabama Men's Hall of Fame on Sept. 24 at a luncheon at The Club in Birmingham.

Founded by the Alabama Legislature in 1987, the Hall of Fame recognizes men "whose lives have impacted the state, the nation and the world." Honorees must have been deceased for at least two years. Plaques recognizing all honorees are housed in Samford University's Harwell G. Davis Library.



BARNETTE

Corts, who died in 2009 at age 68, was a higher education leader who also invested himself personally and professionally in public policy reform efforts. He was president of Samford University from 1983 to 2006.

Cunningham, a publisher, civic leader and philanthropist who died in 2000 at age 78, was president and chief executive officer of Progressive Farmer Corporation and founder of *Southern Living* magazine.

Sledge, an educator, biologist and author from Mobile, taught biology for decades at the University of Montevallo. Also known for his compelling books on World War II, he died in 2001 at age 77.

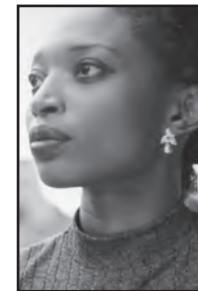
JUDSON COLLEGE

► Alumna Returns to Judson for Surprise Performance

Titilayo Rachel Adedokun came to Judson at the age of 14 and was quickly noticed by professor of music Betty Campbell as a "future star." Following her graduation from Judson in 1991, Campbell encouraged Titi, as she is called, to audition for the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, to which she received a full scholarship. There Adedokun became Miss Ohio and the Second Runner-up to Miss America in 1993. She has since captivated audiences around the world.

Adedokun's talent and experience span different musical genres including opera, Broadway musicals and spirituals.

Her husband, Ruediger Helm, worked together with Campbell to surprise her with a trip to Judson during the 175th Anniversary year. Adedokun gave a brief testimonial and concert for students, faculty and the community Sept. 4.



ADEDOKUN

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► Working Toward 'All-Steinway'

The University of Mobile (UMobile) Center for Performing Arts/School of Music has set its sights on becoming an All-Steinway School, joining the ranks of prestigious music schools that provide students the opportunity to study using what many professional pianists consider to be the finest pianos in the world.

UMobile's Roger Breland said the goal "emphasizes the university's commitment to provide its students and faculty with the finest of musical instruments. It also enhances the university's ability to recruit gifted student musicians."

Among the world-class pianists who praise the instruments produced by Steinway & Sons is UMobile artist-in-residence Kadisha Onalbayeva, who was named a Steinway Artist in April 2013.

In order to be classified as an All-Steinway School, 95 percent of the university's piano inventory must be Steinway & Sons.

► New Art Gallery Hosts First Exhibit

The University of Mobile's (UMobile) new art gallery is hosting "Neutral," part of the 1X4: Analogy art exhibition taking place at four venues in Mobile through Sept. 20. A reception is set for Sept. 19.

The exhibition focuses on four color themes: "Neutral" at UMobile, "Green" at Alabama School of Math and Science, "Yellow" at Spring Hill College and "Blue" at University of South Alabama. The exhibition is organized by local art professor Wanda Sullivan.

Each school will hold individual receptions, with the final reception at UMobile on Sept. 19, 6–8 p.m. in the new Ben May College of Arts & Sciences building. This is the first exhibit to be held in the gallery. For more information, call 251-442-2280.

Christian in Nigeria escapes Islamic extremists

As Emmanuel Sunday rode his motorbike near Jos, Nigeria, Aug. 29, gunmen stopped him and asked him his religion.

The 19-year-old technical school student saw a group of people the gunmen had ordered out of a minibus; the Christians had been told to lie on the ground.

"The gunmen asked me about my religion, and when I told them I was a Christian, they asked me to join a group of people already ordered to lie down by the side of the road," Sunday told Morning Star

News. "I did as I was ordered to do, and then one of the men came and searched me and took money from me, including my mobile phone."

"It was when the gunmen started shooting and killing those of us that were Christians grouped together that I ran into a nearby maize farm, because it was already dark," he said. "They shot wildly at me, but I escaped unhurt, except the injuries I sustained while running in the bush."

Sunday ran for two hours before making his way back to his village.

There he later learned that two of the five people slain were from his village. All five of those killed were from the Church of Christ in Nations congregation in Foron, whose pastor said the assailants were a combined band of ethnic Fulani herdsmen and Islamic extremist mercenaries.

Sunday said his escape was nothing short of a miracle.

"It was not my ability that made it possible for me to escape, but it was God that made me escape to be alive," he said. (MS)

'Verging on catastrophe'

Christians in Central African Republic vulnerable, threatened as chaos continues

More than four months after Islamist rebels seized control of the Christian-majority Central African Republic (CAR), Christians remain vulnerable to atrocities and the threat of imposition of Islamic law.

Rebel groups and Islamist mercenaries from Chad and Sudan joined forces in December 2012 to form a militant coalition called Seleka, which took the capital, Bangui, March 24 and sent then-President Francois Bozize into exile in Cameroon. Seleka Islamist leader Michel Djotodia took over as president.

"It is clear, according to our research, that it is Christians who have been suffering under Seleka rule and Muslims have been profiting," Lewis Mudge of Human Rights Watch (HRW) said, adding that Seleka agents "have not hesitated to attack Christian places of worship."

Mudge confirmed that Christian fears

about the intentions of the new leaders are not unfounded. Djotodia made a pledge to impose *sharia* (Islamic law) in a 2012 request for support from the Saudi Arabia-based Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). The request was in an April 17, 2012, letter addressed to the OIC and signed by Djotodia, who denies writing it.

'New Islamic Republic'

"God willing and we come to Bangui; we will put in place a regime to apply Islamic sharia law," Djotodia wrote in the letter, marked confidential, in which he requests material and financial support to overthrow the government of Bozize. "Even if we fail to hunt Bozize, we will transform a part of the Central African Republic, Chad and Darfur into a new Islamic Republic."

Muslims in Sudan's Darfur region and Chad support the CAR rebels' aims, Djotodia wrote. When Catholic and evangelical leaders chanced upon a copy of the letter and forwarded it to the self-appointed president, he denied writing it, according to

sources in CAR.

With Seleka attacking priests, pastors, nuns, church buildings and other Christian institutions, the letter brought tensions to a head.

The leader of CAR's Evangelical Alliance (EA), Nicolas Guerekoyame, is part of the National Transitional Council created to act in place of the dissolved parliament; he and other leaders of the EA fired off a letter to Djotodia on May 10.

"The various atrocities that preceded, accompanied and followed Seleka's rise to power have been specifically aimed at the Christian population," said the letter, signed by Guerekoyame and EA leaders Michel Gbegbe and Anatole Banga. "Churches and Christian institutions have been desecrated and plundered, priests and pastors have been assaulted and nuns raped."



MS graphic

The letter added that Seleka's actions have been characterized by "massive and unprecedented violations of human rights in the form of large-scale looting ... killings and murders, threats and intimidation, abductions, torture and summary executions, rape of women including nuns, desecration of churches and religious institutions and violence against servants of God (priests and pastors in particular)."

Guerekoyame was arrested Aug. 6 for criticizing the government from the pulpit at a church in Bangui, in spite of the immunity he is supposed to enjoy as a member of the National Transitional Council. He was released later that day.

There have been several reports that agents of the new CAR government selectively attack Christians, their villages and churches while sparing Muslims, who account for less than 15 percent of the population of about 4.5 million people.

Godfrey Yogarajah, executive director of the World Evangelical Alliance's Religious Liberty Commission, called Aug. 15 for an immediate end to the breakdown of law and order, saying in a statement that the assaults "highlight the targeting of Christians."

Call for global Church support

Yogarajah condemned the selective attack on Christians and churches and called on the international community, including the global Church, to rally around suffering CAR Christians and give them support.

Djotodia has claimed that the atrocities are being carried out not by Seleka but by elements beyond his control.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that there are more than 206,000 displaced people within the country and 63,000 others that have fled to neighboring countries.

Mudge said that "the current situation in Central Africa Republic is fragile, and the humanitarian crisis verges on a catastrophe." Neighborhoods in Bangui, he said, "continue to be attacked and looted by Seleka; villages in the provinces are not spared as civilians are killed and homes are plundered and burned."

Although CAR has suffered sporadic violence and a spate of military coups since independence from France in 1960, observers describe the latest violence as the worst ever. (MS)

Evangelicals in CAR give 'appalling accounts'

On May 10, the Evangelical Alliance of the Central African Republic sent rebel leader turned self-proclaimed President Michel Djotodia the following grievances, among others:

"Since the commencement of hostilities ... we have recorded appalling accounts of actions against Christian communities and individual property. Without even giving an exhaustive list ..."

In Ndélé

► The Christian Cultural Centre run by a pastor was ransacked.

► More than 120 iron sheets were taken from two pastors' roofs.

► Two Christians were set free only after 195,000 Franc ransoms.

In Mbrés

► Four large villages were burned, and the pastors and their congregations are now hiding out in the bush, a prey to illnesses and other problems.

In Bantaganfo

► The orphanage was looted, the children menaced and left traumatized.

In Bossangoa

► A pastor died when his house was deliberately set on fire, and another was killed out in his field by Seleka troops.

In Alindao

► The pastor's home was ransacked.

► The Collège de Théologie Biblique d'Alindao (CTBA) on the Alindao mission station was looted and destroyed.

► Three mission vehicles, pastors'

motorbikes and generators were taken.

In Mobaye

► A pastor was beaten.

In Nola

► A pastor had a visit at 10 p.m. and was told he would be killed if he did not give them money.

► Another pastor received two text messages with death threats.

In Yaloké

► A pastor saw his son killed before his eyes in cold blood; he himself was beaten and humiliated.

On the road to Boali

► At a meeting of Baptist churches, Seleka fighters took all the offering money.

In Bangui

► A church was shelled during a worship service, leaving a number of people including children killed or seriously injured.

► A pastor was shot dead by the Seleka in front of the church despite the Bible he carried to show he was a servant of God.

► A pastor had to watch Seleka fighters carry off 10 motorbikes, five vehicles, five computers, four printers, one multifunction photocopier, 56 GPS, seven cameras and one laminator.

► The house of a pastor was visited more than four times by the Seleka, and two vehicles and a motorbike were taken.

► The leader of a Christian organization saw his vehicle taken, while a pastor who had just lost his father was beaten, threatened with death and robbed of the money he

had in his pocket to pay for his father's funeral.

► Another pastor's 4x4 vehicle was taken as he was coming back from an evangelistic mission.

► The house of a pastor was occupied for days by Seleka troops.

► One pastor saw his two vehicles taken away, while another only narrowly escaped an attacker.

► A pastor saw his two vehicles taken by the Seleka.

► A pastor was threatened with death and robbed of 120,000 Francs.

► A pastor was forced to leave his house after it was looted and his life threatened.

► While a pastor was in church, Seleka fighters began ransacking his house; fortunately French and Central African Multinational troops arrived in time to stop them carrying off their plunder.

► One Sunday before the church service, a pastor was visited by Seleka fighters who demanded that he leave the area for a mosque to be built in the place of his church.

► The leader of a church denomination has left the country after being threatened.

In Bobélé

► A pastor narrowly escaped with his life while boxes of toys and Christmas presents for Pygmy children were taken, along with two vehicles. (MS)