

# THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



Oct. 24, 2013  
Vol. 178, No. 42

Reporting. Connecting. Inspiring.

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

## INSIDE



More than 950 Alabama churches to participate in Billy Graham's initiative

◆ Page 3



Facing life's regrets and taking a holistic approach to mental health

◆ Pages 4-5



Retirement centers provide home where senior adults 'retain independence, purpose for life'

◆ Page 7



istockphoto.com

# Online communion

## Can churches 'administer the sacraments' through computer screen?

**Y**ou might call it the Lord's Supper, or you may refer to it as communion. But either way, you've probably always taken it while physically present in a worship service with other believers.

The traditional practice could soon look a little different in the United Methodist Church (UMC), however, at least in the churches with online campuses. Some nondenominational churches already offer online communion as does the online campus of Alabama's Church of the Highlands (see story, page 9), but it is a new concept for many churches and denominations.

The latest move by Central United Methodist Church, Concord, N.C. — which announced plans to launch an online campus that potentially would offer online communion — has Alabama Baptists and others across the state discussing the pros and cons.

About 30 United Methodist Church denomi-

national leaders also are discussing the issue and have urged the bishops to call for a moratorium on the practice so further study of online ministries can be done before a decision is made.

The majority of the leaders agreed with the statement that communion "entails the actual tactile sharing of bread and wine in a service that involves people corporately together in the same place." But not everyone agreed that congregants must be in the same place.

The debate raises fundamental questions at the heart of the church experience: the definition of community, individual participation, the role of tradition and basic theological understandings of the meaning of communion.

### Variety of forms

United Methodists practice open communion, meaning all who worship are invited to partake. Many churches celebrate communion once a month, though each church decides how often to serve it.

Communion takes on different forms among various denominations, but it generally involves the re-enactment of Jesus' last supper by taking bread and grape juice (or wine in some cases).

Also called the Eucharist, many Protestants see the rite as an expression of faith rather than the actual body and blood of Jesus, as the Catholic Church teaches.

John H. Killian, pastor of Maytown Baptist Church, said, "A key element of observing the Lord's Supper is the fellowship of the Supper. While the key focus of the Lord's Supper is the sacrificial death of Christ, we also note that this observance pictures the unity of the Body of Christ as the local Church partakes together.

"While I could agree with ministers distributing the Lord's Supper to those unable to be in the fellowship, as that would be an extension of the worship service, online communion is a step beyond that principle," he said.

Mike McLemore, executive director of

(See 'Real,' page 9)



Coming next week...

The impact of **faith** on **marriage**

# COMMENT

## A Business Meeting You Should Attend

Do you know how hard it is to get members to attend a local church business meeting? In most congregations only a handful of folk regularly participate in the governance of church affairs by consistently attending business meetings. Usually these are the members who direct the organizations, serve on committees, hold church offices or are involved in some leadership role.

Of course that all changes if a controversy erupts. Then members who seldom darken the door of a church often show up. But when things are going well, people often leave the gritty matters of church business to the faithful few. Baptists preach the importance of each believer in the spiritual democracy of a believer's church but our practice often reflects a theology where responsibility is delegated to a few.

Alabama Baptists find it just as difficult to get members to the convention's annual business meeting each November as a local church does for its business meetings. In each of the past two years only 373 of the more than 3,200 Alabama Baptist churches had registered messengers attending the Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC) annual meeting.

In 2012 when a new president was elected and the proposed Future Focus emphasis was presented only 837 messengers registered. The year before in Mobile only 763 messengers registered. That was the lowest number of convention participants since the end of World War II.

### Important decisions

Nearly 20 years ago (1994) when concern was high about the relationship between the state convention, the University of Mobile and Samford University, more than 3,100 people registered as messengers in Mobile. But now that relationships are strong between the convention and its cooperating entities, when the work of the convention continues in a strong and steady manner, fewer and fewer Alabama Baptists turn out for the business session.

But declining attendance does not make the annual meeting any less important. It is at the annual meeting that decisions are finalized about how to spend missions dollars contributed through the Cooperative Program (CP). The proposed 2014 CP budget implements for the first time a shared ministries section for work jointly benefiting the ABSC and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

This approach to budgeting has been recog-



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

nized by the SBC for decades and used by several other state conventions. The shared ministry category allows a convention to consider funds used for these causes to be evenly divided between state and national causes for allocation purposes.

Even though the proposed budget of \$41 million is \$1 million less than 2013, the portion marked for SBC causes goes up to 43.3 percent. When the shared ministries section (10 percent of the budget) is evenly divided, that means Alabama Baptists will be using 48.3 percent of CP receipts for SBC-related causes.

Ministries of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) will use about 22 cents of each CP dollar while the three institutions of higher learning will divide about 20 cents of each dollar. Nine other entities, commissions and ministries will divide about 4 cents of each CP dollar.

Approving the annual budget will be a major decision. It helps set directions and parameters for all Baptists will do together in the coming year.

Those who oversee the ministries of Alabama Baptists and elect the leaders of the various entities will be chosen during the annual meeting. A long and thorough process will be completed when the committee on boards and commissions presents its nominees for service as trustees, directors and commissioners. Each recommendation must be approved by messengers to the annual meeting before the nominees are finally elected. Again that is an important decision.

A positive change in the program allows the SBOM time to share about the impact of its varied programs reaching across Alabama. Previously the SBOM has offered business recommendations such as the proposed budget but

reports about its ministries have been omitted.

In addition to its new half-hour slot to focus on the overall work of the SBOM, time slots have been given specifically for two SBOM programs — Baptist campus ministries and disaster relief — to highlight the impact of their work.

In keeping with the theme of the annual meeting — Changing Lives — institutions and entities have been asked to forgo regular reports about ministry accomplishments and future plans and share stories about how their ministries change lives. The goal of this request by the committee on order of business is to help messengers see the practical differences Baptist ministries make in the lives of individuals and the corporate life of the denomination.

While the primary purpose of the annual meeting is business, inspiration is never lacking. The president's address, the convention sermon, theme interpretations and a special Tuesday night rally featuring the preaching of SBC Executive Committee President Frank Page and the music of Charles Billingsley all promise high and holy moments in the midst of the business focus.

Of course, the Pastors Conference on Monday is always filled with inspiration as popular preachers from across the state and nation share God's Holy Word. Together the three days offer Alabama Baptists a wonderful opportunity for inspiration and a time to make sure the convention continues to do its work decently and in order as the apostle Paul counseled the Corinthian church.

While the primary purpose of the annual meeting is business, inspiration is never lacking. The president's address, the convention sermon, theme interpretations and a special Tuesday night rally featuring the preaching of SBC Executive Committee President Frank Page and the music of Charles Billingsley all promise high and holy moments in the midst of the business focus.

### Upcoming meetings

This year's annual meeting is scheduled for Nov. 12–13 at Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville. On Nov. 11 the Pastors Conference will meet in the same place. Hopefully you can be one of those Alabama Baptists who participates in the annual business meeting. If not, you may want to watch the live streaming of the annual meeting at <http://live.alsbom.org>.

Begin now to pray for the annual meeting. Pray for ABSC President John Killian who will preside, for SBOM Executive Director Rick Lance, for Pastors Conference President Fred Lackey, for each speaker, for each report, for each decision. Like the business of a church, the business of the ABSC is important. It must be bathed in prayer and supported by the participation of God's people. Maybe this is a business meeting you should attend.





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

(ISSN 0738-7741;  
USPS 011-080)

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

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

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

**DR. BOBBY S. TERRY  
EDITOR**

Jennifer Davis Rash  
*Executive Editor*

Grace Thornton  
*Assistant Editor*

Neisha Fuson  
*Editorial Assistant  
for Online Communications*

Julie Payne  
*News Writer*

Lauren C. Grim  
*Designer*

Wanda Bergeron  
*Local Editions*

Linda Harrison  
*Financial Administrator*

Bill Gilmore  
*Advertising Director*

Debbie Campbell  
*Director of Circulation  
and Public Relations*

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

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

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

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

**Full member of  
Alabama Press Association**

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

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

# 'Become a Matthew'

## More than 950 Alabama churches to participate in Billy Graham's initiative

By Julie Payne  
The Alabama Baptist

**A**fter Sammy Gilbreath heard about plans for the upcoming My Hope America with Billy Graham initiative, he realized "the incredible potential it has as a harvest event."

My Hope America with Billy Graham is a nationwide effort to reach people across the country with the gospel message by combining the impact of video programs with the power of personal relationships, according to the My Hope website.

The event has been implemented in 57 countries and resulted in more than 10 million people making a commitment to Christ. It will be held in the U.S. for the first time in November with more than 24,000 churches slated to participate — more than 950 of those in Alabama, according to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

The initiative works off the "Matthew principle," explained Gilbreath, director of the office of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. According to the My Hope website, the apostle Matthew invited people into his home to meet Jesus (Matt. 9:9-10). Based on this Gospel example, My Hope encourages people to "become a Matthew" by inviting friends and neighbors into their home or other gathering place to hear the gospel message.

During this time, the host shows an evangelistic video featuring testimonies and powerful messages from Billy Graham. Afterward the host shares how Jesus is working in his or her life and asks guests if they want to pray to accept Jesus as their Savior.

A final component of serving as a "Matthew" is looking after those who accept Jesus as their Savior and help them grow in their faith.

My Hope culminates the first week of November as the program "The Cross" — featuring Graham's new message — debuts Nov. 7 on his 95th birthday. "The Cross" also is available to order on DVD or online for anyone participating in the project.

Gilbreath, who serves as the initiative's coordinator for the state, said his office has been working for about 10 months training pastors on how to train their "Matthews" to effectively reach people through My Hope.

Kevin Ward, pastor of Salem Springs Baptist Church, Elkmont, in Limestone Baptist Association, is one of the Alabama pastors who went through My Hope training and whose church is participating.

My Hope is something that "could really work," he said.

## How to participate in My Hope

**T**he My Hope America with Billy Graham steps include:

**1. Look Around:** Build a spiritual concern for those around you who need Christ; make a short list of family, friends and neighbors who need Jesus.

**2. Look Up:** Pray every day for each name on your list.

**3. Look Out:** Think of ways to build your relationship with each person.

**4. Look Forward:** Invite them to your home or other venue.

**5. Offer hospitality and food and meet in a cordial, friendly atmosphere.** Watch one of the My Hope America video programs. A Christian (who is known to those listening) should give a short salvation testimony. Then give a clear invitation and lead a prayer for people to receive Christ and begin to follow Him.

**6. Look After:** Make the commitment and a follow-up plan for new believers so they become lifelong disciples of Jesus. You can start with the My Hope America free discipleship materials.

For more information, visit MyHope-WithBillyGraham.org.

And for those who would like to participate in My Hope and aren't yet trained, it isn't too late, said Sammy Gilbreath, director of the office of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Interested people can call his office at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 320. The office can provide information on how to be trained either online or at a local church or association.

"They need to call ... soon because time is running out," Gilbreath said. (TAB, BP)

Salem Springs Baptist members have My Hope events planned during the first 10 days of November.

There are a number of ways participants can conduct an event, including home meetings or even through neighborhood get-togethers, Ward said, noting some people plan to co-host an event.

### 'Reconnecting people to Christ'

Ward said My Hope is not only about salvation but "also about reconnecting people to Christ."

He noted that while evangelism is one of the primary functions of believers, some people have a fear of sharing their faith. "I hope it will encourage people to tell their story," he said.

Gilbreath also noted My Hope's value in training laypeople to share their faith with others. He said while a main goal of the initiative is for there to be a harvest of unchurched people, My

Hope also offers opportunities to train people to share their testimony. "We are excited about the harvest" but also excited about training hundreds of laypeople to do this, he said.

Preston Parrish, vice president of My Hope with Billy Graham, said that in a world where "the main focus of many is the immediate and the material, it is truly remarkable to see so many begin to turn their eyes and hearts to the eternal."

Parrish added that from the outset "this has been a movement of prayer. We are thrilled at how God is answering prayer and stirring the hearts of people across the nation. He's stirring them to become intentional and purposeful about reaching out to others with the love and good news of Jesus Christ. It is going to be a great hour of decision in the hearts of many people across our land." ❧

**MY HOPE  
AMERICA**  
WITH BILLY GRAHAM

**Facing life's regrets and taking a holistic approach to mental health**

# Letting go. Moving forward.



**Getting past guilt can be challenging, but regret can be dealt with, healed**

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

**J**ordan was a star athlete in high school, skilled enough to earn a sports scholarship for college. However, during his college years an injury and a prescription for pain medication led to a drug addiction that sidetracked Jordan's athletics career and his life.

Through the ministry of a Christian rehabilitation center, Jordan recovered from his addiction, and he is now a teacher and a coach. Though few know his name, Jordan's experience has encouraged many people through the song inspired by his story, "Hello, My Name Is" by contemporary Christian songwriter and artist Matthew West.

The first line of the song, "Hello, my name is regret," speaks to a weight that about half of Americans admit to carrying — regret over the consequences of past decisions.

"I read Jordan's story and couldn't help but wonder how many people in the world are walking around defined by the defeat and the regret of past mistakes, believing the lie that they will never be able to kick an old habit or move on from yesterday's mistakes," West writes on his website.

"Jordan's story is powerful proof that we are not defined by our past. God can restore, redeem and renew our hearts and lives. He can set our feet on a new path that will lead our lives to a destination far greater than where we used to call home."

Though most Americans believe God is a God of second chances, getting past our feelings of regret and guilt can be challenging. Fortunately it is possible, according to Renay

Carroll, a licensed professional counselor with Pathways Professional Counseling (a ministry of the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries). The key is in processing past conflicts and seeking resolution and acceptance, she said.

"Many of us look at our past mistakes and try to act like they did not happen, but these attempts fail to deal with the powerful feelings of guilt and regret," she said.

Steve Trader, also a licensed professional counselor with Pathways, said he has seen many people try to deny responsibility for their choices, even as they are consumed with shame for those choices.

Others try to avoid responsibility by comparing themselves to others, Trader said.

"They might say 'I'm as good as that person,' or 'at least I'm not as bad as that person.' They try to soothe their conscience without taking responsibility," he said.

When a person has used poor judgment in making decisions, however, a change of direction is necessary to overcome the negative

feelings about those choices, according to Carroll. Christians call this process of changing the mind, turning and moving in the opposite direction repentance.

"We repent to God over past failures and then seek biblical forgiveness and reconciliation with others," Carroll said.

Following repentance, Trader said there are three steps individuals can take to get past the negative feelings of guilt and regret.

The first is to admit your feelings to yourself, to God and to others if necessary. Taking responsibility for one's actions counters the tendency to blame others for our choices.

The second step is to ask God to free you from the guilt and regret you carry.

"Many people will say, 'I know God has

forgiven me,' yet they continue to carry that burden of guilt. They constantly beat themselves up and let their regrets steal their joy," Trader said.

In those situations, he said, the Bible offers encouragement. For example, 1 John 1:9

In their book  
**"The Five Languages of Apology: How to Experience Healing in All Your Relationships,"**  
Gary Chapman and Jennifer Thomas suggest five languages for how to say, "I'm sorry."

- ▶ **Expressing Regret:** I am sorry.
- ▶ **Accepting Responsibility:** I was wrong.
- ▶ **Making Restitution:** What can I do to make it right?
- ▶ **Genuinely Repenting:** I'll try not to do that again.
- ▶ **Requesting Forgiveness:** Will you please forgive me?

Source: Renay Carroll

promises that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

This and other verses point to the biblical way of dealing with regrets of the past, Trader said.

Finally Trader suggests taking action.

"If you can do something about the situation, do it. Seek reconciliation. Make restitution. But if you can't do anything, then allow the power of the Holy Spirit to work in you and let it go," Trader said.

Letting go and moving forward is hard, but once again, the Bible offers guidance, Trader said, referencing Phillipians 3:13 and Paul's example of "forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead."

## Stop dwelling on the past

Living in the present and future is the key, Carroll said. The past cannot be changed, and the consequences of bad choices or uncontrollable circumstances like car accidents, sudden death or natural disasters cannot be erased. Fortunately our God is the God of Creation, Carroll said, and He makes all things new. Therefore to get past our negative feelings about the past, we must stop dwelling there, she said. "When we think of living life with regret and guilt, we are often living in the past as opposed to living in the present and future," Carroll said. "While we have no control over the past, we do have control over our present and future choices."

Our relationships are best managed when we process our issues from the past, seek forgiveness and reconciliation and make new commitments and agreements to live and work together, Carroll said. ☞

## More than half of Christians say they still carry regret for wrong choices

**R**egret weighs down many Americans. According to a new study from LifeWay Research, almost half the country feels the weight of a bad choice from their past, even though a vast majority believe God gives second chances.

When asked to respond to the statement, "I am dealing with the consequences of a bad decision," 47 percent of respondents agreed.

While self-defined Protestant or nondenominational Christians are less likely to agree (42 percent), a majority of those who said they are a born-again, evangelical or fundamentalist Christian agree (51 percent) they are still dealing with a wrong choice from their past.

Recognizing a sizeable percentage of people are suffering consequences from past mistakes allows Christians to show grace, said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research.

"Christians minister grace out of grace," Stetzer said. "Caring for those dealing with pain and regrets is not about fulfill-

ing obligations or relieving guilt, as all of that has already been taken care of by Christ."

The study, sponsored by Bible Studies for Life, a group study from LifeWay Christian Resources, also found the vast majority of Americans believe God gives second chances for those who have made a bad decision.

### Second chances

Overall 84 percent believe so, while 94 percent of Protestants and 98 percent of evangelicals agree God gives second chances.

Nearly one in five Americans believe God gives a second chance when a person depends only on God (19 percent), followed closely by when a person makes restitution (18 percent), does enough good (15 percent) or promises not to repeat the mistake (11 percent). Fewer than one in six Americans say they are not sure why God gives second chances.

"In all, some 44 percent of respondents believe God's offering of a second chance depends on some kind of human action," said Ronnie Floyd, general editor for Bible Studies for Life.

For Floyd, this viewpoint creates unneeded issues. "The problem with trusting in one's self to gain a second chance from God is that we cannot trust ourselves to get it right," he said.

"Why put extra pressure on ourselves to fix things?" Floyd asked. "We shouldn't. The most scriptural response to a failure is to ask God to intervene to accomplish His will."

Bible Studies for Life commissioned the study to demonstrate the need for a better understanding of what the Bible teaches about past mistakes and God's grace in providing second chances.

The study also is part of a book, "Do Over," available in LifeWay Christian Stores and at LifeWay.com. (BP)

## Can mental illness be cured by prayer alone?

A third of Americans believe prayer and Bible study alone can overcome serious mental illness, according to a survey by LifeWay Research.

The survey also found most Americans (68 percent) would feel welcome in church if they were mentally ill.

Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research, said Christians care about those affected by mental illness.

He's glad churches are seen as a welcome place for those with depression, bipolar disorder or schizophrenia. But he worries some Christians see mental illness as a character flaw rather than a medical condition.

Christians will go to the doctor if they break their leg, Stetzer said. But some may try to pray away serious mental illness. "They forget that the key part of mental illness is the word 'illness,'" he said. "In a typical evangelical church, half the people believe mental illness can be solved by prayer and Bible study alone."

LifeWay Research asked four questions about mental illness as part of a telephone survey of 1,001 Americans conducted Sept. 6–10.

Along with the two items noted above, the study also found that 51 percent say someone close to them has experienced mental illness. That number drops to 37 percent for those over 65.

### Holistic approach

And 54 percent of Americans say churches should do more to prevent suicide. That number jumps to 64 percent among evangelical, fundamentalist or born-again Christians.

Tim Clinton, president of the Forest, Va.-based American Association of Christian Counselors, said spirituality can play a crucial role in treating mental illness.

He called it "soul care."

Clinton hopes more churches will become open to talking about mental illness. That means taking a holistic approach that deals with spiritual, emotional and physical concerns.

That can involve counseling and medication as well as prayer and Bible study. (BP)

# Learning to lean

## Christians urged to remove mask of self-reliance, support each other



Many Christians today view the Church as being God's hands and feet to the world in ministry to others but don't allow God to minister to them through the hands and feet of others.

"Unfortunately our culture has historically defined 'strength' as handling things ourselves," said Paula Batts, director of the Christian Counseling Center in Dalton, Ga. "I often tell clients that it takes more strength to walk through the doors of our counseling center and allow someone else into our personal lives than to keep our struggles zipped up and pretend all is well."

Experts say Christians often find it difficult to admit when a problem arises and tend to present a false front, especially to fellow believers.

David Hughes, who recently retired as pastor of First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C., said, "Regrettably many churches are communities consisting of 'familiar strangers' more than 'brothers and sisters in Christ.'" Hughes is anticipated to become executive director of the Transforming Center in Wheaton, Ill.

"A high premium is placed upon presenting a life far more solid and put together than it actually is," Hughes said. "This deception is a function of what Thomas Merton and others have labeled the 'false self,' or that part of us devoted to gaining the approval of others at all cost."

Hughes said the desire for approval often masks needs that others might be able to help address.

"Week after week, Christians file into churches, acting as though all is well, when in fact they may be dying on the inside because of marriage and family conflict, financial challenges, job stress, health issues, addictive behaviors and/or spiritual doubt," he said. "The false self insists on putting up a brave front, a facade that insists that life is perfectly fine."

Meanwhile they don't get help to deal with the need they are hiding.

"I have noticed that people will wait until they are financially bereft before asking for help from our benevolence fund," Hughes said. "And spouses will delay marriage counseling until so much damage has been done that their marriage is beyond repair."

Batts said removing the mask of the appearance of total self-reliance allows Christians to develop deeper relationships with one another.

### Balanced relationships

"Most of us are far better at giving than receiving," she said. "We want to support each other with food, financial help, a listening ear. It makes our relationships so much more balanced when we are able to receive ministry from others."

Some go so far as to regard the rejection of such help as sin.

Hughes said the reluctance to allow others to minister fails to follow Jesus' example and could be construed as disobedience. He point-

ed out that Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for a drink, recruited disciples to help Him accomplish His ministry and called on them to pray for Him as He struggled in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Robert Creech, director of pastoral ministries studies at Baylor University's Truett

Theological Seminary in Waco, Texas, sees problems of pride and ingratitude.

"It probably is a poor witness to refuse ministry at the hands of Christ's servants," Creech said. "It is in a way a denial of ministry from Christ Himself and a kind of ingratitude toward God."

"At best, it is prideful," Creech continued. "At worst, it is a kind of theology that refuses to recognize the presence of Christ in one's brother

or sister. It can be manifested by a refusal to admit one's needs, a lack of transparency about one's life and a prideful dismissal of offers to help."

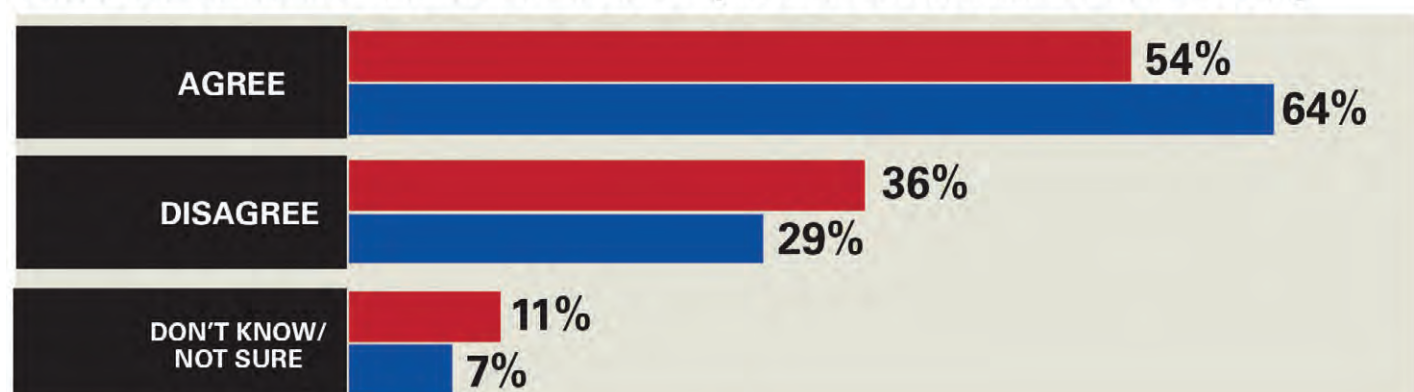
Batts wouldn't go that far. "Perhaps those who don't accept ministry are excellent at giving to others, so it is difficult to say they are a poor witness," she said.

Hughes said Christians should look to the example of Jesus. "The Light of the World did not hide His needs or fears from those around Him, and yet He changed the world," Hughes said. "Why should those of us who follow Him think our witness will be more powerful and effective if all that people around us see is our 'holy face?'" (ABP)

**"Most of us are far better at giving than receiving."**

**Paula Batts  
director, Christian  
Counseling Center**

### Christian churches should do more to prevent suicide in America today.



**LifeWay  
RESEARCH**

■ Among all Americans

■ Among self-identified born-again, evangelical, or fundamentalist Christians

# Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

## BIGBEE

► **Larry Potts** has resigned as director of missions for **Bigbee Association**. He served in the role for nearly five years.

## BIRMINGHAM

► **Hilldale Church, Center Point**, and **Rebirth Christian Fellowship** will partner with **Birmingham Association** to host a community-wide Trunk or Treat block party Oct. 31, 6:30–8:30 p.m. The event will take place at Rebirth Christian Fellowship's campus. There will be candy, face painting, games, inflatables, horseback rides and more. Birmingham Association is accepting candy donations for this event. Bring candy donations to the association office by Oct. 29. For information call Linda Pair at 205-599-3245. Ron Pate is pastor of Hilldale Church and Doug Taylor is pastor of Rebirth Christian Fellowship. ► Music evangelist **Leon Westerhouse** was honored with the Keith-Cross Volunteer of the Year Award at **Birmingham Association's** annual event, The Gathering, on Oct. 6. This volunteer service award was established in 2004



**WESTERHOUSE**

and named in honor of its first recipients, Bobby Keith and Jerry Cross. Presenting the award to Westerhouse was Jerry Cross. For many years Westerhouse has volunteered his time to lead in music worship at the weekly association ministers conference. He is a member of Huffman Church, where B.R. Johnson is interim pastor.

## CENTRAL

► **Sardis Church, Rockford**, was recently honored as the top giver among Central Association churches to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions in 2012. Pastor Jeff Hardy also served as moderator of the association this past year. Wayne Henderson is director of missions.

## COFFEE

► **New Ebenezer Church, Elba**, will celebrate homecoming Nov. 3, 10:30 a.m. There will be no Sunday School. Special music will be provided by Paulayers, The Johnson Family Trio and the New Ebenezer choir. Music will be led by Todd Johnson. Pastor Travis Johnson will speak following the singing and a covered dish lunch will follow. Everyone is invited.

## COVINGTON

► **Southside Church, Opp**,

will hold **Judgement House** on Oct. 28–31, 6–9 p.m. For reservations and tickets call 334-493-6340. Stewart Young is pastor.

## EAST LIBERTY

► **James Euclid Brown Sr.**, former choir director and song leader of **Plant City Church, Lannett**, for 36 years, died Sept. 12. He was 84. Brown sang southern gospel music for more than 70 years with groups such as the Dixie Rhythm Quartet, the Lee Roy Abernathy Quartet, the Sunny South Quartet, the Brown Brothers Quartet and the James Brown Trio. He was a member of **First Church, Shawmut**. Brown is survived by his wife of 63 years, Emily; two children; four grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.



**BROWN**

## MARION

► **Keith Box** is the new director of missions for **Marion Association**. Box has served as pastor of South Hamilton Church, Hamilton, for the past 18 years. Prior to serving at South Hamilton, he was pastor of Pilgrim Rest Church, Fayette, from January 1993 to November 1995. He and his wife, Teresa, have two children.



**BOX**

## MUSCLE SHOALS

► **Randy Copeland** is the new pastor of **Pleasant Grove Church, Moulton**. Copeland is a Hartselle native and previously served as associate pastor of Decatur Church. He and his wife, Cyndi, have one child.



**COPELAND**

## JUDSON

► **Sardis Church, Abbeville**, will hold revival services Oct. 27–30. Lee Chorn, pastor of New Teamon Church, Slocomb, will

speaking. Frankie Money will provide music. The Sunday evening service will be at 6 p.m. and Monday–Wednesday services will be at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome. George Bryan is pastor.

## TALLAPOOSA

► **Joe Turner** is the new pastor of **First Church, Alexander City**. He holds associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in Christian ministry from Southern Baptist School for Biblical Studies in Jacksonville, Fla. He has previously served as pastor of churches in Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana since 1991. He and his wife, Belinda, have two children.



**TURNER**

## MOBILE

► **Dauphin Way Church, Mobile**, will hold "Hymns for the Christian Life Concert" with Keith and Kristyn Getty on Nov. 2, 7 p.m. For ticket information call 1-800-965-9324 or visit iTickets.com. Adam Dooley is pastor.

## WEST CULLMAN

► **Joshua Pendergrass** is the new pastor of **Bethany Church, Crane Hill**. He holds a bachelor's degree from Lambuth University in Jackson, Tenn., and a juris doctor from Faulkner University's Jones Law School in Montgomery. He has previously served churches in Tennessee and Kentucky and most recently as pastor of Cedar Mount Church, Pinson. He is married to Leslie.



**PENDERGRASS**

## WINSTON

► **First Church, Addison**, will celebrate homecoming and its 125th anniversary Oct. 27, 10 a.m.–noon. There will be food and fellowship following the celebration. Lee Taylor is pastor. ► **Meek Church** will hold an Evangelism Celebration on Nov. 3, 5 p.m. Perry Neal will speak and there will be special music by Page Trio. Everyone is invited. Thomas Hyche is pastor and Lee Taylor is evangelism team leader for the association. ☞

## in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders, friends



## Ed Bowman

### Montgomery's Eastmont Baptist minister dies

**E**d Bowman, who served as the minister of education and senior adults at Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery, died Oct. 17. He was 70.

Bowman earned a bachelor of music degree from Samford University in Birmingham and a master of religious education degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

He served in ministerial roles at Cloverdale Baptist Church, Montgomery; East Memorial Baptist Church, Prattville; and a church in Defuniak Springs, Fla.

Bowman served Eastmont Baptist for 22 years.

He also served on the Retirement Centers Committee for the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

He was preceded in death by one daughter and is survived by his wife, Linda, three children and eight grandchildren. (Neisha Fuson)

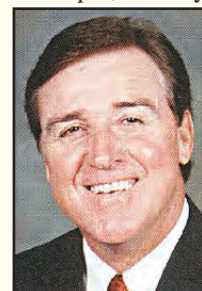


**BOWMAN**

## J.L. Bailey

### Jasper's Eastside pastor Bailey dies at 62

**J.**L. Bailey, who served as pastor of Eastside Baptist Church, Jasper, for 25 years, died Oct. 13. He was 62.



**BAILEY**

Bailey, a native of Jasper, became a Christian at age 22 and attended Farmstead Baptist Church, Jasper, before being ordained.

He graduated from Walker State Technical College in Jasper (now Beville State Community College) and attended New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's extension campus in Birmingham.

Bailey served as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Dora, before moving his ministry to Eastside Baptist.

He is survived by his wife, Linda, four children and seven grandchildren. (Neisha Fuson)

Follow us on Twitter @AlabamaBaptist

**Christmas Village**  
An Alabama Tradition  
arts, crafts, & gifts show

**OVER 700 BOOTHS!**

**November 7-10, 2013**  
Public Shopping

Birmingham Jefferson Convention Complex  
**(205) 836-7173**

Call for Ticket Info or visit [www.christmasvillagefestival.com](http://www.christmasvillagefestival.com)

# The Cooperative Program

## in action in Alabama



### Retirement centers provide home where senior adults 'retain independence, purpose for life'

By Grace Thornton  
The Alabama Baptist

**A**va Kee didn't have many options. In fact, she really only had one. She slept in her car. Kee was in an abusive marriage and moved to a Christian women's shelter. But after a while, the shelter changed to a drug rehab center.

She wasn't on drugs, so she had to move out. Her car became her home.

Then someone told her about Knollwood Retirement Center in Roanoke.

"If it weren't for the love and compassion shown to me at Knollwood, I don't know where I'd be today," Kee said. "I felt worthless and believed God had abandoned me. But God heard my prayers and brought me to Knollwood, where I'm surrounded with loving kindness."

She's there by the grace of God, she said.

"And He didn't just give me a place to live — He gave me a home," Kee said. "I know that the gifts of many people help make my home possible."

#### 'Safe and affordable'

Knollwood is one of four centers in three locations run by Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers (ABRC) that offer housing to residents 62 and up with rent based on their ability to pay.

"We provide a safe and affordable home

in a loving Christian environment for many who need a place to live out their latter years without the stress and hardship of keeping up their home," said Charlotte Crane, ABRC director of financial services, noting that about half of ABRC's annual budget is funded through the Cooperative Program.

In addition to Knollwood, ABRC also offers senior adult housing at Eastview Retirement Center in Montgomery and Baptist Village Townhouses and Hutto Tower in Dothan.

ABRC also recently acquired property in Fairhope and plans to build more townhouses there, Crane said.

On campus, the centers exist "to assist senior adults in retaining their independence, security, health, dignity and purpose for life under God," she said.

Off campus, ABRC ministers to the elderly in other ways. They educate churches and associations on the

needs of the elderly around them and help churches establish and build up ministries to retirement homes in their area.

And missions teams often visit the four centers to do Vacation Bible School (VBS) for the residents, as well as hold other programs. In June, for instance, a youth group from Columbia Baptist Association visited Hutto Tower to do a VBS with Bible study, singing and crafts.

"They also performed light duties that the residents may have needed to have done, such as hand out the lunches and



KEE



Photo courtesy of ABRC

James Kimbrough (standing) and a group from FBC Troy put on a barbecue lunch and a service for residents of Knollwood Retirement Center.

take out their trash," said Marie Cook, manager of Hutto Tower. "We also had our Resident Appreciation Day, in which they (the youth) were very instrumental in it being a great success."

Hutto Tower is where Joyce Bigham lives.

#### Out of her leaky trailer

Bigham's former home was a leaky trailer.

"On her limited income, she didn't have the money to make needed repairs and was literally getting rained on in her home," Crane said.

Someone referred Bigham to Hutto Tower, and she was amazed that she could live somewhere with all her utilities furnished at a price based on her income.

"With tears in her eyes, she said she praises the Lord daily for Hutto Tower and the kind and loving people who work there," Crane said.

And Bigham's story, Crane said, is just one of many.

"Thank you, Alabama Baptists, for your generous gifts through the Cooperative



Photo courtesy of ABRC

Joyce Bigham (right) says she praises the Lord daily for her home at Hutto Tower, managed by Marie Cook (left).

Program. Without you, none of this would be possible," she said. "We are eternally grateful."

For more information, visit [www.albrc.org](http://www.albrc.org).



Photo courtesy of ABRC

A group from Trinity Baptist Church, Roanoke, does Vacation Bible School activities with residents at Knollwood Retirement Center. Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers often play host to groups such as Trinity Baptist.

**"I felt worthless and believed God had abandoned me. But God heard my prayers and brought me to Knollwood, where I'm surrounded with loving kindness."**

**Ava Kee**  
Knollwood Retirement Center resident

# 'Plant & revitalize churches'

## Lindsay Lane helps dwindling church find new life

By Anna Keller  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**D**usty McLemore, pastor of Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Athens, has felt called to lead a church plant for a while now. As of Nov. 3, he'll have reached his goal.

Earlier this year, McLemore received a call from the director of missions in a neighboring association and was told about a church called Christ Way in Madison that was in need of revitalization. Though once vibrant, the church had dwindled down to just a handful of members — fewer than 10. Given McLemore's passion for church plants — combined with an emphasis by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, Southern Baptist Convention Association of Directors of Missions and North American Mission Board (NAMB) on combating the strikingly large number of plateaued Southern Baptist churches in North America — the timing seemed ideal.

### 'Our goal ... too'

"I believe the day of the megachurch has ended," McLemore said. "The theme and philosophy of NAMB is to plant and revitalize churches, and that's what our goal is too."

After meeting with the church's remaining members, McLemore decided the best approach would be to transform Christ Way Church into a second Lindsay Lane Baptist campus — dubbed Lindsay Lane East, 14 miles away from Lindsay Lane — and he asked the Christ Way members if they'd stay and become charter members.

"So we purchased the church, and the first Sunday I went and preached and all the Christ Way members joined Lindsay Lane East," McLemore said. "There's just been a great spirit of unity from the start."

Andy John King, currently the youth pastor for Lindsay Lane, will become the campus minister for Lindsay Lane East. He'll continue to split his time between the two campuses for the coming months, but the plan is to eventually keep him at Lindsay Lane East on a full-time basis.

King shares McLemore's dream and is confident God is leading their church in this direction. With the new church launching Nov. 3, King and McLemore — accompanied by a core team from Lindsay Lane — have been busy in recent months getting things in order.

"With the members from Christ Way, we've been teaching them about our church's purpose, strategy, core values," King said. "We've been expressing that our vision includes them and that we want to put them to work in this church to help it grow."

Brittany Von Kanel and her husband, Brent, are members of Lindsay Lane and are part of the Lindsay Lane East church plant. For the Von Kanel, this outreach opportunity came at the perfect time, as they'd been talking about how they could devote some time to be a part of something new.

"We've really wanted to get outside of the church building and get out and reach people who are lost," Von Kanel said. "Interestingly Lindsay Lane East is in the community we used to live in. We thought it was neat how God took

us away from there, but now He's putting us back in a sense."

Von Kanel, who has an elementary education degree, will head up Lindsay Lane East's children's ministry and is looking forward to spreading the word about the church in the Madison area to see who will become a part of their congregation.



MCLEMORE

"I know if the Lord has called us to this then He's already gone before us and is preparing the way," she said.

Lindsay Lane East's sanctuary holds about 200 people, and McLemore is anticipating about 100 will attend at first. He and his team have been reaching out to neighbor-

hoods near the new church to let them know about their upcoming presence and invite them to check out Lindsay Lane East once it's launched. He's confident the church will grow and is excited by the opportunity to expand the kingdom of heaven.

"Madison's such a growing area. I really believe it's going to take off," McLemore said. "We're excited about it and hope the community responds to this new church." ❧



## Do Low Taxes Produce Efficient Government?

By Jim Williams  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

**A** recent Census Bureau report shows that Alabama remains the lowest-taxing state in the U.S. Tax collections in 2011 — both state and local — amounted to \$2,904 per Alabamian, about 2.2 percent lower than the tax revenue in second-place South Carolina. But do we get our money's worth for that investment?

Low tax collections don't mean everyone's taxes are low in Alabama. Property taxes, for example, are skewed so that utilities and businesses pay at a higher rate than farmers and homeowners, and low-income families pay higher state income taxes than they would in any other state.

The key impact from having the lowest tax collections per capita is that Alabama's state, city and county governments and its public schools have less money to work with than their counterparts in every other state. For instance, Alabama's public agencies in 2011 would have had another \$324 million of tax revenues to invest in public services had our tax collections matched South Carolina's on a per-capita basis. The other 48 states were farther ahead of us than that.

Alabamians expect results from their tax dollars, just as South Carolinians do. We want schools that produce graduates prepared for college and careers. We want smooth roads. We want effective police and fire protection. Since we provide fewer tax

dollars, our governmental agencies can deliver good results only by being more efficient than others.

Unfortunately we do little to encourage efficiency. Alabama relies more than any other state on the earmarking of tax revenue. Under our law, 88 percent of the state's tax revenue is doled out each year by predetermined formulas.

This creates no incentive to manage money well. Instead earmarking creates monopolies by guaranteeing money to favored agencies year after year, whether they spend it wisely or not.

### 'Smart budgeting'

Efficient public services are produced by agencies that have goals and measure performance against them. Alabama has a model Budget Management Act that requires these things, but the governor and Legislature don't follow it. An attempt to create such a "smart budgeting" process was abandoned recently after less than a decade of experience.

Alabamians will get a good return on the taxes we pay only when our elected officials see that smart budgeting is the necessary connection between low taxes and efficient government.

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

— Alabama Baptist State Convention Annual Meeting Preview —

## Meetings related to State Convention annual meeting

### SUNDAY, NOV. 10

► **Church Planters Dinner:** Nov. 10, at Jackson Way Baptist Church, Huntsville, with separate tracks for planters and wives after a dinner together. Marybeth Culbreth, wife of Dennis, who serves as pastor of First Baptist Church, Jasper, will speak to the wives. Lamar Duke, Alabama Baptist church planting strategist, and Kevin Marsico, North American Mission Board regional mobilizer, will speak to the men. Child care will be provided. To register, visit [www.alsbom.org/upcoming-events/church-planter-dinner/church-planter-dinner-registration](http://www.alsbom.org/upcoming-events/church-planter-dinner/church-planter-dinner-registration).

### MONDAY, NOV. 11

► **Alabama Network of Christian Community Ministers:** Nov. 11, registration will

begin at 8:30 a.m. with the program starting at 9 a.m. Mike Pearce of First Baptist Church, Huntsville, will speak at 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow. For more information, call Lisa Rose at 334-271-6794.

► **Education/Music Association (EMA):** Nov. 11, at First, Huntsville, with registration at 3 p.m. Session one will begin at 3:30 p.m. with Michael Gentry and Billy Orton. Session two will begin at 4:45 p.m. with Micah Fries. The banquet, business session and awards presentation will be at 6 p.m. with Frank Jones as guest musician. Alabama Singing Men and Alabama Singing Women will rehearse at 7:30 p.m. Registration form and banquet reservations are required. For more information, contact Larry Morrison at 256-245-6301 or email [lmorrison@fbcs.tv](mailto:lmorrison@fbcs.tv).

### TUESDAY, NOV. 12

► **Missions Fellowship:** Nov. 12, Missions Fellowship meal will be held in the Whitesburg Baptist Church south campus main dining room at 5 p.m. Registration is required with an Oct. 25 deadline. To register, visit [www.alsbom.org/upcoming-events/missions-fellowship-meal](http://www.alsbom.org/upcoming-events/missions-fellowship-meal).

► **University of Mobile (UMobile) Luncheon:** Nov. 12, UMobile board of regents and wives will meet at noon in Whitesburg Baptist Church's Family Life Center.

► **New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Alumni Reunion:** Nov. 12, Hillwood Baptist Church, Huntsville, will host a luncheon at noon. Deadline for registration is Nov. 4. To order tickets, call 205-489-5137 or email [wbadom@centurytel.net](mailto:wbadom@centurytel.net). ❧

## Highlands allows viewers to participate informally

People who attend Alabama's Church of the Highlands have the choice of 10 campuses. And one of them is fully online. The online campus, led by Pastor David Russell, is often the "front door" of the church, he said.

"Many guests want to gauge the spirit and vision of the church and not be relegated to marketing copy or a canned video that falls short of the full experience," Russell wrote in an article for *Leadership Journal*. He hopes viewing online will be the first step to draw them to Christ and church.

Viewers live stream the services, participate in an interactive chat, have a prayer team available for them and can give online, if they choose.

And when it comes time for

communion, that's an option for them too.

As the people in the brick-and-mortar church prepare for communion, Pastor Chris Hodges will often address online viewers and tell them to grab some crackers and juice if they have it available and would like to participate.

It's treated informally, but it's open to online viewers.

### Share your views

Other denominations are beginning to debate online communion (see story, page 1). To read a variety of perspectives from Alabama Baptists and others — and to comment on the subject — visit [www.thealabamabaptist.org](http://www.thealabamabaptist.org) and type in "online communion" with quotes in the search bar. (TAB)

# 'Real' community?

## Churches debate pros, cons of online communion

(continued from page 1)

Birmingham Baptist Association, had similar concerns.

"I would be very careful of offering communion online. This is an ordinance of the church and should be taken with the body of Christ in the assembly of the body," he said. "We do not need to allow this sacred meal to become commonplace."

Ryan E. Carter, of Fort Payne, disagrees.

"The virtual body — the virtual blood. I don't get it," he said. "You don't need a church to have communion. Churches often attempt to replace our own personal relationship with Christ. We no longer need the priest to intercede."

Laura D. Brown, of Southside, added, "The sincerity of our communion is what matters whether privately or publicly. I think online communion is OK because it is one more way to educate, share and practice our faith and observances."

Rick Sharp, of Hartselle, said, "Communion, as practiced in most churches, is a solo and personal act that just happens to be performed alongside others, unlike the original Lord's Supper. In that light, online communion makes more sense than I first thought."

Ken Kalinich, pastor of Big Hurricane Baptist Church, Brookwood, said, "Who am I to say that this is wrong? I suppose the real question is, 'Are people being instructed on the meaning, importance and proper way to participate in observing communion?' If this draws people closer to the Lord, then I say, 'Hallelujah!'"

And while Judy Taylor, of Morris, said she also sees benefits of online communion for the homebound and military, she believes it should be used with discretion.

Maggie Trivett, assistant administrator at Liberty Baptist Church, Deatsville, agreed.

"I think it might work well for people who are bedridden, homebound or in a nursing facility if they know Jesus as their Savior and would be in their church if possible," she said. "If they have someone willing to prepare the communion items for them, it might mean a great deal to them."

But "for those who do not attend church and may not fully understand the meaning of communion I would have concerns," Trivett said.

## Some accidental humor ...

In less than 18 hours leading up to this issue's press time, more than 250 people responded to a question about whether online communion is a good idea or not.

Excerpts from those responses are online at [www.thealabamabaptist.org](http://www.thealabamabaptist.org).

Among the responses came a light-hearted, true story about a communion experience in an Alabama Baptist church ...

*"Once as the Lord's Supper was being prepared, there wasn't enough grape juice on hand.*

*One of our Lord's Supper committee members ran to the local grocery store to get more juice when they realized they didn't have enough. After filling most of one tray they discovered he'd purchased prune juice by mistake! Talk about a Lord's Supper service that'll 'set you free.'"*

Jim Simpson, of Homewood, pointed out that communion is a corporate activity and that one of the essential parts of communion is being served by another.

"A key part is the servant," he said. "You can't make an electronic servant."

Many churches have launched online options for church activities, including worship, seminary, ordination counseling and financial giving. Despite the growing availability of church resources online, participating in communion has mostly remained a part of the physical act of worship in a congregation.

### Going too far?

Some worry that online communication is becoming an alternate form of community for Christians. It is difficult to tell how many churches are offering online worship or online communion as part of their regular services.


A LifeWay Research survey of a thousand Protestant churches found that while 78 percent have a website, less than half of them use

their sites for interactive purposes, such as obtaining and distributing prayer requests (43 percent), registering people for events (39 percent) and automating other church processes (30 percent).

Scott Thumma, a sociologist of religion at Hartford Seminary, said none of the 80-some churches that he has studied that offer online services also offer virtual communion.

"In many ways this is a parallel discussion to the earlier debate about whether online community is 'real' community," Thumma said.

LifeChurch.tv, one of the most innovative online churches in the country, included a blog post in 2010 illustrating how to prepare for online communion by having elements, such as bread or a cracker and wine or Kool-Aid, on hand. A spokeswoman said the church currently does online communion at periodic gatherings for online volunteers rather than as a weekly practice. (RNS, Jennifer Davis Rash contributed)



**PREACH the Word**

**2013 ALABAMA BAPTIST PASTORS CONFERENCE**  
Monday, Nov. 11 • 8:30 a.m.–8:50 p.m.  
Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville

### CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



**Tim Anderson**  
pastor, Clements Baptist Church, Athens



**Michael Catt**  
pastor, Sherwood Baptist Church, Albany, Ga



**Mark Foley**  
president, University of Mobile



**Dusty McLemore**  
pastor, Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Athens



**Paige Patterson**  
president, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary



**Bob Pitman**  
evangelist, Bob Pitman Ministries



**Jerry Vines**  
evangelist, Jerry Vines Ministries



**Daniel Wilson**  
pastor, West End Baptist Church, Clanton

For details, call 205-870-4720, ext 107.

To read more comments from readers on online communion **click here**

# Houston County 'bingo' gambling machines ruled illegal

After more than a year of court proceedings, gambling devices seized from Houston County's Center Stage have been deemed illegal.

They will be destroyed, and the money seized in the raid will be forfeited to the state's General Fund.

"The decision from Judge Conaway in Houston County Circuit Court marks a good day for the rule of law," said Attorney General Luther Strange.

"In a detailed analysis, the court held that machines masquerading as electronic bingo are in fact illegal slot machines," he said. "Bingo operators have tried to create confusion in the law but this ruling ends the nonsense.

"Only the traditional paper version of the game commonly known as bingo is authorized by the Houston County bingo amendment, and

slot machines cannot be used to play bingo," Strange noted.

Houston County Presiding Circuit Judge Michael Conaway issued the final ruling Oct. 17.

It was the culmination of a joint law enforcement effort by the Alabama Department of Public Safety, Houston County Sheriff Andy Hughes, District Attorney Doug Valeska and Strange.

Law enforcement officers seized 691 illegal slot machines and gambling devices and \$288,668.62 in cash proceeds from the Center Stage casino in Houston County in July 2012.

The ruling came after prosecutors from Strange's office presented evidence in a three-day trial in Houston County.

In the ruling, the Court found the game being played did not meet the six mandatory characteristics of bingo set forth by the Alabama

Supreme Court in the 2010 Cornerstone case.

This case requires that the human elements of the traditional game of bingo must be fully preserved in order for a game to potentially qualify as legal bingo.

Strange noted that "the fundamental legal principles which underlie today's ruling apply not only to Houston County but in all counties subject to local bingo amendments. Since taking office, I have said that I will resolve the debate over electronic bingo in the courts.

"Today another court has spoken and I hope this opinion will serve as a warning for those currently engaged in illegal gambling activities or contemplating operating slot machines in Houston County and throughout the state," he said.

"Until the Alabama Legislature acts to create an effective deterrent for large scale illegal gambling, individuals will continue to engage in illegal gambling activity and openly defy the law," Strange added.

"These individuals stand to make

thousands of dollars in illegal gambling profits while risking only a slap-on-the-wrist misdemeanor charge," he said. "Law enforcement will continue to be forced to expend valuable resources to deal with this problem."

In related news, Etowah County District Attorney Jimmie Harp dismissed the charges of possession of a gambling device against Michelle Garbe in early July.

Garbe was charged with promoting gambling and with possession of a machine at Center Stage in Rainbow City, according to al.com.

In Macon County all qualified judges have recused themselves from hearing a case regarding the seizure of gambling machines from VictoryLand in February, al.com also reported.

And Greene County Circuit Judge Eddie Hardaway Jr. stepped aside from a Greenetrack case at the request of the attorney general.

According to al.com, state court officials will find replacement judges for the cases. (TAB, AGO)



STRANGE

## Samford makes 'best value' list

Samford University in Birmingham was recognized as a "best value" university Oct. 17.

The school ranked 64th on the top 100 list of best private universities as judged by *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* magazine.

*Kiplinger's* rates universities by cost and financial aid, student indebtedness, competitiveness, graduate rates and academic support.

Samford's total cost for full-time undergraduate students in the 2013-2014 academic year was among the lowest on the list at \$36,700. (SU)



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

## Edmonds named honorary directors

Hugh and Margaret Ann Edmonds, members of Bethel Baptist Church, Brent, were named honorary directors of *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper Oct. 4. They are the first recipients of this honor.

Hugh Edmonds previously served on the board of trustees of the paper for a total of 16 years — eight years under former editor Hudson Baggett and eight years under current editor Bob Terry. (TAB)

## MARKET PLACE

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

### CHURCH POSITIONS

**SENIOR PASTOR:** Piedmont FBC is currently seeking a full-time senior pastor. Send resumés to: Kip McFry, 605 Piedmont Avenue, Piedmont, AL 36272, or email to: fbcpastorsearchteam@gmail.com.

**PASTOR:** North Gardendale Baptist Church, Gardendale, Ala., is seeking a bivocational or full-time pastor. Send resumé to: dl1308@bellsouth.net, or P.O. Box 1308, Gardendale, AL 35071, ATTN: Pastor Search.

**PASTOR:** Axis First Baptist Church is seeking a God-led, spirit-filled individual for the position of pastor. Send resumés to: P.O. Box 98, Axis, AL 36505.

**BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR:** Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Monroeville, Ala., is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please send resumés to: Pastor Search Committee, 1801 Sawyer Drive, Monroeville AL 36460.

**MINISTER OF MUSIC:** Parkway Baptist Church in Goodlettsville, Tenn., a suburb of Nashville, is seeking a full-time minister of music. Resumés

may be sent to: ken@parkwaybc.net.

**WORSHIP LEADER:** Grace Baptist in Montevallo is seeking God's direction for a worship leader to lead our congregation in praise and worship. Please email resumés to: gracebaptistmontevallo@gmail.com or call 205-602-3847.

**STUDENT PASTOR:** FBC Pelham is currently seeking a full-time student pastor. Seminary degree preferred. Qualified candidates should send resumé to: ddixon@fbcpelham.org.

**STUDENT MINISTER:** Bellview Baptist Church is looking for a part-time student minister. Applicant needs to feel called by God to ministry and committed to the local church. Applicant needs to be enthusiastic, organized and self-motivated with a cooperative spirit and a team approach to ministry. Send resumé to: pastor@bellviewbc.org, or mail to: 6674 Eastern Valley Road, McCalla, AL 35111.

**PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER:** Gethsemane Baptist Church is seeking a part-time/bivocational youth minister. Resumés may be sent to: gethsemanebaptist@yahoo.com or Personnel

Committee, GBC, P.O. Box 9, Hayden, AL 35079 (no phone calls).

### BUSINESS

**MOVING? LOCAL, STATEWIDE OR LONG DISTANCE:** Coleman American/Allied Van Lines. Special rate and programs for Alabama Baptist ministers, staff and church members. Contact Gary Washington at 205-540-7470 or gary.washington@covan.com.

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

**TIME TO REPLACE THAT OLD CHURCH SIGN?:** Reliable Sign Services, a Christian-operated, full-service sign company for two decades, is ready to assist you as you expand your church sign ministry. From electronic message boards to traditional signs, Reliable will fabricate and install statewide or ship anywhere. www.reliablesigns.com. 1-800-729-6844, 205-664-0955.

**CHRISTIAN VALUES BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY:** Christian Values Green Technology Company seeks mature

business professionals for high-income opportunity. Home-based office. Hands-on support and apprenticeship-style training. For complete information, call Paul at 888-710-6994.

### CHURCH CONSTRUCTION

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

### TRAVEL/VACATION

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

### MISCELLANEOUS

**JUDGEMENT DAY:** Evangelistic drama, Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove, AL 35127. Oct. 26, 6-10 p.m. Oct. 27-31, 6-9 p.m. Reservations: 205-744-8521 or cottagehillbaptist.org.

## Want to know God?

Pastor Bill Pritchett  
Southside Baptist Church, Andalusia

So the Lord God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9) and so began Adam's day. Except something had changed. The normal fellowship with God enjoyed by Adam and Eve had been interrupted. Rather than looking forward to being with God they hid themselves in fear. They had lost their childlike innocence and trust with God. They had sinned by disobeying God. Paul writes, "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Man alienated himself from God (Gen. 3:23-24). I still remember the day I felt exposed before God, the day my sin became real to me.

Even before that day began, God had plans to take care of His prize creation. God loves the world and Peter says God does not want "any to perish but all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9), or in other words God longs to restore the fellowship with man that was broken when man sinned. God's plan to restore our fellowship is both unspeakable and unimaginable. God would give "His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). So God's Son went to Calvary's Cross to die and make possible the forgiveness of our sin. I still remember the day that I heard the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ; the story of how He died so that I might be reconciled to God.

The message of God's love and Christ's voluntary sacrifice is so powerful. Like Paul writes, "it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16). It speaks straight to the heart of man and offers him eternal life. God still speaks today through the message of the gospel, offering eternal life, restored fellowship with Him and a new purpose and plan for your life. This day may have begun with you hiding from God. But God has called out to you today, speaking to your greatest need, that of responding to His love and offer of salvation. Why not turn to Him, invite Him into your life and commit your life into His hands today? 🙏

# Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

## New NAMB funding model moves funds from Alabama

TORONTO — A new funding model between the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and South Region state conventions — which includes Alabama — was announced during NAMB's Oct. 9 board meeting in Toronto. The traditional cooperative budget agreement between NAMB and each South Region convention is transitioning to a grant system that is simpler, leaves more spending decisions to the states and will no longer include personnel, said NAMB President Kevin Ezell.

Bobby DuBois, associate executive director for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), said the new agreement eliminates the Cooperative Agreement (CA) that has been operated under for decades. "Under the CA, NAMB and individual state conventions agreed in advance what state and NAMB priorities would be jointly funded. NAMB no longer has CAs with individual states," he said.

Previously NAMB and the Alabama Baptist State Convention — which is currently the top state convention in dollars given through the Cooperative Program — would share costs on ministries jointly agreed upon with a percentage formula.

But "the new agreement provides a flat funding amount for Deep South states beginning in 2015," DuBois said. "The SBOM will receive fewer dollars than in the past but we will work hard to see that our missions and ministry priorities in Alabama do not go unfunded. Alabama will continue to seek ways to partner with Southern Baptist Convention entities where we can. Church planting and church revitalization are important ministries for Alabama, and we will work with NAMB in funding these ministries."

Ezell said NAMB will be able to double church planting funds in 2015 in states such as Illinois, Indiana and Ohio with savings from the transition. The shift of funds from South to non-South regions also will allow NAMB to invest \$1 million over four years for new churches in the Interstate 29 corridor stretching from the Dakotas to Kansas City. The funding shift also will provide an additional 15 church planting catalysts (CPCs) throughout North America.

Ezell also announced plans for three new national CPCs: for deaf churches to focus on starting 100 new churches for the deaf, for churches located near military bases and for missional communities to focus on forming cell groups or missional communities in Send North America cities.

## GuideStone to help Colorado flood victims, churches

DALLAS — GuideStone Financial Resources will provide assistance to churches and participants who have faced recent loss in Colorado because of severe storms and flooding.

GuideStone has put in place a plan to assist the individual participants, churches and ministry organizations it serves located in Boulder, Adams, Larimer, Weld, Clear Creek, El Paso, Jefferson, Arapahoe and Logan counties, all of which were declared a FEMA Designated Individual Assistance Area.

For GuideStone participants who qualify, assistance will include continuation of the retirement plan protection benefits and waiver of the requirement that retirement contributions must be made in continuous months. Assistance will be available for life and health plan participants who are unable to make their monthly payments for coverage. Insurance Premium Assistance also will be provided to participants who meet certain criteria.

For more information, call 1-888-984-8433.

## Evangelicals 'worse than' Catholics on handling abuse

AUSTIN, Texas — A Liberty University law professor and grandson of Billy Graham said he thinks evangelicals "are worse" than Catholics when it comes to responding to sexual abuse by clergy. "Protestants can be very arrogant when pointing to Catholics," said Boz Tchividjian, executive director of Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment (GRACE). "The Protestant culture is defined by independence."

Evangelicals often frown upon transparency and accountability, he said, as many Protestants rely on Scripture more than religious leaders, compared to Catholics. Abusers discourage whistle-blowing by condemning gossip to try to keep people from reporting abuse, he said. Victims are also told to protect the reputation of Jesus. He said too many Protestants have sacrificed souls in order to protect their institutions. "We've got the Gospels backwards." ❧

# Rebuilding lives

## Baptists respond after earthquake, cyclone in Asia

Baptists are responding after a deadly earthquake shook the Philippines and a cyclone swept through two states in India.

On Oct. 15, a 7.2-magnitude earthquake rocked islands in the center of the Philippines, killing at least 144 people, according to BBC News.

The majority of the damage exists in the islands of Cebu and Bohol. All International Mission Board personnel are accounted for and safe.

Though many escaped tragedy in the island of Cebu, many islanders in Bohol were not as fortunate. Many roads and bridges in the area are also heavily damaged.

Pat Melancon, Baptist Global Response's (BGR) managing director of disaster response, reports that BGR teams are currently on the ground responding to the event through assessment activities and assistance.

"The teams' activities will focus upon meeting urgent needs in the context of each community for

a few days or weeks to many months, depending upon the local situation," Melancon said.

In India, tropical cyclone Phailin touched down Oct. 12 in India's Orissa state, and the storm continued through to Andhra Pradesh state the following day. Of the 27 people who died, all but one were in Orissa state.

Phailin reportedly was the country's strongest cyclone in 14 years.

Orissa state is no stranger to deadly cyclones; in 1999, a cyclone claimed the lives of 10,000 people.

Though the cyclone has passed, hundreds of thousands of families are returning to houses crushed by the cyclone's 125 miles per hour winds. Many have lost their means of providing for their families because of destroyed businesses and farms. Roads are flooded and blocked with debris. Power lines are down in many areas.

The Baptist World Alliance has sent \$10,000 for emergency relief to cyclone victims. (IMB, BWA)



## Someone You Should Know

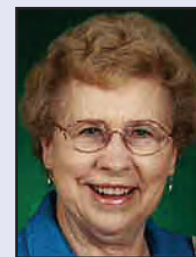
### PATTIE (PAT) BOHANNON

By Leigh Pritchett  
Correspondent, TAB

Five Points Baptist Church, Northport  
Tuscaloosa Baptist Association

**FAVORITE VERSES:** Proverbs 3:5-6  
**FAVORITE HYMN:** "Without Him"  
**HOBBIES:** Reading; taking classes through colleges, universities and Baptist association; preserving family history by writing stories for

younger generations to read  
**FAMILY STATUS:** Widowed; two children, Valerie Flores and Stephen Fleming; two step-children; four grandchildren; six step-grandchildren



BOHANNON

Pattie Bohannon, 82, was by the side of her first husband, Bin Fleming, as he served as pastor of churches in Alabama and other states. Later they served in Guam through the International Mission Board. After her husband died she continued her work through missions trips to China, Australia, Brazil, Alaska and Europe. Bohannon later married a Methodist minister, Ken Bohannon. Now a widow once more, Bohannon continues to teach Sunday School at St. Mark United Methodist Church, Northport, while representing Five Points Baptist by teaching Sunday School at an assisted living facility in Northport. She serves on the executive boards of Tuscaloosa Association and Good Samaritan Clinic.

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

A: My home and my local church. Nell Hubbard (now deceased) was my Sunday School

and Sunbeam teacher. She was a big influence in my early years.

**Q: When and how were you led into ministry work?**

A: I was a Sunbeam as a very young child. Even then, I thought about becoming a missionary. I made that decision public as an early teen. It was prevalent in my thoughts throughout my life.

**Q: What does this ministry work demand?**

A: Commitment to the Lord and commitment to what I've said I would do; study of His Word; time; right attitude.

**Q: What do you get from ministry work?**

A: I get inspiration from those whom I teach and visit. I get satisfaction knowing I may have brought a little bit of light into their lives and that I know I'm doing what God is leading me to do.

**Q: How do family members support you?**

A: Having been a pastor's wife for 37 years, I didn't do things be-

cause they were expected of me. I did what I felt led to do. My family has always supported the decisions I made about ministry.

**Q: How do you see yourself involved in this in the future?**

A: As long as I'm physically able to study and to teach, to go and to visit, I will continue.

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

A: I plan to do this as long as I am physically and mentally able. That will affect what I do. When I'm not able to do that, I'll do what I can do.

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

A: I can hardly realize what life was before. I came to Christ as my Savior as a young girl. I just came to the point of knowing that I wasn't good in God's sight. Even though I don't see Him, I feel Him and know that His Spirit is within me. As I get older, I realize that in a greater way.

What would you do ...

# If you were losing your hearing?

Dear Alabama Residents,

Hearing loss can develop so slowly, you might not even realize it's happening. If you are concerned about losing your hearing, the solution is as simple as 1, 2, 3 ...

## 1 Recognize the warning signs

The first step is recognizing that you have a hearing loss. Take the hearing loss self-test at the right. If you answer **YES to two or more questions**, you may have hearing loss, and it's time to move on to step 2.

## 2 Get your hearing checked by a Beltone Hearing Care Professional

If you are showing signs of hearing loss, the next step is to get your hearing checked. For a **limited time**, Beltone is offering a **FREE Hearing Screening**. Call today to schedule your appointment, then fill out the card at the right.

## 3 Do something about it!

If it is determined that you could benefit from hearing help, we will explain your options and help you choose the best solution for your lifestyle. Use **this \$1000 gift card** at the right towards Beltone's most advanced technology.<sup>2</sup>

There is no reason to live with the frustration and embarrassment of hearing loss.

Call today. Free Hearing Screening offer and Gift Card expire **October 31, 2013**.



**STEP 1**

### Hearing Loss Self-Test<sup>1</sup>

- Do you have trouble following the conversation when two or more people are talking at the same time?
- Do people complain that you turn the TV or radio volume up too high?
- Do you have to strain to understand conversation?
- Do you have trouble hearing in noisy places like restaurants?
- Do you find yourself asking people to repeat themselves?
- Do many people you talk to seem to mumble or not speak clearly?
- Do you misunderstand what others are saying and respond in a way that may embarrass you?
- Do you have trouble understanding the speech of women and children?
- Do people get annoyed because you misunderstand what they say?

**If you checked 2 or more boxes, you may have hearing loss.**

**STEP 2**

### Appointment Card

Call your nearest Beltone location.

Call today to schedule your **FREE** hearing test appointment. Cut out and use this card as a reminder of your appointment time.

Appt. date: \_\_\_\_\_ Appt time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Call by October 31, 2013.**

**STEP 3**

## \$1000 Beltone gift card

## CALL YOUR NEAREST BELTONE LOCATION

<b>Athens:</b> 256-867-4200	<b>Fairhope:</b> 251-272-8997	<b>Huntsville:</b> 256-722-5299	<b>Montgomery:</b> 334-239-7877	<b>Thomasville:</b> 334-636-0000
<b>Bay Minette:</b> 251-295-9324	<b>Florence:</b> 256-275-4226	<b>Jackson:</b> 251-247-0071	<b>Opelika:</b> 334-749-1686	<b>Trussville:</b> 205-383-2945
<b>Bessemer:</b> 205-277-6242	<b>Foley:</b> 888-625-1316	<b>Jasper:</b> 205-282-4527	<b>Pelham:</b> 205-216-4025	<b>Tuscaloosa:</b> 205-409-4683
<b>Cullman:</b> 256-841-4514	<b>Gardendale:</b> 205-683-6100	<b>Mobile (Airport Blvd.):</b> 251-342-7000	<b>Saraland:</b> 251-679-0034	<b>Vestavia:</b> 205-267-5032
<b>Decatur:</b> 256-286-0817	<b>Grove Hill:</b> 251-275-4901	<b>Mobile (Sage Ave.):</b> 251-479-9409	<b>Scottsboro:</b> 256-218-3186	<b>Winfield:</b> 205-487-4300
<b>Dothan:</b> 334-712-6778				

<sup>1</sup> Hearing Loss Self-Test adapted from the U.S. National Institute on Deafness and Other Communicative Disorders, National Institutes of Health. Ten Ways to Recognize Hearing Loss. (2010). Available online: <http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing/10ways.asp>.

<sup>2</sup> Promotional value good toward the purchase of a pair of Beltone Promise 9 or 17 hearing instruments. Not valid on previous purchases. Promotional value off MSRP. Cash value 1/20¢. Void where prohibited by law. Single instrument purchase receives \$500 off. Beltone Hearing Care Centers are independently owned and operated. Benefits of hearing instruments vary by type and degree of hearing loss, noise environment, accuracy of hearing evaluation and proper fit. Participation may vary by location. See individual centers for details. Offer Expires 10/31/13. © 2013 Beltone.

## RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services

### State judges, legislators prepare to define legal 'marriage'

WASHINGTON — Judges and legislators are preparing to determine the definition of legal marriage in a variety of states.

Decisions will soon be made in New Jersey, New Mexico, Hawaii and Michigan. The fate of the latest efforts to expand gay "marriage" beyond 13 states and the District of Columbia will be determined in those states either in the next few weeks or next year.

Southern Baptist ethicist Russell D. Moore pointed to the responsibility of Christians to defend the biblical view of marriage amid cultural change and legal challenges.

Among the latest developments:

► The New Jersey Supreme Court agreed Oct. 11 to review a state judge's decision to legalize same-sex "marriage" in the state. The justices scheduled oral arguments in the appeal for Jan. 6-7.

► The New Mexico Supreme Court was set to hear oral arguments Oct. 23 on whether judicial decisions legalizing gay "marriage" in two counties should be extended throughout the state.

► Hawaii's attorney general issued a legal opinion Oct. 15 saying the Legislature has the authority to legalize same-sex "marriage" without the state constitution being amended.

► A federal judge in Michigan disappointed same-sex "marriage" advocates Oct. 16 by delaying a decision on the state's ban on such unions, saying he would rule after a trial scheduled to begin Feb. 25.

### Debate continues over Troy University's faith-based dorm

TROY — After being challenged for opening new faith-based housing in fall 2013, Troy University recently responded to the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) with a letter stating the Newman Center is "open to all Troy students."

Andrew L. Seidel, FFRF attorney, had challenged the constitutionality of Troy's new housing in August based on the idea that giving preferential treatment to students based on religion violates provisions of the Alabama Fair Housing Law. Initially university spokespersons had indicated that the dorm would give preference to Christian students but later rescinded that idea and removed that language from its website.

Brian D. Boyle, legal counsel retained by Troy in connection with the FFRF inquiry, wrote that "neither students seeking housing nor students seeking resident assistant positions are given preference based on their religious views or activities."

# Growing tension

## Long an oasis of Christian-Muslim calm, Kenya may see more strife

While the smoke that hung over the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi has dissipated, a quiet tension still lingers in the air throughout Kenya's capital.

The September attack by al-Shabab militants on a mall frequented by Westerners in the capital city left at least 67 dead. But the burning of a Christian church in the majority-Muslim city Mombasa just two weeks later suggests the nation is on the precipice of more conflict between Christians and Muslims.

This is dispiriting for many in a country that for years enjoyed relative peace between the two monotheistic religions that dominate the region.

"I am afraid that now Muslims will attack more and the Christians will arm themselves and fight back," said Paul Komu, a Christian who was driving near Westgate when the attacks occurred.

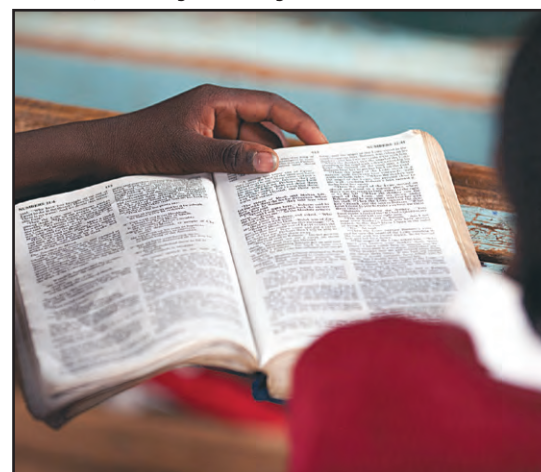
Kenya is predominantly Christian, with Muslims making up about 11 percent of its population, mostly along the Somali border, its coastal region, and in cities such as Mombasa.

### 'Turning the other cheek'

John L. Allen Jr., author of "The Global War on Christians," wrote that just as Africa is the pacesetter for Christian and Muslim growth, it has also become one of the primary fronts for Christian-Muslim conflict, though not always in Kenya. For years, Kenya has been a refuge for people fleeing strife in other parts of the continent.

But Christian missions agencies such as the Mission Network report incidents of persecution pouring over the Kenyan border with Somalia. Mombasa is a flashpoint for conflict and foreign militants and terror groups have wreaked havoc in the past — as was the case with the 1998 al-Qaida bombing of the U.S. embassy in Nairobi.

To a large extent, day-to-day relations between



IMB photo

Recent attacks in Kenya help believers see if they can put the words of Scripture into practice when things get tough, Nik Ripken said.

Muslims and Christians have been amicable. Now sentiments have shifted.

Nik Ripken, the world's leading expert on the persecuted church in Muslim contexts, said the attacks on the mall "help believers in Kenya decide whether they will indeed 'love their enemies,'" said Ripken, who has served 25 years with the International Mission Board. "This is no longer for Kenyan believers an abstract biblical command. How does one love their enemies when they blow up your malls and churches, leaving blood on the ground and calluses in your heart?"

He asked for prayer for believers in Kenya as they struggle with the reality of "turning the other cheek." Many young believers, Ripken said, are seeking "an eye for an eye" rather than seeking forgiveness.

"Pray for the Church in Kenya to be wise as serpents and gentle as doves," he said. (RNS, TAB)

Get your business  
in front of  
key leaders &  
decision makers  
of Alabama Baptist churches

Advertise at the

2013 ALABAMA BAPTIST  
PASTORS CONFERENCE

When: Monday, Nov. 11 • 8:30 a.m.–8:50 p.m.  
Where: Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville

Vendor display booths are still available.

For details, contact Bill Gilmore  
at [bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org)  
or 205-870-4720, ext. 107.

## Christmas in Eufaula Tour of Homes

December 7, 2013 • 1-6 p.m.



An enchanting tour of the South's finest homes draped in holiday cheer. Experience Christmas in 7 different homes. Enjoy a traditional Southern lunch and an elegant dinner at Shorter Mansion. Limited seating. Reservations required.

1-888-383-2852 • [www.eufaulapilgrimage.com](http://www.eufaulapilgrimage.com)

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 27

## Explore the Bible By Jay T. Robertson Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

### ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT JESUS? John 7:14-18, 25-31, 33-36

People in all walks of life have questions about Jesus. Who is Jesus? Is His teaching valid? Is Jesus really from God? How can we understand Jesus? And there is no shortage of answers to these questions. But to discover the correct answers, the person needs to look to the Bible.

#### Is Jesus' Teaching Valid? (14-18)

Jesus is in Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Booths, also called the Feast of Tabernacles. This feast was celebrated in September or October, two months prior to the Feast of Dedication. It is called the Feast of Booths because people lived in leafy shelters to remember God's faithfulness to Israel during the wilderness wanderings. It also was a time of thanksgiving for the harvest.

During the middle of the feast, Jesus goes up into the temple and begins teaching. Like the Galilean crowds that had been amazed at His teaching because He taught as one who had authority and not as their scribes (Matt. 7:28-29), the Jews in Jerusalem also are astonished at Jesus' teaching. After all, Jesus does not have any formal rabbinic training. So the Jews ask the question, "How is it that this man has learning when He has never studied?" The people are impressed that Jesus has such a mastery of Scripture and has never studied under a well-known rabbi.

Jesus declares: "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me." Jesus answers that His teaching and authority come from God, not from man. Jesus' teaching is not based on a long chain of human tradition. He declares that His teaching is valid because it is true. People who seek to do God's will know that His teaching is true.

#### Is Jesus Really from God? (25-31)

Is Jesus the Christ? Is He really God's anointed One? The people are confused about the origin of the Messiah. The prophet Micah had written the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2), but some rabbis were teaching that the Messiah would be

wholly unknown until He set out to procure salvation for Israel. As far as these people are concerned, they think they know where Jesus came from. He is from Nazareth, currently resides in Capernaum and is engaged in itinerant ministry.

Jesus teaches that Father God sent Him to accomplish His mission. Jesus is saying, whether you believe it or not, I really am the One the Father has sent. Jesus declares, "I know Him." Jesus has a relationship with Father God. He has come to serve the Father. He is not here of His own accord.

Jesus boldly declares that the religious leaders of Israel do not know God. They have no relationship with the Father. This is a warning to all who serve in ministry and teach the Bible. Examine your heart to make sure you are saved and submissive to the Word of God. Do you approach the Bible with a hermeneutic of submission or a hermeneutic of suspicion?

Verses 30-31, taken together, bear witness to the division that takes place whenever the revelation of God in Jesus Christ confronts human beings. Some of the people attempt to capture Jesus, but He escapes from them. How He escapes is unclear but the reason He escapes is because "His hour had not yet come." Many of the people, however, believe that Jesus is indeed the Messiah.

#### How Can We Understand Jesus' Teaching? (33-36)

John describes what Jesus is saying and doing at the same moment the temple guards are seeking an appropriate time to arrest Him. Hearing of the official warrant for His arrest, Jesus speaks of His imminent departure in words that are clear to any hearer. He has but a short time before the cross, the means by which He returns to the One who had sent Him. Once again Jesus' words are misunderstood. In order to understand Jesus' teaching, it is important to know the background and context of Jesus' teaching in light of all Scripture. Seek answers to your questions about Jesus in the Bible. ❏

## Bible Studies for Life By James Riley Strange Associate Professor of Religion, Samford University

### STAND DOWN Genesis 13:1-4, 6-18

#### Introduction: Genesis 11:27-12:20

Abram and Sarai are complex characters who show both faithfulness and failure. That is, they are like us. At his best, Abram models both humility and grace for today's people of God.

Today's passage occurs soon after we first learn of the Mesopotamians who answer God's call. Abram's brother, Haran, dies, and his son, Lot, becomes the charge of Terah, his grandfather. Lot travels with Terah, Abram and Sarai from Ur (about 160 miles northwest of the Persian Gulf in modern Iraq) to Haran (just north of the border between modern Turkey and Syria). One cannot hear of these places today without praying for their people.

When, after Terah's death, God issues His call to Abram and Sarai, Lot goes too. All three step out in faith that an Israelite God will lead this band of wandering Mesopotamians who abandon their country, kindred and father's house to travel to an unnamed land. Notice that they pass right through Canaan, not knowing it is the place that God is taking them. Due to Abram's lack of faith they suffer a misadventure in Egypt before returning to Canaan, which sets us up for today's story.

#### Verses 1-4

Lot disappeared from the story after verse 9 and returns to it now. The Negeb is the southern desert of Canaan, where one must dig wells and rely on oases to survive because it is very hot and dry in the summer months.

#### Verses 6-7

Perhaps this is why the group continues north until they reach Bethel and Ai, where Abram had built an altar on his way down to Egypt. These towns sat on neighboring hills north of Jerusalem, which has not yet entered the narrative. "Bethel" means "house of God" and "Ai" means "ruins." Because

Ai is in ruins in the author's day and the original name has been forgotten, we know that he is writing about events long after they happened (see 12:6 and 13:8).

#### Verses 6-7

In verse 2 we learned that Abram is wealthy in both livestock and precious metals. Now we learn that Lot also has much livestock. There are so many flocks, in fact, that the area cannot support both groups. The men's herders begin to dispute who has rights to local land and water sources.

#### Verses 8-13

Abram means what he says ("Let there be no strife between you and me") and tells Lot to choose whatever land he wishes. That is, Abram is willing to accept what might be second best in order to preserve his relationship with his nephew, and he remains concerned for Lot's welfare after Lot leaves (14:14-16; 18:23-33).

Lot chooses the rich, alluvial soil of the Jordan River Valley. This area is well-known to biblical authors. In Joshua the story of the Israelites crossing the Jordan will occur nearby. Some early Christians thought this was the place where John was baptizing in John 1:28. Lot's choice will turn out to be shortsighted.

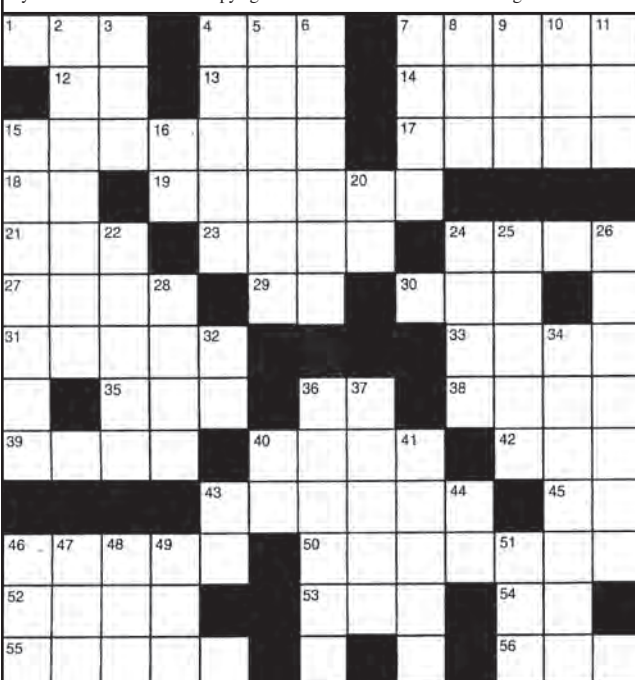
#### Verses 14-18

The LORD augments the promise begun in 12:2-3. The move back to the Negeb by the oaks of Mamre at Hebron foreshadows what will happen in chapter 18. This is where Abram and Sarai will be when God promises them a son.

Through mutual commitment to God through Christ, Christian congregations become a type of extended family too. Surely Paul had Abram and Lot in mind when he encouraged the Philippian brothers and sisters with these words: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4); and again: "Do all things without murmuring and arguing" (Phil. 2:14). ❏

## Christian Crossword

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



### Across

- Bachelor. (abbr.)
- Limb.
- Toi sent \_\_\_ his son. (2 Sam. 8:10).
- Sea level. (abbr.)
- Greek letter.
- A land of oil \_\_\_, and honey. (Deut. 8:8)
- Till there stood up a priest with Urim and \_\_\_. (Neh. 7:65)
- Milk source.
- Egyptian sun god.
- Midpoint.
- Elf.
- Gloomy.
- Ye \_\_\_ Antique Shoppe.
- Extremely.
- Direction.
- Wing.
- Fool.
- Extra duty drill instructor.
- Brown.
- Added to a letter.
- Man's name.
- Ogle.
- Sounds of laughter.
- And Adam called his wife's name \_\_\_.

(Gen. 3:20)

- He leadeth me \_\_\_ the still waters. (Ps. 23:2)
- That I will give you the rain of your land \_\_\_ his due season. (Deut. 11:14)
- I will extend peace to her like a \_\_\_. (Isa. 66:12)
- And took upon him the form of a \_\_\_. (Phil. 2:7)
- By mouth.
- A son of Gad. (Gen. 46:16)
- Symbol for beryllium.
- That he may dip the tip of his finger in \_\_\_.
- They shall say no more, The \_\_\_ of the covenant. (Jer. 3:16)
- of the week. (abbr.)
- Journal. (abbr.)
- Ancient.
- Make free, disencumber.
- Hail.
- Meridian. (abbr.)
- Not important.
- Master of Ceremonies. (abbr.)
- Emergency room. (abbr.)
- Having a tendency.
- Margarine.
- Long-handled spoon.
- Distinguished.
- Second person possessive.
- Tennessee. (abbr.)
- Practicer of divination.
- The peace of God which \_\_\_ all understanding. (Phil. 4:7, modern sp.)
- More bashful.
- Blessed be \_\_\_ that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Ps. 118:26)
- And we were driven up and down in \_\_\_. (Acts 27:27)
- British. (abbr.)
- Electron volt. (abbr.)
- And the second \_\_\_ shall

### Down

- For I am not \_\_\_ of the gospel of Christ. (Rom. 1:16)
- Chartered Life Unwriter. (abbr.)
- Bearing weapons.
- African animals.
- Second and third days



# Dove Awards

## Alabamian wins performance of the year award

**D**ubbed a “vocal powerhouse” by some in the music industry, Tasha Cobbs has led worship at Northview Christian Church, Montgomery, since she was a teenager.

But she recently took home three Gospel Music Association (GMA) Dove Awards indicating she’s come a long way in the last few years.

Cobbs was awarded Gospel Performance of the Year and Contemporary Gospel/Urban Song of the Year for “Break Every Chain,” and Contemporary Gospel/Urban Album of the Year for “Grace.”

But Cobbs wasn’t the only one to walk away with honors at the 44th annual GMA Dove Awards ceremony in Nashville on Oct. 15.

Worship leader Matt Redman, of England, received top honors, garnering the award for Songwriter of the Year and an impressive four awards for his song “10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord),” which has quickly become a familiar anthem in churches around the world.

### Song of the Year

Redman’s recording of the song, co-written by Jonas Myrin, received the awards for Song of the Year, Contemporary Christian Performance of the Year, Pop Contemporary Song of the Year and Praise & Worship Song of the Year.

Hip-hop artist TobyMac was recognized as Artist of the Year for the second time, last winning the award in 2008. TobyMac also won Doves for Pop/Contemporary Album of the Year, Recorded Music Packaging of the Year and

Short Form Video of the Year.

The 2012 big winner Jason Crabb had another good night, taking home awards for Southern Gospel Performance of the Year, Inspirational Song of the Year, Southern Gospel Song of the Year and Inspirational Album of the Year.

Australian band For King & Country was named New Artist of the Year.

Gospel music stars Amy

Grant and Kirk Franklin hosted the awards show, which was held for the first time at the Allen Arena on the campus of Nashville’s Lipscomb University. Touching moments from the event included a tribute to evangelist Billy Graham by Michael W. Smith and the Newsboys, a tribute to longtime

singer and songwriter Bill Gaither by Karen Peck, the Isaacs, Dailey & Vincent and Signature Sound and the presentation of the “Uplift Someone” award to gospel artist Mandisa, whose song and music video “Overcomer” have received national attention.

“What an amazing night of music and honor,” said GMA Executive Director Jackie Patillo in a press release. “Tonight’s performances were all a testament to why we are all here. On behalf of membership of the GMA, we are proud to present this year’s Dove winners and congratulate each of them and the nominees on their achievements.

“We would also like to thank the city of Nashville for welcoming us back home and to the wonderful host for the evening, Lipscomb University.” (BP, TAB)



TobyMac was named Artist of the Year at the 44th Annual Gospel Music Association Dove Awards.

BP photo

# Reaching people in a relevant way



Bill & Gloria Gaither

Photos courtesy of Bozeman Media

## Gaithers seek to inspire through Scriptures, songs, stories

By Leann Callaway  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**A**s two of the most recognizable names in southern gospel music and the writers of classic songs such as “Because He Lives,” “The King is Coming” and “Something About That Name,” Bill and Gloria Gaither are well known for their desire to connect worshippers to theologically and melodically rich songs.

Along the way, the Gaithers have amassed an impressive catalog of achievements, including producing more than 700 songs, hundreds of recordings and a dozen musicals. They also have garnered multiple Grammy and Dove awards and have received the prestigious honor of being named ASCAP Songwriters of the Century. In addition, they have been inducted into the Southern Gospel Hall of Fame and into the Gospel Music Association Hall of Fame and Museum.

These accolades and achievements have deepened their desire to create songs with timeless truths.

By using a variety of platforms to reach audiences, the Gaithers seek to inspire people through Scriptures, songs and stories. They recently teamed with Thomas Nelson Publishers to create “The Gaither Homecoming Bible,” which features testimonies and devotionals from fellow musicians, writers and speakers.

“When we approached different artists about this project, they all responded, ‘We aren’t theologians, we just love the Word of God,’” Gloria Gaither said. “These artists juggle busy schedules while raising kids on the road and schooling them, carpooling and trying to keep their marriage together. They have dealt with all kinds of life experiences that people can relate to, and I told them we wanted to know where the tire of God’s Word hits the pavement of their life. It’s where we challenge people we trust to come together and say, ‘Here’s my biggest hang-up.

Here’s my worst problem. How does Scripture speak to what I’m going through now?’”

As the artists shared how various Scriptures have influenced their lives by providing examples filled with exhortation, their goal is to reach people in a very relevant way.

The Gaithers also emphasize the importance of having a balance between contemporary and traditional worship songs, in order to leave a legacy for future generations. They worked closely with various artists to select 75 hymns and gospel songs, which are showcased as devotionals and interspersed

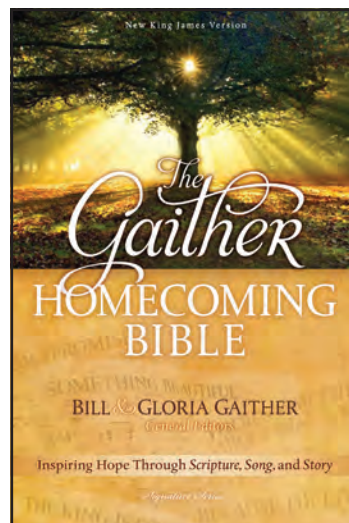
throughout the text, so readers can see their connection to Scripture. “The Gaither Homecoming Bible” also features 230 exclusive devotionals and 20 original poems, along with a reading plan to guide readers on a journey through the Scriptures.

“When we’re struggling in our lives, it’s usually lines from songs that we remember the most and find the most comfort in,” Gloria Gaither said. “The songs need to be deep, true and biblical for people to latch onto and seek refuge. We thought about which songs have rescued us. What are the lines that speak to us? What lines do people remember most?”

“One of those lines for me is, ‘I need no other argument. I need no other plea. It is enough that Jesus

died and that He died for me.’ I mean, how (much more) profound and how simple can you get than that? That line has rescued me so many times. Our faith in God is bigger, higher, deeper and wider than human logic — no matter how smart we are. When someone takes that leap of faith and lands in the arms of God, I want to know about that story.

“We hope that the stories and experiences these artists have shared will encourage and inspire others to find the Word of God to be a vital force in our lives. Most of all, we hope a developing love for the Scriptures will lead everyone who reads it to the One who is the way, the truth and the life.”



**“When we’re struggling in our lives, it’s usually lines from songs that we remember the most and find the most comfort in.”**

Gloria Gaither

Hugh Freeze (left), head football coach for the University of Mississippi in Oxford, baptized Sean Tuohy Jr. at North Oxford Baptist Church in mid-August.

Tuohy was the young son portrayed in 'The Blind Side' movie, and Freeze was the high school football coach portrayed by the name Coach Cotton.



Photo by Russ Jones, Christian News Service

# 'Role model

# in FAITH'

## Ole Miss head football coach Hugh Freeze baptizes 'Blind Side' son, now 20

**W**hen he was 7 or 8, Sean Tuohy Jr. was sidelined by chickenpox on the day he was scheduled to be baptized. Now 20, Tuohy — the young son portrayed in "The Blind Side" movie — was baptized in mid-August by family friend Hugh Freeze, the University of Mississippi's head football coach.

Coach Freeze has "been a family friend since as young as I can remember," said Tuohy, who goes by "SJ."

"His wife and my mom (Leigh Anne Tuohy) are good friends. I've looked up to him as a role model in faith," said SJ, who was baptized at North Oxford Baptist Church, Oxford, Miss., where Coach Freeze is a member.

### 'The Blind Side'

The Tuohy family, of Memphis, also includes husband and father Sean and daughter Collins — as well as adopted son Michael Oher, an offensive lineman with the 2013 NFL champion Baltimore Ravens. Michael's adoption into the family and his rise to one of college football's top recruits is told in "The Blind Side," a 2006 book and 2009 movie. Coach Freeze was Michael's football coach at Briarcrest Christian School and is mentioned frequently in the book, while the movie includes a character named Coach Cotton based on Coach Freeze.

SJ, a basketball player, also was a sought-after athlete out of Briarcrest. He's starting his second year at Loyola

University Maryland where he'll play as a redshirt freshman in the Greyhounds' upcoming season, their first in the Patriot League. Basketball skills run in the Tuohy family. Sean, a restaurateur and broadcast analyst for the NBA's Memphis Grizzlies, played guard at Ole Miss and holds the all-time record for assists in the Southeastern Conference.

SJ said Loyola Maryland was the best college that offered him a scholarship. And it didn't hurt that "it was close to Mike," SJ said, since Michael lives in the Baltimore area.

Leigh Anne said, "I personally don't believe in coincidences. That SJ looked at so many colleges and so many looked at him ... this has to be 100 percent God-driven. For him to have landed there was a miracle."

It was in Baltimore earlier in 2013, Leigh Anne said, that SJ determined he'd waited long enough to be baptized.

During a visit, Leigh Anne attended church with SJ and Michael. After the sermon, she said the pastor "called on people who wanted to get baptized to come on up." Leigh Anne said SJ turned to her and said, "Mom, I've never been baptized." For a moment he considered walking forward, she said.

"He had always been a superstrong Christian," Leigh Anne said, "and he's really felt convicted that he hadn't been baptized."

Nevertheless Leigh Anne said she told him, "I hate to stifle this, but your dad will be so mad if you get baptized and he's not here."

"What if we let Hugh [Freeze] baptize you," Leigh Anne suggested.

"Mom, coach wouldn't do that," SJ replied.

Leigh Anne then said, "What if I make Coach Freeze baptize you?"

Leigh Anne contacted Coach Freeze in spring 2013 and he agreed to work out the details with North Oxford pastor Gary Richardson.

### Ties to Ole Miss

The Tuohys have strong ties to Ole Miss and attend North Oxford when they're in town, SJ said. His mom and dad met as Ole Miss students in the late '70s. Sean was a star basketball player, Leigh Anne was a cheerleader. Their daughter Collins, another Ole Miss graduate, also was a cheerleader.

SJ said having Coach Freeze baptize him was "an obvious choice. I grew up with his daughters as sort-of sisters. He was such a good influence on me growing up."

Just before the baptism, SJ said he and Coach Freeze "talked about the journeys that Christ had led us on" and "just that he was proud of me as a brother in Christ."

Coach Freeze also baptized his three daughters, the Ole Miss coach said during a news conference Sept. 23.

"I'm thankful that my parents were people of faith," said Coach Freeze, who came to Christ and was baptized when he was 7. "My faith is everything to me. I'm pretty clear and open about that. I was grateful to have a great family that introduced me to that." (BP)

*"I'm thankful that my parents were people of faith. My faith is everything to me. I'm pretty clear and open about that. I was grateful to have a great family that introduced me to that."*

Hugh Freeze  
head football coach, University of Mississippi