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# In need of Christ's LOVE



## Volunteer teams from state help Alabama Baptist family plant Miami church

Photo by Doug Rogers

Derek Allen, former executive pastor of Smoke Rise Baptist Church, Warrior, and his wife, Lindsay, moved to Miami, Fla., on May 29, 2013, to become church planters. Since July 2013, Alabama Baptists have sent volunteer teams to work alongside the Allens.

**By Doug Rogers**  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

**D**erek Allen remembers exactly when God called him to be a church planter.

He was executive pastor of Smoke Rise Baptist Church, Warrior, in North Jefferson Baptist Association. He and his wife, Lindsay, attended a conference in April 2012 on the topic of starting a church from scratch. They were hoping to get some ideas to incorporate into their own church, when “out of nowhere God said, ‘This is what I want you to do. I want you to plant a church,’” Allen said. “I just knew immediately. One moment I wasn’t a church planter, the next moment I was a church planter.”

And in God’s providence, He called Lindsay at the same time in another room at the conference.

What followed was a yearlong pro-

cess of praying, vision casting, raising support and consulting with the North American Mission Board — a process that ultimately led the Allens to Miami, Fla., to plant Christ Centered Church.

Beginning in July 2012, they traveled to Miami monthly to scout venues, meet people and make connections in the community. Then on May 29, 2013, the family — which includes three children who were then ages 4, 2 and 2 months — pulled up stakes and moved to their new city where 123 languages are spoken in the school system.

### Huge opportunities

When they first arrived, they were overwhelmed with the need they saw. “We realized there was a huge need for evangelism, a huge need for churches and a huge need for discipleship,” Allen said. But they also saw huge opportunities.

“We’ve found from the very beginning that the missions field here is wide open,” Lindsay Allen added. “People are so open to the gospel, and they are so open to conversations.

“One thing we really love about Miami is the fact that because there are so many different cultures and countries and ethnicities represented here, you really have this unique opportunity to fulfill the Great Commission in one spot,” she said.

But they realized they couldn’t do it alone.

Beginning in July 2013, a steady stream of Alabama Baptist volunteer teams made the trek to Miami to work alongside the Allens, including volunteers from Hepzibah Baptist Church, McCalla; Kyuka Baptist Church, Attalla; Riddles Bend

Baptist Church, Rainbow City; and Twelfth Street Baptist Church and Macedonia Baptist Church, both in Gadsden. Allen estimates that

these teams made more than 15,000 contacts in the community prior to the church’s first worship service Feb. 9.

That service attracted 169 people, and the church has averaged around 100 in attendance since, with at least one profession of faith almost each week. They meet on the Biscayne Bay Campus of Florida International

University (FIU) every Sunday at 11 a.m. and also have small group Bible studies during the week in homes, restaurants and other gathering places. Allen also has brought on two staff members and several

(See ‘Church-planting,’ page 3)



ALLEN

## COMING NEXT WEEK

### A rebuttal to Bill O’Reilly’s contention

that Jesus did not say, “Father, forgive them ...” while on the cross.



# COMMENT

## Restoring Religious Liberty

The recent Hobby Lobby case before the U.S. Supreme Court (see page 1 of the March 27 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*) has made more people aware of the acronym RFRA than any other time in the law's more than 20-year history. RFRA stands for Religious Freedom Restoration Act. It was adopted unanimously in the House of Representatives and by a 97-3 vote in the U.S. Senate. Few major policy decisions have ever received such wide-ranging support. President Bill Clinton signed the bill into law Nov. 16, 1993.

One might well ask why the law's title includes the word "restoration" since religious freedom is enshrined as an individual right in the U.S. Constitution. Stories abound of European settlers coming to the New World for religious freedom. Too often that meant freedom for them but not for others. The first official step toward religious freedom is dated 1636 when Roger Williams, then a Baptist, settled the Providence Plantation (now Rhode Island) and welcomed religious refugees fleeing from Massachusetts Bay Colony and other religious minorities.

On June 12, 1776, the Fifth Virginia Convention adopted the Virginia Declaration of Rights written by George Mason, which said, "All men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion." These words would guide James Madison, a member of that convention, a decade later as he compiled the Bill of Rights, amendments to the nation's new Constitution designed to forever protect certain individual liberties. Chief among those protected liberties was freedom of religion.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteed freedom of religion in two ways. First the government was prevented from passing any law related to the establishment of religion. Second government was prohibited from interfering with the free exercise of religion.

### Sherbert Test

As with any law, it took time for the meaning and impact of that policy to be worked out. It was not until 1818 that the last established state church (Congregational Church in Connecticut) was disestablished. It was 1833 before Massachusetts stopped channeling public money to its state church (Congregational).

In time the U.S. Supreme Court settled on a position called the Sherbert Test, which banned laws that burdened (or limited) a person's exercise of religion. Unfortunately that position began to crumble in the 1980s and completely collapsed in the 1990 case *Employment Division v. Smith*. In that case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that religious freedom could be burdened by the government as long as the law was "neutral" and did not overtly discriminate against religious objectors.



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Writing for the majority, Justice Antonin Scalia wrote that using the "compelling interest" position of the Sherbert Test would lead to "anarchy" and that religious minority groups would have to win their religious freedom at the ballot box.

The reaction was volcanic. Legal experts from the president of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to the dean of the Notre Dame Law School condemned the Smith decision as "a radical departure from the settled principles of American constitutional law."

Born was a wide-ranging Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion dedicated to overturning Justice Scalia's flawed reasoning. Members included People for the American Way and the Traditional Values Coalition and Concerned Women for America. The ACLU sat with the Christian Legal Society. The American Jewish Congress joined with the American Muslim Committee.

More than 50 organizations including Southern Baptists and Mormons worked to change the law.

Chairing the Coalition was Oliver S. Thomas, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs (BJC). In fact, the BJC was the catalyst in bringing together this wide-ranging group of affected parties.

From a historical standpoint, it is important to remember that Southern Baptists withdrew from the BJC and ceased all funding in 1991.

Yet in the months immediately following that action, the influence and stature of the BJC and its staff, including Thomas, were invaluable to Baptists everywhere and to the cause of religious freedom.

In its "Findings," the Congress reported that the framers of the Constitution recognized the free exercise of religion as an unalienable right protected by the Constitution and that the Smith

decision "virtually eliminated the requirement that government justify burdens on religious exercise(s)."

The purpose of RFRA, the Congress said, was "to restore the compelling interest test (the Sherbert Test) and to guarantee its application in all cases where free exercise of religion is substantially burdened."

The almost unanimous vote in both the House and Senate was one of the most public rebukes of a Supreme Court decision in constitutional law.

But no right is absolute, not even religious freedom. Government can still limit religious freedom if it can demonstrate a compelling interest. However, when it does it must do so in the least restrictive way.

So we come full circle back to the Hobby Lobby case and its claim that providing four

birth control options that are known to cause early abortions is a violation of the religious freedom of the owners of the business.

Now the judges must determine if providing the four options is a compelling government interest and, if so, is forcing employers to provide the options the way least restrictive to religious freedom.

Numerous other voices claim threats to religious freedom. In fact, some observers contend religious freedom faces greater challenges today than at any time in the nation's history.

It is important to remember that such claims can be made because of the limitations placed on government by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Had the Smith decision been allowed to stand, there would be no Hobby Lobby case. A "neutral" government policy would be the law of the land, and this nation would have taken a giant backward step away from religious freedom.

In November 2013 the Freedom Forum Foundation sponsored a conference marking the 20th anniversary of RFRA. The conference recognized Thomas as chairman of the Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion and Douglas Laycock, an author of RFRA and now a law professor at the University of Virginia.

It is appropriate for all of us to say thank you to these men, to the Baptist Joint Committee on Religious Liberty (BJC's current name) and to all who played a part in making RFRA the law of the land and for helping restore religious freedom after the Smith decision.

***"Had the Smith decision been allowed to stand, there would be no Hobby Lobby case. A 'neutral' government policy would be the law of the land, and this nation would have taken a giant backward step away from religious freedom."***



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

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Photos by Doug Rogers

**Main photo:** Shon Brown (left) and Rebecca Blakney offer water and invitations to church to motorists parked at stop lights near the FIU Biscayne Bay campus. **Small left photo:** Cheryl Conklin (left) and a team of students from Etowah Baptist Association along with **(small right photo)** Jacksonville State University student Lyndsie Gunter canvass a neighborhood to invite people to Christ Centered Church.

# Church-planting partnership

## 'The Cooperative Program is the way God has kept us in the city'

(continued from page 1)

short-term volunteers from Alabama, helping to make the church an oasis of southern hospitality in a city in need of Christ's love.

During March, two Baptist Campus Ministries student teams — one from the University of South Alabama, the other from Etowah Baptist Association — traveled to Miami to assist with getting the word out about upcoming Easter services. The teams handed out water bottles and invitations in parks, at busy intersections and on FIU's Biscayne Bay campus. They also canvassed neighborhoods with door hangers.

With deep roots in Alabama, particularly Etowah Association — Derek was born in Attalla and served several Etowah Associa-

tion churches as youth minister or pastor — the Allens are grateful for the spirit of partnership. They firmly believe the church wouldn't be where it is today without the work of missions teams from Alabama.

The Allens also are grateful for the support of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

"The Cooperative Program is the way God has kept us in the city," Derek Allen said.

"It's easy to talk to people and easy to strike up conversations about the gospel. What's hard about Miami is staying in the city (because of the high cost of living), so the support given through the Cooperative Program is really invaluable to us."

Reggie Quimby, director of global missions for the Alabama Baptist State Board of

Missions (SBOM), said, "The Allens serve as a great example of what the SBOM's missions partnership strategy Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections is all about as they have networked and continue to network with churches and associations to bring volunteer teams to help them in their missions strategy."

### Encouragement

Allen noted, "When I think about Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections and Alabama Baptist churches partnering with us, the word that comes to my mind is encouragement, because this is a tough city. Just knowing that we're not alone, there's a whole group of people, there's an entire state full of churches behind us and supporting what we're doing is so important."

To learn more about Christ Centered Church, visit [www.christcenteredchurch.net](http://www.christcenteredchurch.net). To learn more about Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections, visit [www.alsbom.org/a18c](http://www.alsbom.org/a18c).



## 'Heartbeat' bill fails during final hours of state legislative session

A House-passed bill that would have banned abortions as soon as a fetal heartbeat is detected failed to pass its final hurdle in the Alabama Legislature.

On the last day of the Legislature's 2014 session April 3, the Senate decided not to take up the fetal heartbeat bill — House Bill 490 — with Senate leaders say-

ing they wanted to wait until court cases on similar laws in other states were decided, according to an Associated Press report.

### Early development

A fetal heartbeat can be detected as early as six to seven weeks into a pregnancy, and the bill would have both required doctors

to check for a fetal heartbeat and would have banned an abortion if a fetal heartbeat was detected. It contained an exemption to save the life of the mother.

The bill was passed by the House on March 4 and was approved by the Senate Health Committee on April 1.

Bill sponsor Rep. Mary Sue

McClurkin, R-Indian Springs, said she was "crushed and saddened" when the Senate did not bring the legislation to a vote.

"We were hoping there would be less babies killed by having this legislation as the law," she said. "I pray that we will realize the value of life and work to protect God's creation." (TAB)

# How Sunday

# youth sports

## affect believers and church life

### Verdict still out on whether weekend travel ball leaves room for spiritual growth

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

In many Alabama families, seasons are marked not by the first day of spring or fall but rather by the opening day of baseball or the first kickoff of football season.

In the past, “blue laws” kept stores closed on Sundays and youth athletics avoided scheduling events on Sundays and Wednesdays. Today that is not always the case.

Like many cities around the state, Gulf Shores offers youth sports programs throughout the year, managed by the city’s recreation department.

“In our city-run programs, we generally don’t schedule anything for Sundays,” said Grant Brown, recreation and cultural affairs director for the city of Gulf Shores. “We try to reserve Sunday and Wednesday for the community.”

Like many cities around the state though, Gulf Shores’ facilities, including fields and gyms, are available for rent any day of the week, and many clients want to schedule tournaments on weekends, including Sundays.

A report published in 2013 by the Review of Religious Research calls this trend the “secularization of Sunday.” The report cites a survey of pastors and members of 16 declining congregations in the United States and

Canada in which respondents identified competing Sunday activities as the primary reason for the decline in Sunday worship attendance.

Youth sports are certainly not the only activities that compete with Sunday morning worship, but increasingly, families are prioritizing their children’s athletic pursuits over their spiritual development (see story, page 5).

“Youth sports today are a much bigger deal than they used to be five or 10 years ago,” according to Caz McCaslin, president of Upward Sports, the world’s largest Christian sports league for youth athletics.

In fact, a data analysis published by ESPN in 2013 suggests that by age 6, 47 percent of girls and 60 percent of boys in the United States are playing on a sports team. The report estimates that nearly 22 million kids between ages 6 and 17 in the United States are playing team sports.

In a blog posting in March titled “Youth Sports on Sundays: A Paradigm Shift,” McCaslin said the good news about the increase in youth sports is that families are spending time together. The negative byproduct of that growth, he wrote, is the increase in weekend tournaments and games, “which naturally creates a conflict for those families who have commitments to both their sports teams and their church families.”

Some churches are duplicating traditional Sunday morning services on Sunday nights to provide an alternate worship time for families, but that also requires discipline. After a long weekend of playing ball and traveling, it might not be easy to “clean up” and go to church for the evening.

#### Upward Sports

Other churches are adapting to the sports culture itself by offering alternatives, such as Upward Sports programs.

Bethel Baptist Church, Odenville, in St. Clair Baptist Association, has sponsored Upward basketball and cheerleading teams for the past 15 years. About 275 children in fourth through eighth grade participate each year, according to Sharon Stephens, Bethel Baptist’s director of operations.

Stephens believes that leagues like Upward are family-friendly because they require less time and the emphasis is on fundamentals rather than competition.

“The teams practice one day

during the week and the games are on Saturday, so it’s a little more laid-back,” Stephens said. “The coaches also have devotions and prayer time at practice, and they really take time to teach kids the art of basketball.”

Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, in Madison Baptist Association also offers Upward Sports teams, as well as ballet and dance classes for children, which parents love because they are alternatives to the crazy business of travel teams and other competitive sports, according to Whitesburg Baptist recreation director Jane Baker.

#### Level of competition important

But the concern with church-sponsored programs such as Upward Sports is the lack of competition, many parents, players and coaches point out.

While it is a good thing for the purpose of why Upward Sports exists, it doesn’t provide a true alternative for kids expecting to develop and improve in their particular sport by playing on the team, several parents explained.

The church and community league programs are not competitive, said Jeff Crane, father of two youth baseball players and member of First Baptist Church, Centre.

“The talent level in these leagues has diminished because of travel ball,” he said. “If you have a child above average in talent in the sport, he will be playing with and against lower-level talent, so his progression rates are not going to progress like you want, or they are going to fall off.”

“But with that being said, you still have to prioritize,” Crane explained. “Is life about baseball or is life about serving Christ? This is a crossroads we’ve come to. We’ve spent years and time praying about it, but we are still figuring out what the Lord wants us to do.”

The Cranes try to attend church when the game schedules are such that they can leave after church to go to the game, he said. But on the weekends the games take them out of town, they have considered holding a Bible study “to take the opportunity to share Christ with some of the guys who don’t know Christ.”

McCaslin believes Christians can benefit by taking church on the road, such as to the hotel lobbies where the families of the players are staying.

“Churchgoing families missing church to attend their kids’ sporting events on Sundays is a problem ... but it’s not nearly as big a problem as all of the families that don’t attend a Bible-believing church at all,” McCaslin said. “If they won’t come to church with us, then we are commanded to be the Church to them.”

Stephen Hall, father of a youth competitive soccer team player and associate pastor of NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville, agreed believers on a sports team can make a difference for the Kingdom. But for him it is more complex than that, he said.

“In one sense, it would be a spiritual thing for me to be the presence of Christ at the soccer field,” he said. “However, for the spiritual development of my son, I cannot choose sports over church every time. Our family needs a habit of constant church attendance even when there are other fun things to do.” (Jennifer Davis Rash contributed)

**“[It] naturally creates a conflict for those families who have commitments to ... sports ... and church.”**

**Caz McCaslin**  
president, Upward Sports



## SUNDAY YOUTH SPORTS



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By Jennifer Davis Rash  
The Alabama Baptist

**S**chool, wolf down a snack in the car, ball practice, wolf down a burger and fries in the car, arrive at the training facility for the hour of individual instruction your dad reserved for you, home, shower, homework, bed. Maybe a few minutes to watch a game on TV or text your friends if your homework load is light.

Wake up, rush around, head to school and repeat the cycle — or at least some version of it. Until Friday that is, then it's game time as is Saturday and most likely Sunday.

It's the life of a travel ball team player. It's about commitment, sacrifice and doing it the right way to get ahead for the years when it really counts — college and the pros.

But is the "all-in" commitment to the ever-expanding travel ball society really worth the exhaustion, stress and restrictions it places on the family? And more than that, is it actually the smartest strategy for the future athlete?

Many parents, players and coaches will proudly and loudly say it is absolutely worth the costs and is the only option.

### Addicted to the lifestyle

But an increasing number of major league scouts, professional athletes, sports experts, former players and parents of travel ball players are not so sure. Some even think the thousands of "all-in" families in the state could be getting duped into thinking they are getting ahead when it is actually negatively impacting many of the young sports stars' potential.

"It has developed into a business," said Jeff Crane, father of two youth baseball players and member of First Baptist Church, Centre. "We thought we had to get our kids involved in travel ball because they want to be competitive, but it wasn't long before we realized we were totally caught up in it," he said. "You can schedule everything around it if not careful ... and easily allow it to become idolatry."

Crane grew up watching his father play softball and played baseball himself at the Division III college level.

"You want so much more for your kids than you had yourself, so you push them," he said. "But you have to back away sometimes or it becomes too much like a business. It is hard to allow them to just have fun."

Another Jeff Crane in the state actually owns a business that benefits from the popularity of travel ball.

General manager and co-owner of the Montgomery indoor baseball and softball training facility Capital Strike Zone, Crane said parents and coaches should always keep their priorities and motives in check.

"Many parents are not putting in perspective what should be important. It is about the development of skills, not just to win at all costs," he said, noting he has seen coaches and parents encourage kids to practice throwing curve balls before they are ready to give their team a better chance to win. "It is taxing on their elbow and actually harmful to them."

But that's not all that is harmful, said Crane, who was part of a 1991 NCAA regional team while playing baseball with the University of Alabama. He also served in coaching and recruiting roles at the collegiate level before and after becoming a major league area scout for the Los Angeles Angels.

Father of 5-year-old Jack and 3-year-old Ava, Crane said, "I'm speaking from experience as a scout and father who would want what is best for my own son.

"Until kids are 17 or 18, their bodies and muscles are not as mature as adults. They need time off and don't need to play every day," he said. "A lot of these travel leagues are playing at an insane level, and the bodies are not ready for it. They are harming them in some ways."

In fact, the statistics prove that the number of arm surgeries in kids 16 and younger has increased in recent years, he added. "This is a huge byproduct of overtraining, overthrowing and overplaying."

Children are not ready for the same type of schedule as a major league player, Crane explained. "They can develop and get better without playing 70 games a summer."

He suggests a slow, methodical progression for training to avoid potential injury that could have long-lasting implications.

Making it in the big leagues does require commitment, sacrifice and time, Crane noted.

"It means repetition of doing the kinds of things you have to do over and over and over," he said. "But it's about building strength, speed and consistency in performance."

"Raw footspeed, raw strength, raw power, natural size, a physical and durable athlete who gets injured less — those are the God-given gifts athletics are looking for," he said. "It's about extraordinary talents and trades that can't be taught. ... They can be enhanced but not taught."

And for those not 100 percent naturally gifted, the right amount of heart, desire and work ethic can potentially get them there as well, he added.

But in all cases, training should focus on building over time, not pushing too hard and too fast. Crane noted these examples as training suggestions for baseball players:

- ▶ Stay healthy.
- ▶ Get plenty of rest.
- ▶ Take 150 to 250 swings at bat daily.
- ▶ Field 100 to 150 ground balls daily.
- ▶ Run to first base 100 times daily.
- ▶ Run the 50-yard dash 10 times daily.
- ▶ Pitch only once a week.
- ▶ Limit pitches to 70-75 per game.

"At a certain point you have to sacrifice

a lot of fun things to stay focused on your sport if you want to be a professional player, but be careful about forcing kids at 8, 9 or 10 to follow this strict of a structure," he said. "Allow kids to be kids for a while."

And don't neglect the other parts of life, Crane said. "Selling out and only working on athletic skills is not enough. You have to be a well-rounded person to make it in the major leagues."

### Secret to success

"You have to be able to think for yourself, be knowledgeable in a lot of areas of life, have a spiritual base and have a sense of right and wrong," he said.

"My faith is a huge part of who I am," said Crane, a member of Christ Church, Montgomery. "The more well-rounded someone is, especially academically and spiritually, they are going to excel more as an athlete."

"Don't allow a child's total self-worth to be completely on how he is doing as an athlete," he added.

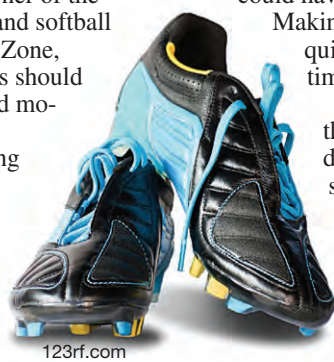
"The odds are so astronomically small of being a professional player that it is doing a child a disservice to push them at such a young age to think that they have to be a professional player or they will be a failure."

Former professional basketball player and current health coach Romeo Penn, an ordained minister now living in Chelsea, agreed.

### Honest evaluation

"I truly believe there is a balance that you have to have of putting in the extra time, the work and the belief in yourself," he said. "At the same time, you have to be willing to honestly evaluate yourself. The hard reality is that everyone won't make it no matter how much work and effort you put into it."

"There has to be a balance because if you become too consumed with the pursuit of this dream, then you could find yourself bitter and disillusioned one day with all your relationships destroyed," he said. 🙏



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# Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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## BESSEMER

► **The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla**, worship choir with orchestra will present "The Cross" on April 12, 6 p.m. and April 13, 11 a.m. The church also will observe Maundy Thursday (April 17) with a special service beginning at 7 p.m. Bill McCall is pastor. ► The executive committee of **Bessemer Association** voted unanimously to establish "The Grace Place" mission on the campus of **Flint Hill Church, Bessemer**. The church will partner with the other 42 churches in the association to provide food, clothing, personal hygiene items, medical and dental screenings and practical classes for the needy. Bruce McCartney is pastor. ► **Raimund Heights Church, Bessemer**, will hold spring revival April 27-29. Sunday services will be at 10:45 a.m. and 5 p.m. and Monday and Tuesday services will be at 7 p.m. Tim Thompson will speak. Tommy Chesser is pastor. ► The Gospel Singing Outreach of **Southcrest Church, Bessemer**, will host 2d Chance and Uplifted in concert May 2, 7 p.m. For information call the church office at 205-425-4991. Scott Bush is pastor.

## BETHEL

► **Nanafalia Church** will celebrate homecoming April 13, 10

a.m. Interim pastor Craig Gavin will speak, and lunch will follow in the fellowship hall. There also will be a singing at 1 p.m. with featured singer Shannon Knight.

## COLUMBIA

► The combined adult choirs of **Bethel Church, Dothan**, and **Bay Springs Church, Dothan**, as well as narrators and drama cast will present the Easter musical "Glorious Day" on April 13, 6 p.m. at Bay Springs Church. Scott E. Cox is pastor of Bay Springs.

## COVINGTON

► **New Hope Church**, located between Opp and Florala, will celebrate its 155th homecoming April 27, 10:30 a.m. Eugene Meadows will speak. Everyone is invited. Ladon Morgan is pastor.

## ELMORE

► The worship choir of **Thelma Church, Wallsboro**, will present the choral celebration "Glorious Day" on April 18, 7 p.m. The 30-member drama cast will be joined by a full choir performing selections such as "The Voice of Grace" and "Our Eyes Have Seen the Glory of the Lord." Doug Chappelle is pastor.

## MADISON

► **Sherwood Church, Hunts-**

**ville**, will celebrate its 50-year anniversary May 4. Daniel Edmonds will speak for the morning worship service and former church choir director Shawn Ferguson will lead music. A covered dish lunch will follow. All former members are invited to attend. Don Paris is pastor.

## MARSHALL

► **Sardis Church, Boaz**, will present "Come See the Lamb" on April 13, 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Child care will be provided. For information call the church office at 256-593-7762. Mike Goforth is pastor.

## TALLAPOOSA

► **Daviston Church** will celebrate homecoming April 27. The Hoggle Family will sing at 10 a.m. and Bennie Yates will speak at 11 a.m. Lunch will follow. Everyone is welcome. Shane Dye is pastor.

## WINSTON

► All ladies are invited to an "Evening with Edie" at **New Prospect Church, Haleyville**, on May 9 with special guest Edie Hand. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. Dinner will be served. The deadline to order tickets is April 30. For tickets call Tammie Batchelor at 205-494-9061 or Sharon Alexander at 205-269-1644. Ron Horton is pastor.

## BWA prayer event seeks to unite men

The Baptist World Alliance's (BWA) annual Men's World Day of Prayer is April 26.

Sponsored by the BWA Men's Department, the prayer emphasis offers "an opportunity to involve men in your church, but also to seek others in your sphere of influence" to find ways to pray for global concerns, according to its website, [www.bwanet.org/programs/men/mens-world-day-of-prayer](http://www.bwanet.org/programs/men/mens-world-day-of-prayer).

The 2014 World Day of Prayer focus is global concerns with specific categories covering peace, love, unity, humanitarian efforts, the environment, ministry and financial support for missions.

Men gathered around the world are encouraged to repeat a prayer together (found at the website) at 11 a.m.

For more information, visit the website or email Day of Prayer coordinators Dave Dilon at [dilon\\_y2k@yahoo.com](mailto:dilon_y2k@yahoo.com) or Roy Scott at [rscott2889@aol.com](mailto:rscott2889@aol.com).

(TAB, BWA)

# Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, *The Alabama Baptist*

## Daniel Bayse



BAYSE

*First Baptist Church, Trussville  
Birmingham Baptist Association*

**FAVORITE VERSE:** Psalm 138:8

**FAVORITE HYMN:** "Tell Me the Story of Jesus"

**HOBBIES:** Being a photographer, grandparent and president of homeowner's association

**FAMILY STATUS:** Wife of nine years, Jane; children: Justin Bayse, Stephanie Hart and John Futrell; three grandchildren

*Daniel Bayse, 65, is a former Navy photographer, former member of Virginia's state police and retired vocational rehabilitation counselor for Veterans Affairs. A licensed professional counselor, Bayse is an evangelist whose primary focus is on the family. He conducts youth seminars, is a counseling supervisor, provides training for prison and jail ministry volunteers and offers ministers a "safe place to talk." This author of nine books also is founder of Prison Family Foundation, Inc.*

education in counseling. It gave me the knowledge to build on and the knowledge to do it. But I have a passion for the people the rest of society wants to push aside.

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

A: Peace. It has never been one that would make a lot of money. I'm not rich, but I'm the richest guy in town. There is a peace and joy seeing the Holy Spirit break the shell of the hardest heart. You watch the healing process get started. I like to watch God work.

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

A: My grandfather was one of the founding ministers of what is now the Wesleyan church. So I grew up in a Christian home. I went into the Navy in 1965. I accepted Christ in the Christian Men's Service Center in Norfolk, Va., in November 1966.

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

A: I was called into the ministry in high school but didn't follow it. Events happened while I was a trooper that made it evident God wanted me in the ministry. I resigned, moved to Dothan and started school at Baptist Bible Institute.

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

A: One of the key elements is having the education to understand what you're doing. I had the unique combination of police work, theology and

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

A: I couldn't do this without the support and encouragement of my wife. She prays with me. She travels with me sometimes. Frequently she goes with me as a soloist, and I love to hear her sing.

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

A: The satisfaction that I know I'm in the center of God's will. I just like knowing that I'm being used by the Father.

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

A: Night and day. When I accepted Christ into my life, I was at the decision point of whether I was going to go the route of other sailors or follow Christ. I decided to follow Christ all the way through the Navy and started serving churches wherever I was stationed. I've followed Him ever since. ☩

## REFLECTIONS

"PASTOR, ON YOUR TAX RETURN, I KNOW YOU FEEL LIKE OLD MISTER CRENSHAW IS ON YOUR CASE ALL THE TIME, BUT YOU CAN'T CLAIM HIM AS A DEPENDENT!"



*If you know of a person who should be featured as "Someone You Should Know," send his or her name, a contact number and the reason you think he or she should be featured to: Someone You Should Know, c/o The Alabama Baptist, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209 or [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org).*



## Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

### Doctrine of Christ

## Christ Died and Was Buried

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

**E**aster is approaching. This is a good season in which to remember that Christ is at the heart of the gospel. Its good news swirls around who He is and what He did. A straight to the point summary of the gospel is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3 in the declaration of Paul the apostle, "I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."

The heart of Christ's saving mission and thus the heart of our message about Him is that He died for our sins, was buried and rose again on the third day. What went before these climactic events is certainly not unimportant — His real incarnation, His sinless life, His compassionate ministry, His unparalleled teaching and His self-revealing miracles. Even so, the heart of His saving mission is summarized in what is declared to be "of first importance" — His death, burial and resurrection.

Let's think this week about the biblical record that Christ died and was buried. Christians through the ages have made the faith confession that His death was a saving death. Think about it. What made His death a saving death was not how He died. Many others before and after Him suffered excruciating deaths upon crosses. In fact, as we know, two others died alongside Him on the day He died, but their deaths did not have an ounce of saving virtue attached to them. What made Christ's death different was not how He died, but who He was.

No other person ever crucified on a cross died as a Savior of others. Christ was more than an ordinary man. He was the Son of God who had entered the world as the son of Mary. All others had a human mother, but none of them had God as their Father. All others who have died on a cross were sinners, but

He was without sin. Sinners do not make perfect sacrifices even though they die on crosses.

The burial of Jesus' body attests to the reality of His death. An attendant fact to a real death was the piercing of His body by the soldier's sword (John 19:33-34). To this may be added the verification of death that the Roman centurion furnished Pilate before the release of Jesus' body for burial (Mark 15:43-45).

Since we already know the conclusion to that fateful weekend, we know that Jesus' death and burial were the necessary precursors to an Easter morning resurrection. Furthermore a real death viewed from the vantage point of the resurrection furnishes us with theological certainty that Jesus paid sin's wages, a portion of which is physical death (Rom. 6:23).

Inasmuch as our Savior paid it all, we in turn owe Him all that we are and have. As we enter once again into Holy Week, we are reminded that we owe Him our deepest worship as well as our highest love. His redeeming love demands our best response in holy living and outgoing service. Owing Him a debt we can never repay fully, we can make installments to Him by ministering to others in His name. We do service to the Savior when we extend practical deeds of helpfulness and kindness to those around us. We can best love Him whom we cannot see by loving those whom we can see. Let's ponder anew 1 John 4:20-21 as we move through Holy Week. 📖

Jerry Batson,  
retired associate  
dean of Beeson  
Divinity School at  
Samford University  
and professor at  
several schools of  
religion, is pastor  
of First Baptist  
Church, McCalla.



# Sent into the world

## Teen girls learn about missions at Complete

**T**he sent life is not the safe life. That was the message driven home to nearly 500 teen girls and their leaders who gathered recently at Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery, for Complete.

Complete is an annual, two-day event for teen girls hosted by Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). This year's conference was March 9-10.

Author Erin Davis was the weekend's keynote speaker. Davis urged girls to live their lives purposefully, understanding that they have been sent into the world for a reason. She challenged participants with the message that following God isn't always easy. In fact, it's sometimes unsafe. But that doesn't change the fact that we are sent.

### Equipped to serve

"The whole idea behind Complete is for teen girls to understand that their lives are completed only through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ," said Erin Bishop, Alabama WMU Missions and Ministry Consultant for Students. "With 'SENT' being the theme at Complete this year, we wanted girls to embrace the idea that they have been sent into the world by God for a purpose and are equipped with unique gifts and talents to fulfill His

specific plan for their lives. It may not be easy or safe, but it's what we're called to do."

At the conference the girls heard from young female missionaries from around the world who are serving God in exciting, and often unsafe, places. The missionaries shared how God had been with them every step of the way in the good moments and frightening ones as well.

More than \$1,250 was given in an offering to be used for Syrian refugees through Baptist Global Response.

Breakout conferences were offered on various topics including seeing the bigger picture, searching for truth, preparing for college and godly dating.

"Complete helped me understand that I need to get out of the boat and follow God

rather than expecting Him to follow me," said Makayla Turner, of Airport Boulevard Baptist Church, Mobile.

At the conclusion of Complete, more than 300 girls made a commitment to live a sent life.

Complete 2015 will be held at First Baptist Church, Pelham, March 13-14. For more information, visit [www.alabamawmu.org/complete](http://www.alabamawmu.org/complete). (WMU)

*"The ... idea behind Complete is for teen girls to understand that their lives are completed only through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ."*

Erin Bishop  
Missions and Ministry  
Consultant for Students  
Alabama WMU



Photo courtesy of Alabama WMU

Members of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union's Alabama Challenge Team help lead nearly 500 teen girls and leaders in worship at Complete 2014 at Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery, March 9-10.

# Heart for missions

## Two Alabamians named to National Acteens Panel

Two of the four teens named to this year's National Acteens Panel are from Alabama.

Elizabeth Stanbrough, a member of First Baptist Church, Alexander City, and Claire Wells, a member of Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery, were selected because they exemplify a commitment to missions coupled with outstanding participation and leadership in their Acteens group, church, school and community.

National Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) sponsors Acteens, a missions organization for girls in grades 7-12. Through Acteens, girls grow in their relationships with God and each other as they learn about and participate in missions, develop leadership skills and live a missional lifestyle.

Both Stanbrough and Wells have been involved in Acteens for the past six years and have demonstrated a commitment to serving others and sharing Christ.

"I have learned what a missions lifestyle is

through Acteens," Stanbrough said. "It is not something you say, a shirt you wear or a book you read. It is what you do every day to reach people who do not know Christ and show them His undying love."

In addition, Stanbrough said one of the most important aspects of Acteens is learning from godly leaders and developing strong friendships. "The constant contact and similar ideals create trust and understanding between Acteens," she said. "This trust paves the way for accountability."

Likewise Wells said, "Acteens is a place where girls can find friends who will be encouraging to them in their walk with Christ. Acteens has been one of the biggest sources of encouragement to me and it has kept me grounded in my faith."

Stanbrough and Wells will serve along with two other Acteens — Cassandra Couch, of Kentucky, and Nayely Vallejo, of Texas. These girls will serve through Dec. 31 and receive \$1,000 from the Jessica Powell Loftis Scholarship for Acteens from the WMU Foundation. (WMU)



STANBROUGH



WELLS

## Samford to host Legacy League gala event

For the first time, the Scholarship Gala Celebration of Legacy League, an auxiliary of Samford University in Birmingham, will be held on Samford's campus in the Leslie S. Wright Fine Arts Center.

The gala event, which will be May 8 at 6:30 p.m., will combine a culinary feast with a show by Christian illusionist Curt Anderson.

Anderson began performing at age 7 and has performed across the U.S. and six countries, gaining the respect of both the Society of American Magicians and the International Brotherhood of Magicians. He also has been endorsed by Josh McDowell.

Known for making a Lamborghini vanish, Anderson has pledged that the gala show will in-

clude an illusion never before seen in Birmingham.

The vision of Legacy League is to make a difference in the lives of students through need-based scholarships. In recent years, scholarship recipients have come

from families facing extraordinary challenges.

Reservations are required for the event and can be made at [www.samford.edu/legacyleague](http://www.samford.edu/legacyleague) through May 2. For more information, call 205-726-2247. (Legacy League)

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Households headed by a person 55 and older spent **\$7.6 billion**

(MetLife Report on American Grandparents)

on infant food, equipment, clothing, toys and games. That's up 71 percent since 1999.



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## PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services

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**Pakistani Christians sentenced to death for blasphemy**

LAHORE, Pakistan — Sawan Masih, now the second Christian on death row on blasphemy charges along with Asia Bibi, was sentenced by Lahore Additional District and Sessions Judge Chaudhry Ghulam Murtaza at the Kot Lakhpath Jail in Lahore, Pakistan. He also was fined \$2,027.

Accusations against Masih sparked the destruction of 180 Christian-owned homes and shops in Lahore's Joseph Colony in March 2013; an anti-terrorism court freed the 133 Muslim suspects in spite of strong video evidence against them. Masih was accused of insulting the prophet of Islam during a drunken conversation with a Muslim friend March 8, 2013.

Amnesty International said Pakistan should immediately release Masih and quash his conviction. David Griffiths, Amnesty's Deputy Asia Pacific director, said, "There are serious concerns about the fairness of his trial."

**Convert from Islam hospitalized after father beats her**

IKI-IKI, Uganda — Wenene Nuru, 23, of Iki-Iki township in Palisa District of Uganda, dreamed about praying in a church after listening to a Christian-Muslim dialogue on "The Sonship of Jesus Christ" on the radio Feb. 28.

After her dream, Nuru said she went to a celebration where a pastor told her about "Christ being born in a person's heart" and she accepted Christ. Like most converts from Islam, Nuru kept her new faith a secret. However, the next day a neighbor who had attended the same party informed her father about her conversion.

On March 4, her father, Nuru Rajabu, beat her and began looking for a knife to kill her, she said. A neighbor came to her rescue and she later found lodging at a nearby church and was taken to a hospital the next day.

**St. Petersburg Pentecostal church liquidated**

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia — A St. Petersburg, Russia, Pentecostal church has been liquidated for alleged illegal educational activity.

Harvest Church lawyer Sergei Chugunov stated the St. Petersburg prosecutor "could simply have demanded an end to the activities they deemed illegal and taken action in the event of disobedience." The church continues to meet for worship and intends to appeal the liquidation.

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# A Certain Trumpet

Sermons by Alabama Baptists

## The Ten Commandments — Fourth in a series

### Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy

**W**e live in a stressful world. The pace of life seems to accelerate with each passing year. Future predictions call for an even faster pace without any promise of slowdowns. With less rest comes more stress, and with more stress comes more mess. The breakdown of so many situations can be traced to a life on the run. Never before has there been so much information thrown at a culture and never before has there been so little wisdom. Is there a solution to this complex situation?

A remedy to out-of-control lifestyles is to apply on a regular basis the principle of the fourth commandment. It is remarkable how a law given on Mount Sinai to a generation of freed slaves finds application to modern times. Such is the awesome power of God's Word.

Just like cars need refueling to continue functioning, God's people are to set aside a Sabbath day to rest and reflect. The Bible warns against running out of gas physically, emotionally and especially, spiritually.

#### A positive voice

The fourth commandment is a positive voice in the middle of what not to do (Ex. 20:8-11). It contains more words than any other commandment. The grind of the workweek is to be punctuated with intentional rest and worship. To ignore God's guidance in this area is to invite a double dose of soul fatigue and the wrong decisions that flow from this serious condition.

The commandment begins with a demand to remember and not forget or neglect (Ex. 20:8). Here is not a suggestion with a take it or leave it attitude but an intentional event written into the schedule every week. The word Sabbath means stoppage and it carries the idea of stopping one thing in order to focus on something else — holiness. The pattern was set by God in creation. In six days He formed the earth and all the support systems for life and on the seventh day He rested. In this way, God created a sanctuary in time to consider how emptiness had become fullness and beauty. His example of rest did not come from exhaustion but to provide a pattern of work and rest into the fiber of human existence. God still can take nothing and make something beautiful. That reminder is essential to keep us



By Jerry M. Henry, Ph.D.

*Jerry M. Henry is pastor of FBC Fairhope and a published author. He currently serves on the state convention resolutions committee and Judson's board of governors.*

from drifting into self-centeredness. We are not the Creator — He is. We are not our sustainer — He is.

The scope of this command includes not only the householder but also those within his household (Ex. 20:10). Responsibility lies with one's self and with those dependent on his care. The broad reach of this responsibility includes strangers within a person's gates.

An updated version of the fourth commandment is given in Deuteronomy 5:12-14. A new generation is ready to enter the promised land. Moses reemphasizes godly conduct to them. The identity as God's people calls for behavior structured by the same Ten Commandments. The Sabbath requirement was still listed as the fourth commandment and still had the most words of any of the commandments.

What had changed is the motive. What had been a Sabbath rest and holiness based on the God of creation now had the motive of the God of redemption — the rescue from Egypt. The God who brought the Israelites out of Egypt also was the God who would bring them into the promised land. On a weekly basis, this new generation needed the renewed emphasis to focus on the power of God to accomplish His promises. The previous generation had backed down when they should have stepped up. Now this generation on the plains of Moab should focus on God's power to deliver and not fall victim to the same trap of the previous generation. The changed motive demonstrates the flexibility of God's Word to resource each and every generation to face the demands of their faithful calling.

Jesus took the fourth commandment seriously. He had a regular attendance to the synagogue and temple services. It also was in those services that He accomplished some of His most amazing miracles. Wor-

ship, compassion and the teaching of God's Word were all ingredients of a Jesus Sabbath.

The Sabbath was so important to Jesus that He directly challenged the religious leaders in their rules and regulations concerning its observance. In fact, the animosity of those leaders was ignited because Jesus and His disciples did activities that were strictly forbidden by their Sabbath laws. He even stated that He was Lord of the Sabbath (Luke 6:5) and that the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27). Jesus does this not by accident but to deliberately go head-to-head with the Sabbath rules.

The officials had gotten so far off course from the original design of the Sabbath day that Jesus felt compelled to restore its purpose. Their stinging accusation was that a healed lame man was a Sabbath breaker because he carried his mat (John 5:9-10). Jesus was willing to put His life in jeopardy to restore compassion to the keeping of the fourth commandment.

The New Testament Church transferred its worship day from the Sabbath to the first day of the week — Sunday. Since the church celebrated the resurrected Savior, the day that He rose from the grave was set apart. This pattern was started by the disciples and continued by the early Church. The first day of the week represents God's new creation as He brings about a new heaven and new earth through the work of Jesus Christ.

#### A day of rest

What should a believer do on the day set apart to rest and worship if it is a workday, such as for first responders, shift workers, ministers and others? Their option is to find another day that can meet the needs that Sunday supplies. Sooner or later, the drain of not having a day of rest and worship will take its toll.

The fourth commandment gives the principle of rest and worship instead of a set of rules and regulations to be followed. Jesus pointed out the error of wrong rules being applied. Certainly the keeping of this commandment involves a time of personal worship, corporate worship, Christian fellowship, family time and rest. Things should be done to realign our focus on the God who loves us, the Christ who saves us and the Spirit who guides us.

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy and it will keep you. 🕊

## Obama asked to pressure Saudis to revise textbooks

**C**iting paragraphs that disparage Christians, label Jews "pigs" and teach that execution is an Islamic response to gay sex, some Americans are asking President Barack Obama to demand that Saudi Arabia remove religious bigotry from its official school textbooks.

Obama visited Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah on March 28, an opportunity, textbook critics said, to argue that these primers fuel Islamic militancy both countries have pledged to counter.

Led by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), a Washington-based think tank, American groups also are pressuring the president to release a 2012 State Department report that details offensive material within the books.

"It's an issue that affects the security of the American people and affects religious groups to which a large number of Americans belong," said David Weinberg, a senior fellow at FDD. And the State Department report, he continued, was funded with taxpayer dollars. "The American people have a very solid justification for wanting to see the contents of that report."

#### Working with Saudis

But the State Department is not inclined to make the report public. Deputy spokeswoman Marie Harf said March 25 that the report is an internal document commissioned to drive the work of State Department officials who have been trying to get the Saudis to revise their curricula.

"We believe it's best and most effective to work with the Saudis on this directly," Harf said.

"We know there's more work to be done. We've been very clear about that publicly," she said. "Every country reforms at its own pace."

But those who have worked to highlight bigotry within Saudi textbooks deem the Saudis' "own pace" unacceptably slow and note that the Saudi government produces these books not only for schools in Saudi Arabia but for Muslim schools throughout the world.

Weinberg noted, "The U.S. has been urging the Saudis to address this issue for over a decade. But students going through the Saudi educational system are still being indoctrinated with these ideas. It is evident that the quiet diplomatic approach that has been preferred by the State Department has been a formula for failure." (RNS)

"And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?" 1 Cor. 14:8



# UMobile Leadership Banquet

## North notes importance of becoming a role model

A man described by U.S. President Ronald Reagan as “an American hero” said he sees hope for the future in the “Spirit-empowered leaders” being educated at the University of Mobile (UMobile).

Lt. Col. Oliver North praised the university during his keynote address at the 9th annual University of Mobile Leadership Banquet, held March 27 at the Mobile Con-

vention Center. More than 800 people gathered for the event.

North served 22 years as a Marine officer. His awards for service in combat include the Silver Star, the Bronze Star for valor and two Purple Hearts for wounds in action. He has authored 13 books, all *New York Times* best sellers.

Assigned to the National Security Council staff in the Reagan administration, North was the U.S. government’s counter-terrorism

coordinator from 1983 to 1986. He was involved in planning the rescue of 804 medical students on the island of Grenada and played a major role in the capture of the terrorists who hijacked the cruise ship *Achille Lauro*. Since 2001, he has been the host of “War Stories.”

During the banquet, North emphasized the importance of preparing the next generation for leadership.

“Every student that I met (at

UMobile) has been intent on gathering the skills and tools that they need to help change the world,” he said. “That effort is important not just to the city of Mobile, not just to the state of Alabama, but it’s important to this country.”

North spoke about the importance of role models, noting a senior military officer served as his role model and ultimately paved the way for his own relationship with Jesus Christ. (UMobile)



Lt. Col. Oliver North (right) talks with University of Mobile President Mark Foley during his campus visit March 27.

Photo courtesy of University of Mobile

## Want to know God?

By Pastor Brian Lee  
Shades Crest Baptist Church, Bluff Park

If you own an iPhone and are looking for an alarm clock to use, there’s an app for that. Actually there are more than 6,000 apps for that. They range from the “Alarm Clock HD” that enables you to read your Facebook posts in the morning to the “Wake and Shake Alarm Clock” that requires you to shake your phone furiously to shut off the noise.

So when it comes to alarm clock options to help us get going in the morning, there are plenty of them. Sometimes, however, that’s just not enough. We need something more. As one person put it, “I’ve got a clock that tells me when to get up. I just need one that tells me why.”

Perhaps you can relate with that. Outwardly you seem to have a great life going. You’ve got a decent job, a nice family and good friends. It ought to be enough, but it isn’t. Somewhere deep inside there’s a longing for something more, but you just can’t seem to put your finger on what that something more is.

Have you ever considered that maybe what you’re missing is a connection with God? That’s what a man named Augustine discovered more than 1,500 years ago. After giving himself to everything his world had to offer, he came to realize that what he needed most was a relationship with God through Christ.

He would later write, “You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless, until they can find rest in You.”

If you feel that restlessness inside and have never opened your life to God, then you are missing the very foundation on which life is built. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). That’s what God wants for everyone.

You can experience that life by trusting Christ to forgive your sins and allowing Him to be the leader of your life.

So if you’re looking for a real reason to get going in the morning, I have good news. There’s a God for that.

## MARKET PLACE

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### CHURCH POSITIONS

**SENIOR PASTOR:** First Baptist Church of Phenix City, Ala., is seeking to hire a senior pastor. Seminary graduate, advanced degrees preferred. Experience in full church ministry a plus. Please send resumé or c/v to: First Baptist Church, Phenix City, P.O. Box 260, Phenix City, AL 36867.

**PASTOR:** Is God calling you to rural Missouri? First Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: P.O. Box 627, Gainesville, MO 65655, or email: bjnn.kiger@gmail.com. Include sermon link if available.

**PASTOR:** South Hamilton Baptist Church is accepting resúmes for pastor. Full-time and bivocational resúmes are being accepted. Please send resúmes to: 1805 Military Street S., Hamilton, AL 35570, or email to: southhamilton@gmail.com.

**PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC:** Westwood Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala., is currently seeking resúmes for the position of minister of music (part-time). Services include blend of contemporary and traditional music. Email your resumé to: steve.potts@wbclive.com or call 205-798-3341.

**PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC:** Hanceville FBC is seeking a part-time minister of music. Primary goal to lead church and choir utilizing blended music in such a way that they encounter God in worship. Additional questions will be discussed during the interview process. Please send your resumé to: resume@hancevillefirstbaptist.com.

**BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC DIRECTOR:** Flatwoods Baptist Church in Northport, Ala., is seeking a bivocational music director who will serve the church by planning and leading our worship/music ministry. The music director will be responsible for coordinating with all the church staff in planning, scheduling and directing the music program and ministries of the church. We are seeking someone who is a talented and passionate leader to plan and conduct

a God-inspired music ministry. Send resumé to: fwbcpersonnel@hotmail.com.

**PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER:** Meek Baptist Church in Arley, Ala., is seeking a godly man to lead our choir and congregation in blended style worship. Email resumé: meekbaptist@att.net. www.meekbc.com.

**STUDENT MINISTER:** First Baptist Church, Dothan, Ala., is seeking and praying for God’s person to fill a student minister position for students in grades 7–12, as well as the college-aged students. If interested, please feel free to forward your resumé to our Youth Advisory Committee Chairman, Courtney Mann. courtneymann@fbcdothan.org.

**FAMILY PASTOR:** FBC Valley, Ala., is seeking a full-time family pastor. This position will work to disciple our children, youth, as well as work with parents. Please send resúmes to: tammy@fbcvalley.org.

**MINISTER OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES:** First Baptist Church of Foley, Ala., is accepting resúmes for the full-time position of minister of children and families. Please email resúmes to: scollins@fbcfoley.com.

**CHILDREN’S MINISTER:** Good Hope Baptist Church in Eclectic, Ala., is seeking a bivocational or part-time children’s minister. It is desired that applicants have an academic degree of childhood development nature or experience with children’s ministry. Please submit resúmes to: kmcghee32@gmail.com or call Libbye McGhee at 334-312-0610 for more information.

### OTHER POSITIONS

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This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through  
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# Greene County raids close last nontribal casinos in state

**G**reene County must follow the same rules related to the game of bingo as all other counties do, according to an April 1 ruling by the Alabama Supreme Court.

Issuing decisions from six separate cases in one order, the court dealt with two cases from 2011 and four from the recent March 31 raid when state law en-

forcement agents seized more than 1,000 gambling machines and an undisclosed amount of cash from four casinos.

The casinos raided were Greenetrack and Greene Charity Bingo in Eutaw and Frontier Bingo and River's Edge in Knoxville.

The seized gambling machines and money will be held as evidence and will be subject

to forfeiture procedures in the Circuit Court of Greene County, according to a press release from Attorney General Luther Strange's office.

"These casinos were operating in open defiance of the rule of law, and we have been left with no alternative but to treat this as we would any other law enforcement matter," Strange said.

Two of the casinos, Greenetrack and Frontier Bingo, also were raided by state law enforcement agents in 2011, but Judge Houston Brown had overturned the seizure and ordered the state to return the machines.

In the April 1 ruling, the state Supreme Court vacated and nullified Brown's orders. The court held that Brown's ruling was "based on an erroneous understanding of the judge's role in the warrant process. ... If a mistaken understanding of law is used as a framework to assess the facts presented by the witness, the mistake is the court's, not the witness's."

The Greene County casinos were the only nontribal, large-scale electronic gambling operations still doing business in the

state until the March 31 raid. Now all but the three casinos owned by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians in Atmore, Wetumpka and Tallapoosa are closed in the state.

Milton McGregor's Victory-Land in Macon County remains shut down after it was raided by state troopers in February 2013. Houston County's facility operates only paper bingo now since its machines were ruled illegal in 2013, and the casino in White Hall (Lowndes County) was shut down in 2012. The machines at McGregor's Birmingham Race Course lasted only a few days before they were ruled illegal in 2005.

Strange has challenged the legality of the Poarch operations as well. A case is currently pending in federal court. (TAB)



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## State marijuana oil research bill becomes law June 1

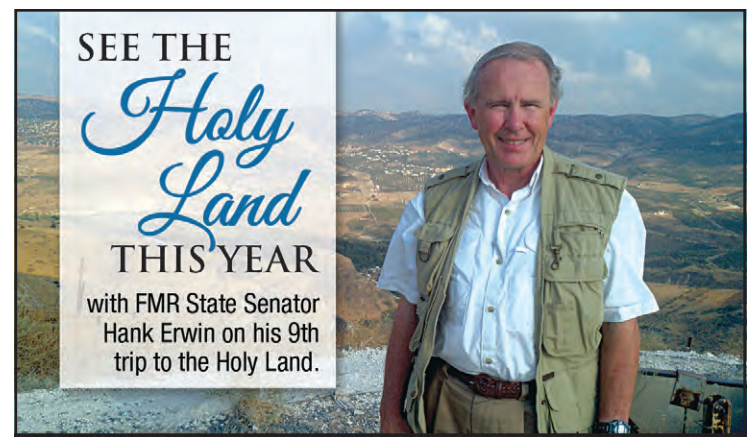
**L**egislation that would fund a University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Department of Neurology study on the effectiveness of using cannabidiol (CBD) oil — a marijuana derivative — to treat severe seizures becomes law effective June 1. Gov. Robert Bentley signed the bill April 1.

Known as "Carly's Law" and named after a 3-year-old Birmingham girl who experiences uncontrollable seizures caused by a genetic disorder, the bill (Senate Bill 174) passed the Legislature unanimously March 20. It was sponsored by Sen. Paul Sanford, R-Huntsville.

Sanford previously had noted in news reports that the biggest challenge for the legislation was the marijuana connection.

But Bentley said, "As a doctor, I have always been supportive of medical research to discover new medicines that may be able to cure or treat some of our most chronic diseases. I hope this Alabama-led medical study can bring relief to children, like Carly Chandler."

The new law will fund \$1 million for the study, but UAB can't proceed until it receives approval from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (TAB)



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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For April 13

## Explore the Bible By Robert Olsen, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

**FORGE GODLY FRIENDSHIPS**  
**Proverbs 22:24-25; 17:14, 19; 26:21; 25:19; 13:20; 14:17, 22, 29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 3:3-4; 16:6; 20:6; 10:12; 11:17; 15:17; 17:17; 18:24; 27:9**

**Consider Consequences**  
**(22:24-25; 17:14, 19; 26:21; 25:19; 13:20; 14:22)**

In 1 Corinthians 15:33, Paul tells us to be careful with whom we associate: "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals.'" These Proverbs reflect this advice from Paul. Christians need to walk a fine line in whom they choose for company. We need to understand that we are called to love our neighbor but not necessarily to live like him. The Proverbs in this section warn us to be careful of how we interact with others. Christians surely cannot neglect people who are different than we are. In fact, the opposite is true. Jesus hung out with the tax collectors and "sinners" — those who were the unlovable ones in society — and we are to do the same. But we always need to be careful to make sure we have close, reliable Christian friends who can encourage us in our Christian walk. If we hang out with people who are easily angered (Prov. 22:24-25) we may also begin to become easily angered. There are many stories in our society about a "good kid" who got mixed up with the wrong crowd and eventually joined in their behavior. We need to be grounded in Christ — knowing who we are in Christ and knowing how we are to live and act — before we can really minister to those around us. Having good friends who are positive Christian examples to us can help us remain focused on Christ in a world that tries to pull us away from God. With God's help we do all that is possible to build and maintain godly friendships.

**Cultivate Patience**  
**(14:17, 29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11)**

People who are hot-tempered are dangerous. It is important to note that being hot-tempered or quick-tempered is different than being angry. Being angry is not necessarily a

sin — Jesus became angry at times, and He was sinless (for one example see Mark 3:5). A Christian can be angry over an injustice that occurs, like corruption in politics or hearing about a crime. The key for a Christian is not to lose one's temper and not to hate the individuals involved in the injustice. When people lose their temper they are prone to foolishness. Yelling at people, harboring bad thoughts toward people or getting physically violent are all possible outcomes for "blowing a fuse." Instead Christians are to exhibit patience. If we are walking with God on a regular basis, reading the Bible and praying, it helps us remember that God is patient with us and we are to be patient with others, showing love to those who offend us or who bother us. This should be a mark of a Christian as it is one of the fruits of the Spirit. Christians should be known to be patient with others, whether it is waiting in line at the grocery store, waiting behind slow traffic or dealing with difficult and angry people. Christians build and maintain godly friendships by cultivating patience.

**Communicate Loyalty and Love**  
**(3:3-4; 16:6; 20:6; 10:12; 11:17; 15:17; 17:17; 18:24; 27:9)**

When one thinks of the qualities of a friend, loyalty, faithfulness and love come to mind. These Proverbs emphasize that these are the characteristics of a true friend. Many friendships today are ended over trivialities or small disagreements. It is easy to give up on another person when they offend you, and some people in society suggest it is OK to use other people to get ahead. However, the Bible teaches that if you are a friend with someone in order to promote yourself or as a stepping stone, you are clearly wrong. True friendship is valuing the person because they are made in God's image and worthy of loyalty, love and respect. A Christian stands by his friends in tough times and is there to comfort them in difficulties, confront them when they are wrong and laugh with them in times of joy. We build and maintain godly friendships by communicating loyalty and love.

## Bible Studies for Life By Catherine Lawrence Department of Religion, Samford University

**HOPE NEEDED**  
**2 Samuel 9:6-13**

Christians need hope. When we fail, we need hope. When we are in pain, we need hope. When we have regrets, we need hope. When life takes strange and difficult turns, we need hope. When our past rises up to condemn us, we need hope. Our lessons for the next several weeks seek to help us understand and receive the hope God offers for these very circumstances and for every other circumstance of our lives. Today's lesson is drawn from an incident in which David, king of Israel, had an opportunity to extend hope to someone who may have thought he was beyond hope.

Second Samuel 9:1-13 tells of David's loyalty to his friend Jonathan, the son of King Saul. David and Jonathan had established a covenant with one another (1 Sam. 18:1-5; 20:12-17, 42; 23:15-18), whereby David had promised always to show loyalty to Jonathan and his descendants. Now both Jonathan and his father Saul were dead (1 Sam. 31:1-6), and David had become king over all Israel (2 Sam. 5:1-5). In order to honor his covenant with Jonathan, King David initiated a search for any of Saul's descendants who remained alive. Ziba, a former servant of Saul, informed David that a son of Jonathan was still alive and residing east of the Jordan River in Lo-debar (2 Sam. 9:5). This son's name was Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth had been crippled in both feet since age 5 (2 Sam. 4:4; 9:3, 13). When David heard the news, he sent for Jonathan's son.

**Hope Extended (6-7)**

When Mephibosheth appeared before the king, he approached David with appropriate expressions of deference and respect (2 Sam. 9:6). David's initial response, "Do not be afraid," suggests that Mephibosheth had entered the king's presence with great fear and trembling. Fear would have been understandable since it was common practice for a new king to eradicate all potential claimants to the throne of the previous king (see

1 Kings 15:29, 16:11; 2 Kings 10:6-7; 2 Sam. 21:1-14). As a remaining claimant to Saul's throne, Mephibosheth very well may have feared for his life as he approached David, but David reassured him that he had no need to fear. The king intended to express his loyalty to Jonathan and to the covenant they had established by showing kindness to his son, Mephibosheth. David promised to give to Mephibosheth all the land that had once belonged to his grandfather Saul; in addition, Mephibosheth would always eat at the king's table. In a situation where Mephibosheth had every reason to fear, David extended hope.

**Hope Questioned (8)**

Upon hearing that David's intention was to exhibit kindness to him, Mephibosheth questioned his own worthiness. He referred to himself as a "dead dog." Mephibosheth knew that because of his family ties he represented a potential threat to David, and yet he found himself experiencing the favor of the king.

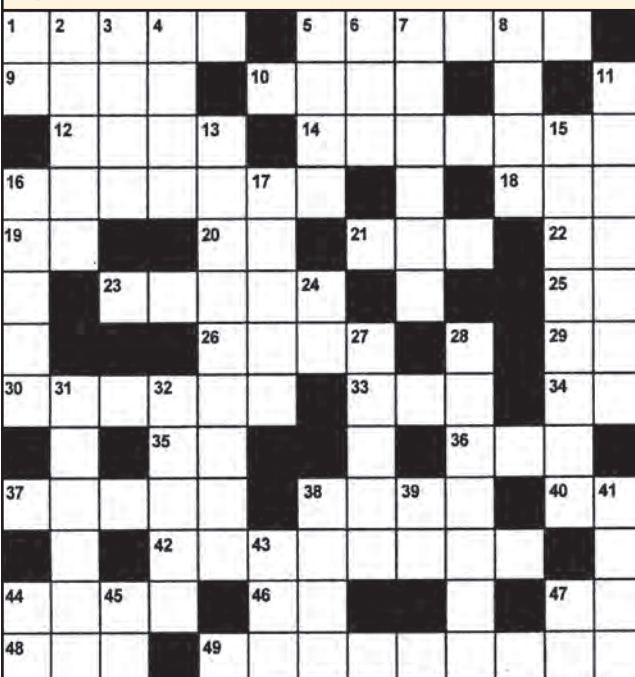
**Hope Embraced (9-13)**

David arranged for the sons and servants of Ziba, Saul's former servant, to work the land on behalf of Mephibosheth. The resulting produce of the land provided Mephibosheth with an income. More importantly Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem and always ate at the king's table, just as David's own sons would have done (vv. 11, 13). The passage does not comment on whether Mephibosheth continued to see himself as an unworthy recipient of the king's kindness. We can hope that he fully embraced his good fortune and allowed himself to enjoy the benefits of living under David's care. If he did, perhaps it was because Mephibosheth came to see that his own personal sense of worthiness (or unworthiness) was of no consequence. Mephibosheth's hope — and the ground from which sprung every good thing he received — lay solely in the king's determination to be faithful to his covenant with Jonathan.

Ultimately hope is not dependent upon past or present circumstances. Hope lies in God and in His determination to be faithful to His children.

## Christian Crossword

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**Across**

- Sermon on the \_\_\_\_ (Matt. 5-7)
- Barabbas was in prison for insurrection and this. (Luke 23:19)
- Old Testament priest and book.
- Hill made of sand.
- Beersheba means "well of the \_\_\_\_." (Gen. 21:31)
- The Lord will do this to Zion. (Isa. 51:3)
- The Sovereign Lord will \_\_\_\_ His anger on Israel. (Ezek. 7:3)
- O taste and \_\_\_\_ that the Lord is good. (Ps. 34:8)
- Master of Education. (abbr.)
- A, B, C, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_.
- What the risen Jesus did with broiled fish. (Luke 24:43)
- Mister. (abbr.)
- I will not \_\_\_\_ you as orphans. (John 14:18)
- Annum. (abbr.)
- Where lions lie down. (Ps. 104:22)
- Radium. (abbr.)

- Nehemiah prayed before the God of \_\_\_\_ (Neh. 1:4)
- One of Noah's sons. (Gen. 6:10)
- J, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_.
- Slang for simple.
- Little Jack Horner's pastry.
- A half shekel was given to \_\_\_\_ for one's life. (Ex. 30:15)
- A servant for life had an awl put through this. (Deut. 15:17)
- District Superintendent. (abbr.)
- The apostles were unschooled, \_\_\_\_ men. (Acts 4:13)
- Jesus' garment did not have one of these. (John 19:23)
- I \_\_\_\_ WHO I AM. (Ex. 3:14)
- Expression of mild sympathy.
- Is the Lord's \_\_\_\_ too short?
- Boaz told his men not to do this to Ruth. (Ruth 2:15)

**Down**

- Come to \_\_\_\_, all you who are weary. (Matt. 11:28)
- Layer of the atmosphere.
- Mountains in Asia.
- Nickname for Nathan.
- You expected \_\_\_\_, but see, it turned out to be little. (Hag. 1:9)
- One in Spanish.
- Type of place where 5,000 were fed. (Mark 6:35)
- One of the kinds of love.
- Believers receive this kind of life.
- Son of Rehob. (2 Sam. 8:3)
- Others \_\_\_\_, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." (Acts 17:18)
- An inheritance of Asher. (Josh. 19:30)
- Number of Sceva's sons. (Acts 19:14)
- \_\_\_\_ Gedi. (1 Sam. 24:1)
- An inheritance of Issachar. (Josh. 19:19)
- Paul appealed to him. (Acts 25:25)
- Jewish queen of Persia.

- This of the wicked is like that of a snake. (Ps. 58:4)
- Zacchaeus sat on one of these. (Luke 19)
- Bachelor of Arts. (abbr.)
- The people of Rabbah labored with these. (1 Chron. 20:3)
- Starting a quarrel is like breaching one of these. (Prov. 17:14)
- Salvation Army. (abbr.)
- I \_\_\_\_ the light of the world. (John 8:12)
- \_\_\_\_ a hen gathers her chicks. (Matt. 23:37)



# TOP 10

downloaded songs from iTunes

## CHRISTIAN & GOSPEL



### 1. Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)

By Hillsong UNITED  
(Zion)



### 2. God's Not Dead

By Newsboys  
(God's Not Dead)



### 3. We Believe

By Newsboys  
(Restart)

### 4. K-Love Fan Awards: Songs of the Year (2014 Mash-Up)

By Anthem Lights



### 5. This Is Amazing Grace

By Phil Wickham  
(The Ascension)



### 6. Shake

By MercyMe  
(Welcome to the New)



### 7. Angel Child

By Missy Robertson  
(Angel Child)



### 8. Write Your Story

By Francesca Battistelli  
(If We're Honest)



### 9. Beautiful Day

By Jamie Grace  
(Ready to Fly)

### 10. Keep Making Me

By Sidewalk Prophets  
(Live Like That)



Photos courtesy of Fair Trade Services

Christian rock band Hawk Nelson is made up of lead singer Jonathan Steingard (left), drummer Justin Benner (center) and bass player Daniel Biro.

# Making a difference

## Christian band Hawk Nelson calls teens to take 'stand for Christ'

By Leann Callaway  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

At their concerts, the Christian rock band Hawk Nelson encourages teenagers to be the hands and feet of Christ while making a difference in their schools and communities.

"One of the messages that we share with teenagers is that they are never too young to start making a difference in this world," bass player Daniel Biro said. "Treating others with kindness and being faithful in the little things are ways to impact people for Christ.

We always want to encourage students to be different from the rest of the world and to live a life that makes a bold stand for Christ."

In addition to Biro, the band is made up of lead singer Jonathan Steingard and drummer Justin Benner.

The songs on their album, "Made," reflect their desire to inspire people to take action and live for what matters most.

"Each of us was created with a plan and purpose by a God who loves us and wants to be involved in our daily lives," Steingard said. "That's the theme for the record, and everything was formed around that idea."

### Songs inspired by personal experiences

As a way to encourage others, their original songs are inspired by personal experiences they have encountered through the years.

"A couple of our songs are about difficult situations, such as my parents' divorce when I was a teenager," Biro said. "There was definitely a period of life when I didn't forgive my mom. With maturity, God showed me that I had to forgive her. By sharing difficult experiences through songs, we

hope to minister to others who are also dealing with tough times."

In an effort to encourage young people to reach out and make a difference in the lives of other people, the band members often share about a variety of missions organizations at their concerts.

"We've really felt compelled to do more than just have an entertaining concert," Biro said. "We want to use our platform to make a difference in this world. As Christians, we're called to be the hands and feet of Jesus and to help widows and orphans in need."



Wherever the group performs, band members desire to connect audiences to the gospel.

"A lot of times, music can relate to people in a way that spoken words are unable to," Steingard said.

"Music has a unique ability to bring people together and connect ideas. The stories that we hear about people being impacted by the songs are so cool, but it's even more incredible to think about how God is orchestrating all the events in their lives and allowing

[people] to hear a certain song in the exact moment they need it the most. We're amazed at how God continues to use these songs to connect people to His redeeming love and forgiveness."

More than having a passion for music, the group has a calling to touch lives.

"There is nothing more fulfilling than impacting lives for Christ," Biro said. "We always encourage teenagers to find something they are passionate about, whether it's drawing, writing, cooking or sports, and to use those talents for God's glory. I think that God can use that little spark of willingness and a desire to be used for His glory and do amazing things." ❧

Source: iTunes at press time

# Living Water



## Baptist youth making a difference, promoting water projects

**O**ne high school student's dream prompted a church to raise more than \$94,000 for a ministry that provides clean water sources to people in developing nations. About five years ago, Katie Honeycutt, a sophomore in the youth group at Sugar Land Baptist Church in Texas, fell asleep in the car on a family road trip. She dreamed about her Houston-area youth group holding fundraising events for Living Water International, an organization she had heard about at school.

When she awoke, she described the dream to her mother, who encouraged her to tell Debi Foley, associate pastor to students at Sugar Land Baptist.

"She came to me with a folder filled with information about Living Water International," Foley recalled.

The faith-based nonprofit organization in nearby Stafford, Texas, exists "to demonstrate the love of God by helping communities acquire desperately needed clean water and experience 'Living Water' — the gospel of Jesus Christ — which alone satisfies the deepest thirst," according to its mission statement. Living Water's board of directors

includes Mark Hartman, pastor of Sugar Creek Baptist Church, Sugar Land, Texas, and Chris Seay, pastor of Ecclesia Church, Houston, Texas.

"Living Water International not only builds wells across the globe to help bring clean drinking water, but they also do hygiene classes with the community and train individuals in each location in well-maintenance," Foley said.

The ministry grew out of a 1990 missions trip to Kenya involving about three dozen volunteers from Sugar Creek Baptist. It began by teaching Kenyans in the Mombasa area how to drill a water well, and it grew into a ministry that has resulted in 12,797 completed water projects in 23 countries, mostly in Africa, South Asia and Latin America.

### Raising awareness

Honeycutt presented a plan to Foley, complete with ideas about how to involve the church's youth group in various events to raise money for the ministry and raise awareness about the need for clean water in developing nations.

"I told her, 'If you have the plan and the vision, I am in full support,'" Foley recalled.

The student group washed cars and donated all the proceeds to Living Water.

Another initiative involved Project H2O, in which church

members were challenged to drink nothing but water for two weeks and donate any money they would have spent on beverages to Living Water.

"It has made our church aware of the number of people around the globe who don't have access to something that we often take for granted," Foley said.

The youth group also organized an annual churchwide dessert auction. The students provide entertainment and church members bid on donated baked goods. Proceeds are designated for well-drilling projects.

"The dessert auction raised \$13,000 in one night early on, and we raised \$22,000 in one night last year," Foley said.

In five years, the youth group has inspired Sugar Land Baptist to donate \$94,817 to build and maintain 12 wells in Africa and India.

"What started as a dream has become a reality for 12 different communities, including a school in Uganda," Foley said. "In those 12 locations, there is now access to clean drinking water, information about proper hygiene and the knowledge of the Living Water of Jesus Christ."

Sugar Land Baptist Pastor Phil Lineberger praised the students' commitment to alleviating human suffering.

"It speaks volumes about their priorities and their sensitivity to the most pressing needs of our world. That cup of water given in Jesus' name is ministry extended to Jesus Himself," he said.

Honeycutt, now a graphic design major at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, has returned home to Sugar Land Baptist for every dessert auction. "It was never about me or something I had to lead — it always was something we could do together as a youth group," she said. (ABP)

## Get involved through Pure Water, Pure Love

**T**hanks to the support of Southern Baptists, national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) was once again able to provide more than 1,000 water filters and filter replacement parts to missionaries serving in the United States and around the world in 2013 through its Pure Water, Pure Love ministry.

"[Providing the water filters and replacement parts for the missionaries] is the primary goal of this ministry, but we also seek to provide clean water for the people the missionaries serve," said Kristy Carr, ministry consultant for national WMU.

Individuals, churches and Christian organizations help provide the clean drinking water by funding well drilling and/or water purification systems, she said, noting the ministry also provides filter pumps, water bottles that filter water while traveling, tablets and chemical purifiers.

The cost of water filters ranges from a \$50 personal water bottle to a \$250 home unit. The initial cost is usually \$400 to \$500 for a missionary family. This provides the family with a home unit, travel-sized filters and replacement filters. The cost of well projects is determined by the location and its needs. They typically range from \$2,000 to \$15,000.

Carr said churches have come up with creative ways to raise money for the ministry.

"One great example is to plan a 5K or fun run," she said. "The RA and GA members at Mount Zion Baptist Church in Warrior are hosting a 5K Run/Walk on May 10."

For more information about Pure Water, Pure Love, visit [www.wmu.com/pwpl](http://www.wmu.com/pwpl). Donations may be sent to WMU, c/o PWPL, P.O. Box 830010, Birmingham, AL 35283-0010. (WMU)



A young Nicaraguan girl drinks clean water.



Living Water International is a faith-based nonprofit organization that demonstrates the love of God by helping communities acquire desperately needed water wells for clean water.