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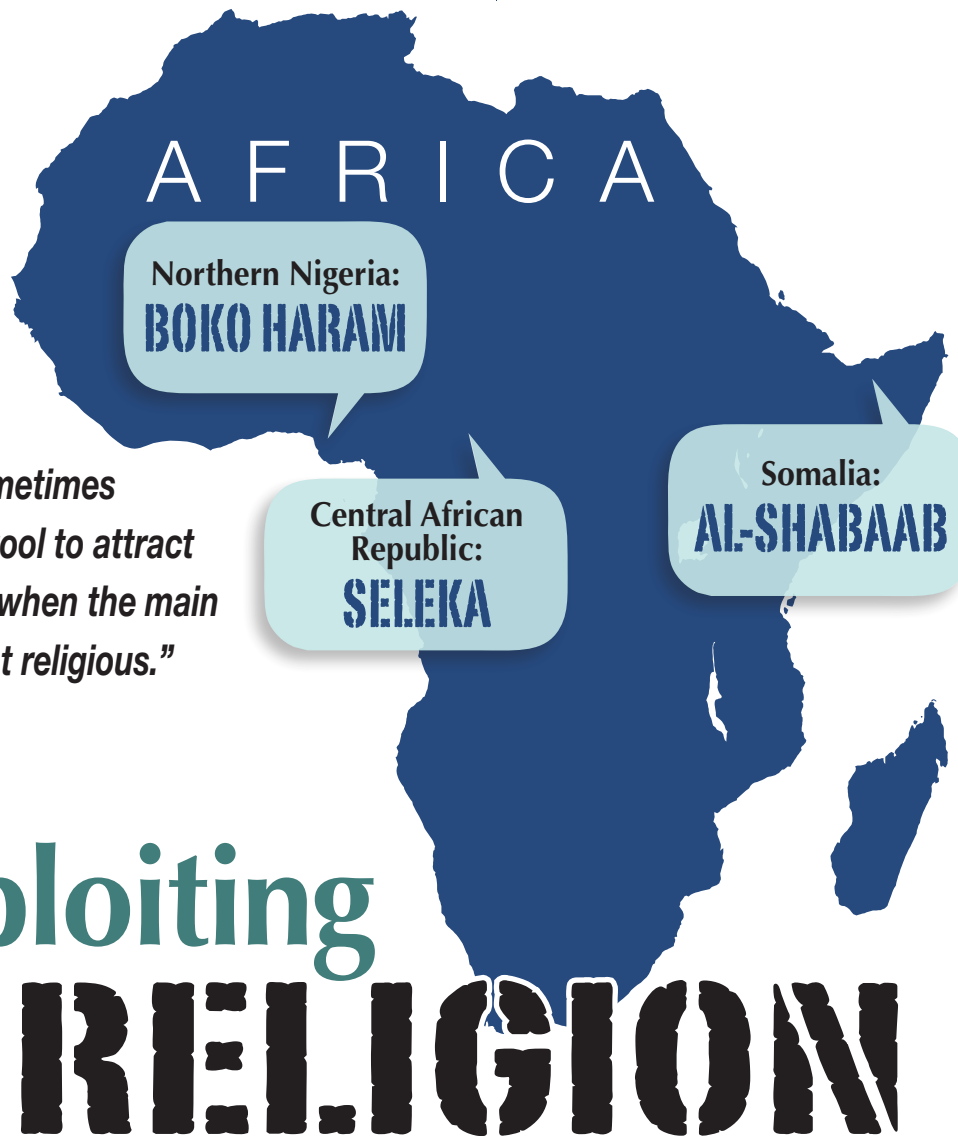
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"Religion is sometimes exploited as a tool to attract attention even when the main complaint is not religious."

Jesse Mugambi
University of Nairobi

Africa's Islamic extremist groups on rise; religion blamed for disturbance

In the days after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks al-Qaida became a household name. But today other extremist Islamist groups, many in Africa, are vying for headlines.

Recently the group Boko Haram gained international infamy after it abducted more than 250 schoolgirls. Since 2009, Christians in northern Nigeria have borne the brunt of Boko Haram violence, which has included attacks on churches, schools and government installations.

Now Libyan Christian leaders fear Boko Haram could spread its influence into their country as a result of a renegade former general's campaign

to purge the chaotic country of Islamist militants.

But Africa is home to several other extremist groups.

In the Central African Republic on May 28, a group known as the Seleka militia attacked a Catholic church in the capital, Bangui, where Christians were seeking refuge, killing at least 30 people.

Revenge attacks

The group emerged in September 2012 and the following year it rampaged through the country, attacking churches and missions, before overthrowing the government in March 2013. The group has since lost ground and is now involved in a cycle of revenge attacks against the pro-Christian anti-Balaka rebel group.

Somalia's al-Shabaab has claimed attacks on churches, public places and public transportation in East Africa. The group, which got its start in 2006, began escalating the number of attacks in Kenya

in 2011 when that country sent its troop to Somalia to fight the Islamists. In late May al-Shabaab said it was shifting its war to Kenya.

Extremist groups are not unique to Africa, said Jesse Mugambi, a professor in the University of Nairobi's department of philosophy and religious studies. Al-Qaida-related groups are on the rise in Syria and Yemen, among other spots.

"They arise whenever and wherever there are serious discontents which complainants consider unaddressed or ignored," Mugambi said. "Religion is sometimes exploited as a tool to attract attention even when the main complaint is not religious."

"In the long run, other opportunistic groups take advantage of such chaos — making it difficult to tell who is aggrieved and who is not," he added. "Religion is then blamed for the disturbance, in general, although the majority of citizens remain law-abiding." (RNS)

Christians watch more TV than non-Christians

With three quarters of Americans saying they watch some TV every day, where do Christians rank in those numbers?

According to a new nationwide study by Barna Group in which adults 18 and older were asked what shows they watch and if they're watching at all, practicing Christians tend to watch more TV than non-Christians.

Practicing Catholics watch an average of 3.5 hours per day and practicing Protestants watch an average of 3.1 hours per day.

In contrast, adherents to faiths other than Christianity watch 2.6 hours of TV per day and those of no faith, which includes self-identified atheists and agnostics, watch 2.7 hours.

Church attendance

Church attendance didn't make much of a difference in the number of viewing hours. People who attended church in the past week, those who attended within the past month and those who haven't attended within the past six months all watch an average of 3.2 hours per day.

The Barna research also found that the same TV shows considered popular among the general population are popular among practicing Christians.

Among other findings about watching TV, the research indicated the Internet has edged out TV as Americans' primary source of information, with 54 percent of adults saying they rely on the Internet every day and 52 percent saying they rely on network TV. Half of all adults

say they rely on cable TV on a daily basis. (TAB, Barna)



COMMENT

Pain, Hope and the Church

Do you know the pain of returning to a place filled with bad memories? Do you know how some of those emotions come flooding back, even when one has steeled against them; how you can almost smell the aroma associated with the event?

All who have lived very long have places like that, places we choose to avoid. Next year the General Congress of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) will be in Durban, South Africa, but that is the place where my late wife, Eleanor, suffered the injuries that claimed her life in 1998. We had just completed a BWA project and were on our way to the airport to return home.

When the announcement was made that Durban would be the site of the 2015 Congress, I knew instantly that I would not go even though I have missed only one Congress since 1980. I simply choose not to revisit a place filled with such painful memories.

Understanding the connection of place and memories makes it easy to appreciate decisions by many to use funeral home chapels rather than church auditoriums for funerals. It also helps us empathize with some who find it difficult to return to the church from which their loved one was buried. The first time one walks back into the church after the funeral of a loved one, flashes of the casket sitting at the front of the auditorium, the fragrance of flowers and faces of family and friends rushing across one's memory can be overcoming. I know. I have been there.

Grounded in faith

But there is another reason, a reason grounded in the Christian faith, that argues for using the church building for the funeral and for continuing to worship there following the funeral.

Perhaps the reason can best be illustrated by the cemeteries that surround many of the country churches that dot Alabama's landscape. It wasn't some law that caused early churches to



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

have cemeteries. It was the message of hope they proclaimed.

Central to the Christian faith is the hope of the resurrection. The apostle Paul declares in Romans 1:4 that Jesus "was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." It was this same Jesus who said in John 11:25, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live."

Again the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8:11, "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

Since the fourth century AD, the Christian Church has declared its belief in the resurrection of the dead through the Apostle's Creed, which declares in part, "... I believe in ... the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen."

The Baptist Faith and Message attempts to summarize Christian teaching on resurrection when it says in Section X — Last Things — that "Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised and Christ will judge all men in righteousness." The section goes on to say, "The righteous in their

resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord."

Baptists and other Christians believe the grave is not the end for the body. Even though "dust returns to dust" a day is coming when God in His power will raise the dead in "glorified bodies" and invite the righteous into His everlasting presence.

It was the hope of resurrection that caused cemeteries to spring up around early churches. The church was used for funerals because it was there the hope of resurrection was preached and taught. It was in the church that one came to personal faith in the Lord Jesus and embraced the hope of resurrection as one's own hope for eternity. The last words said over believers were words of hope — words about the coming resurrection.

Hope of the resurrection

Some Christian faiths dedicate burial grounds only for believers of that tradition. Most Protestant churches in America followed a different pattern. Believers were buried in the church cemetery as a way of expressing their commitment to the hope of the resurrection found in personal faith in Jesus Christ as proclaimed by that local church.

Too often we forget the way the Christian faith shaped our practices. Early Baptists recognized that every time they walked by the cemetery on their way to worship they were walking by the graves of saints who shared their hope for the resurrection. The cemetery was a stark illustration that we are "surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses" as Hebrews 12:1 declares.

Today most just rush by the cemetery without ever thinking about why people were buried next to their church instead of some other place.

Think about it. The church is where our loved one first heard the good news of Jesus Christ. It was in the church he or she learned about the hope of the resurrection. It was in the church one accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. It was in the church the God of life and hope was praised. It was in the church that the reality of God living in us as believers was nurtured and the promise of resurrection grew more precious.

Why then should one want the final tribute to live on this earth and the final demonstration of one's hope in the resurrection to be anywhere else but in the church?

And why would one not want to continue worshipping in that church — the place that gives hope in the face of death because of its testimony to the coming resurrection? The church was a place of comfort and hope before the death of our loved one, and it will continue to be a place of comfort and hope afterward if we let it. 🙏

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

HOW JESUS DIED

I enjoyed Dr. David A. Ball's article concerning how Jesus probably died (front page, April 17 issue). His conclusion was death by "ruptured" heart and not by suffocation, as commonly assumed. As a board certified veterinary pathologist, I have never seen a "ruptured" heart. Perhaps a more likely diagnosis would be congestive heart failure, a common cardiac condition. The heart muscle degenerates, becomes weak and is an inefficient pump, thus congestion. Fluid (from the blood) diffuses into body tissues and cavities, such as the

thoracic, abdominal and pericardial cavities. In the case with Jesus, the fluid was mixed with blood (red blood cells). This condition is further seen in Luke 22:44. His sweat was like great drops of blood. Red blood cells were mixed with fluid (sweat) causing it to appear red. A small amount of blood can cause clear fluid to be red, hence blood and water poured from His side.

The red sweat issue was many hours before Jesus' crucifixion and death. He still had to be arrested and tried. Interestingly this proves that Jesus was all human and all God.

Because no ordinary human could have survived such an extensive circulatory disorder. However, Jesus did because His appointed time had not come yet. A man with congestive heart failure would normally die before the red blood cell issue became apparent. Glory, what a wonderful Savior we have. The question of how Jesus died is dwarfed by the question of why He died for us.

Lynn A. Hanrahan
Jasper, Ala. 🙏





"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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Reuters photo

Serbian army soldiers evacuate people in amphibious vehicles in the flooded town of Obrenovac, southwest of Belgrade, Serbia, May 17.

'Show the people ... that God cares'

Serbian Baptists appeal for help after deadly flooding in Southeast Europe

Baptists in Serbia are appealing to the worldwide Baptist family for assistance after deadly floods affected large parts of Southeast Europe.

Heavy rainfall between May 14 and 17 caused heavy flooding and landslides, killing at least 62 people in several countries with hundreds of thousands left homeless.

Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina suffered the greatest damage with Croatia, Romania and Slovakia also affected.

"Many are suffering," wrote Ondrej Franka

and Dane Vidovic, president and general secretary, respectively, of the Union of Baptist Churches in Serbia. Franka and Vidovic told the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) that rivers flooded "many cities, towns and villages."

Finding refuge in a church

Baptists have not been spared. "Believers from the town of Obrenovac (in Serbia) have been evacuated and came to the Baptist church in Belgrade where they will live until their houses are made livable again," Franka and Vidovic said. The houses of a pastor and church planter were flooded out.

The Serbian Baptist leaders appealed for financial assistance and for food, water, hygienic packs, diapers, blankets, beds and linens.

"This is a great opportunity to help Serbia and show the people and especially authorities that God cares," they said.

Donations may be made online at www.bwanet.org.

Southern Baptists' partner Baptist Global Response also is working in the area. Details of the work and needs were not available at press time, but more information should be available at gobgr.org. (BWA, TAB)

Religious rights watchdog pushes to add Pakistan, Syria to list of worst offenders

One of the nation's leading — and official — champions of religious freedom implored the Obama administration to add Pakistan and Syria to the list of nations that most egregiously violate religious rights.

Before a congressional subcommittee May 22, Robert P. George, chairman of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, said it makes little sense that the roster compiled by the U.S. has barely changed in a decade.

The congressionally chartered commission advocated that the State Department add eight na-

tions to the eight already designated as "countries of particular concern (CPC)."

Religious freedom

"Pakistan represents the worst religious freedom environment for a country not designated as a CPC," said George, whose testimony highlighted Pakistan's harsh anti-blasphemy laws and chronic violence against the nation's Muslims, Christians and Hindus.

George spoke of the "horrible and tragic" sectarian conflict in Syria that has killed tens of thousands and displaced millions. Sunni versus Shiite violence is

rampant. Extremist religious groups, including al-Qaida affiliates, target Christians and other religious minorities.

His remarks to a subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee come as the State Department prepares to issue its annual International Religious Freedom Report, considered the global gold standard for measuring nations' statuses on religious rights.

By law, the State Department must release the report by early September. The CPC list, when it is updated, has traditionally been published at the same time.

George described the list as a powerful tool to pressure countries to improve their human rights records and to give heart to religious freedom activists and the oppressed.

George also said CPCs should be expanded to include non-state actors, such as militant group Boko Haram.

Currently on the list: Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Uzbekistan. In addition to Pakistan and Syria, George's commission wants to add Egypt, Iraq, Nigeria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Vietnam. (RNS)

Multifaceted ministries

Cooperative Program to anchor exhibits at upcoming SBC annual meeting in Baltimore

The Cooperative Program (CP) exhibit at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Baltimore, Md., will feature a diversity of speakers reflecting the multifaceted ministries the CP funds, said Ashley Clayton, SBC vice president for CP and stewardship development.

TED-like talks will be among the newest features of the CP exhibit and will cover such key issues as sex trafficking and ministry outside the Bible Belt.

"Daily personalities who will appear in these interviews on the CP stage will include pastors, denominational leaders and other voices from across the convention who are knowledgeable and passionate about the Cooperative Program," Clayton said. "Messengers should find the schedule of programming at this display and visit as often as possible throughout their convention experience while in Baltimore."

Speakers will reflect a wide range of SBC leaders, including elected leaders, entity heads, seminary presidents and pastors focusing on such topics as church revitalization, pastoring in urban settings, church planting, ethnic diversity, theological challenges, the Great Commission Resurgence and state conventions as well as issues affecting pastors' wives.

"The CP platform and stage display in the exhibit hall is an attempt to elevate, above the floor noise all around us, the long-held SBC values of international missions, theological education, church planting, evangelism, col-

legiate ministry, disaster relief, church revitalization, moral advocacy and so much more," Clayton said.

The CP booth reflects a partnership with and is positioned in the exhibit hall alongside the International Mission Board (IMB) and North American Mission Board (NAMB).

The SBC's ethnic diversity also will be emphasized in the CP booth and in the nearby Many Faces exhibit, said Ken Weathersby, SBC vice president for convention advancement.

"The Many Faces exhibit at the annual meeting is a strategic forum to highlight the diversity in the SBC," Weathersby said. "It is our hope and desire that the messengers would visit with the African American and ethnic leaders as they collaborate and network together to expand the kingdom of God." A Many Faces reception will follow the Tuesday evening session of the annual meeting. The gathering will be held in Room 345 of the Baltimore Convention Center.

Reports of other entities' and ministries' plans for the exhibit hall during the SBC's June 10–11 annual meeting are:

International Mission Board

The IMB exhibit will help visitors find what part they and their churches can play in "One Sacred Effort" to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. The exhibit will feature take-away cards and stickers identifying specific people groups and ministry projects that an individual or church can pray for, partner to reach and engage with the gospel.

Each take-away card will be grouped into providing Scripture resources, meeting human needs and sharing the gospel in the global marketplace through various careers. The exhibit also contains sections for global affinity groups.

IMB representatives also will show visitors the imb.org/one website, which is going live for the SBC meeting featuring the identified people groups and ministry needs.

for the SBC meeting featuring the identified people groups and ministry needs.

North American Mission Board

Come meet some of the 32 Send North America city coordinators and regional mobilizers at the NAMB booth. NAMB representatives will help connect SBC participants with resources to help them engage their entire

church families in the Send North America strategy.

NAMB leaders also will participate in a variety of Q-and-A sessions sponsored by the SBC Executive Committee at the CP exhibit.

LifeWay Christian Resources

Along with the traditional LifeWay store, other highlights are:

▶ LifeWay Research's interactive 9-foot robot will focus on the theme "Transformation," drawing attention to its Transformational Discipleship research.

▶ Ministry experts from the church resources division will introduce the expanded "Explore the Bible" small group curriculum.

▶ A special story time for kids will be held daily at 2 p.m. in the B&H Publishing Group area featuring noted children's authors reading their books. "VeggieTales" characters Bob and Larry will appear each afternoon at 2:15 in the LifeWay store.

▶ Book signings are scheduled by numerous authors such as Ben Carson, David Platt, Gary Chapman, Tom Elliff and Jerry Vines.

▶ Exhibits featuring LifeWay "One-Source" endorsed products and providers will inform individuals and churches of discount purchasing options.

GuideStone Financial Resources

GuideStone's Wellness Center will offer free health checks on blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose. GuideStone representatives also will offer reviews of participants' retirement accounts and answer questions about

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Three announced nominees for SBC president

Ronnie Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, was the only announced nominee for president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) when the May 22 issue went to press. That issue had the official 2014 SBC preview, but two more candidates have announced since that time.

Jared Moore, pastor of New Salem Baptist Church, Hustonville, Ky., and Dennis Manpoong Kim, pastor of Global Mission Church of Greater Washington, Silver Spring, Md., also will be nominated.

Jared Moore

Moore will be nominated by Bennie Smith, a deacon at New Salem Baptist. Paul Sanchez, pastor of Willow Baptist Church, Brooksville, Ky., was originally announced as the nominator but said he will not be making the nomination.

Moore has led New Salem for the past four years, serving previously as a pastor and youth pastor in Tennessee.

Moore is the current second vice president of the SBC. He has served as a teaching assistant at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and an

online adjunct professor at Mid-Continent University in Mayfield, Ky.

Moore is the author of "10 Sacred Cows in Christianity that Need to Be Tipped" and "The Harry Potter Bible Study: Enjoying God Through the Final Four Harry Potter Movies."

Moore holds a bachelor of arts from Trinity College of the Bible in Lynchburg, Va., a master of arts in religion from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and a master of divinity from Southern Seminary. He is a doctor of philosophy student at Southern majoring in systematic theology.

Dennis Kim

Kim will be nominated by Texas pastor Dwight McKissic, pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas.

Kim, who has served as president of the Korean Council of Southern Baptist Churches in America, has served as pastor

of Global Mission Church for 23 years.

Kim is a member of the Pastors' Task Force on Evangelistic Impact and Declining Baptisms. He also served on the SBC Resolutions Committee in 2012 and 2013.

In addition to serving at churches in South Korea and the United States, Kim has taught courses at Southern, New Orleans and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminaries.

He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Korean institutions; a master of arts in theological studies with a concentration in pastoral counseling from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston, Mass.; a master of divinity from Southern Seminary; and a doctor of theology in pastoral psychology from Boston University in Boston, Mass.

Kim is the author of "Pulpit Counseling," "Answer with the Bible!" and other books. He has translated more than 60 books from English to Korean.

Ronnie Floyd

Floyd will be nominated by Al Mohler, president of Southern Seminary.

In addition to chairing the 2009–10 Great Commission Resurgence Task Force, whose report included a call for international missions to receive 51 percent of all Cooperative Program gifts, Mohler noted that Floyd is a former chairman of the SBC Executive Committee and was a

member of the SBC's Program and Structure Task Force during the mid-1990s.

Floyd also has served as general editor for the updated and enhanced version of "Bible Studies for Life," LifeWay's Bible study curriculum series, released fall 2013.

He is the author of 10 books, including "Our Last Great Hope: Awakening the Great Commission" (2011) and "The Power of Prayer and Fasting" (2010). (Compiled from BP stories)



MOORE



KIM



FLOYD

What is the Cooperative Program?

Since its inception in 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has always had one mission — the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19–20). To fulfill its assigned part of this divine mandate, each SBC entity made special offering appeals to the churches. This method was referred to as the “societal” approach to missions and resulted in severe financial deficits, competition among entities, overlapping pledge campaigns and frequent emergency appeals that greatly hampered the expanding ministry opportunities God was giving Southern Baptists.

In 1925, a partnership of missions support for all state and national efforts was conceived — The Cooperative Program (CP). Since its launch, the effectiveness of the CP has been dependent upon individuals, churches, state conventions and SBC entities cooperating and working toward a common goal of sharing the gospel with every person on the planet.

Source: www.sbc.net/cp

GuideStone’s life and health plans, property and casualty coverage, and other GuideStone services. Churches will be able to order materials for Mission:Dignity Sunday, highlighting GuideStone’s ministry to needy retired ministers and their widows.

GuideStone will offer several breakout sessions, including “Doctrines of Faith: Taking a Proactive Approach to Our Changing Culture,” in which a panel will discuss real-life situations churches need to know about for managing possible liability and risks. A free breakfast is included in this session at 8 a.m. Tuesday and 7:30 a.m. Wednesday; advanced registration is required at www.GuideStone.org/SBC14.

GuideStone’s Compensation Planning course will be offered at 9 a.m. on Tuesday and its Retirement Income Solutions seminar at 1 p.m. on Monday and 2 p.m. on Tuesday. Advanced registration is recommended at www.GuideStone.org/SBC14.

GuideStone also will make available a free copy of “Nelson’s Annual Preacher’s Sourcebook” (Volume 2), edited by GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins, to pastors/preachers. Quantities are limited.

Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

“Questions and Ethics,” a free book by Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) President Russell D. Moore, will be distributed at the entity’s booth.

Just days before the Supreme Court rules on the historic religious liberty case involving Hobby Lobby, join the ERLC for “Hobby Lobby and the Future of Religious Liberty,” a panel discussion featuring Moore, Rick Warren, David Platt and Sam Rodriguez, at 9 p.m. Monday, June 9, in the Baltimore Hilton’s Holiday Ballroom 4/5 & Corridor on Level 2. Slated Tuesday: “Questions & Ethics Live” with Moore and Matt Chandler at 5 p.m. fielding key theology, ministry and cultural questions in the Baltimore Hilton in the Holiday Ballroom 1/2/3 on Level 2. Space is limited for both events; go to erlc.com/sbc to register.

Baptist Global Response

“Immersed in Their Stories” will be the focus of the Baptist Global Response (BGR) exhibit. Visitors will get involved in the stories of five people who have been helped by Southern Baptist human needs work through BGR. The stories will focus on projects related to disaster relief/food distribution, rescue of young girls from trafficking, micro enter-

prise for refugees, livestock and clean water.

“BGR has almost 400 projects in over 50 countries each year that help people with the basics of life such as food, water and shelter. Come and discover ways you can get involved in these stories and hundreds of others just like them,” said Jeff Palmer, BGR executive director. For more information, visit www.gobgr.org.

Southern Baptist Foundation

Planning for eternity will be the focus of the foundation’s booth showcasing resources and services to facilitate giving, glorifying God and advancing His kingdom.

Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives

Governed by the Council of Seminary Presidents, the library and archives is the largest and most accessible collection of Baptist material in the world. The exhibit will feature historic photographs of Baptist life, events, churches, ministries and missions. In addition to information on the library and archives, the booth also will have brochures on church archives and information on a new website, baptistheritage.com.

Seminary Extension

Seminary Extension has been training volunteers, leaders, teachers and pastors for Southern Baptist churches since 1951. Following its original mandate from the SBC, Seminary Extension continues to offer opportunities for theological education and ministry training through independent study as well as group studies sponsored by churches, associations and state conventions. Individuals interested in this kind of training where they live and serve are invited to stop by the booth in the exhibit hall for information. Director Randal Williams and student services associate Carmen Ferreira will field questions about promoting Seminary Extension in your area.

Global Hunger Relief

The Global Hunger Relief booth will be staffed in part by Southern Baptist representatives who work hands-on with hunger relief efforts. The booth will focus particularly on relief efforts in Appalachia and among Syrian refugees. Also included in the promotion will be two new music videos from Drew Cline, former lead singer for NewSong and current worship pastor of Fellowship Bible Church, Little Rock, Ark.

Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary

This year, Golden Gate will highlight its fully accredited and fully online master of divinity degree as well as the pending sale and relocation of its campus in Mill Valley, Calif. Themed “Biblical, Missional, Global,” the booth will tell the benefits of gospel-centered education offered at the seminary’s five urban campuses in northern and southern California, Arizona, the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Northwest.

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

A display of selected books from the Charles Spurgeon Library will be featured at Midwestern’s booth. Visitors can receive a free copy of “The Church Planting Survival Guide,” a new resource on church planting from the seminary. And they can enter to win an iPad Mini loaded with books by Spurgeon.

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

New Orleans will highlight its main campus programs, extension centers and fully online master’s degrees. Faculty members will discuss degree programs and current campus news with alumni and potential students. In keeping with tradition, the seminary will give away small bottles of Louisiana hot sauce.

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Visitors to Southeastern’s exhibit will have the opportunity to interact with Southeastern leaders, faculty and alumni about innovative seminary and college degree programs and strategic initiatives that aim to fulfill the Great Commission.

Admissions staff will be present to provide information and answer questions as well as distribute the most recent issue of Southeastern’s magazine honoring Daniel Akin’s 10 years as president. Convention participants also will have the opportunity to win books by faculty members in the areas of biblical studies, theology, philosophy, cultural engagement and missions.

WMU

“Missions for Life” will be the backdrop for learning about missions involvement opportunities for preschoolers, children, youth and adults at the national Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) exhibit. As WMU concludes a yearlong celebration of its 125th anniversary, churches are being encouraged to start new organizations through the 1–2–5 Challenge (begin one new organization with two new leaders and five new members).

Adjoining the WMU booth will be New Hope Publishers and WorldCrafts; all three divisions will conduct daily giveaways.

New Hope is partnering with WMU to tell the story of radical commitment to God’s mission and will feature the new 2014–15 WMU emphasis book by national WMU President Debby Aker-

man, “Secrets to Surrender: Living Wholeheartedly.” New Hope also is featuring the work of several SBC leaders including Taylor Field of Graffiti Ministries in New York City. Field will sign his books at the LifeWay store in the exhibit hall.

WorldCrafts, a fair-trade division of WMU, develops sustainable businesses among impoverished people around the world. For more information, visit www.worldcrafts.org.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Alumni of Southern Seminary’s Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry are invited to the seminary’s exhibit to receive a gift in celebration of the school’s 20th anniversary. Details about the anniversary celebration plans for the fall also will be available.

Throughout the annual meeting, the exhibit will have a variety of giveaways providing resources for pastors. Along with promotions and interaction opportunities with seminary personalities, the seminary also will distribute the latest issue of *Southern Seminary Magazine*. Themed around church revitalization, the magazine features articles by President R. Albert Mohler Jr., NAMB President Kevin Ezell, Billy Graham School dean Adam Greenway and Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Southwestern’s exhibit will reflect the seminary’s ongoing passion for preaching the Word and reaching the world. The booth will feature several seminary-produced videos highlighting successful students and Southwestern’s global impact.

Free books and resources will be distributed, and seminary representatives and faculty will be available to discuss the seminary’s programs and answer questions.

Information also will be available about Southwestern’s “LAUNCH” evangelism event at 2 p.m. Wednesday at the Baltimore Convention Center (www.swbts.edu/launch). (BP)



'Paths of prevention'

LifeWay's Rainer writes 'autopsy' of 'deceased' churches

The church was dying and didn't know it. Attendance was down, the building was mostly empty and the glory days had long since passed.

As a last resort, a church member asked LifeWay Christian Resources' president, Thom S. Rainer, for advice. Rainer spent a few weeks studying the church, then recommended a number of changes.

But church leaders rejected them.

As he walked out the door, Rainer knew it was a matter of time before the church died. Later he and a friend performed a kind of autopsy on the church — reviewing its last few years. Lessons from that church autopsy

— along with about a dozen others — are included in Rainer's latest book, "Autopsy of a Deceased Church."

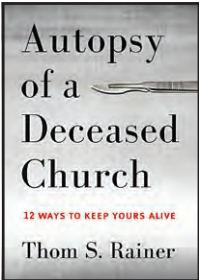
The book is meant for struggling and vibrant churches alike, Rainer said. "Even healthy churches need to learn from autopsies," he noted, "because they can tell us paths of prevention."

Rainer found 10 factors — from slow erosion of the congregation and too many short-term pastors to a lack of prayer and neglected facilities — that cause churches to decline and die.

Most of the deceased churches Rainer

studied had once been thriving and then went through a period of decline. In some cases, demographics played a role. About a third of the dead churches had been in urban areas where the ethnic mix of the community changed but the church did not.

"Though it's difficult to isolate any one factor as the most dangerous," Rainer said, "the steep numerical decline of these churches was most noticeable as the congregation started focusing on their own needs. They became preference-driven instead of Great Commission-driven." (BP)



Church revitalization help available in Alabama

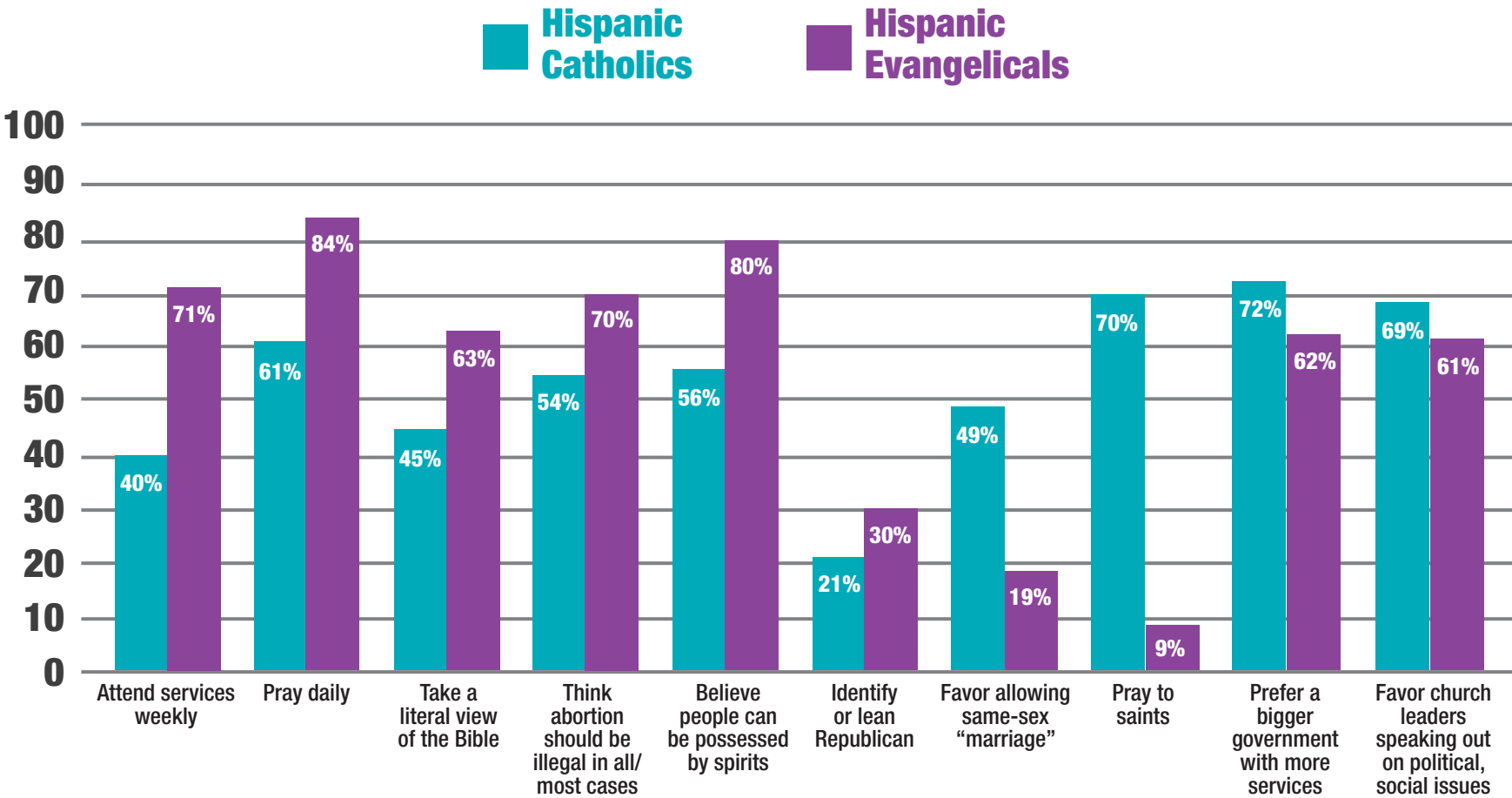
Your state missionaries are seeking to be good partners in the quest for healthier churches through church revitalization," said Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

"We pledge our support to you as you determine how best to lead your church through a revitalization process. Our prayer is that together we can be healthy leaders guiding healthy churches endeavoring to be even more effective in Great Commission Ministries."

To find out more or request assistance, visit www.alsbom.org/ministries/church-revitalization or call 1-800-264-1225. (SBOM)

Hispanic Catholics & Hispanic Evangelicals

The Pew Research Center's look at "The Shifting Religious Identity of Latinos in the United States" also examined their beliefs, behavior and views on social issues. It finds that, beyond the church doors in the lives of the faithful, there are distinct differences between Hispanic evangelicals and Hispanic Catholics:



Hispanic Catholics also are at odds with their church on several key points of doctrine and tradition. They say the church should allow:

- Catholics to use birth control — 72 percent
- Catholics to divorce — 64 percent
- Priests to get married — 59 percent
- Women to become priests — 55 percent

Source: RNS

Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

Missouri's Windermere Center lawsuit comes to an end

ROACH, Mo. — The Missouri Supreme Court declined May 27 to review a lower court ruling ending a 12-year-old legal battle over ownership of a Baptist camp that declared independence from the Missouri Baptist Convention in 2001.

The refusal leaves standing a March 25 decision by the Missouri Court of Appeals denying a jury trial to determine legal ownership of Windermere Baptist Conference Center in Roach, Mo., because of an inadequate brief filed by the Southern Baptist Convention affiliate's executive board.

A three-judge panel of the appellate court's Southern District said procedural errors in the convention's appeal made it impossible for the court to properly review a legal file exceeding 4,200 pages.

Windermere's board of trustees released a statement following the action by the Supreme Court.

"The entire Windermere family is pleased that this litigation has come to an end," trustees said. "We continue to thank God for His blessings on Windermere and its ministry. After more than 12 years and millions of dollars spent on these various pieces of litigation, it is our hope and prayer that all Baptists in Missouri can focus on sharing the gospel in our state rather than attorneys guiding decisions and charting the course."

Southwestern Seminary enrolls Muslim doctoral student

FORT WORTH, Texas — A Palestinian Muslim recently enrolled in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's doctoral program in archaeology. His enrollment marks a significant departure from the norm at the Fort Worth, Texas, school where students normally must present a record of church involvement, evidence of Christian character and a statement about one's Christian conversion before admission.

"For several years, Southwestern Seminary has operated (an archaeological) dig at Tel Gezer in Israel," Southwestern President Paige Patterson said. "During that time we have been joined in the effort by around 20 of our own students and about 60 students from secular schools and religious schools. We have had both Israelis and Muslims.

"One of these young men from a Muslim background loved our people and asked to study with us. He accepted the necessity of abiding by our moral code of conduct. He is a man of peace and we agreed to admit him into the archaeology program."

Baptists in Virginia mark 300 years of 'uncoerced' faith

RICHMOND, Va. — In 1714, a small group of Baptists in Virginia asked their spiritual colleagues in Britain to send "messengers" to strengthen the fledgling religious movement in the colony. The result was the first documented Baptist congregation in Virginia.

Three centuries later — almost to the day — Baptists marked the anniversary with a two-day observance in Richmond.

The remembrance service, organized by the Baptist historical groups, was held in the pillared sanctuary of River Road Baptist Church — a marked contrast to the log structure in Prince George County that probably housed Virginia's first Baptist congregation.

The anniversary celebration continued the next day on the campus of the University of Richmond — founded by Baptists in 1830 to train ministers — with about 40 exhibits by Baptist agencies, institutions and churches.

Church holds last service before demolition for stadium

ATLANTA — Members of Friendship Baptist Church, Atlanta, gathered for the last time May 25 in a historic building being demolished to make way for a new Atlanta Falcons football stadium.

Friendship Baptist, established in 1862 and independently organized as Atlanta's first autonomous black Baptist congregation after the Civil War in 1866, voted in 2013 to sell its home since 1871 for \$19.5 million. The building will be demolished to clear the site for a new \$1.3 billion retractable-roof stadium scheduled to open for the 2017 NFL season.

The congregation will meet temporarily at the Ray Charles Performing Arts Center at Morehouse while working to acquire land for a permanent location.

'Lack of passion'

Southern Baptists see decline in baptisms, church membership

Southern Baptists experienced growth in the number of churches affiliated with the convention in 2013, while other key measures declined, according to the Annual Church Profile (ACP) compiled by LifeWay Christian Resources in cooperation with Baptist state conventions.

The number of churches in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) grew by 91 to 46,125, a 0.2 percent increase over 2012. SBC churches also reported 4,789 church-type missions in 2013, a decline of 203 from 2012. However, some state conventions no longer use the designation of church-type missions, which may have impacted the total.

While the number of SBC churches increased, reported membership of those churches declined by 136,764, down 0.9 percent to 15.7 million members. Primary worship attendance declined 2.21 percent to an average of 5.8 million Sunday worshippers.

For the second year in a row, Southern Baptists experienced a decline in baptisms, down 1.46 percent to 310,368. Reported baptisms have declined seven of the last nine years. However, the decline in 2013 is not as sharp as the previous year's decline. In 2012 baptisms declined 5.5 percent.

Commenting on the annual summary, Frank S. Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee, said he is thankful for an increase in the number of churches but lamented a "lack of passion for reaching people for Christ. The numbers of people in our continent are increasing dramatically while our evangelistic efforts are failing in many places and in many ways."

Total and undesignated church receipts reported through the ACP decreased 2.7 percent and 1.4 percent respectively. Total missions expenditures reported by churches also declined by 1.5 percent in 2013. However, reported Great Commission Giving increased 4.5 percent from \$744 million in 2012 to \$777 million in 2013.

While several categories of the ACP reflected a decline in 2013, totals for various categories were affected by the fact that not all state conventions asked churches for the information in a way that would allow proper year-to-year comparison.

Statistics for the national ACP are reported by individual churches to their local association and/or state convention. National totals are compiled and released after all cooperating conventions have reported.

John Killian, president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention and pastor of Maytown Baptist Church, said of the ACP, "I would hope that all local congregations

see the benefit of allowing the needed information to be processed so that decisions might be made concerning evangelism strategies, needs for prayer and the most effective placing of funding for ministry. Accurate information is needed so that wise decisions might be made.

"I would plead with all Alabama Baptist local church leaders to make certain that the Annual Church Profiles are filed with the local association and the state convention — not as a result of a mandate, but resulting from a happy and loving cooperation for the good of the body of Christ," Killian said. (BP, TAB)

ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION ACP NUMBERS

2,724 of the 3,292 Alabama Baptist churches — 82.7 percent — filled out an Annual Church Profile for 2013. In 2012, 2,760 of the then-3,237 churches reported.

	2013	2012
Membership	1,122,470	1,130,859
Baptisms	17,784	19,318
Churches	3,292	3,237
Associations	75	75

Source: SBOM

Southern Baptist Convention Statistical Summary – 2013

Item/Statistic	2013	2012	2013-2012 Numeric Change	2013-2012 Percent Change
State Conventions	42	42	0	0.00%
Associations	1,161	1,169	-8	-0.68%
Churches	46,125	46,034	91	0.20%
Total Membership	15,735,640	15,872,404	-136,764	-0.86%
Baptisms	310,368	314,956	-4,588	-1.46%
Ratio of Baptisms: Total Membership	1:51	1:50	—	—
Weekly Worship Attendance	5,834,707	5,966,735	-132,028	-2.21%
Church-type Missions Operating ⁽¹⁾	4,789	4,992	-203	-4.07%

Notes:

1. Some state conventions no longer use the designation of church-type mission to categorize congregations which are not self-determining, self-sustaining, and self-propagating. This practice has impacted the number of churches and church-type missions.

Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

FRIENDSHIP

► **Mark Smith** is the new pastor of **First Church, Remlap**. He most recently served as pastor of Eastside Church, Birmingham, and has served as a pastor in Alabama for more than 30 years. He also serves as Alabama Pastors Conference treasurer. He is a graduate of both Samford University in Birmingham and New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Rodna, have two children and one grandchild.



SMITH

BIBB

► **Rehobeth Church, Lawley**, will celebrate homecoming June 22, 10:30 a.m. The Stevens will sing. Chris Tortorice is pastor of the church.

BESSEMER

► **Shady Grove Church, Lacey's Chapel**, will celebrate homecoming June 22. Sunday School will begin at 9:45 a.m. and the morning worship service will begin at 11 a.m. A covered dish lunch and singing will follow. The Campbells will provide the music. Patrick Buckner is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **NorthPark Church, Trussville**, members Jimmy Agnew, Brian Blackshear, Stephen Blackshear, Erin Boehm, Ryan Christmas, Morgan Edwards, Jace Aaron Hill, Jason Hill, Hannah Kelly, Michael Leonard, Chase Moore, Odis Moore, Shaley Parker, Donny Shadix and Kristin Ware recently returned from a week of missions in Mexico. Another group will travel to Uganda for missions July 3–12, and a third group will travel to Ecuador for a missions trip Aug. 1–9. Bill Wilks is pastor.

GENEVA

► **Shawn Smith** is the new worship pastor for **El Bethel Church, Chancellor**. He is currently a student at The Baptist College of Florida in Graceville studying worship ministry and will graduate in December 2014. He and his wife, Kayla, have one child. David Hingson is pastor.

MONTGOMERY

► **Catoma Church, Montgomery**, will have a fifth Sunday sing June 29, 5:30 p.m. with music group Heartline. There will be a salad fellowship after the singing. Chad Underwood is pastor.

MORGAN

► **Pine Ridge Church, Union**

Grove, will celebrate its 75th anniversary June 8 along with homecoming and Decoration Day. Singing will begin at 10 a.m. and morning worship will begin at 11 a.m. A covered dish lunch will follow. Kenneth Smith is pastor of the church.

NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Mineral Springs Missionary Church, Mount Olive**, will celebrate its 125th anniversary and homecoming June 22, 11 a.m. Dinner will follow. Afterward the special singers will be The Rev-elators. Doyle Creel is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Corinth Church, Elrod**, will hold Vacation Bible School (VBS) kickoff June 14, 3–5 p.m. The event will include registration for VBS of all ages and a hot dog supper. Victor Bonner is pastor of the church.

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **Salem Macon Church, Notasulga**, will hold Family Night on June 27, 6:30 p.m. to show what the children have learned in Vacation Bible School and to see a performance by them. Dinner will be provided. Mike Stephens is pastor.

WALKER

► **Philadelphia Church, Jasper**, dedicated its new activities facility June 1. Paul Mason is pastor.

GuideStone suit against HHS backed by ERLC, IMB, SBTS

Three Southern Baptist entities have called on a federal appeals court to protect the religious liberty of the convention's health and financial benefits organization.

In a friend-of-the-court brief filed May 27, GuideStone Financial Resources received support from sister entities in its challenge to the Obama administration's abortion/contraception mandate. The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, International Mission Board and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., called in the brief for the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver to uphold a lower court's preliminary injunction blocking enforcement of the requirement for the time being.

GuideStone and two of the organizations that participate in its health plans filed a class-action suit against a rule issued by the Department of Health and Human Services that requires employers to provide for their workers drugs and devices that potentially can cause abortions. (BP)

Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Anita Thigpen



THIGPEN

Chapel Hill Baptist Church, Northport

Tuscaloosa Baptist Association

FAVORITE VERSE: Psalm 23

FAVORITE HYMN: "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

HOBBY: Visiting neighbors as long as able

FAMILY STATUS: Widow for 27 years after 37 years of marriage to Hassell Thigpen; children, Johnny Thigpen, Jimmy Thigpen, Patricia Thigpen and Jan Smith; three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren

Anita Thigpen, 87, taught Sunday School for 39 years. All those years she led the Sunday morning Bible study for the same age group — senior adult ladies. She began doing this long before she was a senior adult herself. She also has sung in the choir and participated in the Woman's Missionary Union of her church.

Q: What do you get from the ministry work?

A: I got a feeling of love and I felt like I was needed to do something for the Lord.

Q: How do family members support you?

A: They have always supported my ministry, all of them.

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

A: I feel, as long as the Lord lets me, I will always be a faithful member of the church and do what I can. I do think it is important that older people continue to go to church so that the younger people see this and know it is a life thing for you.

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

A: I was raised in a Christian family. We were in a summer revival and I was 9 years old when I asked Jesus to come into my heart. It was at night and I knew what I was doing.

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

A: One of the ladies in our church, Ruth Brown, influenced me in teaching the class.

Q: What does the ministry work demand?

A: It really taught me to study the Bible every day. If you're going to teach, you need to know. I read and study the Bible every day. I did try to be a good teacher.

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

A: I will always have friends and they will always love me. I appreciate that in my church.

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

A: I don't know what it would be apart from Him because I never would have made it these last 27 years if I didn't have the Lord to depend on. ❧

Ruhama Baptist honors couple



15 years of service

Photo courtesy of Ruhama Baptist Church

Scott (left) and Paulette Reed (middle) have served on the staff of Ruhama Baptist Church, Fort Payne, for 15 years. Scott serves as the minister of music, and Paulette serves as church clerk. The DeKalb Baptist Association church honored them with an engraved presentation platter, fellowship meal and an honorarium May 18. Chris Murdock (right) is pastor.

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.

FOCUS on One Mission

Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions

ONE MISSION:
The Great Commission

ONE PROGRAM:
The Cooperative Program

MANY MINISTRIES:
Great Commission Ministries

FOCUS on

ONE Mission

news and features about missions and ministries from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (800) 264-1225 | www.alsbom.org

10 PLUS 20 EQUALS 30

No, this is not a math class, but it is about priorities. Larry Burkett, Ron Blue and Dave Ramsey have spoken to a basic principle for years with regards to spending and budgeting: Money should follow priorities. Let's consider how Alabama Baptists are doing with this principle.

The 2013 audit of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) was approved recently by our trustees, and the audit does reflect the priorities of Alabama Baptists! Just look at the numbers:

10—The North American Mission Board (NAMB) receives gifts from Alabama Baptist churches through the SBOM. In 2013, Alabama Baptists supported NAMB through the Cooperative Program, Annie Armstrong, NAMB Designated and World Hunger gifts. All totaled, NAMB received \$9,781,685 from Alabama Baptists in 2013. When one includes gifts sent from Alabama Baptist churches directly to NAMB the total is more than \$10 million.

20—Alabama Baptists also send through the SBOM gifts that are given to the International Mission Board (IMB) in the categories of Cooperative Program, Lottie Moon, IMB Designated and World Hunger. These gifts totaled \$20,600,720 in

2013. This total does not include gifts sent from our churches directly to IMB.

30—So, \$9,781,685 + \$20,600,720 = **\$30,382,405** The SBOM

forwarded over \$30 million, on behalf of our Alabama Baptist churches, to the two SBC mission boards in 2013.



By Bobby DuBois
State Missionary

I am sure that the two mission boards are grateful for the support of Alabama Baptists.

Can I give you one other number? \$66,601,943 is the total amount of mission gifts sent by Alabama Baptists through the SBOM in 2013. That number represents Cooperative Program giving,

special mission offerings, disaster relief offerings, Children's Homes gifts, associational missions support, World Hunger and other miscellaneous categories. Now, you do the math: 30,382,405 divided by 66,601,943 = ??????

The answer is **45.6%!** Of all the dollars sent through the SBOM in 2013 by Alabama Baptist churches, 45.6% of those funds went to the two SBC mission boards. In my rural Alabama upbringing, that is putting your money where your mouth is! That is allowing your priorities to guide your spending. That is why I love being an Alabama Baptist. Our people talk about missions, pray for missions, physically go in support of missions and give sacrificially to send others on mission. It is all in the math! Well, not really. It is all in the **HEART!**

Bobby DuBois serves as associate executive director as well as director of Finance & Facility Services at the SBOM.

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order your 2014-2015 church planning guide

This 16-month calendar (Sept. 2013–Dec. 2014) has State Board of Missions events and emphases already printed with plenty of room for you to add your church's events.

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your request to Charleen Hobbs at 1.800.264.1225, ext. 231; 334.288.2693 (fax); chobbs@alsbom.org; or **order online** at www.alsbom.org/cpg.

Be sure to **include** your name, church name, mailing address and number of guides needed (up to 20).



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What church can claim to have planted 20 churches in Alabama last year and hundreds more across the country? What church can claim to be a part of training thousands of missionaries, pastors, chaplains, teachers and Christian counselors through six seminaries across the U.S.?

Yours can! Simply by giving through the Cooperative Program.

For information and resources about the Cooperative Program, please contact State Missionary Jim Swedenburg, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 283, jswedenburg@alsbom.org.

MEN'S NIGHT OUT MEN'S Conference

Friday, August 1
First Baptist Church, Athens

Featuring: Hank Parker, Bass Masters Pro; Fred Luter, SBC President

Cost: \$10 per person (meal and conference)

Schedule: Dinner at 5 p.m. Friday, conference at 6:30 p.m.

For more information, please contact State Missionary Steve Stephens at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 268, or (334) 613-2268, sstephens@alsbom.org.

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ALABAMA BAPTIST BOYS CAMPS: DATES & COST



A camp experience where boys participate in uniquely "boy" activities.

Southeast Alabama - Vineyard Christian Retreat Center, Arlton (near Ozark)

- June 23-26, 4th-12th grade boys camp, \$150
- June 26-28, 1st-6th grade boy & Dad or Mom, \$160

Northeast Alabama - Marshall Baptist Retreat Center, Guntersville

- July 7-10, 4th-12th grade boys camp, \$150
- July 10-12, 1st-6th grade boy & Dad camp, \$130/pair

Northwest Alabama - Earl Trent Assembly Baptist Camp, Florence

- July 14-17, 3rd-12th grade boys camp, \$70-\$80
- July 17-19, 1st-6th grade boy & Dad camp, \$140/pair

Central Alabama - WorldSong Missions Place, Cook Springs

- July 28-31, 4th-12th grade boys camp, \$150
- July 31-Aug. 2, 1st-6th grade boy & Dad or Mom camp, \$160/pair

A boy does not have to be in Royal Ambassadors to attend. One or two boys, where they are the only boys in the church, will feel comfortable at the camp. Chaperones are welcome but not required.

All camps include missions education, spiritual growth through twice-a-day "boy interest" Bible study and outdoor chapel, opportunity for decisions, respect and relationship building, and camp activities (archery, air rifles, tomahawk throwing, blow darts, canoeing, cooking on a

campfire and a buddy burner, swimming, adventure recreation, compass and ropecraft skills, and nature study).

— **4th-12th Grade Boys Camp:** Those completing the third grade are eligible.

— **1st-6th Grade Boy & Dad/Man:** For boys going into grades 1-6 and their dads or a significant male adult. Dad participates in all activities with his son. (Special Bible studies in 2014 will be dads sharing life experiences with sons.)

— **1st-6th Grade Boy & Mom Camp:** For boys going into grades 1-6 and their moms. Mom participates in all activities with her son.

For more information and to register online visit alsbom.org/boyscamp.

For more information, please contact State Missionary Steve Stephens at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 268, or (334) 613-2268, sstephens@alsbom.org.

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October 5-7 * Shocco Springs
Alabama Youth Ministers Retreat

"Together Ministry" will help us take a look at the impact of youth ministry on our personal lives—family, spouse, friends, etc. This annual retreat is designed for full-time, part-time, bi-vocational and volunteer youth ministers/workers from Alabama Baptist churches and their spouses. Here's what you need to know—

- * The retreat itself is **FREE!**
- * Lodging for two nights and four meals is \$75 per couple or \$50 per individual
- * Opening worship/fellowship time begins Sunday evening, October 5, at 8 p.m.
- * Retreat concludes by noon Tuesday, October 7
- * Childcare is not provided

RETREAT LEADERS: Allen and Judi Jackson * Keith and Amy Hibbs * Ed and Sharon Cleveland

For additional information visit www.onemissionstudents.org/youthministersretreat or please contact Ministry Assistant Debbie Adams at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 275, (334) 613-2275, dadams@alsbom.org. To register call Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center, 1-800-280-1105.



Judi and Allen Jackson



Amy and Keith Hibbs



The Summit: For Church Leaders

AUGUST 1 & 2, 2014
SHOCCO SPRINGS

REGISTER ONLINE: WWW.SHOCCO.ORG OR CALL 1-800-280-1105



The Summit: For Church Leaders is all about providing church

leaders with tools to take back to their churches. These tools will be useful for reaching, teaching and guiding people in their churches, homes and communities. Participants will have training options in practically every area of church life, including sessions offered in Sunday School, Discipleship, Senior Adult Ministry, Single Adult Ministry, Deacon Ministry, Communications and Technology, Evangelism, Global Missions, Men's Ministry, Woman's Missionary Union, Women's Ministry and more.



If you have come to The Summit before, you will notice that the schedule will be a bit different in 2014. Lunch will not be served on Friday. There will be Early Bird Mega



Conferences from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Friday, followed by a worship rally beginning at 3:45. Supper will be served beginning at 4:45, followed by two conference times.

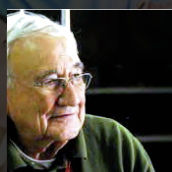


Saturday's schedule: breakfast beginning at 6:30 a.m., with conference times on Saturday morning at 8, 9:30 and 11:00. Lunch will be served at noon.

The Summit: For Church Leaders is for all church workers and leaders. Watch your mail and the website, www.alsbom.org/summit, for updates. You may call 1-800-280-1105 to register and for pricing information.



For other information, please contact State Missionary Jamie Baldwin at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 240, or (334) 613-2240, jbaldwin@alsbom.org.



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METRO - CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH, BESSEMER, SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, 2014
Early registration deadline: August 14, 2014, www.alsbom.org/metro
CONTACT: State Missionary Jamie Baldwin, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 240, or (334) 613-2240, jbaldwin@alsbom.org

NORTH - LINDSAY LANE BAPTIST CHURCH, ATHENS, SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, 2014
Early registration deadline: August 21, 2014, www.alsbom.org/north
CONTACT: State Missionary Daniel Edmonds, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 285, or (334) 613-2285, dedmonds@alsbom.org

DAVID GILL, pastor of First Baptist Church of Theodore, attended the Gulf Coast Regional Training last year and had this to say: "As a senior pastor, every day is busy, and I have more to do than I complete each day. Because of the needs of the people, I must take care of myself to be the best I can be. I am thankful for all the conferences offered by our State Board of Missions. Each conference allows me to stop the routine and sharpen the saw. I also bring people with me with confidence the conference will offer better training in one day that would take me a year's time to invest."



Alabama Baptist State Convention
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

This resource is made possible by gifts from Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

PASTOR, DEACON/ SPOUSE

**THEME: GONE,
FISHIN'**

RETREAT

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or (334) 613-2210,
mjackson@alsbom.org or
Ministry Assistant Debbie
Dickey, ext. 218, or
(334) 613-2218,
ddickey@alsbom.org.*

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

SUMMER MISSIONS CAMPS AT WORLDSONG MISSIONS PLACE

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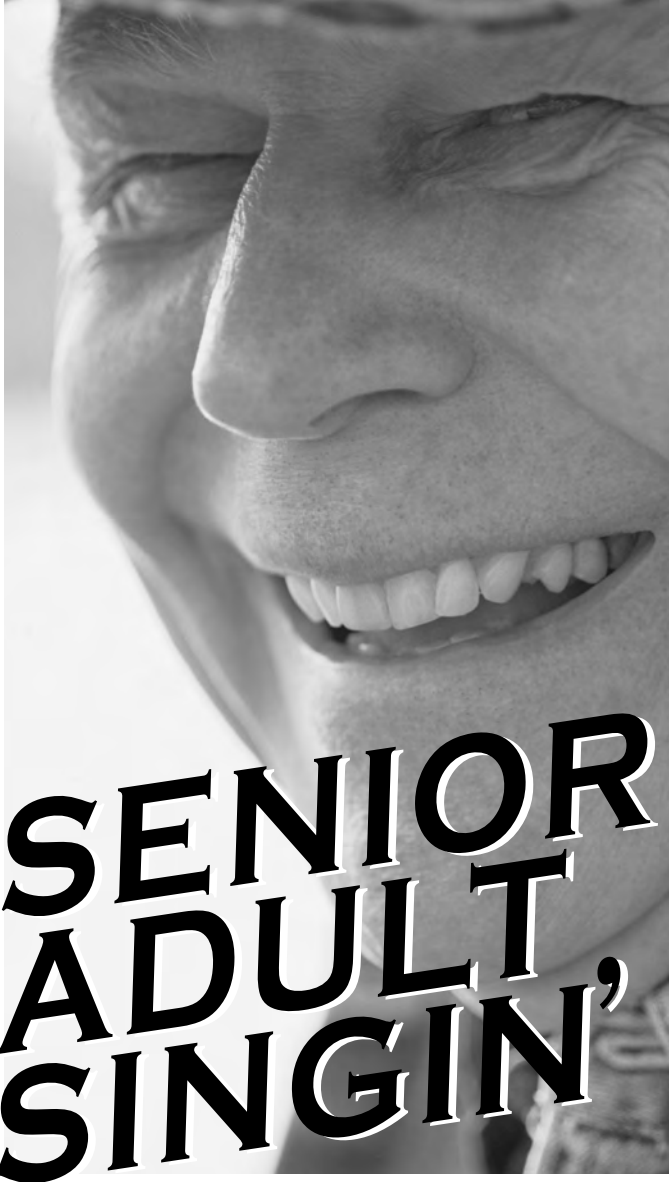
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- **July 12** - First Baptist North Mobile, Saraland
- **July 26** - First Baptist Church, Athens
- **August 2** - First Baptist Church, Demopolis
- **August 23** - First Baptist Church, Jacksonville
- **September 6** - Glencoe Baptist Church, Glencoe
- **September 27** - Tallapoosa Association Office, Jackson's Gap

COST is \$40 per attendee (includes lunch and breaks). Reservations are non-refundable.

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- **December 4-6**: Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery

COST is \$200 per attendee (includes materials, Saturday lunch and breaks). Reservations are non-refundable.

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For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Sheron Poole at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 298, (334) 613-2298, spoole@alsbom.org.



GLOBAL MISSIONS

Church Revitalization Book Reviews

This is the second in a series of reviews that can be helpful toward Church Revitalization

Church Unique, by Will Mancini, is considered to be his "field manual" for church leaders to use to transform their leadership and vision with missional effectiveness. Through the use of this book, he wishes to guide churches away from an internal focus to emphasize participation in their communities and surrounding culture.

This tool, however, should not be limited to churches but should be and has been an effective approach for associations and other Christian organizations to retool their ministries and to see their cities and counties

as frames for ministry opportunities. The book is complex in its approach, but it serves to make a

life of vision simple in the end. The book is as simple as 1-2-3-4. Part 1 is **Rethinking Vision**: Church leaders must reconsider the practice of vision today. Part 2 is **Uncover Uniqueness**: Vision begins with a clear identity that reveals what your church (ministry) can do best. Part 3 is **Talk Up Vision**: Missional vision will answer five fundamental questions in a clear, concise, compelling way. Part 4 is **Live Out Vision**: Vision is realized only to the extent that it is integrated into the life of the church (ministry),

one conversation at a time.

This book will challenge the pastor, staff and ministry leadership to stop the temptation of being copycats because of its destructive nature. It will challenge them instead to be aware of the unique qualities and opportunities of the ministry's position in its

By Rick Barnhart
State Missionary



culture and the unique giftedness of those involved in the ministry to go through the process of discovery and implementation of a strategy of effectiveness that creates movement toward obedience and

faithfulness to their own unique calling.

Though I have not personally been involved in an on-site consultation application of this process, I have heard several good testimonies of the effective change that has come to ministries through the use of

Will Mancini's material. I am presently working through the DIY Church Unique Vision Kit with one of our Alabama Baptist churches. It's all about process.

For more information about church planting among Alabama Baptists, please contact State Missionary Rick Barnhart at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 220, or (334) 613-2220, rbarnhart@alsbom.org.

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'Acting boldly'

Samford aims to provide shoes to children in Dominica

Samford University in Birmingham is attempting to provide shoes to children of an entire nation — and the initial project is to raise funds to purchase up to 6,000 pairs of shoes. As of

May 20, more than \$40,000 had been raised. "Leadership isn't defined by enrollment. It's defined by clarity of purpose and commitment to realizing the potential within," said Samford President Andrew Westmoreland, who announced the undertaking in March.

"This is not a timid goal. But if acting boldly inspires another school to do the same in service to others, then we have succeeded in a much bigger sense."

Samford has aligned its resources with Charlotte, N.C.-based Samaritan's Feet to shoe the entire nation of Dominica. Working on a project with such a huge goal will give alumni, faculty, staff and students an opportunity to come together in a unique and powerful way, Samford officials noted. Lack of adequate footwear is more than a simple inconvenience, they added, noting that millions of people worldwide die because of the spread of diseases contracted through unprotected feet.

Martin Newton, Samford's athletics director, said, "For most of us, shoes are a luxury item, something we take for granted. But for others in the world, those who live on

roughly \$2.50 per day, shoes and clothing are a vital necessity."

In 2013, Samford's student athletes partnered with Samaritan's Feet to provide shoes to Birmingham's inner-city children, many of whom could not afford the socks and shoes necessary to wear to school.

Colin Coyne, Samford's chief strategy officer, said, "Too often as a university or a state or a nation, we fail to realize the power we have in coming together to conquer a common goal. We have

the capacity to do remarkable things if we'll allow ourselves the freedom to imagine them.

"While shoes are the vehicle in this instance, our vision and long-term commitment are

much deeper," he said. "Our interest is in ministry, health, education, global outreach and so much more."

"Our goal is to make this project an annual opportunity, both deeper with Dominica and potentially broader with shoes for another nation."

Students from Samford's McWhorter School of Pharmacy, athletes, administration, alumni and faculty will travel to Dominica on July 27 to make sure no child in the country goes without shoes.

For more information about the Samaritan's Feet partnership, email Coyne at ccoyne@samford.edu. (Samford, TAB)



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Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

From Easter to Pentecost

The Holy Spirit

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

Promise of the Father

In the Christian calendar June 8 is Pentecost Sunday. During the next few weeks we will focus on some aspects of Bible teaching about the Holy Spirit. As Jesus moved closer to His hour of destiny on Golgotha, He spoke increasingly to the disciples about the Holy Spirit. During the Last Supper Jesus told His disciples that if they loved Him they would do something, namely, keep His commandments. Then He said that if they kept His commandments, He would do something, namely, make a request of the Father. To this He added that if He asked the Father, the Father would do something, namely, give them "another Helper" (John 14:15-16).

The promise made

A little grammar lesson illumines a primary truth about the promised Helper. Greek has more than one word for "another." One of the words, *heteros*, means usually "another of a different kind." A second term that meant another, *allos*, refers to "another of the same kind." Jesus used this second word to refer to the Helper whom the Father would send. The implied sense is that the Father had sent His only Son to be a Helper to His wayward and lost world. Jesus had indeed been a Helper to the disciples, even as He is to all who confess Him as Savior. As He announced again that He would be leaving them, He promised that the Father would send in His stead an-

other Helper who would be of the same kind as He had been — eternal, personal and powerful.

The promise awaited

After the resurrection and as Jesus approached the time of His departure back to the Father, He instructed His followers to remain in Jerusalem where they were to await "the promise of the Father" — the very promise that they had heard from Him (Acts 1:4-5). They waited obediently in Jerusalem for 10 days. When the day of Pentecost arrived, the Holy Spirit was given to each of them, filling them and enabling them to speak as they had not spoken before, as well as face opposition with a boldness beyond anything they had previously shown.

The promise received

One of their number, Peter, spoke like he had not spoken before. Rather than denying the Lord, in the Spirit's fullness He spoke with boldness to an assembled crowd. The crowd included some of the authorities who had demanded the death of Jesus. He explained for the crowd that the unusual sight ("tongues as of fire") and the unusual sound (speaking "in other tongues") was because of the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). After the explanation, Peter declared the good news concerning Jesus to his inquisitive audience. He reminded them of the death of Jesus and then declared God's mighty work in raising Him from death and exalting Him to His own right hand. At the end, Peter called on the people to repent and submit to baptism. He then promised that they also could receive the Holy Spirit. "For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself" (Acts 2:39).

The coming of the Holy Spirit was fulfillment of the Father's promise, which Jesus had passed on to the disciples. Peter passed on to the Jerusalem crowd and the Bible passes on to us today. So as we think together in the next weeks about God's Spirit, we will be dealing with a fulfilled promise from our Heavenly Father. 🙏

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.



ALABAMA UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

Alabama-Crenshaw DOM Yancey retires after 30 years in ministry

Don Yancey, who served as director of missions (DOM) for Alabama-Crenshaw Baptist Association for the past seven years, retired as DOM on May 29.

Yancey taught as a math teacher, worked as a coach and as an assistant principal at Greenville High School beginning in 1971 and later was the principal of Greenville Middle School, working in the area school system for 34 years.

While he was teaching, he began serving as a bivocational pastor for several churches in Butler Baptist Association. He began leading Liberty Baptist Church, Greenville, in 1984 and later served as bivocational pastor for Ebenezer East Baptist Church and Damascus Baptist Church, both in Greenville. He also served as interim bivocational pastor of First Baptist Church, Greenville.

In 2007, Yancey became DOM of Alabama-Crenshaw Association. He said he is retiring from his position as DOM but plans to continue in ministry wherever the Lord leads.

On June 1, a fellowship tea was held in honor of Yancey's time as DOM at South Luverne Baptist Church, Luverne.

He and his wife, Glenda, have two children and five grandchildren. (Neisha Fuson)



YANCEY



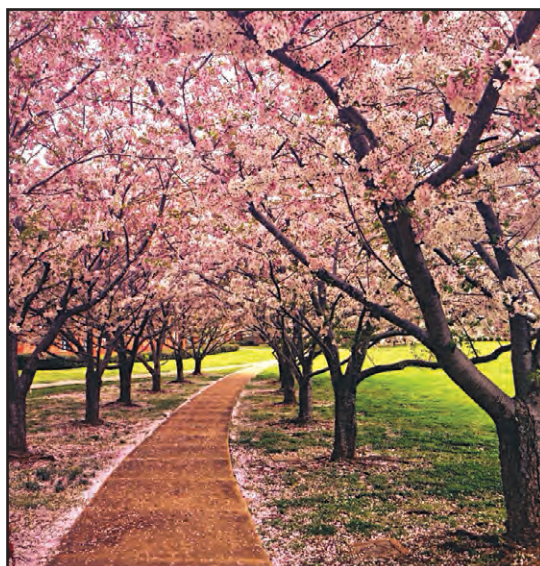
The campus of Judson College in Marion has been named one of the 50 most beautiful Christian college and university campuses in the world, according to the April edition of Christian Universities Online, a Web-based guide to Christian schools of higher education. The online guide also points out that Judson has the honor of being the only women's college in Alabama and is the fifth-oldest women's college in the country.

Judson College campus among world's most beautiful, according to Christian Universities Online

Judson College's campus is among the most beautiful in the world, according to Christian Universities Online.

The April edition of Christian Universities Online, the Web-based guide to Christian schools of higher education, reports Judson has one of the 50 most beautiful Christian college and university campuses in the world.

"Elegant Jewett Hall — the heart of Judson College's ... campus — has had the misfortune of burning down twice. The original Greek Revival-style building dates back to 1840 but succumbed to fire in 1888, while the structure built in its place was struck by lightning in 1947; the subsequent reconstruction was completed in 1951, and this ver-



Photos courtesy of Chip Cooper

sion still stands to this day," Christian Universities Online stated.

Further the online guide points out that Judson has the honor of being the only women's college in Alabama and is the fifth-oldest women's college in the country. The Alabama Baptist Convention-affiliated school owes its 1838 founding to members of Siloam Baptist Church, Marion.

"Today, Judson's beautiful, rural 80-acre campus is an educational hub for its small undergraduate student body of nearly 400," Christian Universities Online said. (Judson)



Odenville's Calvary Baptist celebrates 50 years

Approximately 300 people gathered April 27 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Calvary Baptist Church, Odenville.

This church in St. Clair Baptist Association generally experiences a Sunday morning worship attendance of 125 to 150, said Christene Griffin, Calvary Baptist's secretary.

The anniversary committee planned a weekend of celebrating that included a cookout April 26, a special worship service April 27 and a fellowship meal afterward, Griffin said.

Three of Calvary's former pastors — Jess Page, Robbie Weems and Robert Curly — attended the worship service, with Page delivering the sermon. Former member Judy Castleberry gave a vocal performance and the children's choir sang during the service, Griffin said.

About a month before the celebration, a time capsule that had been buried in 1964 during construction of the church was opened. Some of the items it contained were the first church bulletin and a list of charter members, Griffin said.

A major undertaking of the church was when it opened a day care in 1993, Griffin said. The ministry operates Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. until 6 p.m. and generally has a waiting list.

During the anniversary celebration, one of the church's charter members, Nina Stanfield, was given a plaque to recognize her continued attendance, Griffin said.

Also Linda Rodgers, representative for the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented a plaque to the church, as did Ben Chandler, director of missions for St. Clair Association.

Chuck Lackey has been pastor of Calvary for three years and was the church's youth pastor for 17 years before that. He said 98 people stepped out 50 years ago to do what God was leading them to do by starting the church. As a result, many people have come to salvation in Jesus and many lives have felt the impact of the church's ministries.

Lackey's vision is for the church to continue "to reach out into a dark world with the light of Christ and use our ministries to further the Kingdom." (Leigh Pritchett)

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We Are Cherished

Christian ministries help women escape sex industry

The smoke, the loud music and the smell of perfumes trigger uncomfortable memories for Polly Wright.

But she ignores those reminders of her past as she and a troupe of women make their way to the strip club's dressing room to deliver gift bags filled with fingernail polish, earrings and handwritten notes with messages such as "I'm praying for you."

"We are in there saying, 'You are loved, valued and cherished, and you are not alone,'" said Wright, founder and executive director of the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, branch of We Are Cherished, a faith-based organization that regularly visits more than 50 adult entertainment venues throughout the area.

A way out

Across the nation, dozens of similar ministries, such as Treasures in Los Angeles, Calif., Jewels in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Beauty From Ashes in Fort Myers, Fla., provide emotional support and a potential way out for prostitutes and other sex workers.

Such organizations often partner with law enforcement authorities to identify and help the tens of thousands of women and teens who feel trapped in the sex industry.

Sgt. Byron Fassett, who oversees the Dallas Police Department's high-risk child victims and sex trafficking unit, said, "They

don't want to be doing this. They want out. They just don't know how to get out. And that takes mentoring. It takes somebody to sit there and help them and try to show them that path."

While topless bars typically are legal businesses, a recent study commissioned by the U.S. Justice Department found "an underground commercial sex economy in America that is diverse, organized and lucrative, extending far beyond the typical street corner," researcher Meredith Dank and colleague Kate Villarreal wrote in a blog post.

In Dallas-Fort Worth alone, illicit sex is a \$99 million-a-year industry, the Washington-based Urban Institute policy research group found.

In just seven urban areas studied, underground commercial sex represents a nearly billion-dollar industry. The national study was the first to estimate the monetary value of the sex economy in U.S. cities and address its deep complexity, reported Dank, one of the researchers who interviewed 260 pimps, traffickers, sex workers, child pornographers and law enforcement officials.

"We need more resources and mandates for law enforcement and service providers not only to find, arrest and convict traffickers but also to provide services for those who want to leave the life but have few alternatives," Dank and Villarreal wrote.

In the heart of Dallas, New Friends New Life occupies a suite in a high-rise office tower.

In 2013, the ministry provided access to education, job training, interim financial assistance, mental health services and spiritual support to more than 700 formerly trafficked girls and sexually exploited women and their children, executive director Katie Pedigo said.

The organization grew out of a grassroots ministry that started 16 years ago when a woman in the sex industry became involved in a women's

Bible study at Preston Road Church of Christ, Dallas.

Pedigo said of sex trafficking and exploitation, "It's happening to American girls on every street corner, every bus stop, every mall in our city, and we need to open our

eyes and we need to know it's happening so we can fix it and get it out of the shadows."

First Baptist Church, Colleyville, Texas, provides a 3,000-square-foot house that serves as headquarters for We Are Cherished.

Every week, up to 25 women meet at what they call The Cherished House to enjoy a home-cooked meal and support one another.

Unconditional love

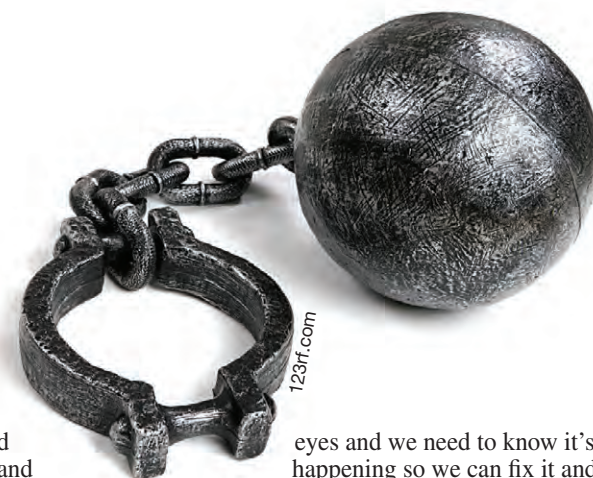
Wright, a former stripper who now runs the ministry, speaks from experience after a long, rocky road of excessive drinking, drug use and "sex-for-anything-but-love," until she converted to Christianity after marrying her husband, Rodney, 18 years ago.

It was her mother-in-law, Troyce Wright, a Southern Baptist, who showed her unconditional love. Polly Wright recounted her experiences in the book "Cherished: Shattered Innocence, Restored Hope."

Wright traveled to Los Angeles to study the Treasures ministry, founded by former dancer Harmony Dust, author of "Scars and Stilettos."

And even for Polly Wright, the road to a better life is a lifelong journey.

"It's still hard. It's still a journey. God is still refining me. And I pray that He'll always be refining me because in that, I get strengthened in His name." (RNS)



"God is still refining me. And I pray that He'll always be refining me because in that, I get strengthened in His name."

**Polly Wright
former stripper**

What is reverse mortgage?

By Jimmy Dixon

A reverse mortgage is a loan sponsored by the U.S. Government that enables senior homeowners (62 and older) to convert part of the equity in their homes into tax-free money or pay off an existing mortgage. Increasingly, older homeowners are using reverse mortgages to supplement their retirement incomes, pay for health care, make



Jimmy Dixon

homeowner with some equity in your home. You may qualify even if there is an existing mortgage on your home.

How much you can get depends on a few factors, including your age, the value of your home, the amount of equity in it and interest rates.

There are several options available for how you receive the money from a reverse mortgage. You can receive the money in an upfront lump sum, a line of credit, fixed monthly amounts or a combination of options.

Like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy Dixon covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives. He is Bible study director and a deacon at Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown.

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Big Sandy reaches hundreds with block party



**Sharing
Christ**

Photo courtesy of Big Sandy Baptist Church

Local fire and sheriff units participate in a community block party at Big Sandy Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, drawing hundreds from the area May 3. The event was hosted in order to engage the community and offer an opportunity for the church to reintroduce itself to the residents of Tuscaloosa and Moundville. The event was part of Big Sandy Baptist's 'Love Out Loud' outreach ministry, which aims to share the love of Christ with the community. Bibles, tracts and other evangelistic materials were given to participants. Tuscaloosa Baptist Association lent the church its block party trailer. Terry Lolley is pastor.

Fair use claim



Caner loses copyright claim to block blogger's posting of videos

A Georgia Baptist college president has lost a second legal battle to block the online posting of videos of him giving contradictory versions of a famous "I had to Jesus" testimony popular in Southern Baptist preaching circles after 9/11.

U.S. District Judge Norman Moon in Lynchburg, Va., granted summary judgment May 14 against Brewton-Parker College President Ergun Caner's copyright claim to two videos posted online by Jonathan Autry, a blogger who attended Liberty Theological Seminary in Lynchburg while Caner was dean.

Autry, represented by his brother, attorney Joshua Autry of Lancaster, Pa., claimed in his defense that he once supported Caner but lost confidence in him after blogs and news articles began casting doubts on the veracity of claims that he was raised overseas and trained as a terrorist before his dramatic conversion to Christianity prevented him from carrying out an act like the terrorist attacks against America on Sept. 11, 2001.

Caner sued in August 2013 claiming that he owned the copyright to videos of him speaking in training sessions to United States Marines about what they needed to know about Islam before being deployed in 2005, and that Autry and another blogger posted them online without his permission.



CANER

The judge, however, determined that Autry's posting of the material constituted "fair use," because it was for the purpose of making "religiously based criticism against a public figure on a matter of public concern" based on Autry's sincerely held religious beliefs that "it is morally wrong to lie, and especially wrong to lie in a church and to U.S. Marines."

During an oral hearing April 30, Caner's lawyer introduced an argument not in the written complaint that Autry was "not qualified" to make a fair use claim because he is a disgruntled former employee motivated by revenge and using a copyright defense to hurt Caner financially by engaging in "cyber-terrorism."

Moon called that an "astounding" claim that is "ludicrous on its face."

The judge observed in a footnote differences in what Caner told Marines about his background in 2005 and what is published in a book that he co-wrote with his younger brother published in 2002.

For the purposes of his ruling, however, the judge said he did not consider whether or not the blogs criticizing Caner were true, but only that their posting was during a time when Caner's remarks were under media scrutiny.

Inevitable outcome

By issuing summary judgment, a ruling in favor of one party determined without a trial, the judge determined that allowing further proceedings would only delay an inevitable outcome.

"I find that more discovery would not give rise to a dispute of material fact preventing the entry of summary judgment," the judge ruled.

"Even if Plaintiff obtained the information he seeks, no reasonable juror could find for Plaintiff."

"I will not allow Plaintiff to strategically prolong this case through an unsupported request for further discovery," Moon said. (ABP)

Want to know God?

By Pastor Franklin L. Kirksey
First Baptist Church, Spanish Fort

Let's get personal about your relationship with Jesus Christ. In our high-tech society it is becoming increasingly easy to become impersonal. As believers in Jesus Christ we must risk getting personal with people about the most important question in the Bible. According to Warren W. Wiersbe that question is, "What do you think of Jesus?"

Did you know you may believe weighty facts about Jesus and still be lost?

Jesus issues a solemn warning in Matthew 7:21-23: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

Did you know you may have warm feelings for Jesus and still be lost?

A sower goes out to sow the seed of the gospel. Matthew 13:20-21 reads, "But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, immediately he stumbles."

Did you know you may claim wonderful friendship with Jesus and still be lost?

As Judas approached Jesus to betray Him, Matthew 26:50 records, "But Jesus said to him [Judas Iscariot], 'Friend, why have you come?'" Jesus is citing a word from Psalm 41:9, "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." Remember Judas Iscariot called Jesus teacher, but he never called Him Lord or Master as the other apostles did. Judas was a false friend or a friend who pretends to be a friend.

Will you have eternal rejoicing or eternal regret? Allow me to encourage you to repent of your sin and place your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who died and rose from the grave to provide eternal life.

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One-quarter of the world harbors anti-Semitic sentiment

NEW YORK — The first-ever global study of anti-Semitic attitudes shows that more than a quarter of the world's population harbors intense anti-Jewish sentiment with region more than religion shaping people's view of Jews and Judaism.

The poll, released May 13 by the New York-based Anti-Defamation League, also finds that a large proportion of the world has never heard of the Holocaust or denies historical accounts of it.

Of those polled, 46 percent have either not heard of the Holocaust that killed 6 million Jews or think it is a myth or exaggerated.

The poll is based on 11 questions that refer to common stereotypes about Jews, such as "Jews have too much power in international financial markets" and "Jews are responsible for most of the world's wars." Those who answered "probably true" to six or more questions were deemed to be anti-Semitic.

Though the survey found Muslims to harbor more anti-Semitic views than Christians, Hindus and Buddhists — and Protestants fared better in the survey than Catholics — a person's region seemed to correlate more strongly with views on Jews than did a person's religion. Regionally 74 percent of all respondents in the Middle East and North Africa held anti-Semitic attitudes. That compares with 23 percent of all people in sub-Saharan Africa, 22 percent in Asia, 19 percent in the Americas and 14 percent in Oceania, the region with the lowest anti-Semitic scores in the world.

Jewish groups protest at Last Supper site in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM — Jewish religious and nationalist groups demonstrated May 22 to demand that the Israeli government not cede sovereignty or control of the Cenacle, traditionally considered the site of Jesus' Last Supper.

Located on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, the Cenacle, which means dinner, sits directly above David's Tomb, the place many Jews believe the biblical King David is buried. Ultra-Orthodox Jews pray in the lower chamber on a daily basis.

The Israeli prime minister's office said the government "has no intention to grant the Vatican ownership or sovereignty over the Tomb of David or the Cenacle. These are baseless allegations."

Israeli police say rumors related to a possible transfer of authority likely triggered vandalism against Christian institutions. The vandals scrawled graffiti declaring "King David is for the Jews, Jesus is garbage" on a wall opposite a Jerusalem church.

The same week, a Roman Catholic official discovered the words "Death to Arabs, Christians and all those who hate Israel" spray-painted in Hebrew on a column in front of Jerusalem's Notre Dame Center. The center is the property of the Vatican.

'Conflicting information'

Megachurch pastors leave Reformed evangelical network amid child abuse scandal

Two pastors have left a Reformed evangelical group after a pastor from the Maryland megachurch they oversaw confessed to covering up sex abuse claims, the latest chapter in a public struggle over evangelicals coming to terms with abuse within their ranks.

Pastors Joshua Harris and C.J. Mahaney left the leadership council of The Gospel Coalition, a central hub for the Reformed evangelical movement, after a trial involving child abuse at Covenant Life Church, Gaithersburg, Md., which both men have overseen.

A criminal trial that concluded recently raised questions about what pastors at Covenant Life knew about the abuse and why steps weren't taken to stop it.

Nathaniel Morales, 56, was convicted May 15 of sexually abusing three underage boys between 1983 and 1991 when he was a youth leader at Covenant Life.

During testimony, former Covenant Life pastor Grant Layman suggested that he withheld information from the police about the abuse allegations against Morales.

"Did you have an obligation to report the alleged abuse?" public defender Alan Drew, who represented Morales, asked during cross-examination.

"I believe so," Layman said. "And you didn't," Drew responded. "No," Layman said.

Layman, who is Mahaney's brother-in-law, stepped down from his role at Covenant Life in March.

Mahaney and Harris are

among a coterie of evangelical leaders who are trying to push the movement toward an embrace of Reformed theology that has traditionally been the domain of Presbyterians and other followers of John Calvin, the 16th-century French theologian.

Reformed theology differs from some evangelical teaching in key aspects, particularly on the question of salvation, and it has roiled life within the Southern Baptist Convention where 30 percent of pastors now consider themselves Calvinists or Reformed.

The allegations of abuse cover-up that have dogged Mahaney's leadership — he was never personally accused of abuse — in recent years also have cast unwanted attention on the Reformed network he helped start and have sent leading Reformed pastors rushing to his defense.

Mahaney founded Covenant Life in 1977 and now leads Sovereign Grace Church, Louisville, Ky., which also is the home of Sovereign Grace Ministries, a national association of 80 Reformed evangelical churches.

Coalition leaders

Mahaney and Harris are no longer listed on The Gospel Coalition website, which boasts leaders such as Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York City; and Mark Dever,

pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington.

Mahaney could not be reached for comment. An employee at The Gospel Coalition said no further comment was expected.

Harris said in a tearful sermon May 18 that he has asked the church's board to consider placing him on administrative leave while the church continues to investigate the issue. "We have

"We have a zero tolerance policy of abuse of any kind."

**Pastor Joshua Harris
The Gospel Coalition**

a zero tolerance policy of abuse of any kind," Harris said, urging people to go to the police if they know of any abuse.

Harris said that because of a separate civil lawsuit, church leaders are un-

able to speak openly about which pastors knew what when. "Right now we're still getting conflicting information," Harris said.

In a statement released in 2013, Covenant Life leaders said they didn't know about the abuse until "many years later."

Nearly a year ago, Mohler, Keller and others came to Mahaney's defense after he was accused in a lawsuit of covering up sexual abuse of children. Mahaney announced he would pull out of a conference called Together 4 the Gospel because of ongoing lawsuits, though he was seated in the front of the audience with conference leaders.

Mahaney took a leave of absence from Sovereign Grace Ministries in 2011 after other pastors in the network charged him with "expressions of pride, untreatability, deceit, sinful judgment and hypocrisy." Six months later the group reinstated Mahaney, declaring full confidence in him.

In October 2012, the same month that a lawsuit was filed, Mahaney stepped down from Sovereign Grace Ministries to focus on pastoral ministry. Two months later Harris' Maryland church voted to leave the Sovereign Grace network.

In a sermon a year ago, Harris acknowledged that he had been sexually abused as a child, telling the congregation amid the ongoing lawsuit, "Please don't allow the circumstance to draw you away from faith in Jesus." (RNS)

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 8

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

WHEN IDOLS TUG AT YOUR HEART
Ezekiel 8:3b-4, 10-12; 14:1-6

State-funded idolatry was part of the reality of the Israelite kingdoms. King Saul rid the tribes of forbidden practices, but he knew exactly where to find a medium when he found no answers from God. As an older king, Solomon bartered peace by marrying idolatrous foreign princesses, leading to his apostasy and the division of the kingdom. Shrines, altars, temples, statues and places of infant sacrifice led to the fall of Israel in 722 BC. Spiritual reformations under Asa, Hezekiah and Josiah spared Judah's complete destruction for more than 100 years. Unfortunately generations following these reformations reverted back to idolatrous practices, as the Lord had warned (Ex. 20:5; 34:7; Deut. 4:25-28). Ezekiel addresses ongoing idolatry in Jerusalem.

Idol worship continues to this day, and it is not limited to remote missions fields. Students in our churches are tempted to idolize musicians, actors and athletes. Our insatiable lust for entertainment has lulled us to sleep, while our children are brainwashed into thinking that the commandments of God are irrelevant. If they are reading and thinking critically, we are asked, why should we worry about whether our kids are being inundated by social agendas to normalize sexual immorality, infant (and pre-born) sacrifice, spiritual syncretism and atheistic humanism? Like Ezekiel, we must shine the light of truth in the darkness and expose idolatry so that we may repent and forsake it.

What's in Your Temple? (8:3b-4, 10)

In this supernatural vision, Ezekiel witnesses the spiritual adultery committed within the temple area of Jerusalem. Leaders who had been consecrated to maintain uncorrupted, holy worship were secretly practicing forbidden worship. They exchanged the truth of God for the lie, idolizing created things rather than their Creator.

What do you think about when you first awake? When you have free moments to

yourself, what do you long for? What occupies your thoughts as you lie down to rest? Idolatry in the lives of others may be easier to identify than in your own life. We can only rid ourselves of idolatry after we expose those selfish and ungodly desires and activities that steal our attention, our affection, our time and our resources.

Is God Unaware? (8:11-12)

Seventy apostate elders turned to unauthorized worship. Like King Uzziah before them, these men chose to burn incense in censors (2 Chron. 26:16-19), though they did so in the privacy of their own rooms. They had obviously not learned from the example of Nadab and Abihu in the Law (Lev. 10:1-2). In fact, they were convinced Yahweh had abandoned them and that He was ignorant of their activities. He was not unaware.

As we consider this scenario, it may seem that awareness of God's omniscience and omnipresence would be sufficient means to keep the elders from their idolatry. Theological knowledge is not enough. Idols are jealous, and they are relentless. God is fully aware of our idolatry.

What's So Wrong with Idols? (14:1-5)

By forsaking the one true God and replacing Him with created things, idolaters declare their hatred for God (Ex. 20:5; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15). Rejection of God's authority is an invitation to His judgment. This passage relates God's response to idolaters who want to hear a word from Yahweh. Unless true repentance and the abandonment of idolatry occur, those who worship false gods yet seek God's direction deserve His wrath.

What's the Way Out? (14:6)

Repentance is the answer. As we learn from Pharaoh and from Saul, recognizing the guilt of sin is not enough (Ex. 9:27; 1 Sam. 15:30). Showing remorse is not the remedy if there is no change of heart leading to change in behavior. Turning from idolatry and surrendering to Christ unshackles us from the fetters that bind. Discipleship teaches us how to live free as followers of Christ.

Bible Studies for Life By Kenneth B.E. Roxburgh, Ph.D.
Chair and Armstrong Professor of Religion, Samford University

GOD IS LOVING
1 John 4:7-12

People in the Scottish Highlands imagine that the way in which to measure the height of a mountain is to plumb the depth of the loch that lies at the foot of the mountain, because the two measurements are thought to be identical. So with the mystery of God's love — its length, breadth, height and depth are beyond our human comprehension — we cannot master them. As Martin Luther once remarked, "It is God who handles us, and not we who handle God;" yet the God who "handles" us is a God of matchless mercy and glorious love.

God is Love (7-8)

The purpose of this section is to encourage Christians to love each other. Love has its origin in God and belongs to the essence of God's being and character. The Christian confession of God is distinctively Trinitarian and to say that God is love is a summary description of the witness of Scripture to God's unfathomable love incarnate in Jesus Christ and experienced and celebrated in the community of the Spirit, bringing us to know God as Father.

Through faith, we experience the relationships of love that existed in eternity between the members of the Trinity and in that love we rejoice and live out our lives of discipleship. To say that we know God and do not live a life of love is to betray our spiritual identity.

God's Love is Revealed in Jesus Christ (9-10)

The dimensions of God's love for us are discovered by plumbing the depths of the love that He showed for us at Calvary when He "sent His only Son into the world ... to be an atoning sacrifice for our sins." This is what we like to refer to as agape love, but let us not drive too deep a wedge between agape and the other words, especially eros. The agape love of God is utterly gracious but agape does not mean love without com-

mitment or love without passion. God's love at Calvary's cross is an earnest love, a love that goes to the very depth of suffering for sin, stands in solidarity with us and comes to give His life for us so that we will never be outside, never be abandoned, never be forsaken.

His love is a holy love that does not tolerate sin but takes the suffering for sin into His own experience as Jesus Christ dies on the cross.

"Amazing love, how can it be? That Thou my God should die for me."

God Calls Us to Love One Another (11-12)

The recipients of such love have no other option but to respond in adoring wonder and seek to exemplify this kind of love within our own attitudes and actions. In verse 12, John speaks of how as we live a life of loving others, the love of God finds a certain fulfillment through our lives of love. When we love others the love of God is shown to have accomplished its full effect on our lives.

It also is true that this love of God is now demonstrated through our example and through the actions of love that we demonstrate toward others. In and through our lives of love, the world sees the love of God in action. New creation comes about when we are in Christ, when the love of Christ controls us.

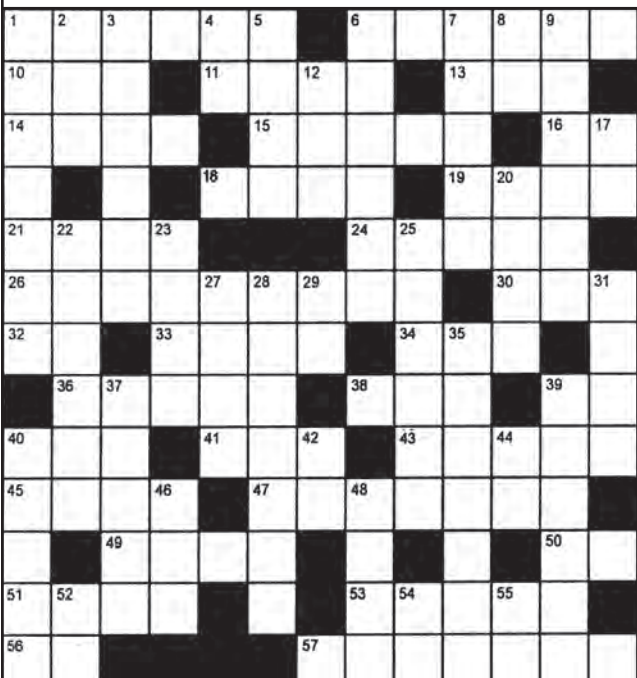
We know that humans err, lust, fight and betray each other, but to be redeemed by God, is to be selfless, open to the vulnerability of others, loving, kind, patient and forgiving. These are the fruits of the Spirit, of love and of God.

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The Alabama Baptist newspaper.

Christian Crossword

By Jennifer Breeding Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- 1. ___ them that are rich in this world. (1 Tim. 6:17)
- 6. Gurgle.
- 10. Electrically charged atom.
- 11. Pungent scent.
- 13. Expend.
- 14. Temporary dwelling. (Ex. 33:10)
- 15. Happily.
- 16. Transit Authority. (abbr.)
- 18. They went into the ___ of swine. (Matt. 8:32)
- 19. What Eve does to the fruit. (Gen. 3:13)
- 21. Earnest enthusiasm.
- 24. Ye see how ___ a letter I have written unto you. (Gal. 6:11)
- 26. The Lord my God will ___ my darkness. (Ps. 18:28)
- 30. Do not ___, my beloved brethren. (James 1:16)
- 32. Thou shalt have ___ other gods before Me. (Ex. 20:3)
- 33. Spoke.
- 34. Leah's relationship to Rachel.

- 36. Whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day ___ the seventh day. (Ex. 12:15)
- 38. Nocturnal bird of prey.
- 39. Bachelor of Arts. (abbr.)
- 40. Long ___ and far away.
- 41. Tender loving care. (abbr.)
- 43. Rebuke not an ___, but intreat him as a father. (1 Tim. 5:1)
- 45. Unfreeze.
- 47. And the world passeth away, and the lust ___. (1 John 2:17)
- 49. Heavenly headpiece.
- 50. For anger resteth in the bosom ___ fools. (Eccles. 7:9)
- 51. Snoopy.
- 53. Rocking ___.
- 56. Emergency Room. (abbr.)
- 57. Refrigerator.
- 4. Let my people ___. (Ex. 5:1)
- 5. He do not whet the ___. (Eccles. 10:10)
- 6. Harness for guiding a horse.
- 7. Let not the ___ rejoice, nor the seller mourn. (Ezek. 7:12)
- 8. Bachelor of Science. (abbr.)
- 9. Serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the ___. (Rom. 7:6)
- 12. Paddle.
- 17. But as many ___ received Him, to them gave He power. (John 1:12)
- 20. "Rock of ___, Cleft for Me."
- 22. Lest there be not ___ for us. (Matt. 25:9)
- 23. Itemize.
- 25. A soft ___ turneth away wrath. (Prov. 15:1)
- 27. The stride of a horse.
- 28. A small mountain peak.
- 29. Touchdown. (abbr.)
- 31. To raise a child.

- 35. Against the lay.
 - 37. Belonging to the world's most famous boat builder.
 - 39. ___ the mountains were brought forth. (Ps. 90:2)
 - 40. Pay the penalty.
 - 42. Chapter. (abbr.)
 - 44. Who by him ___ believe in God. (1 Pet. 1:21)
 - 46. I am the ___, the truth and the life. (John 14:6)
 - 48. Every one.
 - 52. ___ what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matt. 16:26)
 - 54. Greeting.
 - 55. Illinois. (abbr.)
-

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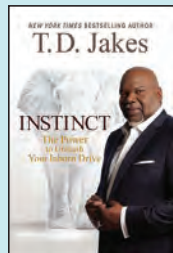
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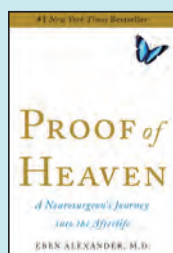
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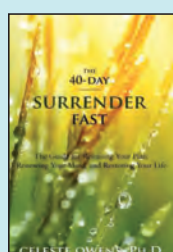
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8. Jesus Calling
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Media reviews



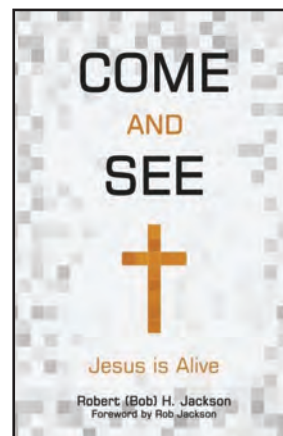
Come and See: Jesus is Alive

Bob Jackson and Rob Jackson. Nashville: Rainer Publishing, 2014. 354 pp. (Paperback).

In my professional career, I have been asked to read quite a number of manuscripts written by people I know and love. I did not always love their writing; some have been simply unpublishable, while many others have elicited the gently (I hope) delivered advice to the authors not to quit their day jobs just yet.

When Bob Jackson, my former associate pastor, asked me to read and critique his manuscript, I agreed with some trepidation. The trepidation proved unfounded: "Come and See" is a life-changing book. Instead of gentle advice to focus elsewhere, I found myself encouraging Jackson to finish the book. I, like others who read preliminary drafts, found myself profoundly impacted by this book that chronicles evidence, primarily witnessed by Jackson, that Jesus is alive and active in our lives today.

Acutely aware of his health and advancing age, he asked his son, Rob Jackson (my pastor), to complete the book if he failed to live long enough. After Bob Jackson's death from a sudden heart attack, Rob Jackson organized and rewrote as needed, then brought the book to publication in an act of love not only for his dad and mentor but for potential readers whose relationship with Jesus will be transformed through this book.



The subtitle of the book is "How to Know for Sure You Are Saved," and after explaining his advice to stop asking Jesus in, the author gets down to business and does a solid job of laying out what salvation is and how the Bible says to obtain it.

The book contains chapters on belief, repentance, eternal security and evidence of salvation, among others. Throughout the book, Greear meticulously supplies Scripture to support his assertions.

Buy the book. Read it, and then stick it in your purse or your glove compartment. Sooner or later, you will run across someone who desperately needs what this book gives.

Why Me? And Why That's the Wrong Question: A Godly View of Suffering

Jim Davis. Abilene, Texas: Leafwood Publishers, 2014. 238 pp. (Paperback).

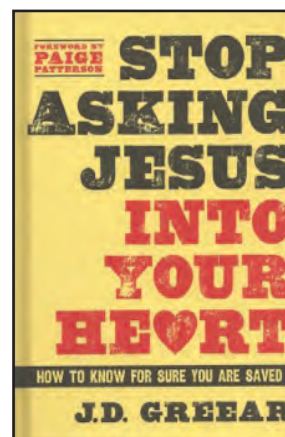
I wasn't very far into this book before I started wondering why I haven't heard of Jim Davis before. By the time I finished it, I was certain I would hear more from him in the future.

"Why Me?" is actually the first book written by Davis, a constitutional attorney from Birmingham, but Davis has written and taught Bible studies for many years.

My guess is that all of us have asked the "why me?" question — and few have been able to find satisfying answers.

This book tackles one of the toughest topics in life and proceeds to deliver exactly what the title promises: a carefully developed and biblically supported explanation of suffering and the right questions to ask. The book is conversational in tone and an engaging, enjoyable read, in spite of the heaviness of the topic.

Davis is a member of Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover. 📖



Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart

J.D. Greear. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2013. 128 pp. (small hard-cover).

What an odd title for a book. Did it catch your attention? It did mine — in a negative way. I didn't like it. I am not alone: Paige Patterson (president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas) wrote in the

foreword that he didn't like the title either. Like it or not, you can't ignore it. Between the title and the bright yellow cover, this is a book that screams to be picked up and examined. And, as I discovered quickly, read. And maybe re-read. Then passed along.

As a young man, author J.D. Greear struggled with doubts about his salvation. He prayed the sinner's prayer, went down the Romans Road and was baptized four times but continued to fear that he was not really saved. This book is the result of his quest for assurance.

Meet the reviewer

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BP photo

Ashley Unzicker, a mother of two and wife of a campus pastor, stars in a YouTube video summarizing Baptist history. Unzicker is gaining popularity in Baptist history classes.

'Bird's-eye view'

Rapping mom summarizes Baptist history with YouTube video

While rap may not be the music style of choice in most Southern Baptist churches, some seminary instructors are pointing students to a rap video in their Baptist history classes.

Ashley Unzicker stars in a YouTube video featuring a rap song that combines the theme music from the popular '90s TV show "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" with the outline to a Baptist history course she took at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

"I've been writing raps forever," said Unzicker, a wife and mother of two children — with one on the way. Her husband, Todd, is a campus pastor for Summit Church in the Raleigh/Durham area.

"I used to say I wanted to be the next Weird Al [Yankovic]; he was like who I wanted to be when I grew up," joked Unzicker, who is taking a break from classes during her pregnancy and being a stay-at-home mom for now. When time allows she hopes to earn a master of arts in Christian studies.

The video, released in 2013, can be seen by searching for "Baptist History Rap" at youtube.com.

Unzicker's professor Nathan Finn said, "Ashley's rap is by far the most creative use of my course lectures I have ever seen. She summarized nearly all of the historical material I discussed. A little bit of her lyrics were taken directly from the lectures though the vast majority of it was her summarizing the material."

A journey through time

Unzicker's historical journey kicks off with a reference to King Henry VIII and ends with Fred Luter Jr. being elected the first African-American president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

"I think it's really interesting just how this all happened — how we [became] Baptists, why are we Baptists and why do we believe what we believe," she said, "and all the different things that each person contributed throughout history."

Unzicker acknowledges she wasn't that interested in Baptist history when she first enrolled in Finn's class in the fall of 2012. But he soon won her over.

"Wow that's why I believe what I believe," said

Unzicker, who recalled the moment Baptist history became real to her.

The class gave her a special appreciation for many influential Baptists of the past. Among her favorites: missionary Adoniram Judson, who served in Burma, and Martin Luther King Jr. and his impact on Southern Baptists during the civil rights movement.

Using the class outline, Unzicker wrote the lyrics one evening and she and her husband filmed it a few days later. While the video has garnered a modest 14,556 views at press time since being released, Unzicker has been contacted by Finn and other seminary instructors who have watched the video and asked to use it in their classes.

"I have shown the rap in a few classes, and I know some colleagues have as well," Finn said. "I have not heard that it is required anywhere. However, I am 100 percent behind it being required everywhere."

Understanding Southern Baptists

While most Baptist seminary students are Southern Baptist by the time they enroll in classes, "many have no idea what that means," Finn said.

"It is important to teach them Baptist history and identity," he said. "I want my Southern Baptist students to know the stories, the strengths and weaknesses and the theological emphases of their tradition so that they can pass it on to the folks to whom they minister. I also want my non-SBC students to become Southern Baptists."

Joe B. Kim, who is teaching a Baptist heritage and practice course at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., described Unzicker's project as a "high quality entertaining video for Baptist studies."

"[Unzicker] gives a bird's-eye view of Baptist history with particular attention to the SBC perspective," he said. "This resource is helpful for priming the pump before a lecture."

Unfortunately for Unzicker, she wrote the rap after she finished her Baptist history class and was unable to receive extra credit. "People asked me, 'Did you do that for points?' I'm like 'No reason. I just really liked doing it.' I got an A though. So I didn't need the extra credit thankfully." (BP)

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Pastor in Bhutan faces funds-collecting charge

THIMPHU, Bhutan — Prosecutors in this tiny Buddhist kingdom in the Himalayas are charging one of two pastors arrested in March with illegally collecting funds and have dropped charges against both of lacking permission to screen a film, sources said.

The office of the attorney general in April charged M.B. Thapa, known as Lobzang, and Tandin Wangyal with attempting to screen a film and illegally collecting funds after no evidence was found to charge them with proselytizing, as the home and cultural affairs minister had initially sought.

Wangyal was charged with collecting funds from within and outside of Bhutan. He denied the charge, which under Article 71 of the Civil Society Organization Act of Bhutan outlaws raising funds for activities "in contravention of the laws of the country" and without prior permission. The pastors were arrested in Khapdani village, Dorokha area in Samtse District, on March 5.

"I would never think of collecting money from the poor villagers," Wangyal said. "They are trying to link information from my laptop and hard disk to the Khapdani case, which is totally irrelevant."

On March 4, they had spoken at a groundbreaking ceremony for a new house at the invitation of another Christian in Khapdani. They were planning to hold a three-day seminar in the village the next day that included the film screening, but as they were trying to transport a child who was ill to a hospital, police arrested them.

While charges against Lobzang have been dropped, the verdicts against him and Wangyal will be announced jointly.

Christian's sentencing result of her father's religion

KHARTOUM, Sudan — The sentence of 100 lashes and death by hanging that a Sudanese judge handed to Meriam Ibrahim is consistent with Islamic law, contrary to Islamic leaders and others who cite her case as an anomaly.

In a case that has drawn international attention, Ibrahim was sentenced to death for leaving Islam and 100 lashes for having sex with an "infidel," as her husband is Christian. She has insisted she did not violate Islamic law as practiced in Sudan because she was raised by her Ethiopian Orthodox mother and never practiced Islam, her Muslim father having disappeared when she was 6 years old. Asserting she was never a Muslim, she denies being an apostate from Islam.

Her husband, Daniel Wani, was found innocent of proselytizing, but their marriage was deemed null and void on the grounds that it is illegal for a Muslim woman to marry a Christian man. Ibrahim, 27, was subsequently charged with "adultery" and sentenced to 100 lashes. When she countered the adultery charge by insisting that she was a Christian, the charge of apostasy was added.

According to Islam and sharia (Islamic law), Ibrahim is a Muslim because she was born to a Muslim father. While Ibrahim insists she was raised as a Christian by an Ethiopian Christian mother, a Sudanese official said Ibrahim was raised Muslim by a Muslim mother, from a Muslim tribe and that she disappeared for several years before turning up again professing Christ and married to a Christian man.

Suicide bomb reportedly kills about 20 people

KANO, Nigeria — Christian sources said an apparent suicide bombing in a Christian area of northern Nigeria's city of Kano on May 18 killed about 20 people, more than the police tally of five.

Murtala Marti of the Evangelical Church Winning All in Kano said about 20 people were killed in the attack in the Christian "foreign quarter" of the Muslim-majority city but only five are being reported.

The Kano city Christian leader said Christians were killed along the road and in nearby businesses, though originally the likely targets of the attack were three area churches.

"Most often the plot is to get at churches, but when it becomes impossible for the terrorists to get there, they usually detonate their bombs anywhere Christians are gathered, either in churches or restaurants," Marti said.

One eyewitness assumed the assailant from the bombing belonged to the group Boko Haram. While Boko Haram (translated as "Western education is a sin") is the moniker residents of Maiduguri, Borno state gave the insurgents, the group calls itself the Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, translated as "The Congregation of the People of Tradition for Proselytism and Jihad."