



INDEPENDENCE DAY

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THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



July 3, 2014
Vol. 179, No. 27

Reporting. Connecting. Inspiring.

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INSIDE



Alabama Baptist changes homeless man's life by sharing a biscuit

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Former Syria-born Muslim shares his own Damascus Road experience

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Wall OF Freedom

FBC Trussville library honors military with special display

By June Mathews
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

July is typically a busy time of year for the library team at First Baptist Church, Trussville. The team scrambles to locate, check out, check in and reshelve books for the church's annual summer reading program. But this year the library is abuzz for a different reason — the Wall of Freedom.

Team member JoAnn Mitchell said, "Lots of times when I'm driving in the car, the Lord puts ideas in my head and this (was) one of them. "Trussville is very patriotic, and many members of our church come in their uniforms for the Fourth of July and different patriotic days. But we hadn't done anything patriotic (in the library) in a long time. I thought it would be nice to honor the people who help preserve our freedom," Mitchell said.

So instead of making plans for a summer reading program the library team made plans to create the Wall of Freedom on which the names of church-connected military personnel, past and present, could be mounted. A call for names went

out via the church's newsletter and worship guides in late May, and according to library director Connie Horsley the response has been overwhelming.

"We thought one tiny little piece of a wall would be all we needed, but it's grown to nearly 700 names," Horsley said. "We asked church members to sign up for themselves or any member of their immediate family who had ever served in the military, living or deceased. We expected to get a few hundred names, but 529 names were submitted the first day."

Military memorabilia

In addition to the impressive list of names covering an entire wall of the library and spilling over onto nearby soffit space, a wide array of military memorabilia is displayed all over the library.

"We have things dating back to World War I," Horsley said. "One of the more unusual items is a huge scorpion that was crawling in the shower with one of our military church members when he was serving in Desert Storm. He scooped it up and eventually encased it in a paperweight to preserve it.

"We even have a picture of a change in command during the 1960s that has Princess Grace in it and another picture of the same ceremony that has the king and queen of Greece in it."

Among the veterans being honored on the Wall of Freedom is

Gordon Harvey, a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and the 117th Air Refueling Wing of the Air National Guard. The first time he saw his name on the wall was an emotional moment for him.

"It's a great honor and I'm really proud of it," Harvey said. "I'm a very patriotic man and proud to have served, so this means the world to me.

"And once you've served in any branch of the military, it's sort of a brotherhood. I would have never guessed that we had this many (members of the military) right here in our church."

Richard Bailey, who currently serves with the 117th, said he feels

equally honored to be listed on the Wall of Freedom, not to mention appreciative of the bit of family insight it gives his preteen son, Daniel.

"I think it's great that my son can come and look at the wall and not only see my name on it, but my dad's and my grandfather's and my father-in-law's names too," Bailey said. "He gets a sense of that history, that lineage.

"I think it's cool for [my son] to see that the people who came before him stepped up."

Current plans call for the Wall of Freedom and military memorabilia to remain on display through the July 4 holiday weekend. ☪



Photo by June Mathews

Gordon Harvey (left), a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and the 117th Air Refueling Wing of the Air National Guard, and Richard Bailey, who currently serves with the 117th, said they feel honored to be listed on the Wall of Freedom.

COMMENT

Supporting the Whole or Supporting the Parts

It was one of the most dramatic moments of the recent Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting. International Mission Board (IMB) President Tom Elliff seemed caught in a dilemma. From the convention floor, a messenger posed the question about whether Elliff would support using money from other SBC entities to help underwrite additional SBC international missionaries.

Two things made the question poignant. First the Great Commission Resurgence program adopted five years ago in Louisville, Ky., began with a call for taking money from other SBC entities as well as state conventions and directing it to international missions efforts. Since that time many state conventions have cut missions budgets in their own states to send additional money to SBC causes. On the SBC level, the Executive Committee has lowered its percentage of support and redirected those funds to international missions. Now the messenger wanted to know if Elliff would support SBC-related seminaries following the example of state conventions and the SBC Executive Committee by lowering their budgets by 1 percent and redirecting those funds to international missions.

Declining receipts

Second was Elliff's report to IMB trustees a month earlier. In May, Elliff told his trustees they had to come to grips with the unsustainable demands placed on IMB resources from years of declining Cooperative Program (CP) receipts and sluggish Lottie Moon Christmas Offering giving. He warned that IMB would be hard-pressed to continue supporting the more than 4,800 missionaries serving today much less meet multiple field requests for hundreds of new personnel.

A lesser man might have caved in to the pressures of his office and endorsed taking money from other SBC entities in order to strengthen the work for which he is responsible. It is only natural to fixate on the importance of one's own contribution to the kingdom of God and when that contribution is international missions, it is hard not to ask for a larger percentage of the budget.

That is not what Elliff did. Instead he told the messenger that every part of the work done by Southern Baptists is important and that every part of the work deserves support. The answer, he said, was not to re-divide the CP budget but to enlarge the budget so all the work could grow from stronger support.



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Rather than focusing on one part of the work, Elliff emphasized the importance of the whole CP partnership between churches, state conventions and national programs. That was statesman-like leadership. He would have no part of trying to strengthen the part of the work that he leads at the expense of his co-laborers in the kingdom of God.

Later Elliff shared an analogy to explain his commitment to CP giving. He said, "The Cooperative Program does more for Southern Baptists than just generate resources. For Southern Baptists, CP is something like the glue between the many thin layers that comprise a full sheet of plywood. Alone those thin sheets are so very weak. Glued together they form a sheet that is remarkably strong and durable.

"The Cooperative Program, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Annie Armstrong Offering for North American missions put the world on notice that Southern Baptists are about the Great Commission. That is our strength," he concluded.

That commitment should not surprise anyone. From his first day as IMB president, Elliff has championed CP. Neither he nor the IMB has ever indicated they were moving "away" from the CP.

Yet the IMB must find new funding if it is to positively respond to present day opportunities. Elliff suggested trustees consider career missionaries through models already in use for Missions Service Corp volunteers such as self-funding or church funding. IMB would provide oversight and/or logistical support for missionaries but financial support would be up to others.

Asking churches to be more committed to international missions is another possibility, especially for those that are sending the missionaries. It is not right for a church to make a solitary

CP contribution so members from that congregation can qualify as coming from a cooperating church. Going forward, Elliff said churches from which missionaries come may be expected to provide ongoing financial support to international missions including CP giving.

Partnering with churches and other Christian groups to reach unreached people groups or to take on multi-year projects is another possible strategy. IMB is correct when it says, "This is a tactile, hands-on generation, with churches eager to play a personal, up-close and onsite role in missions."

But what churches actually do is not controllable by IMB or SBC or anyone other than the members of that local congregation. Local church autonomy is part of Baptist polity. A church may

agree to personal involvement and fund that expanded effort by redirecting some of its missions support away from CP and toward the hands-on assignments.

Some Baptists may see no problem with this development since more money is going to missions efforts than by giving through CP alone. Recent reports in Alabama indicate a number of churches are considering this option or have recently embraced it. Some argue that missions giving will dry up altogether if not tied to a church's onsite missions efforts.

That brings us back to the question posed to Elliff by the messenger at the recent annual

meeting. Should CP dollars be redirected away from the whole program of work done by Baptists in our state and national conventions in order to strengthen one part of the work?

Supporting all

We join Elliff in saying "no." All Baptists do together through the CP is important and deserves support. Picking out a single program or a few programs for support at the expense of the whole is like supporting a favorite child at the expense of the family. When a child has a special need, it is met with special support, not by sacrificing the well-being of other family members.

It was encouraging to learn that the percentage of undesignated offerings from churches given to missions through CP climbed from 5.41 percent to 5.50 percent for the last year of record. Hopefully this is the beginning of a new trend, a trend that demonstrates that all Baptists do together is worthy of financial support through the CP. 🙏

"It was encouraging to learn that the percentage of undesignated offerings from churches given to missions through CP climbed from 5.41 percent to 5.50 percent for the last year of record."

The Alabama Baptist will not publish an issue July 10. The next available issue will be July 17.



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

(ISSN 0738-7741;
USPS 011-080)

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

PRINT SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Church Budget — \$13.75
Individual — \$22.25

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

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Pastor Dan Lowery (left), of Three Rivers Church, Seminole, and two church members prepare to deliver food and clothes to flood victims after what meteorologists termed a 100-year rain in South Alabama in May.



Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Church

'Serving GOD by serving others'

Three Rivers Church ministers in South Alabama after severe flooding

By **Bruce Sims**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Following what meteorologists termed a 100-year rain in South Alabama in May, the members of Three Rivers Church, Seminole, realized the cloudburst had brought with it an opportunity to minister to the people of their community.

"A number of people were either flooded out of their homes or sustained water damage to their houses," said Dan Lowery, pastor of Three Rivers, which derives its name from the confluence of the Styx, Blackwater and Perdido Rivers.

"We had just purchased a van from Silverhill Baptist Church, so we decided to use it to carry water, canned goods and clothing to those who had been hammered by this natural catastrophe," Lowery said. "While we were making deliveries to these people we encouraged them to attend church, especially the children, and that we would be by in the van to give them a ride to Sunday School and church."

Lowery noted assistance also came from Three River's Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), Baldwin Baptist Association WMU, the Baldwin County Disaster Relief group, Home Depot, Dollar General, the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA).

"It's really a good thing that we began to canvass our neighborhood, as both the Red Cross and FEMA thought other states were taking care of Seminole, and in reality, no one was," he said.

Lowery said Dollar General donated clothes and other staples like water and canned goods, while Home Depot donated various housing items.

"One of the things we did as a church was to have a spaghetti dinner for those who had been made homeless," he said. "We served approximately 80 people (who had lost their homes) and first responders."

The church felt is was living up to its motto, "Serving God by serving others," by the way they responded to the needs of the community.

Even today, if a family needs clothing or food it can go to the church for assistance.

"Due to the donations we've been able to enlarge our food and clothing closet," Lowery added.

On average, the 5-year-old Three Rivers averages between 50 and 80 people

each Sunday for Sunday School and is about to launch a building program.

The church was planted by Baldwin Association and has been meeting in mobile chapels provided by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

A permanent site has been secured, Lowery

**"We give God the glory
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**Pastor Dan Lowery
Three Rivers Church, Seminole**

said. "We're now in the process of finding a builder who can put up a structure that contains a sanctuary, as well as some classrooms.

"We've been blessed with a number of young couples, high school age students as well as talented musicians," he said. "During the coming weeks we'll have our third Vacation Bible School, which is always an opportunity to not only teach about Jesus, but also to invite the children's parents to church when we use the van to go pick the kids up."

Jail ministries

The church also has jail ministries in Bay Minette and Foley.

"When Three Rivers first began we had a budget of \$20,000, but today it has reached \$50,000. We have been helped by a number of fellow churches within the county in terms of getting started," Lowery said. "We give God the glory for the things He has been able to accomplish through our church. The flooding is just one example of the opportunities He has given us to serve others." ❏

VOICE YOUR OPINION

SPEAK UP on issues in the Baptist world by writing a letter to the editor of *The Alabama Baptist*.

Remember to:

- Include your name and address
- Focus on issues, not people
- Be as concise as possible

Forever changed

FBC Montgomery member shares biscuit with homeless man, opens doors providing life-changing opportunities for him

By Anna Keller
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Brittney Hanvey says she doesn't quite know what made her pull over to the side of the road back in January to offer a homeless man a biscuit, but that seemingly small act set off a chain of events that are nothing short of miraculous.

Hanvey, a member of First Baptist Church, Montgomery, is a pharmaceutical sales representative, so she spends a lot of time driving around to various doctors' offices. Every two weeks she visits the same doctor at Princeton Baptist Medical Center in Birmingham and recognized the same homeless man on the street visit after visit.

"There was always this same man out there, wearing a raggedy t-shirt and pants," Hanvey recalled. "I was always told not to stop for people by the side of the road, because you couldn't tell if they just wanted drugs."

But, Hanvey said, one frigid January morning she felt compelled to stop and help the man.

"I was taking a doctor some breakfast, so I had some biscuits in my car, and I had a blanket for some reason too," she said. "So I stopped and offered him a biscuit and the blanket, and he took both and asked me if I minded sitting and talking for a minute."

Hanvey sat down and said the man

asked her why she'd stopped. She told him it was because he'd looked so cold, and then he began to cry and asked if he could pray for her before she left.

"Instead of praying for himself, he prayed for me: for my family, my future husband," Hanvey said. "I was so touched. He introduced himself as Benny before I left."

Hanvey said after that January day, she

continued to drive past Benny from time to time but was always running late and didn't have time to stop again. Then one day, she noticed he was missing from his usual spot.

In late February, she visited Princeton Baptist on her regular rounds and saw an older man in the doctor's office who looked familiar.

"The man caught me staring at him and said, 'Oh, Miss Brittney, I'm so glad to see you.'" Hanvey said. "It was Benny. I didn't recognize him because he was all cleaned

up and everything."

As it turned out, the doctor had seen Brittney stop and talk with Benny that cold January day and had been moved to reach out to Benny. He offered Benny a job as his office housekeeper. He's since said Benny has been the best housekeeper the office has ever had.

Praying for patients

"And the doctor told me, 'Before you leave, just notice what he does when patients come in,'" Hanvey recalled.

She watched Benny and noticed that before the doctor came in to visit patients, Benny would walk up to the examining room door, put his hand on the door and pray for the person in the room.

When Hanvey returned to the office in mid-March, the nurses were raving about Benny. They'd grown to love him and were helping him re-learn to write because they dis-

covered he hadn't made it past the sixth grade. Before Hanvey left during that visit, Benny gave her a note he'd written for her, which read:

"Thank you for everything you have done for me. I will forever be grateful for you. You are a very special young lady. I pray for you every day."

When Hanvey came by the office for her next visit, she found a yellow rose waiting for her from Benny. The office nurses explained that they'd been talking about what different colors of roses meant and said Benny had insisted on getting a yellow rose for Hanvey.

Stopping to talk

"I kept telling him, 'Benny, I didn't do anything. I just talked to you that one day,'" she said.

"He said, 'No, no — you and God and the doctor have opened so many doors for me.'"



Photo courtesy of Brittney Hanvey

"Instead of praying for himself, he prayed for me: for my family, my future husband. I was so touched."

Brittney Hanvey
FBC Montgomery member

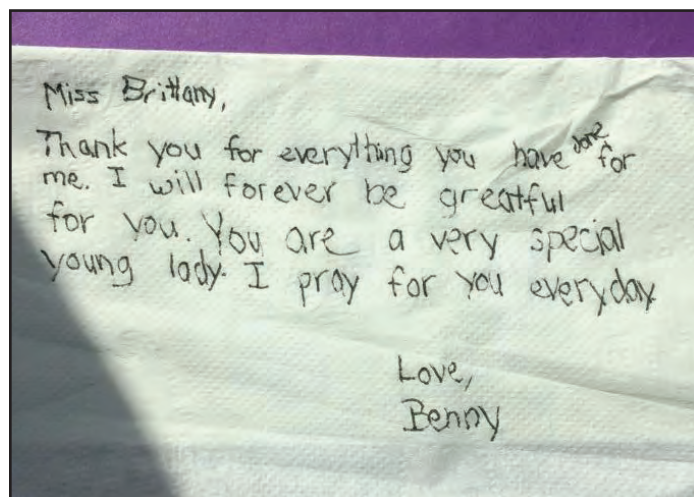


Photo courtesy of Brittney Hanvey

The day after Hanvey received the rose, Benny suffered a heart attack while in the office. He survived, but the incident left him weak, and he had to reduce the number of hours working at the doctor's office. He now lives in a guesthouse at the doctor's home and works a couple of days a week.

Hanvey said she never imagined that her stopping to offer a man a biscuit on a winter day would lead to this, but one thing is for sure: Benny's life is forever changed thanks to Hanvey, and it's safe to say her life is forever changed thanks to him too. 🙏

Alabama Baptists win at National Bible Drill



Photo by Belinda Stroud

Michael Last (center), was awarded first place in the category of High School Bible Drill at the 2014 National Invitational Tournament for Youth and High School Bible Drill and Youth Speakers held June 20 at First Baptist Church, Helen, Ga. He was named Alabama's state winner May 3, giving him the right to compete at the national level. Other state winners who competed at the national level were Sarah Last (left — Youth Bible Drill) and Kathryn Gosselin (Youth Speakers Tournament).

Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

GuideStone reports on progress, health care

BALTIMORE — Citing good news across all ministry areas within GuideStone Financial Resources, President O.S. Hawkins delivered the organization's 96th annual report to messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Baltimore.

Turning first to investments, Hawkins announced during the June 10–11 SBC annual meeting that GuideStone was recognized by various reporting agencies that monitor mutual fund companies.

"Retirement is a marathon; it's a long-term race," Hawkins said, encouraging messengers to make use of GuideStone resources to determine an appropriate asset allocation consistent with their risk tolerance and time horizon.

GuideStone is very competitive in its medical plans, Hawkins said. Renewal rates in GuideStone's group health plans topped 98 percent going into 2014, while renewal rates among other insurance products topped 99 percent, Hawkins said.

As the convention started, GuideStone announced expanded enrollment opportunities for its medical personal plans that take effect July 1, 2014.

"We're in a battle for health care in America, as many of you know," Hawkins said. "We're fighting this on multiple fronts," including through prayer and then advocacy in courts and in Congress.

GuideStone is in its third year of a partnership with Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company to provide churches and ministries with property and casualty coverage. Hawkins cited a 99 percent renewal rate as evidence of the service and competitive rates GuideStone and Brotherhood Mutual offer.

GuideStone's ministry to retired pastors and their widows who live near the poverty line, Mission:Dignity, continues to expand, Hawkins said. Mission:Dignity receives no Cooperative Program support; all donations come from individuals, churches and Sunday School classes. One hundred percent of gifts to Mission:Dignity go to help someone in need; all administrative costs are funded through a separate endowment.

Bob Sena named SBC Hispanic relations consultant

NASHVILLE — Longtime evangelist and leader Bob Sena has been named Hispanic relations consultant to the Executive Committee (EC) of the Southern Baptist Convention, EC President Frank S. Page announced.

Page appointed Sena in response to the final report of the Hispanic Advisory Council Page appointed in 2011. The report, presented to Page by council co-chairs Sena and Daniel Sanchez of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary during the council's final meeting in March, highlighted and detailed the rapid growth of Hispanics in every region of North America.

In his new position, Sena will work as a consultant in the office of convention advancement to represent Hispanic churches and promote the Cooperative Program. He will work comprehensively in strengthening the participation of Hispanic churches in Southern Baptist life.

Sena will continue as director of the Hispanic doctor of ministry program at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. He retired in 2011 as director of the Church Planting Group of the Hispanic Resource Development and Equipping Team of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and has served as a NAMB national Hispanic missionary.

His more than 50 years of leadership in Southern Baptist life include pastoring small and large Hispanic churches in Texas and Georgia, and working as a church planting missionary in New Mexico, as a national multi-ethnic evangelism consultant for NAMB when it was known as the Home Mission Board, and as a Hispanic evangelism associate in the Baptist General Convention of Texas. ☞

National award

Samford's nursing school receives grant

Samford University's Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing has received the third largest award nationally of the 92 Nurse Faculty Loan Program (NFLP) grants for 2014–15. This is the 12th year for the Birmingham university to receive the grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Exceeding \$1 million

Samford's grant of \$1,310,955 is one of only four grants nationally that exceed \$1 million.

Samford received the largest of five grants in the state of Alabama and was more than double the

combined grants of other Alabama institutions.

The grants are designed to help ease a national shortage of nursing educators, according to Jane Martin, associate nursing dean and the HRSA grant administrator at Samford. Students who receive loans for master's or doctoral degree programs can have up to 85 percent of the loan forgiven in exchange for service as full-time nursing faculty members at an accredited school of nursing. Students continue to receive funds for the duration of their degree program as long as they maintain good academic standing.

According to a report by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, U.S. nursing

schools turned away 79,659 qualified applicants from baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in 2012; 2,396 of those applicants were in Alabama. Almost two-thirds of the nursing schools responding to the survey pointed to faculty shortages as a reason for not accepting all qualified applicants into entry-level baccalaureate programs.

The NFLP was approved by Congress in 2002, and Samford was one of the first 55 nursing schools from across the U.S. to receive funds. Samford's NFLP grants now total more than \$5.4 million.

The 2014–15 grant is expected to help up to 87 students at Samford. (Samford)

LifeWay's TRANSFORM training returns to Alabama

What if you could lead your small group or Sunday School class in way that would transform lives?

According to LifeWay Christian Resources, its TRANSFORM: Teaching that Changes Lives training will equip leaders to do just that — see transformation.

Returning to Alabama on Aug. 16, the training's purpose is to "equip teachers with a central focus on seeing lives transformed. ... During the training teachers will gain understandings and skills they can put to use immediately regardless of what materials they use or when their group meets," according to LifeWay's website.

Participants will learn the meaning of transformational teaching, how to teach with the goal of

transformation, practical teaching methods, how to prepare to teach and more.

In 2013, First Baptist Church, Trussville, hosted TRANSFORM. This year the event will be held at Government Street Baptist Church, Mobile.

Positive feedback

Roger Crew, minister of education for First, Trussville, said he heard positive feedback from leaders who participated in TRANSFORM 2013. "They were challenged, encouraged and equipped to lead their small groups more effectively," Crew said.

"Both new and experienced leaders expressed benefits from the training."

For more information, visit www.lifeway.com/transform or call 1-800-254-2022. (TAB)



Photo by Doug Rogers

Volunteers help rebuild Saraland's Celeste Road Baptist

An army of volunteers raises a wall on Saraland's Celeste Road Baptist Church's new building. More than 200 volunteers from several states, organized through the Office of Global Missions at the State Board of Missions (SBOM), arrived in Saraland on June 15 and worked the following week to frame and dry-in the church. The Mobile Baptist Association church was destroyed by fire October 20, 2013, and has been meeting in two mobile chapels provided by the SBOM. The next construction phase will be July 13–19, with a team of churches primarily from Tuskegee-Lee Baptist Association installing drywall. Eddie Holmes is pastor.



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'Paul AND Me'



Photo by Neisha Fuson

Karim Shamsi-Basha is an award-winning photographer whose work has been featured in publications including *Sports Illustrated*, *National Geographic*, *People*, *Time* and *Newsweek*, among many others. His personality as a 'relational photographer' is something that stands out to Bill Bangham of the International Mission Board. 'There are so many photographers who will go and basically document things that happened,' Bangham said. 'He goes and forms relationships with people.'

Former Muslim shares his own Damascus Road experience in new book

By Julie Payne
The Alabama Baptist

Karim Shamsi-Basha felt like his head was going to explode — then everything went dark.

The photojournalist, working at the time for the *Birmingham Post-Herald* newspaper, was covering a fire at Independent Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, on April 8, 1992, when his world suddenly turned upside down.

"It was a chaotic day," he recalled. "I felt this headache; within seconds it evolved into an explosion in my head and my eyes felt like they were going to pop out."

The last thing he remembered from that harrowing moment were the paramedics hovering over him asking him questions.

As a result of the ruptured aneurysm in his brain he suffered that day, Shamsi-Basha was in a coma for about three weeks and couldn't talk or walk for a couple of months after he opened his eyes. When his faculties did begin coming back during therapy, there were lingering effects from the aneurysm such as double vision and short-term memory loss. But despite the setbacks, he still went on to make a rare recovery.

A journey of searching

Shamsi-Basha's final visit with his neurologist those many years ago would launch him into an unexpected journey of searching when the doctor said matter-of-factly that he had seen very few people recover as Shamsi-Basha had. "You have to find out why you survived," the doctor told him.

It could be said that Shamsi-Basha, who grew up a Muslim, had already been on a

long path of searching — particularly within the realm of religion.

Born and raised in Damascus, Syria, Shamsi-Basha was the youngest of four children. His mother would reveal to him years later in his adulthood that she had almost aborted him while pregnant. But her friend, Hanrietta, who had accompanied her to the clinic, wouldn't allow her to go through with the procedure. As the story goes, Hanrietta dragged his mother by her hair from the waiting room and took her back home. Shamsi-Basha was born a few months later.

He has fond memories of his childhood growing up in Damascus, particularly time spent with his father, the owner of a clothing store and also a talented poet and writer.

"I was very special for my dad," Shamsi-Basha said. "He showered me with love."

Shamsi-Basha had a good friend in middle school, Moneir, who was a Christian. The two friends would sometimes discuss religion and their conversations about faith would often result in more questions for Shamsi-Basha, who would occasionally go to his father with those questions.

"[My dad] would say ... You just go on and keep reading and keep exploring.' Dad was very open-minded, and he encouraged me to explore and read and learn," he recalled.

Shamsi-Basha graduated from high school and emigrated to the United States in January 1984. He met his wife, who was a Methodist, while studying at the University of Tennessee. They married and moved to Birmingham in 1989. "We were both open-minded," he explained. "We didn't have a problem marrying each other from different religions."

After his aneurysm in 1992 and subse-

quent recovery, Shamsi-Basha decided to follow the advice of his neurologist to find out why he had survived. Some of his Christian friends advised him to read the Book of John, telling him that God's love is "why we're on this earth."

'Go through Jesus'

Shamsi-Basha wanted to know more about this love, so he began reading John and eventually reached John 14:6 where it says: "Jesus answered, 'I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"

"I didn't want to come to the Father alone and leave my (Muslim) family," Shamsi-Basha noted of the roadblock that verse caused him.

He began talking to many theologians who all had a "pretty black-and-white explanation just like the Bible: 'If you want to go to heaven, you've got to go through Jesus.'"

He continued seeking for the next four years.

Bill Bangham, director of The Academy at the International Mission Board, met Shamsi-Basha at a photojournalism conference during that time and formed a lasting friendship.

"He's the real deal. ... This is not a façade — what you see is what you get," said Bangham, who noticed Shamsi-Basha's curiosity of Christianity early on in their friendship.

As a result of his years of searching, Shamsi-Basha had what he calls a "near-conversion" in 1996 when he asked a minister to baptize him.

"This is when I realized what God has done in my life. Everything that has happened in my life was God taking care of me," he said. "And yet I still couldn't call Him my Savior because I didn't want to be saved alone without my family."

Shamsi-Basha would later experience a series of painful events: a divorce from his wife of 16 years in 2001 and the death of his father in 2005.

"When he died, I fell apart. I became both Muslim and Christian. I was very mad at God for a couple years, but something inside kept tugging me back to Christianity," he noted, adding it wasn't until a particular conversation he had with a Christian in 2008 that he fully accepted Christ as his Savior.

Shamsi-Basha is a sincere, passionate person whom God has drawn to Himself,

said a lay leader at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, whose name is withheld because of his ministry work in sensitive areas of the world. Shamsi-Basha attends the Journey worship service at Dawson Memorial Baptist from time to time.

Shamsi-Basha noted his salvation and conversion from Islam to Christianity was God's doing. "All I did was obey," he said. "Salvation is mentioned over 150 times in the Bible; it's mentioned once in the Quran. Islam and most other religions on this earth say 'do and don't.' Christianity says 'done.'"

His story, "Paul and Me: A Journey to and from the Damascus Road, From Islam to Christ," was published in 2013. The book details his life in first person with parallels to

the apostle Paul's life and sections in each chapter about Paul written by several 20th century biblical scholars.

"The apostle Paul is one of the most influential people in the history of Christianity," Shamsi-Basha explains in the book's introduction. "I am a humble servant who happened to be born in the city of Damascus, where Paul had his conversion. ... Paul converted to Christianity on the Road to Damascus; I converted on the Road from Damascus — two very different stories, two very different men — the same salvation and the same Lord and Savior."

Boldness in sharing faith

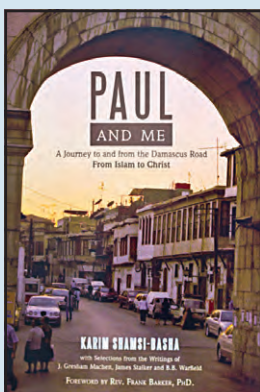
Shamsi-Basha eventually shared the news of his conversion with his Muslim family members. For the most part, the topic isn't discussed, he said.

"I am just letting them see the light of Christ in me. And if the subject comes up, I would be happy to discuss it," he writes in "Paul and Me," which includes a poignant letter to his family at the beginning.

Since his book was published, he has shared his faith story at many churches, including Berney Points Baptist Church, Hoover, as well as on national platforms such as "The 700 Club."

The Dawson lay leader said, "He's getting more and more bold in stepping out in his faith," noting his prayer for Shamsi-Basha is that he'll be able to reach people who need the gospel. He added, "We should all be those type(s) of people, stepping out and sharing our faith and being used in the realms God has placed us." ❏

In 2009, Shamsi-Basha was faced with 'massive bills' and had to sell his home. He stayed with friends for about a year and one particular week, when no one could take him in, he lived in his car behind a coffee shop. In his book, 'Paul and Me,' he noted experiencing that period of difficulty both humbled him and strengthened his faith walk.



For information about his book, visit www.paulandme.com.



IMB photo

With yellow cards in hand, University of Alabama students Amanda Fenton (left) and Dane Van Ryckeghem share Christ with the help of their Brazilian Baptist partner, Larissa Freire (right).



(From right) Brazilian Baptist pastor Carlos Eduardo Mendes Alviso, translator Renata Nascimento Da Costa, Auburn University at Montgomery campus minister Lee Dymond and IMB representative Eric Reese (background) pray over an HIV-positive couple living in Rio de Janeiro's infamous 'crack-land' neighborhood.

IMB photo

'Yellow Card Strategy'

Alabama students use soccer symbol as witnessing tool at World Cup

Sixty-four soccer matches contested by 736 players on 32 teams in 12 cities. Without argument, the month-long 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil is the most watched sporting event in the world.

In addition to the 1 billion people tuning in around the globe, an estimated 600,000 visitors are converging in Rio de Janeiro and the 11 other host cities in Brazil to watch and cheer for their country's team. Other visitors to Rio, however, have another goal in mind — sharing the message of Jesus Christ with those who have never heard.

A team of 11 Southern Baptist college students and two student ministry leaders traveled to Rio de Janeiro for the World Cup as part of the International Mission Board's (IMB) student mobilization efforts to outreach. The students, their Brazilian co-workers and IMB representatives are spending two weeks witnessing in communities around Rio and evangelizing near the city's Maracanã stadium, where tens of thousands of fans attend World Cup matches twice a week during the June 12 to July 13 competition.

Impacting nations

"The World Cup is where the nations come to one place," said Lee Dymond, campus minister for Auburn University at Montgomery and leader of the collegiate group. "It's our opportunity to share the gospel and hopefully impact not just Brazil but all the nations that are coming to Brazil for (the) World Cup."

Dymond said the students "who are here on our team have a heart for evangelism and a heart for the gospel."

After arriving in Rio, the student volunteers spent time learning about a specialized witnessing technique developed by the Brazilian Baptist Home Mission Board. Diogo da Cunha Carvalho, coordinator of evan-

gelistic strategies for Brazilian Baptists' domestic missions efforts, helped to develop the "Yellow Card Strategy" for Brazilian churches to use in 2013.

In soccer, Carvalho explained, a yellow card is displayed by a referee as a warning or caution to a player regarding conduct that could lead to expulsion from the match (signified by a red card).

Carvalho demonstrated the witnessing technique, which begins by approaching someone and raising a yellow card while blowing a whistle — just like a soccer referee. This warning, though, is a message from God, the Baptist volunteer tells the person.

After receiving permission to explain the message, the approach leads to a "goodness" test, Carvalho explained. Here the presenter shows, through a series of questions, how all are sinners according to the Bible and fall short of being "a good person." Then the believer shares the reality of the good news.

In a country such as Brazil with a history of religiousness, "at this point some may connect the phrase 'Jesus died for our sins,' but there's a disconnect between that phrase, their actual sinfulness and the 'I'm a good person' mentality," Carvalho told the student volunteers. "They don't connect the giant statue of Jesus that stands over Rio with what Jesus did for them on the cross — that He came to die and He rose again to defeat death for their freedom."

On game days in Rio, the collegiate team divides into groups of two or three, along with a translator. The teams then fan out around the outside of Brazil's national stadium.

Bekah Gordon, co-leader of the collegiate

trip, said the atmosphere was exactly what she had hoped.

"It's the World Cup," said Gordon, who previously served with Dymond at Auburn as a semester missionary through the North American Mission Board. "I grew up playing soccer, and I'm now a soccer coach in Montgomery. To be able to combine two of my greatest loves — the gospel and soccer — is awesome."

At the stadium one day, Gordon and her evangelism partner approached a young man sitting alone.

"Ricardo was sitting by himself [and we] walked over to him and threw up the yellow card and blew the whistle," Gordon said. "He immediately threw up his

hands and said 'What did I do? What did I do?'"

"That was the perfect reaction because we wanted him to have the idea that something was wrong," she said. "We told him it's not just what he has done, it's what all of us have done."

At first Ricardo said he was a good person but recognized after the examples Gordon gave that he was indeed guilty and deserving of penalty and hell. He admitted he had a faith background as a child but discarded it to enjoy his own lifestyle of fun and partying.

Freedom in Christ

Gordon and her evangelism partner explained to Ricardo "that giving our lives to God is not like going to prison; it's not bondage, but freedom. We shared that we are not bound to sin anymore and life with God is better than the world.

"We continued to share but our translator interrupted us and said, 'He's ready to

accept Christ,'" Gordon said. "We prayed with him and he said 'I feel free now.' The cool thing about this whole exchange is that Ricardo is from Lima, Peru. God blessed our [Portuguese-speaking] interpreter with enough Spanish to communicate the gospel clearly."

James Dubuisson, a student at the University of North Alabama in Florence and youth minister of First Baptist Church, Lawrenceburg, Tenn., admitted he had some apprehension to the direct approach of witnessing.

"I was skeptical of the methods we're using here because I'm more comfortable building a relationship with someone and then sharing the gospel," he said. "But coming up to someone on the street and saying, 'You need to know about Jesus' is new to me. God has been challenging me a lot."

Alison Myers, a senior at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), came to Rio with a personal objective to learn more about the Brazilian culture so she could better share the gospel contextually with Brazilian friends at UAB. More than that, Myers came with a special story to tell.

Myers was born with hip dysplasia. Doctors told her parents she would never walk.

"My parents prayed. ... They had faith in the Lord that He would provide and be the physical and spiritual healer in my life," Myers said. After surgery and therapy, today Myers can walk.

"Every step I take is a daily reminder of what He can do through me," she said. "When talking to people here, if they look depressed or discouraged or broken, I include my story. ... That really lights up their eyes when I tell them how the Lord has done so many great things in my life."

Myers said she prayed before leaving for Rio "that the Lord would stretch me and allow me to be uncomfortable ... and be able to deal with it. ... To hear people say 'no' is hard, but the Lord has given me that boldness." (IMB)

To learn more about global missions opportunities for students, visit imbstudents.org.

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.

BIRMINGHAM

► **East Gardendale Church, Gardendale**, will hold a one-night revival with David Dykes on July 9, 6 p.m. There also will be special music. Everyone is welcome. Allen Davis is pastor. ► **Raleigh Avenue Church, Homewood**, will hold a summer concert series every Sunday night from July 13 to Sept. 7, 6 p.m. The lineup includes Shannon Knight, Claude Rhea & Family, Paul Armstrong, Tony Hepson and more. For information call 205-942-8060. Nicolas Seaborn is pastor. ► **Steven Weems is the new pastor of Huffman Church, Birmingham**. He previously served as associate pastor of Cedar Grove Church, Leeds. He holds a bachelor of arts from Southeastern Bible College in Birmingham and a master's and doctorate from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. He and his wife, Abbey, have five children.



WEEMS

BESSEMER

► **Grant Street Church, Bessemer**, will host Christmas Marketplace on July 12. The event will feature more than 20 Christmas

gift-related vendors and Christmas food ideas, all in a Christmas-in-July themed environment complete with decorations and music. For information call the church at 205-426-2323 or visit www.grantstreetbaptistchurch.org. The event supports the GSBC Women's Ministry. Jason Green is pastor.

CAHABA

► **Pisgah Church, Selma**, will celebrate homecoming July 20. Sunday School will be at 9 a.m. and the worship service will be at 10 a.m. Pastor Harold Arnold will speak. Lunch will follow. The church also will hold revival July 21-23, 7 p.m. Lee Tate will speak.

COLUMBIA

► **Bluff Springs Church, Ashford**, will celebrate homecoming July 20, 10 a.m. with the theme, "He Has Done Great Things." There will be testimonies, a worship service and food prepared by current members. Homer Davis Jr. will speak. Dennis Singletary is pastor. ► **Mount Enon Church, Dothan**, will celebrate 126 years of ministry with homecoming July 14, 10:30 a.m. A special historical video will start worship. Former pastor Bobby Anderson will speak, and a fellowship meal will follow at noon. Jerry T. Hood is pastor.

GENEVA

► **New Prospect Church,**

Marl, in Samson, will celebrate homecoming July 20. Sunday School will be at 10 a.m. and worship will be at 11 a.m. Donald Hall will speak, and lunch will follow as well as an afternoon service at 1:30 p.m. with special music. The church also will hold revival July 21-25, 7 p.m. nightly. Wayne Sharp will speak. Elbert Smith is pastor.

MOBILE

► **Celeste Road Church, Saraland**, and **Turnerville Church, Chunchula**, will hold a joint service at Turnerville on July 13, 6 p.m. with Christian comedian/musician Bro. Billy Bob Bohannon. Eddie Holmes is pastor of Celeste Road.

MONTGOMERY

► **Catoma Church, Montgomery**, will show the movie "God's Not Dead" on July 6, 6 p.m. For information call the church at 334-265-2881. Chad Underwood is pastor. ► The Dixie Echoes will be in concert at **Trinity Memorial Church, Montgomery**, on July 18, 7 p.m. For information call Tom Snowden at 334-285-5112. Stan Holt is pastor.

SARDIS

► **Mount Carmel Church, Coffee Springs**, will celebrate homecoming July 13. Lunch will be served after the morning service. Everyone is invited to attend. The church also will hold revival July 14-16, 7 p.m. Dorman Nelson will speak. James Preachers is pastor.

SHELBY

► **Charles T. Carter** is the new interim pastor of **First Church, Pelham**. He preaches his first sermon July 13. Carter is pastor emeritus of Shades Mountain Church, Vestavia Hills, and a James H. Chapman Fellow of Pastoral Ministry at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University.

TUSCALOOSA

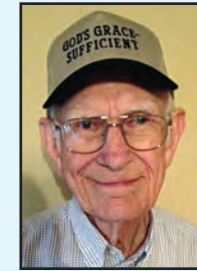
► The Senior Adventure Ministry of **First Church, Tuscaloosa**, will hold comedy night with Dennis Swanberg on July 17, 6 p.m. For ticket information call 205-366-4402. Gil McKee is pastor.

The Alabama Baptist will not publish an issue July 10. Please submit church announcements for the July 17 issue by July 8.

Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Charles Merry Christmas Sr.



CHRISTMAS

FAMILY STATUS: Widower for two years after 65 years of marriage to wife, Louise; children, Joy Carol Sanders and Charles Christmas Jr.; nine grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren

*West End Baptist Church, Clanton
Chilton Baptist Association*

FAVORITE VERSE: Ephesians 3:20

FAVORITE HYMN: "On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand"

HOBBIES: Exercising and giving away witness caps

Charles Christmas Sr., 87, of Jemison, was director of missions for Chilton Baptist Association and served in numerous churches in Alabama and Louisiana. In Alabama, he was associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Center Point, in Birmingham Baptist Association, and pastor of Rock Springs Baptist Church, Lafayette, in East Liberty Baptist Association; Mignon Baptist Church, Sylacauga, in Coosa River Baptist Association; Philadelphia Baptist Church, Hillview Baptist Church and the former Gate City Baptist Church, Birmingham, in Birmingham Baptist Association. Currently he is Sunday School outreach director for his church. For five years, he has written the weekly column "Simple Truth" for the Clanton Advertiser. Three years ago, he began a witness cap ministry, in which he has gospel messages printed on baseball caps that he gives away. Some of his nine different cap messages are "Jesus Christ is Lord" and "God's grace is sufficient." He received his education from Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham and holds a doctorate from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

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

A: Really, it was my family and my church. When I was 10 years old, I came to understand that the question I was faced

with was what did I do with Jesus, who died for my sins so I could be right with God. Death would mean heaven for me. On a Tuesday night in a revival meeting, God opened my heart and I opened my heart to Jesus. And that was the beginning of my journey with Him.

Q: When and how were you led into the ministry?

A: I surrendered to God's call to preach when I was 18 years old and in the United States Navy.

Q: What does the ministry demand?

A: Obedience.

Q: What do you get from the ministry?

A: Fulfillment of pleasing the Lord and giving my life away to others in His name.

Q: How do family members support you?

A: Totally.

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

A: In and through my church and my community and my family, as long as I live.

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

A: I have a pastor's heart. I will be serving Him as long as I have mind and strength.

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

A: He is my purpose. He is my life. ☩

REFLECTIONS

"IT WAS LEFT OVER FROM THE PAGEANT AND I DECIDED TO WEAR IT BECAUSE I MISS ALABAMA."



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.

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

YEC 2014: A Call and a Challenge for Students

You've no doubt heard the statistics that students are more easily reached for Christ before they are age 18 or perhaps even as young as 13 years old. No matter the age, the urgency of the biblical imperative to reach and make disciples of all people hasn't diminished. Student ministers, youth pastors and youth ministry leaders all agree that it gets harder to penetrate student culture with the Gospel.

Tough times require tough measures, and therefore student ministry through the local church has responded with new events, technology applications (there is an app for that), high-powered worship and plenty of catchy new ideas on how best to reach

this generation with the Good News. While all those methods are effective in some measure, conversations with youth ministry leaders over the past decade reinforce the old premise that students still respond best to an invitation to accept Christ out of relationship.

Today there remains no better way for a student to hear and respond to God's call to accept Christ than from a parent or grandparent. Beyond that, relationships with godly teachers and coaches, youth ministry leaders, pastors and friends all can lead to students making a decision for Christ. Youth camps and mission trips are also important ways for

students to hear and respond.

Every year, Alabama Baptist churches have an opportunity through the Youth Evangelism Conference (YEC) to put their students in a place where they can accept Christ, be challenged to live for Him every day and respond to God's call to serve him during their student years and beyond.

By Mike Nuss
State Missionary



YEC2014 brings together great preaching and teaching, exciting worship, fellowship and fun but most of all great

opportunity for relationships to grow and strengthen and the Good News of Jesus to be shared.

It's not too late for students and student leaders from your church to be a part of **YEC2014**, July 25-26 at Samford University's Wright Center. Conference information can be found on page 13, or you can also find information and register online at www.onemissionstudents.org/YEC or by calling (334) 613-2275 and speaking with Ministry Assistant Debbie Adams. We are praying that God will use **YEC2014** to bring students into new and closer relationships with Him!

Mike Nuss serves as director of the Office of Collegiate & Student Ministries.

FREE
This 16-month calendar (Sept. 2014–Dec. 2015) has State Board of Missions events and emphases already printed with plenty of room for you to add your church's events.

order your 2014-2015 church **planning** guide

Limit 20 copies per church. To order, please call, fax or e-mail 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).



FOCUS on One Mission

V.E.L.C.R.O. CHURCH

ASSIMILATION CONFERENCE



Thursday, September 25, 2014

Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham • 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Registration: www.alsbom.org/velcrochurch

Cost: \$10 per person (includes book and lunch). Check in begins at 9 a.m.

Speaker: Mike James

For more information, please contact State Missionary Daniel Edmonds at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 285, or (334) 613-2285, dedmonds@alsbom.org.

ONE MISSION: The Great Commission **ONE PROGRAM:** The Cooperative Program **MANY MINISTRIES:** Great Commission Ministries

Regional Sunday School & Discipleship Leader Training

Great Commission Possible... Through Magnification

SUNDAY SCHOOL & DISCIPLESHIP LEADER TRAINING IS COMING. CHOOSE THE LOCATION AND DATE THAT IS BEST FOR YOU: three one-hour conference times at each location with multiple topics for each age group. Go to the websites below for more information or to register. Registration is \$5 per person before the early registration deadline, \$10 per person after the deadline.

METRO - CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH, BESSEMER, SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, 2014

Early registration deadline:

August 14

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

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 LITERACY MISSIONS CONFERENCE

Friday to Saturday, August 8-9, 2014

First Baptist Church Montgomery

LITERACY MISSIONS

ministry involves churches and associations in meeting needs of adults who are nonreaders, low-level readers or non-English speakers, as well as children and youth who are at risk of failing in school. Come discover opportunities for evangelism through literacy missions ministries.

Learn about our four areas of ministry: Adult Reading and Writing, English as a Second Language, Tutoring Children and Youth, and Bible Storytelling.

Learn how to:

- Organize a church or associational-based literacy missions outreach ministry.
- Understand students' needs and perspectives.
- Use language teaching techniques and resources.
- Share the Gospel with your students.
- Pray effectively for your students and yourself.

WORKSHOPS

- ARW - Adult Reading and Writing
 - ESL - English as a Second Language
 - TCY - Tutoring Children and Youth
 - Bible Storytelling
- Each course is 14 hours in length.

We will also offer one-hour breakout sessions for our experienced teachers.

Registration:

www.alsbom.org/literacymissionsconference

For more information, please contact State Missionary Kristy Kennedy at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 311, or (334) 613-2311, kkennedy@alsbom.org.

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM IN BRIEF



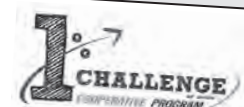
alsbom.org/cp

IF I WERE a gifted stonemason and I had eight brothers who were just as gifted, and if I were fortunate enough to get a contract to build a large wall that would take me years to build by myself, would it not be wise to ask my brothers to assist me, with the result being the same goal but in a much faster time? With our cooperation comes reward! If I were a stand-alone church in the midst of a large convention, would it not be wise to nurture a spirit of cooperation so that together we could accomplish far more in a much shorter time than we could ever do alone? Just saying!! The Cooperative Program is the way to go! – *SID NICHOLS, director of missions, Calhoun Baptist Association, Anniston*



THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM allows smaller churches with limited income to join with larger churches in reaching the world with the Gospel message. CP provides a

Christ-oriented educational environment for college students and a theologically conservative seminary experience for graduate students preparing for ministry. CP connects the local church with a worldwide ministry team carrying the Good News, sharing light in the darkness and helping the less fortunate in the name of Jesus. – *JAMES W. MERCER, pastor, Hollinger's Island Baptist Church, Mobile*



alsbom.org/cp1

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

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

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 begins with breakfast followed by conferences on Saturday morning at 8, 9:30 and 11. 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.



Alabama Baptist Convention
State Board of Missions

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

Returning to Disciple-Making

2014 Alabama Discipleship Tour with Claude King

Have you and your church missed the mark of making faithful and mature followers of Jesus Christ? Examine the motivations, strategies and resources for returning to effective and fruitful discipling. Claude King serves as discipleship specialist at LifeWay Christian Resources. He and his wife, Reta, live in Murfreesboro, Tenn. Claude is co-author of *Experiencing God* with Henry Blackaby and *The Mind of Christ* with T.W. Hunt. He is the author of *The Call to Follow Christ* and *Come to the Lord's Table*.

Thursday, July 31

WEST CULLMAN/EAST CULLMAN ASSOCIATIONS

West Cullman Association Office, 601 Cleveland Ave. S.W., Cullman
10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. (Lunch included. Suggested donation: \$12)
For pastors, other church staff, key leaders

Registration required by July 24. Limited to first 60 registered.

Information: Vicki Nix, westcullmanbapti@bellsouth.net, (256) 739-3929

MARSHALL ASSOCIATION

Central Baptist Church, 1967 High Point Rd., Albertville
6-8:30 p.m. (Meal included at no cost.)
For pastors, other church staff, key leaders

Registration required by July 28.

Information: Randall Stoner, mbadom@charter.net, (256) 582-2882

Wednesday, October 1

ETOWAH ASSOCIATION

Etowah Association Office, 853 Walnut St., Gadsden
10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. (Lunch included. Cost: \$5.)
For pastors, other church staff, key leaders, teachers.

Registration required by September 25.

Information: Betty Sullivan, betty@etowahbaptist.com, (256) 547-1691

Thursday, October 2

CALHOUN ASSOCIATION - TWO TIMES

Calhoun Association Office, 1130 Woodstock Ave., Anniston
9:30 a.m.-noon (Lunch included at no cost.)
For pastors, other church staff, key leaders, teachers.

Registration required by September 26.

6-8:30 p.m. (Supper included at no cost.)
Evening session for bivocational pastors and wives

Registration required by September 26.

Information: John Thomas, jthomas@cbasbc.org, (256) 237-5171

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission ONEPROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANYMINISTRIES: Great Commission Ministries

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

The Troy L. Morrison Leadership/Church Health Awards will be given to individuals who have demonstrated evidence of leadership that has advanced the church in four key areas of Kingdom growth: spiritual growth, ministry advancement, missions involvement and numerical growth. The awards are given to three pastors, one from each of the categories: New Work,

**Troy L. Morrison
Leadership/Church
Health Awards**

Established Work and Bi-Vocational. To nominate a pastor you feel has demonstrated Kingdom leadership, you may obtain an information form online at www.alsbom.org/leadership or by calling Ministry Assistant Debbie Dickey at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 218, or (334) 613-2218, ddickey@alsbom.org. Deadline for submission of nominations is **October 3**.

LEADER LAB



General Sessions Leader:
H. B. London, Pastor to Pastors
Emeritus, Focus on the Family

**TUESDAY-THURSDAY,
JULY 15-17**

Baptist Building, 2001 E.
South Blvd., Montgomery

www.alsbom.org/leaderlab

For other information,
please contact Ministry
Assistant Debbie Dickey at
1-800-264-1225, ext. 218, or
(334) 613-2218,
ddickey@alsbom.org.

**FRIDAY AND SATURDAY,
AUGUST 8-9, 2014
LAGOON PARK & FAIN PARK,
MONTGOMERY**

Baptist Men's State Softball Tournament

- 40 TEAM MAXIMUM • ROUND ROBIN TOURNAMENT • ASA SANCTIONED TEAMS ONLY • SINGLE ELIMINATION IN CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND OF 16 TEAMS

**EACH TEAM WILL PLAY AT
LEAST FOUR GAMES**

ENTRY FEES \$145

FOR ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO PARTICIPATE AND AN INFORMATION PACKET, PLEASE CONTACT MINISTRY ASSISTANT MONDENE COKER AT 1-800-264-1225, EXT. 273, OR (334) 613-2273, MCOKER@ALSBOM.ORG.

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

**MEN'S
NIGHT OUT**
MEN'S Conference

Friday, August 1

First Baptist
Church, Athens

Featuring: Hank Parker, Bass Masters Pro; Fred Luter, pastor, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, and former president, Southern Baptist Convention

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. alsbom.org/mensnightout

WORSHIP & LEADERSHIP CHURCH MUSIC EVENTS

**CHILDREN'S CHOIR SUMMIT
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

July 11-12 at Shocco Springs
\$110 per person (based on 3 or more/room). For children's choir leaders and anyone who works with children

CHECK WEBSITE FOR MORE INFO AND TO REGISTER ONLINE:
www.alsbom.org/children-summit

MIX MUSICAMP@SHOCCO

July 14-18 at Shocco Springs
\$290 per person. For grades 3-5, 6-7, 8-10
Jump into the mix. Unforgettable worship. Lifelong friendships. Aqua jump. Paintball. Uncontrollable fun.

REGISTRATION: mixmusiccamp.org

For more information, please contact State Missionary Keith Hibbs at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 217, or (334) 613-2217, khibbs@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Cindy Parrish, ext. 230, or (334) 613-2230, cparrish@alsbom.org.

youth evangelism conference

BEST PRICE
DEADLINE EXTENDED
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SAMFORD
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CENTER

BREAKOUT LEADERS



MARK CAHILL
ADULT LEADER
BREAKOUT



LESLIE HOLLOWELL
GIRLS BREAKOUT



ROBBIE ROBISON
GUYS BREAKOUT

DON'T MISS THE BEST PRICES FOR YEC 2014 -

REGISTER TODAY! * REGISTER AND PAY BY JULY 11, 2014:
\$30, INCLUDES LUNCH AND T-SHIRT * REGISTRATIONS AFTER
JULY 11 AND WALKUP REGISTRATIONS: \$35, INCLUDES
LUNCH BUT NO T-SHIRT

THIS CONFERENCE IS MADE POSSIBLE BY GIFTS FROM ALABAMA BAPTISTS
THROUGH THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM.

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Join the Party as we begin the celebration of our 125 years of missions through Alabama WMU!

Be the first to hear the exciting plans for the upcoming year of celebration!

Leave challenged and inspired to fulfill God's mission for your life!

MISSIONS

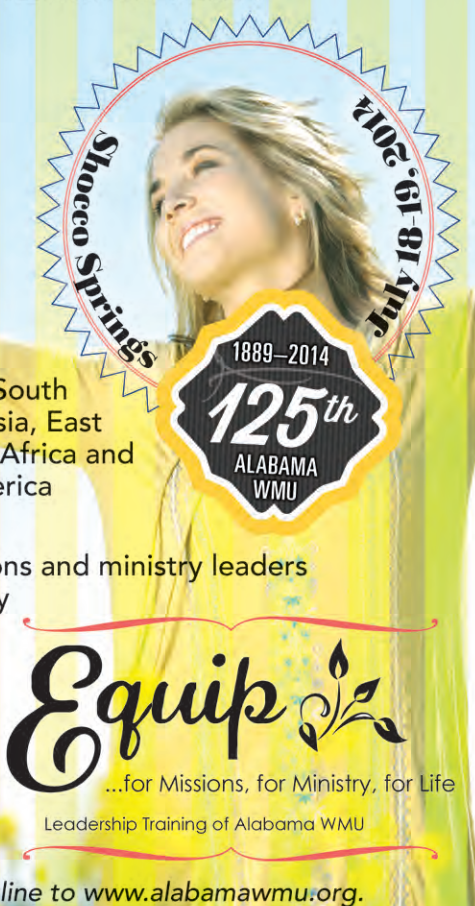
connect with missionaries from South Asia, South East Asia, Central Asia, East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East, and North America

Leadership training for all missions and ministry leaders

DEBBY AKERMAN - Bible Study
President, National WMU
CHIP COLEE - Worship Leader
Minister of Music,
First Baptist Montgomery

Registration: 1-800-280-1105

For more information, please contact Kathryn Helms at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 325, or (334) 613-2325, khelms@alsbom.org or go online to www.alabamawmu.org.



ALABAMA WMU REGIONAL TRAININGS

CHOOSE FROM THREE DATES/LOCATIONS:

- August 9: Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile
- August 16: Highland Baptist Church, Florence
- August 23: First Baptist Church, Pelham

COST: \$10 per person

HALF-DAY LEADERSHIP TRAINING EVENT FOR:

9 a.m.-
11:30 a.m.

- WMU directors and other general leaders
- Women's ministry leaders
- Women on Mission/Adults on Mission/myMISSION leaders
- Acteens/Youth on Mission leaders
- Girls in Action/Children in Action leaders
- Royal Ambassadors leaders
- Mission Friends leaders

Plan your year, learn about new resources and gain practical tips for being an effective missions leader in your church!

For more information or to register, visit www.alabamawmu.org/training or contact Julie McGraw at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 226, or (334) 613-2226, jmccraw@alsbom.org.



PASTER, DEACON/ SPOUSE

THEME: **GONE,
FISHIN**

RETREAT



**Shocco Springs
Friday and Saturday
September 26-27**

**Reservations/Price:
1-800-280-1105**

For other information,
please contact contact State
Missionary Mike Jackson at
1-800-264-1225, ext. 210, or
(334) 613-2210,
mjackson@alsbom.org or
Ministry Assistant Debbie
Dickey, ext. 218, or
(334) 613-2218,
ddickey@alsbom.org.

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SUMMER MISSIONS CAMPS AT WORLDSONG MISSIONS PLACE

Cook
Springs,
Alabama

for girls in grades K-12 and boys in grades 2-6
High adventure camping with a missions emphasis,
featuring:

- ☒ Bible study and worship experiences
- ☒ Time with missionaries
- ☒ Crafts and cultural activities
- ☒ Ropes course for older campers
- ☒ Canoeing/kayaking
- ☒ Zip lines for those completing third grade and above
- ☒ Swimming
- ☒ Hiking

Missions Camp for Girls (for girls completing grades 3-6)
July 14-18 ☒ July 21-25

Missions Camp for Teen Girls (for girls completing
grades 7-12)
July 14-18

Missions Camp for Children (for coeds completing
grades 2-6)
July 7-11

Missions Camp for Mom & Daughter (for girls completing
grades K-3)
July 11-12 ☒ July 25-26

For more information, go online to
www.worldsongretreat.com, or please contact Brandy
Cleveland at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 223, or (334) 613-2223,
bcleveland@alsbom.org. //



Alabama Singing Men & Alabama Singing Women ~ Retreats ~

Thursday and Friday, **SEPTEMBER 11-12** ~ Shocco Springs
REGISTRATION/PRICES: 1-800-280-1105

To inquire about joining Alabama Singing Men, please contact State
Missionary Keith Hibbs at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 217, or
(334) 613-2217, khibbs@alsbom.org. For membership
information for Alabama Singing Woman, go online to
www.alsbom.org/singingwomen and download an application.

For information about the retreat, check online at
www.alsbom.org/worship, or contact Keith Hibbs or Ministry Assistant
Sharon Cleveland at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 279, or (334) 613-2279,
scleveland@alsbom.org.

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SOAPBOX DERBY

State Race: Saturday, October 18, 2014

Location: Dexter Avenue, in front of the Alabama State Capitol
Summer is an ideal time to build a Royal Ambassador soapbox derby car!

Rules & information: www.alsbom.org/ra

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



FOCUS on One Mission

together in ministry
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

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR OUTSTANDING 2014 MISSION VOLUNTEER

The Office of Global Missions of the State Board of Missions would like to honor an **Outstanding 2014 Mission Volunteer. YOUR HELP IS NEEDED.**

Please think about lay people you know whom you feel are worthy of such recognition, and let us hear from you. We realize that there are many who could fit this requirement; however, for this purpose only one individual (or couple) will be selected.

Your recommendation will make a difference. The following information is required if a person (or couple) is to be considered:

1. The name, address and phone number of the person (or couple) being nominated.
2. The name, address and phone number of the nominee's pastor, the church to which he/she/they belong and their association.
3. A list of volunteer mission service: their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and Uttermost where he/she/they have participated during the past five years, including locations and dates. (If the nominee(s) has not served in at least three of the Acts 1:8 areas, please do not nominate that person.)
4. Statements supporting your nomination as **Outstanding 2014 Mission Volunteer** (why you feel he/she/they should be recognized in this manner).
5. Your signature with address, phone, church and association.

To access an Information Sheet and Nomination Application, go online to www.alsbom.org/missionsvolunteer.

If you do not have web access, request your Information Sheet and Nomination Application by contacting Ministry Assistant Virginia Gardner at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 238, or (334) 613-2238, vgardner@alsbom.org.

Requests may also be made by mail to Global Missions Office, Attn: Virginia Gardner, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111-0870.

Please Note:
 No phone calls or e-mail recommendations and/or endorsements accepted! Nominations must be received, not postmarked, no later than Monday, September 22, 2014.

Fall Senior Adult Retreat

Monday through Wednesday, **October 13-15**

Shocco Springs

Declare: "One generation will declare Your works to the next and will proclaim Your mighty acts." Psalm 145:4 (HCSB)

Preacher: Herbert Brown, pastor, Southside Baptist Church, Greenville

Celebration Leader: Debbie Childers, The Reality Group, Austell, Ga.

Music Leader: Chris Weide, First Baptist Church, Opp

More than 200 senior adults gathered at Shocco Springs in April where they praised God and focused on ways to share their stories of God's mighty acts in their lives with their children, grandchildren and those whose lives cross paths with theirs. They joined in praise, worship and laughter. Maxine Bearden from Ozark Baptist Church was there. She said, "I always come away from Shocco Springs uplifted, feeling closer to God! I am always ready to return. I am never disappointed." Will you plan to come and bring a few good friends?

Registration: 1-800-280-1105 (Cost is per person, based upon choice of lodging.)

For other information, please contact State Missionary Eileen Mitchell at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 221, or (334) 613-2221, emitchell@alsbom.org. You may also visit www.alsbom.org/ss for updates as they become available.

ALABAMA CHURCH PLANTER NETWORK DINNER

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2014 ≈ PETE HANNA CENTER, SAMFORD UNIVERSITY, 800 LAKESHORE DRIVE, BIRMINGHAM

Speaker: Bob Logan

Schedule: dinner, 6 p.m.; worship led by church planting worship teams, 6:30 p.m.; message by Bob Logan, 6:45 p.m.; breakout sessions, 7:15 p.m., wives led by Marybeth Culbreth, pastor/planters led by Bob Logan; dismissal to pick up children in childcare, 8:30 p.m.

Who Should Attend? Church planters and wives and/or anyone interested in coaching are invited to this event.

About Bob Logan: No one has influenced church planting in America over the past two decades more than Bob Logan. The Basic Training we now use (Alabama Church Planting Basics) is based upon the Church



Planter Toolkit developed by Logan. He is also currently very active in coaching planters, pastors and other missionary personnel. He is the author of *Coaching 101* and numerous other books and publications.

Registration/Cost: Go online to www.alsbom.org/churchplanterdinner. There will be no cost for those who have completed either Basic Training or Churches Planting Churches Training. All other participants will be charged \$25 per couple or \$15 per individual. The deadline for registration is no later than noon on Wednesday, November 5.

For more information, please contact State Missionary Lamar Duke at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 332, or (334) 613-2332, lduke@alsbom.org.

ONEMISSION: The Great Commission Program MANY MINISTRIES: The Cooperative Program

Monday through Wednesday,
September 22-24, Shocco Springs

Church LIBRARY WORKSHOP

Theme: "Libraries: Reach, Teach and Minister"

Registration/Prices: 1-800-280-1105

For other information, please contact State Missionary Mike Jackson at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 210, or (334) 613-2210, mjackson@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Debbie Dickey, ext. 218, or (334) 613-2218, ddickey@alsbom.org.

ALABAMA BAPTIST BOYS CAMPS: DATES & COST

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

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.

SENIOR ADULT SINGIN'

~ TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16:

First Baptist Church, 830 U.S. Highway 43, Winfield

~ THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18:

Southside Baptist Church, 423 East Cottonwood Road, Dothan

Gas up the church van, and be ready to hit the road! Come to one of the locations above, and let's make some joyful noise. Pianist Frank Jones will be there to lead us as we sing hymns and worship the Lord together. The singin' begins at 10 a.m. and ends with lunch. The cost is \$10 per person, and that includes lunch!

REGISTER ONLINE:

www.alsbom.org/senioradultsingin

For other information, contact State Missionary Eileen Mitchell at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 221, or (334) 613-2221, emitchell@alsbom.org. You may also visit www.alsbom.org/ssd for updates as they become available.

FAITH-FOCUSED SECURITY TRAINING

LEVEL A TRAINING FOR 2014

This is the most basic training for the missions volunteer who travels occasionally to low-risk areas on mission trips. Participants will receive a full day of instruction led by Sentinel Trainers certified by Fort Sherman Academy covering topics like travel security, code of conduct, crime survival and basic crisis policy all from a faith-based perspective.

- 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.

LEVEL B TRAINING FOR 2014

Four sessions of classroom instruction led by a recognized leader in faith-based training for missions organizations. This level is designed for pastors, ministers of missions, church staff, mission team leaders and other mission leaders who travel or lead mission teams to elevated risk locations. Sessions will cover security, code of conduct, crime survival, dealing with unfriendly governments, detention and questioning. Role play will be used.

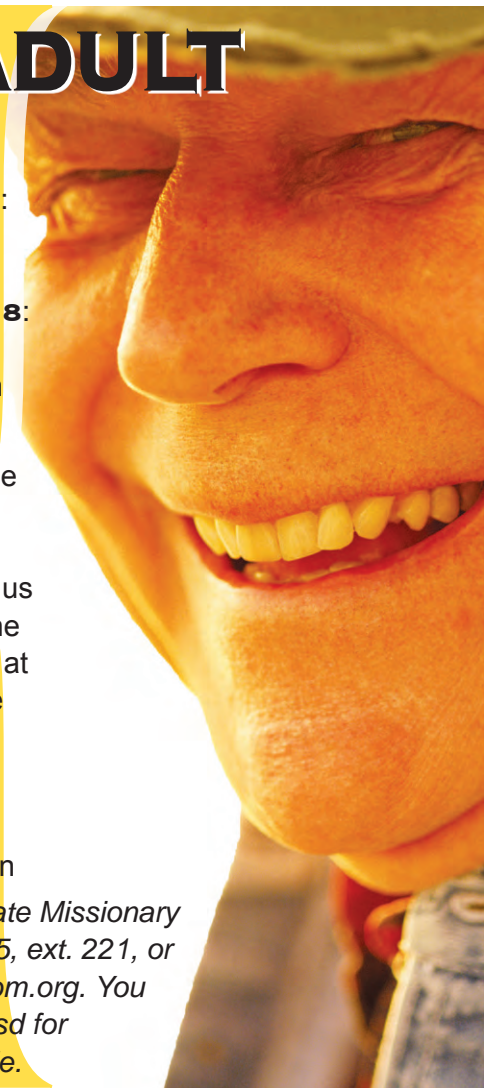
- December 4-6: Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery

COST IS \$200 PER ATTENDEE (includes materials, Saturday lunch and breaks). Reservations are non-refundable.

REGISTER ONLINE www.alsbom.org/ffst

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

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





Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

The Holy Spirit

Paraclete Promises (Part 4 of 4)

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

This week we consider the final passage in which Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit by the special term Paraclete. In the prior three passages, Jesus emphasized the Spirit's role in the lives of His followers. In John 16:4-11, He began by pointing out the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the world of outsiders and unbelievers.

At the time of speaking to the disciples, the coming of the Spirit to abide with them was still in their future. So Jesus informed them, "When He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8). Students of the Bible have understood the meaning of Jesus' verb to be either "convict" or "convince." English versions usually reflect one or the other of these meanings. As we take a closer look, perchance we do well to allow the Bible's "two-edgedness" to come into play. Rather than choosing between these meanings, we can profit by allowing both to stand. Let's see how this playing out as the Spirit joins human witnesses in making an impression on the world.

Concerning Sin

The Spirit seeks to reprove the world by bringing conviction that sin is serious, and sinners need forgiveness. At the same time, the Spirit is at work convincing the world that the God-provided means of sin's forgiveness is through Jesus, the sin-bearer. Viewed this way, the word Jesus used conveys truth in two directions. The Holy Spirit works in the world to convict people about the wrong way and to convince them of the right way.

Concerning Righteousness

The Spirit seeks to bring reproof or conviction that people left to their own efforts are without the kind of righteousness that God accepts into His heaven. While convicting the world of its lack of real righteousness, the Spirit

also works to convince people that Christ is the only way to the righteousness that meets God's requirements. At the heart of the good news is the declaration that Christ's perfect righteousness is accredited to those who forsake unbelief and begin trusting Jesus as Savior.

Concerning Judgment

The Spirit seeks to bring conviction that judgment awaits the unrepentant. Jesus' thought runs from the greater to the lesser. Judgment upon Satan is at the greater end, while judgment upon the world is at the lesser end. If the greater judgment has been wrought, the lesser also will follow. While convicting the world of the danger of divine judgment, the Spirit works to convince people that escape from God's judgment is found only in Christ's atoning work.

Earlier Jesus had said His followers were to bear witness to their world and that His Spirit also would bear witness (John 15:26-27). He has not changed our assignment. We are to bear witness. However, our assignment is not to reprove or cause conviction. That is the Spirit's work. We are not assigned, nor are we capable, of convincing people of the truth about sin, righteousness and judgment. That also is the Spirit's work. If we aspire, and hopefully we do, to see unbelievers come to faith in Christ, we must be partners with the Holy Spirit. He needs the human witness and we need His convicting and convincing power to accompany that witness. ☞

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.



8-year-old girl uses school project to share her view of the Trinity

By Sue Gober, Ed.D.
University of Mobile

I was helping my granddaughter, Peyton, clean out her closet the summer after third grade when we found an old school project toward the bottom of the pile.

Her teacher had assigned the students a "book writing project," where students could write about any topic. Peyton chose to write about the Trinity, which includes her belief about heaven.

Since that day, I have shown Peyton's book to many ministers and all of them told me that her 8-year-old's understanding of the Trin-

ity is more advanced than many church members. (Peyton wrote her "book" about 5 years ago).



PEYTON GOBER

Sometimes a child can show us a simple way of understanding something that appears to be complex. I believe Peyton's writing is an example of what can happen when parents intentionally talk with their children about faith. Because of strong Christian parents, she "gets it," thanks to their teaching of "the most important life lesson," as Peyton says in her dedication.

Here is Peyton's "book," (see below) complete with her own titles and unique third-grade spelling. ☞

Jesus is the Real Power (Not Magic)

By Peyton Gober

Dedicated to my parents who have taught me all that you are about to read. I love you. Thank you so much for teaching me the most important life lesson there is.

Introduction

Dear Readers,
This story you are about to read is not only a really, very, the most important life lesson, but it is true. I hope you enjoy this book. Flip the page to begin.

Chapter One

About Jesus

Most people think that Jesus is just a made up story. Or a legend that was made up years ago, and is still being told today. And some kind of believe, but just ignore it and worship other fake gods. If you are at all questioning Him being the only way, all you have to do is read a little bit of the bible. A certain part. I'm not sure what part but you can always try. If you read the right part, it will teach you that the same Jesus that was alive millions of years ago, is the same Jesus that we pray to today. And He will be forever. And he is the power. Unlike Kings, Queens, or Satan. He rules everything. I mean think about it. Kings and Queens, when they die, new people take there place. Jesus was, is, and will always be the same person. Satan will, too. But he doesn't rule over anything. He tries to get hold of your mind and make you do bad things, have bad actions and set poor examples for others. Just remember to always be a Christ follower.

Chapter Two

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is something that is inside of you. Sometimes you might hear people say that God has three heads. It's true! God doesn't literally have three heads, but, what people mean is that you have:

▶ God

▶ Jesus
▶ Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the form of God that lives inside of you. It's that little voice inside that when you are tempted to do the wrong thing, it is telling you to do the right thing. So whenever you hear that little voice telling you to do the right thing, do what it says, and you will live a much better life than if you always did the wrong thing and got punished all of the time. The Holy Spirit went into action when Jesus went to heaven.

Chapter Three

Satin

Satin is the one who always wants you to do the wrong thing. He is that other little voice that is telling you to do the wrong thing. DON'T LISTEN!! And I mean it, that loud and clear. Because he is the one who always wants you to do the wrong thing, like I said. Like I said earlier, if you do, you will get in trouble all of the time and your life will be miserable. You don't want to live your life miserable do you? No way!! All you have to do is simply don't listen!

Chapter Four

Jesus is the Only Way

If you have Jesus in your heart, you will go to Heavyn. And Heavyn is wonderful. There is no sin in Heavyn! No getting hurt, etheir! I don't know about you, but I want to go to Heavyn. But you can't go because you want to. You do it for the right reason. You except Christ to be your lord and Savior. That's all it takes. But do it because the holy spirit told you to. And if you aren't in that state of mind yet, you don't do it. Before asking him to come inside you, and live in you, you might consider praying! The Holy Spirit might tell you it's not the right time. Then wait, and keep praying. If the Holy Spirit says go ahead, then great! Go ahead! But have someone guide you through it! But overall, you're ready!

(Sue Gober, Ed.D., is professor and director of professional laboratory experiences for the School of Education at the University of Mobile)

Churches vandalized

Vandal hits several churches in Jefferson County

Reportedly inspired by the Holy Spirit, Eja Cree was taken into custody June 20 after vandalizing more than 20 churches, homes and businesses in Jefferson County.

At press time, Cree, 31, was being detained and charged with first-degree criminal mischief. He told detectives the Holy Spirit told him to “get the message out.” Cree spray-painted one word on most of the buildings with a variation of “Memeneusha” in bright-colored paint. Another suspect also was in custody.

Chief Deputy Randy Christian told al.com, “I think we are just dealing with mental illness here and we are relieved to discover that. I would hate to think someone in their right mind would do something like this.”

Baptist churches

Several churches were hit by Cree including First Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove, and Bethel Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove.

A member of First, Pleasant Grove, said church members and staff immediately began to clean the paint off the sidewalk and



Photo courtesy of First Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove
Eja Cree spray-painted a word he said was inspired by the Holy Spirit on one of FBC Pleasant Grove’s sidewalks. Cree is being detained and charged with first-degree criminal mischief.

building when they discovered it early June 20.

“The fact that they caught the person and he’s getting the help he needs was a little comforting,” the member said.

Bethel Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove, also was vandalized.

Church secretary Susan McLellan said after discovering the spray-painted word she and other

church staff called the police. They cleaned the wall where the word was written with a power washer and cleaned the grass that had red paint on it as well. (TAB)

— Correction —

In the June 19 issue, Rick-ey E. Camp, of Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Trussville, was incorrectly listed as being appointed to serve on the North American Mission Board board of trustees. Larry Gibson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Oneonta, was appointed.

“I think we are just dealing with mental illness here and we are relieved to discover that.”

Chief Deputy Randy Christian



You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

Leviticus 19:18

LEGACY

CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

TRAINING LEADERS
IMPACTING COMMUNITIES

Legacy Leadership Conference

“Marketplace Ministry”
Saturday, July 12 • 10 a.m.–noon • Free event

Speakers include:
Tom Rains, C12 Group: Christian Ethics and Executive Leadership
Gary Abney, Marketplace Chaplains: Ministering to Your Co-Workers
Dr. Lee Barnett, LCU President: Vocational Discipleship in Christian Education

Legacy Christian University and Heritage Bible College Alumni
Reception at noon

6806 Whitesburg Dr. SE, Huntsville, AL 35802

256-924-0511 • legacyu.net



Sudanese mother on death row released from prison

JUBA, South Sudan — Meriam Yahia Ibrahim was released from prison in South Sudan on June 23, only to be detained at the Juba airport as she and her family were trying to leave for the United States. By June 26, Ibrahim and her family again were freed from custody, but she could face charges of forging travel documents, punishable by up to seven years in prison.

Her attorneys deny that her travel documents were forged or fraudulent.

Ibrahim, who gave birth to her second child in prison May 27, had received a death sentence by hanging for allegedly leaving Islam after a Muslim claiming to be a relative accused her of marrying a Christian man — the crime of “adultery” under Islamic law for which she also was sentenced to 100 lashes.

Sudan’s state news agency reported that the country’s Court of Cassation canceled the death sentence against the 27-year-old Christian, who was in prison with her toddler son since February, after defense lawyers presented their case. Witnesses for the defense had been prohibited from testifying during the trial.

Human rights advocates said Sudan must ensure protection for Ibrahim and her family as Islamists have clamored for her death throughout the trial.

Her husband, South Sudanese national Daniel Wani, has U.S. citizenship, and Ibrahim was given a U.S. visa. At press time, Ibrahim and her family were staying at the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum.

Coptic teacher loses appeal, sentenced to prison in Egypt

AL-EDISAT, Egypt — A Coptic woman has lost her appeal of what human rights activists call a false conviction for blaspheming Islam and has been sentenced to six months in an Egyptian prison.

The appellate court ruling, handed down June 15, shocked the Christian woman, 25-year-old Demyana Abd al-Nour, her family and human rights advocates. As Al-Nour fled the country in 2013, the ruling practically guarantees that she will spend the rest of her life in exile from Egypt.

On April 10, 2013, a small group of Islamist parents and teachers at Sheikh Sultan Primary School in Al-Edisat accused Al-Nour of teaching coursework that implied disapproval of Islam’s prophet Muhammad.

Al-Nour originally had been sentenced to pay a fine of the equivalent of \$14,270. The judge in the Luxor Court of Appeals replaced the fine with the prison sentence.

Safwat Samaan, chairman of Nation Without Borders, a human rights and development group headquartered in Luxor, Egypt, said the case for Al-Nour’s acquittal was overwhelming. He and other human rights activists in Egypt expected a full acquittal.

There is one more chance for appeal in the Court of Cassation, but Samaan said that because Al-Nour must be in prison to appeal and the legal process would take longer than her sentence, she will now apply for political asylum, likely in France.

Commitment to Egypt’s new constitution questioned

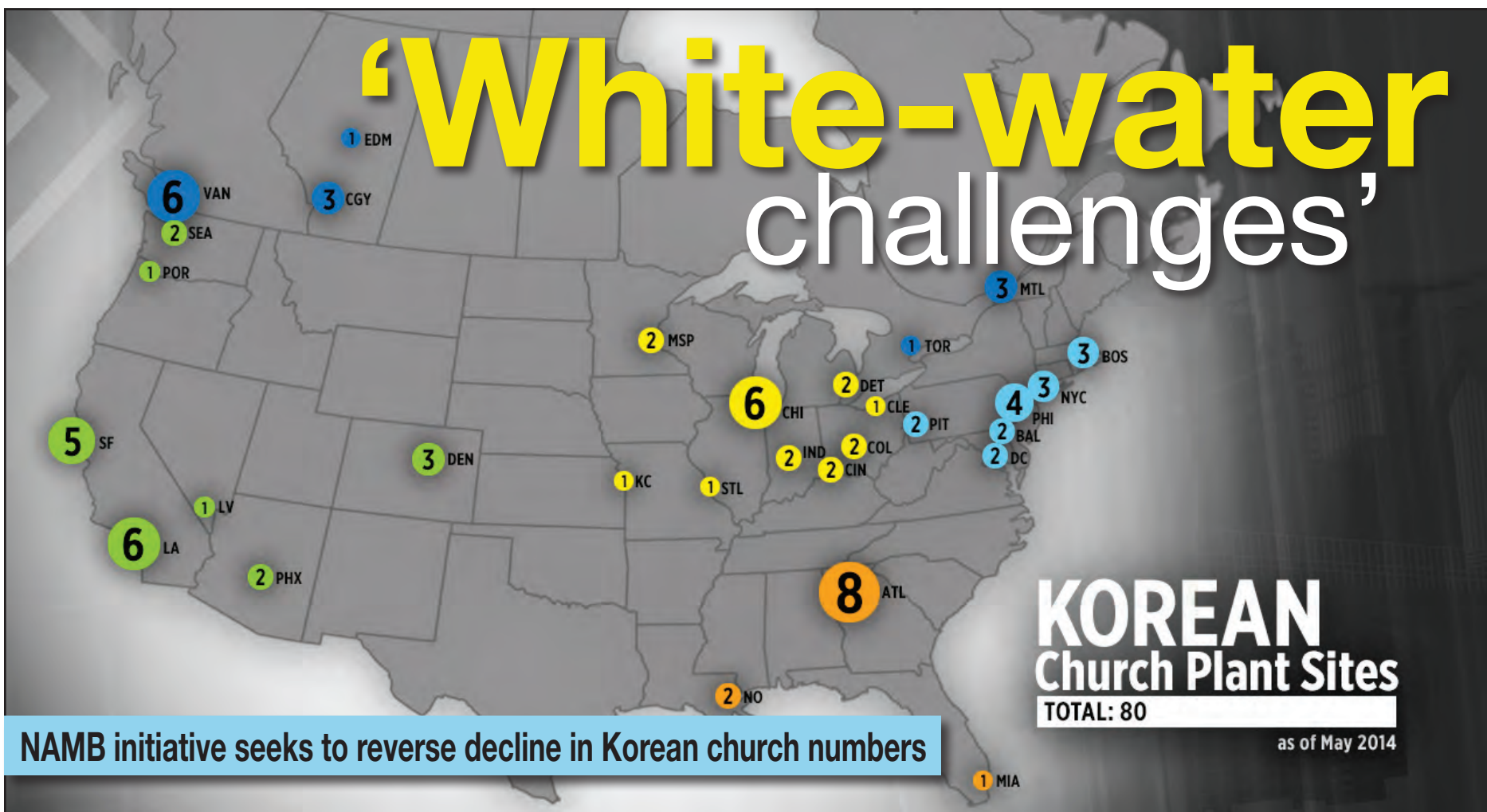
LUXOR, Egypt — Charges of “blasphemy” against a Christian in Egypt for “liking” a Facebook page run by converts from Islam calls into question the government’s commitment to a new constitution guaranteeing freedom of belief and thought, rights activists said.

Kerolos Shouky Attallah is accused of violating Article 98F of the Egyptian Penal Code for “liking” an Arabic-language Facebook page administered by an anonymous group of Christian converts known as the Knights of the Cross. According to Attallah’s attorney the 29-year-old Christian did not make any comments on the site, share any of the postings or upload anything to it.

Safwat Samaan, chairman of Nation Without Borders, a human rights and development group headquartered in Luxor, Egypt, said the accusation against Attallah was ludicrous.

The Knights of the Cross Facebook page was designed to provide Arabic-speaking converts from Islam — many forced to live alone and in hiding — a cyber-place to encourage each other and safely discuss the Bible.

“According to the constitution, Kerolos should not be in jail, because it allows freedom of speech and expression, but the judges are not using the new constitution and are still working with the old law,” Samaan said.



Planting a second-generation Korean-American church has its cultural and generational challenges, according to John Yi, who serves as the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions’ Asian church planting catalyst.

One of the most difficult tasks

for planting such churches in Alabama, Yi said, is to first find who the second-generation Korean-Americans are and then find where they live.

Yi’s comments match up with Robert Goette’s, who started planting churches in Chicago nearly 30 years ago.

Growing up as a missionary kid

in Korea, Goette knew the culture and generational challenges. Some things needed to change.

The veteran church-planting strategist compared his early ministry in Chicago to white-water rafting. There was boredom — then sheer terror, he said.

Churches — particularly ethnic churches — must wisely negotiate those stages of change. One change Goette championed was a mindset that first- and second-generation Korean-Americans are distinctly different people groups. First-generation Koreans often remain entrenched in their culture and learn limited English. Their second-generation children become not only fluently bilingual but also bicultural. Consequently the second-generation Koreans often embrace Western cultural values.

Yi agreed.

“Second-generation culture is much more American than it is Korean. They have a cultural identity of an American. ... They often want to join a Korean church, but it doesn’t work because of language limitations,” Yi said, noting that some second-generation Korean-Americans only speak English fluently.

And much of Goette’s early research is proving prophetic. The accelerated growth of the Korean church from the 1980s and 1990s has slowed, and even declined, as Korean Southern Baptist churches navigate their “white-water” challenges. In recent years, the number of Korean Southern Baptist churches in North America has declined from more than 850 to less than 800, said Jason Kim, the North American Mission Board’s

NAMB is proposing 80 new Korean church plants in 32 population centers. The plants are part of a national strategy (SEND North America) to increase the number of ethnic church plants where they are needed most.

CANADA — Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver

NORTHEAST — Baltimore, Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Washington D.C.

SOUTH — Atlanta, Miami, New Orleans

MIDWEST — Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Minneapolis/St. Paul, St. Louis

WEST — Denver, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Portland, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle

(NAMB) Korean church planting catalyst. Meanwhile between 2000 and 2010, Korean immigration grew 39 percent to reach an estimated 1.7 million people, according to NAMB’s Center for Missional Research.

Growing population

To reverse the decline in the number of Korean churches and keep pace with the growing Korean population in North America, NAMB is proposing 80 new Korean church plants in 32 population centers (see sidebar, this page). The plants are part of a national strategy to increase the number of ethnic church plants where they are needed most.

Eun Kwang Byun recently planted a first-generation church — Valley Life Baptist Church, Northridge, Calif. Coached by Song Sik Kim, the California Southern Baptist Convention’s Korean church planting catalyst co-funded by NAMB, Byun con-

ducted a demographic study and started with a core group of about 12 families from a sponsoring church. Mostly newlywed young adults, ages 30–35, they launched with about 40 in attendance and now have 50–55 every Sunday.

Byun agrees with the research and observation of others that Korean church planting is changing.

Despite the “white-water” challenges, NAMB’s Kim remains hopeful the next generation of Korean-American church planters will steady those rough waves with a missional mindset.

And although there are currently 29 Korean-American Baptist churches in Alabama, and many more small groups on their way to becoming a church, Yi hopes to find and train more Korean church planters. He noted he also is excited to be in the beginning stages of organizing bivocational training for Korean-American church planters. (NAMB, TAB)

Reverse mortgage to change again

By Jimmy Dixon

Since Ronald Reagan got FHA to insure reverse mortgages in 1989 we have never had to use credit scores or income as a means of determining if a homeowner would qualify for a reverse mortgage, but come Sept. 21, FHA may require us to prove you have the means of paying homeowners insurance.

Our questions about credit scores and income will soon be answered, but for now, neither one of these items is a determining factor, so if you plan to apply, the time is now if you do not want the hassle.

After the change, I am sure I will have folks who need to get cash out of their home to help them with living expenses and the funds would probably help their credit score and boost their income, but with this new regulation, there



Jimmy Dixon

will be nothing I can do. So, please take heed and act now.

Now for those of you who are not the least bit concerned with the above yet, and you are looking for a way to grow money that is tax free with no risk (FHA insured), I’d like to send you some information on the Reverse Mortgage Line of Credit Growth Option. I can show you how to grow your account by 3.65 to 4.9%

and yes, it is tax-free and federally insured!

Remember, like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives. He is a Sunday School teacher and active deacon at Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown. For a free brochure, quote or DVD, contact him today at 205-567-4800 or jdixon@mcgowinking.com.



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'Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval'

One Baptist college's accreditation revoked, another's reaffirmed

An accrediting agency handed down decisions involving Baptist-affiliated Brewton-Parker College, Shorter University and Louisiana College, all in a single day.

One Baptist college had its accreditation revoked, another's was reaffirmed and a third got probation on a busy day June 19 for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS).

Brewton-Parker College officials announced plans to appeal Thursday's vote at the SACS commission's board of trustees meeting in San Antonio, Texas, to remove the Georgia Baptist Convention-affiliated school from membership.

Ergun Caner, elected December 2013 as president of the school with a main campus in Mount Vernon, Ga., said Brewton-Parker has 10 days to file an appeal and will remain accredited but on probation during the process.

SACS placed Brewton-Parker on probation in 2012 after finding deficiencies in the number and qualifications of faculty, financial stability and oversight of business functions including compliance with rules for federal student aid.

"The board of trustees have instructed me to take all necessary steps to protect the institu-

tion and our status as a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools," Caner said.

Another Georgia Baptist Convention school, Shorter University in Rome, Ga., announced the same day the SACS commission voted to affirm its accreditation, after placing the school on warning last year for questions about student-teacher ratio and qualifications of faculty members.

Adhering to biblical standards

Shorter President Donald Dowless said in a press release, "Today's vote confirms our belief that strong scholarship and Christian commitment can go hand in hand. We continue to be firmly dedicated to providing our students with access to professors and academic programs of the highest quality while adhering to biblical standards."

Dozens of faculty members departed Shorter in 2012 after imposition of a new "lifestyle statement" affirming biblical inerrancy and requiring faculty and staff to sign a pledge rejecting homosexuality. While not requiring they be teetotalers, the policy also forbade faculty and staff from drinking alcohol in public.

Louisiana College, a Louisiana Baptist Convention-affiliated school in Pineville, La.,

beset by controversy, lawsuits and a leadership change, returned to SACS probation for "administrative issues," just six months after having its accreditation reaffirmed after two years on probation.

Argile Smith, president pro tempore for Louisiana College, said in a press release, "Although the decision is disappointing, it represents an opportunity for Louisiana College to address the issues in preparation for the arrival of a new president. "Fortunately, the issues don't bring into question in any way the excellent classroom work being done by our professors and students. The issues have to do with administrative areas."

Accreditation by SACS is like the "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval" said Belle Wheelen, SACS executive director. Regional accreditation assures public accountability that the institution meets the guidelines of a quality institution. To the institution, accreditation gives access to federal student financial aid.

Wheelen said there is no requirement for a school to have regional accreditation from SACS but such schools do not have the "vote of confidence" to offer the public provided by SACS, and students at those schools do not have access to federal student aid dollars. (ABP, TAB)

Want to know God?

Pastor Mike Owen
Sycamore Baptist Church, Sylacauga

I have on my desk in my office at church a hand-carved figure made especially for me from a craftsman in Africa. It shows a man kneeling in prayer before an opened Bible. When he gave it to me he said, "There is not another one like this in the entire world. It is one-of-a-kind."

The Bible teaches us that this is how God feels about you and me. We are "one-of-a-kind" creations by God. God loves you uniquely, individually, just as you are.

The Bible also teaches us that man has sinned, and sin separates us from a holy God. We have earned God's wrath and punishment for the way we have offended His holiness by choosing our way over His. But His love was so great that it moved Him to offer His only Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

The Bible teaches us that Jesus' death on Calvary's cross was not planned and implemented by men. Jesus was not at the mercy of a Roman ruler. He was not subject to the whims of angry, jealous religious rulers. No, God sent Jesus to the cross so that the wrath of God toward sin could be poured out on His Son, Jesus, and not on you and me. Now by placing our faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross, by trusting in the blood that He shed for me there, I am made right with God. I'm accepted as righteous and holy because Jesus is my righteousness and my holiness.

Every day I'm reminded that God made me special and that I am just what He wanted to make. I rejoice in the fact that I am "fearfully and wonderfully made" in the image of my Creator. I am humbled by the truth that in my rebellion against God, He chose forgiveness instead of rejection, grace instead of judgment.

Today could I encourage you to simply trust in the finished work of Jesus? You are no accident. You are a unique creation by God. You were made to belong to your Father in heaven. Call on Him today by admitting to Him that you are a sinner. Tell Him today you will trust that Jesus died for your personal sins. Invite Jesus to be your Savior today. Then you will discover exactly what you were created for. To belong to the Craftsman who made you for Himself.

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CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR PASTOR: First Baptist Church, Cookeville, Tenn., seeks an experienced pastor to serve as our senior pastor. We are a multigenerational, Southern Baptist congregation. Average worship attendance of 650. See www.fbccookeville.org. Minimum education is a master's degree from an accredited Southern Baptist seminary. Please submit a cover letter and resumé to: First Baptist Church, Cookeville, 18 South Walnut Avenue, Cookeville, TN 38501. Email: SearchCommittee@fbccookeville.org. Deadline is July 31 for submission.

SENIOR PASTOR: First Baptist Church, Mt. Sterling, located in east central Kentucky, seeks full-time senior pastor. Please prayerfully submit resumé and references by July 21 to: FBCpastorsearch@roadrunner.com. Seminary degree and experience preferred.

PASTOR: Shorterville Baptist Church, Shorterville, Ala., is a loving, rural congregation seeking a full-time pastor. The church is located between Dothan, Ala., and Eufaula, Ala., and just east of Abbeville, Ala. Please contact Jimmy Mobley, P.O. Box 27, Shorterville, AL 36373. 334-585-5735 or 334-790-6873.

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

STUDENT MINISTER: Circlewood Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, Ala., is

now accepting resúmes for a full-time student minister. Please submit resúmes or questions by email to: info@circlewood.org.

MINISTER OF STUDENTS: Union Hill Baptist Church is seeking a full-time minister of students (grades 1-12). Resúmes may be sent to: P.O. Box 823, Oneonta, AL 35121 or bbarnett@otelco.net.

BIVOCATIONAL STUDENT PASTOR: FBC Dawes is seeking a student pastor in west Mobile. Previous experience with grades 7-12 with a spiritually focused program. Please send resumé to: jimglazejr@gmail.com.

PART-TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTER: Walkers Chapel Baptist Church, Fultondale, Ala., is seeking part-time children's minister. Interested applicants please email resúmes to: kidsministerjob@gmail.com. No phone calls please.

OTHER POSITIONS

PRESIDENT/TREASURER: The Board of Trustees of the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, Inc., announces the formation of a committee to select the ministry's president/treasurer elect. The Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, Inc., cares for children in crisis in residential care at five locations across Tennessee and a statewide foster care program. The president/treasurer provides leadership and general supervision to this 123-year-old ministry as approved and directed by the Board of Trustees. Applications and nominations are being accepted during June and July. To be considered, all applications and nominations must

be received by the close of business Thursday, July 31. For detailed information regarding qualifications, skills and position duties, as well as the TBCH employment application, please see www.tbch4kids.org/presidential-search.html. Interested candidates are requested to complete the TBCH employment application and forward it to: president@tbch4kids.org or mail to: President/Treasurer Search, P.O. Box 2206, Brentwood, TN 37024.

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Rashional thoughts

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Executive editor • jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

Allowing others to hold the rope provides blessing both ways

Belle will be featured in my prayers this day — for her, for each one who has a part in caring for her and Aunt Jen Jen, may the Lord wrap you in His loving comfort and enduring courage.”

Prayers like this have been coming my way continually through email, handwritten notes, Facebook messages and texts. Friends from around the world are following the cancer journey of my 7-year-old niece Belle (www.caring-bridge.org/visit/bellemitchell). They have been such a great support to all of us, especially during the intense moments like now. As I write this column, Belle is having a difficult recovery from her fourth brain surgery.

Each day brings new challenges but also new levels of support.

Many who are praying have never even met Belle, yet they tirelessly secure the rope for us to hold on to during this time.

Along with prayer support, many are doing practical things like helping with Belle's other siblings, mowing the family's grass, bringing meals and even sending meals from hundreds of miles away (ordering pizza and having it delivered ... a great idea I'm going to remember to use myself).

Showing grace

And so many are helping me personally by taking on extra work assignments, assisting me with my personal responsibilities and showing lots of grace for the commitments I've put on hold at the moment.

Some friends are too far away to help clean the house or do laundry, but they sincerely want to help.

“I'm not just saying it. I mean it. Tell me something I can do,” one friend said. Another, “I mean it. We are here to serve.”

And while I know what it is like to be on the other side

sincerely wanting to help, it is still hard for us as a family to allow people to do too much. We are always appreciative and even shocked at the care shown by so many, but we start feeling as if we have used up our compassion quota and worry those around us are experiencing compassion fatigue.

Still we are learning to accept the offers more widely and depend on others during the tough moments.

The small things

It is amazing how much someone showing up at the front door with a bag of paper products or a gallon of milk can make a difference. Then there's the Thinking of You card that shows up with a few \$1 bills in it to help with vending machine and parking deck fees at the hospital.

Observing the various options for assisting a family in crisis and plugging into those areas seamlessly and quietly seem to make the greatest impact, I've noticed.

Even inexpensive gestures that save the family time or make a routine responsibility more convenient means so much.

Above all though, consistent prayer support undergirds the family. It helps even more when specific prayer needs are known. The best way to keep up with these needs is to follow the patient's preferred communication plan (CaringBridge, Caring Pages, Facebook, a blog, a family spokesperson, etc.). Another ministry to a family in crisis is to protect the immediate family members' time and energy and work through extended family, close friends or church connections to stay updated and know how to help.

We have a hard time letting others serve us. We are used to being the ones serving, but what a tremendous blessing it is — in both directions — to allow people to minister to us. It is truly a picture of God's people at their best. 🙏

Rashional Extras...

Follow me on
Twitter:

@RashionalThts

Making the most out of the work you do

Excerpts from the book “Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results”

By Stephen C. Lundin, Ph.D., Harry Paul and John Christensen

“There is always a choice about the way you do your work, even if there is not a choice about the work itself.”

1. Choose your attitude.

When you are doing what you are doing, who are you being? Are you being impatient and bored, or are you being world famous? You are going to act differently if you are being world famous. Who do we want to be while we do our work?

2. Play.

Fun is energizing and leads to creativity. Happy people treat others well. Having a good time is healthy and helps time pass quickly. Work becomes a reward and not just a way to rewards.

3. Make their day.

Who are our customers and how can we engage them in a way that will make their day? How could we make each other's days?

Serving our customers well will give us the satisfaction that comes to those who serve others. It will focus our attention away from our problems and onto how we can make a positive difference to others. This is healthy, will feel good and will unleash even more energy.

4. Be Present.

Be present for each other and our customers.

We need the Church

By Ray Van Neste, professor of biblical studies
Union University, Jackson, Tenn.

I recently read “All Quiet on the Western Front” by Erich Remarque with my sons. With good reason it has been considered a classic. The writing is powerful and sobering, raising many key issues of life as it follows one German soldier through the challenges of life at the front in World War I. One passage particularly caught my attention as an illustration of the Church. After the narrator got lost in no man's land after a reconnaissance mission at night, he began to despair. The hopelessness of his situation is powerfully communicated. Then in the midst of the darkness and despair he heard movement and voices. He realized these were his friends nearby. Then he states:

“At once a new warmth flows through me. These voices, these quiet words, these footsteps in the trench behind me recall me at a bound from the terrible loneliness and fear of death by which I had been almost destroyed. They are more to me than life, these voices, they are more than motherliness and more than fear, they are the strongest, most comforting thing there is anywhere: they are the voices of my comrades.

“I am no longer a shuddering speck of existence, alone in the darkness — I belong to them and they to me; we all share the same

fear and the same life, we are nearer than lovers, in a simpler, a harder way; I could bury my face in them, in these voices, these words that have saved me and will stand by me.”

This is the Church. In the midst of a fallen world, particularly in our dark times when despair claws at us, we need to hear the voices of our brothers and sisters, the ones to whom we belong and who belong to us. The ones with whom we have shared life and fears and joys. At various times, when our faith falters and our strength fails, it will be these voices that save us and stand by us.

But this only really works when there is a community of believers with whom we are connected, whom we know and by whom we are known. This is the vision of church we see in Hebrews 3–4 when we are called to watch over one another and exhort one another daily lest anyone “be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (3:13). Throughout the New Testament the Church is not simply an audience for a sermon or a gathering for a program, but it is a community of faith where people care for one another, watch over one another, linking arms with one another to help each other on our way to the Celestial City, saying, “We don't intend to make it there without you.” We dare not neglect this great gift of the Church.

“Anything I hold on to, anything I am unable or unwilling to give over to Him is actually holding on to me. Am I willing to do whatever is necessary to loosen the chains of bondage? ... Surrender is a major step for real life change. ... We cannot continue to do negative things and expect to get positive results.”

Joyce Ainsworth

“Food, Freedom and Finish Lines! How to Lose the Weight and Win Back Your Life”

Shared yearnings for the future of the Church:

For a bold, enhanced, reformed and enlivened Church to exist.

For churches to transform the lives of everyday Christians.

For imagination to take precedence over institutionalization as we shape the future together.

Kathryn Mary Lohre

Keynote speaker at the 2014 Associated Church Press convention and author of “For Such a Time as This”

I liked your Rashional Thoughts “Blitzing My Way to Freedom” in the May 29 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*. The last three paragraphs really got me thinking about the importance of not letting the immediate distract me from the eternal. As humans, it is so easy to let that happen.

Bob Van Elsberg
Enterprise, Ala.

“Before we can renew our business (or ministries), we have to be renewed ourselves. We all need renewal in our personal lives and can't come up with new ideas for business until we renew ourselves. We must take time for ourselves. Even when we are doing ministry work, the tank may get very low.”

Roger Lall
DePaul University in Chicago, Ill.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For July 6

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

HOPE OF NEW FREEDOM Ezekiel 34:2b-6, 11-16, 22-24

Eleven score and eighteen years ago “our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty” (Gettysburg Address). Religious liberty and freedom from political and economic tyranny were the goal of colonists. Some simply wanted to be left alone so they could worship God according to their understanding of Scripture. Others were men who would rather die at the hands of the world’s most powerful military than surrender their freedoms to a distant and out-of-touch monarch. All of them desired to be free. Their perceptions of freedom were sometimes vastly different.

Our study passage this week is the first in a new unit concentrating on hope in Christ. We have confident assurance in our freedom in Christ. We have the hope of new life in Christ, as we walk with Him every day. We have hope in new worship, as we learn to worship Him in spirit and in truth. The reason for our hope is that Jesus is our Ransom, our Remedy, our Redeemer and our Rescuer.

Why is Rescue Required? (2b-6)

Sheep are helpless alone against predators; they need a shepherd. They have no claws, no fangs and no defensive coverings. Throughout Scripture, the people of God are referred to metaphorically as sheep. “Shepherds” here is a term denoting priests and prophets who are entrusted with the spiritual watch care over God’s sheep.

Our prophet declares the divine message: Judah’s shepherds have failed at their task. Rather than feeding the flock, they have gorged themselves. Like a hireling using the sheep simply for his own benefit, these spiritual leaders have neglected to care for their charges. God’s people are sick, broken and helpless due to the apathy of the shepherds.

What Does Rescue Involve? (11-16)

Yahweh intends to find His flock, gather

His flock, tend His flock and protect them. In the darkness of their sin, God’s people have been scattered among the nations. He will bring His people back to the Promised Land. Peace and rest will be theirs as He leads them. The injured will be cared for, the lost will be found, the weak will be strengthened and the abusive will be judged.

God’s righteous judgment will rest upon shepherds, but it also will separate the strong from the weak. Yahweh speaks of rescuing the helpless lambs from the butting of the rams, elders who have abused their status for personal gain. Rescue includes liberty for the oppressed and limits for the oppressors.

Who Provides Rescue? (22-24)

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, laying down His life, taking it up again and calling His sheep by name (John 10:1-30). He is the prophesied “servant David” of this passage (34:23), heir to the Davidic throne (Matt. 1:1-17) and the promised King of the everlasting kingdom (2 Sam. 7:16; Isa. 9:6-7). The Messiah invites the broken to come to Him for healing and deliverance (Matt. 11:28; Luke 4:18-19).

Jesus is the Great Shepherd, fulfilling the role David describes in Psalm 23. As the Bread of Life, He feeds us. As the source of living water, He quenches our thirst. As the One who invites us to Himself, He offers us rest. As the Way, He is our righteous path. Jesus is the Great Shepherd.

Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, according to the apostle Peter (1 Pet. 5:4). Unlike the under-shepherds who lead our local congregations, the Chief Shepherd never fails to lead, feed and nurture His flock. He fulfills the Father’s will completely, and He entrusts and enables others to care for His people.

Who provides rescue? His servant David rescues the flock. Jesus is the promised David — our Good Shepherd, our Great Shepherd and our Chief Shepherd.

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

GOD IS FAITHFUL Hebrews 6:17-20; 10:19-23

In the midst of the uncertainty of life, our hopes for the future are not always filled with confidence. Sometimes we are brimming with hope and certainty — what lies ahead is more like an adventure and exploration, something to be encountered with joy and expectation. Our plans all appear to be lining up for great things ahead. But on other occasions, we are not quite so sure or clear. In such circumstances, as we reflect on our hopes as well as our fears, our doubts and uncertainties, we look for a word from God that will sustain us. The Book of Hebrews brings a word concerning the faithfulness of God.

This book was probably written to a community of Jewish believers who were being persecuted for their faith in Jesus as Messiah. They were tempted to “give up” and return to Judaism, and the author writes to them, not only to demonstrate the finality of Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice for their sins but also to encourage them to “press on” and know that in the midst of all their troubles that God is with them.

God is Faithful to His Promise (6:17-18)

The purpose of God is based upon His unchanging character and the promises He has made to His people. This indicates that it is “impossible for God to lie.” He who promised is faithful, whereas human promises often fail because of our forgetfulness, our inability to act on what we say or just because we do not follow through on our commitments. Yet God is true to His word.

As believers we sometimes forget the Christian life is lived on the basis of grace and that our relationship with God is constant, because although we are constantly making mistakes His love toward us never changes. Many Christians think that unless

they achieve a certain level of spirituality, God’s love for them will not be as strong as it once was. If we think in this way then we have forgotten our relationship with God is based entirely on His covenant commitments to us, and we have moved from grace to works. We will never know assurance of salvation.

“Let me not more my comfort draw, from my frail hold of Thee; In this alone, rejoice with awe — Thy mighty grasp of me” (John Campbell Shairp).

Jesus is the Fulfillment of God’s Promise (6:19-20; 10:19-21)

On this foundation we can build our hope and confidence and have a “sure and steadfast anchor of our soul.” As a ship is held fast when at anchor, so the Christian is held safe and secure by the anchor of God’s promises and by the ascension of Jesus Christ as our great High Priest to the right hand of the Father in heaven. Knowing that He is there, praying for us, reminding the Father of His purposes of love for His people, fills our hearts with joy and gladness.

In heaven we have One who represents us in the presence of the Father. His presence, as the risen One who was crucified for our sins, calls forth the mercy and grace of God. He prays for us and brings our feeble words into the presence of the Father and they are answered. His faithfulness toward us is the foundation of our eternal salvation.

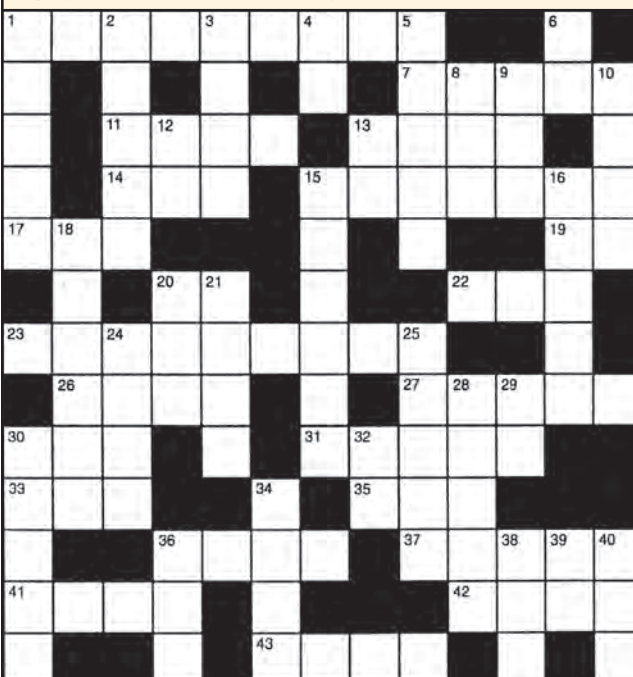
We Can Have Unwavering Confidence in God’s Faithfulness (10:22-23)

The confidence that is generated in knowing the faithfulness of God enables us to come with “confidence” and boldness into the presence of God and know “full assurance of faith.” It is when we are filled with assurance of the love of God toward us through the trials and temptations of life that we will “hold fast to our confession ... without wavering.”

The Alabama Baptist will not publish an issue July 10. Sunday School lessons for July 13 will be available at www.thealabamabaptist.org.

Christian Crossword

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Across

- A name of Christ. (Rev. 1:8)
- ___ not ye against the Lord. (Num. 14:9)
- We ought to ___ God rather than man. (Acts 5:29)
- Why do the heathen ___? (Ps. 2:1)
- Though they be ___ like crimson. (Isa. 1:18)
- Many will ___ in that day. (Matt. 7:22)
- Direction on the compass.
- Academic degree. (abbr.)
- I will ___ My tabernacle among you. (Lev. 26:11)
- He hath given ___ unto all men. (Acts 17:31)
- Two men ___ up into the temple to pray. (Luke 18:10)
- ___ of me. (Matt. 11:29)
- A charge for a professional service.
- Condescend.

- Internal Revenue Service. (abbr.)
- Whom ___ ye that I am? (Luke 9:20)
- ___ found grace in the eyes of the Lord. (Gen. 6:8)
- Israel came by the way of the ___. (Num. 21:1)
- In His favor is ___. (Ps. 30:5)
- God doth ___ with man. (Deut. 5:24)
- Abstain from all appearance of ___. (1 Thess. 5:22)

Down

- ___ them that curse you. (Luke 6:28)
- We beheld His ___. (John 1:14)
- Seeth his brother have ___. (1 John 3:17)
- Trust ___ the Lord with all thine heart. (Prov. 3:5)
- Come boldly unto the throne of ___. (Heb. 4:16)

- ___ that overcometh. (Rev. 3:5)
- The self as distinguished from others.
- Girl’s name. (abbr.)
- Lead astray.
- Ye will not believe, though it ___ told you. (Hab. 1:5)
- Prefix meaning “again.” (Ps. 30:5)
- It ___ upon the earth 40 days and nights. (Gen. 7:12)
- ___ into His gates with thanksgiving. (Ps. 100:4)
- How ye ought to ___ every man. (Col. 4:6)
- A roll.
- Many of them also which used curious ___ brought their books together. (Acts 19:19)
- You are the God who ___ me. (Gen. 16:13)
- Behold, He calleth ___. (Mark 15:35)
- Joseph was sold into

- ___ (Gen. 37:36)
- Is there any taste in the white of ___ egg? (Job 6:6)
- The whole body ___ joined together. (Eph. 4:16)
- Used to form plurals.
- He hath ___ everything beautiful. (Eccles. 3:11)
- The kingdom of heaven is like a ___. (Matt. 13:47)
- Suffix meaning “belongs to.”
- Old Testament name for God.
- To glide on water or snow.



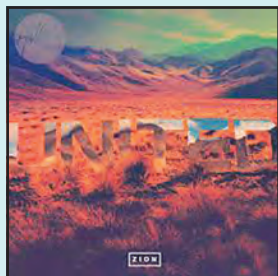
TOP 10

downloaded songs from iTunes

CHRISTIAN & GOSPEL



1. More of You
By Colton Dixon
(More of You)



2. Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)
By Hillsong United
(Zion)



3. Hope in Front of Me
By Danny Gokey
(Hope in Front of Me)



4. We Believe
By Newsboys
(Restart)



5. Fix My Eyes
By for KING & COUNTRY
(Fix My Eyes)



6. Thrive
By Casting Crowns
(Thrive)

7. This is Amazing Grace
By Phil Wickham
(The Ascension)

8. God's Not Dead (Like a Lion)
By Newsboys
(God's Not Dead)

9. Do Something
By Matthew West
(Into the Light)

10. It's Not Over Yet
By for KING & COUNTRY
(Run Wild. Live Free. Love Strong.)

Source: iTunes at press time



Photo courtesy of Fair Trade Services

Dan Dean (left), Shawn Craig (center) and Randy Phillips all serve as full-time pastors in three different cities but sing together in their Christian band Phillips, Craig and Dean.

'Look up'

Phillips, Craig and Dean serve as pastors, musicians and shine spotlight on Christ

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

While serving in dual roles as musicians and full-time pastors in three different cities, Randy Phillips, Shawn Craig and Dan Dean are committed to representing and reflecting the message behind their music.

Since joining forces in 1991, their songs have soared on the charts — selling more than 3 million albums and garnering 21 No. 1 radio singles.

In spite of the accolades and achievements, this musical trio shines the spotlight on Christ. For this group the mark of true success is based on the number of lives changed for God's glory.

Diversity of the body of Christ

"We enjoy meeting people after our concerts and hearing their stories," Craig said. "It's fun to see the diversity of the body of Christ, and it's a real joy to worship across the country with a body of believers. At our concerts our main goal is to cre-

ate an atmosphere of praise and worship. We love to see people come to Christ and see them find the strength to move forward and not give up on their marriage, children or their dreams."

As the group shares testimonies of trials and triumphs during concerts, they hope to encourage people to establish a firm foundation by placing their faith in Christ.

In the midst of the chaos and confusion of this world the group remains focused on directing audiences toward the One who is constant and consistent.

"When people listen to our songs I hope they will listen and look up," Craig said. "In the midst of their fear and circumstances of dreadful times we want to remind them to look up and seek God. I'm reminded of Psalm 34:4, 'I sought the Lord and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears.' If we can encourage people to look up, seek God, fear less and hope more, then we have accomplished our mission." 🙏

"When people listen to our songs I hope they will listen and look up. In the midst of their fear and circumstances of dreadful times we want to remind them to look up and seek God."

Shawn Craig
member of Phillips, Craig and Dean

'DIFFERENCE maker'

Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Barkley wants to be example of Christ

By **Bill Sorrell**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The sounds of triumph heard by Matt Barkley were not in the Los Angeles Coliseum but 7,000 miles away where a football is a ball, not an oval.

While on a trip to Nigeria in December 2010, Barkley, his family and three friends visited orphanages, widows, a center for handicapped men, worked construction projects and went to a prison where they played soccer with inmates.

"It was nothing too crazy. It was low risk," said Barkley, quarterback for the Philadelphia Eagles and former University of Southern California (USC) quarterback.

During a barbecue-style Christmas party, the warden announced that one of the prisoners was going to be set free. "We prayed for him that everything would go well once he was out," Barkley said.

While stopped at a military checkpoint three hours from prison, Nigerians approached Barkley's vehicle.

"When people see that you are white, they want to sell you things, trinkets. This man started approaching the van. We just assumed he was trying to sell us something. He was shouting, 'Pastor Ray, Pastor Ray,' the missionary who runs the prison ministry. We were kind of astonished. How does this guy know Pastor Ray? It was pretty random," Barkley said.

With a victorious voice, the man said, "I played soccer with you in prison. I'm not an inmate now. I am free. I have made it home safely."

Barkley said, "That was a wonderful image and a God-story to us. We were only there for an hour or two but he remembered us. ... You go overseas on missions trips and you are just gone for a week or so; you sometimes don't think you are going to have an impact. God was working in that situation. We did have a lasting impact."

Full of joy

Nigeria, the world's eighth most populous nation, impacted Barkley. He saw poverty and sadness in the faces of people whose family members had been killed during war or by disease.

However, in the midst of the pain and struggle, he saw something else.

"The kids had the most amazing attitude. They are full of joy, full of gratitude for every little thing," said Barkley, whose family gave away hygiene kits, soccer balls and toys.

"It gives you a new perspective on what we have in America and what we take for granted," he said.

Since becoming a Christian at age 10, Barkley has experienced his own freedom. "I don't believe life has any meaning if it wasn't for Jesus Christ. That He offered my sins on the cross is a freeing feeling," he said.

Barkley has received a gift. His ability to play football and be successful is a gift from God, he said.

While a junior at Mater Dei High School in Santa Ana, Calif., Barkley won the Gatorade National Football Player of the Year award, the first time a junior was chosen.

Playing from 2009–12 at USC, Barkley set the all-time career passing records for the school and the Pac-12 Conference. He threw for 12,327 yards and 116 touchdowns. Barkley surpassed USC Heisman Trophy winners Carson Palmer and Matt Leinart.

Barkley, who had 1,592 career completions out of 2,593 attempts, was favored for the Heisman Trophy his senior year in 2012 but the Trojans, ranked No. 1 at the beginning of the season, lost five games. As a junior he was sixth in Heisman Trophy votes.

The Trojan's first-ever three-time captain, Barkley won the Wuerffel Trophy in 2012. The trophy is given to the player who combines athletics, academics and community service. Barkley had a 3.11 GPA and majored in communications. In 2011 he was named to the AFCA Good Works Team, which is comprised of players recognized for their commitment to making a difference in their communities.

Barkley was a semifinalist for the Davey O'Brien National Quarterback Award three times.

In 2011, he was the College Football Performance Awards National Performer of the Year, third team Associated Press All-American and semifinalist for the Manning Award, Maxwell Award and Walter Camp Award.

Beginning the season in 2011, Barkley set the USC single game record for completions with 34 against Minnesota. On Oct. 1, 2011, against Arizona, he passed for 468 yards, a USC single-game record. On Nov. 4, 2011, he set the USC single-game record for touchdowns in a game with six against Colorado. When he was a freshman at USC, he was the first true freshman to start an opener for the Trojans.

Former USC coach Lane Kiffin used the word "elite" to describe Barkley. When Kiffin coached there, he said he "looked forward" to "big" years from Barkley.

Barkley wanted to leave USC, which has won 11 national championships, as one of the "best quarterbacks" who had played there.

"I don't want to have any regrets when I am done playing football. Knowing the platform as USC quarterback, I can use that for good or for bad. Obviously I need to use it for His kingdom and God's glory," Barkley said.

"I don't think of myself as a football player who happens to be a Christian. I am more a Christian who plays football."

Former Trojans quarterback Mark Sanchez, who played with the New York Jets, is teamed now with Barkley on the Eagles. Barkley (6 feet 3 inches, 227 pounds) was drafted in the fourth round as the 98th overall pick of the 2013 NFL Draft.

As a rookie, he completed 17 of 26 passes for 158 yards. He is vying to be a starter this season.

Although he grew up in Southern California, he doesn't surf but loves to snowboard. The gifts he treasures most are "timeless" family items that once belonged to his father, grandfather or great-grandfather.

When it comes down to life, he wants God's will. "It's not my will but Thy will be done," he said.

As he reads his favorite Bible verse, Proverbs 3:5–6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight," he realizes that he must trust.

In praise bands at church, Barkley has played the electric and acoustic guitar. He still likes to play "the old six strings."

One of the churches he attended in Southern California was Rock Harbor Church, Costa Mesa.

Growing up his parents, Les and Bev Barkley, took him to church. He calls them "wonderful examples of what it means to follow Christ." They started the Monarchs for Marines (M4M) when Barkley was at Mater Dei. Coaches, students and parents cleaned up and landscaped youth areas at Marine Corps base Camp Pendleton.

Life lessons

Barkley's mother taught him the value of delayed gratification. Hard work now pays off later is a "life lesson that I hold on to," he said.

His father, who lettered four years in water polo at USC and was a second team All-America in 1979, taught him "what it means to be a man," Barkley said. "He has been a great example. ... He always challenged me to be the best."

Admiring former Green Bay, Seattle and Tennessee quarterback Matt Hasselbeck who is now with Indianapolis, Barkley described him as a "difference maker," something Barkley strives to be.

"I want to be an example of Christ. I want to live as God instructs in the Bible and be a servant of Jesus Christ," Barkley said. "We need to serve. We need to give back. I don't believe anything I have is mine. Every good and gracious thing comes from above. God can use me to do whatever He wants." 🙏

"I don't believe anything I have is mine. Every good and gracious thing comes from above. God can use me to do whatever He wants."

Matt Barkley
Philadelphia Eagles quarterback



Matt Barkley

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