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Photo by Maggie Walsh

By Julie Payne
The Alabama Baptist

It's one thing to come to church or to do a service — it's another thing to understand who you are in Christ," said Wade Morris, speaking to more than 900 students and adult leaders at the state Youth Evangelism Conference (YEC).

Morris, one of three keynote speakers for YEC 2014, spoke to the large crowd gathered at Samford University's Wright Center the evening of July 25, focusing his message on 1 John.

An annual event hosted by the office of collegiate and student ministries of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), YEC was held July 25–26 with the theme "Own It!"

Chris Mills, an associate in collegiate and student ministries for the SBOM, remarked on this year's theme, "Is your faith built on your church, your youth pastor or your

parents' belief systems? What happens if these relationships or institutions crumble, let you down or fail? We wanted students to walk away challenged to truly own their faith. When each (conference) session was 'added together' we hope that's what [participants] take away. We want them to receive Christ, live out their faith ... and share Christ with others — to truly own it."

75 make decisions

At this year's YEC, 75 students made a decision to follow Christ, Mills reported.

"When 75 students choose to follow Christ and make commitments to share with their friends, I am reminded of the importance of these types of events," he said. "God uses them in ways we can't even begin to comprehend to make Himself known."

YEC was broken into several sessions for students, each with its own focus (evangelistic, discipleship and missional). Unique ele-



Photo by Doug Rogers

ments at this year's event included the onsite lunch that was added. There also was a breakout session, which included a separate session for girls and boys with an emphasis on the question, "What does it mean to live your faith as a young woman/young man?" In addition, (See 'Late,' page 19)

Top photo: Georgia-based band The Museum leads students in worship at YEC 2014 at Samford University's Wright Center July 25–26. **Bottom photo:** Students participate in a breakout session.

Coming next week: **BACK 2 CAMPUS** Fall 2014

COMMENT

Two Fights Over Legalized Gambling

Two fights about legalized gambling are going on in Alabama today. One is public with lots of press. The other hardly gets a mention. The outcomes of both are important for the future of the state.

Thanks to Parker Griffith it looks like Alabama will once again debate the wisdom of a state-sponsored lottery. Listening to the democratic candidate for governor, one would think it is 1998 all over again. That is the year Don Siegelman rode the promise of an educational lottery to the governorship.

Griffith's claims for the lottery echo Siegelman's campaign. The lottery, he says, will solve the financial problems of education in Alabama.

That was not true in Siegelman's day and it is not true now. Alabama voters sent the proposal down to a humiliating defeat in 1999. An idea that once led at the polls by 20 percentage points was rejected by a 54 to 46 percent margin once people examined the issue.

Robin Hood in reverse

A state-sponsored lottery is Robin Hood in reverse. It takes from the poor and gives to the rich. Just look at Georgia where the majority of lottery sales occur in zip codes near the bottom of the economic ladder but those who benefit from it come from higher income areas.

Turning the state of Alabama into a side-show huckster trying to separate its citizens from their hard-earned paychecks through gambling is bad public policy.

The state should not be in the gambling business, let alone running a monopoly on a numbers racket. It is wrong. It is harmful. It is deceitful.

Yet the idea has more lives than a phoenix. Slay it one year and it is back the next.

Siegelman tried to resurrect the lottery in 2002 and lost his re-election campaign.

Four years ago, democrat Ron Sparks trumpeted the values of the lottery and lost. But here the idea is again.

It seems the backers of this scheme know they only have to win once for a state-sponsored lottery to become part of Alabama life. Those opposed to the lottery have to win every time the issue comes up to keep it out.

This year there is another wrinkle. For some the question is not about whether a state-sponsored lottery is good public policy. It is about finding new revenue. The easy road is to turn



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

to "sin taxes" like the lottery rather than doing the hard work of crafting a fair and equitable tax structure for the state.

It will be interesting to see if legislative leaders maintain their well-known opposition to a state-sponsored lottery or if their search for state income will cause them to compromise their principled positions.

While the lottery debate goes on in the public square few take notice of the fight against legalized gambling going on in the courts. Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange has done an admirable job of championing the rule of law. With the assistance of the courts, illegal electronic gambling has been largely closed down.

Now Strange is focused on what he calls illegal casino gambling run by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. Strange argues the casinos operated by the Poarch Band are illegal because they are not on American Indian land.

According to the U.S. Supreme Court only American Indian tribes recognized by the U.S. government by 1934 can have land held in trust by the U.S. government. The Poarch Band was not recognized until 1984 — 50 years after the deadline.

Appealed decision

Strange lost in U.S. District Court in April when the court ruled the state's case was filed too late. According to federal law, all challenges had to be filed within six years of the law being adopted in 1934. That decision is now being appealed.

Strange argues the District Court's ruling contravenes the "well-worn rule" that "administrative actions taken in violation of statutory authorization or requirements are of no effect" citing

case law going back to 1917.

He argues that because the secretary of the interior lacked authority to take lands into trust on behalf of the Poarch Band the state of Alabama should have opportunity to have its case against the illegal gambling in American Indian casinos heard in court.

Even if the land is American Indian land, Strange argues, Alabama should still be able to stop the illegal gambling under state civil law because the Indian Gambling Regulatory Act specifies: "[F]or purposes of federal law, all state laws pertaining to the licensing, regulation or prohibition of gambling, including but not limited to criminal sanctions applicable thereto, shall apply in Indian country in the same manner and to the same extent as such laws apply elsewhere in the state" (emphasis added).

The case is more complicated than these few paragraphs can outline. The legal briefs can be found at <http://bit.ly/1tyS20J>.

It is encouraging to know the attorneys general of five other states facing issues of American Indian gambling have endorsed the arguments of the Alabama appeal and filed their own friend of the court brief in support of Alabama's position.

The thousands of slot machines filling the American Indian casinos in Wetumpka, Atmore and Montgomery clearly violate the definition of bingo issued by the Alabama Supreme Court.

These machines are illegal everywhere in Alabama and

that includes American Indian land. The Poarch Band has no agreement with Alabama allowing these illegal gambling machines.

Hopefully the appeals court will reverse the district court ruling and allow Alabama's suit against the American Indian casinos to be heard.

By applying the rule of law Alabama has come a long way in four years. The invasion of electronic gambling machines has been stopped.

The store-front gambling dens that popped up across the state are gone. Destination gambling sites in Greene County and Macon County have been reigned in.

But the fights go on. They go on in the public square as we once again face the state-sponsored lottery question. And they go on almost unnoticed in the courts as efforts to eliminate illegal gambling in American Indian casinos continue.

Both fights are important and hopefully both fights will be won. #

The state should not be in the gambling business, let alone running a monopoly on a numbers racket. It is wrong. It is harmful. It is deceitful. Yet the idea has more lives than a phoenix. Slay it one year and it is back the next.

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

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Planting seeds of FAITH

Native Alabamians share gospel amid chaos in North Africa

By Leigh Pritchett
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

God is moving in the Muslim world. It may not seem so from the unrest that unfolds on network news.

Yet those battles and refugee situations create opportunities to tell people about the Prince of Peace, said Paul and Anne, International Mission Board (IMB) representatives.

"Amazing things are happening with the gospel amid the chaos," Paul said.

A significant percentage of the people in the world who have not yet heard the gospel of Jesus Christ are Muslim, he noted.

Now is the right time for them to be told. "We can see the beginnings of a movement," Paul said.

He and Anne see it as they serve in North Africa.

Both Anne and Paul originally are from northern Alabama. They returned to the state for a short furlough to visit family and share about their ministry to Muslims and other nonbelievers.

Prior to their time in North Africa, they were in another African country, operating a refugee project through Baptist Global Response (BGR).

Growing up overseas

"Our children, while born in the United States, grew up overseas," Anne said. Both their children now are adults and live in the U.S.

In North Africa, Anne and Paul are team leaders, working with four other IMB units in an area about 60 miles by 100 miles.

Paul said their work is undergirded through the Southern Baptist Convention's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, Cooperative Program and BGR.

When the couple arrived in North Africa in 2000, they found in their area about 25 believers, all from Muslim backgrounds. There were no Christian churches.

Currently there are more than 400 believers and 20 to 30 underground churches.

Anne said the people to whom they minister were an unreached group before she and her husband arrived.

Nonetheless, the seeds of faith had already taken root.

Paul said the 25 believers were the result of the work of missionaries from other organizations who had been in the area in the past.

"We were blessed by that," Paul said.

The IMB representatives call the people group "Sparrows," a reference to Matthew 10:29-31. Anne said the name is used to protect the identity of the people.

To minister to the million Sparrows, the team uses a multifaceted approach.

One aspect is a ministry that provides goats for poor women and widows.

Other ministries are relief efforts (replacing burned huts), equine clinics (offering vaccines to combat a deadly respiratory virus common among the horses and donkeys the Sparrows rely on for many uses) and instruction in evangelism and the Bible.

Teaching Muslim evangelism in underground churches "is the most important work we do," Paul said.

Anne said locals are taught Bible stories in a way that is easy for them to remember. Then they practice the stories in order to tell them to others in their villages.

The account of the prodigal son has particular appeal. The locals are drawn to it because it shows God is looking for them and wants a relationship with them.

"There's no personal relationship with the Allah of Islam," Anne said.

Many barriers exist to try to thwart the spread of the gospel.

National partners have been jailed for evangelizing; terrorism laws sometimes are used against Christians; and Islam forces Christians into underground situations.

"A believer in our village was beaten to death," Paul said.

Regardless of the challenges, the Holy Spirit is moving.

One example of this is the "near-tribe believers," people whose jobs have brought them to the area.

Past animosity

Paul and Anne said this group traditionally has been very private about being followers of Jesus because of animosity directed toward them in the past.

Through God's working in the lives of these believers, "they are doing Muslim evangelism" now, Paul said. Many house churches have formed as a result of the evangelism efforts of the "near-tribe believers."

The ability to show movies on cellphones has opened many avenues for evangelism.

Paul and Anne said the "Jesus" film, which the IMB has provided in the local language, can be loaded onto memory cards and shown on cellphones.

People active in sharing the gospel can be

equipped with cellphones to show the film anywhere.

Although the gospel is being shared and God is doing miraculous things among the Sparrows, the road for Paul and Anne has not been easy.

Several years ago, a major heart attack took Paul on a spiritual journey.

For 48 hours, he received little more than aspirin as he was taken from clinic to clinic to distant hospital.

On the three-hour ambulance ride to the hospital, a local man used his right arm to hold the semi-conscious Paul securely in place on the gurney.

Once when Paul became conscious during the ride, the man said, "I'm a believer and you're going to be OK."

At the hospital, Paul heard someone praying Isaiah 41:10 over him: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness."

Even in his fatigue, Paul made the connection and felt assurance that God is sovereign and in control.

Paul was even more confident that God was going to accomplish something great in their people group.

In March, he witnessed two miracles happen the same day.

During an evangelism training session, some participants reported witnessing to a family whose daughter was "possessed" with a spirit of agitation and disruption. They said they prayed over the daughter and she was delivered from that spirit but did not accept Jesus as Savior at the time.

As the session continued, the daughter entered. Paul said she opened her hands toward heaven, and then bowed down, touching her forehead to the floor as is the custom of Muslims. She declared, "Jesus is Lord."

Shortly thereafter, her father arrived. He said he had seen the change in his daughter and wanted to experience it too.

"For us," Paul said, "it was a very powerful moment. God is doing great things among Muslims throughout the world." ❧



Photo by Neisha Fuson

International Mission Board representative Anne, who serves in North Africa, shares a traditional snack of seeds, nuts and wheat.

Shoe a Nation

Samford ministers to people of Dominica

By Maggie Walsh
The Alabama Baptist

When Samford University in Birmingham accepted the challenge to Shoe a Nation in March, it was about more than just footwear (see story in the June 5 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*).

The 6,000 pairs of shoes bought for the people of Dominica was important, but it was secondary to the mission of the 19 Samford volunteers who served in the country July 19–27, said Martin Newton, director of athletics at Samford.

“We were there to tell them the good news of Jesus Christ and ... that Christ loves them — that they do have hope and a future,” Newton said.

The Shoe a Nation project was a collaborative effort between Samaritan’s Feet in Charlotte, N.C.; First Baptist Church, Indian Trail, N.C.; Caribbean Baptist Youth Festival; Samford and various Dominican churches that served as distribution centers July 24–25.

The scheduling of this missions trip was unique because not all members of Samford’s team arrived in Dominica together. Some team members arrived as early as July 19, while others had staggered arrival dates between then and their return date of July 27.

Once in Dominica, members of Samford’s team took on various projects to make their time in the southern Caribbean country count.

‘Power of a moment’

Brad Radice, team member and director of broadcast media at Samford, said, “Don’t ever underestimate the power of a moment. You never know when God’s going to use you.”

During the eight-day missions trip, Samford’s team helped build two houses, painted a homeless shelter, hosted a health fair, collaborated with the Caribbean Baptist Youth Festival for evening events, distributed 6,000 pairs of shoes and ministered to juvenile delinquents.

Colin Coyne, team member and chief

strategy officer at Samford, said, “Exhaustion never felt so good.”

During the shoe distribution, volunteers from all of the partnering organizations joined together to ensure that every child who came to one of the 19 distribution centers left with a pair of shoes.

Radice said, “The mobs of people outside [the distribution centers] were incredible. I can tell you about it and I can show you pictures, but until you see it firsthand it’ll never impact you.”

Before receiving shoes, every child had their feet washed by a volunteer while learning about the love of Christ.

While it was a very organized trip, complications and schedule changes were inevitable.

Coyne said, “‘Don’t forget for a minute Whose plan this is’ was the constant refrain in my mind. Every time something didn’t happen as planned, something better came out of it.”

A perfect example of this was the impromptu visit to the juvenile detention center, he said.

An administrative member of the center called and requested that members of the Shoe a Nation project

come speak to the youth after learning of their time in Dominica.

Former Samford student athlete Jeremy Towns accepted the spur-of-the-moment call to speak to the youth.

Newton said, “It was definitely a God thing. [Jeremy] did an incredible job of connecting with [the youth]. It was something I’ll never forget.”

As “poignant” as that moment was, there were 100 moments like that, Coyne said

For example, several members of the team recounted Patrick Hatcher’s kindness when he gave a Dominican volunteer the shoes off his own feet. This act of kindness brought the volunteer to tears.

Hatcher, director of operations and facilities for Samford Athletics, said, “To be honest, I wasn’t thinking about how it would emotionally affect [the person I gave my shoes to] until the ride home. Thinking back I can understand how that could have been the first pair of tennis shoes he ever owned.”

For Coyne, the trip was one of “the most God-filled” experiences of his life. A trip that will definitely be repeated, he noted. 🙏



Photo courtesy of Patrick Hatcher
Patrick Hatcher (left), director of operations and facilities for Samford Athletics, gives the shoes off his own feet to a Dominican volunteer.

RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services



Green family postpones launch of Bible curriculum

MUSTANG, Okla. — Fresh off their victory in the Supreme Court, the Green family, owners of Hobby Lobby, appear to have hit a stumbling block in one of their other projects — a potentially controversial public school elective on the Bible.

On July 16 the nonprofit led by Steve Green announced it was postponing the August introduction of the curriculum adopted by the Mustang, Okla., school district.

“We have operated on an aggressive timeline to deliver the curriculum for the upcoming school year,” wrote Jerry Pattengale, editor for the projected four-year high school syllabus, in a prepared statement. But “unforeseen delays” necessitated postponing the debut until January 2015.

Pattengale said, “We will continue to work with Mustang and other school districts that have shown interest” in the program.

But when the Mustang school board made 220 pages of the book public, church-state experts suggested that its claims and assumptions amounted to teaching the Bible from a particular religious perspective, which the Supreme Court has banned in public schools.

The book had already undergone significant revision. But Pattengale told *Time* magazine in June that he intended to make more changes to correct “overreaching.”

Americans view Jews, Christians warmly

WASHINGTON — A new Pew Research survey finds United States adults feel most warmly about people who share their religion or those they know as family, friends or co-workers.

Americans give their highest scores to Jews, Catholics and evangelicals on a zero-to-100 “thermometer” featured in the survey, “How Americans Feel about Religious Groups,” released July 16. They are nestled within a few degrees of each other: Jews, 63; Catholics, 62; evangelicals, 61.

In the middle of the chart: Buddhists, 53; Hindus, 50; Mormons, 48. Trending to the chilly negative zone: atheists at 41 and Muslims at 40.

Pew took the thermal reading because “understanding the question of how religious groups view each other is valuable in a country where religion plays an important role in public life,” said Greg Smith, Pew’s associate director of religion research.

IRS agrees to monitor churches for electioneering

MADISON, Wis. — The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) said it will monitor churches and other houses of worship for electioneering in a settle-

ment reached with an atheist group.

The settlement was reached July 18 in federal court in Madison, Wis., where the initial lawsuit was filed in 2012 by the Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF), a Wisconsin-based atheist advocacy group.

The suit alleged the IRS routinely ignored complaints by the FFRF and others about churches promoting political candidates, issues or proposed legislation.

At the time the suit was filed the IRS maintained it was not ignoring complaints of electioneering, but had failed to hire an official to investigate church politicking, which it had been ordered to do in 2009 as the result of another lawsuit.

Ground Zero cross allowed to stay at Sept. 11 museum

NEW YORK — A cross-shaped beam from the wreckage of the World Trade Center can remain on display in the National Sept. 11 Memorial and Museum at Ground Zero, a three-judge panel of the 2nd United States Circuit Court of Appeals ruled, dismissing a lawsuit brought by atheists.

American Atheists filed a federal suit in 2012 claiming the 17-foot display at the museum was unconstitutional. The group said its members suffered from both physical and emotional damages from the presence of the beamed cross, resulting in headaches, indigestion and mental pain.

The atheist group filed an appeal after a lower court dismissed the lawsuit, shifting the focus from the cross to asking for an added plaque that would say something like “atheists died, too.”

An observer would understand that the cross also was an inclusive symbol for any persons seeking hope and comfort in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks, federal Judge Reena Raggi wrote in the court’s decision.

Obama extends LGBT rights for federal contractors

WASHINGTON — President Obama used his authority to extend workplace protections among federal contractors to homosexual, bisexual and transgender status — prompting concerns the action will subvert religious freedom.

Issued July 21, the executive order bars federal contractors from discriminating based on “sexual orientation” and “gender identity.” His order — which the White House announced in June would be forthcoming — also adds “gender identity” to categories protected in federal employment.

The order maintains a 2002 directive by President George W. Bush that permits contractors that are religious corporations or institutions to employ individuals based on their religious identity. 🙏

For information on how to contribute to Shoe a Nation, email Colin Coyne at ccoyn@samford.edu.

Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Alvie Walker



WALKER

*Bush Memorial Baptist Church, Troy
Salem-Troy Baptist Association*

FAVORITE VERSE: Matthew 28:18–20

FAVORITE HYMN: “How Great Thou Art”

HOBBIES: Hunting; riding horses

FAMILY STATUS: Wife of 28 years, Priscilla; children, Livvie,

Schlyer, Madison, Chad and Michelle Walker; three grandchildren

Alvie Walker, 51, has taught a Sunday School class, is a deacon and, with his wife, instructs a Wednesday night children’s class at his church. During major events at Heart of Dixie Trail Rides in Troy, Walker preaches at a cowboy church. He also has worked with cowboy churches in Idaho. A sergeant first class in the Army National Guard, Walker is retiring from active duty with 26 years of service. Including his prior Marine Corps service, he has a total of 32 years in the military. Currently he and his wife are raising financial support for the work they will do after they move to Idaho in the future. There the couple will minister alongside North American Mission Board (NAMB) church planters David and Sue Kite and NAMB cowboy church-planting catalyst Jim Ballard.

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

A: My parents — they brought me up in church — and my grandparents too. I was 8 years old when I accepted Christ. One day, I heard the preacher say that if you don’t accept Christ and die, you don’t go to heaven. I realized that day that just going to church and being a good person wouldn’t save you. I realized I was a sinner and I had to accept what Christ did.

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

A: About four or five years ago, I turned my life over to Christ and said, “Wherever You want me to go, whatever You want me to do.” When I

set foot in that cowboy church in Idaho, God just burdened my heart that this is where He wants me to be. My wife fell in love with the people. She felt the need in Idaho also. The hunger for the gospel out there is so great.

Q: What does this ministry work demand?

A: It demands a lot of time: a lot of travel time, a lot of study time, a lot of ministry time. The greatest need for my wife and me is to get support, people who will sponsor us while we’re out there.

Q: What do you get from this ministry work?

A: I get the satisfaction to know that I am a part of God’s plan, of being the voice, the hands, the feet of Him, to share Jesus with the people in Idaho who have never heard who He is.

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

A: I’m hoping to be involved in it for a long time. I hope to continue to build churches in Idaho and continue to share the gospel.

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

A: It will give me the feeling that I am doing God’s will, what He wants me to do and not what I want to do. I feel God has called me to do this. And I’m willing to do this for Him.

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

A: Oh my. Following Christ in my life has changed everything ... the way I think, everything. Christ has changed who I am. 🙏



Photo courtesy of Mark Gainey

Lake Martin Baptist Church, Dadeville, holds Vacation Bible School.

‘An awakening’

Lake Martin Baptist sees remarkable growth

By Anna Keller
Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

In the year that Mark Gainey has been pastor of Lake Martin Baptist Church, Dadeville, the church has acquired 73 new members — 25 of which became members by baptism. They’ve been able to attract young families that the church has been trying to reach and have grown their weekly attendance from 80–90 each week to about 140 every Sunday.

Gainey credits this remarkable growth solely to God’s timing.

“We specifically set up ways to reach out to young families, but they were all things I’d done before in other places without experiencing this kind of growth,” Gainey said. “It’s clear that God was ready to have an awakening in our community. No method can bring the success we’ve had — it has to be God.”

The thing Gainey attributes to most of the church’s growth is its genuine ability to show love — love to fellow members, love to visitors and love to the community.

“I have been in churches my whole life and I’ve never been in a church this loving,” he said. “I’ve been in welcoming and friendly churches but not a place with this kind of love.”

When Gainey came on board, the church’s motto was “Touching Lives with Love,” but he challenged the church to go a step further and evolve the motto into “Disciples Who Love God and Love People,” since he knew that was a true strength of the church.

Angel Freeman and her family attended the same church for years, but when their pastor left they wanted to find a new church closer to home. The Freemans joined Lake Martin Baptist earlier this summer and feel like they’ve found an amazing church home.

“We visited [Lake Martin] and fell in love in-

stantly,” Freeman recalled. “They’re such a welcoming church. They’re always hugging your neck, asking how you’re doing and what they can do to help you.”

Freeman said she also has appreciated the church’s ability to ask for help where they need it. She’s been at churches before that have been hesitant to request members to volunteer for various things and as a result a handful of people end up doing just about everything around the church. The same is not true at Lake Martin Baptist, Freeman said, and Gainey noted that’s a purposeful thing.

“People want to belong and to live for a purpose greater than themselves,” he said. “Our goal is making sure every single member serves. We say that all the time at our church: ‘Nobody gets to sit back and watch.’ Right when people join, we ask them, ‘Where are you going to serve?’”

According to longtime Lake Martin Baptist member and associate pastor/minister of music Terry Herron, the church has always done a good job of reaching out to the community, but bringing on Gainey (who’s a young pastor) has infused new energy into the church.

“There’s such an air of excitement,” Herron said. “We have people coming back to church who’d

dropped out for a while, and our older members are very excited about the growth trend in our church as far as young people, youth and children go.”

Amid such significant growth — and especially since a third of the new members also are new Christians — Gainey is making a point to set up ways to ensure members continue to mature in their faith. The church just launched a community group program (discipleship groups that meet in members’ homes) as well as mentorship programs where more mature Christians can help reach out to some of those newer to their faith.

“What I don’t want to do is have a church that continues to grow and not nurture our members,” he said. 🙏

“Our goal is making sure every single member serves. We say that all the time at our church: ‘Nobody gets to sit back and watch.’”

**Pastor Mark Gainey
Lake Martin Baptist Church,
Dadeville**

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Murder suspect released as death threats stall prosecution

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — More than three years after the assassination of Pakistan's first Christian cabinet-level minister, Islamist extremists have silenced prosecution witnesses and the prime suspect was released on bail July 11, the prosecutor said.

With prosecution witnesses unwilling to record their statements in court because of Islamic extremist death threats, there has been no progress in the murder trial of former minister for minority affairs Shahbaz Bhatti, who was gunned down March 2, 2011, according to attorney Abdul Hameed Rana.

Islamabad anti-terrorism Judge Atiqur Rehman granted bail to the suspect, Omar Abdullah, on "medical grounds."

"Abdullah was injured in a shootout with police and intelligence personnel when a raid was conducted for his arrest at a private hospital in the federal capital [in 2013]," Rana said.

Abdullah, suspected of being an Al Qaeda operative, also is the main suspect in the murder of Chaudhry Zulfiqar, a senior prosecutor with the Federal Investigation Agency. Abdullah's lawyers had already won bail for him in the Zulfiqar case for medical reasons.

Non-Hindu religious activity banned in India

CHHATTISGARH, India — Church leaders in India have asked national and Chhattisgarh state officials to reverse a ban on non-Hindu religious activity that more than 50 villages have reportedly adopted.

The head of the Religious Liberty Commission of the Evangelical Fellowship of India wrote to officials July 10 that the bans in the Bastar District villages, including some that prohibit non-Hindus from entering the villages, could lead to large-scale persecution of Christians and other minority communities.

The resolutions were passed under the pretext of stopping alleged forcible conversions of Hindus. Belar village banned all non-Hindu activities in a council meeting July 6 after about a dozen villages adopted a similar resolution May 10 that included a ban on non-Hindu missionaries.

"To stop the forced conversion by some ... religious campaigners and to prevent them from using derogatory language against Hindu deities and customs, the Sirisguda Gram Sabha [Village Council] bans religious activities such as prayers, meetings and propaganda of non-Hindu religions," the resolution states.

Large fines, jailing for Baptists in Uzbekistan

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan — Igor Kulyada, a Baptist from Uzbekistan's capital Tashkent, was jailed July 3–6. He was charged for putting up public leaflets with verses from the Bible.

Some of his property was ordered to be destroyed and a fine also was imposed on him. Asked why she had done this, Judge Nilufar Dadabayeva said, "I need to ask my superiors before I can give any information."

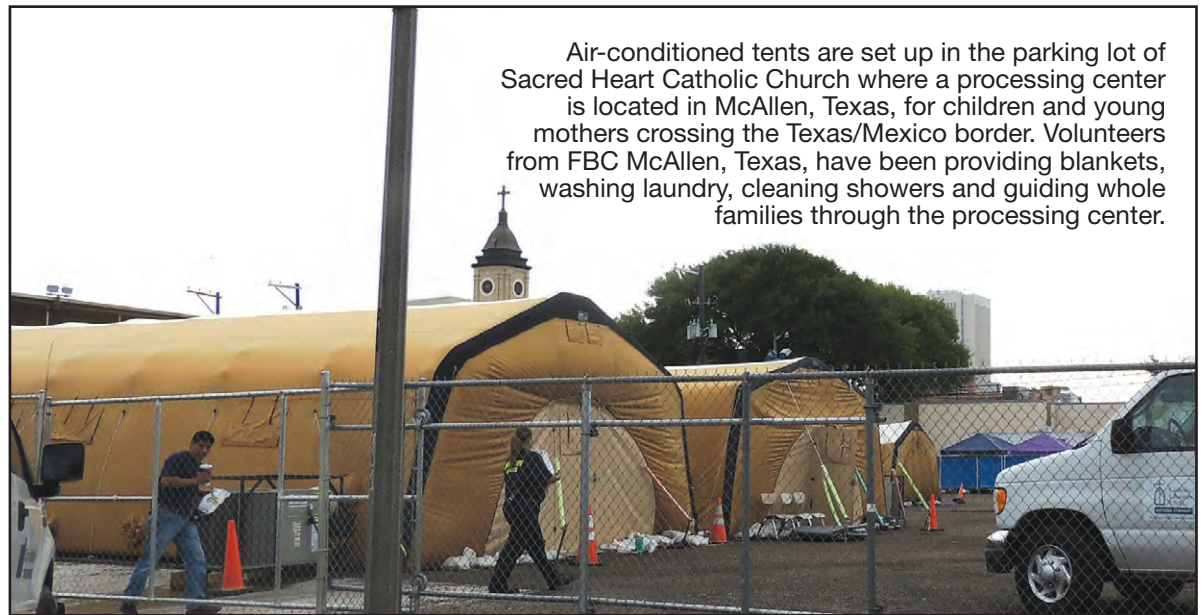
In Syrdarya Region, four Baptists have been fined 50 times their minimum monthly salary, four Baptists 20 times their minimum monthly salary and one Baptist has been fined 10 times their minimum monthly salary. The "offense" of all nine was to meet together to worship and share a meal on Palm Sunday.

Protestants in the central city of Kashi have complained of an illegal raid and house search against one of their co-believers and intrusive questioning of relatives about her. State confiscations of the property of Baptists in Samarkand continue to be carried out.

Kyrgyzstan bans Orthodox bishop from religious work

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan — Kyrgyzstan's State Commission for Religious Affairs (SCRA) refused to allow Bishop Feodosy, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in Kyrgyzstan, to register as a missionary. This prevents him from serving as a religious worker in Kyrgyzstan.

The SCRA claimed Feodosy was denied registration as he "threatens the public security of Kyrgyzstan and sows religious discord among the population."



Air-conditioned tents are set up in the parking lot of Sacred Heart Catholic Church where a processing center is located in McAllen, Texas, for children and young mothers crossing the Texas/Mexico border. Volunteers from FBC McAllen, Texas, have been providing blankets, washing laundry, cleaning showers and guiding whole families through the processing center.

BP photo

Baptists & immigration

Southern Baptist leaders tour border facilities

Southern Baptist national and state leaders recently toured federal government facilities being used to address the crisis of unaccompanied children crossing America's southern border.

Ronnie Floyd, president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), joined SBC lead ethicist Russell D. Moore on July 22 in touring a United States Customs and Border Protection facility in McAllen, Texas, and a Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) shelter in San Antonio. Jim Richards, executive director of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, joined them in San Antonio for the tour of the center at Lackland Air Force Base.

Underage children

The tours, followed by news conferences in each city, occurred as the U.S. seeks to deal with the more than 57,000 under-age children who have been apprehended at the border with Mexico in the last 10 months, according to the Department of Homeland Security. Most of those children — and sometimes children accompanied by a parent or parents — reportedly are fleeing Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, which are plagued by violence among gangs involved in drug trafficking in those Central American countries.

McAllen, which is near the southern tip of Texas, has been a major entry point for unaccompanied minors.

Thousands of children also are

being housed in facilities at Fort Sill in Oklahoma and Naval Base Ventura County in California.

Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery is a possible candidate for housing additional children but no decision had been made at press time.

Floyd and Moore have called not only for the federal government to repair what is generally acknowledged as a broken immigration system but for a compassionate response to the plight of the children who are in the U.S. illegally.

"These children are someone's children and someone's grandchildren. They are people, real people," Floyd wrote July 11. "Their parents, along with other children who are crossing our unprotected borders, are trying to better their lives and futures.

"Yes they should respect the rule of law, but now that they are here, we need to respect the God-given dignity of each of them," said Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas.

Compassionate response

Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), said in a statement, "As Christians, our first response to this crisis on the border must be one of compassion toward those in need, not disgust or anger. This situation on the border is a crisis — one that will take careful work from government leaders to help secure a porous border and an even more porous immigration policy that fuels the problem.

"At the same time, this crisis will

take a church willing to pray, serve and love these vulnerable ones in need."

Also participating in the tours and the news conferences was Daniel Flores, Roman Catholic bishop of Brownsville, Texas.

Serving children

Southern Baptists in Texas have been ministering as they are able, but the federal government has not permitted access to unaccompanied children. HHS is responsible for custody of such children once they are processed. It permits only federal authorities and federal contractors to be in contact with the minors, according to the North American Mission Board. For now, Baptist churches are primarily serving children and adults at a processing center; providing food, clothing and showers; and doing laundry.

The ERLC is among evangelical Christian organizations that have called for reform that would provide border and workplace security; uphold the rule of law; respect family unity; and establish a path to legal status and citizenship to those who want to live in this country permanently and are willing to pay penalties and meet the requirements. Flaws in both the system and its enforcement have resulted in an estimated 11 to 12 million undocumented immigrants living illegally in the U.S.

In 2011, messengers to the SBC annual meeting in Phoenix approved a resolution on immigration reform that called for the advancement of the gospel of Jesus while pursuing justice and compassion. (BP)

Immigration bill topic of debate for House, Senate

While the United States Congress didn't solve the border crisis before it's five-week August recess began, representatives and senators worked up to the last minute attempting to pass some form of legislation to help.

House members even delayed their recess as they worked to find a border-funding bill that would work for everyone.

The bill, H.R. 15 — titled Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act — would provide \$694 million to respond to the crisis at the U.S. border. The proposed funding is far less than the \$3.7 billion requested by President Barack Obama for 2014–2015. The cuts were designed to allow for an easier decision to pass the bill, according to news reports.

Overwhelmed system

According to the *New York Post*, H.R. 15 would seek to do three things: 1) Provide care and processing of the thousands of migrant children. 2) Improve border security. 3) Close a loophole in a 2008 law that delays deportation of children specifically from Central America.

But debates on the bill arose since House Democrats said they would not support the bill, saying it did not contain enough money to provide for the children, according to congressman David Price (D–N.C.).

The Senate version of legislation written to respond to the immigrant surge of both children and adults (Senate Resolution 486) failed to pass before the Senate adjourned for recess July 31. Republicans opposed the measure because it did not include any policy changes to make it easier to deport children back to Central America, according to CNN.com.

Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama said, "With great concern, we as policy makers must face the reality that the president is openly planning to use executive actions to provide amnesty and work permits to millions without any lawful authority. The Congress has a duty to resist."

More than 57,000 unaccompanied children from places like El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala have crossed America's border since October 2013 causing a crisis of how to house and care for them.

And although the Senate passed broad reform legislation in 2013, the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission said it needs improvement. So far, House of Representatives committees have approved bills dealing with such matters as strengthening border and national security and providing visas for guest workers. The full House has yet to act on those bills, however. (Compiled by news services, BP, TAB)

'Divine appointment'

Baptist pastor shares message of hope with surge of young immigrants

Since Palm Sunday Dan Trevino has preached to more than 10,000 immigrant young people from Central America, delivering a message of hope in Christ.

Trevino, associate pastor of Baptist Temple, San Antonio, Texas, leads multiple worship services each week for children, ages 11 to 17, detained at the Mexican border and housed at nearby Lackland Air Force Base. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) shelter is operated by Baptist Child & Family Services (BCFS).

He recognizes many Americans view the surge of unaccompanied minors from Central America as "a big political thing." He sees the opportunity to share the gospel with the young people as "a divine appointment."

Trevino joined the staff at Baptist Temple earlier in 2014 after leaving the pastorate of Harlandale Baptist Church, San Antonio.

"Honestly I was getting to the point where I was feeling ineffective in my ministry and doubting myself in terms of my ability as a preacher," Trevino said.

Two weeks after he arrived at Baptist Temple, BCFS President Kevin Dinnin called him. Dinnin asked Trevino, who served 17 years with BCFS in a variety of roles, to conduct worship services at five camps throughout Central Texas where the agency was caring for the immigrant children.

"I had been wondering if God could use me as a preacher. And now God was using me to spread His Word to all these young people," he said.

For several weeks, Trevino traveled to the camps. Later when the summer camp season was scheduled to begin, HHS consolidated operations at Lackland.

Trevino leads four worship services every Sunday at the base — three for boys and one for girls. Total attendance varies, but most Sundays he preaches to anywhere from 1,000 to 1,400 young people.

Trevino listens to the stories the young people tell him about the life they left in Central America and the journeys they endured. Many talk about parents who wanted their children to have a better life.

Stories of escape

One teenage boy described an entire year spent walking from Honduras to Texas, working along the way to earn money for food. Another boy talked about violence in his homeland.

"He saw other kids executed right in front of him. He started running and didn't turn back," Trevino said.

Based on their familiarity with the Bible, Trevino suspects many of the youth came from evangelical homes where parents taught them the importance of strong faith.

"What they need is a personal walk with Jesus. Many of them already know about God, but we want to build on the basics of what they know."

Each week, Trevino extends an invitation to his listeners to make a faith commitment to Jesus. So far more than 2,500 people have raised their hands, indicating they made professions of faith in Christ — including some staff.

Worship services

Trevino acknowledges some see the expressions of faith as comparable to "jailhouse religion," but he rejects that idea. Participants attend the worship services voluntarily, and many choose to join in weekday Bible studies.

Trevino takes care not to communicate a message "everything is going to be great" if they become Christians, but he assures them God will accompany them whatever their future holds.

His sermons include a variety of biblical

stories of faith and hope. But at every worship service, he leads the children in reading together Joshua 1:9 in Spanish: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Trevino said, "Many may end up going back home. So, I tell them, 'Bring revival to Honduras or El Salvador or Guatemala. ... God has a plan for your life.'"

For decades, Trevino dreamed about preaching in Central America, but he never traveled any farther south than Mexican border cities along the Rio Grande.

"It just never happened. It never panned out," he said. "But God has given me the desires of my heart. I don't have to go to Central America. It has come to me." (ABP)

How to help minister

Emergency items, shoes, Bibles needed

Texas Baptists are collecting funds for Spanish-language Bibles, Buckner International is seeking children's shoes and Baptists in South Texas are gathering emergency items and soliciting volunteer nurses to help minister to unaccompanied minors and mothers with young children from Central America.

► The Baptist General Convention of Texas has established a "For the Children" fund to purchase Spanish Bibles and other supplies for immigrant children in shelters. Dan Trevino, associate pastor of Baptist Temple, San Antonio, Texas, makes available the Bibles to children housed at Lackland Air Force Base, where he leads four worship services every Sunday (see story, this page). Donations to the fund also will be used to meet needs when shelters open in Dallas County. For more information, call Marla Bearden with Texas Baptists' Disaster Recovery at 214-537-7358 or email marla.bearden@texasbaptists.org.

► Rio Grande Valley Baptist Association needs paperback Spanish New Testaments for a triage and transition shelter for unaccompanied minors in the Weslaco, Texas, area. Pastors will lead worship services and provide the New Testaments to children. For more information, call Robert Cepeda at 956-371-8516.

► Buckner International is collecting shoes for immigrants and refugees in McAllen and Laredo in the Rio Grande Valley through its Shoes for Orphan Souls

program. The greatest need is for children's sizes 7 to 13 and youth sizes 1 to 3, particularly for children ages 3 to 6. Shoes need to be lace-up, Velcro-strapped or slip-on with closed toes — not flip-flops or open-toed sandals. To donate shoes, drop off or send shoes to the Buckner Center for Humanitarian Aid, 5405 Shoe Dr., Mesquite, TX 75149. For more information, call 214-939-7179.

► Volunteer teams of registered nurses and licensed vocational nurses are needed in McAllen to work with Calvary Baptist Church, the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley and Sacred Heart Catholic Church. The groups will serve mothers with young children. For more information about volunteer opportunities, contact Marla Bearden with Texas Baptists' Disaster Recovery at 214-537-7358 or email marla.bearden@texasbaptists.org.

► Texas Baptists in the McAllen area are collecting new undergarments and walking shoes for women and children, backpacks, some toiletries, cleaning supplies and other items for the ministry. For more information, call Vanessa Quintanilla at 956-279-5515.

► Laredo Baptists are collecting diapers, travel-size hygiene items, bottled water, walking shoes for women, new undergarments for women and children and other items. For more information, contact Maria Garcia at 956-693-1136 or Gerald Davis with Texas Baptists' Disaster Recovery. (ABP)

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.

BESSEMER

► **Bessemer Association** will hold an evangelism rally Aug. 10–11, 6:30 p.m. On Aug. 10 the rally will be held at Canaan Church, Bessemer. Fred Luter, immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, will speak. The rally will be held at North Highlands Church, Hueytown, on Aug. 11. Kevin Hamm, pastor of Gardendale First Church, will speak. Bessemer Association is asking its churches to move their Sunday night services to Canaan on Aug. 10. Barry Cospser is director of missions.

BETHEL

► **Tribute Quartet**, of Hendersonville, Tenn., will be in concert at **Pine Hill Church** on Aug. 14, 7 p.m. For information call 334-963-4412. Chris Kynard is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **East Gardendale Church, Gardendale**, will hold "AUGUST ALIVE 2014!" on Thursdays in August at 6 p.m. Guest speakers include: Sammy Gilbreath, director of the office of evangelism for the Alabama State Board of Missions, on Aug. 7; missionary Danny Tesseer on Aug. 14; Sid Nichols, director of missions for Calhoun

Association, on Aug. 21; and Scott Dawson, founder of Scott Dawson Evangelistic Association, on Aug. 28. For information call 205-608-0889. Allen Davis is pastor. ► **First Church, Tarrant, in Birmingham** will celebrate homecoming Aug. 10, 11 a.m. Former pastor Charles Click will speak. A covered dish lunch will follow. Everyone is invited. Larry Wilhite is pastor. ► **Jim Cooley** is the new pastor of **First Church, Birmingham**. He previously served First Church, Haleyville, as pastor since 2003. He holds a bachelor's degree from Samford University in Birmingham, a master of divinity from Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., and a doctor of ministry from New Orleans Seminary. He currently serves as second vice president for the Alabama State Convention. He and his wife, Judith, have two children.



COOLEY

MONTGOMERY

► **Capitol Heights Church,**

Montgomery, will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Carole Eagerton and her faithful years of service in the music ministry of Capitol Heights. Friends and former staff are invited to join the special occasion Aug. 17 by attending morning worship at 10:30 a.m. and afterward be a guest for lunch and a recognition program. J. Warren Culver is pastor.

MORGAN

► **Lebanon Church, Falkville**, will hold a fall revival Aug. 10–13 featuring Michael Mason. Paul Shutt will lead worship. Sunday services will be at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. and Monday–Wednesday services will be at 7 p.m. Randy Ashley is pastor.

SHELBY

► **Grace Church, Montevallo**, will celebrate its 21st homecoming Aug. 17, 10:30 a.m. Austin Foster will sing and Jud Walrop from Dadeville will speak. A meal will follow the service. Tim Driskell is interim pastor.

TALLAPOOSA

► **James Smith** is the new director of missions for **Tallapoosa Association**. He received his education from Samford University in Birmingham and Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. He previously served People's Hospice of West Virginia. He also has served as a church planting catalyst with the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists, as director of missions for Monongahela Association in Clarksburg, W.Va., and as a pastor in Tennessee, among other ministry roles. His wife is Jerilyn. ► **Jeff Freeman** has resigned as pastor of **Calvary Heights Church, Alexander City**.



SMITH

TUSCALOOSA

► **Flatwoods Church, Northport**, will host a Home Run Derby at the Flatwood softball fields Aug. 9, 10 a.m. for ages 7–adults. The event is sponsored by the first/second and third through fifth grade Sunday night classes of the church. Proceeds will benefit the West Alabama Food Bank and ministry in the Philippines. The public is invited. Register at flatwoods baptist.com. Email questions to flatwoodsderby@gmail.com. Cecil Smith is pastor. ☞



Fayette's Concord marks 175 years of ministry

Concord Baptist Church, Fayette, celebrated 175 years of ministry May 25 with several special elements.

One unique aspect of the anniversary was the keepsake handheld paper fans the church created, said Pastor John Creitz. "We staged an old-timey picture of some of our men" in sepia color and put it on the fans, he noted, adding Concord Baptist also printed a memorial booklet.

After special music at 10 a.m. by New Life, the anniversary service began at 11 a.m. and Rep. Robert Aderholt spoke.

Presentations of recognition sent by several government officials were featured, and Angie Cooper, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative, presented a framed certificate to Concord. Other highlights of the service included remembrances from some of the older church members.

Dinner on the grounds followed at noon, and in the afternoon the Oswalt family gospel quartet sang.

Creitz noted the anniversary theme of the Fayette Baptist Association church was based on Hebrews 12:1, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." (Julie Payne)

Gadsden's South Highland celebrates 75th anniversary

South Highland Baptist Church, Gadsden, celebrated its 75th anniversary June 1 with a service that began at 10:30 a.m.

Interim pastor Justin Ward made the opening remarks, and Wendell Dutton, representative from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, was on hand to present the Etowah Baptist Association church with a plaque. Gary Cardwell, director of missions for Etowah Association, also presented the church with a plaque on behalf of the association.

Church treasurer Wynn Hill said about seven former choir directors attended the service and several of them sang special music. Also in attendance were three former South Highland Baptist pastors including Bobby Joe Winningham, who delivered the day's message.

About 75 attended the service, Hill said, and afterward everyone gathered for lunch.

Hill noted the most memorable highlights of the anniversary included the "great message and wonderful singing" and seeing people "who we hadn't seen in a while."

She added, "The fellowship was great. I grew up in this church (and) it's very close to my heart." (Julie Payne)

Birmingham Association to investigate allegation charges

The executive board of Birmingham Baptist Association (BBA) released a statement July 29 saying it is investigating recent allegations against BBA Executive Director Mike McLemore.

The allegations resurfaced after a story was published by the *Birmingham News* on July 2, in which an accuser charges that McLemore knew about and covered up alleged incidents of sexual abuse by a former staff member of Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham, where McLemore once served as pastor (see full story in the July 17 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*).

The statement, written by the BBA executive committee and adopted by the BBA executive board during an executive session, is as follows:

"The executive committee of

the Birmingham Baptist Association is investigating the recent allegations against our executive director. The executive committee is grateful that our executive director continues to cooperate fully with the investigation of the allegations brought against an ex-staff member of one of our BBA churches. Any possibility that our leadership may have been involved in covering up the sexual abuse of a minor/minors must be considered thoroughly.

"The executive committee is grieved by the sexual abuse of minors. Those who have been sexually abused by clergy are deserving of special compassion. The churches of the Birmingham Baptist Association are encouraged to take every necessary precaution to protect minors against sexual abuse." (TAB)

REFLECTIONS



Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions

ONE MISSION:
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The Cooperative Program**MANY MINISTRIES:**
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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

Students Sharing Faith a Hallmark of BCM

For the past few weeks, I've been reading accounts of Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) student summer missionaries from Alabama sharing the Gospel and seeing folks on their field of service come to faith in Christ. They are wonderful illustrations of how God is working through the willingness of college students to take the Good News of Jesus to those who haven't heard. This isn't unusual; in fact, this is the norm for students serving through One Mission Students, the student mobilization arm of BCM in Alabama.

Actually it's the norm and much more – students compelled by Christ's love to share their faith with fellow students on their campuses: one of the hallmarks of Alabama BCM. While BCM on any given campus may involve fun, fellowship, Bible study, retreats

and service opportunities for believing students, it is above all a means to reach students with the Gospel and help them grow into faithful Christian disciples.

This culture of campus evangelism is best evidenced by ENGAGE24, an ongoing campus evangelism effort to help students build relationships with campus friends, roommates, teammates, etc., which will ultimately allow them to share their Christian witness. This is beautifully illustrated by this testimony from Lauren, a student at the University of South Alabama (USA):

As a BCM Bible Study group leader, I was able to meet a lot of freshman girls during the first week of school. Jasmine was one of those girls. She and I connected really well. I just assumed she was a Christian, because she said

that she grew up in church and had been on many mission trips. However, one night at BCM, she pulled me and our campus minister aside and said she wanted to talk to us about her faith. That night Jasmine put her faith in Jesus! It was an amazing moment to say the least. Since then, I have been encouraging her in her study of God's

By Mike Nuss
State Missionary



Word and to share her testimony with others. She recently made a decision to be baptized. God has given me this incredible blessing, and with joy I praise Him for everything that has happened!

Last year, more than 900 students shared their faith and 21 students accepted Christ during the ENGAGE24 focus. Beyond that, 234 people made a profession of faith as a result of Alabama BCM with 6,569 persons making a decision for Christ through BCM nationwide. Eight students on campus were impacted for every one student involved in Baptist Campus Ministries.

Like Lauren at USA, I'm praising God for everything that has happened and looking forward to what He will do through BCM in the year ahead!

For more information on Baptist Campus Ministries or ENGAGE24, please contact State Missionary Mike Nuss at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 276 or (334) 613-2276, mnuss@alsbom.org.

GET ACQUAINTED DAY

At the Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd. in Montgomery, Thursday, SEPTEMBER 4, 10 am - 3:30 pm • Check-in and refreshments at 9:30

• Meet your state missionaries • Discover how we can partner together to fulfill the Great Commission • Tour the Baptist Building • Spouses welcome • Lunch provided

Ideal for pastors, church staff, secretaries or associational staff who are new to Alabama, new to their position, or who have never attended Get Acquainted Day

Register by calling or emailing Charleen Hobbs, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 231, or (334) 613-2231, chobbs@alsbom.org, or go to www.alsbom.org/gad



WMU FALL MISSIONS FESTIVALS

FALL MISSIONS FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN

October 10-11, 2014 or October 17-18, 2014

WorldSong Missions Place, Cook Springs
Begins at 5 p.m. Friday, concludes at 3 p.m. Saturday

COST: \$50 per person (includes lodging and meals)

At Fall Missions Festival, children will learn about what God is doing in the Ivory Coast. At FMF, children grades 1-6 and their leaders will hear from missionaries serving in the Ivory Coast as well as experience African culture through food, customs and other activities led by young adults who love and serve the Lord and have a heart for children and for missions.

For more information, go online to www.alabamawmu.org or contact Julie McGraw at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 226, or (334) 613-2226, jmcgraw@alsbom.org.

FALL MISSIONS FESTIVAL FOR ADULTS

October 21, 2014 or October 23, 2014

WorldSong Missions Place, Cook Springs
10 a.m.-3 p.m.

COST: \$16 per person (includes lunch)

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: October 14

Held on the beautiful campus of WorldSong, this year's festival will focus on the amazing sights and sounds of the Ivory Coast, the emphasis area for the 2014 International Mission Study. You will have opportunities to learn from and interact with missionaries who recently returned from serving in this area of the world. We'll pray together and enjoy other special activities. The Fall Missions Festival for Adults is open to adults of all ages.

For more information, go online to www.alabamawmu.org or contact Julie McGraw at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 226, or (334) 613-2226, jmcgraw@alsbom.org.

WHY I BELIEVE IN THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM



There are too many lone rangers in the Christian world when what we really need is to be Cooperative Program team players. Thank God for the Cooperative Program doing more together than any lone ranger can do on their own! — *Jim Hill, pastor, Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Ozark*

I have personally seen the Cooperative Program at work: first as an IMB missionary and then as a seminary student. Without the CP, neither of these endeavors would have been possible for me. Today I continually see the work of the CP as I work alongside IMB missionaries while on short-term mission trips. I also see the CP at work in my daily ministry at the Mobile Baptist Association. I daresay many if not most Southern Baptists do not know what the CP is and do not realize it is the main distinctive that sets us apart from other Baptists. The CP allows Southern Baptists to do more together than we can ever do apart. — *Kelly Jones, receptionist and church development assistant, Mobile Baptist Association*



I believe the Cooperative Program is the best program to support missions since the Day of Pentecost. The Cooperative Program allows churches of every size to work together to carry out the Great Commission. The Cooperative Program allows all of our churches to participate in our effort to reach our world for Christ. It will be a step backward if our churches move to a societal plan for giving. I urge all Alabama Baptists to support missions through the Cooperative Program. — *Sammie Reid, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Warrior*



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

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



SERVA

192nd Annual Session ✨ Alabama Baptist State Convention
November 11-12, 2014 ✨ Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham

Church Revitalization Book Reviews

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

Leading Kingdom Movements, by Mike Breen, is his notebook on how to change the world.

He believes that Jesus unleashed a movement and that people like Paul and the disciples followed His example and did just that: changed the world. Breen encourages learning those lessons again.

I personally would not use the word "movement," but Breen presents his own story as a bridge to what it takes to lead

Kingdom movements. He does so through the major events of his life such as: The Breaking, The Spirit, Grace and Faith, The Multiplication Years and the Two Towers Fall.

Breen states people are not born movement leaders, but rather they are people who have been willing to embrace breaking experiences when God was able to

form something deep within them by reminding them, "My power is made perfect in your weakness."

Just as Breen used the events in his life as a bridge, he used the major points of Paul's life as an example of a movement leader: "Paul: A Man with a Mission," "Paul: Message," "Paul: Method," "Paul: Miraculous + Movement," and "Navigating the Spiritual Terrain."

There is something

Sammy Gilbreath
State Missionary



in me that pushes back on the word "movement," but I do like Breen's emphasis on identifying and recruiting reproducing leaders.

Breen's concept of "orbital pattern of ministry" is a different way of saying that for me, but I do agree that we all have a pattern of ministry and should examine ours closely.

When Breen associates "spiritual mass" with spiritual zeal, I wanted a little clarity. He really divides it into three areas: Passionate Spirituality, Radical Community and Missional Zeal.

This all can be seen in our own lives first if there is a weakness. A self-diagnosis is critical as we ask ourselves, "What is God saying to me?" and then, "What am I going to do about it?"

The book is filled with new terms, for me at least. He also uses some scientific comparisons like "gravity, mass and orbiting" that I have never used. I have previously stated my concern over his concept of Jesus starting a movement. However, I can get through that to agree that we do need to be a part of changing the world through Christ.

State Missionary Sammy Gilbreath serves as director of the Evangelism Office. He may be reached at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 320, or (334) 613-2320, sgilbreath@alsbom.org.

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

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 disciple making. 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.

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,
bettys@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 ONE PROGRAM: The Cooperative Program MANY MINISTRIES: 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 these 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.**

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 and Saturday,
August 8-9, 2014**

First Baptist Church Montgomery

LITERACY MISSIONS

ministries involve 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.

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

FOCUS on One Mission

Together 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/togetherministry 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.



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/fallsenioradultretreat 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.

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

PASTOR, 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.**

SAVE THE DATE

Shocco Springs
March 8-11,
2015

53RD Annual Conference

Alabama
association of
baptist secretaries

Pastors and ministry assistants begin now planning for this great conference. Remember to include this in your 2015 church budget.

Cost: \$261 (which includes three nights double occupancy room, eight meals and program fees). After January 21, 2015 the cost will be \$276.

Worship Leader: Libby Stokes Woolwine

Conference Speaker: Jodi Burbank

For conference updates, check online at www.alabamabaptistsecretaries.com

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



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.**



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

CONCLAVE

A training conference to equip and rejuvenate your youth ministry team.

2015 | **JANUARY 29 - 31** | **CHATTANOOGA CONVENTION CENTER**

www.southeastconclave.org



FEATURING: MARK BATTERSON | ED NEWTON | SKIT GUYS | JEFF BETHKE
 Also Featuring: Allen Jackson, Judi Jackson, Richard Ross, Brian Mills, Ken Coley, Scott Kindig



Conclave is jointly sponsored by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and five other state conventions

RA WEEK HIKE 4 MISSIONS

Nov. 2-9, 2014

RA Week Ideas:

- RAs usher and receive the offering.
- RAs have a Recognition Ceremony.
- RA Camp Out.
- Conduct a "Hike 4 Missions" to raise money for the Lottie Moon Offering. Information is available at www.alsbom.org/ra.
- Have a Pastor's Table at the Wednesday night church supper. RAs are special guests of the pastor and staff. (This is like a Captain's Table on a ship.)

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



START RA BASKETBALL



- Join or start an association RA league.
- Follow the guidelines of RA Basketball, available online at www.alsbom.org/ra.
- Do mission projects as outlined in the "Alabama Royal Ambassador Advancement Workbook," also available at www.alsbom.org/ra.

Note: A team does not have to be in an RA league to play in the February state RA tournament. The team does have to be a Royal Ambassador group and must fulfill the advancement requirements as stated in the guidebook.

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



ONE MISSION: The Great Commission

ALABAMA WMMU 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, jmcgraw@alsbom.org.



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.

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

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.

- August 23 - First Baptist Church, Jacksonville
- September 6 - Glencoe Baptist Church, Glencoe
- September 27 - Tallapoosa Association Office, Jackson's Gap
- October 4 - First Baptist Church, Russellville
- October 25 - Calvary Baptist Church, Dothan
- November 1 - Central Baptist Church, Mt. Olive
- November 22 - Eastwood Baptist Church, Monroeville
- December 6 - Millbrook Baptist Church, Millbrook

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.

Church intruder

Arson suspect sets fire to McCalla's Bellview

Despite a fire at its building in the early morning hours July 26, Sunday morning worship the following day at Bellview Baptist Church, McCalla, was not affected.

The church's alarm went off around 1:30 a.m. on July 26, said Pastor Tim Hassler. An intruder apparently broke a window and proceeded to set fire to some pieces of church furniture that were sitting inside.

A neighbor living near the church grounds happened to witness the fire and began honking his car horn to scare the arson suspect away. Investigators say the suspect reportedly fled the scene in a red Chevrolet Impala, according to news reports.

In addition to the damage that was made to a couple furniture items and the large window, glass also had been shattered on

two of the building's glass doors.

Hassler noted the fire caused minimal damage to the building and that it "could have been so much worse."

Because of the assistance of church members and work crews who helped July 26 to clear out the smoke from the building and board up the broken window, Sunday worship the next day at Bellview Baptist went on as usual, Hassler said.

The investigation was ongoing at press time, and the church is currently in the process of working with its insurance company regarding repairs that need to be made.

Hassler noted that even if the intruder had caused serious damage, "the building is just a build-

ing. God has placed a great church family here ... to continue sharing God's Word." (Julie Payne)



Photo courtesy of Bellview Baptist Church

"The building is just a building. God has placed a great church family here ... to continue sharing God's Word."

Pastor Tim Hassler
Bellview Baptist Church, McCalla

Alabama Governor's School names Allen outstanding male student

Cordova High School student Kyle Allen was named the outstanding male student at the 2014 Alabama Governor's School. Allen, a member of Northside Baptist Church, Jasper, and the grandson of Vivian and Howard Thompson, pastor of New Prospect Baptist Church, Jasper, received the award at the closing session of the Samford University-sponsored program June 27. The Alabama Governor's School is an honors program for academically gifted students and is held for rising high school seniors.



Photo courtesy of Samford University

Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Holy Spirit and Holy Temples

Believers Collectively as a Temple

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

We began thinking about the Holy Spirit several weeks ago in light of Pentecost Sunday. The starting point for our thinking was the four passages in which Jesus spoke of the Spirit as the Paraclete or Helper (John 14-16). Then in the last three weeks our focus has been on the Holy Spirit and the Bible. We looked at His inspiration of its writers, His illumination of its readers and His work of helping apply Spirit-illuminated truth to our lives. Thus we transitioned from the Spirit and the Book of God to the Spirit and the people of God.

For God's people, Israel, the temple was where God uniquely manifested His presence. The prophet Habakkuk contrasted the lifeless and imaginary gods of the nations with the living and true God of Israel, saying, "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him" (Hab. 2:20).

Spirit of God's dwelling place

The New Testament picks up the imagery of a temple as the place where the Spirit of God dwells. One such passage is 1 Corinthians 3:16-17. Written originally to a local body of believers in Corinth, these two verses referred to those believers as a temple of the Holy Spirit. The plural form of the pronoun "you" is used four times in these two verses. The resultant idea is that in a collective or congregational sense a body of believers constitutes a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

Invisible presence

So when we gather for worship where is the Holy Spirit? Do we not sometimes think Him to be an invisible presence floating around in the place of worship, moving among the rows or hovering just below the ceiling? Does the Holy Spirit dwell in the physical structure in which we gather for worship? Careful reflection will lead us to think otherwise. God's Spirit dwells in human hearts. He takes up earthly residence in those who have opened

themselves to the Savior. In fact, the Bible goes so far as to say, "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him" (Rom. 8:9). The reverse of this declaration also is true. If a person truly belongs to Christ in a saving relationship, that person has the Spirit of Christ. In short, the Holy Spirit is present in the gathered body of believers by means of His indwelling each worshipper, thereby turning the congregation into His temple.

Spirit's entranceway

Some practical outcomes of recognizing our hearts as the Spirit's entranceway into our midst include the awareness that to the extent any of us are grieving the Spirit, quenching the Spirit or disobeying the Spirit our place of worship is limited as a dwelling place of the Spirit. Furthermore when the Spirit is not free to flow through us individually for the collective good His convicting presence is curtailed so that unbelievers among us do not come under strong conviction about their need and the Savior's supply.

When we notice that some worship times seem to be moving and powerful but others seem lifeless maybe the individuals of us need to engage in a do-it-yourself heart checkup. Have we brought into church a backlog of unconfessed and uncleansed sin or maybe hearts that harbor unreleased forgiveness toward others? Members with cluttered hearts hamper the church's being a temple of God's Spirit. The Spirit of God has always had an affinity for clean hands and pure hearts. 🙏

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.



Among the BEST

Samford University top-ranked school in state

Samford University in Birmingham is the top-ranked higher education institution in Alabama according to new national rankings released July 30 by Forbes, Inc.

Samford is ranked No. 203 out of the 650 universities nationwide that were included in Forbes' 2014 rankings. Samford is the largest private university in Alabama, a distinction it has held for several decades.

Other Alabama schools in the rankings included Auburn University (204), the University of Alabama (335), Birmingham-Southern College (383), Spring Hill College (437), the University of Alabama at Huntsville (466), the University of Alabama at Birmingham (528), the University of South Alabama (593), Troy University (630) and Tuskegee University (635).

"These rankings further affirm Samford's value, affordability and academic stature," said Andrew Westmoreland, Samford's president.

"We acknowledge that these types of rankings can be subjective from year-to-year, but also a great source of pride for Samford students, faculty, staff and alumni who celebrate the strong national reputation of their university."

This is the seventh year Forbes has partnered with the Center for College Affordability and Productivity (CCAP) to produce their national rankings. According to the CCAP website, the rankings tended to favor smaller, liberal arts institutions this year. Other factors considered by CCAP include graduation rates,

graduate success in the marketplace, student debt and cost.

"Smaller, liberal arts colleges are concerned more with educating students than their research giant counterparts," CCAP noted. "Their prestige is derived almost entirely from the quality of graduate they produce. Therefore it is not unreasonable to think that they would do well in this year's ranking."

Success after graduation

Westmoreland said, "Samford's focus always has been on providing a rigorous academic program for students and helping those students prepare to, hopefully, succeed after graduation. That and our affordability are things that set Samford apart when students and their families are comparing us with other institutions."

Forbes concurred with CCAP's assessment of the rankings. "What sets our calculation of 650 colleges and universities apart from other rankings is our firm belief in 'output' over 'input,'" according to Forbes. "We're not all that interested in what gets a student into college. Our sights are set directly on [return on investment]: What are students getting out of college."

Samford also compared favorably in cost with the other schools in Alabama. One other private school, Tuskegee University, costs less, but Samford's total cost, as reported by Forbes, was lower than Auburn, the University of Alabama, Birmingham-Southern College and Spring Hill College. (Samford)

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 will be noth-

ing 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.



Jimmy Dixon



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at 1-800-803-5201, ext. 107 or bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org.



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Photo by Doug Rogers

Late-night worship

Students, leaders give YEC 'great reports'

(continued from page 1)
a breakout session was offered for the adult leaders, challenging them to live an example of faith to their students.

Brad Averette, associate pastor and minister to students for First Baptist Church, Fayette, took nine students to YEC and noted the youth breakout session was a favorite aspect of the weekend for some in his group, including his son, Andrew.

"We had Robbie (Robison) as our speaker, and he really identified with us while we were in the room," Andrew Averette said.

Fervent worship

The high-energy band The Museum set a worshipful tone for the two-day conference and led the students in fervent worship music with songs like "10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)."

The band also provided a late-

night concert July 25, allowing participants to delve even deeper into worship. During the concert, some students and adult leaders flocked to the edge of the stage.

Mills said, "Each year we have a late-night activity. This is the first time in a few years that the late-night activity was a concert."

In addition to Morris, other keynote speakers at YEC included Mark Cahill and David Nasser, who both delivered messages July 26.

Brad Averette, who attended his first YEC in 1990, said this was his third YEC since serving at First, Fayette. He noted YEC is an affordable and convenient event for students with quality speakers. Another important element, he added, is the spiritual aspect it provides participants.

Mills noted he and others are already busy preparing for 2015 by going through evaluations and working through plans for next year's event.



Photo by Doug Rogers

David Nasser delivers a message to students at YEC 2014 at Samford University's Wright Center on July 26. Nasser was one of three keynote speakers at the annual event.

"Each year after YEC, we come back with an open mind," he said. "That's the case this year. We are going to talk through each element and see what should be changed or tweaked next year."

He added that "great reports"

from the recent event are already filtering in from students and leaders alike.

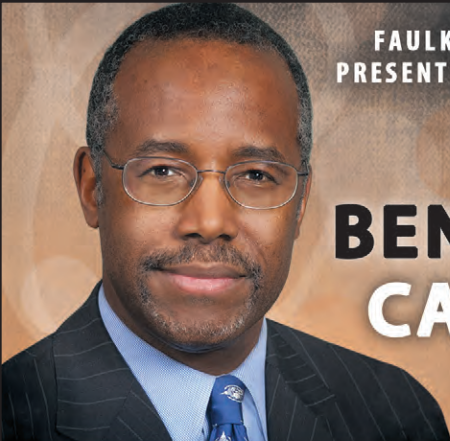
"One student left us a note thanking us for making YEC happen. For me, that was the best affirmation we could ask for," he said. (Maggie Walsh contributed)

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CAMPUS

News



UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **University of Mobile Gallery Hosts 'Automations' Exhibit, Artist Talk:** Mechanical sculptures created by artist Jim Kransberger will be on display beginning Aug. 18 in "Automations," a free exhibit at the University of Mobile's (UMobile) Marilyn Foley Art Gallery.

Kransberger, whose whimsical works feature unique movement, will discuss his art during an Artist Talk at the gallery at 1 p.m. on opening day of the exhibit, Aug. 18. Exhibit hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday. "Automations" will be on display through Sept. 30.

The nearly 80-year-old self-taught artist's sculptures have been in gallery shows in North Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee.

Recently he transitioned to working with clay, moving from folk art to contemporary sculpture. Humor is a common theme in his works and pieces representing both styles of his art will be on display.

Ceramic works and mechanical wood sculptures also will be on display beginning Aug. 18 in "Observations," a free exhibit at the gallery.

The Marilyn Foley Art Gallery is located in the Ben May Building on the UMobile campus. For information, call the UMobile art department at 251-442-2283 or visit umobile.edu.

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **McWhorter School of Pharmacy Receives \$250,000 for Cardinal Health Annual Scholarship Fund:** Samford University's McWhorter School of Pharmacy has received a \$250,000 gift from Cardinal Health, Inc., of Dublin, Ohio, to fund scholarships for senior pharmacy students preparing to serve in independent pharmacies.

This is the third gift from Cardinal Health for this purpose. In 2012, Cardinal Health established the Cardinal Health Annual Independent Pharmacy Scholarship in

McWhorter School of Pharmacy as a part of their organizational commitment to supporting the growth of independent pharmacy. Cardinal Health has contributed \$480,000 to their Samford scholarship fund since its inception.

"We are grateful for Cardinal Health's continued support of students in the McWhorter School of Pharmacy," said Michael A. Crouch, pharmacy school dean.

Nationwide only nine schools were selected to receive support from Cardinal Health's Pharmacy Scholarship Program in 2014. According to Cardinal Health, schools are chosen based on their commitment to advancing the independent pharmacy profession.

As part of the partnership Cardinal Health also provides mentoring resources to students holding the scholarship, providing them with practical guidance beyond their scholarship, Crouch said.

JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson College's Religious Studies Online Learning Program Ranked As No. 7 Most Affordable in U.S.:** Judson College's Religious Studies program has been ranked as the No. 7 most affordable online degree program in the United States by OnlineU.org.

SR Education Group of Kirkland, Wash., did extensive research into the cost of attending different online colleges and posted the results on their

website. According to their study, Judson is cheaper after scholarships and financial aid for undergraduate students than the vast majority of other online schools.

Judson offers bachelor of science, bachelor of arts and bachelor of ministry degrees that are available entirely online.

► **Judson College Appoints J. William McFarland Jr. Special Assistant to the President for Business Development:** Judson College President David E. Potts has appointed J. William McFarland Jr. for the newly created post of special assistant to the president for business development, effective July 1.

McFarland will lead the college's sponsored projects and governmental affairs efforts in securing federal, state and private resources for economic and workforce development, community and regional outreach.

McFarland previously held executive-level roles in both higher education and private business, most recently serving as special assistant to the president and director of both the Center for Business and Economic Services and the James Suttles Entrepreneurship Institute at The University of West Alabama.

McFarland also has recently completed the requirements to obtain the Association of Government Relations Professionals Lobbying Certificate, to be awarded in Washington later this year. He also currently serves as a gubernatorial appointee to the Southern Rail Commission. ☪

Want to know GOD?

Pastor Doug Dortch
Mountain Brook Baptist Church,
Birmingham

One of the most famous frescos of the 16th century Italian painter Michelangelo is his "Creation of Adam," which adorns the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. The fresco is an illustration of God's animating work in forming His human creation and shows the earnestness of God in the process. It's as if God is straining mightily to reach out to Adam, but Adam seems to be not so excited about reaching back to God. The fact of the matter is that Adam seems rather nonchalant. Adam has no idea what he is missing.

The fresco is a commentary on where too many people are even today. The idea of knowing God becomes something people think they can get around to at a time that is convenient to them, but of course we who know God also understand that such people really have no idea what they are missing either.

To know God is to have a purpose to your life. It's to know that life isn't meaningless or random but that God is directing all things toward good ends for those who love Him (Rom. 8:28).

To know God is to be at peace in your life. It's to know that in spite of the trials and tribulations that will come your way God will always see you through (Ps. 23:4). To know God is to greet each day with all manner of possibility, because God is faithful to His promises and His mercies are new every morning (Lam. 3:22-23).

I trust you are not missing any of these blessings. If so, it is no difficult thing to secure them. Simply reach out to that nail-scarred hand of Jesus through which God extended Himself fully to reconcile the world. Do so enthusiastically and with great anticipation.

As you do you will discover that you really are not that far away, because from the very beginning, God has already been reaching out to you. ☪

Correction

The wrong logo was used with "Alabama WMU reflects on 125 years of 'shining the light' of Jesus" in the July 31 issue. While Alabama WMU is affiliated with national WMU, they are not the same group. The national office is headquartered in Birmingham, and the state WMU office is in Montgomery. The correct logo is pictured here



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CHURCH POSITIONS

BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER: Southside Baptist Church of Troy, Ala., is currently seeking a godly, talented and driven individual to lead our choir and congregation in a blended-style of worship. Please email your resumé: southside@troycable.net, ATTN: Music Committee.

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

PART-TIME MUSIC LEADER: Calvary Baptist Church, Eufaula, Ala., is seeking a music leader for primarily Sundays to lead choir and congregation in blended style worship. Email resumé to: mchelms@yahoo.com.

MINISTER OF STUDENTS: Golden Acres Baptist Church is accepting resúmes for a full-time minister of students (grades 9-college). Resúmes may be sent to: 3405 South Railroad Street, Phenix City, AL 36867, ATTN: Gina Harper or emailed to: gabcgina@att.net.

PART-TIME CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR: Resumé to: Cottage Hill Baptist Church, 1120 Pleasant Grove Road, Pleasant Grove, AL 35127, or call 205-744-8521. cottagehillbaptist.org.

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PIANIST: Clearview Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala., is seeking a pianist. Please contact the church office at 205-854-2027 or connie@clearviewbaptist.com.

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A WIRED Ministries participant takes part in service work in the Wiregrass area during WIRED week June 22–27.



Photo by Justin Robinson/Andrew Bradford

'Unite, serve & disciple'

WIRED Ministries helps with community-wide projects in Wiregrass area

By Julie Payne
The Alabama Baptist

With no full-time staff and a limited number of volunteers, the annual weeklong outreach event of WIRED Ministries shouldn't even be possible, noted WIRED's camp director Mark Anderson.

"But our Lord comes through every year," he said.

WIRED Ministries, which exists to "unite, serve and disciple" in the Wiregrass area, joins local churches with the area's nonprofits, service agencies and ministries for a week of community-wide ministry projects. "We operate as WIRED Ministries but call the week we do service projects together WIRED," explained Anderson, who attends Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Dothan.

The idea for WIRED formed in 2006 when a group of local student ministers were concerned about the "camp high" experiences students were having.

"They would (commit) to the commitments they made (at) camp for about a month" but then go back to the way they were living beforehand, Anderson noted.

"We realized that we were spending over \$150,000 in our small group each summer to go to camps and (on) missions trips but had no sustained ministry projects in our own community," he said.

Jerry Grandstaff, Columbia Baptist Association's director of missions, challenged the group of student ministers with the concept to hold a community-wide event for student ministries that would incorporate the association and community.

As a result of that challenge, the group looked at several ministry models, eventually developing WIRED using a combination of elements from both M-Fuge and World Changers.

"We use the lodging format of World Changers by getting area churches to host a group at their church for the week," Anderson said, add-

ing the M-Fuge format is reflected in WIRED's ministry team assignments and daily team schedules. "Our schedule is almost identical to M-Fuge — morning rally, work [at] ministry sites, free time and corporate worship at night," he noted.

WIRED typically lasts a full week in June, and this year's event took place June 22–27 with about 725 people and 28 churches participating. Of those churches, 24 were Southern Baptist, three were Methodist and one was nondenominational.

WIRED week kicks off with a morning celebration service each morning. Participants then go to their ministry project site and work from 8:45 a.m.–4 p.m. Following a period of free time in the late afternoon, all participants gather back together in the evening for worship and devotionals.

WIRED's ministry teams are organized into several categories: "children's ministry," which includes backyard Bible clubs held at apartment complexes and smaller rural churches; "social ministry," which allows the participating students to work with local nonprofit ministries such as clothing closets and soup kitchens; "construction," where light construction projects are done for those who need assistance; and "games and recreation," where WIRED participants can serve at the Boys and Girls Club in Dothan, among other locations.

Increase in participants

During WIRED's first year serving the Wiregrass area in 2008, about 15 churches and 225 people participated. By 2011, the number of participants had climbed to 925.

Anderson noted there is "no doubt" participants' lives have been changed through WIRED. "Students are dramatically changed," he noted. "I have had many of them, their parents and student ministers come up to me and tell me of the huge change in their lives because they went to WIRED."

Lloyd Blank, student pastor for Ridgecrest Baptist and a member of WIRED Ministries' board of directors, agreed, noting students have

developed a heart for local missions as a result of their participation in WIRED.

"We now have numerous students serving in different capacities every month as a direct result of their WIRED experience," he said. "They have been made aware of local area needs and many have taken responsibility to see that the needs are now being met."

Recipients of the ministry work also have been impacted through the help they receive. Anderson said, "It could be the widow woman [who] doesn't have anyone to help her do things around the house but is blessed to have a group from WIRED come ... and get things fixed." He also noted how "dozens of people who wouldn't have a wheelchair ramp" received one that week because of kids serving through WIRED.

WIRED is unique to the Wiregrass area, but Anderson noted it's the ministry's prayer that an event like this would happen in cities around the world.

"We would love for other cities and/or associations of churches to come watch WIRED in motion so that they can take what we do back to their community," he noted. "There would have to be a strong commitment from local student ministers, churches, business leaders and elected officials, but an event like WIRED could happen anywhere."

Grandstaff noted what a tremendous blessing WIRED has been to the community. "WIRED is truly a difference-maker ... (and) a beautiful picture of partnership and the value of cooperation. Under Mark Anderson's direction, leadership of our youth ministers and support of our churches, WIRED continues to accomplish all and even more than we originally dreamed."

Anderson said he believes WIRED Ministries is the closest thing he has seen to the early Church in Acts.

"We have seen that He can and will do great things when His people come together to glorify Him," he said. "We unite to serve our community so that they may see Him in a fresh light. Through all of this His power is revealed to us and many wonders are done in His name, people come to know Him as their Lord and Savior and Christians are made stronger because of their involvement. We are not a camp; we are a movement that wants God to show up and show off in a way that generations have never seen." ❏

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 10

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

TELL IT LIKE IT IS

Daniel 5:1-6, 16-17, 23c-28

In 1969, composers Ralph Carmichael and Kurt Kaiser published a folk musical with the title "Tell It Like It Is." "Pass It On" became a folk classic, sung around campfires and youth candlelight services. Another of the songs in this musical of God was titled "Conform," in which a student is berated verbally by other choir members when he (intentionally) sings a phrase too long. In some ways, Daniel is like this young man. His voice is heard while surrounded by a crowd of other royal advisers. Daniel is willing to tell it like it is.

Today Christians are tempted to conform to the status quo. We are so caught in the whirlpool of politically correct groupspeak that we are either focused on trivial matters or fearing what other liberties we might lose if we speak. The silence of believers in the public forum is, in large part, why religious liberty stands on the precipice, not only in Iraq, but also here. If we are unwilling to speak out and speak up, we should not be surprised if the events in Mosul will soon become the events in Mobile, Birmingham, Montgomery, Tuscaloosa, Huntsville, Auburn or Opp.

Be Certain (1-4)

Belshazzar knows how to throw a party. One thousand of his closest friends are invited to this gala event, in which the king has trophy utensils brought out for display. The gold and silver vessels are not his bounty from war but actually vestiges of Nebuchadnezzar's raid on the temple in Jerusalem. In his drunken stupor, the king raises his glass to toast the gods of gold and silver.

Ever the entertainer, he also pays homage to the gods of bronze, iron, wood and stone. He worships power and prestige; he worships fame and fortune. Without doubt, the king is an idolater.

Be Warned (5-6)

What happens next terrifies this wor-

shipper of false gods. He has a vision but much more than that. A hand appears, which writes strange words on the king's wall. So terrified is Belshazzar that his hips quiver and his knees knock together. This arrogant, inebriated ruler sees something neither he nor anyone else has ever seen before.

This section of Daniel is written in Aramaic; the Greek version, however, introduces readers to a familiar term: magi. The wise men, like Daniel and his compatriots, are trained in Babylonian wisdom literature. These are the men who are called to interpret the handwriting on the wall. The king is desperate to have the writing interpreted, so he promises fame and fortune to the man who can interpret this message.

Be Humble (16-17)

Daniel has no ambitions for another royal appointment, not even a position as coregent over the vast empire of Medo-Persia. Belshazzar's queen first suggests this Judean exile can do what the king's trusted advisers cannot. In her words, he "has the spirit of the holy gods in him" (5:11).

When brought before Belshazzar, the king offers Daniel a royal robe and a gold chain as well as a promotion. Daniel is not interested and tells the king as much. The Most High God (see Gen. 14:18-22) rules over the kingdom of men, and Nebuchadnezzar learns this the hard way (5:18-21). After this brief history lesson, Daniel confronts the king for his lack of humility. This wise Hebrew man demonstrates humility while chastising the king for his arrogance.

Be Honest (23c-28)

"Your life is in God's hands." Daniel's explanation to Belshazzar is honest and direct. "You have been weighed, you have been measured and you have been found wanting." These are more than a punch line in a movie ("A Knight's Tale"), the place where our younger readers may have first heard these words. They are God's judgment decree against an arrogant government and a prideful ruler. 📖

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

JOYFUL FAITH

1 Peter 4:12-19

Amy Carmichael was an Irish Christian whose faith story included serving the poor of Belfast and the abused of India. She served in India for 55 years without furlough, living a life of discipleship in love for others. She wrote a poem on the cost of discipleship that asked the poignant question: "No wound, no scar? Yet as the Master shall the servant be, And, pierced are the feet that follow Me; But thine are whole: can he have followed far Who has no wound nor scar?"

Rejoicing in the Midst of Suffering (12-13)

Peter assumes that suffering for being a Christian is part and parcel of discipleship. We shouldn't be "surprised" when we encounter suffering, thinking that this is strange. Peter's readers had been converted from a pagan culture and now they were living as a cultural minority. They are no longer "at home" in their own culture and it has brought them into experiences of hostility, not what they might have expected as being the purposes of God for their lives. Yet what is happening to them is right in line with the predictions of Jesus. These moments of suffering come in order to "test us." When we realize there is a purpose in what is happening in our lives we can either react with resentment toward God for allowing unpleasant experiences to take place in our lives or we can "rejoice." When we understand that we are actually sharing in Christ's suffering, not in the sense of ever adding to the atoning work of Christ but of knowing fellowship with Him in His pathway, then we can "be glad and shout for joy."

Identification With the Suffering of Christ (14)

Peter knows there is a work of grace that must be accomplished in our lives. The Spirit of God uses difficult occasions because times of pressure seem to be the

perfect condition for God to do a work of grace, a transforming interaction with God that occurs in the life of a Christian, a defining moment, a sanctifying process when He changes me to be more like Jesus who had an infinite ability to trust His Father. Faith in suffering is a vital part of our Christian life, our walk with Christ, our Christian development. When we come through it all with our faith not only not destroyed but increased, strengthened — a faith that has been tested and is well founded — we know to the core of our being we have a faith for living, for suffering and ultimately to arrive at our final destination — Glory.

Glorifying God in Our Lives (15-19)

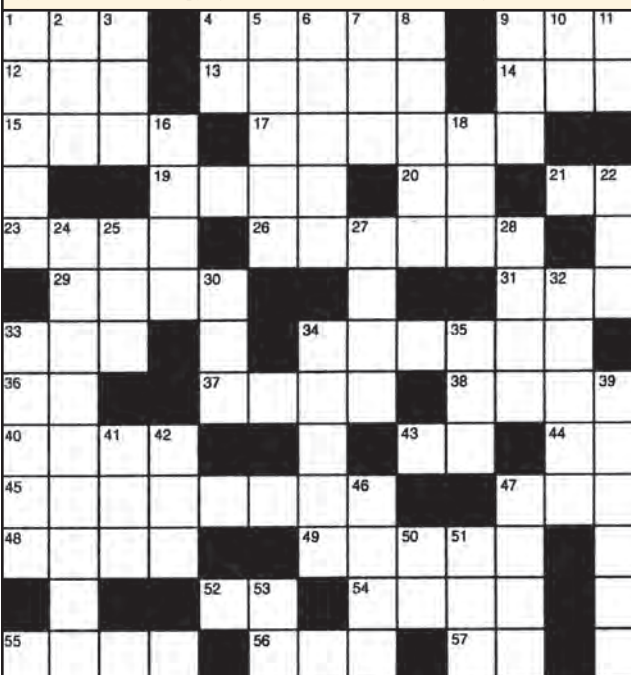
One thing we need to be careful about is that we are not suffering opposition from our culture because of wrongdoing. We should not be a murderer, a thief or a criminal. It seems so obvious and then Peter throws in the phrase "or even as a mischief-maker." Perhaps this was the area of concern that Peter really had in his mind. He uses a word in Greek that is unusual and unique, only found in this passage of Scripture. It seems to refer to someone who "meddles in something that does not concern them." Is he referring to some Christians who are not careful about their witness against a pagan society, critically denouncing the actions of the nonbeliever rather than using gentle persuasion and living a godly lifestyle?

One thing is clear and that is Peter's call to suffer for the correct reasons, bearing the name of Christ, living a life where our attitudes and action are imitating those of Jesus and thereby being salt within society and a light in the midst of the darkness. 📖

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Christian Crossword

By Janice Buhl Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

1. ___ shall not live by bread alone. (Matt. 4:4)
4. And the darkness He called ___. (Gen. 1:5)
9. My heart was ___ within me. (Ps. 39:3)
12. Mine ___ is as nothing before Thee. (Ps. 39:5)
13. Let us go and serve ___ gods. (Deut. 13:13)
14. There was no room for them in the ___. (Luke 2:7)
15. Lo, I have given thee ___ dung. (Ezek. 4:15)
17. The ___ also dwelt in Seir. (Deut. 2:12)
19. On this side Jordan may be ___. (Num. 32:32)
20. Grace ___ unto you. (Rev. 1:4)
21. Los Angeles. (abbr.)
23. Asa destroyed her ___, and burnt it. (1 Kings 15:13)
26. ___ unto me. (Ps. 55:2)
29. And a river went out of ___ to water the garden. (Gen. 2:10)
31. When ye pray, ___ not vain repetitions. (Matt. 6:7)
33. I will ___ unto thy days 15 years. (Isa. 38:5)
34. It ___ to him that was

36. The young men of Aven and of ___-beseth. (Ezek. 30:17)
37. Hast thou eaten of the ___? (Gen. 3:11)
38. So that my feet did not ___. (2 Sam. 22:37)
40. Praise Him for His mighty ___. (Ps. 150:2)
43. And he cast stones ___ David. (2 Sam. 16:6)
44. Thou shalt feed ___ people Israel. (2 Sam. 5:2)
45. Then led they Jesus from ___ unto the hall of judgment. (John 18:28)
47. Therefore shall he ___ in harvest. (Prov. 20:4)
48. Even Bethlehem, and ___ and Tekoa. (2 Chron. 11:6)
49. ___ went and dwelt in her father's house. (Gen. 38:11)
52. Let there ___ light. (Gen. 1:3)
54. ___ made him a great feast. (Luke 5:29)
55. Went up to ___, and fetched a compass to Karkaa. (Josh. 15:3)
56. The name of the wicked shall ___. (Prov. 10:7)
57. Short for Emily.

Down

1. Guel the son of ___. (Num. 13:15)
2. Hast thou not heard long ___? (2 Kings 19:25)
3. Behold, all things are become ___. (2 Cor. 5:17)
4. God is ___ respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34)
5. Whose name was ___ an Israelite. (2 Sam. 17:25)
6. Then Abraham gave up the ___. (Gen. 25:8)
7. Made he a woman, and brought ___ unto the man. (Gen. 2:22)
8. There is one ___ cut off from Israel. (Judg. 21:6)
9. Abraham lifted up ___ eyes. (Gen. 22:13)
10. Moses gave you ___ this side Jordan. (Josh. 1:14)
11. Tennessee. (abbr.)
16. Neither shall the ___ of thy foot have rest. (Deut. 28:65)
18. David sent out 10 young ___. (1 Sam. 25:5)
22. I ___ no ... bread. (Dan. 10:3)
24. King David ___ unto the Lord. (1 Chron. 18:11)
25. The ___ number of them is to be redeemed. (Num. 3:48)

27. Saul abode in Gibeah under a ___. (1 Sam. 22:6)
28. Their ears are ___ of hearing. (Acts 28:27)
30. He will ___ suffer. (Ps. 121:3)
32. And daubed it with ___ and with pitch. (Ex. 2:3)
33. And he came ___, and drew near. (2 Sam. 18:25)
34. Abraham ___ Isaac. (1 Chron. 1:34)
35. Established. (abbr.)
39. Goat and the ___. (Deut. 14:5)
41. Aunt. (Spanish)
42. Short for Samuel.
46. The ___ sea. (Josh. 15:5)
47. And they filled them up to the ___. (John 2:7)
50. To ___ a son. (Heb. 1:5)
51. Avenue. (abbr.)
53. Elmodam, son of ___. (Luke 3:28)





Photo courtesy of Fair Trade Services

Dove-Award winning Christian group MercyMe recently released 'Welcome to the New.' The album is based on 2 Corinthians 5:17 and new life in Christ. Pictured are (l to r): Barry Graul, Nathan Cochran, Bart Millard, Michael John Scheuchzner and Robby Shaffer.

Messages of grace, identity

Dove-Award winning MercyMe's album emphasizes new life in Christ

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

For the Dove-Award winning group MercyMe, "Welcome to the New" is more than just the title of their latest album.

The album provides a collection of songs that celebrate new life in Christ and the theme is based on 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come."

Lead singer Bart Millard said, "From the beginning to end the whole premise of this record is identity in Christ."

Unconditional love

"As people are listening to these songs our desire is that the message of the gospel resonates with people and helps them real-

ize that God loves them unconditionally and is calling them to pursue a personal relationship with Him. During concerts we emphasize that salvation is not based on works but what Christ has already done on the cross.

"There is nothing anyone can do to make God love them more than He already does. All you have to do is accept His invitation and respond by resting in the finished work of the cross.

New creation

"It's a shame to meet people who refuse to respond to the message of the cross, but it's just as tragic to meet people who claim to know Jesus but still feel like they are in bondage. From the moment you receive Christ you are a brand new creation. When your identity is found in Christ there is freedom. For all past, present and future sins,

Christ already says redeemed."

Through their message and music, band members desire to connect audiences to the life-changing love of Christ.

"God has really placed on our hearts the importance of sharing messages about grace and identity," Millard said. "It's the simplicity of the gospel and who you are in Christ — realizing why you can show grace to other people because grace has been shown to you."

This summer, MercyMe toured across the country to promote the album and shared stories behind the songs.

Following their "Welcome to the New" tour MercyMe plans to limit their concert schedule by performing only 50 dates throughout the year.

"While addressing the subject of identity, the Lord has been reminding me that my identity is not wrapped up in MercyMe," Millard said. "Being in the group is one of the ways that the Lord has given me a platform to speak truth into people's lives and present the gospel but it is not the only way to get the message out.

"During this season we have recognized

the importance of cutting back our touring schedule so we can focus on being better husbands and fathers. However, God is still giving us opportunities to be a voice and share the gospel through music."

While embracing and embarking on a new season in life Millard recently accepted a position at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Ariz., where he will serve as the director of a new program launching this fall at the Center for Worship Arts.

"A lot of musicians either go to college as a backup plan or skip it all together," Millard noted. "I mentioned the idea of creating a program that would encourage musicians to earn a bach-

elor's degree and come out not only more equipped from a business standpoint but would also allow them to become more equipped by who they are in Christ.

"The goal is to raise up a generation of students and help them learn the Christian music industry inside and out before they become a full-time worship leader or recording artist. Basically I'll be sharing everything that I learned the hard way over the past 20 years." ❧



"From the moment you receive Christ you are a brand new creation. When your identity is found in Christ there is freedom."

Bart Millard
lead singer, MercyMe



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Virginia street-walking ministry reaches out to prostitutes in Richmond area

Women who accept money for sex, it turns out, rarely refuse invitations to pray.

“Prostitutes always say ‘OK’” when asked to be prayed over, said Travis Collins, former pastor of Bon Air Baptist Church, Richmond, Va. “But they would pray with one eye open to see if anyone was going to drive up” to proposition them.

Collins learned that and much more about prostitution through a street-walking ministry created four years ago to reach out to prostitutes and others living and working the streets of Richmond.

Volunteers minister to prostitutes between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. along a stretch of troubled Jefferson Davis Highway in Richmond.

The ministry has volunteers initiating conversations with prostitutes the third Friday night of every month and has grown to include a daytime component called Wendy’s on Wednesdays. Prostitutes and others can meet with ministry members in the fast food restaurant for prayer, companionship and referrals to social services available to them.

“The ultimate goal would be that we find someone who has been trafficked,” Collins said, adding that probably any woman involved in the sex trade falls into that category.

“I’m not sure we ever met anyone who was there because it was their goal in life to be there. But we were always after those who had been trafficked — those who were there against their will.”

The outreach began in 2010 as the brainchild of Valerie Carter, then a min-

ister at Bon Air Baptist and currently executive director of Woman’s Missionary Union of Virginia.

In the beginning volunteers were drawn just from Bon Air, but members of other local churches came forward as word of the project spread throughout the city.

Even then, the teams have remained small, rarely exceeding a half dozen each of the Friday nights. It certainly isn’t an outreach for everyone.

“This isn’t a ministry in which we recruit volunteers,”

Carter said. Those attracted to the effort feel drawn to it.

“One woman from a Baptist church came one night to try it out. Afterwards she said, ‘God is calling me to do this — God is calling me to be the grandmother and do the hugging.’”

The hours and location have sent some volunteers away after an initial stab at it, while others take issue with organizers’ aversion to measuring or reporting ministry outcomes or employment strategies.

“It’s not that kind of ministry. It’s designed to be fluid so people can come in and out — it can be disconcerting for people who are used to stable paradigms,” Carter said.

What it also isn’t, she added, is a ministry to deliver sermons to prostitutes and others walking the streets at night.

Love of Christ

“We don’t preach and we don’t condemn,” she said. “Our goal is to just show them that God’s love is unconditional and remind them that God loves them, pray for them, hear their stories.”

The women also are given Christian resources for how to get out of their situations if they want that, Carter said.

Those resources include hygiene kits — which do not include condoms — and information on how to contact Gray Haven, a ministry founded to help rescue people from the world of prostitution.

To distribute those materials and initiate encounters, volunteers break into two-person teams of either two women each or one man and one woman.

The pairs speak to and pray with anyone open to it. They also regularly check in with police.

Success stories

Collins has witnessed several victories. One was meeting a woman in her 20s who said she was the daughter of a pastor. Another turned out to be the daughter of one of the volunteer’s friends.

“She got into the car with them and they drove her home,” Carter said.

At no time did the group feel it was too dangerous to be out there.

“There were never any incidents, never a time when any of us felt that we shouldn’t have come that night.”

But helping some of the women feel safer was part of the inspiration behind Wendy’s on Wednesdays. It also was inspired by discussions with Fresh Expressions, a ministry that helps develop new ways of Christian community. Collins is now Fresh Expressions’ Virginia regional coordinator and director of missions advancement for the Virginia Baptist Mission Board.

Carter secured permission from a Wendy’s on Jefferson Davis Highway to hold afternoon meetings with prostitutes there. With management’s approval, Carter and other volunteers rearrange tables and put up signs.

“At first there were only two folks who met us,” Carter said. “One was a guy in drag and the other a woman who had been a prostitute for 20 years.”

Relationships also have been established with other nearby businesses, including a laundromat where prostitutes wash their clothes.

The idea is to eventually build up a community to which prostitutes can feel a sense of belonging.

“One of the Fresh Expressions com-

ponents is to listen to the people in the community to determine how to be church among them,” Carter said. “The approach is to hear the hearts of those in the community and to let something natural develop.”

The context for both the street-walking ministry and Wendy’s on Wednesdays is human trafficking, Carter said.

The term is generally defined as the forced movement of people for the purpose of forced labor or sexual exploitation. Carter believes most of the women working Richmond’s streets fit into that category in some way.

“Most prostitutes are addicted to drugs, so they do this for money,” she said, adding that few actually get to keep the money they earn as prostitutes.

“They are victims of a dominant male in their lives” and “most are abused physically, sexually and mentally.”

Growing ministries

In that sense, the Richmond ministry is one of a growing number on the state, national and global levels dedicated to combating human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Major pushes exist outside the faith-based realm as well. Recent Super Bowls have included anti-sex trafficking campaigns.

Denominations also are becoming more involved. A variety of Baptist organizations offer materials to help churches and ministries address human trafficking, and a number of missions personnel are dedicated to the cause nationally and globally.

One challenge facing the Richmond ministry now is that there are a declining number of prostitutes walking the streets — and not because they’ve gotten out of that life.

“I recently told a detective that sometimes we never see a woman on the street,” Carter recalled. “And he said it’s all online now and doesn’t even focus on the street.”

That may force the street-walking ministry to become something else altogether. And that’s OK, Carter said.

“The cool thing about this ministry is that we can’t control it.” (ABP)

“We don’t preach and we don’t condemn. Our goal is to just show them that God’s love is unconditional and remind them that God loves them, pray for them, hear their stories.”

**Valerie Carter
executive director, Woman’s
Missionary Union of Virginia**