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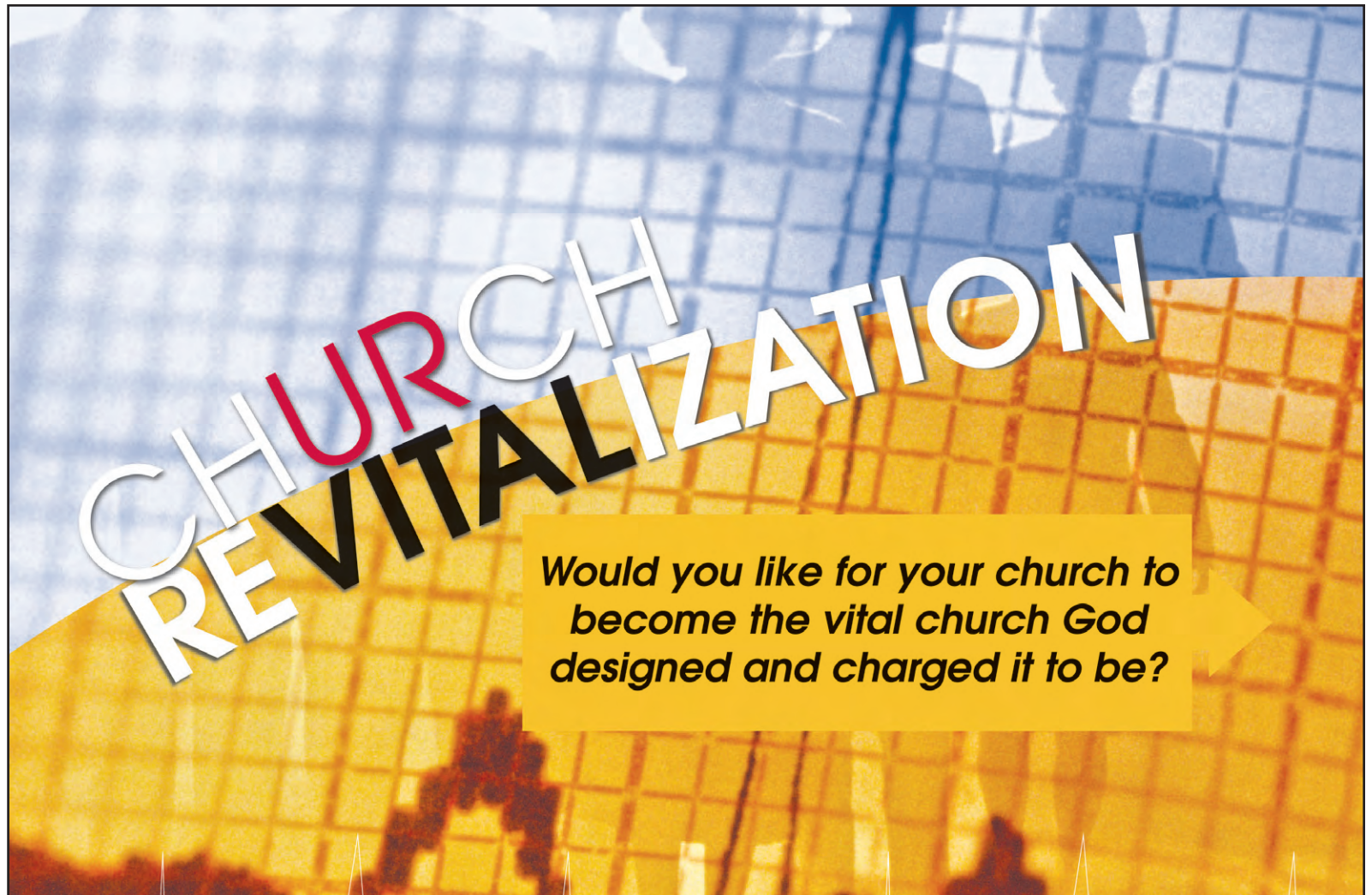


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Graphic courtesy of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

SBOM helps churches self-evaluate with revitalization coaching

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Stepping back to self-evaluate may not be a fun experience, and many people rarely, if ever, take the time to do it. Once-a-year evaluations in the workplace help with this process on the professional side, and sometimes contemplating New Year's resolutions causes people to evaluate themselves personally.

But how many people truly practice routine self-evaluations and then act on the findings? What about in church life?

How can pastors and other church leaders make sure they are staying in tune with the health and effectiveness of the congregation they have been

tasked to lead while also trying to keep up with all that ministry involves?

The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) has found a successful way to come alongside churches in this effort — church revitalization coaching.

Growing effort

The effort, launched a little more than a year ago, has already grown so much that more than 50 coaches have been trained, which means the SBOM can coach more than 100 churches at a time. By the end of September, 60 coaches will be credentialed for service allowing the SBOM to assist up to 120 churches at a time.

"The commitment on the part of the pastor and the church revitalization coach is one year," said state missionary Dale Huff, who oversees the effort. "Over a five-year period of time we could conceivably work with more than 600 churches. That can make a difference in the lives of those churches."

State missionary Sammy Gilbreath, who helped Huff develop the

coaching strategy, agreed.

"It is working really well, and more and more churches are interested," he said.

"We started out slow and methodical and built our system carefully so we could provide a quality product to our churches," he added. "Now we have a good system in place and are excited about how we can help our churches."

Huff said the process starts simply with a phone call or email.

"Call our office of LeaderCare

and church administration and request a church revitalization coach," he said. "A coach will be assigned to you and will guide you through the selection process of one of many identified strategies available to you."

The coaching staff is made up of state missionaries, pastors, retired pastors, ministers of education and directors of missions.

"Every coach goes through a two-day training led by recognized

(See 'Pastors,' page 13)

Is your church a candidate?

Should you consider church revitalization coaching through the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions? If you answer no to four or more of the following questions, you might be a candidate.

- ▶ In the past five years, have baptisms increased?
- ▶ Did your church engage

in three or more outreach events this past year?

- ▶ Is your Sunday School attendance growing?
- ▶ As pastor, is your vision for the church expanding?
- ▶ Is your worship attendance increasing?
- ▶ Is your missions giving increasing?

(See 'Taking,' page 13)

COMMENT

Allegations Don't Always Equal Facts

It was more than 20 years ago. The crisis in the Roman Catholic Church over sex abuse of children by priests had not surfaced and there wasn't a string of stories about Baptist staff members abusing children either.

That is why the charge captured such public attention. A Baptist pastor in a suburban church outside a metropolitan area was arrested and charged with child sexual abuse. According to the county district attorney the pastor had abused a child who attended the church's day-care ministry. The district attorney said the child had described what happened to her and identified who did it.

The charges against the Baptist pastor made statewide news in those days. The metropolitan-paper-ran a front-page story along with a less than flattering picture of the pastor being arrested. The story was on the TV news. The photographers had been tipped off about the arrest and were waiting at the church the morning the police arrived to make the arrest.

Public opinion

Needless to say the Baptist community was shocked. The day-care leaders said the abuse could not have happened. Children were not left alone in private places where such things could take place, they said. The pastor vehemently denied the charge and fellow pastors who knew him could not believe it could be true. Some of us who gathered at the church one Monday morning to pray for the child, the pastor, the church, the name of Baptist and more were scoffed at by news media.

In the court of public opinion the pastor was guilty. The church was picketed by various groups on Sunday mornings. Parents removed their children from the day care. Many people left the church but a core group stood by the pastor through the whole process.

It took more than two years for the case to work its way through the judicial process. In the end, the pastor was exonerated of all charges. The county attorney was officially reprimanded for the way he handled the case. It seems he had political ambitions that caused him to mishandle the case from the beginning including the way he led the child to give the answers he wanted.

But the damage was done. The church never



THOUGHTS
By Bob Terry

got over the negative publicity. The pastor's ministry was ruined in the area. Too many people had assumed if allegations were made, the one charged had to be guilty. After all, where there is smoke there is fire, some might say. The idea of innocent until proven guilty might work in the courtroom, but it doesn't seem to work on the street corner.

Free speech is one of the cherished liberties Americans enjoy. Balancing that liberty with responsibility for what is said is not always so highly valued. Too often it seems someone practices the right to say something without considering the results it might have on another.

Few societies are more litigious than present-day America. One can bring lawsuits ad nauseum. Sometimes they are referred to as nuisance lawsuits. Still if a claim is made, some assume it is true.

And as much as we trust and support our legal system, mistakes are occasionally made there as well.

That is why it is important to remember that allegations or claims do not equal facts. When someone says something about someone else, that does not make it true. When one reads a lawsuit claiming someone acted in a particular way that does not make it true. Even when

someone is charged with a crime, that person is entitled to reasonable doubt until the judicial process has been completed.

An old proverb declares patience is a virtue. It certainly is where allegations are concerned.

Time will show the veracity of allegations. The allegations may be proven true. They could be proven false. Time might even uncover misguided motives of the one making the charge as it did about the county district attorney in the story above. Either way, practicing patience is better than leaping to fallacious conclusions.

Occasionally people speak in anger or hurt. Allegations fly based on vision clouded by emotion or pain. Only when emotions cool and reason returns can the possible errors of judgment be recognized. Unfortunately like with my pastor friend in the story, it is too late. The damage has been done to someone or to some ministry.

Recent Baptist history reminds us that allegations do not always equal facts. Baptists have passed through a season when allegations were loosely and widely thrown in a lot of directions. Many proved true and changes were made. Some proved unfounded but the harm done by the charges was irreversible. People lost their ministries because some people believed the lies told about them.

As Christians we should never forget the account of Genesis 3 where Satan made false accusations about God. The Bible recounts how Satan accused

God of not telling Adam and Eve the truth, of not having their best interest at heart. The first couple believed the allegations and disobeyed God's command with disastrous results.

God's love for all

But the charges were false. Over the years God demonstrated His love for Adam and Eve and all humankind. Ultimately that love led Jesus to Calvary's cross where He paid the price for the sins of the world. Satan's allegations could not have been farther from the truth.

How unwise the first couple was to believe the allegations made by Satan. And how unwise we sometimes are when we believe the charges and claims made against others. We all would do well to remember that allegations don't always equal facts no matter who makes them.

"Over the years God demonstrated His love for Adam and Eve and all humankind. Ultimately that love led Jesus to Calvary's cross where He paid the price for the sins of the world. Satan's allegations could not have been farther from the truth."

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

CROSSWORD PUZZLES

I am an avid fan of your crossword puzzles. I have been doing them for three or four years. I would like to say — the puzzle in the Aug. 7 issue

by Janice Buhl is the absolute best one I've seen.

The words were pretty much all scriptural and there were absolutely no mistakes. Please give her my

congratulations.

Jack Boggan
Montevallo, Ala. 🇺🇸





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

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Be wise



7 warnings for church leaders who use social media

By Thom S. Rainer
Columnist, Baptist Press

Those of you who read my blog (thomrainer.com) or listen to my podcasts know I am a strong proponent of social media. I have seen many good things take place on the various platforms available. I have seen the gospel clearly shared and embraced on social media.

But this social media is a two-edged sword. It can be used for good or great harm. And it can harm the ministries of those in Christian leadership. So whether your platform is a blog, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google Plus or many others please note these seven warnings.

Retrievable information

1. Consider anything you say on social media to be permanent. Yes you can delete or scrub regretful things you have said on social media but, more times than not, the information can still be retrieved. And countless people take screen shots the moment they see something unwisely posted.

2. You can be misunderstood often on social media. The readers or viewers usually

cannot see your body language. They do not know your humor or sarcasm. If you have any question about something you will post, do not post it.

3. Emoticons are not sufficient to soften what you have posted. In fact, emoticons are so ubiquitous now that many readers ignore them.

4. Attacks on other people's character or positions are considered cowardly by many. The reader or the viewer typically sees the person writing the information as one who hides behind a keyboard or microphone. They wonder if the writer would have the courage to say the same things in person.

5. Too many Christian leaders are posting on social media in the heat of emotional moments. If you are angry or otherwise agitated take a 24-hour break from social media. If not you may regret it later.

6. Churches and other Christian organizations are checking the social media pages of Christian leaders. It has become more commonplace for churches and Christian organizations to do a social media background check of potential candidates. I recently conversed with a pastor who was fired from

his church because of something he posted on Facebook. Remember, at the risk of being redundant, most of the words or photos or videos you have posted are permanently recorded.

Others are watching

7. The non-Christian world is watching Christians attack each other on social media. Our Christian witness is compromised again and again by our social media actions. When we say or write scathing attacks on others, non-believers see us as hypocritical, inconsistent and unworthy of emulating.

You might be surprised how many people are watching you on social media.

And you might be surprised how many people have been hurt and angered by Christian leaders on social media. You might also be surprised how many gospel-sharing opportunities have been forfeited by unwise things posted on social media.

Be wise. Be gracious. Be kind. And be Christ-like.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Thom S. Rainer is president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. (BP)

Judson College launches new partnership with Lovelady Center

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

The decision process moved along quickly, because it "just made sense," said Scott Bullard, vice president and aca-

demic dean of Judson College.

With only about two months between the time Judson officials heard Tennessee Temple University would no longer be able to sponsor The Lovelady Center's

2-year-old, onsite, college-level educational program, a plan was put in place and the agreement was signed Aug. 14.

"It is astonishing how Judson's mission parallels with the mission of The Lovelady Center," Bullard noted. "We emphasize that we are a place of Christ for women, and they emphasize the same thing."

"We are ready to offer core classes (starting in September) and see where it goes," he said. "We want to put these women in positions to succeed in their faith

journey and in their classes."

The existing directors of the program, Bob Hall and Melissa Chism, will continue in their roles, and Judson plans to retain most, if not all, of the adjunct faculty while also adding new members.

Pell Grants fund the students' fees for the classes. Fees cover the costs of the program for Judson.

Chism said women choosing to participate in the courses will be on track for an associate's degree and can finish it online from wherever they eventually end up.

"So many never believed they could do this, and it is such a blessing to watch them succeed," she said.

Lovelady Center founder Brenda Spahn added, "When I heard Judson was coming in, I was so excited because my grandmother went there. Judson's going to make our women 'ladies.'" ❧

Scott Bullard of Judson College in Marion signs an educational partnership agreement with Melinda McGahee of The Lovelady Center in Birmingham on Aug. 14.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Cooperative Program giving

Proposed budget for 2015 less than current year

For the sixth consecutive year the 2015 annual budget of the Alabama Baptist State Convention will be lower than the previous year. That was the result of action taken by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) on Aug. 15 when they adopted a \$40.5 million budget for the coming year. The budget proposal now goes to the Nov. 11–12 annual meeting of the convention for final action.

Bobby DuBois, SBOM associate executive director, explained that in 2008 the annual budget was \$46 million. The following year Alabama Baptists kept the same budget goal. But beginning in 2010 the budget goal has been reduced each year.

The 2015 proposed budget is \$500,000 below this year's budget.

DuBois explained that will mean the SBOM will operate on \$150,000 less than the current year. The impact of the falling funds is that all program budgets have been reduced, he said. Also no salary adjustments for convention employees will be provided.

DuBois said since 2008 convention employees have had only two salary adjustments, each a 2 percent increase.

The SBOM also has reduced the number of employees from a high of 119 down to 78 and more reductions are anticipated.

'Mission critical'

The proposed budget does provide support for 10 missionaries serving in Alabama formerly supported, in part, by the North American Mission Board (NAMB). SBOM Executive Director Rick Lance explained these are 10 "mission critical" missionaries serving as church planters, language missionaries, community missionaries and other assignments. Before NAMB refocused its efforts primarily toward underserved parts of the United States, it provided 48 percent of the support for these positions.

Lance shared reports from the SBC Executive Committee indicating that Alabama Baptists provide almost 10 percent of the total amount given to Southern Baptist ministries through the Cooperative Program.

"We are not the largest state nor are we the wealthiest state but Alabama Baptists continued to show their support for Cooperative Program giving," he said. (TAB)

ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION

2015 Cooperative Program Budget

(Proposed Aug. 15, 2014)

	BASE BUDGET
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION MINISTRIES	17,623,720
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS MINISTRIES	
<i>EVANGELISM/DISCIPLESHIP (34 full-time employees)</i>	
Evangelism	108,275
Sunday School and Discipleship	311,710
Collegiate and Student Ministries	97,632
Evangelism/Discipleship Salaries/Housing	1,679,365
Evangelism/Discipleship Travel/Field Services	166,399
<i>LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (11 full-time employees)</i>	
LeaderCare/Church Administration	172,308
Leadership/Church Health	132,252
Worship Leadership/Church Music	87,217
Leadership Development Salaries/Housing	530,005
Leadership Development Travel/Field Services	52,515
<i>MISSIONS MOBILIZATION (14 full-time employees)</i>	
Associational Missions & Church Planting	
Global Missions	
Missions Mobilization Salaries/Housing	365,958
Missions Mobilization Travel/Field Services	68,167
<i>MISSIONS SUPPORT (29 full-time employees)</i>	
Executive Director	
A. Director's Office	25,151
B. Disaster Relief	975
C. Supplemental Aid	975
D. Strategic Initiatives	
E. Mission/Dignity (Formerly: Adopt an Annuitant)	
F. Partnerships	975
Financial and Facility Services	
Director's Office	430,061
Accounting & Human Resources	2,162,075
Church Compensation Services	14,743
Facility Services	1,436,650
Cooperative Program and Stewardship Development	
Communications and Technology Services	
Missions Support Salaries/Housing	956,329
Missions Support Travel/Field Services	160,930
Church Retirement Plan (CHRP)	
Sub-total for State Board of Missions Ministries	8,960,666
STATE CONVENTION ENTITY MINISTRIES	
Christian Higher Education Ministries	
A. A. Earl Potts Scholarship	113,158
B. Board of Aid to Students	257,286
C. Judson College	948,581
D. Samford University	4,351,231
E. University of Mobile	2,415,183
Other Entities and Commissions Ministries	
A. Children's Homes & Family Ministries	256,795
B. Shocco Springs	551,755
C. The Alabama Baptist	559,581
D. The Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers	188,452
E. The Baptist Foundation of Alabama	
F. The Christian Life Commission	24,781
G. The Education Commission	3,270
H. The Historical Commission	129,372
Auxiliaries and Other Ministries	
A. ALCAP	66,171
B. Woman's Missionary Union	
Sub-total for Convention Entity Ministries	9,865,615
SHARED MINISTRIES	
North American Missions in Alabama (3.3%)	1,300,000
Cooperative Program Promotion (2.6%)	1,102,279
GuideStone Financial Services (1.9%)	749,927
GuideStone Mission Dignity (.002%)	8,778
Woman's Missionary Union (1.3%)	512,112
The Baptist Foundation of Alabama (.9%)	376,904
Sub-total for Shared Ministries (10%)	4,050,000
TOTAL BUDGET AND SPECIAL OFFERING GOALS	40,500,000

Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Bernice Yarbrough Martin



MARTIN

Round Island Baptist Church, Athens
Limestone Baptist Association

FAVORITE VERSE: 2 Chronicles 7:14

FAVORITE HYMN: "Jesus Loves Me"

HOBBIES: Keeping scrapbook items; writing notes to and calling people

FAMILY STATUS: Widow for 48 years after 30 years of marriage to William Marvin "Jack" Martin; children: Frances Pressell, Linda Williams, Thomas Granville Martin and Larry Martin; 11 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; seven great-great-grandchildren; now deceased, two children — Elizabeth Faye Martin and William Morris Martin — and one grandchild

Bernice Yarbrough Martin, 98, of Athens, has been a worker in her church. She assisted teachers in Sunday School and Training Union, helped in Vacation Bible School, served on a pastor search committee and was a nursery worker. She also was the church custodian for 35 years, retiring at the age of 86. She was a worker outside the church as well. Until she was 79, Martin was a babysitter, a service she provided for about 40 years. And until she was 79, she served with Council on Aging, keeping house and preparing meals for some of its clients.

told them I'm not a teacher, but I would help.

Q: What does the ministry work demand?

A: Just being there. I loved it and I just gave over to do it.

Q: What do you get from the ministry work?

A: I learned more about how to live a Christian life (by) watching others.

Q: How do family members support you?

A: They prayed for me. I appreciated that and I still need the prayers.

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

A: Writing notes and praying for people.

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

A: I hope that what little I can do will help the people I pray for and write to. I ask people to pray for me.

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

A: They just asked me if I felt I would want to do it. I

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

A: He saved my soul. I'm hoping I have lived a good, Christian life. 🙏

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

Consumed by depression

Comedian Williams' suicide sparks conversation on psychiatric illness

That a "universally beloved" entertainer such as Robin Williams could commit suicide "speaks to the power of psychiatric illness," mental health experts say.

Williams, who died Aug. 11 at age 63, had some of the risk factors for suicide: He was known to have bipolar disorder, depression and drug abuse problems, said Julie Cerel, a psychologist and board chair of the American Association of Suicidology. He also was recently diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease.

People who are severely depressed can't see past their failures, even if they've been as successful as Williams.

"With depression, people just forget," said Cerel, who also is an associate professor at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. "They get so consumed by the depression and by the feelings of not being worthy that they forget all the wonderful things in their lives."

They feel like a burden on their family and that the world would be better off without them.

"Having depression and being in a suicidal state twists reality. It doesn't matter if someone has a wife or is well-loved," Cerel said.

Williams was certainly beloved, as shown by the outpouring of grief and sympathy on social media outlets.

Ken Duckworth, medical director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, agreed the impact is "shocking" when it involves a "universally loved character" such as Williams.

Duckworth caught the news while watching TV with his children. "They all said, 'Nooo, not Robin Williams.'" It's hard to hear that successful people like Williams, who was a genius of comedy, could also have this vulnerability, Duckworth said.

"It speaks to the need for better treatments and the need for society to be more welcoming to people who have these conditions," he said.

About 90 percent of people who commit suicide have some kind of psychiatric illness that's typically untreated or undertreated, he said.

Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Executive Committee, lost his daughter, Melissa, to suicide in November 2009.

Support groups

Page said in an interview on the topic of suicide, "Desperately hurting people take their own lives every day throughout the world, yet the Church is not on top of the epidemic and often seems ill-equipped to address it biblically and effectively."

As an SBC leader, Page said, "We're encouraging churches to provide ministries, like support groups, to be there for people. But also in a general sense, to be more open and honest about the issues that are



commons.wikimedia photo

Comedian Robin Williams (left) visits with Lt. General John F. Campbell after the USO Holiday Tour show in Afghanistan on Dec. 15, 2010.

out there. ... So we encourage people to be the body of Christ. And that means openness to those who are strong, those who are weak, those who are hurting and those who are not. The truth is, we all hurt at some time or another."

Not an objective illness

And as Page notes in his book "Melissa: A Father's Lessons from a Daughter's Suicide," suicide affects all types of people, in all types of positions, in all walks of life.

That someone as successful as Williams could kill himself shows that suicide is "not about objective markers of happiness and success," said Dost Ongur, an associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and chief of the psychotic disorders division at McLean Hospital outside of Boston.

White, middle-aged men with medical problems are at the highest risk, he said. Ongur said "this idea of control and virility and being able to deal with the world in a certain way — as that starts to slip away, there's often a sense of loss of control and threat to one's manhood, and that seems to be associated with higher rates of suicide."

Advocates for people with mental illness say they hope Williams' death will motivate more people

to get help for depression and spur the nation to treat suicide as a public health crisis. Suicide claims more than 38,000 American lives each year — more than the number killed by car accidents, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — and the rate hasn't budged in decades, said Jeffrey Lieberman, professor and chairman of psychiatry at New York's Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Williams could put a human face on a problem that often gets little attention, Lieberman said. "He was such a charismatic and beloved figure, that if his death can galvanize our society to act instead of just grieve, it will be a fitting memorial to him." (RNS, TAB)

"Be the body of Christ ... to those who are strong, those who are weak, those who are hurting and those who are not."

Frank Page
SBC Executive Committee
president

Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

Campbellsville seeks to renegotiate with Ky. Baptists

CAMPBELLSVILLE, Ky. — Campbellsville University has proposed renegotiating its affiliation with the Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC) to phase out nearly \$1 million a year in cooperative funding in exchange for more flexibility in trustee appointments and academic freedom.

Trustees of the 3,600-student school in Campbellsville, Ky., approved bylaw changes July 15 intended "to protect the mission of the university and to avoid both undue influence and the imposition of theological and doctrinal control," according to an open letter to Kentucky Baptists issued the following day.

Board chairman Joseph Owens and President Michael Carter signed a joint letter July 16 proposing talks to replace an affiliation defined by a covenant agreement signed in 1986 with a new "partners in ministry" relationship that allows trustees to elect their own successors without convention approval. The proposal calls for phasing out direct Cooperative Program funding from the KBC over a four-year period.

They said Campbellsville would remain "Christ-centered, Baptist-related and church-connected," maintaining a board of trustees that is 100 percent Baptist and continuing a church relations council that seeks input from pastors, church staff and lay leaders mostly in Baptist churches.

After Tuesday's vote, KBC President Chip Hutcheson issued a statement comparing the university's statement to "the husband who wants to divorce his wife but still offers to live with her."

Hutcheson said concerns voiced by the university over "undue influence" or "theological and doctrinal control" are unfounded.

"The KBC has no influence or control over the university except that of approving trustees the university selects," Hutcheson said. "Kentucky Baptists have always been a diverse people with a 'big tent' mentality. That hasn't changed. We had hoped Campbellsville would remain united in covenant with our family."

CP year-to-date contributions exceed \$153 million

NASHVILLE — Year-to-date contributions to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) missions and ministries received by the SBC Executive Committee (EC) have exceeded \$153 million according to a news release from EC President and Chief Executive Officer Frank Page.

The \$153,914,489.52 received for 10 months of the fiscal year, Oct. 1 through July 31, for distribution through the SBC's Cooperative Program (CP) Allocation Budget represents 96.45 percent of the \$159,583,333.33 year-to-date budgeted CP projections to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America.

The year-to-date total includes money received by the close of the last business day of July.

July's total includes gifts from 39 of the SBC's 42 cooperating state Baptist conventions as well as contributions from churches and individuals for distribution according to the 2013-14 SBC CP Allocation Budget.

LifeWay removes Driscoll's books from website, stores

SEATTLE — LifeWay Christian Resources has pulled Pastor Mark Driscoll's books from its website and 186 stores.

Leaders of the church planting network Acts 29 recently removed Driscoll and his churches from the group he helped found and asked that he "step down from ministry for an extended time and seek help."

Driscoll has been an influential but edgy pastor within conservative evangelical circles for several years. Mars Hill Church, Seattle, where he serves as pastor attracts some 14,000 people at 15 locations across five states. He has been provocative, occasionally profane and has faced allegations of plagiarism and inflating book sales.

Driscoll recently admitted to and apologized for crude comments he made about feminism, homosexuality and "sensitive emasculated" men on an online discussion forum under the pseudonym "William Wallace II." ❧

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

► The Gospel Singing Outreach of **Southcrest Church, Bessemer**, will host Stanley & Company and Southern Heritage on Sept. 5, 7 p.m. For information call the church office at 205-425-4991. Scott Bush is pastor. ► **Sparks Gap Church, Bessemer**, will hold a regular fifth Sunday singing Aug. 31, 1:30 p.m. with special singers The Campbells. Everyone is invited. Johnny Thacker is pastor.

CHILTON

► **Shiloh Church, Clanton**, will hold revival Aug. 24-27. Services will be at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Sunday and at 6:30 p.m. Monday-Wednesday. Speakers will be Bert Tippet on Sunday (both services); Daniel Wilson on Monday; Evie Megginson on Tuesday; and Robert Griffin on Wednesday. There will be special music for each service. Everyone is invited to attend. Ernest Fike is pastor. ► **West End Church, Clanton**, will hold One Day Christian Life Revival with evangelist Roger Willmore on Aug. 24. Services will be at 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Daniel Wilson is pastor.

COFFEE

► **First Church, Enterprise**, will hold the Ladies Power Lunch on Aug. 28, noon-1 p.m.

Amy Smith, of Montgomery, will speak. Lunch is open to the community. For information on lunch cost or to RSVP by Aug. 25, call Michele Drew at 334-393-LOVE. Child care is available upon RSVP. Sonny Moore is pastor.

EAST CULLMAN

► **East Side Church, Cullman**, will sponsor Squire Parsons' Alabama Homecoming concert Aug. 23, 7 p.m. at the Cullman Civic Center featuring a concert by Parsons and several numbers accompanied by a southern gospel choir assembled from across Alabama. For information call 256-734-6144. Ken Allen is pastor of East Side.

ETOWAH

► **First Church, Hokes Bluff**, will hold a men's conference Aug. 23, 7:30 a.m.-noon featuring John Croyle, founder of Big Oak Ranch, and Lee Ozmint, Glencoe High School football coach. The conference will include breakfast, worship, speakers and break out sessions. For cost and more information call the church at 256-492-4679. Eric House is pastor.

GENEVA

► **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will host The 39er's

C.L.U.B. (Christians Living Under the Blood!) nondenominational luncheon Sept. 9, 11 a.m. Dave Hingson, pastor of El Bethel Church, Chancellor, will speak. For reservations call 334-684-9617 by Sept. 2. Mike Shirah is pastor.

NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Russ Quinn** is the new pastor of **Enon Church, Morris**. He holds a doctorate of philosophy in New Testament Studies from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., a master of divinity from Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham and a bachelor of arts in Greek/religion and bachelor of science in psychology from Union University in Jackson, Tenn. He previously served as pastor of teaching and missions advancement at Bellevue Church, Memphis, Tenn.; lead pastor of the Spencer County Campus of Highview Church, Louisville, Ky.; and college and media minister for Gardendale First Church. He and his wife, Laura, have five children.

PLEASANT GROVE

► **Reno Church, McCalla**, will hold a fifth Sunday singing Aug. 31, 6 p.m. with The Prestige Quartet and The Reno Quartet. Food and fellowship will follow. Roasco Kornegay is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Kramer Mize** is the new pastor of **Fleetwood Church, Peterson**. He holds a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Alabama and will graduate in December with a master of divinity from New Orleans Seminary. He previously served as pastor of Woodland Park Church, Tuscaloosa. His wife is Elizabeth.



MIZE

WEST CULLMAN

► **Northside Church, Cullman**, will celebrate its 75th anniversary Aug. 24. There will be a time of fellowship at 9 a.m. with a "Celebration Worship Service" at 10 a.m. A covered dish lunch will follow. Dennis E. Trimble is pastor. ☛

ALABAMA UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

Onley retires after 52 years of Baptist ministry

For Ernest Edward "Ed" Onley, 52 years in ministry was only possible because God taught him how to do ministry and love people "the right way."

Pastor of Poplar Springs Baptist Church, Webb, Onley retired for the "third or fourth time" in his career July 27.

Before he finished high school Onley was called to serve in the United States Marines during the Korean War. He finished his military service and returned home to Virginia.



ONLEY

At age 30, Onley surrendered to God's call on his life, resigned from his position as director of an insurance company, packed up his wife and four children and enrolled at William Carey College (now William Carey University) in Hattiesburg, Miss., to study Bible and sociology.

After earning his master's degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Onley served with the Home Mission Board (now the North American Mission Board) from 1972 to 1991 in Arkansas, Oklahoma and Georgia.

He also served as pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Midland City, and in several interim positions for about 12 years as well as student pastor positions for churches in Mississippi and Louisiana while in college and seminary.

Throughout his years of ministry Onley survived prostate cancer, several heart surgeries and a flare up of Multiple Sclerosis that later went into remission.

He and his wife, Elaine, were both widowed and in 1983 they met while serving with the Georgia Baptist Convention. Between them they have nine children, 16 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Reflecting back on his time in ministry, Onley said, "I never pastored a church that I did not love. I never had a problem with a church ever, anywhere. My deal was serving people and loving people and somehow God worked it out to let me do that." (Neisha Fuson)

Morgan County Youth United impacts hundreds

More than 300 students converged on Brewer High School's (BHS) football stadium Aug. 6 to kick off the school year with the first-ever Morgan County Youth United.

The 6 p.m. joint worship service featured a praise band comprised of youth from Shiloh Baptist Church, Somerville; Cave Spring Baptist Church, Decatur; Shoal Creek Baptist Church, Decatur; The Arc of Morgan County, Decatur; and Central Baptist Church, Decatur.

Morgan County Youth United was a collaborative effort of these churches and promoted by students for two months prior to the event.

Michael Walters, youth pastor for Shiloh Baptist and key speaker for the event, organized Morgan County Youth United in an effort to make this school year, which started Aug. 7, different from previous years.

"Too often [students] go back to school with great expectations but fall back into the same old cycle," Walters said. He noted this event gave students "the chance to spark a revival" in their schools.

Heath McCutcheon, a senior at BHS and Shiloh youth group member, said teenagers in different youth groups often feel separated from one another. "We're all one Church, so we decided to be united," he said.

Following the student-led worship service, Walters delivered a message challenging students to dive into their faith, be a part of the community of Christ and not worry about offending people.

"Don't operate under the assumption that just because we live in the South, everyone is saved. Don't live with assumptions — live with assurance," he said.

Two students accepted Christ and two rededicated their lives at the end of the night.

McCutcheon said being able to pray with someone as she received Christ was a powerful experience.

"You could tell that there was an unspeakable joy about her," he said. (Maggie Walsh)

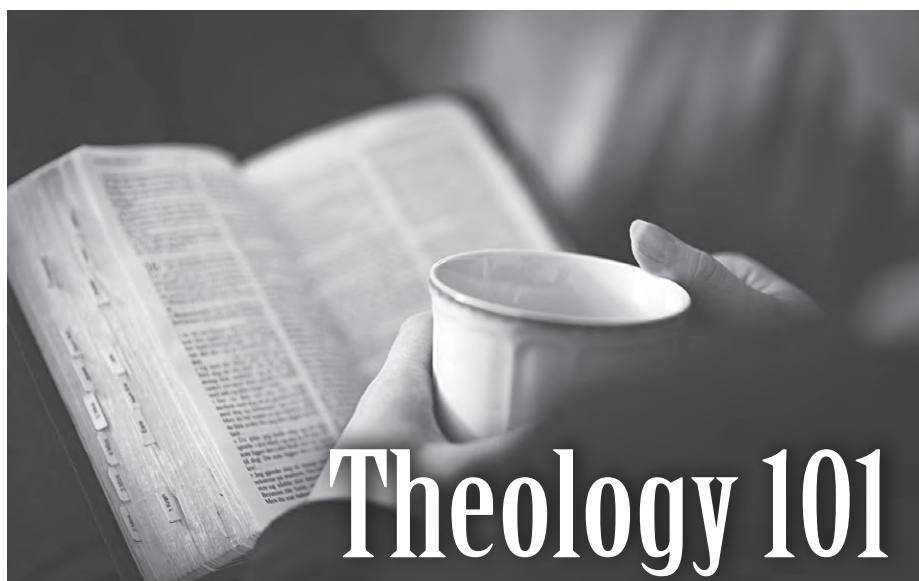


Photo by Doug Rogers

FBC Montgomery holds block party

Lynn Hill (left) a member of FBC Montgomery, gives a backpack full of school supplies to a student at the church's annual Back-to-School Block Party held at the Nehemiah Center in the Chisholm area of Montgomery. More than 170 backpacks with supplies donated by church members were distributed at the event, which also included a medical and dental clinic, games, entertainment and a free hot dog lunch.

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Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Holy Spirit and Holy Persons

Born of the Spirit

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

The theological term for being born of the Spirit is regeneration. Regeneration expresses the work of God's Spirit in a believer by which a person becomes a new creation, as referred to in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

The classic statement about being born of the Spirit is what Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:3, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Toward the end of His words to Nicodemus, Jesus explained this new birth by referencing wind, saying, "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." With these words Jesus connected the work of regeneration or new birth with the agency of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit's conviction

Regeneration by the Spirit is preceded by conviction from the Spirit. When a person responds to the Spirit's conviction concerning sin and His convincing that faith in Christ is the way of salvation, the decision to repent toward God and believe in His Son makes possible regeneration by the Spirit. The result is the onset of newness of life.

Centuries before Christ came the prophet Ezekiel announced God's intention to make new birth possible. God's promise stated, "I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and be careful to obey My rules" (Ezek. 36:26-27). New birth brings a new heart. The new heart then becomes the habitat of the Holy Spirit.

New birth with the resultant new

heart is mandatory to having God's Spirit dwell in us. The Spirit who is holy does not inhabit places that are unholy or unclean. New birth is God's way to a clean heart. The good news of the gospel is that a clean heart is not one that has never sinned, but one that has been cleansed through God's forgiving grace.

Starting point

The path leading up to the new birth may be winding, rocky and difficult as the Holy Spirit makes the burden of unforgiven sin unbearable. However, this experience of regeneration is not the finish line of God's plan for a person, but is the starting point for Him enabling us to become a new creation. Using the analogy of baseball we might say that new birth is like reaching first base safely and within the rules of the sport. First base, however, is not the goal. Reaching home plate is the goal toward which first base is the initial step. Regeneration is the first base of the Christian life. The goal is to make it home safely.

Becoming a new person in whom the Holy Spirit resides makes possible touching some additional bases on the way home, something we could not accomplish without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit residing in us and working through us. Beyond regeneration by the Spirit is the sanctification of the Spirit (1 Pet. 1:2). But that process of is another theme for another day. 🙏

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.



Men's HALL OF FAME

McCrummen, Purcell 'impacted state, nation, world'

Alabama religious leaders Norman Henry "John" McCrummen II and Clare Purcell will be inducted into the Alabama Men's Hall of Fame on Sept. 23.

The honorees, a Baptist and a Methodist, were selected for induction as men "whose lives have impacted the state, the nation and the world." Inductees must have been deceased for at least two years. The Hall of Fame was founded in 1987 and is housed in Samford University's Harwell G. Davis Library.

McCrummen, who died in 2002 at age 81, was pastor of Alabama Baptist churches in Atmore and Selma and at Woodlawn Baptist Church, Birmingham, before being named president of Judson College in Marion in 1970.

Purcell, who died in 1964 at age 79, served Methodist churches throughout Alabama before being named a bishop in 1938. He was elected to the Methodist church's highest national post as president of the Council of Bishops in 1955.

At Judson, McCrummen established an academic option that enabled students to complete four years of work in two years and 10 months. He helped organize the Council for the Advancement of Private Colleges in Alabama and the Alabama Consortium for the Development of Higher Education and was president of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools.



MCCRUMMEN

He retired as Judson president in 1990 and served as chancellor until his death.

McCrummen held a bachelor's degree from Mercer University in Macon, Ga., a master of divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Samford. He was a United States Air Force communications officer in the Philippines and Okinawa during World War II.

Purcell was known for his role in facilitating the union of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Protestant Church in 1939.

He was known as a "denominational statesman" whose ministry touched the lives of not only Alabamians but people throughout the United States and the world. He was made an honorary citizen of Korea for his work with the Methodist committee on relief on behalf of Korean War refugees.

Purcell held bachelor's degrees from Birmingham-Southern College and Vanderbilt University in Nashville and several honorary degrees. He was a U.S. Army chaplain during World War I.

The public is invited to the induction luncheon at 11:30 a.m. at The Club in Birmingham. Reservations are required. Call Alabama



PURCELL

Men's Hall of Fame executive secretary Annette Green at 205-879-3935 or email anniegreen2404@gmail.com. Deadline for reservations is Sept. 15. (Samford)

Bethany Baptist sees God work among students



Photo courtesy of Bethany Baptist Church

Bethany Baptist Church, Crane Hill, in West Cullman Baptist Association celebrates God's working in its youth group July 20. After returning from CentriFuge at Union University in Jackson, Tenn., eight youth were baptized, another answered a call to ministry, one answered a call to missions, another young person accepted Christ, another joined the church and a family reunited with Bethany Baptist — all in one day. Joshua Pendergrass is pastor.

Sharing the gospel

SBOM evangelism office works to prepare churches, leaders for My Hope 2014

By Julie Payne
The Alabama Baptist

It has become a major player in the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' (SBOM) evangelism office strategy, and this year the My Hope with Billy Graham initiative will again be promoted in Alabama to reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

My Hope, which reaches people with the gospel message by combining the impact of video programs with the power of personal relationships, is led by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) and has been implemented in 59 countries. It was introduced for the first time in the United States in 2013.

"Thousands of pastors and Christians across the country reported that they saw great fruit through using the My Hope strategy and programs last year," said Jim Guth, southeast regional coordinator for My Hope 2014.

Decisions for Christ

He added, "In total, more than 112,000 decisions for Christ were reported. ... As a result, [BGEA] decided to continue producing new My Hope films each year to be a resource and encouragement for evangelism for local churches all across the U.S."

Based on the Gospel example

found in Matthew, My Hope is based on the "Matthew principle" in which the apostle Matthew invited people into his home to meet Jesus. The initiative encourages participants to "become a Matthew" by inviting friends and neighbors into their homes or other gathering places to hear the gospel message. During that time, the host shows the My Hope program.

This year's program, titled "Heaven," will be a "clear and powerful presentation of the gospel ... featuring never-before-seen footage from Mr. Graham and focusing on the topic of heaven," Guth said.

Sammy Gilbreath, director of the SBOM's office of evangelism, considers My Hope a "ready-made evangelism strategy" and added it fits perfectly with the SBOM's GPS (God's Plan for Sharing) strategy.

Guth noted BGEA is working closely with the SBOM's office of evangelism, providing support to implement the process of My Hope in Alabama Baptist churches.

Gilbreath, who served as state coordinator for My Hope 2013, said Alabama led the nation in church participations in 2013 with more than 950 churches participating.

Gilbreath said the "boots on

the ground" conducting training this year are Billy Harris, Phil Winningham and Dick Thomassian. Harris, an associate in the SBOM's office of evangelism, will cover south Alabama; Winningham, also an associate in the same office, will cover central Alabama; and Thomassian, executive director of Friends of Nazareth, will cover north Alabama.

The group's primary roles will be going through a database of those who participated in My Hope 2013 to make them aware of the 2014 opportunity. They also will visit Baptist associations and address pastors to cast a vision for My Hope.

Harris said he has already talked to "dozens and dozens" who have shown interest in participating in the 2014 effort.

First Baptist Church, Gulf Shores, is one of many Alabama Baptist churches that participated in My Hope 2013. For its annual outreach event "Gift of Hope," First, Gulf Shores, reaches out to struggling families at Christmas-

time and offers parents a chance to shop for gifts for their children. During its 2013 event, the church also incorporated My Hope testimony videos.

"In all, 96 people — mostly adults — responded to the gospel, receiving Christ as their Savior and Lord," reported Pastor Lloyd Stillely.

"Over the years, we have tried different approaches to sharing the gospel," he said. "This was by far the most effective."

(I) can't wait to see what God will do this Christmas as we share Good News using the My Hope video."

Bob Weber, pastor of Camden Baptist Church in Pine Barren Baptist Association, said his church also may participate in My Hope again.

Working together

Camden Baptist coordinated with Wilcox Academy, a private school located near the church, in 2013 to show the My Hope video to every sixth through 12th grade class. Church members also

served as "Matthews," showing the My Hope program in their homes. As a result of the church's participation, 104 decisions for Christ were made, Weber said.

Guth noted, "We found that churches across America implemented My Hope in many creative ways. ... The local church has a unique position of influence in our communities and our nation."

For the My Hope 2014 initiative this November, Guth is encouraging churches and individuals to organize a group to pray for a burden and strategy for their community and to begin to pray specifically that people will be saved.

Then "the next step for the church is to plan and prepare for an outreach when they can show 'Heaven' or one of the other My Hope films," Guth added.

"Our hope is that thousands of people across America will come to a saving trust in what Jesus Christ did for them on the cross. We believe God can use My Hope to foster in a spiritual awakening and revival in America." ■

The My Hope with Billy Graham program for 2014, "Heaven," will be available to the public Nov. 7. For information on receiving free My Hope evangelistic resources, contact the SBOM evangelism office at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 258.

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Famous Christians from previous centuries

Heroes of the Faith

By Joanne Sloan

Joanne Sloan, a member of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, has been a published writer of articles and books for 30 years. She has a bachelor's degree double majoring in history and English from East Texas State University (now Texas A&M-Commerce) and a master's degree specializing in English from the University of Arkansas (1978).



2014 marks 75th anniversary of first Brazil Baptist church founder's death

Missionary pioneer William Buck Bagby (1855-1939) started the first Baptist church in Brazil. He labored 59 years, one of the longest tenures in Southern Baptist history.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of his death Aug. 5, 1939.

Bagby was born Nov. 5, 1855, to John and Mary Bagby in Coryell County, Texas.

His family moved to Waco when he was 8. Four years later he was converted under the preaching of Rufus Burleson, the founder and first president of Waco University (now Baylor University).

Theology student

Bagby attended Waco University, where he was the first pupil of Benajah H. Carroll in the department of theology (which became Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas). "Yes, Dr. Carroll and I founded the seminary," Bagby told his daughter Helen. "He was the faculty and I was

the student body." Helen Bagby Harrison wrote the standard biography of the family — "The Bagbys of Brazil."

After his graduation in 1875, Bagby farmed for a year and taught school. He was ordained in Plantersville, Texas, on March 16, 1879. "He had preached uncensored since the age of 3," wrote Helen, "when from a chicken-roost pulpit he held an audience spellbound."

In 1880 he married Anne Luther, daughter of John Luther, president of Baylor University. Her parents, strong supporters of missions, named Anne after pioneer missionary Ann Judson. A year after becoming a Christian at the age of 11, Anne dedicated her life to international missions.

The Bagbys were appointed missionaries to Brazil in December 1880. They arrived in Rio de Janeiro in 1880 and founded an American community in nearby Santa Barbara. They moved two years later with three other missionaries to Bahia. There

they established the first Baptist church in Brazil on Oct. 15, 1882. Two years later William started a church in Rio de Janeiro. He continued traveling extensively planting churches in major cities.

In 1901 the Bagbys moved to São Paulo. Anne organized and operated a school. William continued to establish churches and associations as well as promote missions in other South American countries. His work prompted Southern Baptists to send missionaries to other places on the continent.

The Bagbys' fourth and final home in Brazil was Porto Alegre. They spent the last decade of their lives there.

The couple had nine children, four of whom died early.

While toddlers, Luther died of scarlet fever and John of meningitis; Willson drowned at 24 while saving the life of a friend; and Oliver walked away from Galveston Medical College at the age of 26 never to be seen again.



Photo courtesy of The Texas Collection, Baylor University
BAGBY

The remaining five children — Ermine, Taylor, Alice, Helen and Albert — also became missionaries in Brazil, building churches, teaching and evangelizing.

William died Aug. 5, 1939, of bronchial pneumonia. He was buried in Porto Alegre.

Long tenure

Anne died in 1942 after 56 years of official missionary work, eclipsing her husband's tenure and making her service also one of the longest tenures of any Southern Baptist missionary. She worked another six years after her official missionary role concluded in unofficial ministry roles in Brazil. She never returned to the United States.

The archives of William and Anne and their missionary children can be found in the Texas Collection at Baylor University.

The Baptist Studies Center for Research at Baylor University, initiated in 2011, also contains material on the famous missionary family. ☞

REFLECTIONS

"ALL RIGHT PEOPLE — THIS IS NOT THE CHURCH. EVERYTHING YOU GET OUT HERE WILL BE BY YOUR WORKS, NOT BY GRACE!"



'Great urgency'

Baptists take precautionary measures in wake of Ebola outbreak

Baptist leaders in West Africa have called for prayer and are taking precautionary measures to protect their constituencies and communities from the Ebola outbreak that is affecting Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea.

The Baptist World Alliance sent an initial sum of \$5,000 to Sierra Leone to assist in a public education campaign about the disease.

Samuel Conteh, coordinator of social ministries for the Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone, said a Baptist Ebola Task Force has been formed "to coordinate the sensitization of Ebola outbreak in its various churches and other public places" and that "churches are being gradually provided with sanitization plastic buckets with chlorine tablets."

'Better enlightened'

The education efforts have borne fruit, Conteh said. "The response is good. People have become better enlightened on the basic preventive measures against the disease."

He indicated that church activities have been negatively affected by the outbreak. "Church attendances are dwindling. Baptist activities are being slowed down, particularly in [the] epicenters. The

traditional embracing and handshake among members after church service have disappeared."

The Liberia Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention (LBMEC) called "on our brothers and sisters with great urgency to pray for West Africa, especially Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone."

LBMEC declared, "We have encouraged our local Baptist churches, pastors and its leadership around Liberia through a massive electronic text messaging to commit to all the preventive practices that have been advanced by the health experts as well as the Government of Liberia on this deadly disease."

At least one Liberian Baptist, a nurse, died after she attended to an infected patient who succumbed to the disease.

"We pause to remember the compassionate, committed service of Sister Alice M. Paasewe, who was on active duty as a nurse at the Phebe Referral Hospital in central Liberia," LBMEC said. Paasewe, a Baptist church deacon, died shortly after her diagnosis. "Sister Paasewe was a vibrant member of her church and a strong leader in the Woman's Missionary Union of our convention," the LBMEC said. (BWA)

Possible sale

LifeWay explores sale of 14.5-acre property in downtown Nashville

LifeWay Christian Resources is exploring opportunities to better utilize its downtown Nashville corporate offices, which could mean the sale of some — or all — of the 14.5-acre property, Thom S. Rainer said in a letter to the organization's staff.

LifeWay is working with a consulting firm to study the advantages and disadvantages of a possible sale, said Rainer, LifeWay's president and CEO. About 1,100 of LifeWay's employees work in the downtown corporate offices. The organization also oversees 186 stores and 4,300 employees in 29 states.

Acknowledging that LifeWay has been located in the Music City for more than 120 years, Rainer cited demand for property

in the downtown area and fewer employees now working at its corporate offices as reasons for studying a possible sale.

In the letter, Rainer addressed changes in the publishing industry and why more of LifeWay's employees now work outside of Nashville than at its corporate offices.

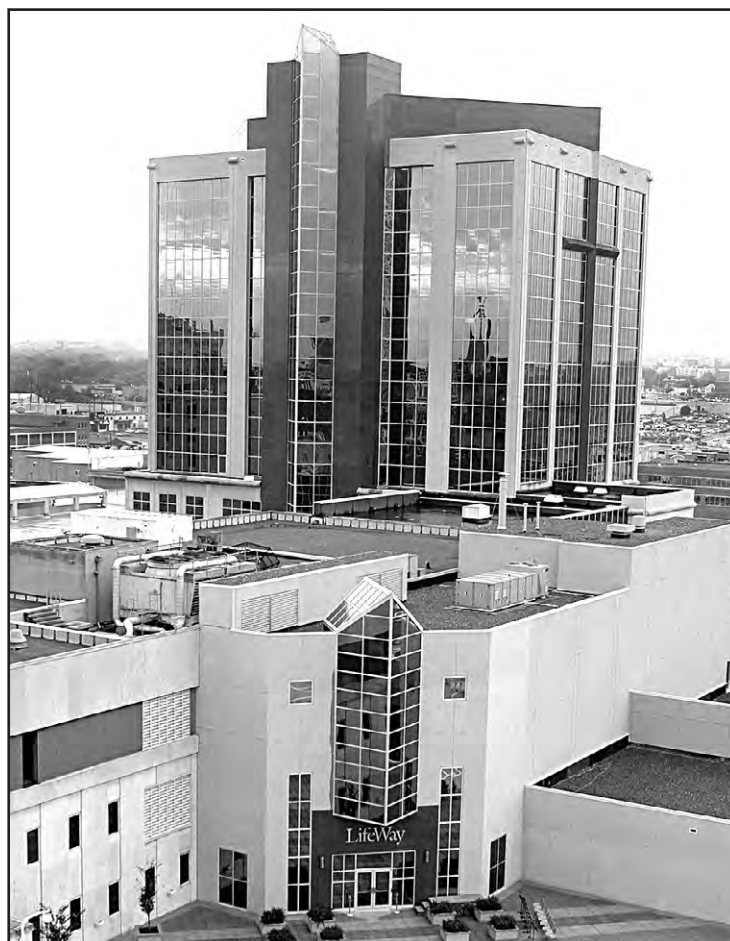
"Our needs have changed. We no longer print and package ... on the first floor."

**Thom S. Rainer
president and CEO
LifeWay Christian Resources**

now an art center, our printing is done all over the country, our assembly and shipping is centered in new facilities in Lebanon, (Tenn.), and [the operations building] sits mostly empty. We have

Nashville than at its corporate offices.

"Our needs have changed," he said. "We no longer print and package our resources on the first floor of the operations building and then put them on a conveyor belt running under Broadway to the U.S. Post Office. That post-office building is



BP photo

LifeWay Christian Resources is exploring opportunities to better utilize its downtown Nashville corporate offices, which could mean the sale of some — or all — of the 14.5-acre property.

been unable to even lease the space."

While LifeWay leases unused office space in its Frost Building along with the adjacent parking lot, Rainer said, hundreds of offices on its campus remain vacant.

LifeWay spokesman Marty King estimated nearly one third

of the facility is vacant or leased, but he declined to speculate about the value of the property. *The Tennessean* newspaper estimated the value at "more than \$80 million."

It could take several months or longer before a recommendation is made to LifeWay's trustees, Rainer noted. (BP)

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CHURCH POSITIONS

FULL-TIME PASTOR: Send resumés to: Stowers Hill Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, 407 Ninth Ave. SW, Attalla, AL 35954. Email: stowershillbaptist@gmail.com. Deadline for resumés is Sept. 14.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Lakewood Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational pastor. We have a small congregation with Sunday morning and Wednesday evening services. The church is located in the South East Lake area of Birmingham. Send resumés to: Lakewood Baptist Church, 8300 9th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35206. Email: Lakewoodon9th@yahoo.com.

MINISTER OF MUSIC: East Hill Baptist Church, Tallahassee, Fla., is seeking a minister of music to join us in reaching people for Christ and His church. Full-time position. Blended worship style. Please send resumés to: dan@easthill.net.

PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER: Eldridge Baptist Church in Eldridge, Ala., is seeking a worship leader to lead our choir and congregation in a traditional/contemporary worship service. Respond to: eldridgebaptistchurch@yahoo.com.

PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER: Meek Baptist Church in Arley, Ala., is seeking a godly man to lead our choir and

congregation in blended-style worship. Email resumé: meekbaptist@att.net. www.meekbc.com.

MINISTER OF STUDENTS & COLLEGE: First Baptist Church of Piedmont, Ala., is accepting resumés for full-time position of minister of students and college. Please email resumés to: sandra5131950@yahoo.com.

STUDENT MINISTER: Verbena Baptist Church, Verbena, Ala., is now accepting resumés for a part-time student minister. Please submit resumés or questions to: verbenabaptist@att.net.

PART-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR: Central Heights Baptist Church in Florence, Ala., is accepting resumés for a part-time youth director for grades 7-12. Resumés may be sent to: Central Heights Baptist Church, 10090 County Road 15, Florence, AL 35633, or emailed to: mdale1080@comcast.net.

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Want to know GOD?

Pastor Patrick Powell
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa

There is a great difference between possessing knowledge about someone and having a personal knowledge of someone. When it comes to knowing God, there are many who can provide biblically accurate information about who God is and what God has done, but that is far different from having a personal relationship with God. To want to know God is a noble desire, and the good news is that God has revealed Himself in such a way that He can be known personally. Jesus indicated that such personal knowledge of God is actually the essence of eternal life. In John 17 we read Jesus' prayer to the Father, acknowledging the authority He had received from the Father to give eternal life to all whom the Father had given Him. Jesus then defined that life in terms of knowing "You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

But this still leaves us with the question, what does it mean to know God in this way? The answer is found in Jesus' words, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me ... I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:1, 6). Jesus clearly taught the only way for a person to truly know God was by believing in Him as the Son of God. The unbelieving Jews of Jesus' day clung to their ethnicity and traditions as the basis for knowing God, but Jesus challenged their claims and taught that it is only by believing in Him that a person is a true child of God. "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:12). This goes for both Jews and Gentiles; there is no distinction.

Therefore to know God is to know Jesus Christ, and we come to know Jesus Christ by receiving Him, that is, by believing in His name as the only name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. May God grant you the grace to repent of your sins and to trust in Christ today. 🙏

'Season of turmoil'

Southern Baptists help displaced Iraqi families by providing survival supplies

While the world's attention has been focused on the plight of Iraq's suffering Yazidi community, Baptist Global Response (BGR) humanitarian partners have been working in other parts of the coun-

try among some 250,000 other displaced Iraqis.

Those efforts focused on providing survival supplies to new arrivals and helping displaced families launch businesses that can provide for their long-term needs.

The same partners have helped an earlier group of refugees begin developing small businesses that will support their families and, as loans are repaid, help even more displaced families in turn.

Primary funding for these proj-

ects came through Global Hunger Relief (GHR), the Southern Baptist channel for combatting hunger in North America and overseas. GHR funnels 100 percent of each donation to the hunger need. In this case, the two projects received a total of \$55,500 from GHR.

The displaced families represented the range of northern Iraq's residents who would rather flee than submit to radical Islamist rule, including many Christians. Some observers believe northern Iraq's ancient Christian communities are on the verge of extinction.

'Midst of great trial'

"This season of turmoil has seen the Christian population of Iraq dwindle significantly and the survivability of those who remain become uncertain at best," said Jeff Palmer, executive director of BGR. "This deepening crisis gives Christians worldwide the opportunity to stand by their embattled brothers and sisters in the faith, as well as to demonstrate the mercy of Christ to others who need to experience the love of God in the midst of great trial."

The multitude of displaced families had overwhelmed already strained job markets, said the BGR partner directing the relief operation.

"We have seen substantial needs for employment and sustainable income for these families," the partner said. "Dependable income from self-replicating sources is the answer for these families developing sufficiency."

Two micro-businesses were launched as test cases, and the lessons learned with those two would help launch another 50 small businesses over a two-year period, the partner said. Proven business pos-

Action urged in Iraq

Russell D. Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, has joined a group calling for the United States and other countries to support decisive military action to incapacitate extremist Islamic forces conducting genocide in Iraq. The open letter on the topic was released Aug. 11. (BP)

sibilities include shoe repair, transport of groceries or vegetables, and sales of tea, coffee, candy or fish.

Families receiving the first round of micro-loans would receive guidance, direction and supervision in growing their businesses, the partner said. Repaid loans would help other families launch businesses as well. Local government officials and Iraqi church leaders affirmed and encouraged the effort.

Need for prayer

Chaos in the area has put the small business initiative on hold for the time being, the partner said.

Palmer said prayer is needed that peace would return to Iraq.

"The situation in Iraq is very volatile, and great uncertainty hangs over the country's future," he said. "Please pray for peace so our partners can re-engage the small business effort. Ask God to make His great love known to every Iraqi heart that is searching for peace." (BP)



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To donate to Iraq's refugee crisis through Baptist Global Response, visit gobgr.org or text **bgr** to **80888**, which will donate \$10 to BGR's disaster response fund.

To donate through the International Mission Board, which partners with BGR in disaster response situations, visit imb.org or text **imbrelief** to **80888**.*

*Text to donate: \$10 will be added to your mobile phone bill or deducted from your prepaid balance. Message and data rates may apply. Must have account holder permission to donate. Terms: igfn.org/t.

'Fulfilling our mission'

Golden Gate Seminary announces purchase, requests name change

Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary has signed a purchase agreement for a new primary campus site in Southern California east of Los Angeles near the Ontario International Airport.

In announcing the formal purchase and sale agreement to the seminary community, Jeff Iorg, Golden Gate president, said, "We have chosen a facility to meet the needs of students in the 21st century. We will soon have a high-quality educational delivery center with excellent facilities for fulfilling our mission of shaping leaders in the future."

Iorg also announced that the seminary will ask that a new name — Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention — be approved by the convention.

Room to build

The new site includes a six-story building, an adjacent ready-to-build lot and more than 700 parking places in the city of Ontario, part of Southern California's Inland Empire region. The building was constructed in 2009 and has remained vacant due to the economic downturn. The building's exterior is finished but its interior is unfinished.

The six-story building encompasses approximately 153,000 square feet, while a future building, at 75,000 square feet, can be constructed for such uses as a chapel, library, offices or classrooms. By comparison, the seminary's core campus buildings in Mill Valley, Calif., are only 121,000 square feet. Thus the new Southern California building is about 20 percent larger than the seminary's current facilities, with room on the new site to nearly double the size of the current facilities.

"A seminary for the 21st century needs space for students, faculty, library, worship and administra-

tion. We will soon have state-of-the-art facilities for all these purposes, plus the most advanced educational technology available," Iorg said.

In contrast to the seminary's new model with other campus models, Iorg said, "When millions of people have not yet heard the name of Jesus, our school must model frugality and simplicity to prioritize resources for global missions. Our tuition must be kept low so students can graduate without seminary-created debt. Our future resources must be focused on people and programs — not facilities."

While the new campus plan also does not include on-site student housing, Iorg indicated it is

still a priority. "Not using a traditional model does not mean we will not facilitate student housing. It simply means the housing won't be at a traditional campus

location," he said.

The seminary currently is finalizing plans to secure use permits, finish the building's interior and prepare for relocation by June 2016.

In commenting on the reasons for selecting the proposed name of Gateway Seminary, Iorg said, "The new

name connects to our heritage, frees us from geographic designations, allows for developing a more global identity and acknowledges our Baptist distinctive." (BP)



BP photo

Golden Gate Seminary has signed a purchase agreement for a building in the Los Angeles area to anchor its new campus by the summer of 2016.

Living with a Reverse Mortgage

By Jimmy Dixon

"What is it like to have a reverse mortgage?" Max and Carolyn Youngblood (a retired pastor and wife) have answered:

"Carolyn and I took out a reverse mortgage a little over two years ago after reading Jimmy Dixon's article in *The Alabama Baptist*. Jimmy came to our home and he was most knowledgeable, kind and patient — a true Christian gentleman.

We decided to apply because we had a mortgage that was a struggle to pay each month. Plus there were some improvements that we wanted to make to our home. Since we closed on our reverse mortgage, life is better because we no longer have any monthly payments

and our home looks so much better.

Each month we receive informative statements from the lender. We are pleased that we have a reverse mortgage and we highly recommend Jimmy to you."

Remember, like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their

lives. He is Bible study director and an active deacon at Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown. For a free brochure, quote or DVD, contact him directly at 205-567-4800 or jdixon@mcgowinking.com.



Max and Carolyn



Jimmy Dixon



— Paid Advertising —

Tennessee judge rules against same-sex 'marriage'

A judge in Tennessee ruled recently that a state does not have to accept as valid a same-sex "marriage" performed legally in another state.

The Aug. 5 ruling in Roan County Circuit Court in Kingston, Tenn., breaks a string of more than two dozen state and federal rulings declaring marriage a civil right that cannot be denied same-sex couples since the United States Supreme Court struck down the federal Defense of Marriage Act in June 2013.

Fundamental right

Judge Russell Simmons Jr. agreed that "marriage is a fundamental right," but he said neither the Tennessee nor U.S. Supreme Court has ever decided whether that right extends be-

yond the traditional definition of marriage as a union between a man and woman.

Until that happens, the judge determined, Tennessee's ban on same-sex "marriage" and state recognition of already-existing marriages does not violate the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment or Article 4 of the U.S. Constitution providing that "full faith and credit shall be given in each state in the public acts, records, and judicial proceeding of every other state."

Simmons said, "The battle has not been whether or not marriage is a fundamental right but what unions are included in the definition of marriage. (That) should be the prerogative of each state" in order "to provide a framework of laws to govern the safety and well-being of its citizens." (ABP)



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Monday, November 10, 2014

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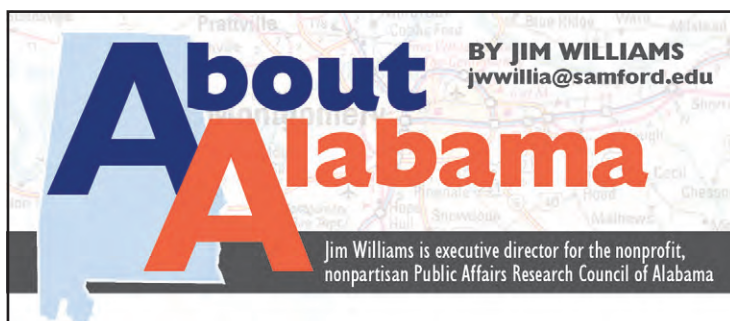
Theme: The Life of a Pastor

"Besides the other things, what comes upon me daily; my deep concern for all the churches." 2 Corinthians 11:28

www.alpastorsconference.com

— Clarification

The Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence at Samford is the sponsor and host of the Birmingham-area Ministering to Ministers Wellness Retreats. The latest retreat was featured in the Aug. 14 issue on page 21, "Finding Hope: Wellness Retreat, reorientation helps ministers 'grow strong at the broken places.'"



Considering Taxes

This is an election year for state officials, and normally candidates would shy away from any talk of tax increases. However, both candidates for governor voiced some openness to considering taxes in a recent Associated Press article.

Undoubtedly the main reason for considering a tax alternative is the dire situation in the state General Fund, but the size and shape of Alabama's tax burden also should be taken into account. Here we look briefly at both issues.

The General Fund budget finances all state services except for those related to education. Revenues to the fund are drawn from a number of small sources and there is little growth potential. To shore up the fund, large amounts have been added from temporary transfers and borrowings that must be repaid over the next several years. Revenues in 2015 are expected to be more than \$80 million below 2014 appropriations.

The largest General Fund expenditures are for Medicaid, which provides health care for the state's large low-income population, and the state prison system, which is overcrowded and under-resourced. These two programs have grown to require 57 percent of General Fund spending, crowding out other

services. For example, the state court system in recent years has been funded in part from Public Road and Bridge Fund revenues that normally are used to maintain highways.

Tax burden

The most recent Census Bureau figures show Alabama collects lower state and local tax revenues per resident than any other state. Tax collections in 2011 amounted to \$2,904 per capita, which was 67 percent of the national average.

In part, this is due to the fact that Alabama has fewer resources to tax than most other states. Based on United States Treasury Department estimates, our 2011 total taxable resources amounted to \$41,552 per capita, which was 78 percent of the national average. Alabama ranked 45th among the states.

But we also tax those resources at a below-average rate. Dividing the tax collections by the taxable resources indicates an effective tax rate of 7.0 percent. The national average in 2011 was 8.2 percent. Alabama ranked 40th.

These data don't suggest that Alabama's tax burden would prevent state policy makers from considering a tax alternative in resolving the state General Fund dilemma. ☐



CHURCH REVITALIZATION

Pastors receive encouragement from coaches

(continued from page 1) experts in the field with an emphasis on coming alongside a pastor to provide encouragement," Huff explained.

The first contact from the coach will take place within two weeks of the request being placed, and then an initial in-person visit will take place. After that, the coach will stay in touch for a year with monthly phone calls and quarterly visits.

"The coach will serve as a conduit for communication and encouragement," Huff said.

And the effort is completely funded through the SBOM budget, he added.

"Because of Alabama Baptists' gifts through the Cooperative Program, there is no cost to the pastor or church."

So far, 48 Alabama Baptist churches have signed up for church revitalization coaching and two have completed the process.

"The response has been overwhelmingly positive," Huff said. ☐

For more information or to request a coach, call Dale Huff at 1-800-264-1225 ext. 263 or email him at dhuff@alsbom.org.



Photo courtesy of Judson College

Alumnae preserve Judson's history

Judson College alumna AJ Smith Arnett works on the 'Pictorial History of Judson College Collection' preservation project on the school's campus this summer. This is the third year Huntsville-area alumnae have returned to their alma mater to help preserve the school's collection of photographs.



CHILDREN AMAZE US EVERY DAY and at Children's of Alabama we want to see every child grow up and live to their fullest potential. That's why we recruit, train and retain the most inquiring minds, the most skilled hands and the most compassionate hearts in pediatric medicine.

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Taking a self-evaluation test

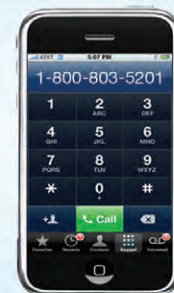
(continued from page 1)

- Are a majority of your deacons under 60 years of age?
- Does your church have active missions organizations?
- Would you describe your church as an Acts 1:8 congregation, committed to reaching your community and the world?
- Does your church have an effective process of discovering, training and involving leaders?

(TAB)

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The Alabama Baptist?



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 24

Explore the Bible

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

LIVE TO WIN IN THE END
Daniel 7:7-18

For readers who expect the Scriptures always to be written sequentially, you need to be aware that Daniel chapter 7 occurs chronologically before chapter 5. Belshazzar is king in Babylon. Daniel is conveying a supernatural revelation that he has experienced as a night vision. Sometime after this revelation, Daniel interprets the “handwriting on the wall” incident.

Bible interpreters recognize the parallel nature of Daniel’s vision and Nebuchadnezzar’s dream earlier in Daniel’s life. Both visions address four kingdoms that are represented in sequence. Nebuchadnezzar dreams about a statue made of four types of material. Daniel’s dream includes four representative beasts. Those who date the composition of Daniel to the Intertestamental Period generally identify the four empires as Babylon, Media, Persia and Greece. Those of us who take the writings in Daniel as historical events identify the four kingdoms as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.

Babylon is represented by a lion with wings, yet the wings are torn off. Medo-Persia is a ravenous bear. A leopard is the beast that represents Greece, with four wings distinguishing four factions after the death of Alexander the Great: Seleucids, Ptolemies, Pergamum and Macedonia. The Roman Empire, under whom Messiah would be revealed, was envisioned as a horned beast.

Evil Will Persist (7-8)

This fourth beast is frightening, an authoritative movement characterized by devouring, crushing and trampling. Reviewing the history of Rome, it is certainly not surprising that interpreters would identify this kingdom as the empire of the Caesars.

Nations are presently in turmoil. Christians are being hunted down simply because they confess Jesus as Lord. Evil will persist and believers will face greater and greater challenges until the eschaton (end of time). Those who believe that followers of Christ

are immune from pain and suffering are uninformed about the persecuted Church in much of the world today.

God Is Our Judge (9-12)

Daniel’s name means “God is my judge.” This passage indicates the Ancient of Days not only holds Daniel accountable, but He also decrees judgment of the ruling empires of the world. The death of the fourth beast is a sign of judgment. God is certainly going to judge the fourth kingdom.

Fire is another sign of God’s judgment. Review Amos 1-2 to see how the fire motif is prevalent in judgment decrees against the nations. Judgment phrases in the New Testament include “fire that never goes out” (Matt. 3:12); “blazing furnace” (Matt. 13:42, 50); “flaming fire” (2 Thess. 1:8); and “burn ... be dissolved ... on fire ... melt” (2 Pet. 3:10-12).

Serve Confidently Under Christ (13-14)

Jesus alludes to this passage in His trial before the Sanhedrin, by which He identifies Himself as the “Son of Man” and that He is “coming on the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 26:64). This Son of Man is granted authority by the Ancient of Days (Matt. 28:18), “so that those of every people, nation and language should serve Him ... His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:14).

Our assignment to make disciples was not an afterthought as Jesus gave His post-resurrection commission. It has always been God’s plan: all families (Gen. 12:3), all nations (Gen. 22:18), all peoples (Ps. 67:3, 5). We have the privilege under the authority of Jesus Christ to share the message of salvation to the ends of the earth.

Live Securely in Victory (15-18)

Victory is His; therefore victory is ours in Christ. Kingdoms rise and fall, but the Kingdom of God is eternal. Daniel’s terror was overcome by the triumph of the King. Nothing we face, no fear, no injustice, no pain can overcome the goodness of God. “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us” (Rom. 8:18).

Bible Studies for Life

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

GOD’S WORK OF CREATION
Psalms 104:1-5, 24-30

The first message of the Bible is a message of Creation that “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

The creation of the world is the first of the many majestic and gracious acts of the triune God. Paul reminds us that creation is the result of God calling “into existence the things that do not exist” (Rom. 4:17).

While the good news of God’s grace has the cross of Calvary at the very center of its proclamation, that grace will not have achieved its final purpose until God “makes all things new” in the establishment of “a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness will dwell.” Theologically creation stands at the beginning and the end of the drama of redemption — it is central to the purposes of God in salvation.

The psalmist often celebrates the work of God as Creator to enable us to enter into a spirit of worship, to adore God for His wisdom, majesty, power and love. To know God as Creator is to place every aspect of our daily lives into His loving tender care.

God Creates Out of His Power (1-5)

The psalmist uses a variety of images in this Psalm to express his understanding of God’s power as Creator. The God who is Creator is the God who has entered into a covenant of love and mercy and so he can begin by speaking of God as the “Lord, my God.”

Yet this God who is close and caring is still “clothed with honor and majesty.” He is dazzlingly resplendent. The psalmist describes the majesty of God as effortless, as one who creates the heavens with no more effort than we would use to hang a curtain within a tent. He rides the clouds as if they were His chariot. Wind and fire become His messengers to a world that He is to be honored and adored.

God Creates Out of His Wisdom (24-26)

Not only does creation manifest the

power of God, but it also speaks of His wisdom. He is a master craftsman, skillfully designing everything that exists according to plans and purposes. The vastness of the oceans speak of the vast horizons where innumerable creatures swim in their depths.

Leviathan, a mythical creature that is mentioned in the Old Testament as being the source of fear and terror, is no more to God than a plaything. All the creatures of the earth, sea and sky are wholly dependent on the daily provision of God’s providence.

God Creates Out of His Love (27-30)

The goodness of God to His creation is spoken of in terms of God opening His hand to fill the mouths of His creatures with good things. Humanity is always viewed as being created in the image of God and is seen as the pinnacle of God’s work of creation.

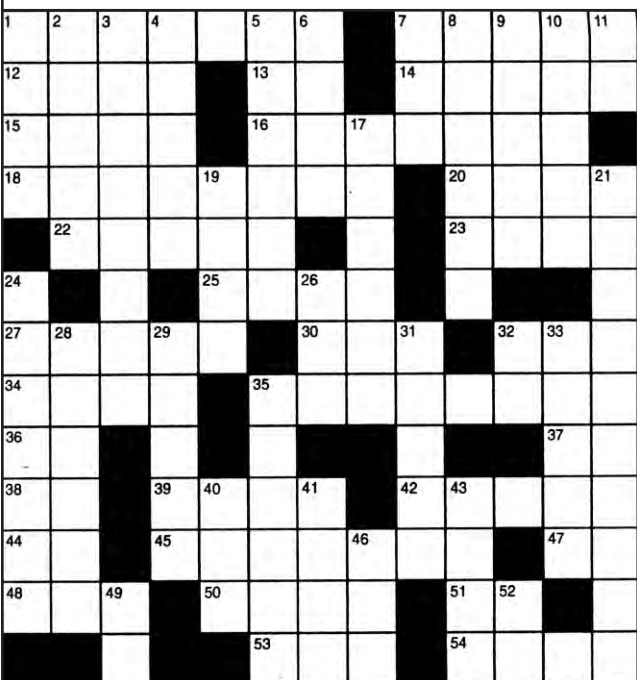
It is typical however of the biblical accounts and celebrations of creation that the Scripture does not pretend to describe in empirical detail the way in which the world came into being. Rather they declare the world is radically dependent on the generosity, wisdom and power of God in whom we are to place all our trust and confidence.

The psalmist helps us to understand that in creation God gives life to others, that God lets others exist alongside and in fellowship with Himself, that God makes room for others. This does not mean, in any sense, that God created because of some inner deficiency in the Triune Godhead that had to be satisfied, but rather God freely chose to create in order to share His love with His creation. Creation thus fittingly expresses the true character of God, who is love and whose love and will-to-community are freely displayed in the act of creation.

No wonder the psalmist uses the word “Hallelujah” for the first time in the Psalms to express his thanks and praise. 𐤇𐤍𐤁𐤏𐤃𐤕

Christian Crossword

By Jody Ellis Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



- Across
1. First book of New Testament.
7. In like manner also, that women _____ themselves in modest apparel. (1 Tim. 2:9)
12. Solomon’s son was Rehoboam, _____ his son. (1 Chron. 3:10)
13. Alcoholics Anonymous. (abbr.)
14. Train station.
15. Ice skating arena.
16. Unto _____, my own son in the faith. (1 Tim. 1:2)
18. Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the _____. (Num. 32:12)
20. And Zanoah, and Engannim, Tappuah, and _____. (Josh. 15:34)
22. He left the _____ cloth and fled from them naked. (Mark 14:52)
23. Grain storage place.
25. That the _____ men be sober. (Titus 2:2)
27. Artist’s stand.
30. Upon the great _____ of his right foot. (Lev. 8:23)
32. Anger.
34. Facts.
35. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our _____. (Isa. 33:22)
36. Doctor. (abbr.)
37. Iowa. (abbr.)
38. Executive order. (abbr.)
39. A _____ without blemish. (1 Pet. 1:19)
42. Sow the fields and _____ vineyards. (Ps. 107:37)
44. Tin symbol.
45. Imitate.
47. Yes. (Spanish)
48. Teaspoon. (abbr.)
50. Hammer.
51. Direction.
53. Latter-day Saints. (abbr.)
54. Whereby the world that _____ was perished. (2 Pet. 3:6)
- Down
1. Follows 1 across.
2. _____ the Arbathite. (1 Chron. 11:32)
3. Tasting the most of tin.
4. When Joseph had _____ the body. (Matt. 27:59)
5. For John the Baptist came neither _____ bread nor drinking wine. (Luke 7:33)
6. Or ministry, let us _____ on our ministry. (Rom. 12:7)
7. Why make ye this _____ and weep? (Mark 5:39)
8. But thou shalt utterly _____ it. (Deut. 7:26)
9. And Chepharhaammonai, and _____ and Gaba; 12 cities with their villages. (Josh. 18:24)
10. If ye fulfill the _____ law according to the Scripture. (James 2:8)
11. New Testament. (abbr.)
17. Even out of the _____s of Gibeah. (Judg. 20:33)
19. Concerning _____, persecuting the church. (Phil. 3:6)
21. Let your _____ be known unto all men. (Phil. 4:5)
24. Thou _____ thy people like a flock. (Ps. 77:20)
26. Estimated Time of Arrival. (abbr.)
28. Eleazar _____ son. (Ex. 6:25)
29. Though thou exalt thyself as the _____. (Obad. 4)
31. Princes shall come out of _____. (Ps. 68:31)
32. Four. (Roman numeral)
33. He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my _____. (Lam. 3:13)
35. It is not for kings, O _____. (Prov. 31:4)
40. Ampere. (abbr.)
41. Emitted blood.
43. Therefore also I have _____ him to the Lord. (1 Sam. 1:28)
46. Opposite of question. (abbr.)
49. Ma and _____. (abbr.)
52. Inquiry. (slang)
- 𐤇𐤍𐤁𐤏𐤃𐤕

BOOKS



Tim Timmons

Photo courtesy of Provident Label Group

'Cast My Cares'

Timmons urges listeners to rely on Christ

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

For singer/songwriter Tim Timmons, "Cast My Cares" is more than just the title of his debut album. It is a reminder for believers to give their worries, fears and anxieties over to the Lord and trust Him to sustain them.

After battling an incurable cancer for more than a decade, Timmons shares his own personal struggles as he performs concerts around the country in hopes of encouraging audiences to rely on Christ as their source of stability and strength during life's storms.

"My purpose in this season is to inspire believers in Jesus to become followers of Jesus through my story," Timmons said.

"Everyone has worries and insecurities, but God is big enough to cast our cares upon Him. When people ask me what I do, I generally tell them that I write songs to help people pray to Jesus."

Timmons hopes these songs will inspire people to draw closer to Jesus in the midst of trials.

"The album is about inviting believers into a deeper

walk and relationship with Christ," Timmons said. "The first single on the album is a song called 'Starts With Me.' I was reading an article about a young preacher who came up to an older preacher and asked how to start a revival in his town. The older pastor takes a piece of chalk and gets down on his hands and knees. He draws a large circle on the floor (around the man) and tells the young preacher, 'The revival starts in you.'"

"Whatever the day involves, whether it's joy or sorrow, I want to be in the presence of God."

Tim Timmons
singer/songwriter

"This really struck me, because I feel like I've spent my whole life asking Jesus

to come along with my agenda. Now I'm asking Christ to show me His plans for the day.

Called to represent

"Whatever the day involves, whether it's joy or sorrow, I want to be in the presence of God. We are called to represent Him and reflect His love to others, wherever He leads us each day.

"The same power that raised Christ from the dead is alive in me, and I want to tell people about it. As we take time to tell others how Christ is working in our own life, that's what will point others to Him. Our story changes everything, and the revival starts in us."

Media reviews



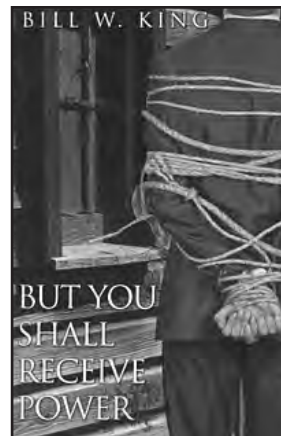
But You Shall Receive Power

Bill W. King. Wheaton, Ill., OakTara Publishers, 2013. 157 pp. (Paperback).

I reviewed one of this author's books a while back. You may know his character — Billy Bob Bohannon. He's a little goofy. The book, as I recall, was pretty funny. This one, on the other hand, was not funny. Not at all. But then, it wasn't meant to be.

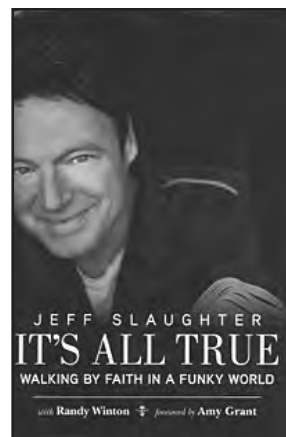
In a radical departure from his comic alter ego, Bill King has written a thriller. I put off reading it for a while, because everyone thinks he can write fiction, but few can. How could I tell Billy Bob his book is a stinker? Fortunately I didn't need to — it was really good. I was engaged from beginning to end and never figured out what was coming from one scene to the next.

Here is the premise for the story: The main character, a pastor, wakes up to find himself bound and in a strange room with no idea where he is or how he got there. As he thinks back over recent events, he tries to figure out who did this to him. I won't spoil the story by recounting any more details, but even though most of the book is written in flashbacks, it moves along well. If you want an entertaining thriller written from a Christian worldview, this is your book.



It's All True: Walking by Faith in a Funky World

Jeff Slaughter with Randy Winton. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013. 246 pp. (Hardback).



In the weeks leading up to Vacation Bible School (VBS), I always enjoy the promotional videos — especially the ones of Jeff Slaughter's high-energy music and dancing, with children on their feet dancing with him. I can't help contrasting the videos with the VBS of my childhood: the sedate procession into the sanctuary behind the United States and Christian flags and the Bible, the piano cues to stand up and

sit down and salute. Whew. What a difference.

I was eager to read this autobiography of Slaughter. I expected an upbeat, happy, dancing and jumping-around story to match the videos. But it wasn't quite what I anticipated. Was it well written? Absolutely. Interesting? It sure was. Happy? Mostly. Upbeat? In places. Honest? I'm pretty sure it was.

Not knowing anything about Slaughter except his music and dancing, I was surprised both by some of the events in Slaughter's life and his openness in sharing them. This is by no means a criticism; I think readers will be encouraged by Slaughter's challenges and the tenacity with which he has persevered. I also think anyone who reads the book will be glad they did.

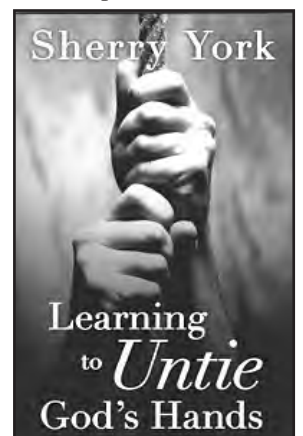
The book was co-authored, or ghostwritten, by Randy Winton, minister of students for First Baptist Church, Brewton.

Learning to Untie God's Hands

Sherry York. Bloomington, Ind.: Inspiring Voices, 2013. 78 pp. (Paperback).

"Learning to Untie God's Hands" is based on the premise that we limit the power of God in our lives by our own actions — unbelief, bitterness, pride and unforgiveness. The author, who is from Addison, outlines seven steps to untying the hands of God in our lives.

While the steps would make a really helpful magazine article, sermon or lesson, I found myself unsatisfied at the end of the book. A generation of readers raised on the teachings of Beth Moore expect more spiritual depth than the book offers, and I am not sure there is enough meat here to flesh out the seven steps. The book does have "good bones" though and with a little more work could become a valuable volume for the frustrated Christian.



Meet the reviewer

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If you have a book you would like reviewed, mail a copy to:
P.O. Box 1504, Hartselle, AL 35640.



Photo courtesy of Dave Ebert

Dave Ebert (second from left) and fellow troupe member Ryan McChesney (third from left) participate in a game called 'Puppet Master,' where the performers are not allowed to move unless the audience members move them.

'Our Gifts for God's Glory'

Comedian finds ready audience for gospel on improv circuit

Spreading the gospel with a laugh — that's the mission of Dave Ebert and his Christian improvisation troupe, hahahAmen.

Ebert, a 2004 graduate of Baptist-affiliated Bluefield College in Virginia, founded the group with three other Christian friends in 2013 in Chicago to provide family-friendly comedy shows for events, churches and other organizations.

"We love God. We love Jesus, and we love using our gifts to honor and glorify God," said Ebert, who studied English and communications while a student at Bluefield College. "We live by the motto, 'Our Gifts for God's Glory.' We are all trained, professional improvisers who want to do more than the secular comedy that tends to be full of vulgarities."

HahahAmen uses improvisation, skits, games, audience interaction and other forms of comedic performance to offer a message about the love of Christ. The group's shows to date include an event hosted by an Illinois state senator and a member of the Illinois House of Representatives as well as performances for local churches, schools, soup kitchens and shelters.

In addition, they now have a weekly appearance at the Comedy Shrine, a popular improv and stand-up comedy theater in suburban Chicago.

"We are hoping to travel outside Illinois and throughout the country or beyond to use our gifts to share our love of God and Jesus Christ," Ebert said. "During our shows, we share testimonies, devotions or other presentations to help share the gospel or plant seeds in the hearts of those who might otherwise be closed to the good news."

Ebert was an amateur comedian while growing up in Pocahontas, Va., and later as a student at Bluefield. But he didn't start doing stand-up professionally until after college, where he had been managing and

sports editor for Bluefield's student newspaper. After graduating he began a career in radio in neighboring Bluefield, W.Va., where he became known as deejay "Big Boy Buddy Love" for Star 95-FM.

"I couldn't make up my mind about my career path," said Ebert, who also took part in several community theatre productions after college. "During all the job-hopping, I had an on-again, off-again relationship with God. I never truly pursued a relationship with the Lord — kind of kept Him at arm's length, trying to do things on my own. I got married and divorced and hit some really hard times financially, emotionally, mentally and spiritually."

Finding God's purpose

Still searching, Ebert got into professional wrestling, taking "Big Boy Buddy Love" into the ring until 2012. But not long after, he said he finally woke up to God's call on his life.

"Despite my rebellion God kept reaching out to me," he said. "Finally I started opening up to the idea of reaching out to God. I started praying (and) reading the Bible for the first time. ... I started trying to see what my purpose was."

So with an invitation from his sister to share her apartment near Chicago to help him "start over," Ebert moved to Lombard, Ill., to begin a new career in acting and improvisation. Some of his work has led Ebert to appear in three short films and four roles as an extra in NBC's "Chicago PD," ABC's "Mind Games" and "Betrayal," and an NFL Super Bowl commercial.

But his most rewarding work on stage, he admitted, is the comedy he does with hahahAmen. That, he added, is just one small way he can express his gratitude to God for faithfully and patiently waiting on him to find his purpose. (ABP)

RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services



Assemblies of God turns 100, looks to multiethnic future

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — The Assemblies of God (AG) marked its 100th anniversary Aug. 5–10 from its home base in Springfield, Mo. It is the world's largest Pentecostal denomination.

The centennial events include a summit on church planting. AG members from more than 100 countries will attend the celebration of the "fellowship" that has grown from 300 people gathered in Hot Springs, Ark., in April 1914 to 67.5 million adherents worldwide.

The United States denomination alone is a veritable United Nations of some 3.1 million faithful — with a membership that is 41 percent nonwhite, up from 31 percent a decade ago.

General Superintendent George Wood said the denomination has grown because its members model the methods of the earliest followers of Jesus.

"They were tasked with taking the gospel to every nation," said Wood, 72, who also heads the World Assemblies of God Fellowship. "The word 'nation' in the Greek language is 'ethnos,' or ethnic group. Our task, right from day one, has been to attempt to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ethnic groups of this world and in this country."

Wood and others acknowledge that the Assemblies' racial history has not been unblemished. With roots in the interracial Azusa Street Revival that began in Los Angeles in 1906, the leaders of the AG started out as a group of white men. Bishop Charles H. Mason of the Church of God in Christ, which would eventually become one of the largest black Pentecostal denominations, attended the Hot Springs gathering, but black and white leaders ended up leading segregated groups.

"We did have a slow start," Wood said. "In the last number of decades, we've seen tremendous progress in the United States."

Non-Christian to serve as ambassador for religious freedom

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama on July 28 said he plans to tap Rabbi David Saperstein as the next ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom, the first non-Christian to hold the job, which was created in 1998.

As ambassador, the man named as the most influential rabbi in America by *Newsweek* magazine in 2009 will head the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom and will be tasked with monitoring religious freedom abuses around the world.

A Reform rabbi and lawyer, Saperstein, 66, has led the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism for 40 years and has spent his career in Washington, focusing on social justice and religious freedom issues. He was instrumental in the 1993 passage of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which requires the government to show a compelling reason for any action that impinges upon the exercise of religion.

He was the first chair of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, which was created as a watchdog group in the same act of Congress that created the ambassador-at-large position. In 2009, he was appointed by President Obama to the first White House Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

Bibles return to US Navy base guest rooms

WASHINGTON — The Gideon Bibles are going back in the Navy's nightstand drawers.

In June, the United States Navy ordered housekeepers at thousands of Navy-owned guest lodges near U.S. and international bases to remove the Bibles and any other "religious materials" from their rooms.

But public outcry, prompted by a social media alert from the American Family Association and protests by the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty, led the brass to reverse course Aug. 15.

Now the Navy's "religious accommodation policies with regard to the placement of religious materials are under review," Navy spokesman Cmdr. Ryan Perry wrote in an email to *Stars and Stripes*, the daily military newspaper. Meanwhile the Bibles (New Testament and Psalms but no Hebrew Bible) will be tucked back into nightstand drawers.

A letter from the Wisconsin-based Freedom From Religion Foundation questioning the constitutionality of religious literature in the Navy lodges' 3,000 guest rooms prompted the original order to remove the Bibles. ■