



INSIDE



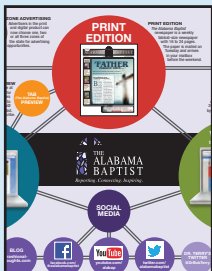
Americans concerned about poor eating habits, study shows

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Christians in the workplace

Are you satisfied with your job?

Christians who are part of a congregation that emphasizes the connection between faith and work report higher job satisfaction than their non-churchgoing colleagues, according to a study recently released by Baylor University.

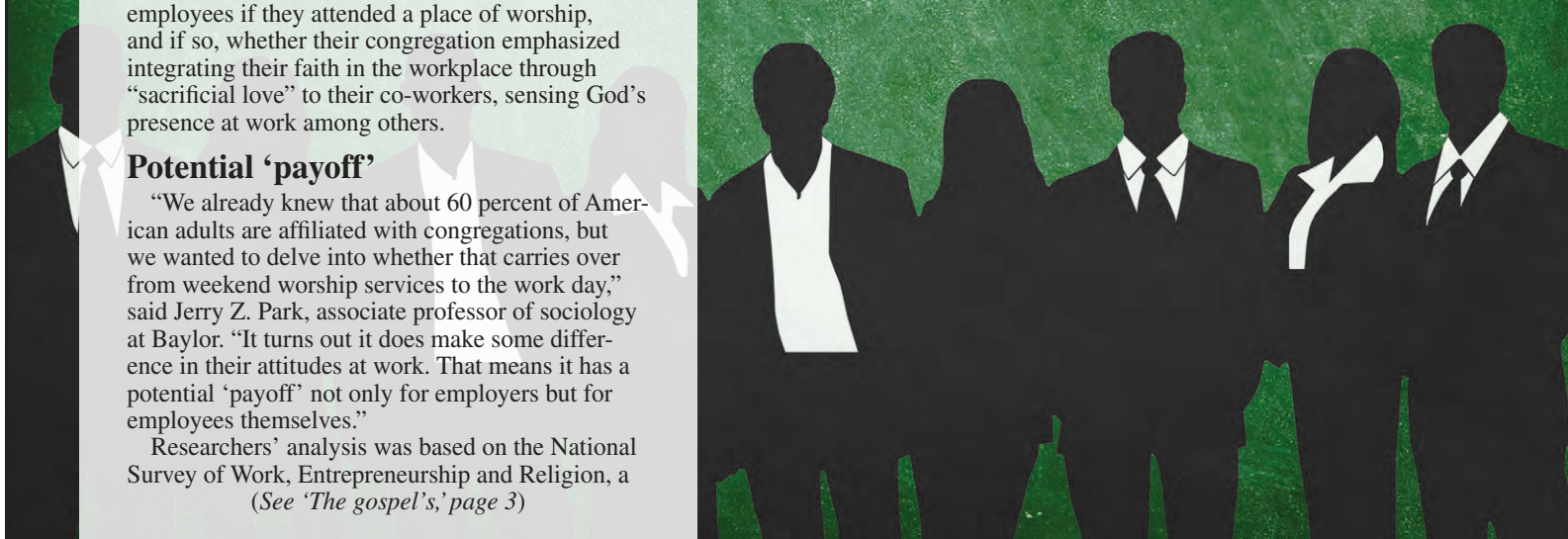
Among the total population of U.S. workers, job satisfaction remains at historic lows. Only 48 percent of American workers say they are satisfied with their jobs, according to the current edition of The Conference Board Job Satisfaction Survey, released in June 2014. However, the study by Baylor sociologists found that job satisfaction increases when workers regularly attend a church that emphasizes the integration of faith and work.

Researchers asked a random sample of full-time employees if they attended a place of worship, and if so, whether their congregation emphasized integrating their faith in the workplace through “sacrificial love” to their co-workers, sensing God’s presence at work among others.

Potential ‘payoff’

“We already knew that about 60 percent of American adults are affiliated with congregations, but we wanted to delve into whether that carries over from weekend worship services to the work day,” said Jerry Z. Park, associate professor of sociology at Baylor. “It turns out it does make some difference in their attitudes at work. That means it has a potential ‘payoff’ not only for employers but for employees themselves.”

Researchers’ analysis was based on the National Survey of Work, Entrepreneurship and Religion, a (See ‘The gospel’s,’ page 3)



Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Colossians 3:23-24

COMMENT

God Working on Our Behalf

Most Christians acknowledge God at work at creation; even that God worked on behalf of humanity as He brought all things into being.

One reads the powerful declaration, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). “Created” is an action word so obviously God was at work. The rest of the chapter is punctuated by the phrase “and God said” Repeatedly the author uses this phrase to introduce new cycles of work as God created all things through the power of His Word.

The chapter concludes with God creating humanity — male and female — and giving them together dominion over creation itself. Humanity was different from all other creation because humanity alone was created in the image of God. It was only humankind that God invited into relationship with Himself and welcomed to join Him in continuing creation by caring for the garden in which Adam and Eve lived.

The story of creation illustrates that God works on our behalf.

Redemption

The story of redemption teaches the same truth. Humanity forsook God to pursue its own selfish desires (Gen. 3:1–7). The God who had worked on humanity’s behalf in creation was abandoned for the idol of self and sin entered the world.

But God would not give up on humankind. Ultimately God worked again. His “Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). In Jesus Christ, God acted to create a new humanity (1 Cor. 15:22). When Jesus died on the cross the righteousness of God was satisfied. The price of sin was paid, not by a human being like Adam or Eve but by the Word of God that became flesh and dwelt among us, through the only begotten Son of God.

Once again God acted on behalf of humankind. He built a bridge across the chasm caused by sin that no human being could do alone. He restored the relationship of fellowship with every human being who would believe on the name of the only begotten son of God (John 3:16).

Creation and redemption demonstrate God working on behalf of all humanity. God also works on behalf of particular human beings.



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Exodus 16 recounts the disheartened Israelites complaining about their conditions. They were about six weeks into their journey. The fantasy of an easy existence following their flight from Egypt was gone. So were their resources. They were hungry and out of food. The people grumbled that it would have been better to die in Egypt than to starve to death in the desert.

The passage tells how God promised to “rain down bread from heaven” every morning for the people to eat as well as quail each evening. God gave specific instructions about how much to gather and said obedience to the instructions would show how much the people trusted the Lord.

The people called the bread manna (v. 31). “It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey.” Verse 35 says, “The Israelites ate manna 40 years, until they came to a land that was settled; they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan.”

Learning from manna

The story shows God working, this time on behalf of a particular people with a particular problem. But there is more to be learned from the story about the manna.

By the time described in Joshua 5, Joshua had succeeded Moses as leader of Israel. The Israelites had crossed the Jordan River and

were at last ready to enter the “land of milk and honey” — the land promised to their forefather Abraham.

Their first campsite after crossing the Jordan River was at Gilgal. Most scholars place the site just north of Jericho between the fortress city and the river. There the Israelites observed the Passover so we know the river crossing was made in the spring of the year.

Verse 11 marks a significant change for Israel and a lesson for us. The verse says the day after the Passover, the children of Israel did not eat manna. Instead they ate “the produce of the land.” Specifically they ate unleavened bread and roasted grain.

Producing milk and honey

What they ate had been produced by the land. Even the description of the Promised Land — a land of milk and honey — implies not only abundance but also work to produce the milk and honey.

Interestingly verse 12 says, “The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna from the Israelites but that year they ate of the produce of Canaan.”

Is it coincidence that the manna stopped exactly at the time the Israelites had other options? No. God may sometimes intervene and provide miraculous solutions to our problems but the expectation is that we are to work with the resources available to solve our problems.

It is a mistake to act as if we can live by our own strength and not acknowledge our need for God. It is equally wrong to acknowledge our need for God and do nothing to solve our problems. This principle has sometimes been expressed in the quip to “pray like it all depends on God and work like it all depends on you.”

One writer explained it this way, “Our ability to produce does not arise solely from our ability or diligence but also from the resources available to us. Conversely the land does not work itself. By the sweat of our faces must we produce bread.”

As the nation turns its attention to the Labor Day holiday, it is important to look for ways God is working on our behalf today. It also is important to dedicate ourselves to the work God has given us to do. Both actions are necessary to accomplish God’s will for our lives. 🙏

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September 1

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

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The gospel's application

Workplace is a strategic place for Kingdom influence, Peel says

(continued from page 1)

2010 Web-based survey of 1,022 full-time workers. Their findings concentrated on three areas:

▶ **Job satisfaction:** Full-time workers who regularly attend a congregation that emphasizes integrating their faith at work report higher job satisfaction.

▶ **Job commitment:** Full-time workers who regularly attend a congregation that emphasizes integrating their faith at work report higher commitment to their place of employment.

▶ **Entrepreneurship:** People who are actively involved in congregations that promote integration of faith with work are more likely to describe themselves as entrepreneurial. However, attendance seems to impede entrepreneurship — perhaps because time and energy spent in entrepreneurial endeavors leaves less time for church attendance.

Researchers measured the three areas using a 15-item Congregational Faith at Work Scale, Park said. That scale includes such items as whether respondents sense God's presence while they work, whether they view their work as having eternal significance, whether they

view co-workers as being made in the image of God, whether they believe they should demonstrate "sacrificial love" toward co-workers and whether they believe God wants them to develop their abilities and talents at work.

Workplace attitudes such as job commitment also were evaluated by a variety of items that asked how much participants felt like "part of the family" at their organization, how efficiently they get proposed actions through "bureaucratic red tape" and whether they "went to bat" for good ideas of co-workers.

"Religious participation is an active part of life for millions of Americans, and it is relevant in other domains," the study concluded.

The connection between faith and work is relevant because work was the first commission given to man in the Garden of Eden, said

Bill Peel, author of "Workplace Grace" and founding executive director of The Center for Faith & Work at LeTourneau University in Longview, Texas. It is important to think of work as a good gift of God, something that we are called to do, he said.

"God expects us to work and wants us to work. Work gives people dignity. If you

want to destroy human flourishing, take work away," Peel said.

Between Sundays, Americans spend 8 to 10 hours a day at work, and for most Christians the workplace is a strategic place for Kingdom influence. Churches can and should encourage members to think about what the gospel means to the work, Peel said.

"We should be going to work for the same reason we go to church — to worship God and serve our fellow man. So if believers are going to work unchallenged, unprepared and unthoughtful about what God would have them do in the workplace, they are missing the gospel's application in the biggest, most controlling area of their lives," Peel said.

Spiritual resources

By isolating themselves from God during work hours, believers are not able to draw from the spiritual resources and wisdom the Bible offers for everyday living. However, by joining God's work at the workplace, great things can happen, Peel said.

"If Christians in the workplace today will seize the spiritual opportunities they have, who knows what extraordinary things God will do with the ordinary workplace moments they give to Him." (ABP, Carrie Brown McWhorter contributed)

**For more information about the
integration of faith and work, visit
centerforfaithandwork.com.**

Elementary teacher shares how her faith influences her work

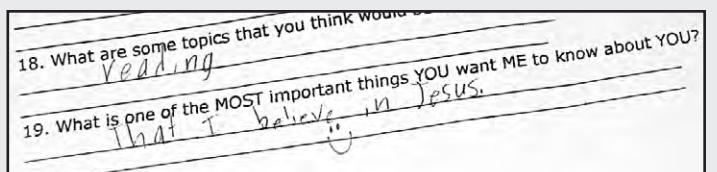


Photos by Carrie Brown McWhorter

Carrie Skinner (right), a fourth-grade teacher at Fruithurst Elementary School, says her faith influences her work every day. "Being a teacher has definitely deepened my walk with the Lord because I see God daily in the eyes and smiles of my students.

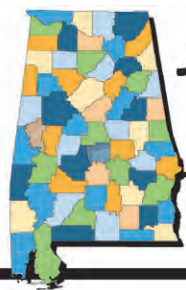
Students like Christian Scott (left) encourage her with their fearless testimonies, such as what he wrote on the first-day of school survey. "We have so much to learn from children about how to be open about our relationship with the Lord," Skinner said.

Skinner is a member of First Baptist Church, White Plains, Anniston, which has applied for membership in Calhoun Baptist Association. (Carrie Brown McWhorter)



*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name
of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

Colossians 3:17



Across ALABAMA'S Associations

BESSEMER

► Addie Dennis, a member of **Shady Grove Church, Lacey's Chapel**, since 1942, celebrated her 100th birthday Aug. 18. She has served in many roles. The church said she has touched many people's lives and wishes her a happy birthday. Patrick Buckner is pastor.

BIBB

► **Mount Carmel Church, West Blocton**, will hold the Sisters Following Christ Women's Retreat on Sept. 13, 8 a.m.–noon with lunch to follow. Tanya Goodson-McLemore, Wendy Hall and Paula Shelby will speak. All women are invited and there will be door prizes. For information call Donna Ellis at 205-938-1374. Robert Smith is pastor.

CHILTON

► **Concord Church, Clanton**, will celebrate its 115th homecoming Sept. 14. Services will be at 10:30 a.m. with guest singers Justified and special guest preacher John Will Wyatt. Lunch will follow at noon. There will be no afternoon or evening services. Everyone is invited. Randal Mims is pastor.

COFFEE

► The annual Coffee County Christian Single's Appreciation Luncheon will be Sept. 14 from 12:15–2:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall of **Hillcrest Church, Enterprise**. Motivational speaker John S. Riley will speak. Reservations are required. RSVP no later than 10 a.m. Sept. 11 by calling 334-894-6411 or email CoffeeCoChristianSingles@gmail.com. John Granger is director of missions and Michael Mynatt is pastor of Hillcrest.

GENEVA

► **Bryan Klobe** is the new pastor of **New Hinson Church, Slocomb**. He and his wife, Dena, have two children. The church also will host a senior adult revival Sept. 4. Services will begin at 9:45 a.m. Sammy Gilbreath will speak. Lunch will be provided. Call Geneva Association at 334-588-3276 with the number attending from your church by Aug. 29.

MOBILE

► **Union Church, Grand Bay**, will hold revival Sept. 14–17. Services will be

Sunday at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. and Monday–Wednesday at 7 p.m. Dwight Smith, director of missions for Wayne County Association in Mississippi, will speak. Bob Smith will lead worship. David Walley is pastor.

MONTGOMERY

► **Wayne Cobb** is the new minister of evangelism and outreach for **The Church at Eastern Oaks, Montgomery**. He



COBB

is a graduate of the University of West Alabama and has been serving in ministry for many years with a passion and dedication for spreading the gospel. He previously served in the same role at Snowdown Church, Montgomery. He and his wife, Sherryl, have

two children and five grandchildren. Daniel Gillenwater is pastor.

ST. CLAIR

► **Eden Westside Church, Pell City**, will host a senior adult event "Give Me That Mountain" on Sept. 6, 9 a.m. Keynote speakers will be Kevin Hamm, Harris Malcolm, Wilburn & Wilburn and Jay Parrack. Breakfast will be provided prior to 9 a.m. There is a cost for lunch. Registration is preferred. To register visit edenwestside.org or call 205-338-7711. Jacky Connell is pastor. ► **McEntyre Church, Ashville**, will hold a singing Aug. 31, 2 p.m. Special singers will be Paul Harbison and Damascus Road. Everyone is welcome. The church also will hold revival Sept. 14–17, 6:30 p.m. Jerry Caylor will speak. Bobby Joe Winningham is pastor.

TALLAPOOSA

► **Craig Guy** is the new pastor of **Sandy Creek Church, Camp Hill**. He and his wife, Elizabeth Ann, have four children and five grandchildren.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Timothy Plant**, minister of education and administration for **Calvary Church, Tuscaloosa**, celebrated 15 years of ministry at the church Aug. 24 during all three of the morning worship services. Tim Lovett is pastor.



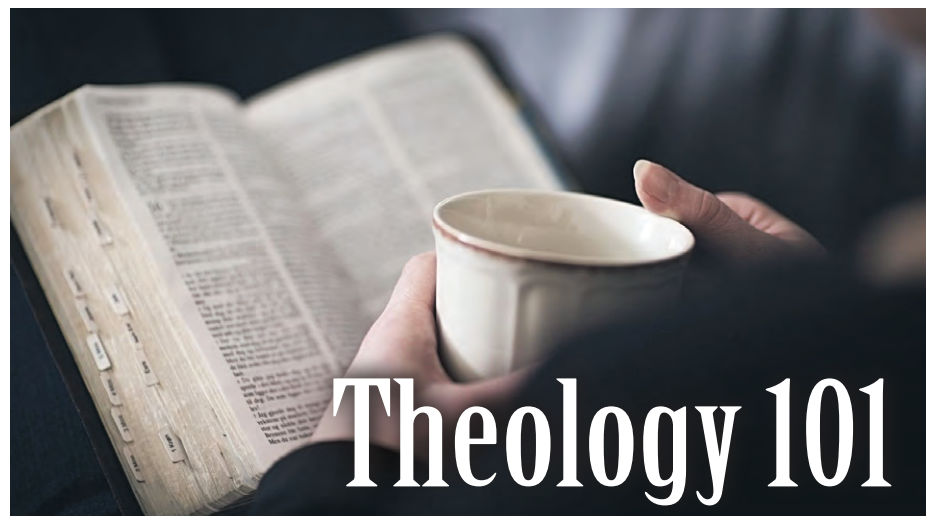
PLANT

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **Salem Macon Church, Notasulga**, will hold a fifth Sunday night singing Aug. 31, 6 p.m. Debra Perry and Jaidyn's Call will sing. Mike Stephens is pastor.

WINSTON

► **Grace Church, Haleyville**, will celebrate homecoming Sept. 7. Worship will begin at 10 a.m. Sherman Kimbrough will speak and lunch will be at noon. Heaven's Song will sing in the afternoon. Everyone is invited. Ricky Thrasher is pastor. ☪



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Holy Spirit and Holy Persons

Filled with the Spirit

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

A summary description of what happened when God poured out the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost includes the statement, "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). Later when the early Church faced persecution, the leaders prayed for boldness to continue their witness. God's response to their prayer was powerful and to the point, "And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). Thus the early days of the Church furnishes us two examples of people being filled with the Spirit.

Later when the Church was expanding into other places under the missionary ministry of the apostle Paul, letters were written to the newly founded churches. One such letter was written to believers in Ephesus. Toward the end of that letter we read the two-part command, "Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). In the New Testament we find not only examples of people filled with the Spirit, but also we read the direct command for us to be filled with the Spirit. When the Bible gives us a command failure to live up to it is sin. Not wishing to sin concerning this commandment, we must inquire what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

A divine Person

The idea of being filled immediately causes us to think of a substance being put into a container in such quantity that the container becomes filled with the substance. But then we remind ourselves that the Holy Spirit is not a substance but a divine Person. Furthermore, we are not mere containers into which something is poured until we get full. So let us change our image from substance filling a container to a divine Person taking control of our lives.

In the early days of the Church in Jerusalem the Sadducees joined with the high priest in opposition to the

apostles. Acts 5:17 reads that they "were filled with jealousy." We do not think that somehow their heads or hearts were opened for someone to pour a quantity of jealousy into them. Rather we understand that jealousy took control of their thoughts and actions, and so much so, that the controlling jealousy led them to imprison the apostles. Being "filled with" was a way of saying being "controlled by."

Unrighteous qualities

Similarly Romans 1:29 speaks of people filled with all manner of unrighteousness, such as evil, covetousness and malice. They were full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and maliciousness. We do not read this passage and imagine that someone opened up their hearts and heads and poured into them a full measure of unrighteousness. Rather we understand that such attitudes and behaviors as envy or strife or deceit took control of their thoughts and actions. Those being described were found to be driven or controlled by murder and deceit and therefore filled with all manner of unrighteousness.


Just as such unrighteous qualities are not substances that fill a human container, so the Holy Spirit is not a substance that fills a believer. Many find it helpful to think of being filled with the Spirit as a way of living and thinking in which we invite the Holy Spirit to control us. As the Holy Spirit continues to control us we find that our days begin to be filled with such admirable qualities as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5:22–23). ☪

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.



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What are you eating?

Americans concerned about poor eating habits, study shows

For good reason, the obesity epidemic gets a lot of press these days.

Whether it's Michelle Obama's initiatives to curb childhood obesity — one in three American children is overweight or obese — or recent criticisms lobbed by Congress at Dr. Oz for his promotion of “miracle cures” for obesity, there is no shortage of media coverage sounding the alarm about America's nutritional emergency.

But what do Americans themselves say about what they eat?

The short answer? Too much.

Nearly half of Americans are concerned they eat too much (47 percent). With growing knowledge about food and its effects on health, and the availability of so many online resources and diet apps, it comes as no surprise that younger adults are more concerned about how much they eat, and what they eat, than older adults.

Millennials — born between 1984 and 2002 — are the generation most likely to

say they are very or somewhat concerned about how much they eat (57 percent). In contrast, far fewer Elders — born in 1945 or earlier — express concern about eating too much (30 percent). Gen-Xers (49 percent) and Boomers (44 percent) fall between these extremes.

Concern among young adults

This pattern, in which concern about eating habits is greatest among young adults, emerges on a number of food-related topics studied in a new Barna Group study among Americans 18 and older. Overall young adults are twice as likely as Elders to express concern about their eating habits.

There is a similar contrast between the levels of concern expressed by practicing Christians (55 percent) and by Americans who adhere to a faith other than Christianity (42 percent) or to no faith at all (41 percent). Those who attended church within the past month (56 percent) also tend to be more concerned about eating too much than marginally church (46 percent) and unchurched (40 percent) adults.

Beyond the amount of food they consume, what concerns Americans most about their eating habits?

The past decade has seen an explosion of healthier alternatives (depending on what you order) to traditional fast food, such as Chipotle, Corner Bakery and Panera Bread. National demand continues to grow for healthier dining-out options as well as for easier access to more organic foods.

Despite the availability of healthier choices, however, half of all Americans say they are concerned they eat too much unhealthy food (51 percent) and one-third say they eat too much fast food (37 percent).

Again Millennials are much more likely to express concern about unhealthy eating and fast food consumption than Gen-Xers, Boomers and Elders.

Perhaps thanks to the popularity of nutrition and fitness regimes like Weigh Down Workshop and Rick Warren's Daniel Plan, practicing Christians (53 percent) express more worry about unhealthy food than Americans who adhere to non-Christian faiths (40 percent). Similarly more practicing Christians (15 percent) are very concerned about eating too much fast food compared to Americans of other (8 percent) or no faith (9 percent).

The well-documented “grocery gap” in America's cities may be partially at fault

when it comes to the high levels of concern about unhealthy eating among black (62 percent) and Hispanic (58 percent) adults, compared to a lower percentage of whites (49 percent). And the high concentration of fast food restaurants in many urban neighborhoods likely affects

Two out of five adults say they are concerned they do not eat enough homemade food.

the high number of Hispanic (60 percent) and black (46 percent) Americans who say they are worried about too much fast food (vs. 30 percent of whites).

Kids have a reputation for hating veggies, but according to a majority of Americans vegetables and fruit are not very popular among adults either: Nearly two-thirds of adults (63 percent) report they are concerned about not

eating enough fresh produce. Once more generational and ethnic differences follow the established pattern. Millennials (29 percent) are more than seven times more likely than Elders (4 percent) to say they are very concerned about their low level of fruit and vegetable consumption. The percentage of Hispanics (32 percent) who express this concern is nearly double the proportion of whites (18 percent).

Two out of five adults say they are concerned they do not eat enough homemade food (42 percent), and one-third say they worry about unpredictable mealtimes (37 percent). These concerns are most common among Millennials and nonwhite Americans. (Barna Group)

I'm worried I eat too much

Millennials	57%
Gen-Xers	49%
Boomers	44%
Elders	30%

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Christ-centered patient care



Obamacare won't change the way faith-based hospitals in Alabama deliver care, leaders say

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

Faith-based health care providers in Alabama say it is too soon to know how the Affordable Care Act (ACA) will affect their patients, but they insist that any changes will not interfere with their mission to provide quality and timely Christ-centered medical care.

Though more than half of Americans still view the law unfavorably, the ACA — also known as Obamacare — is now the law. While almost everyone agrees the 3,000-page law passed by Congress and signed by President Barack Obama in 2010 is far from perfect, health care providers don't have the

luxury of watching all the wrangling from the sidelines.

Peter Selman, CEO of Baptist Medical Center South in Montgomery, sees potential benefits for patients if the law corrects the worst problems of the old model of health care, a system he called “unsustainable.”

Positive changes

“The status quo was very broken. Our nation's health care system is inefficient, inconsistent, fragmented and unaffordable for most Americans. Change was necessary,” Selman said.

One of the positive changes Selman sees happening as a result of the ACA is an increased focus on wellness. In the past, hospitals were rewarded for having beds filled

with sick people, he said. Now the focus has shifted to preventing and managing diseases.

“We are focused on transforming our organization away from a ‘fee for service’ model to a model that provides incentives to manage the health of all citizens in our region,” Selman said.

The ACA's goal of providing access to health insurance for more Americans has potential benefits as well, Selman said.

“The law has successfully enabled millions of the estimated 50 million uninsured Americans to get health care coverage,” he said. “Having health care insurance does not always equate to seamless health care access, but it is an important first step.”

Hugh Greene, CEO of Baptist Health in Jacksonville, Fla., said in a 2013 presentation that spiraling costs and increasing numbers of uninsured patients have been driving the need for health care reform for several years. Still the bill in its current

form has many flaws, he said. For example, malpractice reform, a huge factor driving up costs of health care, did not make it into the law for political reasons.

In addition, the Supreme Court decision allowing states to refuse federal funds for Medicaid expansion has hurt hospitals, Greene said. Under the ACA, hospitals voluntarily took a cut in the amount they are reimbursed by Medicare, thinking the increase in newly insured patients from Medicaid expansion would more than make up the difference, Greene said.

Early reports indicate hospitals are getting a stronger-than-expected benefit from a new influx of low-income patients whose bills are paid by the government's Medicaid program. Nashville-based HCA Holdings, Inc., the nation's largest for-profit hospital chain, reported a 6.6 percent drop in uninsured patients at its 165 hospitals. In four



Photo courtesy of Baptist Health System



Photo courtesy of Baptist Health System

A Baptist Health System doctor meets with a patient.

“Our nation's health care system is inefficient, inconsistent, fragmented and unaffordable for most Americans. Change was necessary.”

Peter Selman
CEO, Baptist Medical Center South

“The ACA aside, we believe the future in health care comes down to greater coordination of care. As such, we have invested resources ... to create an integrated health delivery system to provide the highest level of care as efficiently and as cost-effectively as possible.”

**Greg Johnston
senior vice president and CFO
Baptist Health System**

states that expanded Medicaid, the reduction grows to 48 percent.

However, a number of states, including Alabama, refused to accept the increased federal funds for Medicaid. As a result some patients in Alabama have lost their prior insurance coverage and many others are still doing without, said Greg Johnston, senior vice president and CFO of Baptist Health System (BHS) in Birmingham.

“The intent of the ACA is to lower the number of uninsured by expanding Medicaid and increasing commercial insurance coverage by providing subsidies on the health insurance exchange. However, without expanded Medicaid the number of uninsured patients has remained the same — actually increased slightly — and those now covered on the exchange were previously covered by individual policies or some other private plan,” he said. “So we’re not seeing more insured patients and we’re being paid less for our Medicare patients,” Johnston said. (See more about Medicaid reform in related article, this page.)

Another major problem is higher costs to patients, a problem BHS is trying to mediate.

“As a hospital system, one greater role we’re playing with our patients deals with the patient’s insurance coverage. Under ACA, most plans now require higher out-of-pocket payments for co-pays and deductibles, so we’re now providing more education and working with patients as they pay a higher share of the reimbursement,” Johnston said.

Despite the challenges, both Selman and Johnston say their hospitals and providers are committed to working within the law to deliver quality patient care in a Christ-centered manner.

Leadership role

Selman said, “As the largest health care system in central Alabama, Baptist Health enthusiastically embraces the leadership role in reforming health care. We are well-positioned to meet these challenges and we expect our communities to look to us to be the captain of this ship.”

Johnston said, “The ACA aside, we believe the future in health care comes down to greater coordination of care. As such, we have invested resources, and our physicians are investing time and resources, to create an integrated health delivery system to provide the highest level of care as efficiently and as cost-effectively as possible.” (ABP contributed)

Caring for the ‘least of these’

Not expanding Medicaid hurts everyone, Mitchell says

By Ross Mitchell
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Alabama’s continuing refusal to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) not only leaves some 200,000 struggling workers without a health safety net, it also threatens our hospitals’ mission to provide medical care when and where it is needed.

Additionally it hinders faith-based hospitals from carrying out the Creator’s mandate to care for the “least of these.” Both the Old Testament and the New Testament point out a Christian’s obligation to provide opportunities for health and wholeness to all regardless of their economic or social standing.

Luke 8 records the story of a woman who had spent all her resources on her health and still suffered. In faith she reasoned that if she could just touch the hem of Jesus’ garment she could be healed. She was correct because Jesus never refused to heal anyone who came to Him. Faith-based hospitals are the means of connecting the physically hurting and medically impoverished to the healing touch of the Savior. Faith-based hospitals will continue to offer medical care to anyone who needs it, but at some point the resources will reach a critically low point that will force our compassionate caregivers to turn them away instead of welcoming them with open arms.

As written, the ACA would have been a break-even scenario for hospitals. ACA funding cuts and other factors would have been offset by revenue created when more people were insured through both the federally subsidized insurance exchanges and the expansion of Medicaid for adults earning less than 138 percent of the federal poverty level.

But the U.S. Supreme Court allowed states to opt out. Alabama, with nearly 700,000 uninsured adults in 2013, is among 24 states that have not expanded Medicaid.

The decision puts a multi-billion-dollar dent in Alabama hospitals, already battered by the recent Great Recession.

The ACA’s funding cuts will cost Alabama hospitals some \$4 billion through 2022. Again these losses could have been offset by approximately \$7 billion in re-

imbursements under expanded Medicaid, a new study by the Urban Institute shows.

Many Alabama hospitals already are in a dangerous downward spiral, with rural facilities at greatest risk. Eight rural hospitals have closed in Alabama since January 2012. Without the economic boost from expanded Medicaid, many others face serious service reductions or even closure.

The effects of hospital closures are devastating and widespread. Traveling farther for medical help can be a life-or-death matter for someone having a stroke or heart attack, or for a mom ready to deliver a newborn with possible complications.

The economic impact ripples across the county and surrounding areas. Hospitals often are among the top employers and pay top wages. In some rural areas, hospital workers earn \$250–\$350 a week above the county’s average wage. Alabama’s health care industry employs 80,000; their wages indirectly support another 79,000 jobs.

Hospital employees and visitors also bring in business and sales taxes. Hospitals are, in sum, a community’s lifeblood.

Alabama is parsimonious on eligibility for standard Medicaid. A family of three must make less than \$3,600 a year (\$68 weekly) for adults to qualify.

Nearly 342,000 uninsured adults in Alabama would qualify for expanded Medicaid under the ACA Medicaid eligibility guidelines, almost totally funded by tax dollars generated in Alabama but held by the federal government.

Working adults

The majority — 185,000 adults — are working. They are cooks, servers, cashiers, office clerks, barbers, child care workers, mechanics and janitors, a new study by Families USA shows. Another 82,000 do not participate in the workforce, including at-home spouses, the disabled and college-age students.

Only 22 percent of those who would qualify for an expanded program are unemployed, the Families USA study said. Considering the vast number of laid-off professionals still unable to find equivalent jobs, it would be unreasonable to dismiss Medicaid expansion as a handout for those who don’t want to work.

ACA-subsidized insurance is available only to adults above the federal poverty lev-

el, less than \$20,000 a year (\$381 weekly) for a family of three. Among those who would have qualified for expanded Medicaid, 74 percent do not earn enough money for subsidized insurance.

Because elected state leaders opted out of expanding Medicaid, some 254,000 Alabamians fall into an “insurance gap,” with no options for affordable coverage.

Hospitals have suffered in recent years as recession job losses left tens of thousands without insurance. And the cost of providing care to these individuals has soared by more than 150 percent at some hospitals from 2008 to 2012.

Financial benefit

So why add Medicaid patients?

Under the ACA, federal tax dollars will cover 100 percent of costs for expanded-Medicaid patients through 2016. Reimbursements will taper to 90 percent by 2020 and stay at that level. The entire health care industry, not just hospitals, will benefit financially.

Critics say state government cannot absorb the additional costs after 2016. But a University of Alabama study shows the economic benefit to taxpayers from expansion would exceed costs by \$935 million through 2020.

The trade-off for expanding Medicaid is \$13.41 in federal money for every \$1 state taxpayers spend to expand coverage for the poor, the Urban Institute calculates. Refusing Medicaid expansion could cost Alabama taxpayers \$14.4 billion in extra federal funding through 2022, the Urban Institute says.

Credible studies say expansion could result in 32,000 additional jobs paying \$1.3 billion, providing a \$20 billion overall benefit to Alabama through 2020.

We will pay the same federal taxes regardless. But by refusing to expand Medicaid, Alabama now subsidizes

the states that did. Alabamians already pay more in federal taxes than we get back in funding.

The state needs the jobs and economic boost. Hospitals deserve a fighting chance from a balanced ACA. Employers seek a healthier, more productive workforce. Cities and counties are measured by their hospitals and staff.

People’s lives and well-being depend on a robust health care industry.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Ross Mitchell is vice president of external and governmental affairs for Baptist Health System in Birmingham.



MITCHELL

“People’s lives and well-being depend on a robust health care industry.”

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Historical HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



50 Years Ago August 1964

A Family Affair: The pastors of several sister churches and the deacons of Graysville First Baptist Church composed the council for the examination of Jack Brymer for the gospel ministry. Introduction to the ordination service was made by the pastor, David S. Holman. W.C. Mason made the recommendation to the church from the council that Brymer be ordained. Talmadge Brymer, brother of the candidate, led the opening prayer and Gene Brymer, brother of the candidate, rendered the solo, "I'll Walk with God," accompanied by James Garner at the organ. Joe Brymer, father of the candidate, preached the ordination sermon. Jack Brymer served Graysville First Baptist Church for six years as minister of music and as a deacon.

40 Years Ago August 1974

Laymen Answer Request: Ten Christian laymen from the Birmingham area packed their work clothes and tools and made a trip to the small island of Antigua to construct a building to be used

for educational purposes. The project was under the direction of Shelby Smith, missionary to Antigua, who while on furlough spoke to churches in Alabama about the need. One particular church, First Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove, in Birmingham Baptist Association took up the challenge and arranged for six of its laymen to travel to Antigua and build the structure. Making the trip were Reginald Stokes, pastor of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church; Charles Armstrong, Jack Vice, David Johnson, Gary Tender, Bill Andrews and A.J. Muse, all members of Pleasant Grove Baptist. The remaining volunteers were Raymond Martin, Horace Vines, E.G. Norris and Cecil Nelson, all from the Birmingham area. Nelson is pastor of West Side Baptist Church in Bessemer Baptist Association.

30 Years Ago August 1984

Christian Resort Being Built: Pastor Floyd Spears and the 70-member Dauphin Island Baptist Church play host every summer to church youth and choir groups from across the Southeast.

A new addition to the church's resort ministry is an 18-room dormitory-style building now being completed. Groups coming to Dauphin Island and using the facilities do not come just for rest and recreation. The visitors conduct Bible studies and lead programs with juveniles in the Mobile County Youth Center. Youth groups usually learn of the Dauphin Island ministries through the Home Mission Board. Spears, called to preach at the age of 51, has served as pastor of Dauphin Island for 11 years.

20 Years Ago August 1994

Return from Antigua: Nineteen persons from Lamar Baptist Association have returned from Antigua where they assisted Villa Baptist Church, St. Johns, Antigua, with a Vacation Bible School (VBS) and revival services in July. They represented five of the association's 26 churches and were 15 to 70 years old. David Woods, pastor of First Baptist Church, Vernon, preached the revival. Missionaries John and Cheryl Hamilton and their daughter, Beth, helped with VBS and Sam McK-

ay, director of missions for Lamar Association, led the group.

10 Years Ago August 2004

Standing In the Generation Gap: Preacher Lee Waldrep of Lawrence County always said the Lord would send someone to carry on his ministry. In 1960, he held his infant great-grandson and knew this was the one. Fast forward to 2004. That baby, Phil Waldrep, has grown up to head Phil Waldrep Ministries, an organization that ministers to thousands of people each year through revivals, conferences, books and missions outreach. Waldrep and his family are members of Central Baptist Church, Decatur. Waldrep was called into the ministry in 1975 at the age of 14. He was in demand almost immediately for revivals and other special services. Senior adult and marriage retreats followed. According to Waldrep, his ancestor always wore a white shirt when he preached. Waldrep does the same. "When I preach, I always wear a white shirt as my silent tribute, as a reminder of who he was," Waldrep said. "I live in his legacy all the time." ❧

Want to know GOD?

Pastor Scott Moore
Crooked Oak Baptist Church, Tusculum

I am intrigued by the title for this column — "Want to Know God?" It says a lot. People desire meaningful relationships and they instinctively know the most important relationship is with God Himself. Unfortunately that desire, like the biblical concept of sin itself, totally misses the mark.

Several years ago my family and I joined a megachurch, a sizable congregation where on any given Sunday morning 10,000 members and guests would be in attendance.

Mind you I was not just one of the many "faces in the crowd." I was a paid, adjunct staff member assisting with the preschool department. As a quasi-staff member I had met the pastor on several occasions, both officially and unofficially. I could honestly say that I knew the pastor.

Several years and one church later, a friend of mine and I attended a conference in which this megachurch pastor was one of the speakers. I wanted to introduce my friend to the pastor, so we found him after his message.

I extended my hand to my old acquaintance — my now former pastor. My intention was to first reintroduce myself to him and then introduce my friend. I said, "Pastor you may not remember me, but I was a member of your church for five years."

Unabashedly he replied, "God bless you, my brother ... and what's your name?" Somewhat deflatedly, I replied, "Scott. And this is my friend, John."

The point of this story is that I knew the pastor but he didn't know me. Similarly Jesus, according to Matthew 7:23, will say to a group of stunned sycophants, "'I never knew you? depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.'"

The most important question is not, "Want to know God?" but rather, "Does God know you?" Good works will not get you into heaven. Establishing a relationship with Jesus will. And Jesus wants to know you. Examine Romans 10:13 and then introduce yourself. You and Jesus will both be glad that you did. ❧

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Rashional thoughts

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Executive editor • jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

Which group best describes your youth?

The two church youth groups had similar missions — feed the families and entertain the kids — but the experiences could not have been any more different.

Both groups helped out at the local Ronald McDonald House on subsequent Saturday afternoons. The families there have children facing life-threatening illnesses who are being treated at a nearby children's hospital.

Weekends are some of the loneliest moments for the families because there are typically no (or few) medical appointments for those who are not in the hospital. The days can be long without visitors or planned activities.

So organized groups coming in are always a welcome sight. And youth groups are especially exciting for the kids.

Of course, adult leaders tagged along with the youth groups, supervising the afternoon activities and evening meal. And both meals turned out to be very tasty.

The difference came in the interaction with the kids.

The first group was small in number but large in heart. Only a handful of young people helped out, and there was nothing fancy to their setup or delivery. Still they clicked well with the kids. They basically walked around engaging the children until a connection was made. From there, that student would play with the child the rest of the afternoon, even eating with him or her during the evening meal if the family OK'd it.

Lacking in heart

The second group was large in number but not so large in heart, at least as a whole. I noticed a few individuals who were trying to do more, but most of the group spent a great deal of time in a circle chatting and laughing with each other.

They did an amazing job setting the area up like a carnival, but few took time to man the booths. The few activities with a supervisor were fun for the

kids, but the other activities were barely touched. Someone nearby would wave us off, saying, "Do whatever you want" when we approached the unmanned booths.

Most members of the group did not even try to interact with the kids, even though the kids tried to pull them into various activities. A few of the students were kind enough to go along with the activities at first, but they were looking to be rescued after a few minutes.

Disappointed kids

I saw several disappointed kids who picked up the vibes from this group quickly. And being a personality type who can't sit by while such injustice takes place, I had to attempt to remedy the situation. After all, if you came here to minister to kids with cancer, then why are you in a huddle practicing your cheerleading moves or sitting around a table whispering with your backs to everyone else?

I wanted to be frustrated with the students, but as I looked for the adult supervisors I found them in huddles of their own.

So I started introducing children to members of the youth group and suggesting activities they could do together. Some of the youth cooperated but were stiff and barely spoke to the children. Others said they had other responsibilities, so they could not play with the kids. They would tell me this and then walk back over to a group and stand around and talk for 30 or 45 more minutes.

I have to believe this second group was the exception and not the rule, but it gave me a new appreciation for youth leaders who are teaching and modeling appropriate behavior and witness.

It also reminded me to be thoughtful and responsible about the roles we take on to "help" others. We should always make sure our motives are pure and that we are willing to truly participate — not just show up and say we did. ☞

Rashional Extras...

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Efficiency – Speed – Accuracy – Productivity

By Bob Cosby, M.D.
Birmingham, Ala.

In response to your July 31 "Rashional Thoughts" on efficiency, I propose another view.

Not often considered when we are waiting in line and wishing other people would hurry up is that everyone has their own personal energy level, and everyone has a very individual mental data processing speed with a safe speed limit to their capabilities.

Yes there is probably an average mental processing speed and an average range of speeds. However, the normal range is wide and in a given individual whom we are observing we cannot know what their capability is at a given moment in time while under our observation. A relatively slow speed may be normal for them.

Yes a person may be slothful, unmotivated or exhibiting passive aggression by intentionally working slowly to aggravate you, but there are several other possibilities.

Reasons for slow mental processing speeds include sleep deprivation, fatigue, anxiety, distractions, depression, medication effects, physical illness, pain and birth defects.

As we gain age and maturity we slow down in lots of ways. In addition we acquire a lot of data. Processing this data appropriately to make safe decisions takes extra time, which will seem slow to younger persons.

When an individual's cognitive processing limit is exceeded, excessive errors will occur. Since errors create more work for everyone than the time gained, work done over the speed limit can be worse than useless.

The problem is that we are all constantly judging others by our

own cruising speed at a given time. Those we see whom are faster may be admired or they may seem reckless or hyperactive. Many individuals increase the disparity between themselves and others on a daily basis by getting artificially wired on caffeine or other substances. In this situation they have only themselves to blame when others seem slower.

We should perhaps compare others' performances to what our slow processing speed was when we were last worried, ill, depressed or in pain. At those times we expected others to tolerate our slow speed and to appreciate our efforts in trying to function despite our problems.

Thankfully God is in control of all these variables, both in ourselves and others, and He uses them to build His character in us. His Bible says, "Trials produce patience, and patience produces the will of God."

It's perhaps better to see apparently inefficient and slow-speed delays as opportunities to pray for the individual, who, like us, has problems. We have the opportunity to be cheerful and show compassion in the face of hardship. We can give thanks to God that we are able to perform our God-given tasks faster and better than some others.

EDITOR'S NOTE — The July 31 "Rashional Thoughts" on efficiency was about developing well-balanced, efficient team members who produce quality work while also delivering an appropriate quantity of work in a routine season of life. However, a couple of the examples used could have been interpreted as promoting speed and high energy over all else.

Clutter influences the way you work, the way you live and the state of your soul, argues megachurch pastor Bill Hybels.

The pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill., Hybels talks about how to live a life anchored by the priorities that matter most in his new book, "Simplify: Ten Practices to Unclutter Your Soul."

"This is about decluttering your soul. This isn't about cleaning your basement or buying a new Day-Timer," he said. "The great truth in my mind is that a schedule is not so much about what you have to get done, but who you're trying to become. That was one of the greatest simplifying revelations of my life.

"When you put a schedule together, and before you list all the duties and responsibilities, you say, 'Who do I want to become in the next 12 months?' You plug in the time it'll take you, you fill in the rest with what you have to get done. If that subtle shift can be made, you can be helped in dramatic ways." (RNS)

Humility

Much confusion exists about the spiritual character trait of humility. It is not low self-esteem. It must not be confused with ability and availability. Scripture pictures servant leadership modeled by Jesus as humility. Humility admits human weakness and sin. It accepts God's grace in Christ and forgiveness, which moves us toward a liberated Christian life. We can boast then only in Christ.

Bill Morgan
Director of missions
Autauga Baptist Association

"There's something not to like about everybody. If that's the lens we insist on wearing, we'll have plenty to see and no one to love."

@BethMoore

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Charges filed

Former Muscle Shoals youth minister arrested

A former youth minister from Muscle Shoals has been arrested on rape and sodomy charges.

Charles Kyle Adcock, 31 — who served as youth minister at Woodward Avenue Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals, from December 2008 to May 2012 — was arrested Aug. 20 in Texas. He faces 22 counts of rape in the second degree and nine counts of sodomy in the second degree, according to Muscle Shoals Police Chief Robert Evans.

The victim is reportedly a college-aged female who was 14 when the incidents started in 2010. Media reports indicate the sexual encounters took place between 2010 and 2012 and happened on church property and at Adcock's home.

At press time, the Colbert County sheriff's office was in the process of extraditing Adcock from the Dallas-Forth Worth area where he lives. Adcock left the ministry in 2012 and first moved to Arkansas before making his way to Texas.

Will Rushing, senior pastor of Woodward Avenue Baptist, said the news has hit the congregation hard.

"We've been doing some really great things ... and now some feel like the wind has been sucked out of our sails," said Rushing, who was named pastor in November 2013. He, nor any of the current staff,

served with Adcock, but they are working to be as transparent as they can about everything, he said.

A statement released by the church also noted: "We are willing to work with law enforcement agencies in any way necessary to help in their investigation and would encourage anyone with information about the case to contact law enforcement."

"There were a lot of tears during our prayer meeting time (Aug. 20)," Rushing said. "There is a sense of betrayal and hurt. ... We are praying for the victim as much as we can and trusting God would take care of her."

Staying focused

While the action of one person can leave a negative reflection on the entire group, Woodward Avenue plans to stay focused and move forward, he noted.

"We are still committed to being a positive influence to this community," Rushing said. "That is my goal, that is my heart and that is what I want to see happen."

Rushing asked Alabama Baptists to pray for wisdom for him and healing for the church. He also asked for prayer specifically for the victim.

"The news cycle will run its course, but the victim will deal with it for a lifetime." (Jennifer D. Rash)

Open Doors ministers to thousands of refugees in Iraq

The temperature hit 113 degrees in the city of Erbil, Iraq, recently.

Thousands of Christian refugees who have fled from Mosul and other cities to the capital city of Kurdistan are in desperate need of fresh drinking water and more.

They also are desperate for safe housing. Churches and schools in Erbil and surrounding cities have opened their doors to many of the refugees but they are running out of room.

A great crisis is taking place as the number of refugees in Iraq and Syria continues to grow. Men, women and children have been forced to flee their homes because of escalating violence by the ter-

rorist group Islamic State (IS).

The United Nations (U.N.) has declared its highest level of emergency in Iraq as a humanitarian crisis because of the death and destruction carried out by IS terrorists. The U.N. estimates 1.2 million people have been internally displaced.

Partnering together

Open Doors, working with churches and other partners in northern Iraq, has responded as Christians have fled the intense persecution. Mosul has been cleansed of almost all Christians. Most Christians left with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

Open Doors is providing food,

water, medicine, pillows, blankets, air coolers, cooking and eating utensils and hygiene kits.

"Open Doors is helping to support (more than) 3,000 families spread over 21 villages in northern Iraq," said David Curry, Open Doors USA president and CEO. "What is unfolding is the worst genocide since Rwanda 20 years ago. We cannot allow this to happen on our watch. Please pray, spread the word in your church or small group, advocate and give so Open Doors can provide more humanitarian aid in the weeks and months ahead."

For more information, visit www.OpenDoorsUSA.org. (Open Doors)



Kenneth R. Clement

DeKalb Association DOM, former pastor dies

Kenneth R. Clement, who served as DeKalb Baptist Association director of missions, died Aug. 20. He was 69.

A native of Gadsden, Clement earned a bachelor's degree from Samford University in Birmingham and a master's of theology degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

While in seminary he served in several interim pastorate roles and later served as bivocational pastor of Tates Chapel Baptist Church, Centre, and Ivalee Baptist Church, Attalla. He was pastor of First Baptist Church, Indian Springs, for 18 years and then pastor of Mount Hebron West Baptist Church, Elmore, for 13 years before leading DeKalb Association as director of missions for 11 years.

Clement served in several roles in Baptist life including a position on the board of governors for Judson College in Marion, as a trustee for Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega, chairman of the credentials committee for the Alabama Baptist State Convention, moderator for Elmore and Shelby Baptist associations and trustee for LifeWay Christian Resources, to name a few.

He preached the gospel in 12 states and traveled on missions trips to Nigeria, Jamaica, Mexico, Hong Kong, Belize, Guatemala, Brazil and England.

Clement is survived by his wife, Cecilia, three children and six grandchildren. (Neisha Fuson)



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J. Rodney Bledsoe, J.D.
Chief Development Officer

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Christian killings in Nigeria escalate in 2014

JOS, Nigeria — Islamist extremist group Boko Haram and others killed 1,631 Christians in Nigeria for their faith in the first six months of 2014 — 91 percent of the total Christians killed in the country (1,783) in all of 2013, according to advocacy group Jubilee Campaign.

The increase in Christian deaths so far this year accompanies an increase in the total number of people killed during the period, mainly by Boko Haram — 4,099, which is 975 more than the 3,124 total deaths from attacks by religious extremists for all of 2013 according to Jubilee.

Boko Haram, which seeks to impose “sharia” (Islamic law) throughout Nigeria, has reportedly increased attacks with a large injection of funding from foreign terrorist groups. Emmanuel Ogebe, manager of Jubilee Campaign’s Justice for Jos Project, said he has noted a trend this year of Boko Haram targeting some Muslims primarily because they cooperate with the Nigerian military.

“The pattern therefore is that if you do not do what they demand, even if you are Muslim, you become an ‘apostate’ deserving of death,” he said. “Therefore the difference between Boko Haram’s approach to Christian ‘infidels’ and Muslim apostates is you are killed as a Christian ‘just because’ your name is Christian, you go to church, etc., whereas Muslims are generally killed ‘for cause,’ for example working for the government or refusing to pay extortion taxes to Boko Haram.”

One of the recent attacks occurred Aug. 11 and left 14 Christians dead.

In Yelwa, where Muslim Fulani cattlemen have largely replaced Christian ethnicities over the years, a throng of heavily armed herdsmen attacked a remnant Christian community in Plateau state, sources said. According to area witnesses, there were more than 150 armed gunmen who attacked the village.

On the same morning in Zarazong village a group of gunmen killed two other Christians, and between the two villages 15 homes were burned down, sources said. ☞

‘Jolt of confidence’

Samford exceeds campaign goal 4 months early

Samford University in Birmingham celebrated Aug. 19 with the surprise announcement by President Andrew Westmoreland that the university had exceeded its goal for “A Campaign for Samford” more than four months early.

As of Aug. 15, gifts and pledges totaling \$200,155,265 had been received from 17,381 donors, representing the largest fundraising effort in the university’s 173-year history. Gift amounts ranged from 36 cents to \$13.4 million. The campaign launched in October 2009 with a goal of \$200 million.

“This is a story, actually thousands of stories, of people who rallied to support an institution they cherish, at times when economic uncertainty pervaded every aspect of their lives,” Westmoreland said.

Fundraising projects

The campaign originally was scheduled to end Dec. 31 but likely will close about Nov. 1, said W. Randy Pittman, Samford’s vice president for advancement. Several projects remain in progress, including a new Brock School of Business building and a campaign for Cumberland School of Law.

Every facet of the university has benefited from the campaign, officials noted.

Pittman cited the importance of the two largest campaign goals — scholarships and annual fund.

Annual fund support is the largest single component of the campaign, with more than \$76.8 million raised in “much-needed funds” beyond revenue

provided by tuition and fees, Pittman explained, underscoring the national recognition for value and affordability that Samford has received from several prestigious rankings and publications.

More than \$56 million in new scholarship funds has been received.

Gifts of \$31.4 million support academic programs, including expansion of existing programs and the launch of several new initiatives.

Although capital projects were not the largest component of the campaign, nearly \$30 million has been given to provide for the new business school building, new residence facilities, renovated fine arts facilities and new athletics facilities.

About \$6 million was given for faculty enhancements, including endowed chairs and professorships and research support that help to “attract and retain quality individuals to join Samford’s nationally-recognized faculty,” Pittman said.

When the university launched “A Campaign for Samford,” it did so in an unusual economic climate.

Westmoreland said, “Launching the campaign as we did, during a dismal period for the economy, probably made a few of [our] friends scratch their heads in wonder at our timing.”

“I’ve always said that there is no perfect time to undertake a capital campaign,” he said. “Perhaps we stretched the limits of timing with this effort, but the results should be a jolt of confidence to every person connected with Samford. I am deeply grateful for every gift from every person.” (Samford)

Samford co-sponsoring workshop on helping veterans

Samford University’s Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence (RCPE) is co-sponsoring a workshop aimed at breaking the stigma of moral injury among veterans and their families, with particular focus on veteran suicide which currently averages 18 per day.

The program will be held Sept. 9–10 at First United Methodist Church, Montgomery, and will feature presentations by veterans and a special performance by the acclaimed public health project Theater of War. Rita Brock, author

of “Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War,” also will speak. Brock is founding co-director of the Soul Repair Center.

Also co-sponsoring the event is Gateway To Hope, a coalition of chaplains, social workers and faith communities in Alabama.

According to RCPE director Michael Wilson, participants will

learn about moral injury and its relationship to post-traumatic stress disorder, challenges of military sexual trauma, and creating safe communities of support for veterans to tell their stories and reflect on them.

They also will explore ways to reintegrate veterans into the civilian world without leaving them to suffer in silence. (Samford)

For more information and to e-register, visit www.samford.edu/rcpe or call 205-726-4064.



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 31

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

BE READY FOR TRIBULATION Daniel 9:20-27; 12:9-13

Are you ready? Are you ready for persecution, hardship, loss of status, loss of liberty, loss of income, loss of property, loss of life? In the sugar-coated theology of many cultural Christians in America, God would never allow bad things to happen to those who trust Christ. The person who believes this is uninformed about the teachings of Scripture, the history of the world Christian movement and current events in many parts of our world. Tribulation is alive and well for many who identify with Jesus as Lord.

"If God really loves me, He wouldn't let bad things happen to me." Two immediate responses come to mind. First did the Father love Jesus? He certainly did, and He allowed Jesus to suffer and die, be buried and rise again for the glory of the Father. Second God demonstrated His love for us by sending Jesus to take our death sentence for sin. Never doubt the Father's love. We asked God, "How much do You love us?" Jesus demonstrated the answer by spreading His arms open wide. This much!

Pray for Understanding (9:20-23)

Daniel receives angelic revelation. While contemplating the prophecies of Jeremiah, Daniel prays for understanding about the meaning of the 70 years of exile. Like other great Old Testament saints, he confesses sins on behalf of the nation, as well as confessing the mercy and forgiveness of God in the midst of His righteousness.

Time passes and an angel reveals to him more than he asked for. Instead of a simple explanation of the reason for 70 years, Gabriel brings a message regarding the Messiah. The 70 weeks (literally, "sevens") point to the promised Redeemer to come.

This passage reminds us of other passages regarding prayer and God's magnificent work. Jeremiah records that when we pray, God will show us things that we do not know (Jer. 33:3). In Paul's doxology within the letter to the Ephesians, he writes, "Now

to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think — according to the power that works in you — to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen" (Eph. 3:20-21).

Prepare for Difficulty (9:24-27)

Throughout the Scriptures, God's people face challenges of all sorts. The enemy tempts, the Lord tests and we face the consequences of our own choices and behaviors. Unjust persecution, punishment and imprisonment are but some of the difficulties faced by believers. We have already witnessed in Daniel that believers and unbelievers face life and death dangers — the three Hebrew men and the furnace, Belshazzar and the writing on the wall, Daniel and the lions' den — with clear indication that God is not obligated to deliver (Dan. 3:18).

Christians the world over are suffering because they confess the name of Jesus, because they follow in believer's baptism and because they confess the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Few believers have experienced the freedom of religious exercise that Christians in the West have come to take for granted.

Persist in Faith (12:9-13)

In this extensive section — Daniel 9-12 — we read about God's plan for Israel and the nations. Angelic messengers are mentioned by name (Gabriel and Michael), and two resurrections are addressed (Dan. 12:2). Throughout this section, judgment is certain to come upon the nations. Israel is not without its difficulties, but God is faithful through it all.

Daniel wanted to know how long (echoing the cry of Habakkuk). In fact, the disciples also wanted to know Jesus' timetable (Acts 1:6). Trusting God does not work according to our schedule. He is faithful, period.

We must persist in faith, trusting that God is faithful, no matter the circumstances. If our suffering brothers and sisters can trust Him through the chaos in northern Iraq, we can trust Him through our discomfort. 📖

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

OUR WORK WITH CREATION Leviticus 25:1-7

The first biblical creation story reaches its zenith, not with the creation of human beings who find their fulfillment in work, but in Sabbath time that is "the climax of living, not an interlude" (Rabbi Akeiba). Sabbath speaks of rest, reflection and renewal. It is the weekly act to resist the consumerist attitude of our contemporary society of 24/7 multitasking in order to achieve, accomplish and perform without taking time to ponder our spirituality pilgrimage or to enjoy God's creation in play. To observe Sabbath not in legalistic rules and regulations but as an act of resistance against consumerism is also to put the needs of others before our own.

Call to Stewardship (1-3)

The stewardship of Sabbath is extended in this chapter to the wider concept of jubilee. Jubilee occurred every six years when the land was to remain untilled, and every 50 years when the ownership of land that may have been sold or mortgaged to pay off debts would be returned to the original owner. The main purpose of these laws appears to be preservation of land and people who were struggling financially. If left unchecked, the process could lead to social division as a rich class of landowners exploited the needs of the poor. Isaiah once denounced those who "join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no room" (Isa. 5:8). If the jubilee principle had been observed, then such exploitation of the earth and unbridled oppression of the poor would never have happened.

Sabbatical Life in God's World (4-5)

Just as we are called to stop working after six days and reflect on God and commit ourselves to the needs of others in "acts of mercy" so the land was to be tilled for six years and on the seventh take its rest, and ownership of the land was to be restored after a maximum of 49 years

of temporary ownership. Wealth in Israel was never meant to be accumulated by a few. Monopolies that came from unfettered consumerism or absolute communism were outlawed.

Neither the state nor the multi-billionaire were meant to possess everything to the detriment of the rest of society. These laws of jubilee were intended to extend the principle of Sabbath rest to every area of community life. Love and mercy for the needs of others were at the heart of these laws, and Israel was reminded that they were once "aliens" in the land of Israel. In the same way, Christians are reminded in the New Testament that we are strangers and pilgrims in this world, that this "world is not my home, I'm just a passing through."

Sharing the Resources of God's Goodness (6-7)

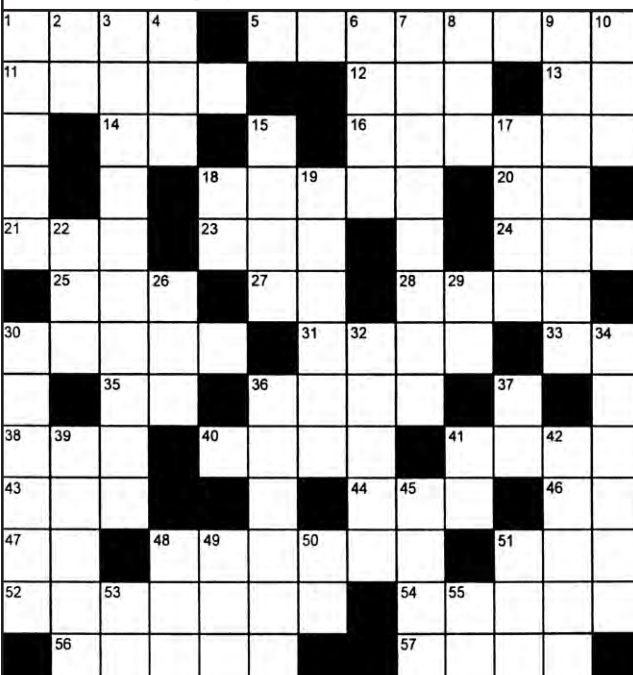
John Wesley used to say, "Earn all you can, give all you can, save all you can." God calls us to use our resources, never to claim that they belong exclusively to us but in serving the needs of others. Sometimes we use what we possess to diminish others, to make them feel like they need us. God doesn't give in that kind of way. God's gifts establish us and come with a message that we are loved and we matter to Him. In the same way God gives us all that we have to promote the welfare of others.

God gives to make us into generous givers. This means being willing to be an instrument and a steward of the grace of God to others. This generosity is never meant to be drawn out of us reluctantly. We are called to be cheerful participants in God's mission of outgoing love for the sake of the world.

Ultimately the stewardship of our lives, our time, our gifts and our possessions becomes an aspect of the life of our triune God as we share in His mission by receiving His grace and sharing His love with others. 📖

Christian Crossword

By Pat Horning Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- We ought to ___ God rather than men. (Acts 5:29)
- Son of Rachel. (Gen. 35:24)
- Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great ___. (Luke 4:38)
- Edible cereal grass.
- Fa, so, ___.
- Suffix indicating plural.
- Odorous.
- One of the 12 spies. (Num. 13:6)
- And hath raised up ___ horn of salvation. (Luke 1:69)
- Narrow beam of light.
- Rod for billiards.
- A time to rend, and a time to ___. (Eccles. 3:7)
- Pig pen.
- Los Angeles. (abbr.)
- Large rodents.
- Son of Jacob. (Gen. 30:13)
- Change direction.

- South Dakota. (abbr.)
- Give, and ___ shall be given unto you. (Luke 6:38)
- Simple.
- Light brown.
- ___ unthankful lepers healed. (Luke 17:17)
- Then shall the lame man ___. (Isa. 35:6)
- Or if he shall ask an ___, will he offer him a scorpion? (Luke 11:12)
- Cardiac Care Unit. (abbr.)
- Louisiana. (abbr.)
- North America. (abbr.)
- Put up thy sword into the ___. (John 18:11)
- Average amount.
- Reject.
- Come ye yourselves ___ into a desert place. (Mark 6:31)
- Loud.
- Inner surface of the hand.
- of praise. (Heb. 13:15)
- ___ ye holy; for I am holy. (1 Pet. 1:16)
- In ___ give thanks. (1 Thess. 5:18)
- Expression of affirmation.
- I put my hook in thy ___. (Isa. 37:29)
- Merry gathering.
- Already eaten.
- Period of bad health.
- Negative vote.
- Pull.
- But many that are first shall be ___. (Mark 10:31)
- Cubic centimeter.
- Purge out therefore the old ___. (1 Cor. 5:7)
- And the Lord opened the mouth of the ___. (Num. 22:28)
- Nevertheless.
- Arkansas. (abbr.)
- ___ to the voice of my supplications. (Ps. 86:6)
- Build.
- To ___ from evil is understanding. (Job 28:28)

Down

- Let us ___ the sacrifice

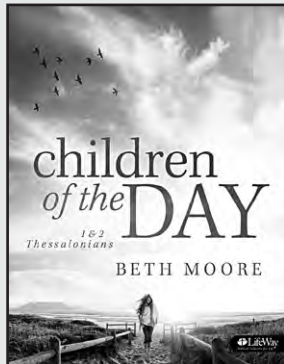
- Remember his ___ no more. (Prov. 31:7)
- Blessed is ___ that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Matt. 21:9)
- Once more.
- Halle ___ jah.
- Sound an ___ in my holy mountain. (Joel 2:1)
- Roughen and redden.
- Science. (abbr.)
- Owens.
- Newspaper ___.
- Comrade.
- Do, re, mi, fa, ___, la, ti, do.
- Ma and ___.



TOP 10

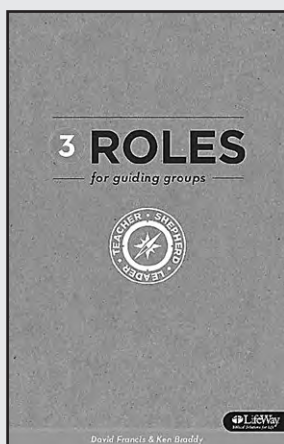
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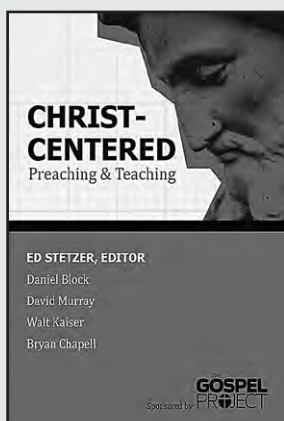
1. **Children of the Day — Member Book**
By Beth Moore

2. **3 Roles for Guiding Groups: Teacher, Shepherd, Leader**
By Ken Braddy and David Francis



3. **Christ-Centered Preaching & Teaching**
By Daniel Block, Bryan Chapell, Walt Kaiser, David Murray and Ed Stetzer

4. **Missionary Sunday School: One Mission, His Story, Every Person Booklet**
By David Francis



5. **Context: Engaging the Young Adults of Your Community**

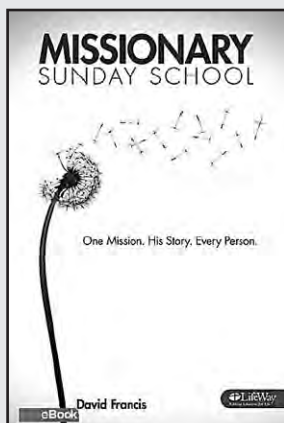
6. **The 7-Day Prayer Warrior Experience**
By Stormie Omartian

7. **Strong's Greek Hebrew Dictionary**

8. **The Scarlet Thread Through the Bible**
By W.A. Criswell

9. **Transformational Class**
By David Francis

10. **The Daily Walk Bible NLT: 31 Days with Jesus**



Source: Lifeway.com at press time



Citizen Way

Photo courtesy of The Media Collective

Citizens in the Kingdom

Citizen Way desires to connect audiences to love of Christ

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The contemporary group Citizen Way is literally a band of brothers on a mission.

In 2004 brothers Ben and Josh Calhoun formed the worship band with another set of siblings, David

and Ben Blascoe, based on their shared interest in music and mutual desire to connect audiences to the life-changing love of Christ.

With the release of their debut album "Love is the Evidence," which features the hit songs "Nothing Ever (Could Separate Us)" and "Should've Been Me," the group is on the right path.

Through their music and message, Citizen Way seeks to provide clear direction as they point students straight to the truth of the gospel.

"Our main goal and greatest desire is to point people to Jesus," lead singer Ben Calhoun said. "I will never forget asking a group of students what they learned after a week at church camp and one of the students replying: 'I learned it should have been me. It should have been each one of us paying the penalty for our sins but Jesus stepped in

and paid the price for us.' That was so meaningful and inspired me to write the song 'Should've Been Me.'"

Wherever Citizen Way performs they offer more than a concert. They hope to provide students and young adults a life-changing encounter with God.

"Our group name is based on Philippians 3:20 and John 14:6," Ben Calhoun said. "We love having opportunities for our group name to provide a bigger picture and represent the family of God. We are citizens in the kingdom of God, following in the way of Jesus."

While enjoying the journey, they continue to take their task seriously. This spring Citizen Way is touring across the country with MercyMe and they will perform at various music festivals during the summer.

"My dad is a pastor and he has reminded us about the importance of surrendering your life to

the authority of the Lord and allowing Him to lead you," Ben Calhoun said. "That's what we are doing on this journey. We get to be a part of the bigger picture and a part of what God is doing. We get to experience things that we could never do on our own strength; but through His power we get to see lives being changed." ❧



"Our main goal and greatest desire is to point people to Jesus."

Ben Calhoun
lead singer, Citizen Way

Alive & well

Lazarus' strong sense of calling keeps him busy traveling to far away villages, sharing the gospel and discipling new believers.



BP photo

Local Lazarus becomes bold witness for Christ among his Buddhist neighbors

His name is Chum Sok, but to many people he's known as Lazarus.

Lazarus, similar to his namesake in the Bible, shared how he went from death to life, literally.

As a result, he said, God took this modest and elderly Christian and turned him into a bold witness for Christ.

Today Lazarus is hard to track down. He has a calling to share Jesus with his own people. Every week he spends at least two days going out to evangelize, traveling on Sundays to a village far away to share the gospel and teach.

Back home he and fellow believers gather to study the Bible every night, often hearing of someone who is sick and going to pray for them until they are better.

Lazarus' experience not only impacted his life but stirred a strong response in his village where there are now more than 80 people attending church.

"Now villagers understand that Jesus can save," he said, choking back joyful tears.

In a village where Buddhist neighbors once criticized Lazarus and fellow Christians for believing in the foreigners' God, they now call on the Christians to pray when someone is sick.

Though he's been a Christian for many years, Lazarus' faith started out weak. "I used to be embarrassed," he said. "I would hide my Bible in my shirt when I went to church. I prayed for God to help me not be ashamed."

Lazarus and others shared how God an-

swered his prayer in a way no one could expect.

As the sun began to set one evening, he started having trouble catching his breath. Soon it became alarming as he began gasping, unable to breathe. His tiny, elderly wife, Mean Sary, rushed to find a car to take her husband to the hospital.

She and their son managed to get Lazarus to the main public hospital. By the time he arrived, Lazarus' organs were shutting down. The doctors soon lost his pulse.

That's when Mean Sary, who was not a believer at the time, began to pray.

"I had no hope," she said. "My husband was always praying, but he couldn't. So I cried out to God for him."

Lazarus' pulse returned and he remained on a ventilator for the next six nights with no improvement and no clear diagnosis. Eventually doctors told Mean Sary to take her husband home to die.

A few times Lazarus regained consciousness long enough to write "Pray." Then he would slip back into his comatose state.

Feeling defeated, Mean Sary began the journey home in the ambulance with Lazarus, who by that time had begun to look black and lifeless.

Lazarus' home was filled with friends and family, both Christian and Buddhist.

Mean Sary collapsed once she made it home, unable to be consoled.

Meanwhile Southern Baptist representatives and friends, William and Nancy Potter, and local believers from Lazarus' church helped Mean Sary get Lazarus onto

a bed and prayed for the family. As believers prayed, some in the room took the ventilator out of Lazarus' mouth so he could die with dignity. When they did, a miracle happened — Lazarus began to cough.

The Christians all got down on their knees and began praying for God to heal Lazarus, to give him his breath back. Gradually Lazarus began to show more signs of life — regaining his natural color.

"That's when I started having hope and faith," Mean Sary said.

The 'Jesus clinic'

The Potters asked if they could take Lazarus to the Christian doctors in the area. Mean Sary agreed, and Lazarus was soon in the care of Southern Baptist representative Dr. Joseph Bricker at what's known by the locals as the "Jesus clinic."

The clinic is a multinational, multiorganizational medical clinic whose mission is to provide quality medical care in the name of Jesus and share the gospel with each patient.

The Jesus clinic is actively planting churches throughout surrounding villages and has played a part in many church plants countrywide.

At the clinic patients "experience the love of God in a way they would not experience anywhere else," Bricker said.

Test results at the clinic looked good, and Lazarus no longer had multiple organ failure. As he regained consciousness, he looked around and saw doctors and nurses praying for him.

"I knew I would live," Lazarus said. "I knew Jesus was in those doctors, and their wisdom comes from God."

Lazarus began to recover and was eventually sent home in good health.

Lazarus only remembers a few things from his time in the hospitals — the Jesus clinic in particular shapes how he now lives his life.

"I remember waking up once and praying 'Oh God, if I am your child, please give me the chance to evangelize. If You let me live, I will tell people about You,'" he recalled, stopping a few times to wipe away tears.

After slipping back out of consciousness

in the hospital, Lazarus had a vision. "I saw three people — Jesus, a soldier and a guard," he said. "Jesus said to me, 'Let your hope rise in Me.'"

Today Lazarus is alive and well, and he's keeping his promise to God. He didn't just come back to life physically; he was revived and emboldened spiritually. No longer a shy Christian hiding his Bible in his shirt, Lazarus joins his fellow believers to make Jesus known in their village, surrounding villages and even villages far away. His wife and son are now believers in Christ.

Reflecting on his ordeal, Lazarus said, "[It was] like Satan wanted me to shut up ... God saved me, and now I speak the truth."

He expressed his gratitude for the Jesus clinic and the care he received there.

"The doctors at the Jesus clinic have hope," he said. "Their faith stands out as different."

Lazarus said he is especially appreciative of Dr. Bricker. "I like that he knows how to pray in my language," he said. "He prayed I would be able to serve the Lord." And that's exactly what he's doing.

Lazarus often goes back to the Jesus clinic for checkups. When he does, he shares his testimony, helping the clinic in its mission to share the gospel with every patient.

"If we're God's children, we must have fruit," he said.

Pray for Lazarus

Lazarus asked for people to pray for the following requests.

▶ Pray for him and his wife to have good health so they can continue in ministry.

▶ Pray for his family to remain close and follow God with all their hearts.

▶ Pray he would continue to take time to share the gospel in every situation.

▶ Pray he would "remain connected to the vine of Christ" and continue to bear fruit.

▶ Pray for everyone in his country to have opportunity to hear the gospel and believe in Christ.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Names have been changed for security reasons. (BP)



BP photo

Lazarus' wife, Mean Sary, looks on as he describes his death-to-life experience.