

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



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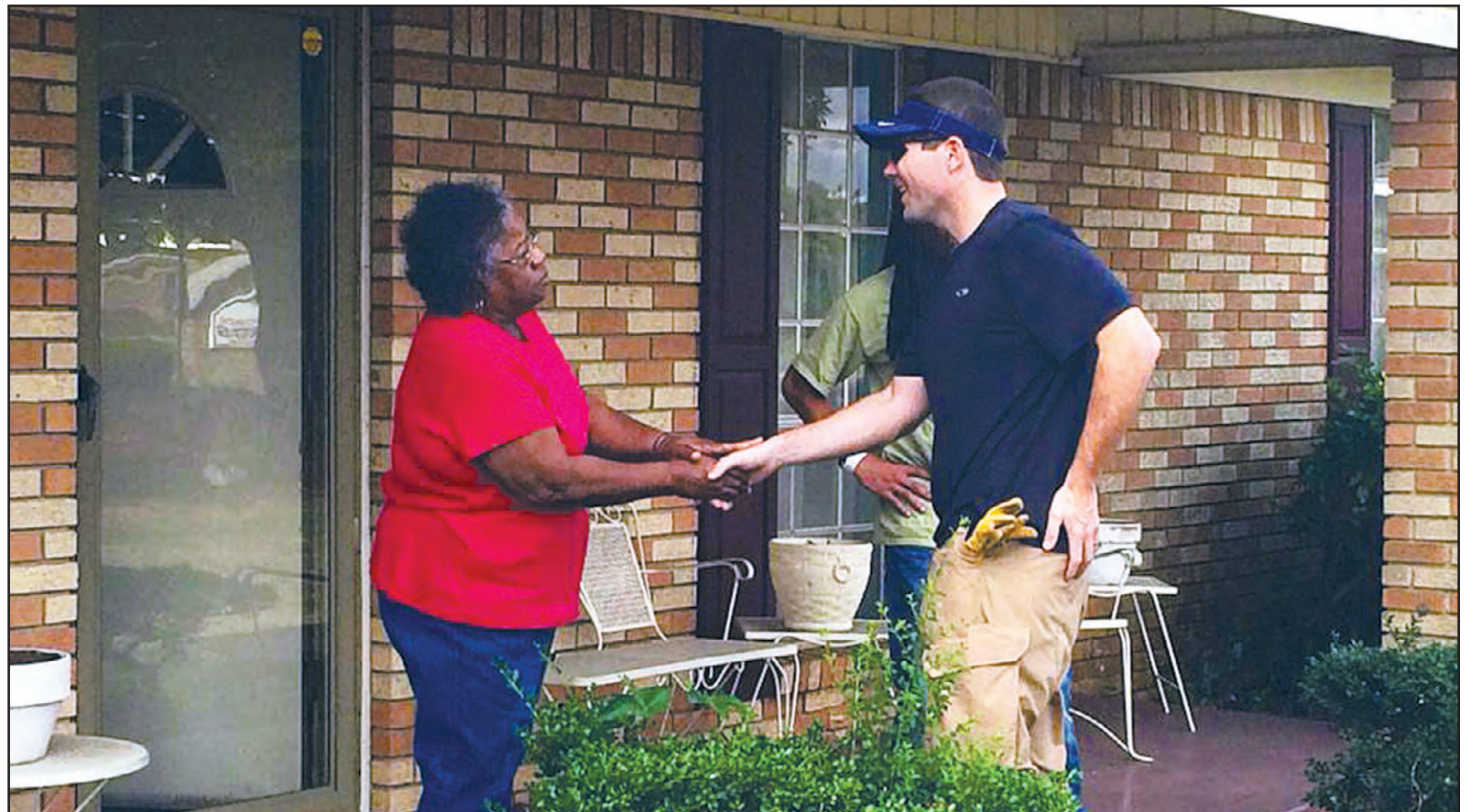


Photo courtesy of Tuscaloosa Baptist Association

Tuscaloosa Mayor Walter Maddox greets community members during A Day of Hope on Sept. 27. Maddox worked on 'Project #25' that day, pressure washing and cleaning up the home of an elderly couple.

A Day of HOPE

More than 600 volunteers from Tuscaloosa serve community together

By Neisha Fuson
The Alabama Baptist

Churches large and small can be found in nearly every city and county across the state. For most people a church can be found a block away or a few miles down the road. But just because the church

building is nearby doesn't mean the church body is fulfilling its responsibilities of reaching the community.

But how can a church body truly know its neighbors, help where needed, touch lives with the love of Jesus and be a foundation that points those in need to Christ?

On Sept. 27, A Day of Hope (ADOH) afforded Tuscaloosa churches the opportunity to do all these things and more.

A simple thought — "Let's take one day to serve together where we show the love of Jesus in practical ways to our community" — snow-balled into a 72-project, community-wide event that brought together
(See 'About,' page 13)



Photo courtesy of Tuscaloosa Baptist Association

Hopewell Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, volunteers work inside a home during A Day of Hope. Owned by a single woman, the home was destroyed in the April 27, 2011, tornadoes.

COMMENT

The 'Boar Tide' of Ministerial Education

In Canada's Bay of Fundy the tides are the largest in the world — more than 40 feet in some places. When the tide rolls in and crashes against the rivers flowing out to sea, the results can be spectacular. Peaceful rivers turn into white water rapids as the currents fight with each other to control the direction of the flow. Water spouts explode tens of feet in the air. For hundreds of feet, the water roils and rolls and people come from around the world to witness what is called the "boar tide."

Baptists also have conflicting streams that seem to be in constant tension to influence the flow of ministerial education.

Historians call one stream the Charleston Tradition named after the first Baptist church in the South, which was established in Charleston, S.C., in 1696. The second is called the Sandy Creek Tradition after the 16-member church in North Carolina that became the fountain of the Second Great Awakening in the South in the mid-1700s.

The Charleston Tradition embraced formal theological education for its ministers and did things decently and in order. The Sandy Creek Tradition was free flowing, emotional and looked for some spirit-filled brother or sister to preach the Word. Charleston gave direction to the earliest church planting and organizational efforts of Baptists. But in the mid-1700s the Sandy Creek church had grown to 600 members and eventually played a role in starting more than 40 churches and three associations from Virginia to South Carolina.

Reflecting on the Charleston Tradition, the late Baptist historian Robert Baker emphasized an "educated clergy" as a primary reason for Baptist growth and expansion over the years. That emphasis is seen in the number of colleges and seminaries Baptists founded and continue to support.

Yet 18th century Baptist historian Morgan Edwards wrote of Shubal Stearns, the leader of the Sandy Creek Tradition, "Of learning he had but a small share yet was pretty well-acquainted with books." That model endured through the years as farmer-preachers shared the gospel across the South and other areas of the nation.

'Educated clergy' value

Both traditions persist today. Alabama Baptists value an educated clergy. Through the Cooperative Program, Baptists support six national seminaries. One of those seminaries — New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary — provides graduate theological education through extension centers in Birmingham, Huntsville, Montgomery, Rainsville and Tuscaloosa.

Samford University is home to Beeson Divinity School, an outstanding theological



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

educational center training scores of ministers serving Alabama Baptist churches.

At the same time more than half of the Baptist churches in the state are served by bivocational ministers, according to officials at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. While some of these pastors have seminary training, the majority are from the mold of Shubal Stearns. They may have a "small share" of formal theological education but they are "pretty well-acquainted with books."

Perhaps it comes from long hours by lamp-light reading and studying. The pastor of the church where I came to know the Lord had one year in a Baptist college before leaving to become pastor of my home church. I remember him spending hour after hour studying and reading so he would be better prepared to lead the congregation.

Bivocational pastors have to find study time after working another job and doing all the things required of a pastor to care for the members and keep the church functioning. It is no wonder Alabama Baptists have such high appreciation for these men.

Perhaps some of their familiarity with books comes through participation in Samford's Ministry Training Institute. Since 1947 this ministry has sought to equip Christians to be leaders in churches and communities through theological education and practical ministry training.

Currently the Ministry Training Institute works in more than 30 locations across Alabama and the training is backed up by the reputation and standing of Samford University. Courses there lead to certificates in biblical studies or pastoral ministries. These are not seminary-level courses but one is confident of quality training through the institute.

Both traditions are important and both streams make valuable and enduring contributions to churches and to the kingdom of God. Both also defy stereotypes. Shubal Stearns-type

pastors have served some of the largest churches in Baptist life and held top denominational positions. Charleston-type men have served small and rural churches and cared for God's family through multiple generations.

The conflict comes when the two streams collide by someone claiming to be something that person is not.

Resumedoctor, a resumé writing firm, says one of the most common misleading pieces of information is "inflated education or purchased degrees that do not mean anything."

Pastors are not the only ones guilty of inflating resumé in this way. Football and basketball coaches have made national headlines by claiming something they did not earn. In 2007, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) learned one of its deans had inflated her resumé and she was forced to resign.

Earning degrees

To earn a master of divinity degree from an accredited school takes three years of full-time study. A doctor of ministry degree requires a minimum of two additional years of full-time study. A doctor of philosophy degree requires a minimum of three years of full-time study beyond the masters. A degree from an accredited school attests to a certain level of training and preparation.

When one receives a degree from a school not accredited by the Association of Theological Schools, the only recognized accrediting agency for seminaries, and then tries to present one's self as equally trained as the minister who graduated from an accredited school, it is misleading at best.

Writing about the issues, a business recruiter cautioned, "If you convince your employer you are more experienced than you really are, you will be expected to demonstrate the necessary skills when you need to." That is true for ministers as well. Ministry demands will soon demonstrate whether one is as trained as one claims.

There is nothing wrong with being of the Charleston Tradition. There is nothing wrong with being of the Sandy Creek Tradition. What is wrong is presenting one's self as something one is not. That is when the waters get choppy and the turmoil begins — for the pastor, for the church, for the community and for Baptists.

No Baptist pastor should ever succumb to the temptation posed by degree mill-type institutions. With the many opportunities of quality training offered across Alabama it simply is not necessary for effective ministry. 🙏

***Presenting one's self
as something one is
not — that is when the
waters get choppy and
the turmoil begins.***



"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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'Faithful to the Great Commission'

CP aids Gilliam Springs Baptist's global focus by investing in missions

The small town of Arab, Ala., has no connection to the 22 nations of the Arab League, other than the missionary interests of the pastor of Gilliam Springs Baptist Church located there.

Pastor Jamey Pruett and his wife, Ashleigh, served one term as missionaries to the Middle East through the International Mission Board before moving to Arab three years ago.

"I have a sensitivity to the Middle East," Pruett said. "I learned [while serving there] that Arabs in general are beautiful people and they have as much right to hear the gospel as anyone, and I learned Jesus died for Muslims as well."

Pruett is focused on bringing people to Christ wherever they may be found and the Cooperative Program (CP) allows him to extend the reach of the church beyond its northern Alabama hometown of about 8,000 people. The church gives 10 percent of its undesignated receipts to the CP.

'A wonderful tool'

"The Cooperative Program is a wonderful tool Southern Baptists have for funding missions and ministry," Pruett said. "We could be spending that money [elsewhere] but we give it through CP because of what it accomplishes. It seems as though the Lord has us focused much more outward than inward. We have chosen to invest our money in missions."

The church ministers locally and globally, teaching its children to do the same, said children's minister Theresa Mayo, who coordinates the children's outreach with the work of youth and missions minister Will Harbison.

"The strategy is to teach them they can be missionaries right now," Mayo said. "Our children need to learn they can be on mission here now with their friends, and when they get bigger they can go out like the youth do now."

Because the children are trained to invite their friends, Vacation Bible School (VBS) regularly draws more people than the 500 typical of Sunday worship. A three-night VBS stretching out over three weeks at Amber Woods Apartments grew out of the VBS at the church, Mayo said.

"We fed the children and their parents and about 75 to 100 of our people went, so there was a lot of interaction," Mayo continued. "Adults could do the crafts and they were in the large group sessions. It was basically a



BP photo

A Vacation Bible School rally sponsored by Gilliam Springs Baptist Church, Arab, allows the church to focus on community outreach by inviting families in its area to participate.

ministry to anyone who wanted to come outside their door and be a part (of it)."

Building relationships with the apartment residents and management will lead to evangelistic opportunities in God's timing, Pruett said.

Other youth outreaches include a feeding ministry to disadvantaged school students.

Each Friday for the past four years, the church has provided 150 students with backpacks stuffed with food for the weekend. Also locally, the church has operated jail ministries for male and female prisoners and has led Upward Basketball and Upward Cheerleading for youth for five years.

Six times a year, Gilliam Springs members drive three hours east of town to minister through Reach the Nations Church, Clarkston, Ga., where 50 languages are spoken within one square mile. Gilliam Springs participates in block parties, backyard Bible clubs, home visits and other outreaches there.

Pruett said, "This gives our people a good chance to step into other people's culture for the moment, to love on them and share the

gospel with them. It's our international missions trip that doesn't take us overseas."

Elsewhere across the United States, Gilliam Springs is helping with a church plant in Franklin, Tenn.; as many as three church plants in the Metro Baptist Association of New York; and a church plant in Kemmerer, Wyo.

"[We're] being faithful to the Great Commission," Pruett said. "I think that's the purpose of the Church, to bring people to Christ."

Internationally, Gilliam Springs is in the third year of a five-year commitment to a church plant in Sao Simao, Brazil, and in the second year of ministry in Jacmal, Haiti. Gilliam Springs is starting a partnership with a missionary in Germany and exploring options in Africa and Southeast Asia, Pruett said.

Missions conference

Pivotal to Gilliam Springs' outreach is the church's annual Engage Missions Conference which "has really helped our church catch a vision for missions, local and global," Pruett said. "[The conference] was our attempt to increase effectiveness; it put a better face on what missions is."

As a result, Gilliam Springs gave more than \$100,000 to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions last year, and for the last two years has been among the top 200 givers to Lottie Moon in Alabama.

"When I came here, I sensed our folks had been a sleeping giant for some time," Pruett said. "We went places, we did things, but there was no intentionality, no strategy. With Engage, we're just trying to bring focus to the Great Commission." (BP)



BP photo

These youth and children were baptized at Gilliam Springs Baptist Church, Arab. The Cooperative Program enables the church to focus on local and international missions.

Helping pastors through tough moments

NAMB, Focus on the Family launch pastor care line

Southern Baptist pastors struggling through personal or professional crises have another confidential place to turn, thanks to a new partnership between the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and Focus on the Family.

In Alabama, ministers and their families also have Pathways Professional Counseling as an option.

NAMB's care line launched Oct. 1 is dedicated exclusively to Southern Baptist pastors, chaplains and missionaries. After dialing 844-PASTOR1, calls are answered by Focus on the Family's Family Help Center and remain completely confidential. No information about the calls — including the name of the pastor or the church or the nature of the call — will be provided to NAMB.

"The North American Mission Board cares for pastors and we want to be a part of the compassion of Christ for them and their families," said Michael Lewis, NAMB's executive director of pastoral care and development.

Lewis said the phone line is another way NAMB is attempting to resource and support pastors — along with marital and family help, providing pastor appreciation resources and initiating Pastors-in-Covenant groups, among other efforts.

Pathways Professional Counseling is a ministry of the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries and offers in-person counseling services across the state.

Dale Huff, director of the office of LeaderCare and church administration for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), said Pathways has helped hundreds of Alabama Baptist ministers over the years and is a resource promoted by the SBOM.

"There are so many needs that we certainly welcome the new pastor care line to assist with those needs, but we do want to make sure NAMB, Focus on the Family and Alabama Baptist ministers know of the referral options in our state as well," he said.

Mental health problems

NAMB partnered with Focus on the Family in part because the ministry has more than two decades of experience hosting a pastors-in-crisis care line. Focus began the pastor care line ministry in 1992 under the leadership of H.B. London.

Jim Daly, president of Focus on the Family, said, "Focus on the Family recognizes the sacrifices and hard work of Southern Baptist pastors. Many of them give up their own time to be there for their flock — giving up holidays to visit with sick people

at the hospital, counseling couples through the tough times in their marriages and helping their congregants pray through milestone decisions."

"This commitment not only takes time, but it also takes its toll on pastors — physically, emotionally and spiritually. Because they have always been there for others, it's our privilege to be there for them. Our licensed counselors are eager to provide an ear and biblically-based counsel that will help and give hope," Daly said.

Providing an ear

Jared Pingleton, director of the counseling team for Focus on the Family, said pastors call the care line for a variety of personal and professional reasons, such as family problems, emotional issues and leadership crises — any issue for which a pastor needs safe, biblically-informed counsel.

The phone line is available weekdays between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. The agent answering the call will listen to and pray for the pastor. If there is a further need, the agent will refer the call to a counseling team. A chaplain or a counselor will return the pastor's

call within 24 to 48 hours for an initial consultation. Because of the NAMB-sponsored prayer line, SBC pastors will get a priority in this process. Crisis calls — if a pastor mentions imminent danger of harm to himself or others — will immediately get routed to the counseling team.

Pingleton noted that at times pastors call the care line for counsel about how to deal with tough mental health problems that go beyond their training and have arisen in their congregation.

"Research shows that the average person goes to their pastor first — even before a medical professional at times," Pingleton said. "They're the first line of defense, and they're not trained well for that typically.

"It can be overwhelming. We want to come along side of them, support them, encourage them, educate and equip them — anything we can do to consult with them to give them tips, tools and techniques about how they can minister more effectively in their role," he said.

"They don't have to feel like they are out on their own and over their head. We can give them clear and concise consultation that will be of immediate help." (NAMB, TAB contributed)



Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Gay Nell Olive



OLIVE

Philadelphia Baptist Church, Bankston Fayette Baptist Association

FAVORITE VERSE: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

FAVORITE HYMN: "He"

HOBBIES: Writing, reading, exercising and visiting older people

FAMILY STATUS: Husband of 47 years, Don; children, Donna Speaker and Alan Olive; two grandchildren

A catastrophic medical event in 2004 resulted in Gay Nell Olive suffering double pneumonia and being on a ventilator, strokes on both sides of her brain, an abnormal EEG, a heart attack, dialysis, congestive heart failure and an infected heart valve requiring surgery for aortic heart valve replacement and closure of a hole in the heart. For three months Olive, who is 67, was hospitalized; she underwent therapy through 2012. In 2006, she learned she has two inherited blood clotting disorders that Olive now knows affected her three pregnancies (one of which was a miscarriage). She is certain she is alive today as a testament to God's glory, mercy and sovereignty. For 10 years her ministry has been telling about that mercy and God's plan for each of us.

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

A: I recognized God's mercy in my life. Reflecting back on all the things I had survived and my children survived (before birth), it just makes chill bumps run up and down me. (Everyone is) alive today for only one reason. The more we share the mercy that is in our lives, the more He is glorified.

Q: What does your ministry work demand?

A: It demands that I keep my body healthy, eat properly and exercise everyday so that I can share God's mercy with people, so that I can get better and better. ... I told my husband I like to think about it as mercy beyond the cross.

Q: What do you get from your ministry work?

A: I feel like I've been recharged. I feel like I've been

plugged right into the Lord. It's rejuvenating to share God's awesomeness and glory. It just fills you. You're sharing this (with others) but you get so much more in return.

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

A: It will help me to know that I'm accomplishing the purpose that God has for me and my life. It's easy to be depressed and feel that it's useless to do anything anymore. I think this ministry will help me get out and meet more people

Q: How do family members support you?

A: They all support me. They all love the Lord. I am so thankful for my family, my husband and for my children and their love for the Lord. I know they share my story.

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

A: Jesus is the reason I'm alive, the reason we all are alive. I don't know how anybody could have survived what I did without Him in their life. I don't know how they can survive today's world without Him. Jesus is not only my Lord and Savior; He is my Friend.

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

A: My mother and father because they took me to church. I was 11 when I began my walk with Jesus. I went to Girls in Action (GAs) and Bible drill and was in Young Woman's Auxiliary (YWA). I was in the speaker's tournament at Shocco (Springs Baptist Conference Center). "Be Not Conformed to This World" was my speech. ☞

'No time for retreat'

States allowing same-sex 'marriage' could increase to 35 with high court decision

The Supreme Court's decision to sit out the legal battle over same-sex "marriage" will — for now, at least — leave the future of laws prohibiting gays and lesbians from marrying in the hands of lower state and federal court judges. But it also almost certainly means the couples challenging those laws are more likely to win in the end.

The court said Oct. 6 it would not hear appeals from five states — Virginia, Utah, Oklahoma, Indiana and Wisconsin — whose same-sex "marriage" bans had been invalidated by lower federal courts. The decision, issued without explanation, will likely lead to recognition of gay "marriages" in 11 states, the five mentioned above and Colorado, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kansas, West Virginia and Wyoming.

The following day the 9th Circuit court of appeals invalidated marriage laws in Idaho and Nevada. Other states impacted by this ruling are Alaska, Arizona and Montana.

This would take the total of states recognizing gay "marriage" to 35 plus the District of Columbia. It also allows an avalanche of legal challenges to the remaining bans to keep going forward in state and federal courts, where gay and lesbian

couples have overwhelmingly prevailed.

The high court's refusal to step into the issue surprised activists on both sides of the gay-"marriage" debate, but observers speculate it may be a temporary reprieve, giving other gay-"marriage" cases time to wind their way through the system, fleshing out all the legal issues involved.

The court's decision leaves 15 state laws blocking same-sex unions unchanged. Each is already under legal attack, facing challenges in state or federal court — sometimes both. Challenges to marriage bans already have reached a handful of state appeals courts and the federal appeals courts for the 5th, 6th and 11th circuits.

Some of those judges had been waiting to see what the Supreme Court would do. The court's instruction is: Proceed.

Challenging state laws

Technically the Supreme Court's decision does not dictate how those lower court cases should come out. But it sends a signal that is hard for lower court judges to ignore.

No federal appeals court has yet upheld a state law prohibiting same-sex unions. But judges on a 6th Circuit panel hearing a challenge to four state laws earlier this year expressed skepticism that the Constitution requires states to recognize those marriages.



RNS photo

And two of the lawsuits are now in front of the conservative judges of the 5th Circuit. If either of those courts upholds a state ban, the justices might be faced with a marriage case that would be harder to sidestep.

If an appeals court upholds a state's marriage protection laws the Supreme Court's Oct. 6 orders appear "to pre-ordain that the Court, if it grants review, would overturn such a ruling," Ed Whelan, president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, wrote Oct. 6 for National Review Online. "For it is difficult to imagine that the Court would let the current judgments against marriage go permanently into effect in those states and then rule in cases from other states that there is no constitutional [same-sex 'marriage'] right."

By letting gay and lesbian "marriages" go forward in 11 other states the justices almost certainly made it harder to reverse course in the future, Yale law professor William Eskridge said. If they do, he said, the court would have to do more than simply prohibit some couples from marrying; it would have to invalidate marriages that

have already taken place. "It will become very hard for the Supreme Court to take that back," Eskridge said.

Sam Rohrer, president of American Pastors Network (APN), added that the high court's decision allows lower courts to usurp control over state legislation, which is an attack on state sovereignty.

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) of the Southern Baptist Convention, said Christians should neither "jettison a Christian sexual ethic in order to acclimate to the cultural moment" nor respond "with a siege mentality ... in an era in which marriage is redefined and confused."

Moore said changing times require a changing strategy, away from "culture wars" toward "cultural persuasion."

"This is no time for retreat or for resentment," Moore said. "This is a time for mission."

He said in a written statement, "Let's hold fast to what the gospel reveals about the meaning of marriage and the gospel behind it. Let's articulate a Christian vision of what marriage should be, and let's embody that vision in our churches. Let's love our gay and lesbian neighbors. Let's move forward with persuasion and with confidence."

The Supreme Court's refusal to hear the appeals came in spite of requests from both sides of the same-sex "marriage" debate that it make a ruling soon on the question of constitutionality. The ERLC joined four other religious organizations in a September friend-of-the-court brief urging the justices "to end the divisive national debate." The current legal ambiguity is burdening religious organizations and people of faith, they said.

Ruling implications

The expansion of same-sex "marriage" has resulted in a growing clash between the supposed rights of gay couples and the religious freedom of individuals and organizations. Photographers, florists, bakers and other business owners who oppose serving in support of same-sex wedding ceremonies are facing penalties for their refusal. The legal conflict raises questions about whether additional legislation is required to protect religious liberty and conscience rights.

Same-sex "marriage" will be one of the topics of the ERLC's conference Oct. 27-29 in Nashville — "The Gospel, Homosexuality and the Future of Marriage." (Compiled from RNS, BP, ABP and APN)

Marriage law in Alabama faces 3 challenges

Alabama has three challenges to its voter-approved marriage law, stating marriage is between a man and a woman. The lawsuits have been filed in each of the state's three federal court districts, but judges have yet to rule. The state is defending the current law.

The first challenge came in mid-February when Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in Montgomery sued the state on behalf of Paul Hard, a Montgomery resident. Hard is a graduate of the University of Mobile and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and reportedly a former Baptist preacher.

Claiming the estate

The suit is in response to the way Hard was treated following the death of his "husband," David Fancher, who died following a car accident in 2011. Hard wants to claim the estate of Fancher and seek the proceeds in a wrongful death case as well as have "married" listed on

Fancher's death certificate, according to media reports.

According to *The Anniston Star*, Hard was initially denied by hospital officials any information and the chance to see Fancher after the accident on Interstate 65 in Autauga County on Aug. 1, 2011. Hard and Fancher were "married" in Cape Cod, Mass., for less than three months before the accident.

With this case the SPLC seeks to overturn the state's Marriage Protection Act, a 1998 law that bans the recognition of same-sex "marriages" from other states, and the Sanctity of Marriage Amendment, which put this ban in the constitution in 2006.

A second lawsuit was filed in May by a lesbian couple who want their marriage recognized so they can both be legal parents of the son of one of the women.

The third lawsuit was filed in June by a lesbian couple in Birmingham who want their Massachusetts-performed "marriage" to be recognized in Alabama.

Wendy Brooks Crew, attorney for the Birmingham couple, said, "Your marriage

status shouldn't change when you cross state lines."

Attorney General Luther Strange said, "I will vigorously defend the traditional definition of marriage as between one man and one woman. That has been the definition of marriage for the history of western civilization."

Seeking to overturn

And with the Oct. 6 Supreme Court decision (see story, this page) not to deal with the same-sex "marriage" issue — leaving it up to the lower state and federal courts to decide — proponents of gay "marriage" are beefing up their efforts to overturn the state's ban.

Alabama's chapter of the Humans Rights Campaign (HRC) — an organization that works on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals — said the decision was "joyous."

But HRC stated that "LGBT Alabamians still lack basic legal protections." (Compiled from wire services)



Across ALABAMA'S Associations

To submit news items, email news@thealabamabaptist.org or call 205-870-4720, ext. 100, at least three weeks prior to the event.

BESSEMER

► **Seventh Street Church, Bessemer**, will celebrate its 92nd homecoming Oct. 26, 10:30 a.m. Former pastor Joe Lenox will speak. A covered dish lunch will follow. Sam Davidson is pastor.

BETHEL

► **Thomaston Church** will celebrate its 74th homecoming Oct. 26. Sunday School will start at 9:30 a.m. and worship will start at 10:30 a.m. William E. Percy III will speak and Mitzi Gates will perform. A covered dish lunch will follow. Brooks Barkley is pastor.

COLBERT-LAUDERDALE

► **Jonathan Ratliff** is the new youth pastor for **Calvary Church, Tuscumbia**. He previously served as youth pastor for First Church, Colbert Heights, in Tuscumbia. He also served at Muscle Shoals Church and Round Island Church, Athens. He holds a bachelor's degree in athletic training from the Uni-



RATLIFF

versity of Alabama; a bachelor's degree in education from Athens State University; and a master's degree in kinesiology from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, La. He and his wife, Dana, have three children. Darrell Pace is pastor.

ETOWAH

► **Twelfth Street Church, Gadsden**, will present Judgment 21: Derelict, Oct. 21-22, 26 and 29-30, 6-9 p.m. This event will confront students and adults with the truth of heaven and hell through a real-life scenario acted

out. For admission information call 256-546-0471. Craig Carlisle is pastor.

LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

► **Lookout Mountain Association** will hold its annual benefit concert for Alabama Children's Homes & Family Ministries on Oct. 25, 6 p.m. at Shady Grove Church, Collinsville. Guest singers and musicians will perform. Michael Rogers is pastor of Shady Grove. Lloyd Borden is director of missions.

MARSHALL

► **Mount Vernon Church, Albertville**, will hold revival services Oct. 26-29. Don Piper, *New York Times* best-selling author and speaker, will speak at the 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. services Oct. 26 and Steve Taylor, pastor of First Southern Church, Pratt, Kan., will speak in the 6:30 p.m. services Oct. 27-29. Child care will be provided for all services. David Martin is pastor.

MONTGOMERY

► **Trinity Memorial Church, Montgomery**, will host the Freemans in concert Oct. 23, 7 p.m. A love offering will be taken. For information or directions call Leila Fisher at 334-264-8151 or Tom Snowden at 334-285-5112. Stan Holt is pastor.

TUSCALOOSA

► **Circlewood Church, Tuscaloosa**, will host Tim Lee in special services Oct. 26 at 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Lee served as a Marine in the Vietnam War. Herb Thomas is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **Steve Scoggins** has resigned as pastor of **First Church, Opelika**, to be the pastor of First Church, Hendersonville, N.C. He previously served as pastor of First, Hendersonville, and also has served on the board of

directors of *The Alabama Baptist* newspaper. A reception was held at First, Opelika, on Scoggins' last Sunday, Oct. 12, to thank Scoggins and his wife, Karen.

WEST CULLMAN

► **Dennis Trimble** will be the new director of missions for **West Cullman Association** starting Oct. 27. He holds a bachelor's degree in religion from Samford University in Birmingham and has taken additional graduate level courses at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and the Birmingham extension center of New Orleans Seminary. He serves as pastor of Northside Church,



TRIMBLE

Cullman, until his resignation becomes official Oct. 26. He also served at the former Riverview Church, Trussville; East Side Church, Cullman; and Ebenzer Church, Vinemont. He and his wife, Shirley Jo, have one child.

WINSTON

► **Al Hood** is retiring as director of missions (DOM) for **Winston Association**. He holds an associate's degree in education from Walker Junior College (now Beville State Community College) in Jasper; a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Alabama; a master of divinity in biblical studies from New Orleans Seminary; and a doctor of ministry in biblical studies from Luther Rice University in Lithonia, Ga. He has served at Saragossa Church, Nauvoo; Philadelphia Church, Jasper; and Center Grove Church, Cullman. Hood became DOM on Aug. 1, 2000, and will retire Dec. 31. ☞

Boko Haram continues to attack, kill in Nigeria

Adamu bears a scar on the back of his neck where two members of the Islamic extremist group Boko Haram tried to slaughter him.

A member of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (EYN) in Gwozu, in northeastern Nigeria, Adamu, 28, said that in April 2013 he was working on his bean farm when a member of the extremist group Boko Haram showed up.

"He told me to convert to Islam and join them in waging a jihad to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria," Adamu said. "I told him that I will not renounce my Christian faith. ... He left me there on

my farm without saying anything again." Two days later, five other members of Boko Haram showed up. "They then told me that since I refused to recant, they would kill me." They seized Adamu and tied his hands and legs behind his back.

Miraculous survival

"They forced me down on my stomach and then proceeded to ... cut my neck from the back. I was bleeding and went blank as the knife cut through my neck."

Adamu lay there for days, he said, adding that his survival was miraculous; only later would he

learn that the Boko Haram members had threatened to kill anyone in the village who helped him.

Though the villagers were afraid to rescue him, eventually a member of his church snuck onto the farm and found him alive, Adamu said, and took him to a Christian hospital in Cameroon.

Boko Haram and others killed 1,631 Christians in Nigeria for their faith in the first six months of 2014 — a figure that is 91 percent of the total Christians killed in Nigeria all of last year, according to advocacy group Jubilee Campaign. (MS)

ALABAMA UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

West Cullman DOM Collins retires after 29 years

After 29 years as director of missions (DOM) for West Cullman Baptist Association, Jack Collins has decided to step down from the position effective Oct. 21.

"It's been a good journey and I will be available for whatever the Lord wants me to do," Collins said. "I'm just happy to be a part of the Alabama Baptist family."

The Arkadelphia native received a bachelor's degree in religion from Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham and later took additional classes at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

He served as pastor of Northside Baptist Church, Cullman, and Westside Baptist Church, Demopolis, before accepting the position of West Cullman Association DOM in October 1985.

As DOM, Collins has facilitated 29 associational missions trips throughout the Southeast and Northeast with groups ranging in size from 13 to 83 people.

Under his leadership seven churches were planted, making West Cullman a 61-church association.

Being able to be in the churches with the people of God was one of the most fulfilling aspects of his position, Collins said. "Encouraging people to follow the Great Commission is the most important thing."

Although he is retiring as DOM, Collins is not retiring from ministry. He will be available for pulpit supply and remain active in his home church, Northside Baptist.

"It's been a great journey," Collins said of his 56 years of pastoral and associational ministry.

When asked what advice he would pass on to fellow and future DOMs, Collins said, "Love the people and love the Lord and don't give up."

He and his wife, Charlotte, have two children, two stepchildren and "a whole gang" of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. (Maggie Walsh)

Spring Hill Avenue sells property, changes name

Toward the end of June the congregation of Spring Hill Avenue Baptist Church, Mobile, made a significant change by selling its facilities.

Established in 1907 and formerly a larger congregation, the church was averaging about 60 people on Sundays when Pastor Lee Havens first began serving there three and a half years ago.

The church eventually decided to sell its sizeable facilities, which after about a year on the market sold in June to a young Presbyterian congregation in need of a building.

Spring Hill Avenue Baptist purchased a smaller building to move into, the West Jordan Baptist Church building on Eliza Jordan Road in Mobile, which is about 15 miles west of Spring Hill Avenue's former property.

"A majority of our members lived in west Mobile; the logical thing (was) to move where our people live," Havens noted, adding of the sale that "the Lord just worked that out."

Havens said the church is in the process of renovating its new location by enlarging the stage area, installing new flooring, repainting the entire building and purchasing chairs.

"It's going to look like a brand new facility when we get through with it," he said, adding the renovations should be complete by the end of October.

While these renovations are taking place the church is meeting in a temporary location.

According to Havens, practically the entire church body remained when the church sold its former property, and an additional 15 new people also have been attending services since the church began meeting at its temporary site.

And along with the move came a name change — the church is now Hill Spring Baptist Church, Mobile.

"Our people are so excited ... from the 80 year olds to the children," Havens said of the move. "It's been a team effort and it's been a God thing." (Julie Payne)

ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION ANNUAL MEETING ORDER OF BUSINESS

Nov. 11–12, 2014 • Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham • Theme: S.E.R.V.E.

TUESDAY MORNING

PIANIST	Frank Jones
WORSHIP LEADER	Keith Hibbs
8:30 Pre-session Music	Alabama Singing Men/Women
8:45 Call to Order	John Killian
GREETINGS	
Birmingham Baptist Association	Mike McLemore
Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham	Greg Corbin
Congregational Music	Keith Hibbs
Invocation	Jerry Curry
8:55 Enrollment of Messengers	Billie Davis
9:00 Committee on Order of Business	Morgan Bailey
9:05 Committee Appointments	John Killian
9:10 Memorial Service	Harrell Cushing
9:20 Alabama Baptist Ministers Benefit Society	Mike McLemore
9:25 Introduction of Resolutions	Roger Willmore
9:30 Congregational Music	Keith Hibbs
9:35 Miscellaneous Business	
9:50 RECOGNITIONS	
Former Convention Presidents	Rick Lance
New Pastors and	
New Church Staff Members	Bobby DuBois
SERVING Through Giving	
10:00 The Cooperative Program	Jim Swedenburg
10:15 Audit Committee	Bobby DuBois
10:20 Insurance Committee	Bobby DuBois
SERVING Through Church Planting	
10:25 Church Planting in Alabama	
10:40 Special Music	Alabama Singing Men/Women
SERVING Through Teaching	
10:50 Samford University, Andrew Westmoreland; The University of Mobile, Mark Foley; Judson College, David Potts; The Education Commission, Ken May; Board of Aid to Students in Church-Related Vocations, Bill Goodwin	
WORSHIP AND PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS	

11:20 Presentation of Convention President	Rick Lance
11:25 Special Music	Lindy Parsons
11:35 President's Address	John Killian
12:00 Benediction	Steve Johnson

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

PIANIST	Frank Jones
WORSHIP LEADER	Chris Diffey
WORSHIP	
1:30 Pre-session Music	Lakeside Baptist Church
1:45 Invocation	Gary Jones
SERVING Through Partnering	
REPORT OF STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS	
1:50 Report of Executive Director	Rick Lance
2:15 State Board of Missions Recommendations	
2:45 State Board of Missions — S.E.R.V.E.	
3:05 Convention Recognitions	
3:20 S.E.R.V.E.	Randy Norris
3:45 Resolutions Committee	Roger Willmore
3:55 Miscellaneous Business	
4:05 Committee on Boards and Commissions	Mike Miller
4:15 Committee on Committees	Jim Cooley
4:25 Committee on Time, Place and Preacher ..	Dusty McLemore
4:35 Benediction	Bill Evans

TUESDAY EVENING

SERVING Through Worshipping	
WORSHIP	
6:45 Pre-session Music	Frank Jones
6:50 Invocation	John Thweatt
Recognitions	Rick Lance
6:55 Special Music	Veritas
Message	Robert Smith Jr.

WEDNESDAY MORNING

PIANIST	Frank Jones
WORSHIP LEADER	Eric Mathis
WORSHIP	
8:30 Pre-session Music	Samford University
8:45 Congregational Music	Eric Mathis
Invocation	Buddy Gray
SERVING Through Helping	
8:50 Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, Rod Marshall; Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center, Buster Taylor; Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers, Ray Burdeshaw; Alabama Woman's Missionary Union, Candace McIntosh	
9:20 S.E.R.V.E.	Daven Watkins
9:45 Election of Officers	
SERVING Through Sharing	
10:15 <i>The Alabama Baptist</i> , Bob Terry; Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, Lonette Berg; The Baptist Foundation of Alabama, Barry Bledsoe; Alabama Citizen's Action Program, Joe Godfrey; Christian Life Commission, Jim Graham	
10:45 Resolutions Committee Report	Roger Willmore
10:55 Previously Scheduled Business/Election of Officers if needed	
WORSHIP	
11:05 Congregational Music	Eric Mathis
11:10 Introduction of Convention Preacher and Alternate Preacher	John Killian
Special Music	Melodie Dean, Mike May and Lori May
Scripture	Buddy Champion
11:25 Convention Sermon	Tim Cox
11:50 Introduction of Convention Officers	Rick Lance
11:55 Benediction — Adjournment	Irby Jackson

To request messenger cards, call Sheila Rikerd at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 249 or visit www.abscannualmeeting.org.

Pastors should challenge members to give, report says

Christian researchers tracking decades of decline in charitable giving say the trend will not be reversed until pastors challenge congregants to embrace Jesus' teachings on the poor.

But that will take a different kind of pastor than the counselors and comforters that seminaries and divinity schools have trained for ministry, according to the annual "Empty Tomb" report on Christian giving.

Empty Tomb, a nonprofit that tracks the percentage of church members' income that they give to their congregation, reported that seminaries need to school future clergy on the affluence of American congregations and remind church members of "God's agenda to love a hurting world."

In 2012, the latest year for which the numbers are available, church giving dropped to 2.2 percent of member's incomes, the lowest percentage since 1968.

Ian S. Markham, dean and president of Virginia Theological Seminary, said seminaries are already doing more to boost charitable giving.

"The vast majority of seminaries offer courses on stewardship," he said, to help future clergy motivate others to give. (RNS)

Ministering to the family

Dallas Baptist church holds prayer vigil after Ebola victim's death

A prayer vigil for the family of Thomas Eric Duncan, the first person to die of Ebola in the United States, was held Oct. 8 at Wilshire Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas, where Duncan's fiancée is a member.

Joining host pastor George Mason were about 200 people, including representatives of the 10,000 Liberian nationals who live in Dallas; Olu Menjay, president of the Liberian Baptist Missionary and Education Convention; and pastors, chaplains, health care professionals and political leaders.

Mason said, "Over the past week we have heard people over and over again who are worried. They are worried about this virus coming to our country, coming into our life. This is an unwelcome guest, let us be honest. No one wants this virus in our community, in our city or in our world."

'We embrace it'

"But when something is here, we embrace it not because it is good — it is bad — but we seek to find what God might do that is good in us and through us because of it."

Louise Troh, Duncan's fiancée and mother of his adult son, was unable to attend, quarantined at home with her three younger sons, all of whom were exposed to Ebola

through Duncan before his Sept. 28 diagnosis and isolation at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital, where he died Oct. 8.

"Our love for Louise has made this suffering come to us," said Mason, Troh's pastor. "We regret the reason. We do not regret the suffering, because when you love someone you are vulnerable to suffering and you are open to joy. Love is the deepest reality of life and so you feel it all."

The service was live streamed with hopes that Troh might be able to view it. Duncan had come to the U.S. at Troh's invitation, Mason said, and the two had hopes of reuniting as a family. Troh described Duncan as a Christian who was quiet, generous and respectful of his parents, said Mason, who has counseled Troh in phone conversations during the crisis.

"This service is intended to draw people together, to call one another to God who is

Judge of the living and the dead and to lay each of our lives before the mercy of God," Mason said during the service at Wilshire Baptist, which is affiliated with the Baptist

General Convention of Texas. "The world likes to divide people up in all sorts of ways. And it likes to say that differences mean otherness. ... We (Christians) think of the oneness of our humanity as children of God ... so our differences can be embraced, not run from."

Menjay, who is currently living in Birmingham, said Duncan's death puts a worldwide face on Ebola, known to kill most of those it infects.

"My sisters and my brothers, I strongly believe that the death of Bro. Eric Duncan has put a real face to the lethal Ebola outbreak in our country," Menjay said. "We pray to God for God's comfort for the family of the bereaved." (BP)



BP photo

Pastor George Mason, of Wilshire Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas, hosts a prayer vigil for Ebola victims.

'Very special lady'

Cullman's East Side member recalls Baptist life, ministry over past 95 years

By Julie Payne
The Alabama Baptist

She was a child of the Great Depression. But as a daughter of a Baptist pastor, the now 95-year-old Evelyn Howell Sapp recalls distant memories of her childhood with fondness as well as memories of the friends she has made along the way in Baptist life.

Sapp's father, Malcolm E. Howell, began preaching when he was just a teenager.

"He wanted to help educate young men who were ... called to preach," Sapp noted. "When young men would say they were called to preach, my daddy would go and have prayer with them and always give them a book that he felt would help them."

Sapp recalled how she and her siblings were given Bible verses to memorize at home. "If I didn't know the memory verse for next Sunday, the next day I knew it," she said with a chuckle.

Her father, who also worked as a mail carrier, served as the pastor of several Alabama Baptist churches including Arkadelphia

Baptist Church in Cullman County, New Union Baptist Church in Cullman County and Blount Springs Baptist Church in Blount County, among others. He also served as director of missions for Sulphur Springs Baptist Association later in his ministry.

According to Sapp, Arkadelphia Baptist was the same church Hudson Baggett grew up attending. Baggett, a familiar name in Alabama Baptist life who would serve a 28-year tenure as editor of *The Alabama Baptist*, was one of Sapp's favorite childhood playmates.

Childhood friend

"We must have been 8 to 10 years old when I first began to know Hudson," she recalled. "[We] would get outside and play ... ball. I'd pitch and we'd bat when we were kids. Hudson just seemed like he was a close kin to me in a way."

Later in life, Sapp would sometimes go to hear her childhood friend preach.

"Hudson had such a good sense of hu-

mor," she noted. "When he died (in 1994) I felt like I had lost one of my very best friends."

Sapp, who was 12 years old when she accepted Christ as her Savior during a revival at Blount Springs Baptist, also went on to become very involved in Alabama Baptist life. Within the church setting she served as a pianist and church clerk and focused much of her ministry efforts as a Sunday School teacher.

70 years of teaching

Sapp taught mostly teenagers and, later in life, taught a class for senior adult ladies. Before resigning recently after about 70 years of teaching Sunday School classes, she taught couples.

Sapp noted she always referred to the Sunday School lessons printed in *The*

Alabama Baptist and used quotes from those lessons in her teaching material.

"I've known about *The Alabama Baptist* all my life. And I still read *The Alabama Baptist*. ... [It] is a wonderful paper," she said.

Sapp's calling to teach also extended into teaching elementary school for 27 years.

"I enjoyed teaching, period. I think I was born to teach. ... I enjoyed knowing that I was adding to the child's knowledge either in school or in Sunday School," she said.

Sapp, currently a member of East Side Baptist Church, Cullman, has been widowed for 33 years and has two children, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

She noted she has formed many lasting friendships as a result of her years of teaching, and former students will still take the time to stop by and visit with her.

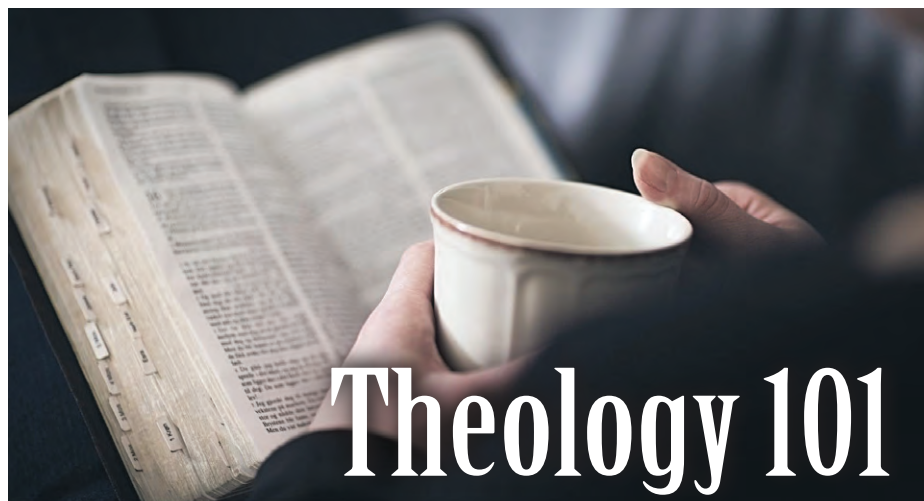
Nedra Green, a member of Seventh Street Baptist Church, Cullman, is just one of many whose life has been touched by Sapp and her ministry. Sapp was serving as a Sunday School teacher at First Baptist Church, Hanceville, when Green first met her years ago.

"She was super nice to me," Green recalled of that first meeting, adding Sapp is a trusted friend and has been like a "second mama" to her.

"I just feel like she's my family," Green said. "She's a very special lady." ❧



SAPP



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Holy Spirit and Holy Living

Walking in Love (Part 2 of 2)

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

Last week we began looking at the Christian life as a walk in love, based on Ephesians 5:1-6. Part of our motivation for a life characterized by love is the awareness that we are both begotten and beloved by God. We looked last week at the description of how Christ loves us as our pattern for walking in love. This week we continue with this theme by paying close attention to conduct that is unbecoming to love and conversation that is out of place with love. Thus our passage not only gives us the positive picture of how to walk in love but also the negative picture of life with Christlike love missing.

Conduct unbecoming

Conduct unbecoming to walking in love includes immorality, impurity and greed. Such conduct should not even be named among saints. Impurity and immorality probe into a person's inner life of thoughts and fantasies as well as the outer life of words and deeds. Greed speaks of pleasures pursued at the expense of others, a grasping for more and more regardless of who gets deprived or devalued in the process.

We might say that a sub-category of the theology of Christian living is a theology of the tongue. The capability of meaningful communication of thought through verbal exchanges is a gift that belongs exclusively to creatures made in God's image and likeness.

As has been observed, dogs bark, cows moo, horses neigh, pigs grunt and geese honk, but only humans can speak meaningful words. Even so, we can take this good gift from God and turn it into a means of thoughtless and unloving pollution that taints the minds and inflames the passions of others. A basic premise about love is that it does no evil to another (Rom. 13:10).

People, not speech

Christians often lament the extent to which filthy speech pollutes the airwaves. However, the airwaves are not the victims; people are. Coarse, suggestive and profane speech taints the imaginations of people who hear it. Polluted minds tend to produce unlov-

ing actions. Conversation that is out of place with love can work evil to others.

A common example is the thoughtless use of obscenities. The reference in our passage to obscene speech is literally to filthy or vulgar talk, something that seems to have been mainstreamed in public life as well as private conversations. Love does not spew filth into the lives of others. Rather love for others desires to ennoble and uplift them.

Coarse talk

Also listed in this passage is what is called foolish or silly speech along with coarse talk. Such use of the tongue often takes the form of joking or jesting that employs clever innuendoes or double meanings, so that words contain sexual or immoral overtones.

The seriousness of immoral living and unclean language is signaled in the declaration that we can be sure of this: "That everyone who is sexually immoral or impure ... has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (5:5).

In addition covetousness is named in the same breath as immorality and impurity and is identified as a form of idolatry. Covetousness is not motivated by love but by greed and self-interest. Lest the seriousness of filthy speech goes unrecognized, the passage adds that it amounts to disobedience to God and His standards. Such disobedience incurs His wrath (5:6).

Give thanks instead

In place of using speech that degrades and defiles others, the better use of language is the giving of thanks (5:4). Rather than hurting others love finds expression in gratitude both to God and to others. ❧

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.



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 anniversary of President Lincoln's meeting with Truth

Abolitionist Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) could neither read nor write. Yet she was perhaps the most influential African-American woman in the 19th century.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of her meeting with President Abraham Lincoln.

Born Isabella Baumfree in 1797 in Ulster County, New York, Truth was the eleventh of twelve children of James and Elizabeth Baumfree. They were slaves of a Colonel Hardenbergh.

At the age of nine, Truth — known as Belle at the time — was sold at auction with a flock of sheep for \$100. She was sold three more times, the last to John Dumont at West Park, N.Y.

Belle married a slave on Dumont's plantation. She had five children.

Cheated out of freedom

When Dumont cheated her out of her freedom, she escaped with baby Sophia and lived with the Van Wagenens, a

Quaker abolitionist family.

While staying with them she experienced a spiritual conversion. Overwhelmed with the presence of God's greatness, she said, "God revealed Himself to me with all of the suddenness of lightning."

She then said He pervaded the universe: "There was no place where God was not." She became instantly conscious of her great sin.

After her conversion, Belle started preaching. She knew the Bible because she had memorized much of it while listening to it being read.

Since she was a free woman, she wanted a new name. Based on Psalm 39:12 and John 8:32, she took the name Sojourner Truth.

In 1843, Truth left New York City after 14 years there and became an itinerant preacher in the Northeast and Midwest.

In 1850, she dictated her memoirs to friend Olive Gilbert. After abolitionist

William Lloyd Garrison published her memoirs as "The Narrative of Sojourner Truth," she became widely known.

Moved to Michigan

In 1857, she moved to Battle Creek, Michigan.

Truth became involved in several social movements, including the abolition of slavery, women's rights and suffrage, temperance and prison reform.

On Oct. 29, 1864, Truth went to Washington D.C. and had an audience with President Lincoln.

She told Lincoln, "I never heard of you before you were put in for president."

Lincoln laughed and replied, "I heard of you years and years before I ever thought of being president. Your name is well-known in the Midwest."

Lincoln showed her a Bible that a group of Baltimore black people had given him. Truth thanked Lincoln for his efforts to help black Americans. He thanked her for

her encouragement. She asked him to sign her "Book of Life," her scrapbook/autograph book. Lincoln wrote, "For Aunty Sojourner Truth, A. Lincoln, October 29, 1864."

She stayed in Washington to help freed slaves at Freedman's Village. She was there when Lincoln died on April 15, 1865.

She and grandson Sammy walked through the East Room of the White House where Lincoln's body lay in state.

Legacy lives on

Truth died on November 26, 1883, in Battle Creek. Her funeral service, attended by approximately 1,000 people, was held at the Congregational-Presbyterian Church. She is buried at Oak Hill Cemetery.

Her legacy lives on today. A bronze portrait bust, the first honoring an African-American woman, was unveiled on April 28, 2009, in the United States Capitol. ☞



TRUTH

REFLECTIONS



The Alabama Baptist says goodbye to news writer Payne, welcomes Walsh

After working on *The Alabama Baptist's* editorial team for more than three years, Julie Payne has left her position as news writer.

Payne originally began working part-time in April 2011 and later was hired for a full-time position in April 2012. Her duties included writing articles, maintaining the paper's columns, processing and editing wire copy, producing videos and proofing pages for print.

She earned a bachelor's degree in telecommunication and film with a concentration in broadcast news from the University of Alabama.

Payne and her husband, Josh, will have their first child in early December.

Jennifer Rash, executive editor of the paper, said, "Julie has been a fantastic addition to our staff and we are sad to see her go so soon. Of course, we are all very happy for her in this new season of life and wish her only the best, but we are really going to miss her. She brings a polished level of professionalism to everything she does and definitely made us all better by being part of our team."

As Payne leaves the staff, *The Alabama Baptist*

welcomed Maggie Walsh to the position as news writer Oct. 1.

Walsh earned a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism and a minor in communication studies from Troy University and graduated magna cum laude in 2013.

She interned with the paper during summer 2012 and later worked as a freelance writer for *Alabama Farmers Cooperative* magazine. After graduation she traveled around the United States as a technical presenter for Camfel Productions.

"I am looking forward to growing as a writer and expanding my skill set while being able to work with some really strong Christian leaders," Walsh said. "And I'm very thankful that God opened this door."

Rash said, "Maggie is truly a God-send to us. We could not have scripted the timing of her availability better if we had tried. When she served as a summer intern with us in 2012, we saw a spark in her that we knew we wanted to watch. Maggie fit in with our team seamlessly from day one. She has such great potential and we are excited she has chosen to launch her journalism/communication career in Baptist newspapers with us." (TAB)



PAYNE



WALSH

CAMPUS

News



JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Young Performs One-Woman Show at Judson:** Billie Jean Young, artist-in-residence and associate professor of fine and performing arts at Judson College in Marion performed her one-woman



YOUNG

show, Fannie Lou Hamer: This Little Light. The performance was Oct. 11 at 6 p.m. in the Alumnae Auditorium. Young has delighted audiences with her hour-long Civil Rights era play depicting the life of Fannie Lou Hamer. Hamer was a sharecropper in Mississippi who was drawn into the Civil Rights movement by her desire to secure equality and voting rights for all of America's people.

"I wrote the play ... to give voice to a then unsung heroine and because the Civil Rights movement was an important part of my own life," Young said.

Young was a student at Judson

who graduated with distinction in 1974 and went on to earn a law degree from Cumberland School of Law at Samford University in Birmingham. She returned to her alma mater in 2006 to teach.

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **UMobile Involved in Faith-Based Feature Film:** Students, faculty and alumni from the University of Mobile (UMobile) have been directly involved in the production of a faith-based movie filmed in Mobile.

The faith-based feature film blends live action and animation in a story that showcases the power of grace. Keone Fuqua, assistant professor of film and theatre at UMobile, worked with producers Jeff Galle and Blake Hester in 2010 and that history provided an opportunity for UMobile students to participate in a professional-quality feature film.

Hester, who also served as the film's extras casting coordinator, recently visited the university to speak with several classes regarding student and faculty involvement in the movie.

"The University of Mobile has

been a big supporter," Hester said. "Keone was a big part of the film and helped us from the very beginning when we were in development. Students and alumni came out during shooting and helped us in post-production."

"Yellow Day," directed by Carl Lauten, premiered Sept. 16 at the Mobile Civic Center Theater. Tickets are available at Premiere Cinemas in Spanish Fort.

To learn more about the film or view the trailer, visit yellowday-movie.com.

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Samford University to Award Journalism and Mass Communication Scholarships:** Samford University's Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (JMC) will award partial scholarships to as many as 12 freshmen who enroll in the fall of 2015. Application deadline is April 1, 2015. Each scholarship is worth up to \$1,800 per year.

Scholarships will be awarded based on ACT scores, high school grades, volunteer work and participation in media-related clubs. They can be renewed each year provided that the student main-

tains a 3.5 or better GPA and is involved with Samford student media.

"These scholarships can provide \$7,200 in financial assistance during a student's time at Samford," said Bernie Ankney, Samford JMC chair. "This can help students receive an outstanding education in journalism and mass communication at a reasonable cost. Samford offers one of the best journalism and mass communication programs at a private university in the United States."

Samford offers majors in print and broadcast journalism, public relations and advertising. The JMC department also houses an interdisciplinary film production minor, a sports media program and courses in social media, church media and photojournalism. Samford JMC students regularly win awards for their work and graduate to be highly competitive in the job market.

"Samford journalism and mass communication graduates work for some of the top magazines, newspapers, television stations, and public relations and advertising firms in the nation," Ankney said. "This scholarship can be a great step toward a bright and rewarding future in journalism and mass communication careers." ❧

Want to know GOD?

Pastor Steve W. Grissom
Haven Baptist Church, Madison

Christianity is a battle. It is a battle each day to follow Christ.

Martin Luther knew this battle all too well. He wrote, "I more fear what is within me than what comes from without." Sin is not just all around us. It is within us. To conquer sin, we must run to Christ by faith. The Bible states, "The just shall live by faith."

We hear voices from society calling us to just have faith. Without a doubt, faith is foundational to know God. The apostle Paul said, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." Such saving faith must be put into context. It is not faith in ourselves or in our abilities.

First we must understand that it is a gift from God (2 Pet. 1:1; Phil. 1:29). God grants faith so we might recognize His grace to us.

Second it is grounded in God (Acts 3:16). That is, our faith should be focused in the God-man Jesus Christ. First Corinthians reminds us our faith is rooted in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If not for this history-altering event our faith would be futile.

Third faith is given so that we might glory in God (Rom. 4:20, 5:2; 1 Pet. 1:21). Our faith is not about who we are or what we have done. It is about who Jesus Christ is and what He has done. As the famous hymn "In Christ Alone" so beautifully states, "In Christ alone my hope is found; He is my light, my strength, my song; this Cornerstone, this solid ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm. What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease. My Comforter, my all in all — here in the love of Christ I stand."

J.D. Gear reminds us, "Faith is not the absence of doubt; it is continuing to follow Jesus in the midst of doubt."

Let me invite you to cling to Christ. He has already won the battle. His victory can be yours as well. ❧

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CHURCH POSITIONS

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Antioch Baptist Church, Columbus, Miss. (east central MS), in search of bivocational pastor. Resumés may be submitted to: 6080 Hwy 45 North, Columbus, MS 39705.

INTERIM PASTOR: Brent Baptist Church in Brent, Ala., is accepting resumés for an interim pastor. Cutoff date for resumés is Oct. 29. Please send resumés to: Brent Baptist Church, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 246, Brent, AL 35034. Please visit brentbaptistchurch.org for more information about our church.

WORSHIP & EDUCATION PASTOR: White Springs Baptist Church, Rainbow City, Ala. Full-time. WSBC is an exciting church on the move. With an already strong, exciting and energetic worship ministry, we are seeking God's man to propel us to the next level. For a full description of the worship and education pastor profile, please visit whitespringsbaptist.org. Send resumé to: Pastor Abel at abelg1@comcast.net.

MINISTER OF WORSHIP & MUSIC: First Baptist Church, Childersburg, Ala., is seeking a full-time minister to lead worship music and develop youth and children's programs. Please forward resumés with a cover letter to: FBC Childersburg, 200 8th Avenue SW, Childersburg, AL 35044, or email to: jferg23881@bellsouth.net. Resumés should be received by Oct. 31.

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.

INTERIM MUSIC/WORSHIP LEADER: Resumés should be sent to: Greensboro Baptist Church, ATTN: Music/Youth Search Committee, 908 Main Street, Greensboro, AL 36744, or email to: greensboro@bellsouth.net.

STUDENT MINISTER: Concord Baptist, Anderson, S.C., is seeking a student minister (grades 6-12). Degree required from an accredited seminary and minimum of three years church/ministry experience. Submit resumés via email to: jjames@concordbaptist.com or to: Concord Baptist, 1012 Concord Road, Anderson, SC 29621, ATTN: Dr. Don Cox. Church website: concordbaptist.com. Email: jjames@concordbaptist.com.

MINISTER OF YOUTH: First Baptist Church of Blakely, Ga., is currently receiving resumés for the position of minister of youth full time. Please send resumés to: kalderman@fbclakely.com.

YOUTH PASTOR: Autaugaville Baptist Church is currently seeking a part-time youth pastor to lead our youth ministry program, primarily grades 7-12. Please submit resumés to: Dr. Garner Clark, 245 First Street, Prattville, AL 36067. Website: www.ataugavillebaptist.org.

STUDENT & FAMILY ACTIVITIES PASTOR: White Springs Baptist Church, Rainbow City, Ala. Part-time. We are seeking God's next man to serve as our student and family activities pastor. For a full description

of the ministry profile, please visit whitespringsbaptist.org. Email resumé to: Pastor Abel at abelg1@comcast.net.

MINISTER OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES: First Baptist Church of Foley, Ala., is accepting resumés for the full-time position of minister of children and families. Please email resumés to: scollins@fbcfoley.com.

TWO POSITIONS AVAILABLE: Deerfoot Baptist Church in Trussville is seeking two part-time positions: interim preschool/children's minister and interim student minister. Interim positions needed up to 12 months. Experience required. Please submit resumés or questions to: phall@deerfootbaptist.org.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS: The DeKalb Baptist Association in NE Alabama is currently accepting resumés for the position of director of missions. Acceptable candidates must have a history of involvement in associational missions and support for the Southern Baptist Convention. Resumés can be sent to: DOM Search Committee, 218 Parker Avenue SE, Rainsville, AL 35986, or email to: dbasecretary@farmerstel.com.

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MISCELLANEOUS

JUDGEMENT DAY: Evangelistic drama, Cottage Hill Baptist, Pleasant Grove, AL 35127. Oct. 25: 6-10 p.m.; Oct. 26: 6-9 p.m.; Oct. 27 and 28: no presentation; Oct. 29-31: 6-9 p.m. Reservations: 205-744-8521.

Dealing with continuing woes

WalletHub ranks Alabama as worst state to have a baby, according to recent analysis

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Infant and maternal health were two major factors in a recent analysis that ranked Alabama as the worst state to have a baby. The analysis by the personal finance social network WalletHub was released in September.

Vermont topped the overall rankings, while Alabama was number 51, ranked behind every other U.S. state and the District of Columbia.

"Families in the United States pay the highest birthing costs in the world," wrote WalletHub's Richie Bernardo, citing a 2012 report from the International Federation of Health Plans. "With

our findings, we hope to enlighten expectant parents on the costs and conditions they can anticipate where they live."

WalletHub experts evaluated states by examining several factors related to infant and maternal health, including hospital charges, infant care costs, infant mortality rates and access to healthcare for

mothers and babies. Data for the analysis came from the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other governmental agencies and advocacy groups.

The WalletHub analysis highlights Alabama's continuing woes when it comes to maternal and infant health. According to the 2014 KIDS COUNT Data report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, ten percent of all babies born in Alabama in 2012 were low-birthweight. Alabama also has the second highest infant death rate in the nation.

Braden Richmond, an obstetrician-gynecologist (OB-GYN) in Anniston, said Alabama's high number of rural poor makes maternal healthcare problematic for a large number of patients. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

(ACOG), 52 percent of births in Alabama are financed by Medicaid, which requires maternity patients to enroll in the Alabama Medicaid Maternity Care Program.

"We see a lot of patients on Medicaid, which isn't a problem, except that the patient has to have a Medicaid referral and follow the steps to get into the program. Other than that, care is not a problem. But then the question becomes where are you going to go?" Richmond said.

Alabama has one of the lowest numbers of OB-GYNs per capita in the country with 474 OB-GYN physicians serving a population of 2 million women, according to ACOG. Thirty-three of Alabama's 67 counties do not have any OB-GYNs, and few hospitals offer labor and delivery services.

Joseph Biggio, professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, said, "Over the last several years we have seen a number of labor and delivery units, especially in some of the smaller hospitals, close. While in some circumstances the providers moved to other facilities, in several cases the providers closed their offices and left the state. This only compounds the problem of attempting to get physicians to establish practices or

join practices in the state."

At the same time, the number of family physicians providing maternity care is declining, a trend that is concentrated in rural, underserved areas. These smaller communities, because of their demographics, typically cannot support specialty practices like obstetrics and gynecology.

As of 2012, only about 10 percent of family physicians in the state were offering obstetrics, said Daniel M. Avery Jr., professor and chairman of the department of obstetrics and gynecology in The University of Alabama's College

of Community Health Sciences,

"Half of the counties in the United States have no OB provider," Avery said. "That leaves some 10 million women in the reproductive age with no local access to OB services. These women might not be able to afford to take off work or have transportation

to travel to a town that does offer maternity care, so they don't get adequate care."

Not only are there economic factors at play, but not having a local obstetrics provider makes getting prenatal care, as well as delivery, challenging, increasing the risk of premature delivery and complications at pregnancy, Avery said.

Education is key

No single factor can be isolated to solve the problems the state faces, Biggio said. A lack of maternal care can lead to medical complications in pregnancy, which can then lead to premature births. Premature births often result in infant deaths. Educating women, even before pregnancy, is key.

"The importance of preconception care to optimize maternal health prior to pregnancy is a message that we will be hearing more about in the future," Biggio said.

A well-educated, well-insured patient will have no problems with access to quality medical care, Richmond said. The continuing challenge is to help mothers improve their own health and, in turn, the health of their babies.

"The problem has nothing to do with their hearts," Richmond said. "The battle is in education and motivating mothers to get the care they need." ■



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'Accessible Kingdom'

Birmingham to host disability ministry conference

Disability ministry isn't hard and it will look different in every church," said Amy Kirby, special needs coordinator for Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham.

And she said she is excited to attend The Accessible Kingdom Disability Ministry Conference at Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Nov. 7-8, to help her and her church learn more about how to reach out to those touched by disability.

Variety of topics

This is the first time the annual national conference will be held in Birmingham. It is cosponsored by Joni and Friends and MNA Special Needs Ministries and will include more than 40 workshops with topics like Autism and Your Church; Getting Started: First Steps to Establishing Disability Ministry in Your Local Congregation; Pastoral Care for Families Touched By Disabilities; Marriage and Disability and many others.

Keynote speakers will include Emily Colson, author of "Dancing with Max," and Stephanie Hubach, MNA Special Needs Ministries director.

Church members, educators, pastors and families of those with disabilities are encouraged to attend.

Kirby said, "[Disability ministry] is a vital area for any size church to be involved in — whether you minister to one person or dozens — our doors should be wide open."

Shades Mountain Baptist members plan to attend, as do members from The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, and Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham.

Joel Wallace, associate director for MNA Special Needs Ministries, said the heart of special needs ministries can be found in 1 Corinthians 12 where Paul addressed the body of Christ: "The

parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable. ... But God has so composed the body ... that there may be no division in the body but that the members have equal concern for one another."

"I think it's really clear that those who we may think are weaker (should be) indispensable by the Church and yet people

with disabilities have typically, for different reasons, not been included in the Church," Wallace said.

He said

the conference is specifically designed to have "something for everyone" by covering "a lot of specific disabilities but then a lot of applicable topics."

"Most churches would like to minister to those with disabilities but don't know how," Wallace said. "And that's what The Accessible Kingdom is for." (Neisha Fuson)

To register for the conference, visit www.accessiblekingdom.org.

"Most churches would like to minister to those with disabilities but don't know how. And that's what The Accessible Kingdom is for."

Joel Wallace
associate director, MNA Special Needs Ministries



COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

CP giving drops, leaders 'prayerfully optimistic'

NASHVILLE — The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) ended its fiscal year 0.76 percent below last year's contributions and missed its Cooperative Program (CP) allocation budgeted projection of \$191.5 million by 2.58 percent, according to SBC Executive Committee President Frank S. Page.

The SBC received \$186,567,610.63 in Cooperative Program Allocation Budget gifts during the fiscal year Oct. 1, 2013–Sept. 30, 2014, or \$1,433,665.07 less than the \$188,001,275.70 received during the last fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2013.

"We have been monitoring CP gifts closely since the Great Recession and believe we may have reached the nadir, or lowest point, for national Cooperative Program gifts," Page said. "Individual giving to churches continues to lag behind other sectors of charitable giving in the United States, but we remain prayerfully optimistic that through a combination of the '1% CP challenge' and a renewed commitment of individual giving through churches, we will see an uptick in CP funding for our missions and ministries over the next several years."

"The Atlas of Giving forecasts that giving to religious organizations will decline by 2 percent year-to-year, so the fact that our national CP giving was down by less than 1 percent and overall giving was actually slightly up shows we are bucking the trend," Page said. "The '1% CP Challenge' coupled with focused prayer may have made all the difference for Southern Baptists over the past few years."

West Virginia Convention executive director retires

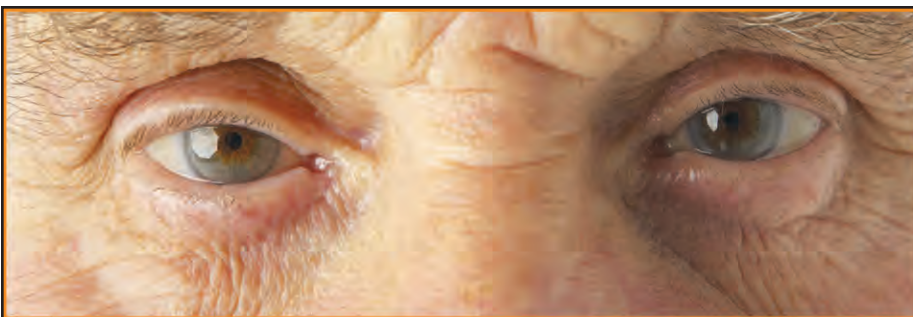
SCOTT DEPOT, W.Va. — Terry Harper, lead missionary and executive director of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists (WVCSB), has announced his retirement, effective at the conclusion of the convention's Nov. 6-7 annual meeting.

Harper, 66, has led West Virginia Baptists for 13 years, longer than any other executive director since the state convention was established in 1970.

Harper told the executive board that heart health treatment and tests at the Cleveland Clinic contributed to his retirement decision.

"Service in a state convention is great work and I will always be grateful for this opportunity to serve Christ in this unique way," Harper said Oct. 1 in a statement. State conventions have "a special place in Southern Baptist Convention life," he said, "and I do not see how [Southern Baptists] could ever do without the work of state conventions."

Harper announced his retirement to the convention's executive board during their Sept. 6 regular meeting. ☛



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J. Rodney Bledsoe, J.D.
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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.”

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Max and Carolyn



Jimmy Dixon

— Paid Advertising —

‘About the Kingdom’

Volunteers show love of Jesus in practical ways

(continued from page 1)
more than 600 volunteers representing about 50 churches.

The day became a reality by working through The Hope Initiative — a program created by Mayor Walter Maddox in 2009 as a partnership between the “City of Tuscaloosa and the faith-based community to focus on making long-term improvements in areas with high crime rates,” according to www.tuscaloosahope.com.

Eric Boykin, missions strategist for Tuscaloosa Baptist Association and director of The Hope Initiative, was the humble mastermind behind the event.

“Our prayer is that God would get all the praise and glory for this, not the Baptist church, not me. It’s all about the Kingdom,” Boykin said.

And there was much praise to be given to God after ADOH was completed.

Projects included building eight decks, putting up drywall in three homes, power washing homes for elderly couples, replacing a front door for a single mother, putting siding on a home that had been left by a contractor after April 2011 storms — the list goes on and on.

Boykin discovered many of the project needs by word-of-mouth but churches and individuals also submitted needs on tuscaloosahope.com. After a project was posted, a team of two traveled to survey the site to make sure there was a legitimate need, to verify accurate locations and to make plans for the logistics of each project.

The website also served as the portal to sign up to serve on a project. Teams didn’t have to be from a single church or one location. Some projects consisted of a Baptist volunteer, a few volunteers from a community church and a Catholic all working together on one team, Boykin said.

And it wasn’t just churches serving. Volunteers from the Housing Authority, Children’s Rehabilitation Services and the mayor’s office participated.

Maddox served on “Project #25: Crowell Pressure Washing,” as listed on the website.

“Pressure washing, weed eating, cleaning up, you name it,” Maddox said of the project. “We did whatever we thought we could do to help.”

He and his daughter, Taylor, along with six other volunteers, worked at the Crowell home and Maddox, who recently marked nine years in the position, said it was “one of the most meaningful days of me being mayor.”

“I was glad to be a small part of A Day of Hope,” Maddox said.

Looking back at the opportunities to serve and give back to the city after the April 2011 tornadoes, Maddox said ADOH gave volunteers that same feeling.

‘God truly blesses you’

“We benefitted the most from doing the volunteer work because God truly blesses you and rewards you for your service,” he said.

Irby Jackson, pastor of Crestline Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, and five volunteers from his church worked on the team that built a handicap ramp for Mylan Marks, an autistic 12-year-old who is

wheelchair-bound. The boy and his family live below the poverty line and could not afford to build a ramp. They used to struggle to get Mylan and his wheelchair in and out of the house, but not anymore.

Jackson said, “It meant a great deal to see the kid’s face as (his family) pushed him up the wheelchair ramp the first time. It was like watching your own kid open

a Christmas present. And he was so excited.

“I feel like the purpose of the Church is to make disciples and we do that by loving God, serving others and worshipping together. ... I saw this as a great opportunity to support missions.”

At every project site volunteers were encouraged to tell community members, “We

just want to show the love of Jesus in practical ways.”

Boykin said the catchphrase was “an easy way to introduce the gospel to people.”

ADOH went so well that leadership plans to make it an annual, possibly biannual, event, Boykin said.

“Volunteers were coming back saying that it was amazing. ‘I don’t even have a relationship with a black person or a Hispanic person,’ they’d say. This allowed our churches to do something together (in places that are underserved),” he said.


ADOH was made possible by the Alabama Baptist State Convention who gave a \$5,000 Love Loud grant to help fund the projects. Habitat for Humanity also gave \$5,000.

“We didn’t have any projects that stopped because of a lack of funding,” Boykin said.

Jackson said ADOH was “one of the best days and opportunities to serve God by helping a family who desperately needed it,” and he plans to lead his church to serve again next year. ☪



Photo courtesy of Irby Jackson
Team members from Crestline Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, work on a ramp for 12-year-old Mylan Marks during A Day of Hope.



A Dying Child's Spiritual Legacy

By Fred G. Womack

Retired SBC pastor, Fred G. Womack, tells of his 6-year-old daughter’s battle with cancer, his personal grief and how God granted unexpected and astonishing assistance through it all, such as the child’s vision of heaven before her death. The book highlights that nothing short of God’s supernatural comfort could produce solace and hope powerful enough to offset the unrelenting anguish that came in those days.

Books may be ordered online from Amazon.com, Booksamillion.com or WestBowPress.com.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 19

Explore the Bible By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

ONLY JESUS SAVES Hebrews 7:23-28

A Permanent Priest (23-24)

Christ's priesthood is superior because it is permanent. The permanence of Jesus' high priesthood appears again in Hebrews, this time emphasizing the contrast between the Levitical priests and Jesus. Aaron's line of priests had a multitude of members because death prevented them from continuing in office. For the Aaronic priests the office continued but the person changed. The law of heredity guaranteed that some descendant of Aaron would fill the office. The successor, however, might lack the qualifications to intercede effectively with God for the people. Simply being a descendant of Aaron did not necessarily mean that the new high priest would do a good job. Jesus, however, continued to fill the office as High Priest. The office of High Priest is permanently secure in the hands of Jesus.

Jesus holds His priesthood without change. We can grasp the idea here when we think of how pastors vary. One is better at visiting and one is stronger at preaching. Some people relate to one while other people relate better to another. In the same way, one priest was a better intercessor than the former. Every descendant of Aaron was different. You and I will never have another high priest. No young, inexperienced priest just out of seminary will ever succeed Jesus. Jesus is superior by virtue of His permanence.

Able to Save (25)

Jesus is able to save to the "uttermost" those who draw near to God through Him. The term "uttermost," or "always" in the Holman Christian Standard Bible, is unusual, being used elsewhere only in Luke 13:11. The term combines the idea of completeness with the idea of eternity. It means complete, absolute, total, eternal salvation. The words here allow no possibility of our supplementing our salvation by doing good works. Salvation is all Christ's work, from beginning to end.

Whoever we are, whatever we have done, no matter how wicked our sin — whether it is

murder, infidelity, perversion, betrayal, lying or whatever — Christ can save us completely and eternally. Anyone who comes to God for salvation must come through Jesus, for salvation only comes through Christ.

The phrase "is able to save to the uttermost" is present tense. The reference is not just to the initial experience of being saved. It refers to the perpetual experience of being saved. Jesus saves those who trust in Him, not only in the moment of initial commitment but day-by-day and moment-by-moment throughout all time. Jesus' continual saving work brings about our growing sanctification as we are made more like Him.

Because of His Character (26-28)

Verse 26 summarizes the qualities of an ideal high priest clearly seen in Jesus. First three personal traits describe the ideal high priest. The first trait refers to personal holiness. Jesus was "holy." He was a perfect accomplishment of all that God required. No one could find in Jesus any flaw or failure. The word "innocent" means without guilt. Jesus had no craftiness or malice. The word "unstained" refers to Jesus as having no moral contamination. Jesus was holy by nature and action.

The second trait teaches that, in relationship to human beings Jesus was set apart from sinners. Jesus was sinless, and this fact set Him apart from sinful human beings. Jesus' service in the office of High Priest also set Him apart from other human beings. The holy High Priest can perfectly serve the needs of a sinful person to come to the holy God for salvation.

The third trait teaches that, despite Jesus' likeness to human beings, He nevertheless stands above them, for He was "exalted above the heavens." Jesus was the unique God-man. His exalted nature should cause us to appreciate more deeply the glory of His ministry.

Jesus' superiority also is seen in that He had no need for daily sacrifices for Himself since He was sinless. With a perfect High Priest like Jesus, Christians may approach God with confidence. Jesus' character guarantees our access. ☞

Bible Studies for Life By James Barnette, Ph.D. Samford University and Brookwood Baptist Church, Mountain Brook

OVERCOME BETRAYAL Genesis 37:19-27; 39:1-2

Hatred and Jealousy Can Cause Others to Betray Us (37:19-24)

It took Joseph approximately three days to travel from Hebron to Shechem but when he arrived there he learned that his brothers had moved 13 miles north to Dothan. The latter city was another day's journey. When Joseph came into their range of vision they immediately recognized him from far away due to his colorful garment. At this point the brothers began to make their cruel plans. Reuben had every reason to hesitate over the plot. Blood, especially a brother's blood, was sacred and not to be spilled. As the eldest of the family, Reuben would be the most answerable for any wrong done to Joseph.

Cisterns were dug into the ground and lined with plaster. Since most of Israel's rainfall is limited to three or four months of the year, these cisterns collected rainwater and made it available during the long dry spell. It was not at all unusual that during part of the year they were dry. After Joseph is stripped of his status and tossed into the cistern, his brothers sit down comfortably to eat. At this point they showed no signs of guilty consciences.

God is at Work on Our Behalf Even When Others Abandon Us (37:25-27)

The alternation of the names "Ishmaelites" and "Midianites" suggests they were synonymous or overlapping terms. While some have argued against this suggestion, it is in fact settled by Judges 8:24, which says of the Midianites "they had golden earrings, because they were 'Ishmaelites.'" Many expand on this argument to suggest that "Ishmaelite" had already become less an ethnic designation and more a term like "gypsy" or "Bedouin," which describes a way of life.

The goods the caravan is transporting were common commodities for trade. Myrrh was imported from southern Arabia and must have come by caravan up the In-

cense Road, which wound around the west coast of Arabia all the way over to Damascus.

The 20 shekels sale price was typical for slaves in this period and represents about two years' wages for a common shepherd. Jacob's family is well-to-do so the money is of little consequence to the brothers. Furthermore by the time they divided it up among themselves they did not have much to show for their treachery.

People Betray; God Doesn't (39:1-2)

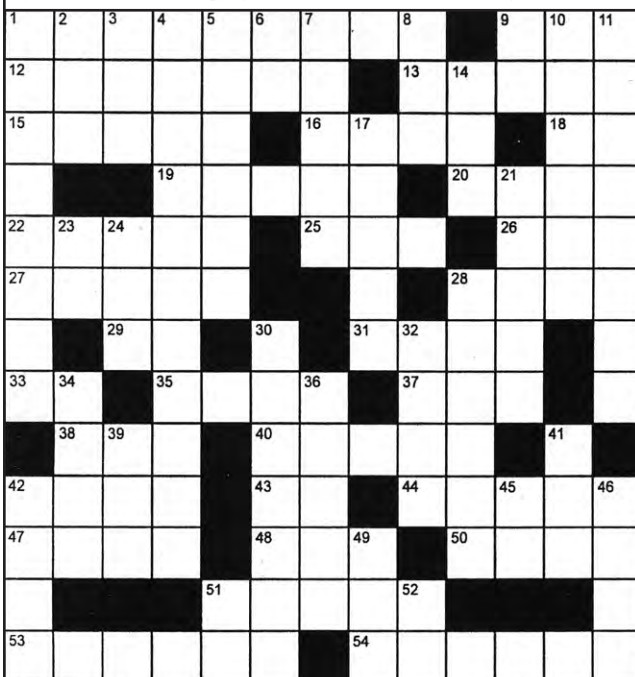
Potiphar was a high official in Pharaoh's court. His name, which means "he whom Re gives," occurs occasionally in Egyptian inscriptions from between the seventh and third centuries B.C. We know little else about Potiphar but his historical connections are not important. He is described as captain of the guard or, as some suggest, captain of the bodyguard. Regardless of the exact meaning of his title, the term suggests that he was part of an elite, courageous band of rugged men. The narrative's focus proceeds immediately to Potiphar's temptress wife who attempts to cause Joseph to stumble in his faith and convictions.

Joseph found himself in a country and culture he did not know, surrounded by a language he did not understand. The once yearned-for child of Rachel and the favorite son of Jacob had been sold as a common slave. He had come from a rural culture, an unsophisticated people. The changes and adjustments he faced must have been overwhelming. But not only did Joseph adjust to his new circumstance, he flourished in it.

How does one account for this adaptability? The reason is given and it is a marvelously simple one: the Lord was with Joseph. The Sovereign God of Israel was with Joseph and guiding him through all of his travails. God was the secret of his success. Indeed the Joseph narrative is an exposition of Romans 8:28 that in all things God works for good. ☞

Christian Crossword

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Across

- Jesus Christ the same _____. (Heb. 13:8)
- The beginning and the _____. (Rev. 22:13)
- Seek to ____ in. (Luke 13:24)
- To take away weapons.
- The ____ which He promised. (Deut. 9:28)
- Electrical engineer. (abbr.)
- At the ____ hand of God. (Rom. 8:34)
- The people ____ mind to work. (Neh. 4:6)
- The ____ of the sea. (Gen. 49:13)
- They departed from _____. (Num. 33:45)
- Money or goods given to poor, in love. (singular)
- ____ prophet. (Rev. 16:13)
- A fig _____. (Mark 11:13)
- Foot. (abbr.)
- Any three.
- ____, I am with you.

- Thunder and _____. (1 Sam. 12:17)
- No room for them in the _____. (Luke 2:7)
- The children of _____. (Ezra 2:57)
- Unto the ____ down. (Ps. 50:1)
- ____ Lord. (Ps. 120:2)
- Let him be Anathema Maran-_____. (1 Cor. 16:22)
- Hemoglobin. (abbr.)
- The ____ of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3:18)
- "And sun" in Spanish.
- Tailor. (abbr.)
- Prefix indicates "inside" or "within."
- I will ____ thee. (Gen. 22:17)
- ____, thou shalt love. (Rom. 13:9)
- Glory and _____. (2 Pet. 1:3)
- Down**
- Flee also ____ lusts. (2 Tim. 2:22)
- East by north. (abbr.)
- Social Security Administration. (abbr.)
- The glory of the _____. (1 Cor. 15:40)
- A weasel.
- Revised Version. (abbr.)
- A territory of India.
- Basic monetary unit of Japan.
- Eastern time. (abbr.)
- The eye of a _____. (Matt. 19:24)
- Nor to your _____. (Jer. 27:9)
- Airport code for New Delhi, India.
- Inclined upward.
- Moses and _____. (Lev. 13:1)
- Associate in Arts. (abbr.)
- Very low frequency. (abbr.)
- His ears shall _____. (Jer. 19:3)
- Teachest _____. (Luke 20:21)
- With a gold _____. (James 2:2)
- Grasses.

- Not many ____ are called. (1 Cor. 1:26)
- A unit of conductance, reciprocal to the ohm.
- Airport code for O'Hare Field, Chicago, Ill.
- Sixteenth letter of Hebrew alphabet.
- Multiply ____ the face of the earth. (Gen. 6:1)
- My ____ is easy. (Matt. 11:30)
- Revised Standard Version. (abbr.)
- ____essed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20)
- Yes. (Spanish)



TOP 10

*best-selling
Christian books*

Source: Christian Book Expo, October

FICTION

1. **The River**
By Beverly Lewis (Bethany House)
2. **Angels Walking**
By Karen Kingsbury (Howard Books)
3. **The Harbinger**
By Jonathan Cahn (Frontline)
4. **The Westward Christmas Brides Collection**
By Wanda E. Brunstetter (Barbour)
5. **The Healing Quilt**
By Wanda E. Brunstetter (Barbour)
6. **A Love Undone**
By Cindy Woodsmall (Waterbrook/Multnomah)
7. **The Daughters of Harwood House Trilogy**
By Sally Laity (Barbour)
8. **The Christmas Brides Collection**
By Kelly Eileen Hake (Barbour)
9. **An Old-Fashioned Christmas Romance Collection**
By Kay Cornelius (Barbour)
10. **When the Soul Mends**
By Cindy Woodsmall (Waterbrook/Multnomah)

NONFICTION

1. **The Mystery of the Shemitah**
By Jonathan Cahn (Frontline)
2. **Unphiltered**
By Phil Robertson (Howard Books)
3. **Jesus Calling, Hardcover**
By Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
4. **The Best Yes**
By Lysa Terkeurst (Thomas Nelson)
5. **The Five Love Languages**
By Gary Chapman (Moody)
6. **I Am a Church Member**
By Thom S. Rainer (B&H)
7. **Heaven is for Real — Movie Edition**
By Todd Burpo (Thomas Nelson)
8. **Be the Message**
By Kerry Shook (Waterbrook/Multnomah)
9. **Heaven is for Real, Paperback**
By Todd Burpo (Thomas Nelson)
10. **Break Out!**
By Joel Osteen (FaithWords)



Photo courtesy of Biscuit Media Group

With the release of a lullaby album and children's book, singer/songwriter JJ Heller desires to minister to young families and help them build a strong spiritual foundation.

Heller's lullaby album nominated for Dove Award

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

With the release of her latest album, a lullaby project called "I Dream of You," singer/songwriter JJ Heller is focusing on the beauty of simplicity and dwelling on Psalm 139:14, "I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

In August, "I Dream of You" was nominated for a Dove Award in the category of inspirational record of the year.

After including special songs on previous albums for her two daughters, Heller began receiving requests to record a lullaby album.

"So many people have told me they listen to my music when they're trying to find peace and rest," Heller said. "This project was not only designed to calm the hearts of children, but the child inside every adult as well."

Heller and her husband, Dave, spent the majority of last year writing and recording songs for the project. During this time they also were inspired to create a companion bedtime story, "The Golden Feather," for families to read together.

"Reading books with our girls before bedtime is such a special time for our family," Heller said. "I hope that both the CD and book can be used to help families enjoy special times together during the final minutes of the day."

As Heller balances ministry and motherhood she realizes the importance of developing projects that will help families build a strong spiritual foundation.

"I grew up going to church and I'm so thankful to have that foundation of truth," Heller said. "I went to

a Christian high school where my parents taught and even though I was selected to be in a vocal ensemble all four years, I didn't get very many solos. It wasn't until my freshman year of college that I learned to play the guitar and began writing songs. I met my husband around that time and we put a band together. We still had no aspirations to make a career of it, but we kept playing music and God kept opening doors for us to continue which has led us to where we are today."

God moving in extraordinary ways

While performing concerts around the country Heller shares songs and stories about real life experiences, which she hopes will help listeners relate to the message and realize how God is moving in extraordinary ways.

"We've heard countless stories from listeners whose lives have been changed because of God moving through our songs," Heller said. "It's been an amazing blessing to hear many stories over the years from people who changed their mind about attempting suicide because of our song 'What Love Really Means.'"

"I also spoke to a soldier at a concert who told me that he was stationed in Iraq for over a year and would listen to our music every night before bed. He said how wonderful it was to be at the concert listening to me sing without gunfire in the background. I can't express what an honor it is to hear these stories and be a part of what God is doing in their lives.

"My prayer is that the Lord would use these songs to help people feel less loneliness and more freedom. Music has a way of exposing our hearts, so the wounds that we would rather keep buried can find healing. I love having opportunities to share the stories behind the songs and singing about redemption, hope and the safety net of God's love." ❧

"My prayer is that the Lord would use these songs to help people feel less loneliness and more freedom. ... I love having opportunities to share about ... the safety net of God's love."

JJ Heller
singer/songwriter



BGR photo

The Naivasha Children Shelter in Kenya recently used Global Hunger Relief funds to buy two new cows that provide an average of 15 liters of milk per day.

Multiple benefits

Global Hunger Relief helps Kenyan boys focus in school

Cows have changed the classroom experience for some schoolboys in Kenya. The animals' milk has helped them focus.

The Naivasha Children Shelter in Kenya recently used Global Hunger Relief funds to buy two new cows. The shelter is a rehabilitation center for boys who have lived on the streets, and it focuses on reintegrating them with their families.

The cows offer multiple benefits to the boys. Previously the cows on site were old and had stopped producing milk. Staff collected an average of 15 liters per week from the two animals. The new cows produce almost the same amount per day.

"Since we bought the cows, boys are [drinking] tea with breakfast, which just wasn't possible be-

fore," said Paul Mwangi, the school director who also is in charge of all livestock and agriculture.

He said the boys also weren't eating anything between their breakfast at 6:30 a.m. and lunch at 1 p.m.

"They get hungry and the boys were not concentrating, but now we can offer them a tea break at 10 a.m.," Mwangi said. "There is a big improvement in their focus during school."

The second benefit the cows bring to the shelter is that they teach the students how to take care of animals. Because some won't excel in school, it's important for staff to teach them other skills that can help them survive when they are reintegrated with their families.

When they leave, they will return home with both an education and vocational skills. (BGR)

For more information about the Global Hunger Relief fund, visit gobgr.org.

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Paul Mwangi
school director, Naivasha Children Shelter



World of RELIGION
Compiled from Wire Services

Bread for the World honored for humanitarian work

WASHINGTON — Bread for the World, an organization that seeks to end world hunger through political policy changes, has been awarded the Community of Christ's (CofChrist) International Peace Award for "40 years of passionate advocacy and achievements in overcoming hunger and poverty."

David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, will accept the award Oct. 24 at the CofChrist annual Peace Colloquy in Independence, Mo. The award ceremony will kick off the event, themed Poverty: God Weeps.

Bread for the World staff members Jose Garcia and Diane Ford Dessables will give a series of workshops Oct. 25, and all participants will have the opportunity to take part in the Offering of Letters, a campaign where participants write letters to Congressional representatives to encourage policy reform.

The International Peace Award was established in 1993 to honor recipients as peacemakers and bring attention to the work of peacemaking throughout the world. It was first given to Jehan Sadat, widow of former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, for her work of social reform and women's civil rights in Egypt.

Beckmann said he is grateful "for strong partnerships with people of faith across the country — partnerships like the one between Bread for the World and the Community of Christ."

CofChrist's World Hunger Committee first sponsored the Hunger Report, Bread for the World Institute's annual analysis of issues crucial to ending hunger around the world, in 1996.

Messianic Jew to appeal his deportation from Israel

BE'ER SHIVA, Israel — A British Messianic Jew deported from Israel in 2013 for participating in an evangelistic outreach to Jews confirmed that he will appeal his case to a supreme court.

Barry Barnett, 50, left the country Dec. 2, 2013, under a deportation order issued by Israel's Ministry of the Interior and was banned from the country for 10 years. Barnett said his primary concern is returning to Israel but that the case has religious rights implications that go far beyond him.

"If we win in the Supreme Court, not only does it get me back to Israel instead of waiting 10 years after having been deported, it means that every single Christian has the right or every religious person has the right to express their faith freely without intimidation," Barnett said. "It's about the right of religious expression."

Barnett was arrested Nov. 20, 2013, near the city of Be'er Shiva by immigration enforcement officers at a Jews for Jesus campaign. The arrest struck members of Jews for Jesus as odd from the start; members of an ultra-Orthodox Jewish group known as Yad L'Achim followed Barnett and other members of the group during the campaign and organization leaders said officers with evident religious bias singled out Barnett, the only non-Israeli in his canvassing group.

Muslims join together to oppose, denounce ISIS

WASHINGTON — More than 120 Muslim scholars from around the world joined an open letter to the "fighters and followers" of the Islamic State, denouncing them as un-Islamic by using the most Islamic of terms.

Relying heavily on the Quran, the 18-page letter released Sept. 24 picks apart the extremist ideology of the militants who have left a wake of brutal death and destruction in their bid to establish a transnational Islamic state in Iraq and Syria.

Its aim is to offer a comprehensive Islamic refutation, "point-by-point," to the philosophy of the Islamic State and the violence it has perpetrated, according to Nihad Awad, executive director of the council of American-Islamic Relations. The letter's authors include well-known religious and scholarly figures in the Muslim world, including Sheikh Shawqi Allam, the grand mufti of Egypt, and Sheikh Muhammad Ahmad Hussein, the mufti of Jerusalem and All Palestine.

A translated 24-point summary of the letter includes the following: "It is forbidden in Islam to torture"; "It is forbidden in Islam to attribute evil acts to God"; and "It is forbidden in Islam to declare people non-Muslims until he (or she) openly declares disbelief." ﷻ