

# THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



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# Called to SERVE overseas?



## IMB broadens policy to appoint more missionaries

**T**he declining number of International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries on the field is about to make a 180-turn. More opportunities to serve are being opened up and restrictions on who can be appointed are being loosened.

But even with the new policy, which was approved by IMB trustees during their May 12-13 meeting in Louisville, Ky., some of the core qualifications remain in place, IMB President David Platt said.

For instance, IMB missionaries must be baptized members of a Southern Baptist church at the time of appointment and hold a commitment to and identification with Southern Baptists. The candidate's conviction of truth must align with the current Baptist Faith and Message (BF&M) and be devoted to the vision, mission, values and beliefs of IMB. The

person also must indicate a vibrant personal discipleship and be active in disciple-making. The call to serve must be affirmed by the local church as well as IMB leadership.

IMB service will be open to U.S. citizens and permanent residents of the U.S. who are in good physical, emotional and mental health and who model a godly family life and/or personal relationships.

While there is a lot of work to be done before IMB will be ready to appoint people in the new opportunities, being labeled pathways, the possibilities are limitless, Platt explained.

The concept is moving toward missional living rather than missionary living. IMB won't be financially supporting most of the new appointees. Instead the idea is that those newly appointed would support themselves while doing missions.

“They will not leave their work to do missions but leverage their work to do missions,” he said.

Professionals who can get jobs overseas, students studying in universities in other countries and retirees are all prime targets for the new missionary positions.

The idea is that the official point person on the field would be a traditionally funded missionary while other team members would be self-supported.

And while the new roles will come with specific sets of qualifications such as certain education levels and other requirements, previous disqualifiers related to baptism, speaking in tongues and divorce have been eliminated.

Also having teenage children will no longer be a disqualifier. “We want it to be simple and clear that what's driving us doctrinally is what all these churches [of the SBC] have agreed on in the Baptist Faith and Message,” Platt said during an hour-long telephone news conference with editors. “We're tethering ourselves to the Baptist Faith and Message, and we tethered ourselves to it in such a way that if the Southern Baptist Convention were to edit or adjust the Baptist Faith and Message a year from now or two years from now or whenever, then that would adjust the way we work.”

Subsequent to the news conference, IMB spokeswoman Wendy Norvelle said trustees have yet to

determine the preferred funding mechanism for new pathways of missionary service. She added, however, that IMB encourages churches to give through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and the Cooperative Program.

### Not enough money

But, Platt noted, “the reality is that we will never have enough funding to send full-time, financially supported missionaries to all the most extreme places in the world with the gospel ... even if the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering were to double overnight.”

Moving IMB to serve in a unique way to train and support larger numbers of people on the field who are able to provide their own support is a way for 40,000-plus churches to partner together, he said. “I believe the local church is the agent God has appointed to spread the gospel around the world. I want to lead IMB very intentionally to partner with local churches.”

Previous policies “were put in place at various times for good reasons,” Platt said, but needed revision given the demands of fulfilling the Great Commission today.

(See ‘IMB removes,’ page 12)



PLATT

# COMMENT

## Are Baptist Associations Still Relevant?

The year was 1767. Baptists in New England were debating whether or not to come together and form an association of churches. Only a few New England congregations cooperated with the Philadelphia Baptist Association.

New England's hesitancy about associations was not typical of the way most Baptists reacted to the Philadelphia Association or to the concept of associations. Since its official founding in 1707 the Philadelphia Association had provided cohesion for the Baptist movement. At one time participating churches stretched from Maine to the Carolinas.

In 1751, Baptist churches had formed the Charleston Baptist Association, the first association in the South, and efforts were underway to form an association in New England.

But New England Baptists were wary of any organization beyond the local church. They had witnessed what happened to Congregationalists who formed a voluntary association only to see the association assume power over local churches. Even Baptist stalwarts like Isaac Backus had doubts about being a part of an association for a time.

### 'Subservient to the churches'

Baptists had tried to assuage such fears. Early on they declared "an association is not a superior judicature having power over the churches concerned." The association is "subservient to the churches" they declared in a 1749 official statement.

Against that background Samuel Jones, moderator of the Philadelphia Association, wrote to James Manning, of Rhode Island, that "a collection or union of churches into one associational body may easily be conceived capable of answering those still greater purposes which any particular church could not be equal to."

Though the language seems strange to today's ear, the words lift up one of the originating principles of Baptist associations — helping churches do together what no single church could do alone. Both the Philadelphia and Charleston associations, along with other early Baptist associations, embodied the advantages of cooperative actions.

Associations stressed education for its members and supported schools for its ministers. Baptist historian Leon McBeth in his book, "The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness," quotes from the minutes of these bodies showing efforts to work in "destitute areas" and to engage in extensive home missions activities.

Two-plus centuries later that contribution of Baptist associations has not changed. Associations still channel the passion and energies of cooperating churches into missions projects and ministry programs aimed at local needs. In most



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

cases this cooperation makes it possible to do more together than any church could do alone.

Today some large-membership churches provide extensive local ministries. While Baptists celebrate this, they are exceptions rather than the rule. Most Baptist churches still need the cooperation of sister churches through their local association to do major missions projects or on-going ministries.

Even where large-membership churches can do their own missions and ministry projects, most still support cooperative efforts because of the witness of Baptists standing together.

In New England, for example, once the Warren Baptist Association was formed, Backus became the associational spokesman as Baptists stood together to fight for religious freedom. Writing about the advantages of standing together, Backus wrote that associations "increase the body of weight and strength" when addressing public issues.

### Standing together

Whether it is speaking to an issue like religious freedom (which is still an issue today) or feeding the hungry or sharing Scripture passages, people notice when Baptists stand together through their local association.

Though subservient to a church, the association's counsel on matters of doctrine and practice has generally been valued. Like today, churches historically have invited "help" from their association when faced with the knotty problems.

The only power of the association relates to fellowship. A church can be accepted into fellowship with sister churches if in general agreement with the accepted doctrinal guidelines. Or fellowship can be withdrawn from a church whose faith and practice cannot be rec-

onciled to generally accepted standards.

That leaves the church free to believe and practice what it wills but the endorsement of the Baptist association through membership remains like a "seal of approval" to observers. Whether one is a cooperating member of the association or not says something about that church.

Most directors of missions can tell multiple stories of working with churches to mediate disagreements and to arbitrate conflicts. As in days past the wisdom of the local Baptist community, as represented through the association, can be valuable to local churches.

Confidence in the association led to another historic contribution — helping churches with personnel matters. From earliest times associations helped churches obtain pastors, arranged for pulpit supplies between pastors, commissioned preachers for itinerant work and helped establish new churches. Early associations also

screened potential pastors to ensure general agreement with Baptist doctrine and polity. Those contributions continue today.

While most attention is paid to what associations "do," the "being" of associations also is important. More than 20 years before the Philadelphia Association was organized, area Baptist churches met together each quarter for a time of inspiration and encouragement. One historian said the association provided fellowship for "lonely Baptists."

The quarterly meetings offered unintended benefits. Good preaching was modeled. Sound teaching about Baptist beliefs and practices was provided. But the primary purpose was for Baptists to be inspired and encouraged in their faith by being with other Baptists. As Baptists met one another the entire body of believers was strengthened as each participant learned of others who shared a common faith in Jesus Christ.

Again the value of that historic contribution continues today. There is no way of over valuing the benefits of neighbors, co-workers and others learning of the common faith they share when they see one another at associational-sponsored meetings and events.

When the Charleston Association started in 1751, a circular letter to area churches described the association as a "great means of union and common interest and that union will be weakened and those interest suffer in proportion as neglect prevails."

That observation is still true. 🏛️





"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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# Gambling with Alabama's future

## Numbers in state legislation to form lottery, legalize casinos not adding up

By Jennifer Davis Rash  
The Alabama Baptist

**L**egislation that would authorize a state-run lottery and casinos at the four dog tracks moved out of committee May 14 and was awaiting state Senate action at press time.

But no matter the details of the bill — sponsored by Sen. Del Marsh, R-Anniston — the numbers supporters are using aren't adding up when all things are equal. Instead of an estimated nearly \$332 million net revenue from a statewide lottery, the state would likely garner \$272 million at most.

Even though this year's state General Fund budget shortfall of nearly \$300 million is the driving force behind interest in expanding gambling in the state, any potential lottery revenue would not help because the earliest a statewide election would be held on the matter would be September.

And none of the estimates come close to covering the estimated \$702 million needed going forward.

Marsh is pushing for a three-pronged gambling solution through Senate Bill 453, which would call for a constitutional amendment to form a state-sponsored lottery and allow casinos at the state's four dog tracks.

It also would call for a compact (an agreement) with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians (PCI) in exchange for tax revenue on their gambling dollars (see story, page 13).

Revenue from casinos at the dog tracks is estimated at around \$60 to \$70 million, but potential revenue from PCI facilities was not provided.

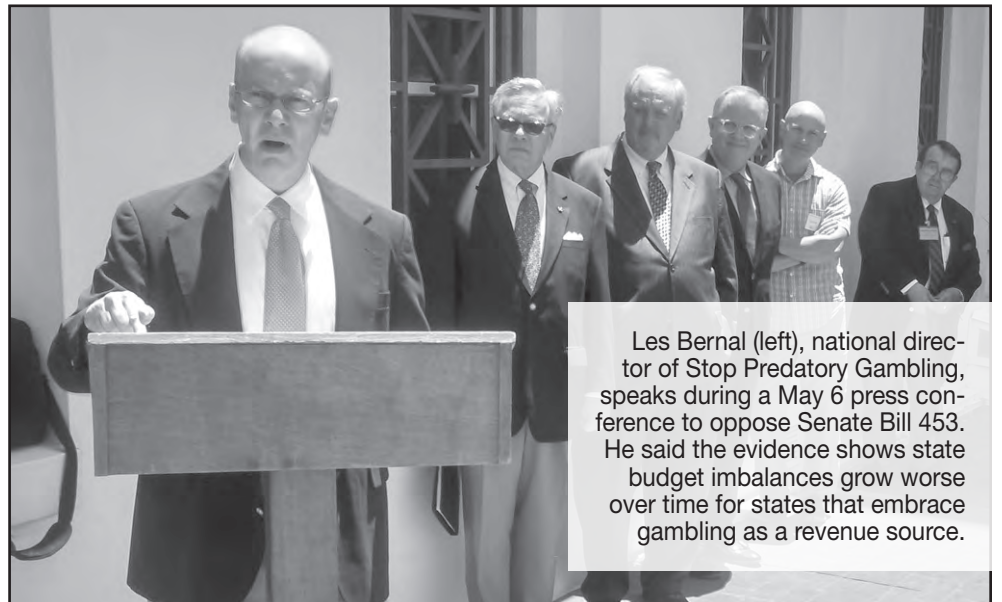
The numbers Marsh is using to make his case come from the April 2015 "Assessment of Lottery and Gaming Programs Across the United States," a study conducted by the Institute for Accountability and Government Efficiency (IAGE) at Auburn University at Montgomery.

Marsh hired the organization to specifically look at revenue generated by lotteries in other states and estimate what Alabama would generate with expanded gambling in the state.

### Calculating the numbers

IAGE concluded that Alabama could potentially receive \$331,667,963 in net revenue after administrative costs and prize money were deducted.

Researchers came to this number by taking the per capita lottery net revenues from the 43 states with state-run lotteries and calculating it with



Les Bernal (left), national director of Stop Predatory Gambling, speaks during a May 6 press conference to oppose Senate Bill 453. He said the evidence shows state budget imbalances grow worse over time for states that embrace gambling as a revenue source.

Photo by Keith Hinson

Alabama's population. The average annual per capita lottery revenue in the 43 states was \$69.11.

So \$69.11 multiplied by Alabama's population of more than 4.8 million comes to the nearly \$332 million amount.

Determining calculations based on national averages works if Alabama fell in line with the national average in areas such as per capita income and median house income, but it doesn't.

Alabama falls 18 percent below the national average in these areas. Calculating the per capita number with the percentage below the national averages drops the net revenue amount by about \$60 million.

The IAGE study also used the national average of 33 percent of lottery revenue being used in state programs in its calculation of what Alabama would generate, which means researchers are expecting the state to bring in nearly \$1 billion in gross revenue from a lottery.

### Reality of revenue expectations

However, of the five states surrounding Alabama with lotteries — Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Georgia and Florida — Alabama most closely aligns with Louisiana in size and financial statistics.

The IAGE research found that Louisiana, with a population of 4.65 million, generates \$447 million in gross lottery revenue.

Alabama has a population of 4.85 million and comes in \$762 less in per capita income and \$1,621 less in

the median household income than Louisiana.

Yet Alabama is expected to generate more than double what Louisiana generates, according to the IAGE study.

Another concern with promoting the proposed revenue potential from expanding gambling in Alabama is that the study did not take into account the costs that come with this industry.

Research in other states with lotteries and/or casinos has proven that social problems and crime increase, leading to more money needed to pay for expanding law enforcement and social services.

Projections have many times been much lower than what was promoted in the beginning.

For instance, Ohio residents were told in 2009 that four proposed casinos would generate \$651 million in annual tax revenue, but a 2014 report showed a total of only \$518.6 million paid in more than two years combined, according to *The Columbus Dispatch*.

John Hill, senior research analyst for the Alabama Policy Institute, said the IAGE study should not be taken seriously in the decision about expanding gambling.

The study does not take into consideration any of the negatives and thus additional costs, he said.

"Alabama is not the only state ... having a shortfall with its budget. There are 20 other states (and) our research shows that 19 of those states have lotteries and 16 have casinos," he said. "So why do we think that bringing in more gambling to our state through casinos or lotteries or both will solve our problem when it hasn't worked in ... other states?"

And experts agree the gambling industry won't stop with the current legislation. There have already been several failed attempts at establishing a fifth casino location in the Houston County facility where Ronnie Gilley took a stab at setting up a casino in 2009-2010. ❏



123rf.com

## WMU to focus on surrender, sacrifice, service

**P**rior to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, North American and international missionaries will share how God is at work around the world during the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Missions Celebration and annual meeting June 14–15 in Ohio.

The theme, "All for You," focuses on surrender, sacrifice and service as a follower of Christ.

"In following Jesus we find the joy and purpose that makes life worth living," said Wanda S. Lee, executive director of national WMU. "Nothing shares the message of Jesus better than

a life lived in total surrender to Him."

This devotion to Christ and a passion for sharing Him with others will be a consistent

*For more information, visit [wmu.com/columbus](http://wmu.com/columbus).*

theme of featured speakers, including: Michael Coleman, a military chaplain with the North American Mission Board; Terry Dorsett, executive director of the Baptist Convention of New England; Earl Hewitt, a doctor who serves in West Africa; David and Alicia, who serve in Southeast Asia; and Bud Fray, a retired missionary who served in Africa.

General sessions are June 14 at 3:30 p.m. and 6 p.m., and June 15 at 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. In addition, 20 different conferences will be offered June 15. Topics range from creative ways to engage preschoolers in missions to understanding post-traumatic stress disorder and learning ways to minister to those suffering from it.

The meeting and missions celebration will be at First Baptist Church, Grove City, approximately a 10- to 15-minute drive from the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus. (BP)

## Going to the annual meeting?

Stay up-to-date on activities with the free app available for iPhone, iPad and Android users. It can be downloaded by typing in "SBC Annual Meetings" in the device's app store. This year's preferred Twitter hashtag will be #sbc15.



commons.wikimedia.org

# 'Great Awakening'

## Columbus to host upcoming 2015 SBC annual meeting June 16–17

**A**s the 2015 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting approaches, SBC President Ronnie Floyd urges fellow Baptists to gather June 16–17 in Columbus, Ohio, to cry out to God and expect great things to follow.

The meeting's theme is "Great Awakening: Clear Agreement, Visible Union, Extraordinary Prayer," based on Romans 13:11.

"We've got to understand that we need everybody," said Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas. "I know historically and biblically there is no great movement of God that ever occurs that is not first preceded by the extraordinary prayer of God's people."

During the annual meeting messengers gathering at the Greater Columbus Convention Center will consider a variety of recommendations. Among them:

▶ A new name for Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. Prompted by its decision to relocate its primary campus to the Los Angeles area from the San Francisco area, the seminary has requested that its name be changed to Gateway Seminary of the SBC.

▶ An amended North American Mission Board (NAMB) ministry statement to include planting churches overseas in cooperation with the International Mission Board (IMB). Messengers approved a similar amendment change to the IMB's ministry statement in 2011 to allow it to assist with unreached people groups in the United States and Canada. The amended NAMB statement is expected to relate particularly to military chaplains stationed at overseas bases.

▶ SBC bylaw amendments to allow for the potential use of electronic voting devices

in the convention hall after the 2015 meeting in Columbus and to establish a quorum for voting on all matters of SBC business as those present at the time of a ballot.

Other highlights will include:

▶ A "Sending Celebration" — a joint commissioning service June 17. IMB and NAMB will celebrate commissioning overseas missionaries and North American church planters.

▶ NAMB will host its fifth annual Send North America luncheon June 15 at noon in the convention center's Battelle Grand Ballroom. The lunch is free but tickets are required and available at [snaluncheon.com](http://snaluncheon.com).

▶ GuideStone Financial Resources will again offer a wellness center and will offer retirement and insurance meetings June 15–17.

▶ Crossover Columbus, the annual evangelistic outreach by Southern Baptists in the host city of the SBC annual meeting, will take place June 13. For more information, visit [www.namb.net/crossover](http://www.namb.net/crossover) or [crossover-columbus.org](http://crossover-columbus.org). Collegiate groups can learn about opportunities at [forcolumbus.org](http://forcolumbus.org).

### Related meetings

▶ Hispanic Southern Baptists' AVANCE will meet prior to the SBC annual meeting, with Floyd as the featured speaker. The meeting will begin June 14 at 5 p.m. with dinner followed by workshops from 6:30 p.m. to 7:45. The meeting will conclude with an 8–9 p.m. session on the newly formed SBC Hispanic Pastors and Leaders Network.

▶ The National African American Fellowship (NAAF) will hold its annual meeting June 14–15 and will focus on revival for the Church and spiritual awakening for the U.S. culture. To purchase tickets in advance, visit [naafsb.org](http://naafsb.org) or email [f.williams@naaf](mailto:f.williams@naaf)

[sbc.org](http://sbc.org) or [t.mcbride@naafsb.org](mailto:t.mcbride@naafsb.org).

▶ The National Hispanic Baptist Fellowship will host its annual National Day of Prayer on June 15, 7–8 p.m. in the convention's prayer room in Hall D.

▶ The Pastors' Wives Conference will be held during the morning session of the Pastors' Conference on June 15.

▶ NAMB will host all SBC chaplains at a reception June 15, 4:30–5:30 p.m. on Level 1, Room C123–C125 of the convention center.

▶ The SBC Ministers' Wives Luncheon will be June 16 at noon in the Regency Ballroom. Email [mary.cox@northmetro.net](mailto:mary.cox@northmetro.net) for tickets.

▶ A Samford University Alumni reception will be June 17, 2–3 p.m. on Level 2, Room C221.

▶ A NAMB-sponsored lunch honoring bivocational pastors and their wives will be June 17 from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Level 3, Room Battelle A.

Register online at [sbcannualmeeting.net](http://sbcannualmeeting.net) under the "Messengers" tab. After completing online registration, each messenger will receive an eight-digit registration code to present at the annual meeting's express registration lane. There the registration code can be entered into a computer and a nametag will be printed.

Messengers planning to propose resolutions must submit them no later than 15 days prior to the annual meeting. Detailed guidelines on submitting resolutions are available at [sbcannualmeeting.net](http://sbcannualmeeting.net) under the "Messengers" tab. Resolutions may be submitted online but must be followed up by a letter of credentials from the submitter's church.

For more information about anything related to the annual meeting, visit [www.sbcannualmeeting.com](http://www.sbcannualmeeting.com). (BP)



FLOYD

# From military chaplain to church planter

## NAMB seeking permission to assist IMB in 'specialized' role overseas

**S**outhern Baptist military chaplains would be authorized to plant churches overseas under a recommendation headed to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting June 16–17 in Columbus, Ohio.

In February the SBC Executive Committee approved a recommendation enabling the North American Mission Board (NAMB) to “provide specialized, defined and agreed upon assistance to the International Mission Board (IMB) in assisting churches to plant churches for specific groups outside the United States and Canada.”

NAMB President Kevin Ezell said in an email to SBC entity heads and state convention executives that the request is being driven in part by a climate in the U.S. that is “more hostile toward religious liberties.”

Ezell said the agency wants to be positioned to “take proactive steps should large numbers of our military chaplains decide they can no longer serve the military in good conscience.”

freedom to plant churches adjacent to military bases outside the United States with the specific purpose of serving the U.S. military population,” he wrote.

Ezell said the new assignment would be a good fit for NAMB.

### Southern Baptists outnumbered

According to a 2013 article in *SBC Life*, Southern Baptists have 1,440 endorsed chaplains serving in the U.S. military, more than any other denomination or faith group. *Christianity Today* recently reported new Department of Defense statistics showing that Southern Baptists make up about 1 percent of the nation’s current military force, and are now outnumbered by atheists.

Recent changes in the military including the repeal of “don’t ask, don’t tell” and reprimands for proselytizing have caused some SBC leaders to wonder about the future of military chaplaincy in the denomination.

Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said in a 2013 blog that “Southern Bap-

tist chaplains cannot surrender their commitment to Christ in order to maintain their commitment to ministry within the armed services.”

NAMB issued new guidelines clarifying that SBC chaplains will not participate in or attend wedding ceremonies for gay members of the military.

Ezell said, “Southern Baptists love and pray for our chaplains. That being said, we only want to endorse chaplains who can support Baptist doctrine and belief without reservation.”

Other Baptist groups recognized as endorsing agents by the military include the Alliance of Baptists, American Baptist Churches USA and the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

According to the pre-convention issue of *SBC Life*, David Platt, IMB president, supports expanding NAMB’s portfolio. The change also would enable the two agencies to cooperate in evangelizing unreached people groups with populations both in the U.S. and abroad. (BNG)

## SBC Pastors Conference to focus on theme ‘He Must Increase’

**T**hough the 2015 Southern Baptist Pastors Conference will feature a diverse array of speakers — in terms of both race and age — conference president William Rice hopes they won’t be the gathering’s focus.

Instead he hopes pastors will turn their attention to Jesus, setting the stage for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting’s emphasis on prayer and awakening. Hence the theme of the 2015 Pastors Conference: “He Must Increase.”

“In ministry, we get distracted by so many things,” said Rice, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Clearwater, Fla. “And some of those are good things,” like methodologies, leadership, strategies and worship styles.

“But at the end of the day, what we need most of all is this movement which focuses upon Christ — His glory, the mission to make Him known among the nations and in our own country.”

The June 14–15 Pastors Conference will be at the Greater Columbus Convention Center.

Speakers for June 14 at the conference will include Dean Fulks, pastor of LifePoint Church, Columbus, Ohio, and Russell Moore, president of SBC’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

June 15 morning speakers will feature messages from Vance Pittman, pastor of Hope Church, Las Vegas; Paul David Tripp, executive director of the Association of Biblical Counselors’ Center for Pastoral Life

and Care; and David Uth, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla. Afternoon speakers will include Clint Pressley, pastor of Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C.; H.B. Charles, pastor of Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.; and Steve Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, Tenn. Evening speakers will include J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church, Raleigh-Durham, N.C.; James MacDonald, pastor of Harvest Bible Chapel, Rolling Meadows, Ill.; and David Platt, president of the International Mission Board.

Worship will be led by Christian recording artist Travis Cottrell, Harvest Bible Chapel’s Vertical Church Band and Calvary Baptist’s worship team. (BP)

For more information, visit [sbpc.net](http://sbpc.net).

## SBC President Floyd, 11 pastors to lead ‘Call for Prayer’

**F**or an “epic night of prayer” during the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting, 11 pastors have been named by SBC President Ronnie Floyd to help lead the evening session June 16 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Ohio.

Floyd has titled the session, “A National Call for Prayer to All Southern Baptists for the Next Great Awakening and to Reach the World for Christ” on the meeting’s opening night.

Two former SBC presidents, Jack Graham and James Merritt, will be among

the evening’s leaders. Graham is pastor of the Dallas-area Prestonwood Baptist Church, and Merritt is pastor of the Atlanta-area Cross Pointe Church.

### Alabama ties

Also among the leaders are three with Alabama ties: Steve Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, Tenn.; Vance Pittman, pastor of Hope Baptist Church, Las Vegas; and Ted Traylor, pastor of Olive Baptist Church, Penscola, Fla.

“It is time to call out to God for the next Great Awakening and to reach the world

for Christ,” said Floyd, pastor of the multicampus Cross Church in northwest Arkansas.

Floyd also noted, “One of the unique moments of the evening will be when we embrace and celebrate our ethnic diversity, which may also involve moments of repentance and reconciliation. Each of us needs to be in this experience together, letting God do a powerful work in each of our lives and churches. Southern Baptists must lead the way in embracing and celebrating our ethnic diversity.” (BP)

## Alabamians to lead at SBC annual meeting

**A**labama Baptists will be among those serving during the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Columbus, Ohio, June 16–17.

Appointments to the Committee on Committees were announced by SBC President Ronnie Floyd in accordance with SBC Bylaw 19.

The Committee on Committees will assemble in Columbus prior to the annual meeting to nominate members of the Committee on Nominations who, in turn, nominate trustees for the boards of SBC entities.

The Committee on Committees has 68 members, two from each of the 34 states and regions qualified for representation on boards of SBC entities.

Alabama’s committee members are Marilyn Foley, Spring Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, and Buddy Champion, pastor of FBC Trussville.

### Executive Committee, boards

Alabama Baptists also are among those nominated to serve on the SBC Executive Committee (EC), the four denominational boards — International Mission Board (IMB), North American Mission Board (NAMB), LifeWay Christian Resources and GuideStone Financial Resources — the Ethics & Religious Liberties Commission (ERLC), the six seminaries and the Committee on Order of Business. Nominees were selected by the 2015 Committee on Nominations and will serve if elected by messengers to the annual meeting.

Those nominated from Alabama are:

- ▶ Paul S. Hicks, pastor of West Jefferson Baptist Church, Quinton, replacing Steven W. Loggins, director of missions for North Jefferson Baptist Association, nominated with term to expire in 2019 on the EC.

- ▶ Rick L. Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, nominated for a second term to GuideStone.

- ▶ F. Max Croft, associate pastor of Agape Baptist Church, Scottsboro, and Jay L. Wolf, pastor of FBC Montgomery nominated for a second term as IMB trustees.

- ▶ Erin S. Bounds, member of North Valley Baptist Church, Odenville, replacing Larry E. Gipson, pastor of FBC Oneonta, nominated with term to expire in 2019 as a NAMB trustee.

- ▶ Timothy M. (Mark) Hindman, member of FBC Prattville, nominated for a second term as a Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustee.

- ▶ Gregory T. Pouncey, pastor of FBC Tillman’s Corner in Mobile, replacing David E. Brown, Wheat Ridge, Colo., who resigned, with term to expire in 2017 as a Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary trustee.

Floyd also named the Committee on Resolutions which will include Kathy Litton, national consultant for ministry to pastor’s wives for NAMB and wife of Ed Litton, pastor of FBC North Mobile, in Saraland. (TAB, BP)



# Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

## COFFEE

► **Steve Watson** is the new pastor of **Damascus Church, Elba**. He previously served as youth minister for First Church, Enterprise. He holds an associate's degree from Enterprise State Community College, a bachelor's degree in history from Samford University in Birmingham, a bachelor's degree in English and secondary education from Troy University and a master of religious education degree from Southwestern Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He and his wife, Tama, have four children.



WATSON

## MARION

► **Mount Olive Church, Hackleburg**, will host Archie Watkins & Smoky Mountain Reunion in concert June 4, 7 p.m. James Nichols is pastor.

## SHELBY

► **Jeremy Brown** is the new worship pastor for **First Church, Indian Springs**. He previously served as minister of music for First Church, Eclectic. He also served at Russell Chapel Church, Sylacauga. He holds a bachelor's degree in Christian ministry from the University of Mobile. He is currently working



BROWN

toward a master of divinity at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham. He is married to LaShelia. Charlie Dale is pastor.

## COOSA RIVER

► **Bon Air Church, Sylacauga**, will celebrate homecoming May 31, 10 a.m. There will be singing, preaching and lunch. The Kempters from Slapout will perform special music. Jeff Thomas is pastor.

## COVINGTON

► **West Highland Church, Andalusia**, will celebrate its 75th homecoming June 7, 10:30 a.m. A fellowship meal will be served at noon. Jane Graddy, director of music, and Sue Reeves will lead music. David Richburg will speak. Larry Stewart is pastor.

## ST. CLAIR

► **Gary Hanner** is the new minister of music for **Arbor Church, Pell City**. He previously served as minister of music for Siberton Church, Atalla. He also has served at Greensport Church, Ashville; Riverside Church; Cook Springs Church; Sulphur Springs Church, Trussville; and Mount Gilead Church, Jacksonville. He holds a license for ministry in Christian music from Siberton Church. He and his wife, Ann-Marie, have three children. ► **Joe Joyner** is the new interim pastor of **Mount Pleasant Church, Pell City**. He previously served as interim pastor for Greensport Church, Ashville. He also served



HANNER

at Macedonia #1 Church, Margaret, and First Church, Moody. He serves as moderator of St. Clair Association. He holds a bachelor's degree in Bible and religious studies from Mississippi College in Clinton, Miss., and a master of theology from New Orleans Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Barbara, have three children. ► **Rick Vaughn** is the new pastor of **Poplar Springs Church, Ashville**. He previously served as pastor of Rutledge Church, Etowah. He also served at South Sauty Church, Langston; New Heights Church, Albertville; and Douglas Church, Ashville. He holds a bachelor's degree in church administration and theology from New Orleans Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Kathy, have one child.



JOYNER

at Macedonia #1 Church, Margaret, and First Church, Moody. He serves as moderator of St. Clair Association. He holds a bachelor's degree in Bible and religious studies from Mississippi College in Clinton, Miss., and a master of theology from New Orleans Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Barbara, have three children. ► **Rick Vaughn** is the new pastor of **Poplar Springs Church, Ashville**. He previously served as pastor of Rutledge Church, Etowah. He also served at South Sauty Church, Langston; New Heights Church, Albertville; and Douglas Church, Ashville. He holds a bachelor's degree in church administration and theology from New Orleans Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Kathy, have one child.



VAUGHN

## TUSCALOOSA

► **Carrolls Creek Church, Northport**, will host The LeFevre Quartet in concert May 31, 10:45 a.m. Alan Roggli is pastor. ☪

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## in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders, friends

### George Walton Lassett

*Retired chaplain, interim pastor dies at 89*

George Walton Lassett, who served in several staff positions in Alabama Baptist churches, died May 8. He was 89.

Lassett, of Citronelle, earned a bachelor's and master's degree from Mississippi College in Clinton, Miss. He also earned a master's in the theology from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and an honorary doctorate from Yellowstone Baptist College in Billings, Mont.



LASSETT

Lassett served as interim pastor of First Baptist Church, Foley, and First Baptist Church, Silverhill. He also served as interim minister of education and administration at First Baptist Church, Fairhope, and in several interim pastorates in Baldwin County.

Lassett was a retired chaplain, earning the rank of lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves and served 24 years, including active duty during World War II, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War.

He is survived by his wife, Josephine; two children; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. (Neisha Roberts)

### Richard 'Rick' C. Whitehead Jr.

*Bethel Baptist's worship leader dies at 56*

Richard "Rick" C. Whitehead Jr., who served for 11 years as worship leader at an Alabama Baptist church, died April 28. He was 56.

Whitehead, of Odenville, served as worship leader at Bethel Baptist Church, Moody, in St. Clair Baptist Association.

Whitehead also established Celebrate Recovery at Bethel Baptist and ministered at The Lovelady Center in Birmingham. He was co-owner of M & R Pipe & Supply in Birmingham, which opened in 1989.

He is survived by his wife, Pam, and one son. (Neisha Roberts)



WHITEHEAD

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fax it to 205-870-8957 or call 1-800-803-5201.

# Ministry Tips



## CARING ABOUT PEOPLE, NOT JUST DETAILS

By Pastor Dave Walsh  
Ariton Baptist Church

As all those in ministry know, the work never ends. There is always another meeting or another service; there is always another program or event; there is always another funeral or wedding or hospital visit.

In the midst of the maelstrom that

is ministry, too often we forget the most important part of ministry — the people to whom we minister.

### Goal-oriented, detail-driven

Being a type-A personality and a poster child for obsessive-compulsive disorder-people everywhere, I tend to be both goal-oriented and detail-driven. The casualties

of these traits can often be the people who attend the services and events that we are so focused on.

Remember how Jesus responded to the woman with the issue of blood in Matthew 9. He was on a mission; His disciples were with Him, pushing Him toward that mission. What did Jesus do? He stopped to tend to the need of the one over the

desires of the many. He taught the same lesson in Matthew 19 when He said, "Let the little children come to Me."

We need to spend more time caring for people and less time caring about details. When they see the love and concern, they won't care about anything else. ☪

# Health care reform law

## Obamacare deadline looms for some churches

**C**hurches and ministries that reimburse their employees for individual health coverage may soon find themselves facing stiff penalties of up to \$36,500 per employee, per year under the federal health care law commonly known as Obamacare, as a grace period expires June 30. The penalties on employers who maintain employer payment plans were to begin in January but the Internal Revenue Service granted a six-month reprieve.

Organizations that offer GuideStone Financial Resources health plans are not at risk of these penalties. GuideStone's health plans are church health plans and are considered group health plans under federal law and thus are not affected by these penalties.

"Fortunately GuideStone health plan participants and the churches and ministries that employ them can rest assured that they can continue to pay for coverage as they have in the past and meet the guidelines under the current law," said Donna Lively, managing director of insurance plans at GuideStone. "Organizations

that don't utilize GuideStone should consult with their legal and tax advisers to determine how to comply with the letter of the law."

GuideStone has developed new health coverage solutions that may be appropriate for smaller churches. Additionally churches with only one employee can apply for coverage for that lone staff member during the employee's first 60 days of employment.

GuideStone encourages churches and ministries to remain vigilant about the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and the related adminis-

trative policies that can create significant challenges for churches.

GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins said, "This is just one of the myriad challenges facing all Americans, but especially churches and ministries thanks to the health care reform law. While we continue to wait for Congress or the courts to provide relief, the churches and ministries we serve can remain confident that GuideStone will advocate for them with legislators and regulators and will provide useful information to help them comply with this law." (GuideStone)

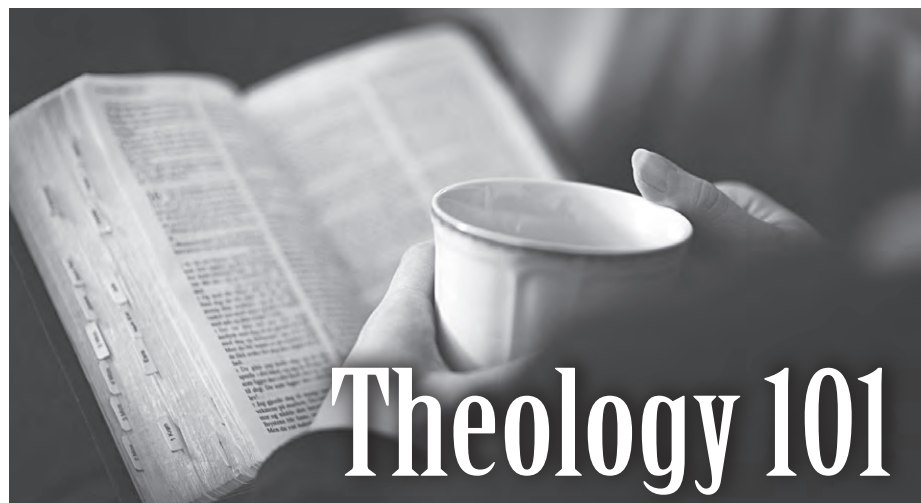
**For more information, visit  
[GuideStone.org/HealthReform](http://GuideStone.org/HealthReform).**

## Deacon service runs through 3 generations



Photo courtesy of Melissa Harris

Calvin Harris Jr. (front center), of Lineville, has served as a deacon at Mount Olive Baptist Church, Lineville, for 54 years. His three sons and two of his grandsons now follow in his footsteps. Pictured are sons (front row): Roger Harris (left), deacon at Mount Olive Baptist; Bloyce Harris (right), deacon at Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Ashland; (l to r, back row) grandson Shane Harris, deacon at Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Dadeville; son Ronald Harris, deacon at Union Hill Baptist Church, Bessemer; and grandson Chad Harris, deacon at Mount Zion Missionary Baptist. In total these three generations have served for more than 129 years.



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Images of the Church

### The Church As A Loaf

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

**S**ome images of the Church do not occur in more than one or two passages. Some do not have a direct, explicit statement that labels them as such but are nonetheless meaningful metaphors or analogies about the people of God. As a result we can easily overlook them and, in doing so, miss out on some aspect of truth about the Church. This week's image of the Church as a loaf of bread is in the category of an easily overlooked one, but nonetheless is suggestive of an important aspect of being the Church in our kind of world.

#### Preparations for the Feast

The background for this image of the Church may be seen in the Passover Meal and the accompanying Feast of Unleavened Bread. Preparation for the Feast involved purging the household of yeast in preparation for baking the loaves of unleavened bread used in the meal itself.

The admonition to the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 5:7 was, "Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch," a reference to a batch of dough destined to become loaves of unleavened bread used in the Passover celebration. Yeast was often equated with evil influences, as when Jesus warned the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 16:6). The imagery of an unleavened loaf is based on the common knowledge captured in the question, "Don't you know that a little yeast permeates the whole batch of dough?" (1 Cor. 5:6).

#### Unleavened quality

The unleavened loaf used in the Passover Meal and then in the Last Supper suggests that, in a spiritual sense, an unleavened quality should characterize the Church.

The imagery of God's people being a new lump of dough or a new loaf is given specific application by calling malice and evil the old leaven that needs purging, while naming sincerity and truth as qualities of an unleavened Church (1 Cor. 5:8).

One take-away truth about the image

of the Church as an unleavened loaf might be expressed in the single word "purity." Evidences of the lack of moral purity in the Corinthian church included tolerating immorality by failing to discipline an immoral member (1 Cor. 5) and the suggestion that some Christian men still visited prostitutes as they had done in their pre-Christian years (1 Cor. 6:12-20).

In a context of calling members of the Corinthian church to resist idolatry, 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 draws specifically upon the Lord's Supper's focus on the bread and the cup to make the appeal against idolatry, saying, "Because there is one bread we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." The imagery of one body partaking of the one loaf suggests community or fellowship as well as common nourishment and mutual dependence.

#### Church 'oneness'

A second take-away truth about the image of the Church as a loaf might be expressed in the single word "oneness." The fractured fellowship in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 1-4) belied the imagery of a church as one loaf. Divisions in the church were all the more grievous when they showed up in the celebration of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11).

Each time a church shares in taking bread at the Lord's Supper, the imagery of a common, unleavened loaf serves as a visual reminder of the twin ideals of a congregation being together in oneness and distinctively set apart in moral purity. The reality of our life together needs to match the symbolism in our worship. ☞

*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).



## 2015 marks 100th anniversary of famous hymn writer's death

**F**anny Crosby (1820–1915) is the most prolific hymn writer of all time, penning more than 8,000 hymns. She also is known for her work in New York City slums. By the end of the 19th century she was one of America's most famous people.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of her death.

Frances Jane "Fanny" Crosby was born March 24, 1820, to John and Mercy Crosby in Southeast, a village in Putnam County, N.Y. At six weeks old she caught a cold and developed inflammation of the eyes. An incompetent doctor applied mustard poultices to her eyes which caused her to go blind.

A few months later her father died. Her mother worked as a housekeeper to support the family. Crosby was raised by her mother and maternal grandmother,

who both taught her Christian principles.

Shortly before she turned 15 she entered the New York Institute for the Blind. With the aid of her family she memorized long passages of Scripture. By the age of 15 she could recite the Pentateuch, the Gospels, Proverbs, Song of Solomon and many psalms.

After graduation she became a teacher there until her marriage in 1858 to Alexander Van Alstyne, a fellow teacher. Their one daughter died in her sleep as a baby.

In 1843, Crosby, an advocate for the blind, became the first woman to speak before the U.S. Senate. Three years later she spoke before a joint session of Congress supporting education for the blind.

She became a Christian on November 20, 1850, during a revival meeting when

the congregation sang "Lord, I give myself away."

"My very soul," she later said, "was flooded with celestial light." Shy Crosby sprang to her feet and shouted, "Hallelujah."



CROSBY

In the 1860s she began writing hymn lyrics for composers such as William H. Doane and Phoebe Knapp. A family member or her secretary wrote her hymns down for her. She never copyrighted her songs and usually received \$1 a hymn (equivalent to about \$20 today) from the composer. Among her most famous hymns are "Blessed Assurance," "To God Be the Glory," "Praise Him, Praise Him," "Jesus Is Tenderly Calling" and "Rescue the Perishing."

Often she would compose several hymns a day and have as many as 12 in her mind that she was working on. Her capacity for

work was incredible, but she never wrote a hymn without first praying for inspiration.

During the last several decades of her life she used her hymns in city rescue work in the slums of Manhattan. For years she lived in a rented room in the worst slums and used any money she received from her hymns to help the poor.

### Death and burial

Because of a serious heart problem Crosby's family moved her to Bridgeport, Conn., in 1900. She died Feb. 12, 1915, and was buried at Mountain Grove Cemetery. At her request her family erected a small tombstone with the words, "Aunt Fanny: She hath done what she could; Fanny J. Crosby." On May 1, 1955, a large memorial stone was dedicated that contained the first stanza of "Blessed Assurance." ❧



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— **Pastor Ron Pate**  
Hilldale Baptist Church, Center Point

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# Hold tight to **FAITH**

## Foley challenges UMobile grads at commencement ceremony

**U**niversity of Mobile (UMobile) President Mark Foley challenged graduates to hold tightly to what they believe amid a changing American culture.

"What is it in which you believe?" he asked. "What is it to which you hold so tightly that you will not be shaken from it?"

"It is Jesus, for there is no greatness apart from Him," Foley answered during the university's 49th commencement ceremony May 9. Families and friends of graduates gathered at the Mobile Civic Center to see approximately 370 diplomas awarded.

### Preparing men, women

Foley said the university prepares men and women who have mastered a body of knowledge according to the degree they seek, who know what they believe and why they believe it and who possess the willingness and skill to use their influence in appropriate and effective ways to change the world in which they live and work.



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile

The university presented its top two awards to the outstanding male and female graduate selected by vote of the faculty.

Both awards are presented to graduates who exemplify the mission of the university and selection is based on scholarship, Christian character, leadership and service.

The Annie Boyd Parker Weaver Excellence Award was presented to Danielle Rae Standifer, of Chattanooga, Tenn., who graduated summa cum laude from the College of Arts and Sciences with a bachelor's degree in English and humanities.

Standifer served as president of Sigma Tau Delta, published poetry, tutored French and English in the school's Chora Godwin Learning and Writing Center and taught Freshman Seminar.

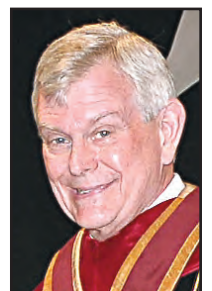
The William K. Weaver Jr.

Excellence Award was presented to Joel E. King, of Auburn, who graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree in music.

King is an avid worship leader, singer and actor who has held important student leadership positions at the university, including as a resident assistant and as president of the Student Government Association. He has been minister of music at First Baptist Church, Chickasaw, throughout his tenure as a student.

He has participated in several UMobile operatic presentations and was a member of Chamber Singers, The 12 Men of UM and University Singers.

Additional academic awards were presented during the Honors Convocation on May 8. (UMobile)



**FOLEY**



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# LETTERS

## TO THE EDITOR



### FREE OF EBOLA

The lethal Ebola outbreak has officially ended in Liberia. The World Health Organization made it official May 11 with a declaration ceremony held at Centennial Memorial Pavilion in Monrovia.

The president of Liberia, the president of Togo, international diplomats, various partners and thousands of Liberians attended the program.

So many churches, partners, friends and individuals aided us collectively and independently to sustain this great achievement. Indeed we were overwhelmed by countless challenges and you provided us with help. You stood with us in tangible ways. We are grateful. I thank my God.

While the challenges still linger, we are grateful and joyful. The challenges of poor health care services, poor hygienic conditions, increased orphan crisis and deplorable economic conditions continue to confront us. We are resolved to remain prisoners of hope to work on these challenges.

We are aware the Ebola virus is not totally eradicated from Liberia until it is eradicated in our West

African region, especially Guinea and Sierra Leone. We stand in solidarity and prayers with our sisters and brothers there.

Olu Q. Menjay, president  
Liberia Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention

### 'BOLD STANCE'

Just wanted you to know how much I personally enjoyed reading the May 14 editorial, "The Worst Kind of Legislation," and comments concerning the upcoming legislation related to gambling within our state. Your overall evaluation was spot-on and the statistics you stated were eye-opening. As a reformed — by being transformed — compulsive gambler, I can assure you and your readers that the suicide rate will definitely increase. As you well-stated, Senate Bill 453 has no place within the Christian faith. Thank you for your bold stance on this extremely detrimental issue.

Dusty McLemore, pastor  
Lindsay Lane Baptist Church,  
Athens

## REFLECTIONS



## Want to know GOD?

Pastor Charles Gibbs  
West Mobile Baptist Church, Mobile

The disheveled-looking woman stepped out of the shadows and said, "Can anybody tell me about Jesus?" She was from a distant city where she had prostituted herself to support a drug habit. She had come to Mississippi hoping to find the father of her unborn baby but in the process had miscarried. She'd slept under a bridge the night before.

I explained to her that sin dirties our heart and separates us from God — and that no one can go to heaven with a dirty heart. I read Romans 3:23: "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." She acknowledged that she understood.

Then I showed her Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." I explained that we've earned separation from God forever but God offers us the free gift of eternal life. I said, "God loves you so much that He sent His Son to die on the cross for you."

I barely got it out of my mouth when she said, "You mean He loves me?" I said, "He sure does," and tried to continue but she interrupted me again. This time a little louder, "You mean He loves me?" I responded in the same way and she repeated even louder, "You mean He loves me!" I assured her that He does.

I read John 1:12: "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." I explained that she must ask Jesus to forgive her sins and invite Him into her heart. I showed her in Revelations 3:20 how Jesus stands at the door of our heart and gently knocks. She indicated she was ready and we knelt to pray. She admitted her sinfulness and prayed a prayer something like this, "Dear Jesus, I know I'm a sinner and I believe You died and rose again to forgive my sins. Please forgive me and come into my heart and take over my life."

She was forever changed. Perhaps you need to pray that prayer today. It worked for me. It worked for her. And I know it will work for you.

## MARKET PLACE

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT PLACING A CLASSIFIED AD, CALL THE ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST, 205-870-4720, EXT. 102, OR EMAIL ADS@THEALABAMABAPTIST.ORG. COPY DEADLINE IS TWO WEEKS BEFORE PUBLICATION.

### CHURCH POSITIONS

**SENIOR PASTOR:** New Lebanon Baptist Church of Newnan, Ga., is a small but growing Southern Baptist church seeking a senior pastor. Please include your testimony, statement of faith, ministry philosophy and a sermon link or CD with your resumé and send to: nlbc30263@gmail.com, or 1674 Wagers Mill Rd., Newnan, GA 30263.

**SENIOR PASTOR:** First Baptist Church of Enterprise is seeking a full-time senior pastor. Salary based on experience and education. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, FBC Enterprise, 302 N. Main St., Enterprise, AL 36330.

**PASTOR:** Munford Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 129, Munford, AL 36268, or email resumé to: mbcpastorsearch@yahoo.com.

**PASTOR:** Thomaston Baptist Church in Thomaston, Ala., is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 131, Thomaston, AL 36783, or email resumé to: jeffladuron101@yahoo.com.

**BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR/CHURCH PLANTER:** Bay Side Baptist Church, Lillian (Gulf Shores area), seeking a bivocational pastor/church planter. Send resumé to: P.O. Box 533, Lillian, AL 36549, or email: tboharris@gmail.com.

**MINISTER OF MUSIC & EDUCATION:** Ridgecrest Baptist Church is accepting resúmes for the position of full-time minister of music and education. Interested parties should mail resúmes to: Ridgecrest Baptist Church, c/o Search Committee, 912 31st St. E., Tuscaloosa, AL 35405, or email resúmes to: rbcsherri@comcast.net.

**WORSHIP PASTOR:** FBC Fernandina Beach, Fernandina Beach, Fla., is seeking a worship pastor. We are an SBC church that averages 500 in worship, located in Northeast Florida and have a blended style of worship. Qualification preferences are 5 years experience and a seminary degree. For church information, our website is FBFIRST.COM. Interested candidates should send resumé to: resume@fbfirst.net.

**SONG LEADER:** East Huntsville Baptist Church is looking for an energetic song leader to lead us in a blend of traditional and contemporary music. We are a small church with no choir. Send resumé or contact Personnel Committee at: easthuntsvilleba@bellsouth.net.

**MINISTER OF MUSIC/WORSHIP LEADER:** Eastside Baptist, Birmingham, is seeking a part-time worship leader for a blended style of worship music. Send resúmes to: bfmurphy@bham.rr.com.

**MINISTER OF MUSIC:** Five Points Baptist Church, Sylacauga, is accepting resúmes for their bivocational minister of music position. Applicants should submit resumé to: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 2447, Sylacauga, AL 35150 or jthayessr@gmail.com.

**PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER:** Pleasant Springs Baptist Church is accepting resúmes for a part-time music minister. Send your resumé to: Personnel Committee, Pleasant Springs Baptist Church, 409 Winchester Rd., Huntsville, AL 35811.

**MINISTER OF MUSIC & STUDENTS:** Linden Baptist Church is accepting resúmes for the full-time position of minister of music and students. Interested candidates may submit their resumé by email to: scraft@servpro9855.com.

**MINISTER OF MUSIC & YOUTH DIRECTOR:** East Gardendale Baptist Church is accepting resúmes for this bivocational position. Applicants may submit resumé to: EGBC, 360 Tarrant Rd., Gardendale, AL 35071, ATTN: Cathy Edwards or cathyegbc@att.net.

**PART-TIME AGE GROUP MINISTERS:** North Shelby Baptist Church is seeking three ministers. Preschool minister: Exciting opportunity to plant seeds of the gospel in our youngest members. Middle school minister: Exciting opportunity to nurture students grades 6-8 in their understanding of the gospel. High school minister: Exciting opportunity to prepare students grades 9-12 to take the gospel wherever adulthood takes them. For full descriptions, visit www.northshelbybaptist.org/employment.

**MINISTER OF YOUTH:** East Highland Baptist Church in Hartselle is accepting resúmes for a bivocational youth minister through June 12. Send resúmes via email to: searchcommitteeehbc@gmail.com.

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## State Board makes 'strategic, historic' moves

By Jennifer Davis Rash  
The Alabama Baptist

The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions approved six recommendations in what Executive Director Rick Lance described as an "eventful, strategic and historic" meeting May 15 in Montgomery.

One recommendation dealt with the "departure from biblical marriage" by an Alabama Baptist church, two dealt with the State Board's executive committee and one created the first-ever state missions offering.

In the recommendation related to biblical marriage, the State Board agreed with the March 16 decision by Madison Baptist Association to disfellowship Weatherly Heights Baptist Church, Huntsville.

Weatherly Heights Baptist Pastor David Freeman has repeatedly expressed his support of "adult, loving, monogamous same-sex relationships," and Ellin Jimmerson — the church's unpaid minister to the community — expressed her agreement when she officiated Huntsville's first same-sex wedding Feb. 9.

With the State Board's vote, members of the church will not be allowed to serve on boards nor have seated messengers at conventions. The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee also is expected to make a similar recommendation June 15.

The State Board also voted to recommend to messengers that they authorize Alabama's executive committee to serve as representatives of the convention in declaring when a church is no longer in like-minded fellowship and friendly cooperation with the state convention.

A third recommendation requests the convention to give authorization for the executive committee to serve as the bylaws review committee of the state convention.

The missions offering recommendation requests combining the Kathleen Mallory Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Missions Offering with the Disaster Relief (DR) Missions Offering and rebranding them to be the Myers/Mallory State Missions Offering. Myers is for Dr. Martha Myers, Alabama Baptist and international missionary murdered for her witness in 2002. Malloory was the first paid Alabama WMU executive director and also served as national WMU executive director.

The offering would go first to Alabama WMU (\$550,000), then to DR (\$200,000) and anything above those amounts would be divided among missions partnerships and church planting/church revitalization.

Other recommendations approved the 2014 audit and financial assistance for two Baptist associations. ☞

# Award-winning

For the 19th consecutive year, *The Alabama Baptist* has been named among the top regional Christian newspapers in the nation. Below is a list of awards won by *The Alabama Baptist* and other state Baptist entities based on work published in 2014.

## The Alabama Baptist

▶ **Overall newspaper** — award of merit (EPA); publication redesign — fifth place (EPA); best in class/print: regional newspaper — award of merit (ACP)

▶ **"Back to School"** by Ginny Bourland — reporting and writing: personal experience/1st person account: long format — award of excellence (ACP); first person article — fifth place (EPA)

▶ **"SBC Executive Committee Proposal Needs More Work"** by Bob Terry — news writing division, opinion/editorial — first place (BCA)

▶ **"Faith and Family"** by Carrie Brown McWhorter and Lauren C. Grim — feature writing division, series or package — first place (BCA)

▶ **"Project Ruth"** by Bob Terry — feature writing division, single article: 750–1,500 words — second place (BCA)

▶ **"Putting Love Into Action"** by Neisha Roberts — news writing division, single article: more than 1,000 words — third place (BCA)

▶ **"Stitching in His Name"** by Maggie Walsh — feature writing division, single article: less than 750 words — third place (BCA)

▶ **"Protect your church at Christmas"** by Carrie Brown McWhorter — feature writing division, single article: 750–1,500 words — third place (BCA)

▶ **"War on Poverty"** by Carrie Brown McWhorter and Lauren C. Grim — feature writing division, series or package — third place (BCA)

▶ **"Paul and Me"** by Neisha Roberts — single photo, controlled — fifth place (EPA)

## University of Mobile

▶ **"Making Rhymz with Grace"** by Kathy Dean — feature writing division — grand prize (BCA)

▶ **"Making Rhymz with Grace"** by Kathy Dean — single article more than 1,500 words — first place (BCA)

▶ **"Question Me an Answer"** by Kathy Dean — single article more than 1,500 words — second place (BCA)

▶ **"To See Uniquely"** by Kathy Dean — single article more than 1,500 words — third place (BCA)

▶ **"Project Serve 2015"** by University of Mobile Marketing &

Public Relations — public relations for special events less than \$25K budget — second place (BCA)

▶ **UMobile** by Trey Taulbee and Garrett Hughes — website, organization or company site adapted template — second place (BCA)

▶ **University of Mobile Magazine** by University of Mobile Marketing & Public Relations — print publication magazine — third place (BCA)

## Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

▶ **"2014 Missions Volunteer of the Year"** by Bethany Rogers — video (including podcast) other — first place (BCA)

▶ **"Mission Trip to Ukraine"** by Brian Harris — blog series — second place (BCA)

▶ **MixMusicCamp.org** by Brian Harris — website, event or promotion site adapted template — second place (BCA)

▶ **Acts 1:8 Connections (AI8C.org)** by Brian Harris — website, organization or company site adapted template — third place (BCA)

## Samford University

▶ **"2013–14 Annual Report Samford University"** by Office of Marketing and Communication — public relations materials — best of class (RCC); annual report — award of excellence (RCC); annual report print collateral — first place (BCA)

▶ **Know It, Share It Card** by Philip Poole and Janica York Carter — miscellaneous — award of excellence (RCC); promotion and advertising speciality item — third place (BCA)

▶ **"Shoe a Nation, Samford University"** by Philip Poole, Brad Radice and B.J. Millican — video, entertainment/inspirational — certificate of merit (RCC); video (including podcast) editorial feature, more than 5 minutes — third place (BCA)

## Tuscaloosa Baptist Association

▶ **Tuscaloosa County Baptist Association** by Bethany Rogers — website, organization or company site adapted template — first place (BCA)

## First Baptist Church, Montgomery

▶ **"Find Us Faithful" Stewardship Campaign** by Amanda Smith and Doug Rogers — public relations for special events less than \$25K budget — third place (BCA)

*The Alabama Baptist* editorial staff worked together with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions office of communications as the 2015 awards team for the Baptist Communicators Association, led by Jennifer Davis Rash and Doug Rogers. Jennifer Davis Rash also served two years on the Associated Church Press board before being elected as vice president during the recent annual meeting in April. Neisha Roberts was elected as membership vice president for Baptist Communicators Association, also in April.

Philip Poole of Samford University is the Religion Communicators Council representative on the Universal Accreditation Board, the governing body for professional accreditation.

# IMB removes 'automatic disqualifiers' to send more workers to the harvest

(continued from page 1)

Platt commented on several specific changes related to hot-button issues:

► **DIVORCE**

"Divorce is not an automatic disqualifier for long-term service with the IMB as it was under the old policy," Platt said.

The marital history of all missionary candidates still will be examined. However, the circumstances of a divorce will now be considered along with the view of the prospective missionary's host culture regarding divorce and the candidate's potential role on a missionary team, Platt said. Requirements regarding divorce may need to differ for lead church planters and support personnel, he said.

► **BAPTISM**

The only baptism requirements under the new policy are that a missionary be "a baptized member of a Southern Baptist church" and possess a "conviction of truth as expressed in the current Baptist Faith and Message statement of the Southern Baptist Convention."

The BF&M, Article VII, defines baptism as "the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried and risen Saviour; the believer's death to sin; the burial of the old life; and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus." Article VII adds that baptism is "prerequisite" to church membership and the Lord's Supper.

IMB missionaries, Platt said, "are going to believe and function and practice and live in accordance with" the BF&M.

"Baptism must take place under the authority of a local church that practices believer's baptism by im-

mersion alone, embraces the doctrine of the security of the believer's salvation and does not view baptism as sacramental, regenerative or essential to salvation." The policy applied to all missionaries at all levels of service.

► **SPEAKING IN TONGUES**

The new policy does not mention speaking in tongues or using a private prayer language, but Platt said the IMB Field Personnel Manual allows a missionary to be terminated for disruptive emphasis on any specific spiritual gift as normative for all Christians.

Previously IMB policy defined the gift of tongues, or "glossolalia" in Greek, as speaking "a legitimate language" and disqualified from service all missionary candidates who used an unintelligible language in worship or practiced glossolalia in worship without following the New Testament guidelines. Using an "ecstatic utterance as a prayer language" disqualified a candidate from service.

► **TEENAGE CHILDREN**

Families with teenage children are eligible for appointment and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, Platt said, noting some missions fields are suitable for families with teenagers while others are not.

A previous policy stated that couples with children 12 and older would be eligible for service only after specific criteria were met, including psychological or psychiatric evaluations of the children.

When asked about policies governing alcohol use, Platt said trustee-approved policy did not previously and does not currently disqualify from service candidates who drink alcohol. Yet the Field Personnel Manual requires all missionaries to abstain from alcohol following their appointment. Platt

cited policies on alcohol as a model for how other debated issues might be handled in the future.

"The only way to address some of these issues is not a policy that's a disqualifier on the front end," Platt said. "People know. It's not like we're hiding any of what we believe about these issues. But we are saying, 'OK, they're not automatically disqualifiers on the front end, but it's clear, as an IMB missionary, that we abstain from alcohol.'"

Making adherence to the BF&M the baseline requirement for missionary service represents an attempt to ease initial restrictions on qualified Southern Baptists who feel a call to take the gospel to the nations.

Trustees "see that there are some issues we must address as the IMB," Platt said. "Our pipeline has been small and tough to get through in different ways that we could open up and free [up]."

Regarding prospective missionaries who were prevented from serving under the old policies, Platt said, "The door is open for them to explore serving with the IMB." (Compiled from BP, IMB, TAB stories)

## — Correction —

The article "A Certain Trumpet: Jesus The Door — John 10:9" by Tony Meinhart in the March 12 issue of *The Alabama Baptist* was printed with an error in the last sentence. The sentence should read, "My prayer for you is if you do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, you will open up your heart today and surrender your life to Him."



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## Reverse Mortgage News

By Jimmy Dixon

Since financial assessment began April 27, one of the questions homeowners now ask is, "Do I qualify for a reverse mortgage?" Prior to April 27, we only needed to know if the homeowner was at least 62 years old and if the home would meet an FHA inspection. Now homeowners will need to meet some requirements. Probably the easiest way to find out if you qualify is to simply call me and let me ask you some questions. If you'd rather do some investigating on your own, one place to begin would be to take a piece of paper, write down your total income on one side, and then on the other side write down what you spend a month on your home including mortgage payment, homeowners insurance, property taxes, utilities and any homeowner association dues. Now subtract your property expenses from your income. If you have at least \$559 left over as an



Jimmy Dixon

individual, or \$886 as a couple, you may very well qualify, but we will need to check your credit and show you have demonstrated a willingness to pay your bills. We will have to prove you have the income you say you do and show you have the means to pay taxes and homeowners insurance in the future. If you are exempt from property tax, your exempt status will not change just because you get a reverse mortgage.

There's a lot more paperwork involved now, but the reverse mortgage is still worth looking into.

Remember, like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives. He is a Sunday School teacher at Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown. For a free brochure or free reverse mortgage quote, contact him directly at 205-567-4800 or [jdixon@mcgowinking.com](mailto:jdixon@mcgowinking.com).



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# GAMBLING

# proposals

## PCI offers state \$250 million 'economic bailout plan'

By Carrie Brown McWhorter  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**V**egas-style casinos are a likely outcome but not a requirement to keep gambling in Alabama

exclusively under American Indian control, according to Robert McGhee, vice chair of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians (PCI).

PCI has offered the state a \$250 million "economic bailout plan" as part of a proposed compact (agreement) between the state and the tribe that would grant them exclusive rights to manage gambling in Alabama.

"In terms of an agreement, a compact with the governor or Legislature, most of the time it is to do exclusive rights to those games. Class III is an exclusive right that is usually agreed to when we're able to give you a revenue share," McGhee said.

McGhee said the specifics of any agreement, including an expansion to Class III table games and slot machines, would have to be worked out between the two entities.

"We would have to determine what is the best way to get to the goal the state has," McGhee said. "We would have to look at all options the governor would propose to see what was beneficial for both governments."

### Budget shortfall

Several proposals are under consideration to fix Alabama's budget shortfall. Lawmakers so far have rejected Gov. Robert Bentley's proposal to raise revenue through taxes.

In April, Sen. Del Marsh, president pro tem of the Senate, proposed an amendment to the state constitution that would clear the way for Class III gambling in Alabama and create a statewide lottery (see story, page 3).

The Senate's Tourism and Marketing Committee approved Marsh's bill May 14, sending it to the full Senate for a vote. A late effort to add the former Country Crossing site in Houston County to the bill failed.

Marsh's bill would require approval by three-fifths of members of the Senate and House of Representatives to pass the Legislature.

If the bill is successful a statewide vote in September would determine the ultimate outcome.

The Senate's effort comes as the House works on its own budget proposal. On May 14 the Alabama House Ways and Means General Fund Committee approved a budget that would cut funding for vital services including Medicaid, mental health and prisons. The House was set to vote on that budget plan May 19.

At a May 14 press conference, Bentley responded to both legislative actions. Bentley said he does not support Marsh's bill and doesn't think many legislators do either.

"I don't think there's much of an appetite in the senators right now for gambling, but they have been talking about it," Bentley said.

Bentley also said he would veto the House budget put forward, calling it an "austere budget" and "unacceptable."

"It's irresponsible, it's unworkable, it hurts the people of Alabama," Bentley said.

Bentley also said a special legislative session looks "more likely" as the regular session moves toward a close.

A spokesperson for Marsh said the senator "does not support giving a monopoly to one group." Several requests for comment from Alabama House Speaker Mike Hubbard went unanswered, but other media outlets have reported that his intent is to limit gambling in the state to electronic bingo.

### Fate of gambling

The fate of electronic bingo in the state still could hinge on a lawsuit brought by Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange that is pending in the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals. The state's suit in *Alabama v. PCI Gaming Authority* asks the court to decide whether casinos operated by PCI in Wetumpka, Montgomery and Atmore are in fact operating on federal trust land.

The case also asks the court to interpret whether the state has authority on tribal lands to enforce a 2014 Alabama Supreme Court ruling which found that electronic bingo machines do not meet the traditional definition of bingo games and therefore are illegal under Alabama law. ☐



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Ephesians 4:32

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# TOP 10

albums on iTunes

## CHRISTIAN & GOSPEL



**1. Singalong 3 (Live)**

By Phil Wickham

**2. Empires**

By Hillsong UNITED

**3. How Can It Be**

By Lauren Daigle



**4. Kiss the Son**

By Rick Pino

**5. Outback Worship Sessions**

By Planetshakers



**6. Welcome to the New**

By MercyMe

**7. You Make Me Brave (Live)**

By Bethel Music



**8. Lead Us Back: Songs of Worship**

By Third Day

**9. Run Wild. Live Free. Love Strong.**

By for KING & COUNTRY



**10. We Will Not Be Shaken (Live)**

By Bethel Music

Source: [popvortex.com](http://popvortex.com) at press time



Lauren Daigle

Photo courtesy of Centricity Music

# Performing with passion

## Breakout artist Daigle desires to inspire transformation

By Leann Callaway  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

As one of Christian music's 2014 breakout artists, Lauren Daigle has increased her purpose, focus and desire to share life-changing truths through songs.

With her first full album, "How Can It Be," debuting at No. 1 on Billboard's Christian Albums Chart and hitting No. 29 on Billboard's Top 200, Daigle's music and message have soared to new heights.

While maintaining a busy schedule performing around the country, the 23-year-old Louisiana native emphasizes her commitment to step out in faith and walk in obedience.

"One of my favorite verses is Proverbs 16:9 which says, 'The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.' I have held dearly to this verse ever since I was a little girl," Daigle said.

"I am so humbled, honored and thankful that God has directed the steps along this journey and has brought me to places I could only dream of. I want people to know that God is faithful and sovereign, and His promises are true and trustworthy."

Daigle is receiving critical acclaim from media outlets for her soulful voice, heartfelt lyrics and mainstream sound.

### 'Outcry Tour'

She is currently performing on the "Beautiful Offerings Tour" with Big Daddy Weave, Citizen Way and Jason Gray. This summer Daigle will appear on the "Outcry Tour" along with Hillsong, Jesus Culture, Passion, Kari Jobe, David Crowder, Trip Lee and others.

When Daigle was 15 years old she contracted a de-

bilitating virus that kept her out of school for nearly two years.

"I was a typical teenager living life and having a blast," Daigle recalled. "Then there was a big halt. Because my illness was an immune deficiency, anything that was airborne, I would catch it.

"During this time of solitude I began writing songs and developed a passion for music. This was actually the best thing that could have happened to me because God began to reveal His plans and desires for my life during those quiet and still moments when I was seeking Him.

"Looking back it was actually a complete blessing because the Lord used that season to completely pour into me a passion for music and ministry."

When Daigle was staying at home she enjoyed watching "American Idol" and was encouraged to audition for the reality TV show once she recovered from her illness.

After auditioning in 2010 and 2012, Daigle captured the attention and admiration of audiences. Although she didn't advance to the final round, Daigle believes God had a plan and purpose for the experience.

"God taught me so much through this experience," Daigle said. "I realized the importance of finding my identity only in Christ, not in the words or approval of man. I also realized the value of finding my rest and strength in Christ. God's promises and truths helped me stay grounded and focused while being in the spotlight."

Today Daigle desires to see lives changed for God's glory through her music and message.

"I want people to encounter God and respond with worship, awe and reverence. That's when the lost are saved and when transformation truly happens. That's when everything changes. ... That's the cry of my heart expressed through these songs." ❧



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Will McRaney (center) and Joel Rainey (right), both strategists with the Mid-Atlantic Baptist Network, serve lunch to hundreds of demonstrators in front of a CVS Pharmacy looted and burned during the Baltimore riots following the death of Freddie Gray.

Photo by Shannon Baker/MABN

# Impacting Baltimore

## Outreach sparks 'great day of unity' following riots

**F**ollowing the riots that led to the looting and burning of a CVS Pharmacy in West Baltimore, a team from the Mid-Atlantic Baptist Network (MABN) responded by feeding hundreds of people lunch at the site. It was the same day Maryland State Attorney Marilyn Mosby charged six police officers with the death of African American Freddie Gray.

The day before, Michael Crawford, a local pastor and team strategist for the network's church multiplication, and Joel Rainey, team strategist for evangelism and missions engagement, brainstormed during a lunch meeting about what the network could do to help the community affected by the recent rioting.

As they ate their lunch, the idea hit them: Why not feed cheesesteak sandwiches to 1,000 people? The owner of the restaurant, a personal friend of Crawford's, agreed. He would close down his restaurant, "The Real Thing," to make and deliver the sandwiches.

Rainey called an MABN pastor whose wife worked for Maryland's lieutenant governor. He asked if it would be possible to get a permit to feed 1,000 people at the site of the riots the next day.

### Permission to serve

Within a few hours Rainey received a call from the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives. After Rainey explained they had enough food and needed the permission to serve it, the office granted it.

Rainey also contacted the church office of Jamal Bryant, pastor of the Empowerment Temple, who preached Gray's funeral. Bryant agreed to help secure the site for the ministry.

As the MABN team drove to West Baltimore, the state attorney's office announced the charges against the officers. As a result the team arrived to a jubilant

crowd and began to set up tables for lunch.

As Rainey waved to the growing crowd, he said, "Oftentimes in our churches we ask the question, 'What would Jesus do?' And sometimes in scenarios like this we ask, 'Where would He be?'"

"Let me tell you where He is," Rainey said. "He is here. God is at work here through His people bringing reconciliation to this city and He's doing it through the greatest reconciliation story that has ever been told in humanity."

Within the hour, Rainey and Will McRaney, executive missional strategist for MABN, served the demonstrators and law enforcement officers. Among those serving were Bryant; Kevin Moore, the man who captured the video of Freddie Gray's arrest; Juan Grant, who said Gray was his best friend; and Sybrina Fulton, the mother of Trayvon Martin, whose tragic death

in 2012 sparked racial tensions and protests throughout the nation. Also serving was Ron Larson, church planting catalyst for the North American Mission Board, and Charlie Brown, church planter for East Baltimore's Graffiti Church.

McRaney, who handed out water to individuals, said, "It's a great day of unity for the Church here in Baltimore and for the people here coming together."

"This is a great way to display who we are as some 560 churches just coming together to advance God's kingdom — together with ourselves and with the city and our fellow sister churches. ... We're just excited for the future kinds of things that can happen here as a result of us pulling together."

McRaney added, "We know the hope of the world really is Jesus Christ and so we want to spread that message and we look forward to those opportunities in the days and years ahead."

McRaney credits the 560-plus MABN churches for the opportunity. "Since the network represents so many churches, city officials take notice," he said. "We can do so much more together." (BP)

**For more information on how you can pray and get involved, go to [www.bcnd.org/lovebaltimore](http://www.bcnd.org/lovebaltimore).**

## Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

### Former Baptist leader Winfred Moore dies

AMARILLO, Texas — Two-time Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) presidential candidate Winfred Moore died May 8 in Amarillo, Texas. He was 95.

Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church, Amarillo, from 1959 until his retirement in 1989, was nominated as president of the SBC in 1985 and 1986. Though backed by the so-called "moderates" in the era known as the "conservative resurgence," Moore described himself as a "conservative" and "denominational loyalist" who was opposed to tactics of the resurgence group.

Moore lost the SBC presidential race in 1985 to incumbent SBC President Charles Stanley.

Moore received 19,795 votes — more than the total number of messengers at the 1984 convention in Kansas City — but he still lost by 10 percent at the convention in Dallas, which set a record registration of 45,519.

After his election as first vice president in 1985, Moore was added as an ex-officio member to the SBC Peace Committee, a group formed to determine the causes of controversy dividing Southern Baptists and make recommendations to solve them.

After retiring from the pulpit, Moore joined the faculty of Baylor University in Waco, Texas. In 1997 he was named director of the Center for Ministry Effectiveness. He also was on the founding board of Baylor's George W. Truett Theological Seminary.

Moore's wife, Elizabeth, died in 2012. (BNG)



MOORE

### Former Georgia Baptist executive director dies

UNION CITY, Ga. — James H. "Jim" Griffith, 89, executive director emeritus of the Georgia Baptist Convention (GBC), died May 7 in Union City, Ga.

Griffith led the state convention for 11 years, from 1981 to 1992.

During his tenure churches' gifts through the Cooperative Program more than doubled while the state missions offering more than tripled. The convention also expanded its work in church planting and language missions, with the number of Georgia Baptist churches growing from 2,977 to 3,282.

Griffith was pastor of Beech Haven Baptist Church, Athens, Ga., for 14 years as well as First Baptist Church, St. Simons Island, and First Baptist Church, Gray, both in Georgia, and pastor of a church in North Carolina. He served two terms as president of GBC during his 24 years in the pastorate and twice was elected as GBC first vice president.

Griffith earned degrees from Mercer University in Macon, Ga.; Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.; and Luther Rice Seminary in Lithonia, Ga. He is survived by his wife, Mildred "Mimi," three daughters and one granddaughter. (BP)



GRIFFITH

### Immigration award presented to ERLC's Duke

HOUSTON — The National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC) presented the inaugural Robert Gittelson Immigration Advocacy Award to Barrett Duke on April 29 during its national convention in Houston.

Duke has advocated for a just immigration reform plan in his role as vice president for public policy and research with the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC). Samuel Rodriguez, NHCLC's president, presented Duke with the award.

Duke received the award at a time when immigration reform has taken a backseat to other issues. Though widespread agreement exists that America's immigration system is damaged, resolving the problem has escaped lawmakers so far. The system and its enforcement have resulted in an estimated 11 to 12 million undocumented immigrants living illegally in the United States. (BP)



DUKE