



INSIDE



Former Alabama Baptist pastor knows firsthand benefit of Mission:Dignity

◆ Page 3



Workplace chaplains provide spiritual, emotional care in secular companies

◆ Page 4



A Certain Trumpet: How Should a Pastor Think about His People's Giving?

◆ Page 11

INSPIRING

legacy



MARTHA MYERS



KATHLEEN MALLORY



Main photo by Grace Thornton/Myers and Mallory photos courtesy of Alabama WMU
Packets are being mailed soon with resource information about Alabama Baptists' first-ever state missions offering, the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering.

Alabama Baptists gear up for first-ever state missions offering, week of prayer

The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) and Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) have partnered to launch a first-ever state missions offering.

The Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering is being collected all year, with special emphasis during the first Week of Prayer for State Missions to be observed Sept. 11–18.

"Until now, Alabama has been the only state in the SBC without a bona fide state missions offering," said Rick Lance, state missionary and SBOM executive director. "This is a truly historic year for Alabama Baptists."

The new offering replaces what used to be an annual offering for helping fund the work of Alabama WMU (the former Kathleen Mallory Mission Offering) and the newer Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Offering

and expands them to include other state Great Commission Ministries (church planting, church revitalization and global partnership missions).

If the statewide goal of \$750,000 is met, Alabama WMU and Disaster Relief will receive gifts equal to or more than historically received through their separate offerings.

'Hallelujah goal'

Candace McIntosh, executive director of Alabama WMU, has high hopes of reaching the goal and even exceeding it to reach the "hallelujah goal" of \$1 million.

"Alabama Baptists have a heart for missions," she said.

The offering keeps the namesake

of Kathleen Mallory because of her legacy with missions and missions funding.

She lived a humble lifestyle so she could give as much money as possible to missions, McIntosh said.

Mallory, who served as leader of Alabama WMU from 1909 to 1912 and then head of national WMU for 36 years before she died in 1954, also had an "intense devotion to prayer," McIntosh noted. All together, "it's a legacy that inspires Alabama Baptists decades later."

And it's a legacy that helped to fund things like the missions ministries in which Martha Myers participated as a young girl.

Myers, who grew up in an Ala-

bama Baptist church, went on to serve 25 years as a medical missionary in Yemen before being killed by an extremist there in 2002.

'A sterling example'

Lance said, "Martha Myers is the Great Commission literally lived out on two feet. She personifies sacrificial giving. She took the gospel and her ministry to the people who were underserved and unreached, and in that way she is a sterling example of what it means to give sacrificially for the cause of Christ."

That's why when Alabama Baptists created the new state missions offering in late 2015, they

(See 'Lance,' page 6)

Alabama says 'no' to transgender bathroom directive

Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange is having nothing of the attempt to "redefine the word 'sex' in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to mean 'gender identity.'"

The "significant guidance letter" delivered to federally funded schools by President Barack Obama's administration in early May requires schools to define a student's sexual identity based not on biological traits,

but on feelings. And if the schools don't obey the demand they could risk losing federal funding, according to news reports.

But Alabama along with Texas, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Utah, Georgia, Governor Paul LePage of Maine, the Arizona Department of Education, Harrold Independent School District in Texas and Heber-Overgaard Unified School District in Arizona

have all said "no" by filing a lawsuit against the directive May 25.

Declaring the federal demands are "unlawful" and "capricious and arbitrary," the lawsuit calls for a permanent injunction preventing the Obama administration from implementing and enforcing its rules.

Strange wrote in a press release, "Title IX is about discrimination 'on the basis of sex,' not gender identity." (See 'Attorney General,' page 11)

COMMENT

Religious Persecution in the United States?

Some Christian voices have complained for years about religious persecution of conservative Christians in the United States.

Honestly, I paid little attention to their warnings. Persecution was something that happened in other parts of the world. For example, Morning Star News published an in-depth report May 25 of Christians in the villages of Katholi and Sukma in India who were attacked, beaten, some tortured, homes burned and forced from their villages.

The reason, the news service wrote, was that Hindu villagers became convinced their gods were angry because neighbors had become Christians.

That is religious persecution and that does not happen in the United States except in rare and isolated cases.

But the definition of religious persecution is broader than torture and killings. One definition of religious persecution is “the systematic mistreatment of an individual or group of individuals as a response to their religious beliefs or affiliations or lack thereof.” Another definition reads, “The act of harassing, oppressing or killing people because of their differences from society.”

It was certainly religious persecution when the Roman Emperor Nero had the apostle Paul beheaded and the apostle Peter reportedly crucified upside down in a Roman arena. It was religious persecution when Christians and Jews were driven from Rome by Emperor Claudius. And it was religious persecution when Peter and John were ordered by Jewish authorities not to preach the gospel as reported in Acts 5:28, 40.

One form of persecution was physical (killings). One was social (banishment). One was mental and spiritual (command not to speak). But all fall under the definition of religious persecution.

‘Wrong answer’

Consider what is happening to Ruth Neely. She is a municipal court judge and part-time circuit court magistrate in Pinedale, Wyoming. After that state’s Supreme Court overturned the state’s ban on same-sex unions, Neely was asked by a reporter if she was excited about performing gay weddings. Neely answered that her biblical con-



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

victions about marriage precluded her from solemnizing such unions.

Her response was the wrong answer for the Wyoming Commission on Judicial Conduct and Ethics. The unanimous recommendation of the Commission was that she be removed from office. The recommendation asserted her statement about the sanctity of marriage was tantamount to a refusal to obey the law.

Important to the case is the fact that as a municipal court judge Neely has no authority to officiate at weddings. As a circuit court magistrate she can preside over weddings at her discretion. She is not required by office to perform any weddings.

Neely’s attorneys argue the Commission on Judicial Conduct and Ethics effectively said no one who shares Neely’s biblical views about marriage can be a judge in Wyoming. In essence the Commission created a “religious test” for judicial office and a “religious test” for public office and is a clear violation of the U.S. Constitution.

Is the Neely case religious persecution? Is she being harassed or oppressed because of her religious beliefs? It certainly seems so.

On the other side of the country Harvard law professor Mark Tushnet, a constitutional scholar, recently wrote on a blog that conservative and religious objectors to same-sex “marriage” should be treated like Nazis following the end of World War II.

Tushnet lauds the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) activists for taking a “hardline approach” and tolerating no accommodation for opposing points of view. “My own judgment,” he wrote, “is that taking a hardline (‘you lost, live with it’) is better than trying to accommodate the losers.

“Trying to be nice to the losers didn’t work well after the Civil War, nor after Brown (v. Board of Education),” Tushnet added. “And taking a hard-

line seemed to work reasonably well in Germany and Japan after (World War II).”

In Tushnet’s new world there is no room for minority voices, no place for dissenting opinions. He disenfranchises all who believe the traditional understanding that marriage is the union of one man and one woman.

Is that religious persecution? Is that an effort to isolate, to marginalize citizens because of their religious views? Does that fall under the definition of social persecution? Again, it seems so.

There are other examples that raise similar questions. They range from television shows being canceled (the Benham brothers lost their HGTV show) to broadcasters being fired (Curt Schilling fired by ESPN) to economic boycotts (Chick-fil-A) because biblically based views did not correspond to politically correct social positions.

How should Christians respond to instances like these? Perhaps with the same type of courage as

the Indian Christian believers in Katholi and Sukma. When assaulted by mobs and told to deny their faith in Jesus, they refused. The mobs’ response was to beat and burn them.

Mary Eberstadt, senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, recently observed that Christians and churches who capitulate to this intolerance (and shall we say religious persecution) are on a path of destruction. She declared, “The results (of religious capitulation) are plain to see: the churches that tried to protect themselves in that way are dying.”

It was Jesus Himself who promised that persecution —

whether physical, social, mental

or spiritual — would be the fate of His followers. John 15:20 records Jesus urging, “Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me they will persecute you also.”

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me” (Matt. 5:11).

The apostle Paul penned that famous question, “What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?” (Rom. 8:35). The response, “No. In all these we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us” (v. 37).

Perhaps as the culture of the United States changes Christians should read again these important verses for religious persecution in this nation may no longer be an idle discussion. ✠

**“It was Jesus Himself
who promised that
persecution — whether
physical, social, mental
or spiritual — would
be the fate of His
followers. ... ‘If they
persecuted Me they will
persecute you also.’”**

Connect with us
>>>>> **ONLINE** <<<<



thealabamabaptist.org



facebook.com/thealabamabaptist



twitter.com/alabamabaptist

TAB

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

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

(ISSN 0738-7741;
USPS 011-080)

© The Alabama Baptist, Inc. is published weekly except for one week in July and December by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 1-800-803-5201. Fax: 205-879-6026. Website: www.thealabamabaptist.org. Email: news@thealabamabaptist.org or circulation@thealabamabaptist.org. Periodicals postage paid at Birmingham, Ala., and at additional mailing offices.

PRINT
SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Church Budget — \$13.75
Individual — \$22.25

DIGITAL
SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Church Budget — \$8.50
Individual — \$14.95

DR. BOBBY S. TERRY
EDITOR

Jennifer Davis Rash
Executive Editor

Neisha Roberts
Editorial Production Coordinator

Maggie Walsh
News Writer

Lauren C. Grim
Designer

Wanda Bergeron
Local Editions

Linda Harrison
Financial Administrator

Bill Gilmore
Advertising Director

Debbie Campbell
Director of Circulation and Public Relations

NEWS SERVICES
Baptist Press (BP), Baptist News Global (BNG), Religion News Service (RNS), Forum 18 (F18), Morning Star News (MS).

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to:
The Alabama Baptist
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209

ADDRESS CHANGE
Send old and new addresses, and name of church to:
Circulation Department
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209
Allow two weeks.

To the best of our knowledge, all of the ads in *The Alabama Baptist* represent legitimate companies and offerings. However, one should always exercise normal business caution in responding to ads.

Full member of
Alabama Press Association

Accredited member of
Evangelical Council for
Financial Accountability



'Nation's Top Regional
Christian Newspaper'

1999, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014
as judged by Associated
Church Press, Evangelical
Press Association or Religion
Communicators Council



Security + dignity

Former Alabama Baptist church leaders Reginald (left) and Claudia Pressley (right), who spent 45 years in ministry together before retiring, know firsthand the difference Mission:Dignity makes.

Photo courtesy of GuideStone Financial Resources

Mission:Dignity helps meet monthly needs of more than 1,800 retired ministers

After 45 years of ministry, former Alabama Baptist pastor Reginald Pressley and his wife, Claudia, retired much the way they began — serving small churches in the Southeast. They were there for the births, baptisms, weddings and funerals as they marked the milestones and the passage of time in the lives of their members.

And they wouldn't trade anything for the memories.

The couple met in their teens at Toccoa Falls Institute, a private, faith-based high school tucked away in the mountains of North Georgia. He was attending on the advice of a pastor from where he lived in Talladega after surrendering to the ministry; she was the daughter of an instructor.

His memory is that for Claudia, "It was love at first sight."

Her story is slightly different.

"He chased me all over the place."

Regardless they struck up an acquaintance that year before he returned to Alabama for his senior year. Then Uncle Sam called and he was drafted, entering the Marines and shipping off for the Korean Peninsula.

The relationship continued halfway around the world, and when he returned home he also returned to Toccoa to visit Claudia. Soon they were married and, after his discharge, settled back in Toccoa. He took Bible classes at the school and then moved the family to Florida where he studied at the Baptist Bible Institute (now the Baptist College of Florida) in Graceville.

"Times were tough being newly married, having a son and wife and trying to support them; money was scarce," he remembered.

Alabama church experience

And he was serving his first church.

Bellwood Baptist Church, Geneva, was a good experience and taught him a lot about human nature. For instance he pointed out the church squabble that was just being solved when he walked into the pulpit as the congregation's pastor.

Claudia explained, "Shortly before we arrived, the church had a very heated question over whether to add air conditioning. Most folks didn't have it back then and couldn't af-

ford it so they could not see taking on the expense of higher electric bills just for an hour or two on Sunday morning.

"Well the church was split on the vote so they went ahead and air conditioned the sanctuary, and that created a very unique worship experience. The half in favor of air conditioning sat on one side with the cool air blowing, and those who opposed it sat on the other side with the windows open."

That experience was just the first of a lifetime of encounters with human nature that Reginald and Claudia look back on with a laugh and a shake of their heads.

Throughout the next several decades, the couple moved around the Southeast, always serving in small churches and living in parsonages.

Reginald's favorite part of the ministry was the preaching.

"The Lord just seemed to speak through me and give me what the people needed to hear at the time," he said.

Reginald credits his ministry with strong preaching, good discipleship and a strong missions education program through Woman's Missionary Union and the Brotherhood. They were the backbone of the church and kept the church focused on missions, he said.

Now retired, the couple is not far from where they began their ministry. They live in Toccoa and are still members of Old Liberty Baptist Church, just 15 miles across the state line in Westminster, South Carolina. It was the last church he served and it is where he retired from at age 70 in 2001. Claudia plays the organ each Sunday.

One of the real blessings in retirement is Mission:Dignity, the benevolence ministry of GuideStone Financial Resources, which extends the couple's limited income and helps them make ends meet.

"We never had much money to put away for retirement, though the churches helped where they could," Reginald said. "I think many of them put about \$35 a month away toward our retirement, which is what the Annuity Board [now GuideStone Financial Resources] recommended as a minimum.

"Of course we didn't have anything to contribute because I rarely made more than \$300 a month in my early days and not much more than that later."

Claudia seconded that thought.

"I sometimes wonder how in the world we got by in those days without health insurance but we couldn't afford it," she said. "Thank goodness the Annuity Board eventually offered a program and it was a real lifesaver. The Annuity Board was a real blessing when we needed it.

"It was hard to raise four children on a country pastor's salary but the Lord always met our needs."

The Lord is now meeting their needs through Southern Baptists who contribute to Mission:Dignity. As in the past, the contributors do not know the hardships that retirees may be having, but the check arrives at just the right time with just the right amount.

Established endowment

Mission:Dignity assists more than 1,800 recipients each month, providing a measure of security and dignity in their retirement years. The neediest couples with at least 25 years of paid Southern Baptist ministerial service can receive \$600 each month from Mission:Dignity. Thanks to an established endowment that pays for administrative costs, 100 percent of money given to Mission:Dignity benefits a retired pastor, worker or his widow in need. For some recipients it means being able to stay in the familiar surroundings of their own home. For others it covers the cost of groceries, utilities, prescriptions and other necessities. But for each of them it's an expression of the love and care of their Southern Baptist family.

Claudia said, "We don't know what we would do without the check we receive from Baptists all over the nation who contribute to folks like us. As you get old the medical bills come a lot more frequently and seem to never end.

"Mission:Dignity is helping us to meet those bills while still having funds available to cover other day-to-day expenses." (GuideStone)

Mission:Dignity Sunday
is June 26.

Spiritual guidance

Workplace chaplains provide spiritual, emotional care in secular companies

On any given Sunday, most Americans do not attend church. Most will, however, show up to work throughout the week. These individuals still experience times of uncertainty, personal and family turmoil, loss of loved ones and other moments where they may desire spiritual guidance.

Workplace chaplains seek to fill that void. Much like military, hospital or prison chaplains, workplace chaplains minister to those in need and offer counseling — they just do it in one's place of employment, most of which are secular companies.

Although having chaplains in the workplace is not a new idea, the concept has gained increasing acceptance in recent years.

Alabama has at least four Baptist workplace chaplains, according to Mark Wakefield, an associate in the office of global missions of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), who serves as the state chaplaincy strategist.

Corporate, or workplace chaplains, are not required to connect through the North American Mission Board or SBOM, so the number is difficult to pinpoint in the state, Wakefield said.

The largest and oldest workplace chaplaincy organization is Marketplace Chaplains USA, a group founded by former Baptist General Convention of Texas employee and military chaplain Gil Stricklin.

It includes more than 2,800 chaplains serving in 46 states and six other countries. Marketplace Chaplains reports a strong increase in their numbers over the past decade, with 2015 bringing the most new client companies

in any year of the organization's three decades of operation.

The main focus of workplace chaplains is to provide "emotional and spiritual care as part of an overall Employee Assistance Program focus," Wakefield said.

Assistance may include informal counseling, encouragement, crisis intervention, providing a safe place to talk and teaching stress management, Wakefield said, who noted he's been aware of workplace chaplains for about 15 years.

A familiar face

Rich Shockey, Marketplace Chaplains division director for Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and

Nebraska, also serves as a chaplain in a couple of offices in the Kansas City area.

He noted that by visiting the workplace, getting to know people and being a familiar face, chaplains are more than a phone number to people and therefore are more likely to be approached by people in times of need.

"When crisis comes — and it probably will at some point in their life — then they think of the chaplain because they know them," Shockey said. "We have the opportunity to provide spiritual care and support and to share the gospel."

Shockey noted that since chaplains in his organization are contracted by companies — instead of serving as an employee of the company they serve — they can "protect confidentiality" and "maintain neutrality." Chaplains can therefore serve "the CEO and the person pushing the broom."

Additional benefits

Wakefield said his experience and informal study have shown that "when employees sense that



123rf.com

Much like military, hospital or prison chaplains, workplace chaplains minister to those in need and offer counseling and 'emotional and spiritual care' — they just do it in one's place of employment, most of which are secular companies.

employers care about more than the bottom line, they are more loyal and productive."

"Some evidence indicates that any legitimate crisis intervention provided to employees reduces sick time and workers' comp claims," Wakefield said.

Corporate Chaplains of America (CCA), a group with about 200 chaplains serving more than 450 companies in 42 states and a few international sites, echoed Wakefield's comments, noting that chaplains help a company overall and not just the individual employees. CCA says chaplains in the workplace lead to lower employee turnover, higher reported job satisfaction, greater employee productivity and lower absenteeism rates.

All 'by permission'

Kevin Bussey, a CCA chaplain, previously served as a Southern Baptist pastor. He noted that while workplace chaplains are not an attempt to replace churches or pastors, "our chaplains are often the only pastors that employees will encounter."

"We get to know employees, their families, their dogs and cats, their hobbies and, of course, their sports teams," he said. "Everything our chaplains do is by permission. We never force ourselves or our faith on the employees. If we are given permission then our chaplains will share our faith with the employees."

Bussey said "the biggest blessing" he experiences as a workplace chaplain "is when I get a chance to share the gospel with an employee or family member."

He recounts many stories of being able to minister to someone

he built a relationship with as their workplace's chaplain. He recalled praying with a young couple in the hospital who had just been told their infant would not live through the night — and then rejoiced when the child lived.

'What God did'

He remembered "counseling a couple who was at the brink of divorce" and being "amazed

at what God did" to bring the couple back together.

Wakefield said, "Workplace chaplaincy is an excellent example of taking the gospel to the world. Evangelism has to be done with discretion and not give the appearance of proselytization. If a chaplain provides good pastoral care, those discussions will naturally happen without being forced." (BNG, TAB)

"Workplace chaplaincy is an excellent example of taking the gospel to the world."

**Mark Wakefield
Alabama Baptist's
chaplaincy strategist**



Give your dad or grandfather a gift he will enjoy each week — **The Alabama Baptist.**

Choose the option he prefers. Includes 50 issues.

Digital gift subscription \$14.95

Print gift subscription \$22.25

Combination gift subscription (digital and print) \$24.95



Email circulation@thealabamabaptist.org or call 1-800-803-5201, ext. 118 to purchase your gift subscription.

‘Fire in the Field’

Evangelical crusade in Monroe County reaches across denominational lines to save souls

By Maggie Walsh
The Alabama Baptist

June 4 may have been just another Saturday for most Alabama Baptists, but for those in Monroe County the day was a reminder of what God has done.

That night, Christians from various denominations gathered together for a final celebration service under a massive tent in a Monroeville field and remembered how God had moved just a couple months prior.

And it all began with one man.

A visitor to Monroeville was meeting with Pilots for Christ, a nonprofit organization that provides air transportation for critical patients and their families, to learn more about the ministry when he requested to meet with area pastors, explained John Marks, director of missions for Bethlehem and Pine Barren Baptist associations. The visitor had a vision, a tent and the financial means to supply the tent with chairs and sound and lighting equipment.

‘Electric’ atmosphere

His vision? To have a revival of souls the size of which the area’s never seen.

And that’s exactly what happened April 10–16 — there was a “Fire in the Field” in an open track of land in the middle of Monroeville.

The Fire in the Field Crusade attracted more than 1,600 participants its first night, almost hitting the tent’s seating capacity.



Photo courtesy of John Marks

The Fire in the Field Crusade in Monroeville attracted more than 1,600 participants its first night, almost hitting the tent’s seating capacity.

“The first night it was electric, really,” Marks said. “The atmosphere was just awesome. God poured His Spirit out on that meeting. It’s just hard to describe.”

James Henry, pastor of Little River Baptist Church, Uriah, who served as prayer chairman on the 10-person steering committee for the crusade, agreed, saying, “God really astonished us through His power and presence each night.”

Led in music and message by Gerald Simmons, worship leader at Northside Baptist Church, Charlotte, North Carolina,

and evangelist Frank Shelton, the crusade also featured a counseling tent with 80–85 counselors for anyone who accepted Christ or needed prayer following the nightly services. John Bush, of First Baptist Church, Montgomery, also was on hand to assist counselors.

Ministering in schools

During the weekdays, Shelton spoke to students in area schools.

Henry said, “[Shelton] has a way with kids. The whole time he was talking the kids were hanging on his every word. I’ve

never seen anybody be able to hold a crowd of teenagers like that.”

At Wilcox Academy, a private Christian school in Camden, 102 students prayed to receive Christ after one of Shelton’s assemblies. From the assemblies and crusade altogether, 355 people accepted Christ or rededicated their lives and it’s a spark that Henry believes will be fanned into a much larger flame.

“I really believe that God is starting something right now in our state and in our country and I believe that it’s going to happen in our youth — those are the bulk of the people that got saved through the crusade and assemblies,” he said.

“It was definitely an amazing thing to see God just working through us to fulfill what we believe was His will through Monroe County.”

The crusade also was a unifying force for churches across denominational lines.

“It wasn’t a Baptist thing,” Henry said. “We had all different denominations come together for one sole purpose and that was to see people come to know Christ.

“To come together like that for an event like this is crucially important for Monroe County because it kind of breaks all the barriers down. None of this would have happened had we not bathed this in prayer and asked God to bless it and unite us as one people, and that’s exactly what happened when we got under this tent.

“It wasn’t about one specific church. It was about people’s souls.” ✝

Watch your complimentary
Ministry Training Institute
lecture on Philippians here



Photo courtesy of Samford University’s MTI

As part of your subscription to *The Alabama Baptist*, you will receive a complimentary lecture taught by Kevin Blackwell, executive director of the Ministry Training Institute at Samford University, for the next few weeks. Use your Aurasma app to watch the sixth lecture on Philippians by placing your mobile device over this photo. App instructions noted on page 9.

Three Rivers Church holds dedication service



Photo by Dan Lowery

Three Rivers Church, Seminole, holds a river baptism during its dedication service for its new building May 15. The church started seven years ago in a home with four people. It then moved to a small building that seated about 25 people then to three acres of land with mobile chapels provided by Alabama Baptists. Rick Barnhart was the guest speaker at the dedication service. Dan Lowery is pastor.



Across ALABAMA'S Associations

To submit news items, email news@thealabamabaptist.org or call 205-870-4720, ext. 112, at least three weeks prior to the event.

CHILTON

▶ **Mike Shaw** is the interim pastor of **West End Church, Clanton**. He previously served as interim pastor of Riverside Church, Helena, after his retirement in 2014. He served for 35 years at First Church, Pelham, where he was recently named pastor emeritus. Shaw is a past president and first and second vice president of the Alabama State Convention and has served on several state-level committees and in multiple positions for Shelby Association. He is currently a board member for *The Alabama Baptist*.



SHAW

COFFEE

▶ **First Church, Elba**, will host Christian comedian Billy Bob Bohannon June 26, 5 p.m. Michael Woodham is pastor.

COOSA RIVER

▶ **Refuge Church, Lincoln**, will hold revival services June 26–30. The Sunday service will be at 5 p.m. and Monday–Thurs-

day services will be at 6:30 p.m. Gary Williams, pastor of Fairview Church, Gadsden, will speak. There will be special music. Roy Cordle is pastor.

DEKALB

▶ **John Inman** is the new pastor of **Moon Lake Church, Mentone**. He holds a bachelor's degree from Tennessee Temple University (now Piedmont International University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina) and has completed courses toward a master's degree. He previously served as a pastor, teacher and worship leader in several health care facilities through Brainerd



INMAN

Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee. He also served as a fill-in preacher at Brainerd and as worship leader in the church's Celebrate Recovery program. Inman and his wife, Rachel, have five children.

RUSSELL

▶ **Beaver Creek Church, Phenix City**, will hold VBS on June 19–24. For more infor-

mation call the church at 334-291-1711. Lynn McManious is pastor. ▶ **Bethany Church, Phenix City**, will hold VBS on June 12–16. For more information call the church at 334-297-1936. Jimmie Hobbs is pastor. ▶ **Cottonton Church** will hold VBS on June 13–17. For more information call the church at 334-855-4726. Wesley Price is pastor. ▶ **Crawford Church, Phenix City**, will hold VBS on June 20–24. For more information call the church at 334-297-5307. Marvin Minton is pastor. ▶ **Silver Run Church, Seale**, will hold VBS on June 12–16. For more information call the church at 334-855-2127. Richie Ashburn is pastor. ▶ **Smiths Station Church** will hold VBS on June 13–17. For more information call the church at 334-297-4932. David Kees is pastor.

SELMA

▶ **Westwood Church, Selma**, is requesting information on any answered prayers for a history writing of the church for its 50th anniversary. The history will begin with the mission in 1963–66. Please send all information to Elsie Ikerman at 1260 Moores Ferry Road, Selma, AL 36701. Edward Eaton is pastor. †

Lance, McIntosh hope church leaders 'prayerfully consider' promoting Myers-Mallory offering

(continued from page 1)

decided to add Myers as a namesake — in honor of Myers' sacrifice, Lance said.

"This offering is similar to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and the Annie Armstrong Offering for missions in North America in that it is a complement to, not a competitor with, the Cooperative Program," he said. "It essentially supplements some of those ministries."

And, Lance added, he hopes Baptists from across the state will join the effort and invest in making a difference together through the offering.

McIntosh agreed.

"We're the ones who champion the call to missions in our own state," she said.

"As we support missions here in our state, we can continue to gain traction in the hearts of Alabamians."

In the coming days, church leaders statewide will receive resource packets with

ways to pray for and plan for promotion of the upcoming Week of Prayer for State Missions.

"We hope that as it gets in the hands of our church leaders that they will process the information

that is in it and prayerfully consider how they would lead their church to be a part of it," McIntosh said.

"We want them to go ahead and set that time aside on their church calendar so that they can promote the week of prayer," she said.

"And set aside a day when they will emphasize the offering and help educate their congregation on how they impact others [when they give to] the Myers-Mallory missions offering here in Alabama." (TAB, SBOM)

For more information, visit myers-mallory.org.

"As we support missions here in our state, we can continue to gain traction in the hearts of Alabamians."

Candace McIntosh
executive director, Alabama WMU

Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

LifeWay's Stetzer to join staff at Wheaton College

WHEATON, Ill. — Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research and executive editor of The Gospel Project curriculum published by LifeWay, has been named to the faculty of Wheaton College in Illinois and as executive director of Wheaton's Billy Graham Center for Evangelism.

Stetzer, 49, will begin his new roles at Wheaton on July 1, which also will include publisher of Evangelical Missions Quarterly, founded nearly 50 years ago, and chair of the Wheaton College Graduate School's evangelism and leadership program.

In the newly endowed academic post named The Billy Graham Distinguished Endowed Chair for Church, Mission and Evangelism, and through Wheaton's Billy Graham Center, Stetzer said he looks forward to "a unique opportunity to serve the Church, helping Christians know and engage their culture in the name of Christ." (BP)



STETZER

CP giving 6.13% above year-to-date projection

NASHVILLE — Year-to-date contributions to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) national and international missions and ministries received by the SBC Executive Committee (EC) are 6.13 percent above the year-to-date budgeted projection, and are 2.65 percent above contributions received during the same time frame in 2015, according to a news release from EC President and CEO Frank S. Page.

As of May 31, gifts received by EC for distribution through the Cooperative Program Allocation Budget through the first eight months of the Convention's fiscal year totaled \$131,956,900.93. This total is \$7,623,567.60 above the \$124,333,333.33 year-to-date budgeted amount to support SBC ministries globally and across North America and is \$3,405,282.76 more than the \$128,551,618.17 received through the end of May 2015. (BP)

in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders, friends

Clifford Dees Jr.

Former Alabama Baptist pastor dies

Clifford Dees Jr., retired pastor of Chilton Baptist Church, Thomasville, died Feb. 3. He was 76.

Dees served as pastor of Chilton Baptist for 18 years before his retirement. He was a member of Chilton Baptist at the time of his death.

He also served as pastor of Salem Baptist Church, Dickinson; Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Uriah; Barnwell Baptist Church, Fairhope; Second Baptist Church, Semmes; Forest Hill Baptist Church, Linden; Yellow Bluff Baptist Church, Pine Hill; and Christian Fellowship Baptist Church, Thomasville. He is a United States Army veteran and served from 1961 to 1966.

Dees earned his bachelor's degree from Mobile College (now the University of Mobile). He was preceded in death by his wife, Barbara. He is survived by four children, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. (Hannah Muñoz)



DEES



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Last Things

Death

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

Unless Christ returns in our lifetime, our initiation into God's last things will happen at death. As it's often said, the human mortality rate is 100 percent. Hebrews 9:27 puts it clearly: "It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment." Our question this week is simply, "What might we glean from the Bible about this initial event in God's last things?" The Bible endorses the observation that death is the common lot of all living things.

Genesis 5 lists the generations from Adam to Noah, and with the exception of Enoch — although each one is said to have lived hundreds of years — each person has the summary of his life end with the same three words, "and he died" (vv. 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31). Death is part and parcel of earthly life. We are born, we live and then we die. Earthly life does not last forever. When did this become the common lot of all humans? At its outset, the Bible presents death as the result of sin (Gen. 2:17). In the New Testament, Romans 6:23 underscores the reality that death is the wage of sin.

Stark reality

Death is often euphemized in attempts to soften its stark reality. People without a sure and steadfast hope for a blessed future, as well as many Christians, attempt other ways of referring to death. Those of us who have served as pastors and hence been involved with many funerals have heard death referred to by such alternatives as "passing," "passing on" or "passing away." We hear such expressions as "departed," "crossed over," "laid to rest," "breathed one's last" or simply "someone is no longer with us." In fact the Bible itself says of the deaths of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that each of them "breathed his last" (Gen. 25:8; 35:29; 49:33).

The Bible has another well-known euphemism for death, calling it "sleep." David is said to have "slept" with his fathers (1 Kings 2:10). When the

daughter of Jairus died, Jesus told the mourners, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping" (Luke 8:52).

Similarly when Lazarus had died and been buried, Jesus told the disciples that Lazarus was "sleeping" (John 11:11). A person who is sleeping is expected to awaken at some point. When the analogy is applied to believers, the truth is rather evident: those who die in the Lord are expecting a resurrection.

Fear of the unknown

Since the act of dying is something we have yet to experience, there can be a fear of the unknown. Even so Hebrews 2:14-15 reminds Christians that Christ has removed the fear of death by His victory on the cross.

While the analogy of death as sleeping softens the impact of death, the starkness returns when the Bible calls death an enemy. In fact 1 Corinthians 15:26 terms death as "the last enemy." However, that same chapter ends by telling us that this last enemy is a defeated enemy.

In light of and after the resurrection of Christ, Christians are headed toward a victory when the corruptible puts on incorruption and the mortal puts on immortality, bringing to pass the saying, "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54). The Bible is quite clear about this victory. It tells us that death is a matter of being absent from the body and present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8).

Look for more about this next week when Theology 101 looks at what lies just beyond the moment of death for God's children. †

Jerry Batson is a retired Alabama Baptist pastor who also has served as associate dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and professor of several schools of religion during his career.



Leaders must make plans to protect church members, security experts say

By Michael J. Brooks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The 1966 massacre on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin, in which 14 people died and 31 were wounded, is categorized as the first "active shooter" tragedy in America, but it was the Columbine High School shooting in Colorado that got the full attention of the nation, according to law enforcement officers who addressed church leaders in Shelby County on Feb. 20. Thirteen people were killed at Columbine and 21 were injured April 20, 1999.

More than 100 church leaders gathered at The Church at Chelsea-Westover, in Shelby Baptist Association, to learn about protecting churches from active shooting incidents. The event was sponsored by the association, the Shelby County Sheriff's Department and the Shelby County Law Enforcement Chaplains Association.

"By their very nature as welcoming organizations, churches are 'soft targets' for aggressors," according to Carol Dodgen, of Dodgen Security Consulting in Birmingham. "But our response in the first few seconds are so critical. We must assess areas of weakness and make plans to protect our people."

'Deadly force incidents'

Dodgen said 85-90 percent of her time is spent leading workplace violence training.

Dodgen noted there were nearly 1,200 "deadly force incidents" from 1999 to 2015 and gave explanatory break-down about the underlying causes. The categories were, in order of frequency: robbery, domestic spillover, personal conflict, mental illness, gang-related, religious bias, drug-related and random. According to the FBI, nearly 4 percent of deadly force inci-

dents between 2000 and 2013 occurred in churches, resulting in 21 fatalities and 27 people wounded in the six incidents.

Dodgen encouraged participants to make plans and train for every possible emergency.

"Dave Grossman said, 'You do not rise to the occasion ... you sink to the level of your training,'" Dodgen said. "I agree. It's important for church leaders to make plans to protect their congregations."

Lt. Brad Flynn of the Helena Police Department noted that Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley has ordered all Alabama law enforcement officers receive active shooter training, but that most active shooter events are over by the time law enforcement arrives on the scene.

Have a plan

"Sixty-nine percent of these incidents are over in five minutes or less," he said. "Therefore what you do as a leader on the scene is important."

Shelby County Correctional Officer Jeff Woods said, "You need to know the doctors, nurses and EMTs in your church, and those who've had CPR training. Safety team members should have assignments and stick to them in the event of any emergency."

Shelby County officers fired an assault rifle on the church's parking lot to give participants inside an idea of what live gunfire sounds like and sponsored another training scenario when an officer disguised as a drifter came into the church lobby demanding money.

Keith Brown, ministries center director for Shelby Baptists, said the participation and the speakers met his expectations.

"Unfortunately this is a topic we'll need to give more attention to," he said. "We're especially concerned about churches since they most often have little security." †

Dogwood Grove Baptist breaks ground mid-May



New building

Photo by Amelia Messamore

Dogwood Grove Baptist Church, Adger, breaks ground for a new church building May 15, after the original building was destroyed in a fire in November 2013. Pastor Darrell Cook expressed thanks to Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief for use of a mobile chapel unit. Pictured here are Cook (right) and church members, some of whom are on the building committee.

ALABAMA

UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

Hunter Street's Gray marks 30 years as pastor

"It's amazing how gracious and kind the people of Hunter Street Baptist have been to me," said Buddy Gray, who marked 30 years as pastor of the Hoover church June 1.

The Birmingham Baptist Association church held a reception in Gray's honor that day and he shared a special message during Sunday services June 5.

Although he's been serving at Hunter Street Baptist for three decades, Gray's first call to ministry was when he was 16 years old.

He began preaching at rural churches not long after that and earned his bachelor's degree from Samford University in Birmingham. He later earned a master of



GRAY

divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and then a doctorate from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

Gray also served as youth minister for Hunter Street Baptist in the late 1970s.

He said his "most significant role and most important role" is being a husband to his wife, Tricia, and a father to his three children.

Gray served as president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention for two terms starting in 1998. He also was a trustee and chairman of the board for Southern Seminary.

When asked about something he's learned along the way in ministry, Gray said, "My greatest lesson or challenge is dealing with my own heart. I'm always aware that I've got a long way to go. I'm grateful that God's been gracious to allow these people (at Hunter Street) to help me."

When looking to the coming years at the church, Gray said,

"Being Christians in our society is going to be more challenging than ever before and I think it's important for churches and for Hunter Street to be healthy (and) have a real understanding of who God is and what our mission really is. ... That's going to be fascinating to see what will transpire over the next 10 to 20 years." (Neisha Roberts)

Geneva Assoc. assists many through missions store

For Alabama Baptists in Geneva Baptist Association, the Christ Helping Hands Ministry (CHHM) is a way to "do God's will, help others and give others an opportunity to help themselves," according to Director of Missions Dicky McAllister.

CHHM was started in July 2009 and consists of a missions store and food pantry. Those passing by the location on Dothan Highway 52 in Hartford can see a large sign for CHHM, which is how many of those who come for assistance know about the ministry, according to McAllister. Others are directed to CHHM by churches in the association and even those outside the denomination, McAllister said.

"Once there's a ministry where you help and encourage people, the word is gonna get out there, especially in these rural counties," he said.

Volunteers from New Prospect Baptist Church, Hartford; Bellwood Baptist Church; New Teamon Baptist Church, Slocomb; Union Baptist Church, Hartford; Christian Home Church, Slocomb; and others help serve food and provide financial assistance and "spiritual guidance" to more than 20 people each week (the average number who go to CHHM for help).

"For us, we know we're doing God's will and ... in the worst of times we're doing our best to meet the spiritual, physical and financial needs of others," McAllister said.

For more information on CHHM or to volunteer, call the associational office at 334-588-3276. (Neisha Roberts)

Mud Creek Association helps pastors grow

"Pastors need other pastors." It's a common saying, but it's also a truth that Mud Creek Baptist Association grasps.

That's why it has events like the April 29 Ministers Meeting for associational pastors and their wives. Organized by Mud Creek Association Director of Missions Ken Maddox, the meeting sought to provide "practical, actionable, usable insights to strengthen [pastors'] vision for personal growth and a compelling vision for church growth," according to Maddox.

Lamar Duke, lead church planting strategist in the office of associational missions and church planting for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, led the meeting which featured a fellowship meal, a message and two practical sessions. Duke shared a message of encouragement from Ephesians 3:14-21 about rediscovering the church where God has placed you.

In the first practical session, he spoke on the importance of prioritizing your entire life. Drawing from Matthew 22:37-40, Duke explored the order of placing God first, spouse second and self third, followed by others, things and church.

"Self is the bucket in which we carry love for others," he emphasized, also bringing attention to "the tyranny of the urgent" that's always trying to shift our focus from the truly important things in life.

The second practical session focused on how to lead change in a church or organization. Within that, Duke and participants discussed "built-in resistance to change" and how to identify and lead "key influencers to advance the cause of Christ," Duke said. (Maggie Walsh)

Butler Association holds senior adult fellowships

The quarterly senior adult fellowship in Butler Baptist Association is the "best attended senior adult meeting in the county," according to Betty A. Foster, who's been the director of the fellowship

for more than 10 years.

Foster, a member of Spring Creek Baptist Church, Honorville, said the fellowship always has a meal and a program that the host church organizes. This quarter McKenzie Baptist Church hosted the event June 2.

The senior adult fellowship consistently sees more than 100 senior adults at each event, Foster said.

"Senior adults look forward to what they are going to eat and what the program is going to be," Foster said. "It's something to look forward to, and of course the fellowship."

Many churches, like Foster's church, take a busload of senior adults to the fellowships, since many times they are scattered across the county in order to accommodate the most people.

The programs vary at each event but in 2014 there was a senior adult talent show, where the winner was an 88-year-old singer. One year they held a "Minute To Win It" game, which was "fun, fun, fun," Foster said.

She hopes to host a grandchild talent show this year or in 2017. (Neisha Roberts)



When YOU'RE in the driver's seat, choose Children's South Surgery.

When a patient goes in for a surgical procedure at Children's South, that child receives world-class care from board-certified pediatric professionals: ● surgeons ● anesthesiologists ● nurse anesthetists ● recovery room nurses and ● support staff.

Everyone on our staff makes the choice to work with children and their families ● 24/7, 365 days a year.

Children's South Outpatient Center
1940 Elmer J. Bissell Road
Birmingham, Alabama 35243
205.638.3217



Children's of Alabama

 Find us on Facebook

The Alabama Baptist newspaper.



(augmented reality)

Follow these instructions

- 1** Download the Aurasma app from your app store.
- 2** Choose the "ALBaptist" profile under channel and tap "Follow." You will only have to do this one time. (Any ALBaptist options will allow you to follow *The Alabama Baptist*.)
- 3** Tap the [] icon at the bottom of the screen.
- 4** You will see pulsating dots, which indicate the app is searching for a target. Once it finds a target the dots will turn to a bull's-eye. The bull's-eye will remain until the augmented reality image loads.
- 5** Hold your device over a page or image in *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) marked as augmented reality and watch the paper come to life.
- 6** If the image is slow to load at any point, then it may be your data speed or Wi-Fi strength. Change locations and try again.
- 7** Each week when TAB arrives, open the app and hold your device over the augmented reality articles.

Devoted. Developed. Deployed.

Pastor's Alpha meeting encourages pastors to make bold discipleship moves

By Michael J. Brooks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Jesus' ministry was full of bold moves and pastors can make bold moves too by discipling people as Jesus did, said Craig Etheredge, pastor of First Baptist Church, Colleyville, Texas.

Etheredge spoke to about 50 pastors in the Pastor's Alpha meeting at Liberty Park Baptist Church, Birmingham, on May 3. Pastor Scott Guffin served as host. Robert Mullins, pastor of Mount Hebron Baptist Church, Elmore, and Daniel Edmonds, director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' (SBOM) office of Sunday School and discipleship, served as conveners.

Edmonds explained that the Pastor's Alpha (soon to be called Disciple-Making Ministries) meeting was created in partnership with LifeWay Christian Resources to encourage pastors in disciple making in their churches and now has expanded to include other staffers and key lay leaders.

"We got feedback from pastors early on that they'd love to bring others with them for training as a way to share the burden in their churches," Edmonds said. "Craig Etheredge talks about starting a movement and that's what we want to do. We're happy to see the network expand and more churches joining in."

Etheredge said churches need to return to disciple-making as Jesus taught and practiced.

'Kingdom growth'

"Throughout Scripture, He is lifted up as our model," Etheredge said. "We're to walk as He walked, and Jesus poured His life into others for Kingdom growth."

A disciple, according to Etheredge, is first of all a learner. But he insisted a "data dump" isn't all that's meant by discipling.

"Jesus exhorted those He taught to 'walk with Me,' so we gather that a disciple is one who takes knowledge and uses it to become like the Master Teacher and to do what He commands."

Etheredge used three D's to explain his understanding of discipleship — devoted, developed and deployed.

"Disciples are devoted to Jesus, they develop the character of Jesus and they are deployed into the ministry of Jesus."

Etheredge said the Great Commission has four verbs that explain the process Jesus inaugurated.

"First we're to 'go,'" he said. "This means we're to explore our world and spend time with sinners as Jesus did. He was known as a 'friend of sinners.'"

"Second we're to baptize. This is the connection phase when people step over the faith line and accept Christ," Etheredge said.

"Baptism has always been the way we show the world our intention to turn from disobedience and to follow Christ."

"Third we're to teach. This means we train new believers how to obey the Lord, or as I like to say 'to feed themselves' through their devotional life.

"And the fourth verb," Etheredge said, "is almost hidden. Jesus said to 'teach them what I commanded you.' His command is that we make disciples, so the process isn't complete until new Christians become disciplers themselves."

Etheredge explained how he

makes time in his schedule as a pastor to meet individually with new believers for several weeks, leading them through a study of Christian growth and sometimes he's able to do this with a small group.

"Every pastor is busy with multiple tasks," he said, "but what is more important than teaching new believers how to walk with the Lord? And when those we've disciplined become disciples, the work is multiplied."

Those in attendance were given pre-publication copies of Etheredge's book, "Bold Moves — Lead the Church to Live Like Jesus" that will be available from Etheredge's discipleFIRST Ministries later this year (discipleFIRST.com).

Upcoming event

Etheredge will return to Birmingham for a two-day event called FLASHPOINT at Samford University on Jan. 13-14, 2017.

This event will be jointly sponsored by Samford (with host Kevin Blackwell), discipleFIRST and SBOM's office of Sunday School and discipleship.

For more information on this event or the Pastor's Alpha meeting, contact Edmonds at demonds@alsbom.org or 1-800-264-1225, ext. 285. ☛



The Youngbloods

Retired Pastor Max Youngblood recommends

REVERSE MORTGAGE

Specialist
Jimmy Dixon

Like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives.

He represents McGowin-King Mortgage, which is an Alabama-owned and operated company.

CONTACT JIMMY TODAY

for a **FREE REVERSE MORTGAGE PROPOSAL OR BROCHURE**



NMLS #207518

PHONE: **205-567-4800**
EMAIL: **jdixon@mcgowinking.com**



YOUR HOME FOR 24/7 CHRISTIAN MUSIC

in the Alabama River Region: Montgomery, Prattville, Wetumpka, Millbrook and Troy.

www.wrvfmtheriver.com

Faithful service

Hurricane Baptist marks 200 years in big way at anniversary celebration

Every Sunday, Barbara Giles and her fellow One Step class members come to Hurricane Baptist Church, Gilbertown, with \$2 in hand.

One dollar goes toward shipping costs for Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes, an outreach ministry of Samaritan's Purse that collects and delivers gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 150 countries.

Missions project

The other dollar goes toward a missions project of their choice. Their most recent project was a monument of the Ten Commandments which was placed in the church just in time for its 200th anniversary celebration.

"We just prayed and wanted to present something to the church," Giles said of the monument. "We just felt like that's what God wanted us to do."

The One Step women's group had been collecting the funds for the monument for about two years, and it was installed the Thursday before the Sunday celebration.

The May 15 celebration service began at 10

a.m. and featured three former pastors as guest speakers: Lonnie Baxter, Jim Hill and Tyler Powell.

For the occasion, church historian Shirley Giles compiled a 93-page church history that was given to each family present. As Shirley Giles presented the history before the church that morning, a slideshow of historical photos was

displayed on a screen behind her.

"We ... wanted to present something to the church. We just felt like that's what God wanted us to do."

**Barbara Giles
member, One Step
women's group**

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

For information about placing a classified ad, contact the advertising department of The Alabama Baptist at 205-870-4720, ext. 102, or ads@thealabamabaptist.org. Copy deadline is two weeks before publication.

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

Stave Creek Baptist Church in Jackson, Alabama (Clarke County), seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Stave Creek Baptist Church, ATTN: Rickey Manchester, P.O. Box 685, Jackson, AL 36545.

BIVOCATIONAL/FULL-TIME PASTOR

New Market Baptist Church, New Market, Alabama, is seeking God's will for a pastor. Please send resumé along with CD, DVD or website of recent sermon to: nmbcp15@gmail.com or mail to: New Market Baptist Church, P.O. Box 128, New Market, AL 35761.

MUSIC MINISTER

Carrollton Baptist Church, Carrollton, Alabama, is accepting resúmes for a part-time minister of music. Two different morning services and Wednesday night rehearsal. Please reply to: Carrollton Baptist Church, Box 457, Carrollton, AL 35447, or cbc01@centurytel.net.

MUSIC MINISTER

Northside Baptist Church in Calera, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational minister of music. Please send resumé to: nick@northsidecalera.org. For more in-

formation, call 205-410-6418.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC

Haven Baptist Church in Madison, Alabama, is currently seeking a bivocational minister of music. The music minister must be a Christ follower willing to be a member of the Haven family. He is to lead our choir and congregation in worship. In our music, we aim to be multi-generational and seek to glorify God by singing Christ-centered songs. Please send inquiries or resúmes to: Havenbap@knology.net.

BIVOCATIONAL SONG LEADER

East Huntsville Baptist Church is searching for a bivocational song leader. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, 808 Maysville Rd., Huntsville, AL 35801.

CHILDREN'S MINISTER

Centreville Baptist Church is accepting resúmes for a full-time children's minister. Please submit resúmes to: centrevillebc@bellsouth.net.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

Morgan Baptist Association is accepting resúmes through June 30 for director of missions. Send to: DOM Search Committee, 1410 State Street

North, Hartselle, AL 35640.

ORGANIST

Meadow Brook Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, is currently seeking an organist. Responsibilities include playing for Sunday morning worship, assisting with Wednesday evening rehearsals, occasional Sunday evening services as well as playing for weddings and funerals. Please contact worship pastor, David Vaughan at dvaughan@meadowbrookbaptist.org.

BUSINESS

TIME TO REPLACE THAT OLD CHURCH SIGN?

Reliable Sign Services, a Christian-operated, full-service sign company for two decades, is ready to assist you as you expand your church sign ministry. From electronic message boards to traditional signs, Reliable will fabricate and install statewide or ship anywhere. www.reliablesigns.com. 1-800-729-6844, 205-664-0955.

GREAT PRICES

Stair-lifts, walk-in tubs, lift-chairs and lightweight take-apart scooters. We service Alabama. 1-800-682-0658.

CHURCH CONSTRUCTION SERVICE

Lewis Webb Builders, Inc., active

in church construction service for over 30 years. Remodel, rehab, repair. Call 334-285-9302.

TRAVEL/VACATION

LOG CABIN

Lake Guntersville area, beautiful view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log on to www.paradisevista.net to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.

GULF SHORES

1/2/3 BR luxury beachfront condos and 4 BR beach resort house. Owner direct saves you \$\$\$\$. Call Chris at 1-800-713-6435, or cashley945@earthlink.net.

NORTH CAROLINA COTTAGE

Hayesville, Western North Carolina — lovely, like-new mountain cottage for rent, April–December. 2 BRs, 2 BAs. All conveniences. Weekly/monthly. On beautiful Hiwassee River. Low price \$550 weekly. Sleeps five. Children welcome. No pets. 828-389-3302.

AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE CONDOS

Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Alabama. Rent direct from Christian family owners. Lowest prices on the beach for over 25 years. Call 205-752-1231, 205-556-0368, 251-752-2366 or www.gulfshorescondos.com.

Want to know GOD?

By Jenni Ingram

Member, First Baptist Church, Gantt

I have heard it said, "Why do you believe in a God in a book that was written by humans? I personally believe in the big bang theory." This to me is so comical. Why do I believe in a God in a book? That is so funny. I don't believe in a God in a book. I believe in a God that is living, breathing, interacting with me every day. Do I need scientific proof that my God exists? Nope. I experience this "proof" every day. Every breath I take, every beat of my heart, every breeze through the trees, every baby's cry, every ripple of the water — that is my proof.

The big bang theory? Is that not truly in a book? Was that not discovered and written about by man? Yes, it was. I may actually believe the big bang theory. My adjustment to that theory is that I do not believe that it was a random act of science. I believe God made the big bang happen. I believe that when our infinite God reached His hands into the finite area of space to create the heavens and this earth, it disrupted the status quo in space and created a huge bang. I believe that God caused those molecules to join together and the land and seas to form. I believe that this very same Creator God hung every star in the sky, made the sun and moon to orbit and created every living thing.

I believe every syllable of the Bible. Yes, God used simple men like you and me to write it, but we are told in 2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." We were given a heart for God when He created us. I don't know about you, but especially as this world gets more disgusting and sinful, my soul longs for heaven. This longing is placed there by God. Wouldn't you like to be assured that this longing will be fulfilled? Know God, talk to Him, read His Word, surround yourself with other believers and be welcomed home to heaven where He has your place ready. †

A Certain Trumpet

Sermons by Alabama Baptists

Philippians 4:10-17

How Should a Pastor Think about His People's Giving?

I think this is a legitimate question to ask when approaching the subject of stewardship. I, perhaps like many other pastors, have tended to cringe when it is time for the sermon on stewardship. But I have learned in nearly 30 years of being a pastor that the dread is unfounded. I have discovered that our people expect it and they will even remind me when I haven't preached on the subject in quite a while. Needless to say, I have been pleasantly surprised.

Some may look at this title and want to manipulate it to say something like, "Should a pastor think about his people's giving?" Or "Dare a pastor think about his people's giving?" I would like to go ahead and state the obvious at the outset, pastors do think about their people's giving. You can usually tell what a pastor is thinking by the sermon he preaches when the time comes.

Reluctant to give

Some pastors try to guilt their members in to giving more which indicates he is thinking his people are reluctant to give.

Some will prominently publish giving numbers in church publications which indicates the pastor is thinking that if his people see how the giving is going they will be motivated to give more.

Others will use fundraising activities with the mindset being that people will only give if they have an opportunity to win even more in return.

Let me ask the question again, "How should a pastor think about his people's giving?"

I believe we can find the answers toward the end of Paul's letter to the Philippians.

1. A pastor should be glad for His people's giving.

Currently I am privileged to serve a most generous church. The Philippian church was that kind of church to Paul. The first time Paul visited Philippi, he brought the gospel to them. After Paul's time there was complete, the church continued to regularly support him with their offerings (2 Cor. 8).

For some reason the support subsided, "But I rejoiced greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before,

By Craig Carlisle

Craig Carlisle, pastor of Twelfth Street Baptist Church, Gadsden, earned degrees from Samford University in Birmingham; Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; and Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He and his wife, Tammy, have one daughter.



but you lacked opportunity" (Phil. 4:10). Perhaps it was Paul's changing venues, the distance or recent poverty in Philippi. Whatever the circumstances, Paul never doubted the Philippians really did care. I love the word Paul uses here: "revived." It's a rarely used word that means "blossom again." When the gift-bearing Epaphroditus appeared in Paul's cell, it was like spring flowers suddenly bursting into bloom for the apostle.

Every Tuesday, I receive a summary of our giving from the previous Sunday from our financial secretary. It includes budget gifts, capital gifts, designated gifts and any gift that has been given to our church.

Some weeks there is great rejoicing and other weeks not so much. But, as a pastor, what I have learned to do is to be truly grateful for every gift our folks give. I have learned not to look at whether the giving is up or down, but to look at it with the attitude of gratitude.

Obedient to the Lord

I have confidence that our people love the Lord, they are being obedient to the Lord, they appreciate what we are doing through our ministries and I am truly grateful for their financial support. Isn't that how a pastor should think about his people's giving?

2. A pastor should be glad for his people's giving because it tells him they view themselves as partners in the ministry.

Paul writes, "Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction" (Phil. 4:14). Paul is so encouraged by the fact that the Philippians participate with him. The Greek word used in this verse for "share" has a very deep meaning. It means

"a deep partnership of two going in the same direction."

The word "affliction" can mean "hardships of any kind," but here it seems to indicate the challenges Paul is facing in spreading the gospel. This verse contains a hint of the significance of Christian giving. It also seems to hint at Paul's hesitancy in telling them of his own needs.

The beauty of this passage is that we see the Philippians recognizing Paul's strategic role in the spread of the gospel. The gifts meant that the Church eagerly participated in the work of God and in a very real sense were gifts toward the spread of the gospel to other Gentiles.

Strategic to spread the gospel

Pastors, is that not what our churches say when they give toward the ministries of our churches? Are they not saying we want to further the gospel in our community and the world? Do our churches realize that they are strategic in the spread of the gospel? Are we not encouraged when we see this kind of testimony from our people? Should we not be grateful for the endorsement of our people when they demonstrate godly stewardship so that the gospel can spread? Isn't this how a pastor should think about his people's giving?

3. A pastor should be glad for his people's giving because it is evidence of spiritual growth in their lives.

When as a pastor I see my people giving, I know that it is evidence that they are growing spiritually. When I see our people giving my thought is, "How godly they are becoming." Paul says, "Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek the profit which increases to your account" (Phil. 4:17).

Paul commends the Philippians because their gifts were an investment. The gifts were an investment in the work of God and in their future.

Paul here was not thinking of the financial blessing. In this verse his servant attitude emerges as he thinks of their growth and blessings.

Pastors, let's show gratitude and have the proper attitude when it comes to the giving of our people. Isn't that how a pastor should think about his people's giving? ¶

Attorney General Strange files lawsuit 'on behalf' of state

(continued from page 1)

He noted the lawsuit was filed "on behalf of Alabama ... to prevent the Department of Justice and Department of Education from enforcing the guidance letter."

"The Obama administration has taken government overreach to an unprecedented level," Strange told *The Montgomery Advertiser*.

"Directly challenging the personal privacy of America's schoolchildren while threatening to withhold funds from schools which refuse to accept this form of coercion. President Obama does not have legal grounds to rewrite the law. ... This



STRANGE

disturbing attempt to transform America's classrooms into laboratories for the Obama administration's social experiments will not stand up to the test of law."

Whose authority?

In the press release, Strange noted, "This lawsuit will determine whether (the departments) have the authority to implement the policy announced in the letter. ... Until the lawsuit is resolved, I would encourage educators to simply ignore the guidance letter."

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said of the lawsuit, "By forcing through his policies by executive action, President Obama excluded the voice of the people. We stand today to ensure those voices are heard."

Although the letter does not explicitly mention any repercussions for failing to follow the guidelines, previous action by the Obama administration demonstrates that failure to comply comes with a price tag.

Earlier in 2016 a school district outside of Chicago created its own standards for balancing the needs of a transgender female student — a teenage boy presenting himself as a girl — with those of the student's female teammates. Demanding full inclusion and affirmation of his gender identity as a female, the transgender student balked at the school's offer of a private changing area and sued the school district demanding he be allowed to use the same locker room facilities as the girls. Citing Title IX, the Departments of Education and Justice threatened to withhold some of the school's \$6 million in federal funds if they did not submit to the student's demands.

Based on birth certificate

Harrold Independent School District in Texas issued new guidelines May 23 in defiance of the Obama administration's interpretation of Title IX, stating a student's birth certificate will determine a student's gender identity on campus and all multiple-occupancy bathrooms or changing facilities "shall be designated for and used only by individuals based on their biological sex." (BP, TAB)

"And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?" 1 Cor. 14:8

Preparing for missions

New missions education opportunities available through Beeson, Samford's Ministry Training Institute

By Neisha Roberts
The Alabama Baptist

Having a "solid theological education that grounds you in Scripture" is foundational to a life of missions, according to David Parks, director of Beeson Divinity School's Global Center at Samford University in Birmingham.

But now Beeson students pursuing a master of divinity degree also will be able to get "as much missiology and cross-cultural experience" as possible, where their options before were more limited. A new missions certificate to be offered for the first time in Fall 2016 will allow students to "maximize their training for missions," Parks said.

Cross-cultural work

The certificate will take advantage of the Supervised Ministry Practicum (SMP), a one-year internship required of all master of divinity students, by matching students with a local ministry that is doing cross-cultural evangelistic work. For example one missions certificate student who is a member of The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham, will join a team that is trying to reach an unreached people group in Birmingham. The student's involvement will include finding

Online 'continuing education' certificate available

Students pursuing a master of divinity degree at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University in Birmingham are gaining a new opportunity to enhance their missions education (see story, this page), but they are not the only ones.

Anyone, anywhere, with any level of prior education now has an online option for missions education taught through Samford's Ministry Training Institute (MTI).

Along with biblical studies classes taught at 26 MTI loca-

tions around the state, the program also offers areas of concentration online. The latest option is the Global Missions Certificate.

"This certificate has been created to offer basic training and an overview in missiology," said Kevin Blackwell, MTI executive director. "Whether serving in long-term or short-term missions, students will have access to seasoned missionaries who will share their own experiences as they offer a holistic academic experience."

Noting the courses would be an excellent choice for missions

orientation and education for anyone interested in, training for and/or going to the missions field, Blackwell pulled from the expertise of three veteran missionaries with a Ph.D. in missions to develop the courses.

The certificate consists of four courses — Introduction to Global Missions, Missions Strategy, Christian Anthropology and The Life of a Missionary.

For more information, visit samford.edu/go/mti or call 205-726-4055. (TAB)

people to learn more about what it means to be biblical (first priority), contextual and strategically effective."

Three courses will be part of the missions certificate: Introduction to Christian Missions; Contemporary Issues and Strategies in Missions; and Biblical and Historical Foundations in Missions.

Increased opportunities

Parks, who is a Samford and Beeson graduate, spent six years on the missions field in Southeast Asia with his wife, Jenn, and four children through the International Mission Board.

After praying about a way to better equip Beeson students for missions since 2012 when he came to lead the Global Center, Parks said he's excited to see how the new missions certificate will help "maximize the missions training opportunities" for students.

"I believe the overall experience we have provided for them now will make the (missions-oriented students) strongly consider what Beeson has to offer." ✠

the people group, building relationships, sharing the gospel and trying to start small groups or a house church.

"There's no guarantee where this will go but it's great preparation for missions to a place where the majority of people are unreached," Parks said, noting that this SMP will look drastically different than an average internship at an established church or ministry.

The missions certificate also requires a Cross-Cultural Ministry Practicum (CCMP), a six-week

minimum cross-cultural immersion experience overseen by the Global Center, according to Beeson's website. Some of the CCMP options are in the Czech Republic, Ecuador, India, Malaysia, the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey.

"The cross-cultural experience is incredibly important for (a

student's) training of course but we are careful not to simply send students for an 'experience,' as many people have had during this day of popularity in short-term missions," Parks said. "Students will go deep in their learning of cultures, as well as missions strategy.

"We have a great need for

LEEDS STAINED GLASS, INC.
SINCE 1995

Toll-free: 888.699.9679
AL local: 205.699.9679
Call for **FREE** on-site consultation
Ask for Terry Barnes, Owner

information@LeedsStainedGlass.com
Visit www.LeedsStainedGlass.com
for online gallery!



Download Our Free
Church-Bus Buyers Guide.



THEBUSCENTER.com
Endorsed by  LifeWay
CHRISTIAN STORES

All New CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM
splat.bogardpress.org

SHARE PRAY LEARN APPLY TELL

SPLAT Available Fall 2016

PRE-K/KINDERGARTEN
1ST & 2ND GRADE
3RD & 4TH GRADE
5TH & 6TH GRADE

Contact us for information about Preview Paks.

Bogard Press
4605 N. State Line Ave.
Texarkana, Texas 75503
800-264-2482 ext 5112





DIGITAL SIGNS



“The response to our digital sign has been amazing! We are able to get so much information to our community on a daily basis. The color and clarity of the digital sign make it an attraction for all those passing by. We could not be more pleased with the digital sign and our new ability to reach more people with our message. Thank you Reliable Signs!”



— Allen Drew, Crossroad Baptist Church

www.reliablesigns.com

1.800.729.6844 • 205.664.0955

Marion Association volunteers help build Boaz church, return for dedication

By Hannah Muñoz
Intern, The Alabama Baptist

Members from Marion Baptist Association churches, including Director of Missions Keith Box, and Carpenters for Christ were present for the building dedication service at Aurora Missionary Baptist Church, Boaz. The special service celebrated the new structure which was built during Marion Association’s annual five-day missions trip in 2015.

Brainstorming ideas

The idea for the missions trip began when Box prayed for a location for the annual trip.

“Asking God for help was the first step,” he said. “Prayer is always first and foremost.”

Carpenters for Christ, “a brotherhood of men who come together annually in the name of Christ to build churches,” according to the group’s website, helped connect the association to Aurora Missionary Church, whose building was old and in need of tearing down. The work began shortly after.

Associational volunteers were divided into three teams:



Photo courtesy of Marion Baptist Association

The new building of Aurora Missionary Baptist Church, Boaz, was recently dedicated during a special service. Volunteers from Marion Baptist Association and Carpenters for Christ participated.

kitchen, construction and youth and drama. The kitchen team cooked three meals a day for all of the volunteers. The construction team hung Sheetrock and the youth and drama team put on a youth revival for members of the church. Carpenters for Christ volunteers helped with the construction of the church itself, which took one year to complete.

A special moment of the

construction was the prayer surrounding the steeple. All of the volunteers laid hands on the steeple and each other and prayed for the church.

During the dedication service, Aurora Missionary Pastor Chad Robertson shared a special sermon and the choir sang special music.

Box said, “There was a pretty large crowd that was there and able to worship together.”

You already know us.



We were there when you woke up with a new lease on life. We know exactly what makes you tick. We’re your neighbors and your friends, and now we’re part of Alabama’s newest progressive healthcare network. With five hospitals, dozens of specialty centers, and the largest primary care network in Alabama, Brookwood Baptist Health is a new community of care, united in service and devotion to you, the people of central Alabama.

Call 877-346-0714 for an appointment
BROOKWOODBAPTISTHEALTH.COM

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 12

Explore the Bible By Miguel Echevarria, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

CALLED 1 Samuel 3:1-10, 17-21

A Voice and A Message (1-10, 17-18)

Before discussing 1 Samuel 3 it is important to note that in 1 Samuel 2:22-36, Eli's wicked house is decreasing in favor before the Lord — so much so that the Lord has promised to cut off Eli's family from serving as priests (v. 31). Samuel, on the other hand, is growing "both in stature and favor with the Lord and also with man" (v. 26) and continues on this trajectory of righteousness before the eyes of the Lord in Chapter 3.

In 1 Samuel 3:1-10, God speaks to Samuel several times while resting in the tabernacle. Samuel confirms that it is the Lord speaking to him and says, "Speak, for Your servant hears" (v. 10). The message was one of judgment for Eli's family. Rather than being resentful, Eli accepts God's judgment, saying: "It is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him" (v. 18).

While God may choose to speak audibly to His people, it is important that Christians not become fixated on waiting for "a word from the Lord." In some circles, this is called "waiting on a rhema," based on a misunderstanding of this Greek word. Simply put, this is a faulty teaching based on a word fallacy.

God has given humanity the Bible as the primary means of communicating with us. The Bible is God's sufficient revelation; it is all we need for life and godliness. As Paul says, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

This is what theologians call the

doctrine of "the sufficiency of Scripture."

Taking this teaching seriously, we should value knowing God's written Word above waiting for a supernatural revelation from the heavens.

A Prophet (19-21)

As Samuel continues to grow, the Lord remains with him and he is recognized as a prophet. A prophet in the Old Testament is one who speaks on behalf of God, proclaims truth unapologetically and calls people to repentance. Samuel's status as prophet is confirmed by God's people (v. 20).

Samuel stands in a long line of Old Testament prophets, such as Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The prophets' ministries pointed to the prophet that God's people had been anticipating for some time.

In Deuteronomy 18:18, God says to Moses: "I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I commanded them."

Centuries after Moses penned Deuteronomy, the expected prophet, Jesus Christ, arrived. He fulfills the role of one who speaks on God's behalf, telling His people: "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

This is the prophetic word that everyone must hear. This is the word that everyone must believe.

Are you looking for a prophet? Are you looking for a word from God? Look no further than Jesus, God's word made flesh (John 1), the prophet par excellence.

All other prophets and so-called prophetic words will disappoint you. Jesus will never disappoint and His words will never fail.

So place your trust in Him. ☩

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

TRANSFORMED IN MY PRAYER Matthew 6:9-15

In one of the most helpful books on prayer that I have ever read, titled simply "Prayer," author Ole Hallesby says the foundation of prayer is helplessness: "For it is only when we are helpless that we open our hearts to Jesus and let Him help us in our distress, according to His grace and mercy."

Prayer doesn't need to be a beautiful soliloquy in which we know exactly what to say and use all action verbs in our sentences.

Prayer focuses on God and His kingdom. (9-10)

Worship does not speculate on God's character. Worship is deeply moved by a sense of God's being and His ways. Claus Westermann says in "Praise and Lament in the Psalms" that worship is "speech directed toward God ... and speaks of God's majesty and grace." We come to God with absolute assurance of His love and so we pray to Him as a "Father" and use the child's name for God, "Abba."

Worship is expressing our love toward God and our reverence for God who is to be revered as holy. Worship arises out of our human experience of God and is the very heart of prayer. As the Westminster Shorter Catechism expresses it, "Our chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

Present all your needs to God. (11-13)

God accepts our prayers just the way we are. We pray to a God who loves variety. This means that ways of praying will be as varied and different as there are people. There is no "right" way to pray. God never comes to us with an "off-the-shelf" method of praying that we have to use regardless of our personality, gifts or needs.

We come humbly but we come honestly expressing our physical needs and spiritual desires. So we ask God to give us our daily bread and to forgive us our sins and enable us to face trials and temptations in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer is both simple and profound. The Lord's Prayer can be recited in a matter of minutes, but at the heart of the prayer is a lifelong search for God and an attitude which seeks to bring our whole lives in line with His will. So we pray, "Your will be done on earth (in my life) as it is in heaven."

Forgive others. (14-15)

Once again Jesus indicates that our relationship with others impacts the reality of our experiences of fellowship with God. If we refuse to love one another in the same way in which He has loved us then we miss out on what being a Christian is all about.

When Robert Louis Stevenson, the author of "Treasure Island," lived in the South Sea Islands he would always conduct family worship in the mornings for his household. It always concluded with the Lord's Prayer. One morning in the middle of the Lord's Prayer he rose from his knees and left the room. His health was always precarious and his wife followed him, thinking he was ill.

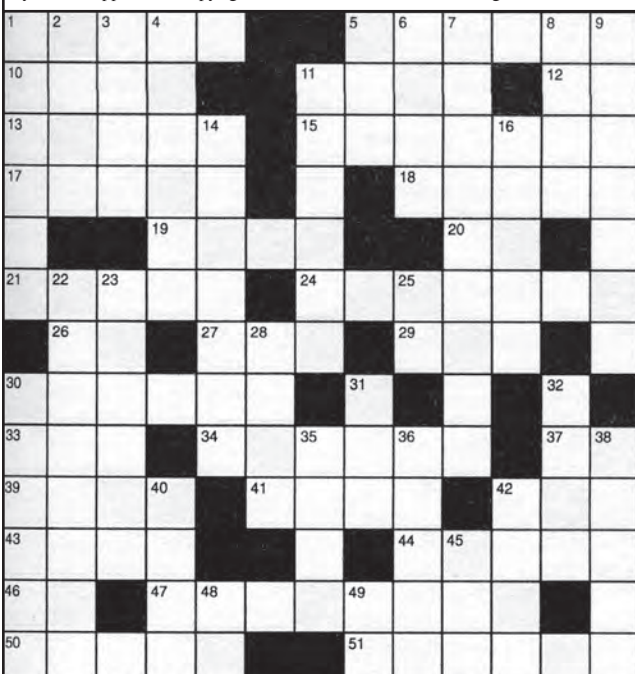
"Is there anything wrong?" she asked. "Only this," he said, "I am not fit to pray the Lord's Prayer today."

He sensed that a lack of forgiveness toward another person was hindering his prayer life. Go with the encouragement from Volume 67 of *The Chinese Recorder*, a missionary journal published in Shanghai:

"Love ever lives, forgives, outlives
And ever stands with open hands
For this is love's prerogative
To give and give and give." ☩

Christian Crossword

By Janet Hopper Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

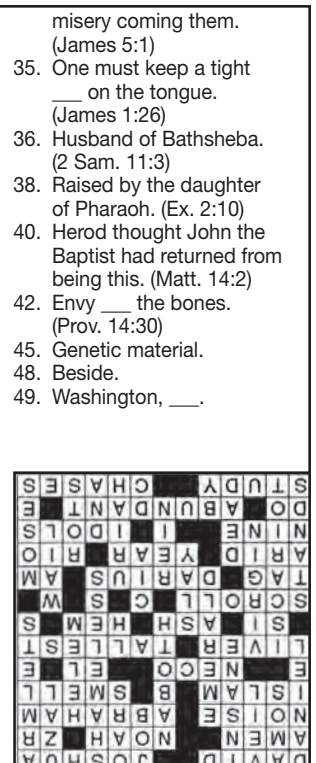


Across

- Slayer of Goliath. (1 Sam. 17:49)
- Moses' successor. (Deut. 34:9)
- Prayer ending.
- Ark builder. (Gen. 6)
- Zirconium. (abbr.)
- Joab heard this in the city. (1 Kings 1:41-45)
- Husband of Sarah. (Gen. 17:15)
- Muslim faith.
- Isaac caught the ___ of his clothes. (Gen. 27:27)
- Pharaoh of Egypt. (2 Kings 23:29)
- God.
- Organ mentioned in preparing offerings. (Lev. 3:4)
- Saul's height compared with others. (1 Sam. 9:2)
- Spanish affirmative.
- The Lord lifts the needy from the ___ heap. (1 Sam. 2:8)
- The priest's robe had bells and pomegranates around its ___. (Ex. 39:26)
- The ___ of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Jesus. (Luke 4:17)

Down

- Favorite children's game.
- King of Persia. (Ezra 4:5)
- God to Moses: I ___. (Ex. 3:14)
- The evil spirit goes through ___ places seeking rest. (Matt. 12:43)
- In the ___ that King Uzziah died. (Isa. 6:1)
- Spanish for "river."
- Number who did not give Jesus thanks. (Luke 17:17)
- Those who cling to worthless ___ forfeit ... grace. (Jon. 2:8)
- Whatever you ___, work at it with all your heart. (Col. 3:23)
- He who works his land will have ___ food. (Prov. 12:11)
- Ezra had devoted himself to the ___ of the Law. (Ezra 7:10)
- He who ___ fantasies lacks judgment. (Prov. 12:11)
- Moses put this over his face. (2 Cor. 3:13)
- David feigned to be this. (1 Sam. 21:13)
- Old Testament man known for his patience.
- The disciples were straining at these. (Mark 6:48)
- Israel had participated in ___ prostitution. (Jer. 13:27)
- Son of Joktan. (Gen. 10:27)
- Gold jewelry offered to the Lord. (Num. 31:50)
- Owned vineyard King Ahab coveted. (1 Kings 21:2)
- The fourth jewel decorating the foundation of heaven's wall. (Rev. 21:19)
- Brother of Shomer. (1 Chron. 7:35)
- Judas ___, betrayer of Jesus. (Matt. 26:14)
- The ___ will be with child. (Matt. 1:23)
- Left hand. (abbr.)
- Abraham took the knife to ___ his son. (Gen. 22:10)
- The house of the righteous ___ firm. (Prov. 12:7)
- Central Intelligence Agency. (abbr.)
- The rich will ___ at the



WHAT ARE YOU READING?



Alabama Baptists share about what they are currently reading

JENNIFER DAVIS RASH

The Alabama Baptist, *rashionalthoughts.com*
 “What Makes A Leader Great” by Russ Crosson

I love reading books on leadership, management and organizational skills. While I always learn at least a few tips from each book, some books are better than others. There are those that leave you longing for and imagining a world in which what was described in the book could be true, but we all know it is totally unrealistic. And then there are some that are realistic but too complicated and complex to embrace. When you find one that combines a realistic view with manageable concepts, then you know you have a winner.

“What Makes A Leader Great” is one of those winners. It not only is realistic about what is possible but also has the most clearly articulated concept of the importance of the “why” of leadership that I’ve read to this point.

Russ Crosson says, “We lead in order to replace ourselves.”

And he is speaking to all forms of leaders, not specifically to business leaders.

“At some point all of us will have opportunities to make decisions that can potentially change the course of a situation or the life of another person. Men and women from all walks of life are asked to lead but few have the tools or the motivation needed to teach others to do the same.

“Great leadership isn’t about the leader at all — it’s about the mission of the organization, church, business or even family where the leader serves. And it is about who will replace the leader when he or she is gone.”

With only 153 pages, the book is a relatively quick read and is packed with rich nuggets and challenging concepts I plan to implement.

CAROL BLAKELY SCOTT

Member of First Baptist Church, Gallant
 “The Insanity Of God” by Nik Ripken

Christians in other parts of the world who are being persecuted for their faith in Christ just view that as a necessary part of being a Christian, whereas we here in the United States fear persecution and even go so far at times as to avoid persecution.

This book is a gripping personal narrative of the author’s life in missions — the best one I’ve read in a long time. †

Tell us what you are reading, a quick summary of what it is about and your response to it so far. Email news@thealabamabaptist.org or send us a message on Facebook. You may also mail your information to 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209.

The Christian vocal group Voices of Mobile has begun a summer tour that takes the group all over the Southeast and the Caribbean.



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile

Worship on the road

Vocal ensemble Voices of Mobile begins summer tour

The Christian vocal group Voices of Mobile recently released a new album of worship music on iTunes and started a summer tour that takes the University of Mobile (UMobile) musicians to six southern states and the Caribbean.

“Here in this House” includes fresh, new arrangements of old hymns and popular Christian songs. Songs include the hymns “Come Thou Fount” and “I Surrender All” as well as popular tunes “Praise the Lord” and “It’s Still the Cross.”

Highlights include re-makes of hits by the contemporary Christian vocal group TRUTH founded by Gospel Music Hall of Fame member Roger Breland, who joined UMobile as executive director of the Center for Performing Arts and founded Voices of Mobile. Former TRUTH member Greg Wiggins, now an adjunct music instructor at UMobile, composed new arrangements of TRUTH favorites “He is Able” and “Potter’s House.”

Authentic arrangements

The title track, “Here in this House,” opens every Voices of Mobile concert. It features Rachel Smith, sophomore vocal performance and worship leadership major from Orlando, Florida, and David Robbins, senior worship leadership major from Eufala.

Breland said the album’s appeal is its authenticity. “These committed students are more than just a traveling band — they believe what they sing, and their goal is to live what they sing,” Breland said.

A five-star review on iTunes by Love 2 Worship said, “I absolutely love the emphasis on a large group vocal sound — an ensemble of great singers singing in perfect harmony. The detail in their sound is amazing. Cut-offs and dynamics compliment the lush harmonies. I’m a new fan.”



Voices of Mobile recorded the album on campus in the university’s professional Fisher-Brewer Recording Studio. “Here in this House” was engineered by Jeremy Harford, produced by Roger Breland and Andrew Goodwin and mastered and mixed by Chris Springer, with special arrangements by Greg Wiggins.

Voices of Mobile travels worldwide, performing concerts in Cuba, China and throughout the United States from Alaska to Hawaii.

The summer 2016 tour takes the 17-member ensemble to Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Texas, Tennessee and Mississippi, with a four-day stint in the Caribbean.

The group is blogging about its summer tour at voicesofmobile.wordpress.com. For a full list of tour dates, visit the group’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/VoicesOfMobile. (UMobile)

“These committed students ... believe what they sing and their goal is to live what they sing.”

Roger Breland
 founder, Voices of Mobile



Photo courtesy of WinShape Camps

A volunteer (left) hangs out with a camper at WinShape Camps 2015 during the summer. Katie DiQuollo, a volunteer on camp staff this summer, said serving on staff is 'the best' experience.

Summer volunteering

Why college students should work at summer camp

By Katie DiQuollo
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Junior human development and family science major Allie Gassner spends her summer on staff at WinShape Camps working as the performing arts and crafts assistant.

"My college experience has been molded by my experience with summer camp," she said. "And I absolutely agree that college students should spend at least one summer working at camp."

WinShape Camps was established in 1985 in Mount Berry, Georgia, to provide a camp experience that would enable campers to sharpen their character, deepen their Christian faith and grow in their relationships with others, according to its website. The camps are part of the WinShape Foundation, founded in 1982 by the late Chick-fil-A founder and chairman, Truett Cathy.

'Opens the gate'

Summer opens the gate for countless jobs and internships for college students, but serving on summer staff is by far the best for four reasons.

► Friendships with staff last a lifetime.

You arrive at staff training not knowing anyone, but end the summer with a second family. Camp becomes your home away from home.

"WinShape, for example, is the place where I have found my lifelong friends because I know they love me for who I am and they consistently encourage me to be the best version of myself," Gassner said.

► Being a leader and role model is rewarding.

Your campers look up to you. They see you engaging in camp activities and want to jump right in. Campers come to you with questions and it is rewarding as your job to be a mentor to them through their camp experience.

► You learn the gift of patience.

"Because of the way WinShape approaches developing leaders, I feel confident and extremely equipped to handle responsibilities and challenging situations," Gassner said.

► You make endless memories.

After a summer of laughs, adventures, staff bonding and unforgettable camper moments, you are bound to take away memories.



DIQUOLLO

EDITOR'S NOTE — Katie DiQuollo is a junior Samford University student studying journalism and mass communication with a minor in sports and recreation ministry. She is serving in the Chickasaw Tribe at Mount Berry's WinShape Camp this summer. ✦

Shocco Springs offers camp experiences in Alabama. For more information, visit shocco.org.

RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services

Connecticut high court reaffirms death penalty repeal

HARTFORD, Conn. — The Connecticut Supreme Court on May 26 upheld the abolishment of the death penalty for everyone in the state, which means 11 men on death row would be resented to life in prison without the possibility of release, according to the *Hartford Courant*.

The death penalty in Connecticut was repealed in 2012 with the caveat that those already sentenced to death could still face execution, according to the article. The Supreme Court upheld the 4-3 decision in August 2015 that the death penalty was unconstitutional for all following the 2012 repeal.

Connecticut's death row is housed at the Northern Correctional Institution in Somers. With the state Supreme Court's 5-2 ruling, those on death row could move to the general prison population instead, according to Michael Courtney, head of the state's capital defense unit of the office of the chief public defender.

While the men on death row were relieved, the news was not welcome for the victims' families, according to the article. William Petit's family was killed by Joshua Komisarjevsky and Steven Hayes, who were sentenced to death in Connecticut. According to the article it was their crimes that were the basis for the 2012 repeal not extending to those already on death row.

"Now people have decided to change the game," Petit said in the article. "You end up not having much faith in the criminal justice system because it's really not a justice system. It's a legal system moved by the winds of different opinions and who has been appointed. I think it's a sad day for jurisprudence in the state of Connecticut." (National Catholic Reporter, *TAB*)

United Methodist Church struggles with Scripture, sexuality

PORTLAND, Ore. — The United Methodist Church is struggling to maintain unity amid deep divisions over Scripture and sexuality, the presiding bishop of America's second-largest Protestant denomination acknowledged.

Responding to rumors of a potential breakup at the quadrennial United Methodist General Conference, Bishop Bruce Ough said May 17 that the leadership is "not advancing or advocating any plan of separation or reorganization of the denomination."

The Church faces increasing pressure in the United States to ordain LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) clergy and allow same-sex weddings, both strongly opposed by conservatives and among the growing congregations in Africa where homosexuality is banned in many countries. There are 12 million Methodists worldwide, including 7.2 million in the U.S.

Ough, who is president of the Methodist Council of Bishops, acknowledged that its 152 members are divided. He cited a "brokenness" that "surrounds or emanates from matters of human sexuality, interpretation of Scripture, how we include our LGBT brothers and sisters." (RNS)

Research shows women who attend church live longer

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — A correlation has been made between women who attend church and a longer lifespan, according to research by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The study, published in the *JAMA Internal Medicine* journal, found that women who attend services more than once a week live 33 percent longer than women who don't, *The Christian Post* reported.

"Our results suggest that there may be something important about religious service attendance beyond solitary spirituality," said Tyler VanderWeele, professor of epidemiology at Harvard's Chan School and senior author of the study. "Part of the benefit seems to be that attending religious services increases social support, discourages smoking, decreases depression and helps people develop a more optimistic or hopeful outlook on life."

The study concluded that "religion and spirituality may be an underappreciated resource that physicians could explore with their patients, as appropriate." (*TAB*)