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INSIDE



Historical Commission reminds churches to tell, preserve their story

◆ Page 5



Priority Talk Radio provides outlet to share Christian world-view

◆ Page 9



Longtime pastor Sammie Reid outlines sermons year in advance

◆ Page 13

Athens, Greece



Crisis or opportunity?

Photo courtesy of Desiring God

Muslim refugees in Athens give up all they know for Christ

By David Crabb
Mobilization and development director
Training Leaders International

The spirit of Athens, Greece, lies at the crossroads between old and new. Everywhere you look are reminders of the epic grandeur this city once enjoyed. Even if you were to overlook the many monuments and ruins scattered throughout the city, the Acropolis looms large on the horizon, serving as a constant reminder the world once revolved around this city.

The modern Athens, however, bears little resemblance to its ancient self. While teeming with life

and energy, it sags under the burden of economic stagnation and wrestles with its current and most pressing crisis: what to do with the massive influx of refugees from the Middle East that are daily streaming into the city.

Greece is unofficially a “Christian” country. Some estimate that nearly 97 percent of the population identifies with the Orthodox Church.

Cultural identification

And yet for most Greeks, this is merely a cultural identification, not a religious one. The Church is linked closely with the state, and most Greeks ignore the Church at best, or

(in a difficult economic time) resent it at worst. The tired cathedrals throughout the city serve as an appropriate metaphor for the “Christianity” of the city — ubiquitous, but lifeless.

And yet the kingdom of God is growing in Athens.

The Spirit of God is on the move and proving once again that He uses the foolishness of the world to confound the wise. God has used this city’s greatest burden — the refugee crisis — to display His glory in magnificent ways. Every day Muslim refugees in Athens are finding Jesus to be their true Treasure.

Javad is an Iranian believer with a Muslim background who is pastoring in Athens. He first heard the gospel via satellite radio while living in Iran.

Drawn by curiosity

Javad didn’t have a Bible, and he didn’t know any Christians. But when he came to Greece, a roommate asked him to come to an Iranian church with him. He didn’t even realize it was possible for “Iranian” and “church” to be put together. Because it was an entirely new concept, he accepted the invitation out of curiosity. There, in a small, non-descript room of a rented street

(See ‘Costly,’ page 11)

COMING NOV. 24

**Alabama Baptist
State Convention**
annual meeting coverage



COMMENT

It Costs to Disagree with Culture

Two very different organizations are currently caught in the troughs of disagreeing with culture. One is a popular conservative parachurch organization. The other is an elite academic and research facility. But both are being squeezed because of positions related to homosexual activities that don't fit the new American culture.

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA is a large organization which sprouted from conservative theological soil in the early 1940s, although its roots go back to the University of Cambridge in England in the 1870s. It is best known for its campus ministry program with more than 1,000 chapters on nearly 700 college campuses across the United States.

InterVarsity also has a publishing arm, InterVarsity Press, which is a popular nameplate among conservative lay readers and academics alike.

The parachurch group finds itself in trouble because of a recently adopted requirement that staff members "believe and behave" in a manner consistent with the statement, "Scripture is very clear that God's intention for sexual expression is to be between a husband and wife in marriage. Every other sexual practice is outside of God's plan and therefore is a distortion of God's loving design for humanity."

Traditional understanding

"Believing and behaving" is defined as agreeing with the substance of the statement, not engaging in sexual immorality and not promoting positions inconsistent with the statement.

To be clear, there are more issues discussed in InterVarsity's position paper "A Theological Summary of Human Sexuality," but the statement affirming the traditional definition of Christian marriage has sent those supporting gay "marriage" into orbit.

The traditional understanding of marriage is not new for InterVarsity, according to organizational spokespersons. The organization released the new official statement because of cultural changes around sexual activity. In other words, the organization was attempting to clearly communicate its



THOUGHTS
By Bob Terry

theological commitment to the traditional understanding of marriage because of cultural questions which have arisen about marriage in recent times.

Some staff members predict InterVarsity will be kicked off numerous college campuses because of its support for traditional marriage. InterVarsity counters that it hopes campuses will continue to welcome the group just as they welcome Catholic campus ministers whose church holds the same teaching.

But InterVarsity has already been banned from the 2017 meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. The society questions whether InterVarsity's actions are consistent with the society's values of diversity, inclusivity and tolerance.

So because InterVarsity acts to promote a traditional understanding of Christian marriage, it is banned from exhibiting at the nation's largest gathering of biblical scholars. One cannot help but ask which organization is violating the values of diversity, inclusivity and tolerance.

Are individuals or organizations that uphold traditional Christian values allowed to participate in this new American culture?

Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland is one of the elite schools of medicine in the nation. And even though "Johns Hopkins Medicine's commitment to the LGBT community is strong and unambiguous" (to quote school officials), Johns Hopkins is now under attack from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the nation's largest LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) civil rights organization.

The reason? A research project done by two Johns Hopkins professors.

Earlier this year Lawrence Mayer, a scholar-in-residence there, and Paul McHugh, professor of psychiatry and behavioral science, concluded there is little scientific evidence supporting the "born that way" and other theories on sexual orientation.

Their report, titled "Sexuality and Gender: Findings from the Biological, Psychological and

Social Sciences," said, "Some of the most widely held views about sexual orientation, such as the 'born that way' hypothesis, simply are not supported by science. The literature in this area does describe a small ensemble of biological differences between nonheterosexuals and heterosexuals, but those biological differences are not sufficient to predict sexual orientation, the ultimate test of any scientific finding.

"The strongest statement that science offers to explain sexual orientation is that some biological factors appear, to an unknown extent, to predispose some individuals to a nonheterosexual orientation," the report continued.

HRC called the study a "misguided, misinformed attack on the LGBT communities" and threatened to punish Johns Hopkins if it did not disavow the study by its two scholars.

HRC announced it is beginning to rate hospitals and will consider whether hospitals and health care systems practice what HRC called "responsible citizenship." In the case of Johns Hopkins

Medicine, HRC threatened its numerical score will be "reduced substantially" unless the institution distances itself from the Mayer-McHugh study.

HRC has offered no scientific study to challenge the "Sexuality and Gender" study. Instead it resorted to bullying as if they were the meanest kid on the playground. HRC evidences no concern for truth, academic inquiry or academic freedom. It seems only to stomp on anyone who dares disagree with them.

Culture in America is changing. There is no question about that. The nastiness of the recent presidential campaign is just one more example of that fact.

More and more culture resembles the hedonism of pagans. Less and less culture reflects the long recognized norms of the Judeo-Christian tradition. And those who embrace the new culture will not tolerate anyone who challenges nor questions their behavior.

'Stand firm'

It costs to disagree with culture and the cost will only go higher.

To the Christian, the Bible offers guidance and encouragement. The apostle Peter affirmed, "The Word of the Lord endures forever" (1 Pet. 1:25). The Bible, not cultural norms, must be the believer's guide. To that, the apostle Paul added, "Be alert. Stand firm in the faith. Be valiant and strong. Let all you do be done in love" (1 Cor. 16:13-14).

That is great advice for the individual Christian, for Christian organizations and for churches no matter the culture in which they live. ✠

***"Those who embrace
the new culture will
not tolerate anyone
who challenges nor
questions their
behavior."***

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TAB

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

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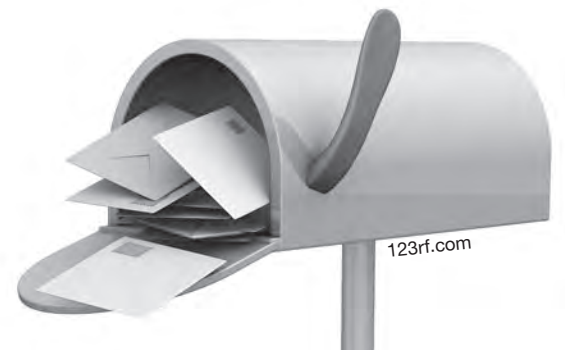
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'Not forgotten'



Card ministry to prisoners folds after 20 years of service

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Scarlett Dunnam's son, Mac, died of AIDS in 1994, and nothing has been the same since — not her heart, not her mailbox and not even Alabama's prisons.

"It was shortly after he died that I attended a meeting that was about AIDS and HIV in the prison system," said Dunnam, a member of Eastview Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa.

At that point in time inmates with AIDS were separated from the rest of the prison population, so they were stigmatized and alone, she said. "I couldn't really think of anything worse than having AIDS and being in jail too."

So Dunnam began to talk with people connected to the state's prison system and asked if there was anything she could do to reach out to them.

'Laid on my heart'

"I asked if maybe we could do cards at Christmas, and [a lady within the prison system] said she would be happy to do it," Dunnam said. "I really felt like it was a need, and I just felt like God had laid it on my heart to do that."

So Dunnam sent a letter to the editor of *The Alabama Baptist* asking for individuals and church groups to write Christmas cards for inmates and mail them to her house so she could bundle them up for transport to the prisons. She's done it every Christmas since then, and Easter too.

And in the past two decades she's received tens of thousands of cards from all across Alabama — 8,000–10,000 a year, if she had to guess.

"Some people sent two cards, some sent a

hundred," Dunnam said. "Every one of them was special. So many people wrote the nicest, most personal comments inside their cards."

The whole purpose behind the ministry was just to show the love of Christ to inmates with AIDS, she said. She gave it the name MAC D Ministries in honor of her son, Mac. The acronym stands for "Making Another's Christmas Delightful," and it included the card collections along with other ministry to AIDS and HIV patients in her local area.

Big response

She started the ministry with good intentions and high hopes, but she said she never dreamed that so many people would respond to the call for Christmas and Easter cards.

"It's been a very easy project for people to get involved in, especially people who are shut in," Dunnam said. "I feel like with HIV people and AIDS people and even with prisoners that sometimes not a lot of people seem to care, and this has been such a great way for a lot of people to show them that they are loved. And if that can help them understand God's love for them, then that's what it's all about."

Because prison officials requested that the cards not include a return address, Dunnam said she didn't hear many personal stories over the years of how the cards were received. But she does know that many recipients put the cards up on their walls and they "continued to bless them through the years" that way.

She said it breaks her heart to have to make the decision to stop gathering and shipping the cards, but because of some changes in her family's situation, continuing the ministry is no longer possible.

Dunnam encourages anyone interested in picking up where she is leaving off to select one correctional facility, contact the chaplain and

work out how cards can be gathered and distributed for that facility. The name and contact information of the chaplain can be found on the correctional facility's website, she said.

Brad Smith, Dunnam's pastor at Eastview Baptist, said he knows the investment she's made has made a difference in the lives of others for years.

"One of the things about Scarlett is that she just loves people," Smith said. "She knows that the prisoners

have made some mistakes and made some bad choices, but at the same time she wants to share with them Christ's love and let them know that they're not worthless and not forgotten."

'I will miss it'

And her commitment has been inspiring to many, he said.

Dunnam said it would be a definite change to not have so many cards ending up in her mailbox in Tuscaloosa.

"I know that I will miss it — and my mailman will miss it," Dunnam said with a smile. "But I hope that it's made a difference." ¶

**"If [a card] can help
[inmates] understand
God's love for them,
then that's what it's
all about."**

**Scarlett Dunnam
founder, MAC D Ministries**

Ministry Tips



ASSIMILATION

By Chip Warren
Minister of education, FBC Albertville

Has your church ever had a new member or newcomer who left because he or she was never assimilated? Here are a few tips on assimilation.

Tip #1: Avoid the attitude of "It's their responsibility to make friends and fit in." New people need to make some effort, but we must bear the primary responsibility.

Tip #2: Time is of the essence. Assimilation experts tell us we have about a six-week window before they are out the back door.

Tip #3: Be sure the new member/regular attender connects with a group in the church. For most it will be a Sunday School class or home Bible study group, but it could be the choir or any other group.

Tip #4: Get them plugged into some

kind of service or ministry. New people want to be asked and to get involved. It would need to be an entry level type of service — greeter, usher or food service. For obvious reasons, teaching the Bible or working with children comes later.

Tip #5: Create opportunities for new people to make friends. There is a huge difference in friendly churches and ones where it is easy to make friends. (chipwarren@bellsouth.net) ¶

‘Saving’ the Religious Right

Religion not same as political agenda, Moore says

If the Religious Right is to survive, it must embrace a “gospel-centered” evangelicalism that articulates why and how Christianity matters rather than using religion as a means toward a political end, the Southern Baptist Convention’s (SBC) top spokesman for public policy concerns said in a prestigious lecture Oct. 24.

“A Religious Right that is not able to tie public action and cultural concern to a theology of gospel and mission will die, and will deserve to die,” said Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), in the 29th Erasmus Lecture sponsored by *First Things* magazine.

“One of the wrong assumptions of some in the old Religious Right establishment is that the Church as formed theologically simply needs to be mobilized politically,” Moore said in an hour-long address titled “Can the Religious Right be Saved?”

“That assumption is wrong,” Moore said, evidenced by the slowness of evangelical Protestants to embrace the pro-life movement following the 1973 landmark Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*.

“Bill Clinton learned his view that personhood begins with breath, not with conception — used to justify his veto of legislation [banning] partial-birth abortion — he learned that not from Planned Parenthood but from a conservative Southern Baptist pastor’s teaching from Genesis,” Moore said.

“Even now, some abortion providers tell us that the majority of their clients are not pro-choice,” he continued. “They are instead Roman Catholics or evangelical Protestants who believe that they are committing a grave sin but committed to looking for mercy afterward. That’s not just a social problem. That is a theological problem.”

Working together despite differences

Moore said the various streams of the Religious Right could work together despite theological differences.

“I don’t accept the Christology or the doctrine of salvation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” he said. “They don’t believe that I am a member of an authentic church. But we can happily co-labor together, because there’s no confusion about our deepest convictions and where the point of connection is.

“But when, for instance, prosperity gospel hucksters are received as fellow Christian leaders by evangelical Protestants, we have declared war on the gospel itself,” Moore said. “Health and wealth pros-

perity theology, in its hard or soft forms, is not just another stream of historic Christianity. It is the old Canaanite fertility religion except worse, because it takes the name of our Lord in vain under the pretense of apostolic Christianity.”

Moore said one problem with the Religious Right establishment is it is too “liberal,” meaning that it seems willing to sacrifice theology to achieve earthly ends.

Nostalgia versus appeals

“When a religion is seen as a political agenda in search of a gospel useful enough to accommodate it, one will end up pleasing those who see the primacy of politics while losing those who believe the gospel,” he said.

Moore said nostalgia and appeals “that we are losing our country” only work if success is defined as a nominal cultural Christianity “that can be quite good for restraining some aspects of overt immorality, but is worse than paganism if there is in fact a hell.”

“Likewise, the sort of apocalyptic language that presents every presidential election as an Armageddon, from whence one cannot recover, is the sort of theological liberalism that makes no sense in a religion in which Augustine wrote ‘The City of God’ in the context of a collapsing Rome,” Moore said.

“Even at the level of pragmatic politics, such appeals leave a constituency cynical and burned over. The younger generation of evangelicals sadly, and to the Church’s detriment, hardly ever speaks much

about biblical prophecy,” Moore continued. “Why? Because they are exhausted by the hyperventilating of some evangelicals in the last generation over blood moons and red heifers.

“That is much more the case with endless appeals to act now or lose everything that prove not to be true in a world that is fallen and depraved but also made resilient by the sustaining power of common grace and the grain of theology of creation itself.”

Moore said the Religious Right could be saved, but “not with just tinkering around the edges.”

“Religious conservatives will need a robust religion and a sense of what is in fact to be conserved,” he said. “This will mean abandoning the idea of a moral majority or a silent majority within the nation and building instead collaborative majorities, often issue by issue. It will mean institutions which have the vision and the financial resources to play a long game of cultural renewal and persuasion, not driven merely by the populist passions of the moment.” (BNG)



MOORE

“Religious conservatives will need a robust religion and a sense of what is in fact to be conserved.”

Russell Moore
president, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission



Bremen BC celebrates history, 50th anniversary

When the men and women of Bremen Baptist Church gathered Oct. 2 to celebrate the church’s 50th anniversary, they did it with the kind of spirit that happens when a lot has been invested there.

God built their church, but the men of the church let their hands be the ones used to construct the building, working long nights together on the construction after finishing up work in the afternoon at their jobs. Their wives would bring meals while they worked.

So there was a lot of history to be celebrated when the West Cullman Baptist Association church gathered for a homecoming that Sunday. Pastor Terry Blankenship (see photo, right) brought the morning message, and Pat Musselwhite (see photo, left), a representative of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented the church with a plaque.



Photo courtesy of Pat Musselwhite

Hanceville’s Walter Baptist shares memories

It was a walk down memory lane for the congregation at Walter Baptist Church, Hanceville, on Oct. 2 when they gathered to celebrate the church’s 125th anniversary.

Former pastors Bruce Ellard and Randy Hicks brought the messages and former minister of music David Harbison led music.

Historical materials were on display in the sanctuary and fellowship hall. Former pastors and family members were recognized with boutonnieres or corsages. And members shared memories of how the church influenced their lives.

Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative Pat Musselwhite and Randy Makemson, director of missions for East Cullman Baptist Association, presented the church with plaques.

Tony Mitchell is pastor.

Carrollton’s Hebron celebrates 175 years

Members of Hebron Baptist Church, Carrollton, gathered in old-fashioned attire for a Saturday night service Sept. 24 to kick off their 175th anniversary celebration.

A large crowd gathered that night to hear the Pickens Singing Men and the following morning to hear a sermon from former pastor Ronnie Elmore.

During the Sunday service, Angie Cooper, a representative of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented the church with a framed certificate. Gary Farley, director of missions for Pickens Baptist Association, did a presentation on the church cemetery. Members gave testimonies at both services.

A covered dish lunch followed the Sunday service. Randy Gray is pastor.

FBC Hazel Green steps back to mark 50 years

Even the warm weather took members of First Baptist Church, Hazel Green, back in time at the church’s 50th anniversary Sept. 25 as they fanned themselves with the program printed on an old-fashioned fan.

Former pastor Bobby Eads was the guest speaker for the day at the Madison Baptist Association church, and a video featured charter members Louis and Violet Shockey and new members Samantha and Mike Magrone.

Jerry Armor, an Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative, presented the church with a certificate and the church choir provided special music.

Mike Patterson is pastor of First, Hazel Green.

Compiled by the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission and TAB



Photo courtesy of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission

Lonette Berg (right), executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, drives all over the state speaking to various groups about the importance of record keeping and history preservation. In the above photo, Berg shares helpful tips with librarians from north Alabama.

Preserving the stories

Historical Commission reminds churches about importance of their own story

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Lonette Berg has put more than 368,000 miles on her blue Honda CRV. She's burned up Alabama's highways and back roads carrying around three plastic boxes full of stuff to help state Baptist churches tell their story.

Just ask her — she'll bring them to your church. There's really no question.

"When I took this job, my goal was always to be able to say 'yes' in some way," said Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission (ABHC). "I don't think we've been asked to do a workshop or

presentation and not been able to help."

One thing Berg does on a fairly frequent basis is put on workshops to help churches plan their anniversary celebrations.

"I've been to hundreds of church anniversaries, and I have photographs of decorations and big boxes of stuff that I've collected up over the years to give people ideas on what they might like to do at their church," she said.

Celebrating faithfulness

She'll go to a church, spread those things out on the table and talk through different ways they can celebrate God's faithfulness in the church's history, she said.

"How are we going to involve

our children? How are we going to involve our young people? How are we going to build this event for everybody to participate in some way if they would like to? How are we going to use it to reach people through evangelism? There's a lot to consider," Berg said. "We try to help them accomplish the same goal with the resources we have."

And ABHC offers that service at no cost to the church, thanks to Cooperative Program funding.

Berg or other ABHC representatives also travel to every 25-year-milestone church anniversary celebration they are invited to attend.

"We can present a framed certificate at that event, if the church would like, and for other milestone anniversaries such as pastor anniversaries, etc., we can also provide letters of commendation," she said.

Another free service the commission offers is microfilming of church records in order to save those documents safely for future generations.

"We can always do another certificate, but once your church records are gone, they are gone forever," she said. "If the clerk has always kept the records and there's a fire and we haven't microfilmed them, all that written record of God's story is gone, and we can't get it back."

ABHC can take those records, sort and index them and save each page on microfilm, she said. "We handle them very carefully."

One copy is kept at the library of Samford University in Birmingham — where the commission has its office — and another is kept at a secure offsite location, Berg said.

"It's really important for churches to have their records microfilmed, because those records reflect the story of what God has done among us," she said. "They are stories of salvation, rededication, discipleship, weddings, fellowship — all the parts of church life are reflected in our church records, and so I think it's important for us to keep those stories for future generations."

It's because of those stories and their importance that ABHC also offers guided tours for church groups at Samford, where the Alabama Baptist historical collection is housed.

Display items

"We show them some treasures, we tell them some wonderful stories, we make them laugh and we have a good time," Berg said.

Items on display range from a foot-binding shoe brought back from China by an Alabama Baptist missionary in the early 1900s to Charles Spurgeon's original sermon notes.

"When you hold in your hand the same paper that Spurgeon did

when he preached, it's just a high moment," Berg said.

"I want people to know there's life in history, there's not just dusty books."

'Help them look back'

The tour also includes an all-you-can-eat buffet and an old-fashioned hymn sing led by a pianist on a concert Steinway piano.

"We try to help them look back

on where we've been and remind them how important their own story is, that it's important for them to keep

journals and record their own stories," Berg said. "So much of what we rely on now are journals and diaries kept by regular Alabama Baptists telling the stories of what was happening in their lives and churches."

These stories put flesh on the bones of church history and that's so important to pass down, she said.

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), said that without a memory of the past, a map for the future is difficult to foresee.

SBOM and ABHC "work as true partners in assisting our churches to celebrate their past and to anticipate their future as people of faith on mission with the Great Commission," he said. "The Alabama Baptist Historical Commission is vital to Alabama Baptists in numerous ways." 🌟

**For more information, call
205-726-2363 or visit
www.abhconline.com.**



Photo courtesy of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission

ABHC's Pat Musselwhite transports church records to Samford University in Birmingham to be microfilmed.

Alabama churches collaborate to create 'irresistible environments,' pastor says

By Neisha Roberts
The Alabama Baptist

By creating what Chad Boak calls "irresistible environments," leaders at Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery, hope to "utilize and leverage the culture so that someone who has no idea who Jesus is will feel comfy and excited and want to come back."

Boak, who serves as the creative pastor at the Montgomery Baptist Association church, said music, church facilities, volunteers and even stage design all play a part in these "irresistible environments."

"While we want to call folks to repentance and realize there's a sin issue ... folks may not start there. We want to make sure we are welcoming and bring them in. We don't want anything to be offensive to them, except for the gospel," Boak said.

That's why he and other church staff and members make the church's four yearly stage designs a priority.

Featured set up

It was the church's Easter 2016 set up that found itself featured on churchstagedesignideas.com.

"We'd repurposed our Christmas set and were taking some cues from that," Boak explained. "It was a team effort in designing it and

building it. The panels were built by a church member and then put together by a combo of staff and volunteers."

The design uses old metal roofing, recycled wood and painter's lights and was assembled in two days, Boak explained, noting that the cost to build the stage was less than \$300.

"We don't have a very big budget for this stuff. We constantly make magic happen and are blessed with capable volunteers."

Multiuse stage

But this stage design not only served Vaughn Forest Baptist for a season, it also caught the eye of Valleydale Church, Birmingham.

The creative team there was planning for a new stage design and saw Vaughn Forest's stage on the ministry design website.

Instead of venturing out to build a new stage, Cameron Cross, video director at Valleydale Church, and Kirkwood Bullis, worship pastor, reached out to Boak about borrowing the stage.

Cross said, "When I called [Chad] about the idea he was more than happy to help us out."

Valleydale Church took a team down to Montgomery and loaded up the stage pieces in a truck and then set it up in their own sanctuary in September, where it will

remain through March 2017.

"Honestly this interaction with Vaughn Forest has been wonderful," Cross said. "I think if the opportunity presented itself we would definitely hope to borrow again."

Borrowed items

That's the same experience leaders at Vaughn Forest have had, according to Boak.

The church borrowed ministry items from a Canadian church in Calgary, Alberta, and has lent other items to churches in North Carolina and Texas.

To build off of that type of global camaraderie, Boak and Brian Harris, head of communications for Vaughn Forest and web, social media and email marketing strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, started Montgomery Church Creatives, a monthly gathering for all church people to get together and talk about ministry.

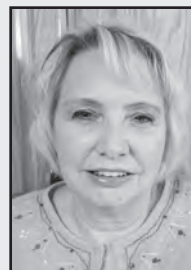
"It's kind of a therapy," Boak said, "because we all can relate to one another. But it's also like a 'Hey, I'm out of this and I need to borrow one.' It's a collaborative effort. Any way that we can help others, like they've helped us, is our goal."

For more information, visit Montgomery Church Creatives' Facebook page. ☞

Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Patricia Murdock



MURDOCK

*Ruhama Baptist Church, Fort Payne
DeKalb Baptist Association*

FAVORITE VERSE: 2 Timothy 1:7

FAVORITE HYMN: "Amazing Grace"

HOBBIES: Hiking, traveling, being with grandchildren, volunteering with Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

FAMILY STATUS: Married 44 years to husband, Chris; son, Chris Jr.; daughter, Jessica; two grandchildren

When Patricia Murdock's husband became a minister more than 40 years ago, she said she received a calling to serve alongside him. Murdock, 64, whose husband is pastor of Ruhama Baptist Church, Fort Payne, has served churches in different capacities, such as nursery worker, Sunday School teacher and WMU leader. Currently she helps with Vacation Bible School, AWANA, her church's bus ministry and Released Time, a Bible study for local students. In June 2016, she retired after 30 years with DeKalb County Board of Education.

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

A: I had a lot of people that taught me about the Lord. My mother and father (Willene and the late Leo Maxwell). My grandmother (the late Suda Jane Maxwell) that I stayed with during the summers was instrumental in teaching me about the Lord. Sunday School teachers. Brother Hunt would come to our school and tell Bible stories. He led a lot of people to the Lord. I was saved at the age of 10 during a revival at our church.

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

A: My ministry, I feel, is being the pastor's wife and serving the needs of our church. It sounds funny, but I married into the ministry. My husband-to-be was called to preach at age 17. That same year, 1972,

we were married. At age 20 he was called to preach at his first church. We began our ministry together and it is now 40-plus years.

Q: What does your ministry work demand?

A: I work in many capacities. I work alongside our church family. That's what I feel like I'm called to do. One of our main priorities is our AWANA program.

Q: What do you get from your ministry work?

A: I'm just blessed to be able to serve in this church and, over a span of time, five churches. I've been blessed to meet a lot of people and serve with them. I love my church family.

Q: How do family members support you?

A: We have a loving family. They continue to be a blessing to us. Very supportive.

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

A: I just want to continue to serve where the Lord leads me.

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

A: I just pray that we are able to reach more of our youth and reach more of the lost around us, have more of them come to know the Lord as their Savior.

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

A: Complete difference. Jesus is my Joy Unspeakable. He is the Rock of My Salvation. All the honor and praise I could give goes to Him. ☞



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.

BLOUNT

► **Pleasant View Missionary Church, Holly Pond**, will hold its regular third Sunday night singing Nov. 20, 6 p.m. Tim Frith and The Gospel Echoes will perform special music. For more information call 256-796-5986 or 256-590-4468. Randy Burtram is pastor.

CAHABA

► **Friendship Church, Lawley**, will hold a turnip green and music festival Nov. 19, 4 p.m. Greens must be cooked in iron pots. Other food will be available. Local musicians will perform special music. Donald Harris is pastor.

ELMORE

► **Betty Jackson** retired Oct. 31 from her role as ministry assistant, receptionist and accountant

for **Elmore Association**. She served the association for 20 years, alongside her husband, Jim Jackson, who serves as director of missions. Prior to her time at Elmore Association she worked as an elementary school teacher and as secretary for St. Clair Association. She and her husband have three children and seven grandchildren.

FAYETTE

► **Philadelphia Church, Bankston**, will hold a retirement reception for Pastor Jesse Boggan on Nov. 20, 2-4 p.m. Boggan began serving as interim pastor in 1999 and has served the church since then. His last day as pastor will be Nov. 27.

MONTGOMERY

► **Hayneville Church** was

named Volunteer of the Year by the Family Guidance Center of Alabama. Pastor Andy Hepburn accepted a plaque on behalf of the church. ► **Grady Smith** is the new pastor of **Gateway Church, Montgomery**.

He will begin Nov. 14. He previously served as associate pastor and minister to internationals at Lakeview Church, Auburn. He holds a bachelor's degree from Auburn University and a master's degree and doctorate from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He and his wife, Julia, have three children. ☞



SMITH

The Across Alabama's Associations column will not run in the Nov. 24 issue.

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



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

The Person of Christ

Purposeful

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

The purpose for Christ's coming into the world was set before the creation of the world. Revelation 13:8 refers to Him as "the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world." We might say that Christ was born to die. Or, to use the title of a book by L.E. Maxwell, we could say that Christ was "Born Crucified." When Christ rode into Jerusalem at the beginning of the week that would see Him crucified, He referred to that event, saying, "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour?' But for this purpose I came to this hour" (John 12:27). Throughout His days on earth Christ never lost sight of the purpose for which He came. He lived a focused and purposeful life that pointed always toward the cross.

As early as the age of 12, Christ replied to Mary when she found Him in the temple, "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Whether or not He had any inkling as a pre-teen that His destiny was to be the sin-bearing Lamb, He was aware that the Father's business was His business.

Different kind of Messiah

After appointing the 12 disciples, Christ began teaching them about His purpose in the world as the promised Messiah. Along the way they got the message that He was indeed "the Christ" or promised Messiah, as attested in their response to His question, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter voiced their answer, "You are the Christ" (Mark 8:29). From that point, Christ began to teach them the kind of Messiah He had come to be.

Like most others in their day, they envisioned a Messiah who would be a political or military leader who would establish Israel as an earthly kingdom. However, Christ began to speak of Himself as a suffering, dying and redeeming Messiah (Mark 8:31). He did this through what is commonly termed His Passion Announcements, the first one being that just cited in Chapter 8.

Then in Mark 9:31, Christ gave the disciples a second announcement that added the fact that a betrayal would set in motion His suffering and death.

A third announcement is in Mark 10:33-34. It added that all this would take place in Jerusalem and would involve mockery and scourging. Knowing that His purpose was to die for the sins of humankind, Christ held fast to His purpose, as described in Luke 9:51, "Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem."

Final meal

We recall that on the night before His crucifixion, Christ purposed to eat a final Passover meal with the disciples. In doing so, He established for them and for us a memorial supper, which at its heart would be a reminder of His purpose to offer His body and shed His blood for our redemption.

We are Christlike when we live purposeful lives, provided our purpose is to honor God and fulfill His purposes. Speaking of God's purpose for all believers, Ephesians 2:10 puts it like this, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

In a way similar to the Father's purpose for His Son being determined before the creation of the world, we might think of ourselves as God's children for whom He purposed before our Christian conversion. And that we should live purposefully. God describes it as walking in good works. ¶

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.



Washington Assoc. food bags meet physical, spiritual needs

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

She was someone who'd been walking through the doors of Washington Baptist Association for quite a while, Mildred Butler said — the kind of person you read stories about in the newspaper.

"You could tell she'd lived a rough life," Butler said of the local woman who came to pick up a bag of food provided monthly by the association.

But one day she pushed open the door and Butler didn't recognize her.

"She told me who she was and I couldn't believe it was her," she said. "She said she'd gotten saved. I'd never seen anyone with that much change in appearance before — it was night to day. And it just amazed me."

It "lifts you up" when that happens, said Butler, who serves on staff at Washington Association and acts as point person for the distribution ministry.

As people have come in for bags of food over the years, she has had several let her know as they've found Christ or gotten back in church, she said.

It's amazing the difference a food ministry can make in meeting the community's physical and spiritual needs, said Larry Thompson, director of missions for Washington Association.

"We started maybe eight years ago and at that point somewhere between 15 and 20 individuals were coming in to get food," he

said. "Now we're over 350 bags a month."

For those who qualify, food bags are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to noon, except for the second Tuesday of the month — that's when the truck from the Food Bank in Mobile delivers the next month's worth of food.

The money to purchase the food comes from churches and individuals in the county, he said, as well as assistance from the Ala-

bama Hunger Offering for Global Hunger Relief provided through the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

And Butler said a lot of people will collect food and bring it in during world hunger emphases or around the holidays. "It really helps," she said.

In the past year, the association gave out more than 3,700 bags of groceries, Butler said.

"We've got a lot of volunteers who help us give the food out," said Butler, noting that it would be

nearly impossible to keep up with the volume of work with only her and Thompson as the paid staff of the associational office.

The need for food assistance in the area is deep — deeper than Butler originally thought they would be able to handle.

But God has always brought exactly what they needed, she said.

"Since the beginning, I thought, 'I don't know how we're going to do this financially,'" she said. "But God supplies. He has always supplied." ¶



Photo courtesy of Mildred Butler

In the past year, Washington Baptist Association has given out more than 3,700 bags of groceries to those in need.

Alabama Campers on Mission member honored



Achievement award

Photo courtesy of Terry Baughmann

Jake Carrol (center in plaid) was recently presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award by Alabama Campers on Mission (COM) during the organization's fall rally in September. Carrol, along with his wife, Velma (second from right), have been active in COM for 25 years. Jake Carrol has served as project leader more than 30 times, worked on projects in 19 states and has led Oneida Baptist Institute for 14 years. Randy Clements (right), another COM member, presented Jake Carrol with the award.

Supernatural healing

Most Americans believe God can heal sick, survey finds

Most Americans believe God can bring about supernatural physical healing, according to a new study released by Barna, with evangelicals leading the way in that belief.

However, where Baptists stand in those attitudes depends on whether they have adopted the high-profile healing practices of other Christian groups, according to Art Allen, who recently retired from Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas.

"In recent years, Baptists have come to be connected with Pentecostal and charismatic and evangelical" movements, especially around beliefs on spirituality and physical health, Allen said.

Those who consider their Baptist faith to be an expression of evangelicalism likely would fit into the trends uncovered in the Barna report, he said.

According to Doug Wilson, dean of the school of Christian Studies at the University of Mobile, Baptists have common distinctives — such as believer's baptism, baptism by immersion and the priesthood of all believers. But Baptists also have "historically approached practical and theological aspects of our faith from a variety of perspectives."

'Variety of perspectives'

Wilson explained to *The Alabama Baptist* that some "Baptists identify as Cessationists, believing that manifestation gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7-11) ceased at the close of the Apostolic Age. Others identify with the Third Wave of believers — the first wave being Pentecostalism and the second being the charismatic movement — who believe that manifestation gifts, including supernatural healing, are normative for the Church. Still other Baptists are cautious about affirming every spiritual healing as a work of God, believing that the enemy can counterfeit the works of God."

Barna found that 66 percent of American adults "believe people can be physically healed supernaturally by God," as reported in the study titled "Most Americans Believe in Supernatural Healing."

Researchers found strong consensus across generations among those who believe in supernatural healing. However, it also learned that 25 percent of millennials

strongly disagree with the concept. That compares to 21 percent of Generation Xers, 14 percent of boomers and 13 percent of elders.

Wilson said he has not seen this trend to be true of young believers, noting that many of the students he interacts with are "absolutely convinced that God is able to heal without the intervention of doctors and medication if He chooses."

Evangelical support

The strongest support by far comes from evangelicals, with 87 percent strongly agreeing in supernatural healing. Protestants as a whole were at 55 percent and Catholics at 19 percent, according to the study.

Practice matches belief, Barna added. It found that 68 percent of Americans say they have prayed for someone else's supernatural healing — compared to a third who have never done so.

However, the survey found relatively few who report being healed supernaturally. Only 27 percent of Americans said they have had such an experience, compared to 73 percent who said they have not.

Roxanne Stone, Barna editor in chief, said, "The experience of actual physical healing is, of course, less frequent. Evangelicals in particular are more likely to pray for and believe in miraculous healing than they are to experience it, though this does not appear to affect their belief in its possibility."

Stone added that most Christians have heard pastors pray for the health of others during worship services.

And that would be the extent of many Baptists' experience with faith-based healing practices — at

least historically, Allen said.

Wilson did note, however, that throughout Baptist history "we have recorded anecdotal evidence of supernatural healing," referencing the Shantung Revival of the 1930s. During the revival several Southern Baptist missionaries in China chronicled a great move of God through revival in the Shantung Province churches, "which was accompanied by several instances of physical healing by supernatural means."

Traditionally, however, Baptists have placed more importance on seeking spiritual health, Allen said.

"That's what we Baptists have been doing: focusing not so much on the physical aspect of life but on our relationship with God and with other believers," Allen said.

Healthy results

Those traditional practices during the past 400 years have produced healthy results — whether or not illness is reversed, Allen said.

Wilson agreed.

"Historically Baptists have met physical needs with physical responses," he said. "Medical missionaries have been sent, Baptist hospitals and clinics built and disaster relief volunteers deployed to respond."

"At the same time, we recognize that the physical body is a shell we inhabit for a glimmer of history. By contrast, our souls are eternal, which is why such great emphasis is placed on evangelism and discipleship."

Allen said, "The real miracle is not physical healing, but spiritual healing and spiritual growth and maturity." (BNG, TAB)

RELIGION

in

America

Compiled from Wire Services

Baptist denominations reach across racial lines

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) announced a new partnership Oct. 5 with the National Baptist Convention of America International, Inc., (NCBA) seeking to build new bridges between predominantly black and white Baptist churches in the United States.

CBF Executive Coordinator Suzii Paynter and NBCA President Samuel C. Tolbert Jr. signed a memorandum of understanding at Simmons College in Louisville, Kentucky, "to begin a conversation that will foster deeper relationships," according to a press release.

Potential areas of cooperation include social justice and advocacy awareness, the dismantling of racism in the U.S., disaster response and long-term recovery, alleviating poverty and supporting and equipping healthy churches. (BNG)

College head football coach gives players Bibles

MIAMI — The University of Miami head football coach Mark Richt gave more than just coaching advice to his players recently — he gave each of them a Bible.

"I just heard enough guys say they didn't have one and some guys said they had older versions that were harder to understand," Richt told local news outlets. Each Bible had a player's name embroidered on the cover.

Richt said, "I told the guys, 'It's a choice. If you want to just leave it at the chair, you can. If you want to take it with you, you can. If you want to give it to somebody, you can.'"

Richt said he doesn't try to make any of his players share his Christian beliefs, according to *The Christian Post*. (TAB)

Americans unconcerned about politicians' morals

WASHINGTON — More than 70 percent of white evangelicals think that when politicians commit immoral acts in their private lives it doesn't have much effect on their ethics in government affairs, according to new research.

The Public Religion Research Institute and the Brookings Institution released the results of a recent survey that showed an increase in the number of U.S. citizens who believe that immoral acts done in private have no correlation to unethical acts he or she might commit once in office, according to *The Christian Post*.

Research shows that white evangelical protestants are much more likely to lean this way than they were five years ago. (TAB)



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Photo by Neisha Roberts

Greg Davis, host of Priority Talk Radio, said he 'could've never fathomed' that the idea he had for a talk radio show about ministry would become an almost daily experience he's had for the past five years.

Encouragement on the airwaves

Priority Talk Radio provides outlet for pastors, authors to share Christian worldview

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Just a few days after getting out of an airplane seat on a long-haul flight back from Egypt, Paul Brasher found himself sitting in a different cozy seat across the table from Greg Davis.

Some might call it the hot seat, that little leather chair in the radio studio of WXJC.

But the way Davis sees it, it's just a good place for a friendly chat.

For instance on Oct. 21, the day he talked with Brasher, the two talked about the persecuted church in Egypt and how Brasher had gotten to visit with a growing church meeting in a garbage dump.

"The Church over there, it's vibrant, it's growing," said Brasher, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, Pell City.

That's encouraging, Davis said. And that's exactly the kind of

thing he wants listeners of his talk show, Priority Talk Radio, to get to hear about.

Davis, executive director of First Priority of Alabama, sits at that table five days a week and talks with pastors, authors, actors, musicians and a whole bunch of other people. And he invites anyone who is interested to listen in.

Desirable landing spot

"We try to bring the biblical or Christian worldview to whatever we talk about, no matter what kind of issue or topic it is," he said.

That plus the fact that it's a strong, 50,000-watt signal on FM radio makes his talk show, Priority Talk Radio, a desirable landing spot for people who are household names to be on the air, Davis said.

From Kirk Cameron to Squire Parsons, Mac Powell to James Dobson and pretty much every Southern Baptist Convention president from the past several years,

Davis said he enjoys the variety of people he gets to talk to.

He also loves to feature Alabama pastors like Brasher.

"We've got a national reach and nationally known names in here pretty often, but we are also definitely local. That sets us apart," Davis said. "If you're looking to hear about what's going on in the world from a different perspective than anywhere else, you'd enjoy listening to our program."

Davis, a member of Beechwood Baptist Church, Mount Olive, first had the idea for the program more than five years ago when he was a regular guest on several of Crawford Broadcasting's stations.

"I went on there a lot at the time to promote First Priority, and I got to thinking that I was sad that there wasn't a place for authors, pastors and others to talk

about ministry," Davis said.

He mentioned that to them a few times.

Then one day, they decided he had a good point.

"The general manager was in town and they set me up to meet with her," he said. "She said, 'Hey, we're going to do that show, and we want you to host it.'"

Davis wasn't too sure about that, but he agreed to get together with some of his buddies and do it for a little while and see how it went.

"I thought it would be fun to do for a few months," he said. "I could've never fathomed that more than five years later, we'd still be doing it."

It's been an amazing experience, he said.

"I get to sit down and have conversations with people and ask any question I want to ask," he

said. "It's been really valuable for me personally, not just a fun job. We don't think there's any reason to waste our time talking about it unless it's got something to help with building the Kingdom."

And Priority Talk Radio is a live show that takes phone calls, so Davis never knows exactly where a conversation will go, he said.

"But where most talk radio is driven by controversy, ours isn't that way," Davis said.

"We talk about hard issues, but we also have fun while we do it."

Daily shows

Priority Talk airs weekdays from 2 to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 5 to 7 p.m. on 92.5 FM or 850 AM in the Birmingham area (or you can listen live online from anywhere) and Sundays from 9 to 11 a.m. on WYDE (101.1 FM).

It also is available in podcast form on iTunes or on the show's website. 

**For more information or
to listen live online, visit
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Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile

UM celebrates homecoming

On Oct. 29 more than 750 students, faculty, staff and alumni attended the University of Mobile's (UM) Homecoming: Family Day. Carnival games, inflatables, dinner, live music and a car bash were some of the events that took place throughout the day. Along with an alumni baseball game, the Rams women's and men's soccer teams both had victories over Mississippi's William Carey University. The Lady Rams also clinched the SSAC championship.

Members of UM's women's basketball team (pictured left) cheered on the soccer teams during UM's Homecoming: Family Day. (UM, TAB)

'Burial bed' uncovered in Jerusalem where Jesus was laid; restoration to be completed in 2017

Onlookers — consisting of tourists, Greek Orthodox priests, conservators in hard hats and others — stood in anticipation as the elaborately carved layer of marble was removed for the first time from what is considered to be the tomb of Jesus Christ.

Located at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the shelf or "burial bed" where Jesus' body was laid in the tomb had been covered by the marble slab for centuries, since at least 1555 A.D., according to news.nationalgeographic.com.

'Long analysis'

When the slab was removed, researchers found a grey-beige surface and a surprising "amount of fill material beneath it," according to Fredrik Hiebert, archaeologist-in-residence at the National Geographic Society. The National Geographic Society, headquartered in Washington D.C., is one of the largest nonprofit scientific institutions in the world.

"It will be a long scientific analysis, but we will finally be able to see the original rock surface on

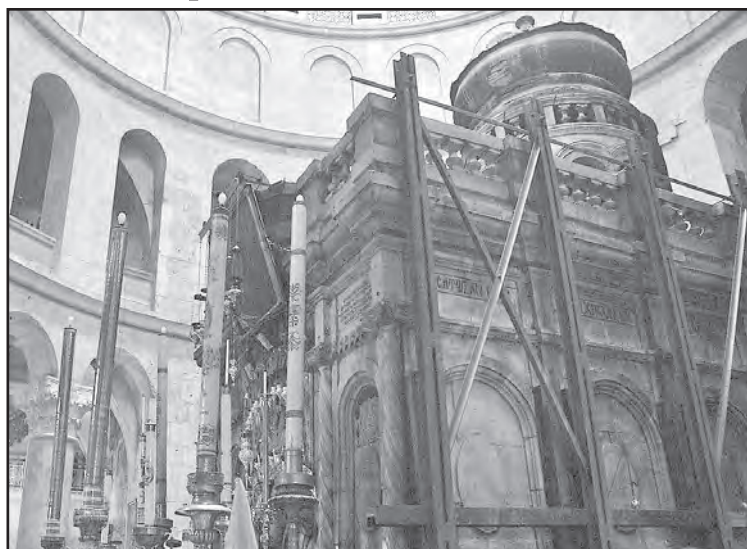
which, according to tradition, the body of Christ was laid," Hiebert said.

The shelf, roughly 3 foot by 5 foot, was enclosed in a chapel-sized structure called the Aedicule, which also is undergoing restoration. The structure of the Aedicule suffered damage from an earthquake in the 1920s and from being boarded up in the 1940s.

Shared custody

The new historical find will give researchers a glimpse of what is considered to be the most sacred site in Christianity and analysis of the original rock may enable them to better understand not only the original form of the tomb chamber, but also how it evolved as the focal point of veneration since it was first identified by Helena in 326 A.D., the *National Geographic* reported.

Six Christian sects — Greek Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Church, Armenian Orthodox Church, Coptic Orthodox Church, Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Syriac Orthodox Church — maintain custody over the Church of the



Wikimedia commons photo

Aedicule

Holy Sepulchre and its contents.

The restoration of the tomb has an expected completion date of 2017 and the total cost is estimated at more than \$4 million.

Exclusive look

An exclusive look at the restoration project will be shown in the month of November in "Explorer" on the National Geographic Channel. (TAB)

— Correction —

In the Nov. 3 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*, in Across Alabama's Associations, Gene Dobbs was incorrectly listed as previously serving as pastor of New Hope Church, Pell City. He previously served as pastor of New Hope Church, Argo.

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

WORSHIP PASTOR

The First Baptist Church of Alexander City, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a full-time worship pastor working directly under the senior pastor. Desire a dedicated minister to provide leadership for all music programs for both sanctuary and contemporary style services. Resumes accepted to musicservicescommittee@fbc-ac.org.

BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER

Silver Run Baptist Church, Seale, Alabama. Submit resumes to Cheryl Boutwell at justshert@gmail.com.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC OR INTERIM

Wayside Baptist Church in Ashford, Alabama, is looking for a part-time minister of music or interim. Resumes can be sent to P.O. Box 468, Ashford, AL, or emailed to waysidebaptist@grace-ba.net. For more information call Joe @ 334-796-8136.

TWO POSITIONS

Calvary Heights Baptist Church, Alexander City, AL, is receiving

applicants for a part-time, bivocational minister of youth and bivocational music director. Resumes and inquiries may be sent to: CalvaryHeightsBaptist@gmail.com.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR

Oak Bowery Baptist Church in Calhoun County, AL, is seeking a children's ministry director. Resumes may be mailed to: Oak Bowery Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, 3300 AL Highway 144, Ohatchee, AL 36271 or oakbowerybaptist@att.net.

OTHER

COORDINATOR

Randolph Baptist Association is seeking a Christian person for our Wedowee Christian Service Center. Must be able to coordinate activities, train and supervise volunteers. This is a part-time position M-W-F. Send to RBA, P.O. Box 287, Wedowee, AL 35278.

SECRETARY POSITION

Randolph Baptist Association is seeking a Christian lady for the secretary position. Must be

proficient in computer, copier and other office equipment. Part-time, M-F, 9-3. Send resume to RBA, P.O. Box 287, Wedowee, AL 35278.

SECRETARY POSITION

Seventh St. Baptist (Cullman) is hiring to fill a part-time custodian/maintenance position. \$12/hr. Expectations are all janitorial duties along with basic maintenance skills. Please send resumes to 708 7th St. SW, Cullman, AL 35055.

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- 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.

ALABAMA UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

Deceased member inspires missions giving

Elza Josephine “Jodi” Hamlin was always thinking of others. The longtime organist at Bethany Baptist Church, Reece City, Hamlin was known for sending cards to church members, bringing them food and, as the church’s missions director, inspiring them to think of the work being done for the Lord around the world.

Hamlin especially encouraged members to give to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering. And when she died Aug. 27, her fellow church members recalled her excitement about the new offering, giving \$1,200 in honor of Hamlin and the Christ she served.

“Jodi did not live until Sept. 18 for the Myers-Mallory celebration, so our church decided to fulfill her last request and put a special emphasis on the offering,” church member Linda Ables said, noting there were only about nine members at the small church to give to the offering that Sunday. (TAB)

Costly decision

God is worth loss of family, homeland, refugee says

(continued from page 1)

corner, he heard the message of life and surrendered to Christ.

Javad is a remarkable evangelist. Every day he goes to the park, refugee camps or coffee shops to share the gospel with Iranian and Afghan refugees. He told me he knows of at least two to three Muslims who have trusted Christ nearly every day since he arrived in 2008. He works in a refugee center that provides food, clothing and practical help to newly arrived refugees.

Informal network

Through the ministry of this center alone, more than 2,000 Muslims (overwhelmingly Iranian and Afghan) have trusted Christ in the past eight years. In Javad’s church, approximately 400 people have trusted Christ in the past few years, and nearly 2,000 Farsi Bibles have been distributed to Iranian seekers.

Many of these new converts are only passing through the city of Athens on the way to other European cities, so an informal network of church plants has grown up. Former-Muslim converts have planted Farsi- and Urdu-speaking churches in Germany, France, the U.K., Sweden, the Netherlands and more. A new wind from the Global South is changing the face

of gospel-preaching Christianity in Europe.

And yet following Jesus is a costly decision for Muslims.

‘Give up everything’

Javad told me, “When I came to faith, I knew I could never go back to my family or to Iran, but it’s worth it because I have Jesus.” This is a great problem for many Muslims. To come to Christ means to give up everything they know — their country, their family, their friends and their way of life. And yet, as one former Muslim here in Athens told me, “When you have the Treasure, you will gladly leave family, friends and country.”

These brothers and sisters know the truth of Jesus’ words: “Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me” (Matt. 10:37).

After conversion to Christianity, many former Muslims experience persecution from their family and friends. They are ostracized, harassed, sometimes even attacked. These brothers and sisters understand firsthand Jesus’ words: “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice

and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matt. 5:11–12).

Like the apostle Paul, many of these converts once persecuted Christians themselves. Javad was preaching in a park one afternoon and proclaimed, “Jesus is the Son of God.” A Muslim woman who was entirely veiled except for her eyes, cursed him loudly and intensely. A few weeks later, he was preaching again at church, and after the service a woman — with no veil — came up to him and said, “I heard you preach in the park a few weeks ago and cursed you, but now I have eyes to see that Jesus is the Son of God.” This woman is now part of a church plant in Germany and regularly shares her faith with Muslim refugees.

‘Power of God’

As I heard story after story of Muslim refugees coming to Christ, I couldn’t help but think of the many Muslim refugees who live in my city back in the United States. The story there is flipped — hardly any Muslims are converting to Christianity and the seed that Christians are sowing seems to fall only on hard ground.

One evening I asked Javad, “Why do you think so many Muslims are coming to Christ here in Athens? Is it that they feel more social freedom now that they’ve left their countries?” His answer rebuked me. “Perhaps they feel more freedom, but they are coming to faith because of the power of God to break their hearts,” Javad said.

Here in Athens, a new glory is on display that exceeds even the grandeur of the ancient city. “The gospel ... is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16) because “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The name of Jesus is spreading through Athens, and thousands of Muslims are finding Him to be their greatest Treasure.

EDITOR’S NOTE — David Crabb is the mobilization and development director for Training Leaders International, a mentoring ministry that provides theological training around the world, and co-founder of The Gospel Fund, a fundraising platform for global missions ventures. This article first appeared on desiringgod.org.



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Gov. Bentley's gambling advisory group evaluating current laws, potential revenue

Gov. Robert Bentley announced the appointments for his Alabama Advisory Council on Gaming, which has until Jan. 1, 2017, to present its findings and recommendations to law-makers for consideration. The council will focus on evaluating state and local gambling laws, tax revenues from existing illegal gambling operations in the state and tax revenue structures from gambling in other states.

Although studies have concluded that gambling enterprises such as casinos and lotteries do not provide a long-term boost to state economies, Bentley said he hopes the council will end the long-debated issue by figuring out "a way for the people to have a say in its resolution."

The council had its first meeting Nov. 3, with the next scheduled for Nov. 17. At its first meeting, the council voted to make all its meetings open to the public.

Bentley also said it was "safe to say" there will be no raids on VictoryLand in Macon County or GreeneTrack in Greene County in the meantime, where illegal bingo gambling is going on currently, the *Montgomery Advertiser* reported. For more information, visit www.thealabamabaptist.org and search "gambling." (TAB)



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Director of Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs



CLINTON CARTER
Director of Alabama Department of Finance



CURTIS STEWART
Deputy Commissioner of Alabama Department of Revenue



CARRIE MCCOLLUM
General Counsel for Alabama Credit Union Administration



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CONNIE ROWE
State Representative R-Jasper



GREG ALBRITTON
State Senator R-Range



Russian missionary fights for religious freedom

ORYOL, Russia — A Baptist missionary convicted under Russia's new anti-evangelism law and compelled to end his ministry there has lost his first court appeal in Oryol, Russia, but has vowed to continue legally fighting for the cause of religious freedom.

An appeals court judge Sept. 30 upheld the conviction of Donald Ossewaarde on charges of conducting missionary activities in violation of the new law that prohibits evangelizing outside church walls and without a government permit.

"[My attorneys] assured me that this case will play an important role in determining the future of religious freedom in Russia, not just for foreign missionaries, but also for ordinary Russian believers," Ossewaarde wrote on his webpage.

The Independent Baptist missionary had been charged Aug. 14 for holding religious services in his home, advertising services on bulletin boards in nearby neighborhoods and failing to give authorities written notification when he began his religious activities. He was fined about \$600 and was advised by a court appointed attorney that anything might happen to his family while in Russia.

The new law, which went into effect in July, defines illegal evangelism as activity by an authorized representative of an officially registered religious organization who uses media to publicly spread the organization's doctrine to nonmembers to convince them to join the group, Ossewaarde contends. He and his wife, Ruth, had been sent on the missions field by Faith (Independent) Baptist Church, Bourbonnais, Illinois, and had raised financial support from churches across the United States, but they do not represent an official religious organization. (BP)

Russell Association churches honored for anniversaries



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Crawford Baptist Church (Pastor Steve Williamson, left, and church member Marcia Johnson, second from left) and Concord Baptist Church (Pastor Bud Passmore, right) were 2 of 5 churches in Russell Baptist Association honored for marking special anniversaries in 2016. Lonette Berg (second from right) of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented the certificates during the Russell Association annual meeting Oct. 18. Also honored were Mount Lebanon, Philadelphia and Shiloh Baptist churches.



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Prayerfully planned

Longtime pastor outlines sermons year in advance

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Sammie Reid, pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Warrior, has all his sermons outlined a year — maybe more — in advance.

He said it may not be the kind of plan that works for everyone, but for him, it helps him be more thoughtful, prepared and able to give God's Word the time and attention it deserves, no matter how busy any given week is.

"I set aside time to sit down and make a calendar of all the Sunday mornings, Sunday nights and Wednesdays for at least a year out," he said.

He outlines each sermon a year in advance, then prepares detailed, typed-out messages for each one several months before he preaches it.

"I give priority to preaching because I believe that is the most important task of the pastor. Everybody has to find their niche and this works best for me," Reid said. "I have plenty of time to gather materials to go with each one and am able to think about the messages over the months leading up to them."

And it frees him up to do other

ministry as everyday life happens.

"This way, if on any given week I have a funeral or a crisis in the church, as every pastor has, it doesn't affect my preaching negatively because I'm not under pressure for next Sunday. I've got that ready; I don't have to worry about that," he said.

He's been doing it that way for 30 years now.

'All these years'

"In my doctoral program I had to make a sermon calendar for a year as one of my projects," Reid said. "I saw how helpful it was and I decided I could do that on a regular basis. I've been doing it that way all these years."

In an article for LifeWay Christian Resources, Rob Hurtgen, pastor of First Baptist Church, Chillicothe, Missouri, wrote that a good annual preaching calendar is developed "through prayer, thought and discipline" and "provides a clear destination with the flexibility to take necessary detours."

He listed four benefits of an annual preaching calendar:

1. Leadership

Having clear direction for a sermon spills over into other areas of leadership — building trust in

handling God's Word well helps the congregation trust their pastor in other areas, Hurtgen wrote.

2. Confidence

A well-planned calendar can allow a church's leadership team to work together confidently in planning songs and other parts of the worship service, he wrote.

3. Increased creativity

The best creativity flows not out of deadline pressure but out of the discipline of consistent work.

4. Reduced anxiety

"There are always two Sundays in a pastor's week: the one you are getting over and the one you are getting ready for," he wrote. "By planning ahead you will really be planning for both."

The greatest resistance to the annual preaching calendar, Hurtgen wrote, is the question of the Holy Spirit — "How can the Holy Spirit lead if you plan everything ahead of time?"

This, he said, is answered by how you view the work of the Holy Spirit.

"If your theological conclusion is that the Holy Spirit only sees the future as you do — clouded, speculative and uncertain — [what you rely on] will be your



Photo courtesy of Sammie Reid

Sammie Reid, pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Warrior, outlines his sermons a year in advance in order to 'give priority to preaching,' he says, which allows time to handle life as it comes.

work and your effort," Hurtgen wrote. "But if you believe the Spirit leads, teaches and presses you into the future, you will see His leadership as assembling your entire preaching process. Countless times a sermon scheduled months in advance has spoken precisely to the issues men and women in the church were facing the day it was preached — even regarding newly emerging issues."

Holiday planning

Reid said this is the perspective he takes as he prayerfully lays out his year.

He looks at special occasions first — days like Easter, Palm Sunday, Father's Day, Mother's Day and Christmas Day — and builds around those days before

planning the rest of the year.

"For many years I have preached a series leading up to Christmas," he said. "I already have the series for Christmas 2017 ready. I'm working now on what I would preach in 2018."

He also will preach a series leading up to Easter 2017 on the "Week that Changed the World," taking a sermon to cover each day of Passion Week.

"I have a folder that I keep ideas in, if I see something that triggers something in my mind," he said. "It may be a year later that I go back and start working on it."

For more information or to download a sample preaching calendar, visit www.lifeway.com/Article/pastors-preaching-benefits-annual-calendar-planning.

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Copyright laws

How to avoid violating copyright law

Avoid using materials (photo, artwork, copy, videos, etc.) that weren't created by your church for use in promotional materials (whether it's online, in a newsletter, in a bulletin, etc.).

"In my experience, churches often have a helpful presumption when it comes to infringement actions," said Will Hill Tankersley, partner at Balch & Bingham LLP in Birmingham. "There's an assumption churches have a charitable and noble purpose. But that won't save you if you are a genuine infringer, no matter how noble your cause."

Register to be a part of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA).

It's free to register, and being a part of DMCA allows churches to get safe harbor protection for some copyright violations by giving them notice and allowing them to remove the offending asset before official legal action is taken.

"You do have to take down any asset you're notified about though. Just being on the registry isn't enough," Tankersley said. "That's why it's important to have a reliable point of contact for the registry who can be on top of removing the photo."

Use disclaimers liberally.

Consider placing a disclaimer on your website, print and social media properties, letting readers/viewers know that, "We disclaim any sponsorship with outside organizations that might be represented here."

Reach out to organizations in advance if you want to use their material.

Often the answer will be yes, and churches will be given consent to use the material in a completely legal and approved fashion.

Michael Taunton, litigation, appellate and IP/trademark attorney at Balch & Bingham LLP, said, "The worst infringers are the ones who feel entitled to [use outside content] because of their mission. A simple phone call could do a lot to smooth things over in advance."

Talk to your church's insurance agent.

Make sure you have copyright coverage that makes sense for the church. Many churches just have personal injury

coverage and wouldn't have the same insurance backing as West End Baptist Church, Clanton, happened to have (see story, this page).

"There is a presumption that exists that churches are charitable and so they're going to be given some leeway," Taunton said. "I would say though churches need to be increasingly careful when it comes to copyright and IP issues. Some of that presumption is fading."

Limit access to church channels.

Churches have more channels than ever: website, social media, YouTube and more. To protect themselves from copyright issues, it's very helpful for churches to limit the number of people who have access to posting information to these channels, and to ensure that the people who do have access have been properly trained to avoid infringement.

Chris Friedman, litigation attorney at Balch & Bingham LLP, said, "Churches are identity builders, and you have lots of people who want to express themselves and be part of that mission. If too many people can utilize those platforms though someone else who might not understand the dangers might post. If the person at the top can be familiar with some of the broad IP laws, that person can be the failsafe."

Use consent signage at larger events.

Putting up a sign that lets event attendees know that photographs and video will be captured and potentially used to promote the church can help protect the church legally, and allow them to gather relevant, owned assets to use in the future.

Be sure you're copyrighting your own material.

It's also important that churches be looking out for their own assets, so when producing unique content such as music written by a church's worship team or putting a sermon series on YouTube, be sure to go through the steps to copyright those assets.

Taunton said, "Churches want to be sure they're controlling how that material is presented. Let's say you're producing a DVD of a sermon series. The church is going to want to make sure someone can't chop it up and edit it to make it look like the pastor is saying something else. Even if you have no intent to monetize your materials, you need to take those steps to be sure the church isn't made to look like it's endorsing something it doesn't want to endorse." ¶

Compiled by Anna Keller

"[Churches] need to assume that something that's a creative work belongs to someone else."

Will Hill Tankersley
partner, Balch & Bingham LLP



123rf.com

Accidental INFRINGEMENT

Clanton church learns about laws firsthand

By Anna Keller
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

West End Baptist Church, Clanton, wasn't trying to break copyright laws. A staff member had posted a promotional piece on the church website about a swimming party for their children's summer program. After doing a Google image search, a photo was selected and used on the website for a few weeks, along with the corresponding promotional text. After the event, the promotion was taken down.

It's a familiar story, one that's similar to what many other churches do when promoting something.

But despite innocent motives, West End Baptist bore the brunt of copyright laws.

A few months after the swimming party, the Chilton Baptist Association church was blindsided by a letter from a law firm seeking damages on behalf of the photographer and owner of the copyright for the image the church used without authorization.

West End Baptist had never had a copyright issue before. It also thought it was covered by its long-time membership with Christian Copyright Licensing International, but it turns out, that membership extends only to a church's music usage and worship ministry.

Taking necessary steps

Recognizing the copyright mistake, Eddie Lightsey, assistant pastor at West End Baptist, said the church took all the necessary steps to "repay the owner for our unauthorized use of the copyrighted photo and protect our interests as well."

Thankfully, "after meeting with our insurance provider we found out that we were covered for liability in this case and they took over the process of negotiating a settlement," Lightsey said.

He said it was "truly a blessing" to discover that the church's insurance policy covered this type of issue.

Unfortunately, however, issues like this are not isolated ones, and it's important for churches to brush up on how to protect the church and its staff/members from copyright infringement — especially when multiple staff members and church members have access to a church's website, social media accounts, etc.

Critical understanding

According to Will Hill Tankersley, partner at Balch & Bingham LLP in Birmingham, it's critical for churches to understand that pulling images from an Internet search, however harmless its intent, and then using them in promotional pieces is risky from a copyright standpoint.

"The rights are there once the work is created," Tankersley said. "What that means for churches is you need to assume that something that's a creative work belongs to someone else. Unless you're getting assets from a place that offers up art as public domain, you should never assume you have the right to use it."

He likened using an asset without consent to finding a car by the side of the road with keys in it and using it to take someone who's injured to the hospital.

"You don't have the right to use it just because it's easily available to you, even if it's for a good cause," he said.

Since this incident at West End Baptist, Lightsey said he and fellow church staff have educated themselves to better understand what is within and without their rights from a usage standpoint. They've also found ways to access noncopyrighted photos and media, which are fine to use within church promotional materials.

"There is a wealth of very good options if you are careful and know where to look." ¶

"You don't have the right to use it just because it's easily available to you, even if it's for a good cause."

Will Hill Tankersley
partner, Balch & Bingham LLP



Photos courtesy of Samford University/Caroline Summers

Kaitlyn Orman (right), a sophomore on Samford University's women's soccer team (above) who has torn her ACL twice, finds peace in knowing the Lord is stronger than any injury.

'Exhilarating' joy

Samford soccer player finds peace despite injuries

By Katie DiQuollo
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Kaitlyn Orman, a sophomore midfielder on Samford University's women's soccer team, started this fall season with joy. And that was despite injury.

Orman tore her ACL for the second time in the 2016 spring season, putting a setback on her college career.

"I was able to physically push myself harder but more importantly I had a sense of peace from the Lord that it would be okay, that there would be hope and a purpose for this happening," Orman said.

Circle of support

Her first torn ACL kept her on the bench freshman year, and the second kept her from playing spring season. Orman's family and friends circled around for support as she recovered from both injuries.

"I have had numerous people encourage me daily and help me when I just couldn't seem to see the light at the end of the tunnel, but the one person who has been my biggest supporter is my mom."

Orman's teammate and friend, Virginia McNeill, described her recovery as admirable.

"I think her love of the game and passion for this team helped her battle through the recovery so quickly, and I know we all look up to her for that," McNeill said.

Orman's setback of injury and recovery illustrates a deeper meaning than she ever would have thought. Because of her two injuries, her story has molded into her testimony.

"He has given me peace and hope in the future that in no way could have been done on my own. Through His good grace, God has pursued and recovered my life when I was filled with brokenness," Orman said. "After my first surgery, I was self-reliant, determined to recover on my own strength. But God remained faithful and persistent making Himself known to me."

Orman experienced the lows of what an injury brings to a person, but she also experienced the greatest high — peace in knowing the Lord is stronger than any injury.

'Light for the Lord'

"Stepping back onto the field for the first time was exhilarating. Really the only word I can think to explain the feeling is joy, joy to be back playing that game I love and joy to be able to be a light for the Lord on the field."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Katie DiQuollo is a junior Samford University student studying journalism and mass communication with a minor in sports and recreation ministry.

"[God] has given me peace and hope in the future that in no way could have been done on my own."

Kaitlyn Orman
sophomore midfielder
Samford University women's soccer team

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Pakistani pastor, family evicted from home

FAROOQABAD, Pakistan — Defying a court order, police in Pakistan's Punjab Province forcibly evicted a pastor and his family from their home mid-October after Muslims attacked in a bid to seize the property, sources said.

Pastor Michael Robert of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Farooqabad, was at home with his family in the Mohalla Sadiqabad area Oct. 19 when more than 50 armed men, led by Hameed Gaadi, stormed their house and beat them, an attorney for advocacy group The Voice Society said.

The attack left Robert, his wife and father seriously injured.

One witness said the assailants sought to seize the property, which is already the subject of a legal dispute. Christians in 96-percent Muslim Pakistan are commonly deprived of rights by Muslims who believe they can act against the minority community with impunity. When Gaadi and his men arrived that night, police were soon informed but took enough time reaching the scene that the assailants were able to damage and remove the family belongings, Maria said.

"Rather than making efforts to arrest the accused persons, the police put a lock on the gate and announced that it was seizing the property because it was disputed," she said. "This is a clear violation of the court's restraining order and a grave injustice for the pastor and his family, who have been forced out of their own home by the police at the behest of gangsters." (MS)

'No let up' of persecution in North Korea

PYONGYANG, North Korea — The persecution of Christians in North Korea continues at horrifying levels, according to Open Doors, an organization focused on helping the global persecuted Church.

Open Doors CEO David Curry told The Christian Post that precise statistics on the number of Christian prisoners and number of people executed for their faith is hard to get out of North Korea, but estimates that more than 70,000 Christians were imprisoned in 2015 alone.

"You have executions — we don't know how many, but we know of enough. There has been no let up in persecution in North Korea," Curry said.

Another human rights advocacy organization, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, noted that "documented incidents against Christians include being hung on a cross over a fire, crushed under a steamroller, herded off bridges and trampled underfoot."

Hae Woo, a North Korean woman who started a secret church in a prison camp, said that in North Korea people are taught that Christians kill people and drink their blood, according to the Post.

"Every form of religion, and especially Christianity, was like opium: addictive and destructive," Hae Woo said, noting that it was God who helped her make it out of the prison camp alive. She eventually escaped to South Korea, but thousands of her North Korean Christian brothers and sisters still face intense persecution in their country. (TAB)

Kenyan Christians targeted by extremists

MANDERA, Kenya — Islamic extremists targeted Christians in the shooting deaths of 12 Kenyans at a guesthouse in Kenya's northeastern town of Mandera on Oct. 25.

Somali Al Shabaab rebels took responsibility for the pre-dawn attack on the guesthouse, where a Kenyan theatre troupe from outside the area was staying, according to the militants' radio affiliate. An area pastor said Christians were targeted.

"Some of the students who died had visited my church for Sunday worship and had requested prayers," he said. "The attackers knew exactly whom they were attacking, that is, the Christians."

The theatre troupe was made up of university students who reportedly travelled to the mainly Muslim area of Mandera to perform plays in local schools. (MS)