

INSIDE



Blessings from adoption far outweigh challenges, Alabama mother says

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Chrismon Tree: TAB features monogram ornaments as symbols of Bible, early Christian signs

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Baby boomers, those between 52 and 70 years old, are busier than the senior adults of previous generations — they're often caring for aging parents and involved in the lives of their grandchildren.

Ministering effectively to this group is going to require pastors to tailor events to fit boomers' unique schedules and needs, says Ronnie McCarson of Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile.

Seismic shift



123rf.com photo

Evolving approach needed to minister to today's baby boomers

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Ronnie McCarson has been ministering to adults age 55 and up full time since 1993, and at least in some capacity since 1977.

But he said that, much like everybody else, he's still working to figure out the best way to minister to the aging baby boomer population.

"It's not going to be the same," said McCarson, pastor to adults 55+ at Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile. "As they age, they're going to be different than their moms and dads were."

Eileen Mitchell, a state missionary specializing in senior adult ministry with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said as she's traveled the state meeting with senior adults and senior adult ministers, she's thought the same thing.

"This age group is not going to do things like their parents," she said. "They work longer age-wise, and many use their vacation time to see grandchildren's events, programs, etc."

May not be good fit

What that means is that the week-day morning meetings and week-long trips of the generation preceded-

ing them might not be a good fit for the baby boomers, the generation born between the years of 1946 and 1964. They're between 52 and 70 years old, sitting squarely on the demographic McCarson is aiming to reach.

And he can already see them bringing a seismic shift to how he's done ministry in the past.

"What we're experiencing here is that if they want to take trips, most of them are more interested in a Friday to Saturday trip because they're still working," he said. "And they're looking for it to be a weekend getaway or restful retreat, because their lives are really busy."

Many of them are caring for aging parents and at the same time are very involved in the lives of their grandchildren, McCarson said.

Less free time

"I'd say 75 percent of the adults who pick up children from our school here at Cottage Hill in the afternoons are grandparents because the mothers are working," he said.

"We even see situations where some of their children are getting divorced and moving back into the house with the kids."

The free time they thought they (See 'Finding,' page 17)

COMING NEXT WEEK

**Alabama Baptist
State Convention**
annual meeting coverage



'Powerful DIVIDES'



Christians urged to show grace postelection

By Maggie Walsh
The Alabama Baptist

This presidential election has been perhaps the most inflammatory in history. In the days, hours and minutes leading up to the announcement of reality TV star turned politician Donald Trump as this nation's president-elect, Facebook and Twitter feeds were filled with stinging commentary flying both ways.

And now, in the hours, days and weeks following the announcement, many evangelical leaders are urging Christians to pray for their next president while showing grace to their fellow voter, which may require some to step away from the keyboard.

Much of the dissension comes from Christians asking one another, "How could you vote for Trump?" or "How could you vote for Hillary Clinton?"

Demographically, Pew Research Center found that most weekly churchgoers voted for Trump over Clinton, 56 percent to 40 percent. And 8 in 10 self-identified white, born-again/evangelical Christians — Protestants, Mormons, Catholics and others — say they voted for Trump.

Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research, summarized the exit polling down to this: "White Americans with evangelical beliefs favored Trump, as did Republicans with evangelical beliefs. African-Americans, Asian-Americans and Latino Americans with evangelical beliefs favored Clinton, as did Democrats with evangelical beliefs."

'Deeply entrenched'

The extreme divide and passionate opposition on both sides prompted anti-Trump riots in major cities after the election results were announced. The protests took place despite pleas by Clinton and President Barack Obama for good sportsmanlike behavior.

"These divides are powerful in America today and they are deeply entrenched in the Church," McConnell said.

And these divides are what evangelical leaders are speaking into.

President of the Southern Baptist Con-

vention and former Alabama Baptist pastor Steve Gaines said there is a right way and a wrong way to disagree with someone.

"If we disagree with someone's opinions, we must do so without attacking the person. There has been far too much inflammatory rhetoric coming from Christian leaders throughout this election. That kind of speech is divisive, ungodly, uncalled for and sinful," Gaines said.

'Don't assume'

Along the same vein, J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in the Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, area, wrote in a blog

post, "Don't assume that fellow believers who voted for Trump did so because they are utterly insensitive to minority struggles or unconcerned about misogyny, xenophobia, or sexual assault."

"In the same way, don't assume that those who voted for Clinton (or didn't vote for either) are naïve about the threats to religious liberty or too cowardly to oppose abortion," Greear wrote.

"(Instead) be humble and charitable enough to realize that many mature Christians came to different conclusions about what the right posture was, and give them the benefit of the doubt," he wrote.

"You don't have to agree with their conclusions, but in the Church we can and must demonstrate a humility, forbearance and civility usually absent from public discourse."

Regardless of who a Christian voted for, the culture we live in is a messy place and an individual's perspective may land them in a different camp than you. Boiled down — it's complicated, said Mark Galli, editor-in-chief for *Christianity Today*.

'Make space'

"For the most part, evangelical Christians on the left and right are simply trying to navigate the very complex relationship of faith and politics, and where they end up doesn't always look pretty," Galli said.

"Perhaps we can make space for those with whom we disagree, while continuing to champion the causes we believe further justice." (BP contributed)

"For the most part, evangelical Christians on the left and right are simply trying to navigate the very complex relationship of faith and politics, and where they end up doesn't always look pretty."

**Mark Galli, editor-in-chief
*Christianity Today***

Nov. 8 ballot addresses far-reaching issues

By Neisha Roberts
The Alabama Baptist

More than 150 state level ballot measures made their way before voters Nov. 8, including 71 measures from citizen signature petitions instead of state legislatures — the highest number of such initiatives to make it to Election Day since 2006.

More than 130 million Americans voted on several far-reaching issues including marijuana use, physician-assisted suicide, religion-based issues, minimum wage, gun control and gambling (see page 13).

Eight out of 9 states with marijuana-related ballot measures voted to legalize or expand the use of the drug.

California, Massachusetts, Maine and Nevada all voted in favor of legalizing recreational marijuana use. Arizona was the only state to reject the measure.

Arkansas, Florida and North Dakota voted to legalize the use of marijuana for medical use. Montana, which legalized medical marijuana use in 2004, voted to expand its medical use.

'Dropped their guard'

According to Barrett Duke, vice president for public policy at the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, "Everywhere medical marijuana makes its entrance, the effort to legalize it for recreational use soon follows. Every state that legalized recreational marijuana on Nov. 8 had previously legalized medical marijuana."

"Now [four] more states have dropped their guard and naïvely welcomed this deadly drug inside their borders under the mistaken belief that they are only helping to alleviate suffering," he said.

In Colorado, a state that legalized recreational marijuana use in 2012, voters chose to legalize physician-assisted suicide through the Colorado End of Life Options Act. It joins five other states with a similar law. Before this measure passed in the Centennial State, assisted death was a crime of felony manslaughter.

The newly passed law gives adults access to "medical aid-in-dying medication," according to the law's text posted on Colorado's Legislature website. It also allows terminally ill patients to self-administer drugs prescribed by a physician to induce "peaceful death."

Mark Edlund, executive director of the Colorado Baptist Convention, said, "As a Colorado native it grieves me to see Colorado continue its strong march to the liberal side of the political spectrum. Sadly our state receives national recognition for the legalization of marijuana, same-sex 'marriage' and legalization of abortion. Now we add to that physician-assisted suicide."

In 2015 messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution affirming "the dignity and sanctity of human life at all stages of development, from conception to natural death." The

resolution also called on Christians to "care for the elderly ... and show them honor and dignity."

Minimum wage was addressed in Arizona, Colorado, Maine, Washington and South Dakota, with 4 of the 5 states voting in favor of raising the minimum wage. South Dakota was the only state that voted on a veto referendum to actually lower the minimum wage for minors.

Health care

In California voters opposed Proposition 61, what was considered one of the most expensive ballot measures in 2016. Fifty-four percent of voters said "no" to the measure so that state agencies will continue to be able to negotiate the prices of prescription drugs without reference to the prices paid by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Supporters of the measure said it could have provided significant savings and forced the drug industry to begin reducing its prices. Opponents of the measure said passing Proposition 61 would have reduced access to prescription drugs and raised prices for everyone, including veterans.

Colorado voted down the Colorado Creation of ColoradoCare System Initiative, leaving the health care system unchanged. If the measure had passed it would have meant a new payment system would go in place designed to finance universal health care for Colorado residents (through a 10 percent additional payroll tax paid by the employer and the employee).

Gun control was on the ballot in four states. California voted "yes" to support prohibiting the possession of large-capacity ammunition magazines and requiring individuals to pass a background check in order to purchase ammunition. In Maine, however, voters said "no" to requiring background checks before a gun sale. Nevada voted "yes" to requiring firearm transfers to go through a licensed gun dealer and Washington voted "yes" to allowing the authorizing courts to issue extreme risk protection orders and remove an individual's access to firearms.

Penalties for sex crimes

Georgia approved the measure "Additional Penalties for Sex Crimes to Fund Services for Sexually Exploited Children." More than 80 percent of voters voted "yes" in order to allocate generated revenue for the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund.

And the Ten Commandments monument could have made its way back to Oklahoma's state capitol if they had passed a measure relating to the use of public money. Voters there did not want to allow public money to be used for religious purposes.

Alabama's 14 measures passed, relating to topics from state park funds to age restrictions for government officials. (BP contributed)



"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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Thanksgiving traditions

Ideas for keeping holiday customs while simplifying usual rituals

By Carolyn Tomlin
Special to The Alabama Baptist

For years the clan gathered at the grandparents' home for Thanksgiving. As we grow older and the children have children, the number around the table seems to grow each year. While it's important to continue holiday traditions honored in the past, sometimes there isn't space to feed or seat several generations of family or friends. However, that doesn't mean families should cancel celebrations or delete holiday events. Here are some suggestions for keeping Thanksgiving customs while simplifying the usual rituals.

Rent space. Instead of bringing in extra chairs and tables to an over-crowded apartment or smaller home, rent a room from a community center or use the dining room of your church. Know the approximate number who will attend when making a registration. Will your group be comfortable in the size of the room? Is a kitchen available? Reserve early as the calendar fills quickly.

Delegate dishes

Plan a pot-luck meal. This is often called "bring-a-dish" or a "covered dish" meal. Delegate main dish, vegetable, fruit, bread, dessert and drinks to avoid everyone bringing a green bean casserole. And you really need more food than chips and soda. Provide for those who have allergies to certain foods or who are diabetic.

Don't forget to request paper plates, plastic eating utensils, napkins and tablecloths (disposable). Provide heavy-duty plastic bags for cleanup. Bottles of cold water or chilled cans of soft drinks eliminate the need for ice and glasses.

Think greenery for a centerpiece. Nothing compares with simple bunches of cedar, pine, holly and other natural greenery and fresh fruit for Thanksgiving decorations. Add a few candles but never leave a flame unattended. Miniature gourds complement Thanksgiving dinners. Perhaps family and friends who drive



123rf.com

in from other parts of Alabama have specific greenery that isn't available in your area. Could they help with the table decorations?

Committee involvement. If you've made all the arrangements in the past, allow others to share in the event. Ask for volunteers to email or call all family members or friends. Don't overlook those who live a long distance away as they should be contacted whether they attend or not. Could the teenagers in your family be responsible for this job? Provide names, emails and addresses. Update as needed for names and address changes.

Count your blessings. Begin the meal with prayer, which could be led by the oldest family member. After the Thanksgiving meal (instead of rushing off to watch football games), ask for each person to tell about a special blessing they received during the past year. Realize that some people may not participate. If this happens, move on to the next person.

Is a piano available? Plan a sing-along of favorite music. Some favorite hymns sung at Thanksgiving are "We Gather Together" and "Count Your Blessings."

If a teenager is in your family, ask him or

her in advance to read Psalm 23. Make copies of this familiar Scripture and give to each family. As an option, repeat this Scripture as a group.

Saying goodbye. Before leaving, make a group photo and update names and emails. Send each family a copy of the photo and stay in touch throughout the year. Place a donation basket nearby for extra expenses such as if some people prefer the photo be printed out or put on a CD and mailed rather than emailed.

God's blessings

One of the purposes of a family meal is making everyone feel comfortable and going home with pleasant memories of the time together. And regardless of the location, celebrate the season, thank God for His blessings and enjoy being together as a Christian family. It's the people who love and support one another that matter.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Carolyn Tomlin writes for the newspaper and magazine market and teaches writing-to-publish workshops. She may be contacted at tomlinm@bellsouth.net.

Ministry Tips



FORMING FRIENDSHIPS

By Pastor Greg Hyche
Ladonia Baptist Church, Phenix City

Let's face it, pastors can be competitive with one another regarding the growth and size of his ministry.

Our personal walk with the Lord is far

more important than how many we are running in Sunday School.

When meeting with other pastors, do not be so consumed with probing questions about the success of their ministry that you fail to give attention to the pas-

tor as a person. Seek to form friendships.

Be relational and ask how they are doing, ask how the family is doing, and most importantly, ask, "How may I encourage and pray for you as a fellow pastor?"



Unsplash.com photo

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY — NOV. 19

National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to raise awareness of the more than 100,000 children in foster care waiting to find permanent, loving families. A coalition of national partners — Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, The Alliance for Children's Rights and Children's Action Network — sponsor National Adoption Day.

WAITING children

Blessings of adoption, foster care far outweigh challenges, Alabama mother says

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Angela Bennett knows better than most the frustrations and joys of adoption. She and her husband, Chris, became foster parents in October 2009, hoping to adopt two sisters in the care of a foster family in their church.

The girls were eventually adopted by another family, but the Bennetts pursued God's call to foster care ministry. Seven years later, the Bennetts are parents of six children, two biological and four adopted through foster care placements. Life is busy, especially since the Bennetts also continue to foster as many as six children at any given time, but Angela Bennett wouldn't have it any other way.

'Forever home'

"When you think you can't do it any more, a child comes and hugs you and tells you he loves you, and it's all worth it," she said. "Especially for older children like my son, who was 12 when we adopted him.

All he wanted was a forever home so no one could take him away again. He has that now."

The Bennett children have a lot in common with the majority of children currently in care of the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) who are waiting for their forever families. Of the more than 5,500 children in foster care in Alabama, approximately 225 are eligible for adoption. Most are already in school and many are teenagers.

By the time a child in the state foster care system is available for adoption, all avenues for reunification with the child's biological family have been exhausted and the courts have terminated parental rights. These waiting children usually live in group homes or with foster families who do not plan to adopt them. Organizations like Heart Gallery Alabama seek to make these children known to prospective adoptive families, according to the organization's executive director, Michelle Bearman-Wolnek.

Approximately 500 children have been adopted from foster care each year in the

state for the past several years. In fiscal year 2015, 512 adoptions from foster care were completed in Alabama, Bearman-Wolnek said. For fiscal year 2016, the number was 503, according to Barry Spear, public information manager for Alabama DHR.

Ticking clock

Alabama has worked hard to speed up the process of parental rights termination in recent years, said Gayle Watts, CEO of Children's Aid Society of Alabama, another agency that supports children in the foster care system and works to find homes for them.

"As these children grow older, the clock is ticking. No one wants them stuck in the court system," she said. "What we need most in Alabama is families for older youth and sibling groups."

The National Center on Adoption and Permanency estimates that 40 percent of adoptions in the United States are from the foster care system. Another 40 percent are

by stepparents. International and private infant adoptions have decreased in recent years for several reasons.

For one thing fewer infants are available for adoption, the result of increased access to birth control, pregnancy prevention programs, abortion and wider acceptance of and support for single motherhood.

In response, many adoptive families worked with international agencies in the 1990s and early 2000s to adopt children from other countries. At the peak of this movement in 2004, 22,989 children were adopted internationally from countries including China, Russia and Guatemala.

Steady decline

Since then, the number of international adoptions has steadily declined because of stricter international treaty regulations and improvements in child welfare systems in many countries. In 2015, 5,647 children were adopted internationally, according to

For photos and videos of Alabama children looking for an adoptive family, visit www.heartgalleryalabama.com.

November is National Adoption Awareness Month.

5 adoption myths debunked

According to the 2013 Adoption Attitudes Survey funded by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, 24 percent of American adults have considered adoption. That translates into more than 76 million Americans. If only 1 out of 500 of them adopted out of the foster care system, the estimated 100,000 children currently in foster care in the United States who are adoptable would have a forever family. Here are five myths about adoption from foster care and the truth about that misinformation.

the U.S. Department of State. Most were between the ages of 1 and 12.

As the face of adoption has changed, ministries have responded, said Louise Green, senior regional vice president (Central Alabama) for Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH). For example, maternity ministries for unwed mothers were phased out as the number of single women placing babies for adoption decreased, Green said. The focus at ABCH moved toward care for children, many of whom are referred by DHR and some of whom are adopted by their foster families.

'Orphan care'

Green attributes the steady numbers in adoption from foster care in Alabama to an increased emphasis in churches on caring for children who need permanent families, often called "orphan care."

"Because of the church ministries promoting care for children, our foster care program has grown. We have been able to have more children placed with us and have seen an increase in foster to adopt. The Church has been instrumental in that, and we have been blessed to come alongside and partner with them and provide more opportunities for Christian homes and foster care and Christian parents who want to adopt," Green said.

Still, the process of adoption, especially of an older child from foster care, scares many prospective families, Watts said.

Uncertainty is normal

"They aren't sure how they might handle a child who has a history with someone else or challenges. Sometimes they say they believe they will feel a closer bond with a younger child. People are often afraid," Watts said.

Angela Bennett wants people to know those fears can be overcome and the challenges of the process are worth the reward.

"There's more blessing for the parent than for the child," she said. "A lot of people think they can't love an adopted child as much as a birth child but it isn't true. No matter how long they stay, each child who comes into our home becomes part of our family and part of our heart." 🌸

MYTH: All foster care children have some kind of physical, mental or emotional handicap; that's why they are classified as "special needs."

FACT: The term "special needs" is somewhat misleading because it can mean that the child is older, a minority or requires placement with his/her siblings. While some children are dealing with physical or emotional concerns, just like other children, they need the nurturing and support that a permanent family can provide. Many foster children are in the "system" because their birth parents weren't protective and nurturing caretakers — not because the children did anything wrong.

MYTH: Adopting a child from foster care is expensive.

FACT: Adopting children from foster care is virtually free while private or international adoptions can cost anywhere from \$4,000 to \$30,000 or more. When adopting from the Alabama Department of Human Resources, the department charges no fees for the adoption home study (which includes 30 hours of training) nor for the placement of children. Expenses are gener-

ally limited to the costs of criminal history record checks and obtaining medical exams on all household family members. To help adoptive families, a growing number of companies and government agencies offer adoption assistance as part of their employee benefit packages, including time off for maternity/paternity leave, financial incentives and other benefits. In addition, Congress has made federal tax credits available for foster care adoptions to help offset required fees, court costs and expenses. Better than tax deductions, tax credits reduce tax owed rather than taxable income. In 2016 the maximum adoption tax credit is \$13,460 for families who earn less than \$201,920 annually. More information is available in the IRS Publication 968 "Tax Benefits for Adoption" or IRS Publication 607 "Adoption Credit and Adoption Assistance Programs."

MYTH: There are not enough loving families available who want to adopt a foster child.

FACT: Many prospective adoptive parents may initially want to adopt an infant, often because they are unaware that there are older children who also need families.

When they learn about an older child available for adoption, they often "fall in love" and realize the enormous impact they can have on that child's life. Older children can share their feelings about joining a new family, helping to make the adoption and transition process successful.

MYTH: Adoptive parents must be "perfect" parents.

FACT: Prospective adoptive parents do not have to be rich, married, own a home or be of a certain race or age to become an adoptive parent. One-third of adoptions from foster care are by single parents. Patience, a good sense of humor, a love of children and the commitment to be a good parent are the most important characteristics.

MYTH: There's too much red tape and bureaucracy involved in adopting a child from foster care.

FACT: Congress has streamlined the foster care adoption process through enactment of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. This law ensures that children in foster care who cannot be reunited with their birth parents are freed for adoption and placed with permanent families as quickly as possible. (TAB)

For more information about adoption, visit www.nationaladoptionday.org.

Who are 'special needs' children?

- ▶ Any child age five or older.
- ▶ Children with a background of parental substance abuse, mental illness or mental retardation that places them at risk.
- ▶ Children with various degrees of mental, physical or emotional problems.
- ▶ A sibling group of two or more placed at the same time with the same family.

Source: dhr.alabama.gov



Unsplash.com photo

The Alpha Women's Resource Center in Jackson provides expectant mothers with various forms of assistance. Pictured here (right) is the center's baby clothing store.



Photos courtesy of Alpha Women's Resource Center

'Huge' missions field

Pregnancy resource center provides solid foundation for parents

By Grace Thornton
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

For Diane Pruitt, her ministry's purpose can be summed up in one baby who's still alive — and the mother who got her life on the right track.

"The mother made the comment that 'if it hadn't been for the Alpha center, my baby would've been in somebody else's trash-can,'" Pruitt recalled. "She said she had no idea how to take care of her baby."

And that's why Pruitt, who serves as executive director of the Alpha Women's Resource Center (AWRC) in Jackson, works hard alongside other staff and volunteers to promote a culture of life, not just before the baby is born, but also after.

Outreach of churches

"We want to help our clients become good parents and give them a total physical, mental and spiritual foundation through the services we provide," she said.

The center's staff views its work as a local missions outreach of area churches.

"We have a two-fold purpose — the first is to share the gospel," Pruitt said. "The second is to provide the men and women we serve with resources."

Those services run the gamut from pregnancy tests to parenting programs to the responsibility of

Ways you can help

Wondering if there's a way you or your church can help out with Alpha Women's Resource Center's (AWRC) ministry?

There are a variety of ways you can, according to AWRC, including volunteering as a client advocate, a fatherhood mentor, an abstinence present-

er or a baby store organizer.

The center also needs help with fundraisers, such as Walk for Life in the spring or the Alpha Banquet in the fall.

For more ideas, call 251-246-7750 or visit alpha-wrc.com, or to view the center's client-oriented website, visit pregnancytesthelp.com. (TAB)

the father in raising the child, she said.

"When you come here, you'll be speaking with someone who is going to build a relationship with you," Pruitt said. "We come alongside them on an individual, case-by-case basis to encourage them and offer programs that can help them."

For women facing an unplanned pregnancy, staff members are able to educate them on the risks and specifics of an abortion procedure and help them make the right decision, Pruitt said.

In a recent study, 64 percent of American women said they felt pressured by others to choose abortion, and in 2014 more than 8,000 abortions were performed in Alabama.

"Five counties surround us and none of them have a pregnancy

resource center," Pruitt said. "We have a huge field that we're able to go out in [to] educate people and share the gospel."

Mobile ultrasound

And they're hoping to soon be able to actually go out into it even more with a mobile ultrasound unit, she said.

"It will help us get to more people who have transportation issues," Pruitt said. "It's been a huge undertaking and a huge challenge, but God has already provided two thirds of the resources we need to be able to purchase that unit."

Another way the center is reaching out into the surrounding counties is through teaching an abstinence program in area high schools.

"We see close to 2,000 students a year in the schools," Pruitt said.

The ministry of AWRC has grown so much since a doctor and his wife from First Baptist Church, Jackson, started it almost 25 years ago, she said. "It was just the two of them, and now we have a six-member staff and about 20 volunteers."

First, Jackson, where Pruitt is a member, is still heavily involved in AWRC's ministry, as are more than 30 other area churches who support the center on a regular basis.

The majority of the center's supporters are Baptist, including Clarke, Washington and Choctaw Baptist associations, which contribute to AWRC on a monthly basis.

Loren Robinson, director of missions for Clarke Association, said, "The main thing is they are a very evangelistic ministry. With every client that comes in, they share the gospel at the point of need, and they are very effective in ministering to the clients whether it's a young girl who's wondering if she's pregnant or a young family looking for resources on how to be parents."

'Very effective'

They have the best training tools for their volunteers that Robinson has ever seen, he said.

"They're the only ministry of that sort in our area — how could we not partner with them? They're very effective in what they do," Robinson said. ♣

TAB's new website almost ready

The staff members of *The Alabama Baptist* (TAB) are excited about the coming release of the paper's new website.

"We are really close now," said TAB editor-elect Jennifer Davis Rash. "It has certainly been a labor of love this past year and a half," she said, noting the enormity of the task of migrating more than 35,000 articles from the current site.

Paul Brandon, principal of Vehicle Media, the new web designer of thealabamabaptist.org, said, "It's a much more fresh and updated feel."

"It's got neat features in terms of navigating around, so it's easier to read and digest and get to the things you want to read. It's a more tightly knit user experience."

And it's much simpler to access from handheld devices, he said. Social media sharing also is much easier and more intuitive on the new site, Brandon said.

In addition to more opportunities, readers will have more opportunities to post their own content on the newspaper's website.

Instant coverage

Rash said, "Subscribers will now be able to submit news and feature items to us as they are happening. All they will need is a smart phone to take a photo or short video clip, upload the file and fill in the content information."

All appropriate submissions will be posted on the homepage within 24 hours, she said.

"It can then be shared with others online, and that submission also will be passed along to the editorial staff for consideration in the print edition," Rash said.

It's all part of building each other up as Christians, she said.

"We believe the ability to connect quickly, directly and comprehensively within that community will help all of us be more efficient and effective in the ultimate goal we all have — loving God, getting to know Him better and sharing Him with others," Rash said. (TAB)



Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

The Person of Christ

Joyful

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

Many of us probably have had an image of Christ as one who was sharply focused, serious-minded and all business. While these impressions are not wrong, they are not the total picture of Christ the Gospels paint for us. Christ also was a joyous person. He not only spoke often of His joy, but also to occasions when He experienced great joy, according to the Gospel writers.

For example, after the 70 that He sent out to minister in His name returned with their reports, Luke 10:21 records Christ's reaction to their reports in these words, "In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit." The ministry of others was a source of joy for Him, even as the Holy Spirit was the inspiration for that joy.

'Let him sing'

When He instituted the Lord's Supper by taking bread and a cup, investing in them symbolic meaning related to His body and blood, Mark 14:26 tells us that at the conclusion of Supper, "When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

How often do we think of Christ as lending His voice to the singing of a hymn? Surely He sang perfectly on key. Do we not usually make a connection between joyousness and singing? James 5:13 makes such a connection by asking, "Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms." Isaiah 65:14 declares, "My servants shall sing for joy of heart."

Being full

Not only did Christ join the singing, in His words to the disciples in the upper room that evening before the crucifixion, Christ assured them, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11).

Still later that same evening, with the shadow of the cross drawing ever closer, Christ turned to the Father in prayer. In the course of that prayer, He prayed, "Now I come to You, and these things I

speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves" (John 17:13). Christ desires that His followers' joy should be full. Our joy coupled with His joy equals joy in its fullness.

Looking forward

Christ's joy had a forward-looking dimension to it. After referring to Christ as the "author and finisher of our faith," Hebrews 12:2 continues, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Christ knew the future — greater joy that awaited Him when He returned to the Father. The prospect of an ascension back to the Father was a major ingredient of Christ's joy. Not only did He rejoice over His own return to heavenly glory, but also over the Father's plan that those redeemed through His shame and suffering would one day join Him there.

As Hebrews 2:10 phrases it, Christ would ultimately bring many sons to glory. That was a joyous prospect set before Him even as He faced the cross.

Good like medicine

The thought we take away from these references to the joy of the Lord is that Christ possessed joy in His own heart, such as He wanted to share with His followers, joy both here and now as well as in heaven to come. Two longstanding truths are that the joy of the Lord is our strength (Neh. 8:10) and that a merry heart does good like a medicine (Prov. 17:22).✠

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.



Persecuted Church

Compiled from Wire Services

Christian 9 year old tortured, released after 4 days

QUETTA, Pakistan — A 9-year-old Christian boy accused of burning a copy of the Quran, Islam's holy book, was arrested Oct. 21 and reportedly tortured for four days along with his mother, according to the British Pakistani Christian Association (BPCA), a London-based charity.

BPCA and other human rights advocates called for the release of the mother and son, and, according to the Pakistani Christian Post, lawmakers and the leadership of a Sunni Muslim political party were instrumental in helping to secure their release.

"This is the first blasphemy charge in my recollection that has been dropped," BPCA Chairman Wilson Chowdhry said in a statement to The Christian Post.

If more Muslim politicians were willing to support Christians in this way, more lives could be saved, Chowdhry said. "That said, the fervent support shown by Muslim politicians during this incident could be an indication of a seed change in the way that the Muslim community views the application of blasphemy laws." (TAB)

Pastor in Cuba sentenced to 1 year of house arrest

LAS TUNAS, Cuba — A civil court in Cuba sentenced the pastor of a house church to a year of house arrest Oct. 22 for loud worship services, sources said.

Juan Carlos Nuñez received the hastily delivered sentence in Cuba's eastern city of Las Tunas, where he leads a house church of 550 worshippers, before his attorney had an opportunity to defend him, a source close to the pastor said.

Nuñez was charged under the country's environmental protection laws with "disturbing the peace."

Nuñez said he hopes to appeal the sentence, which he said was overly harsh. The charge of disturbing the peace stems from complaints filed by Nuñez's neighbors that the sound system for his Apostolic House of the King of Glory church used for music and preaching was too loud. Nuñez obliged them, he said, by replacing the speakers with smaller, 150-watt units.

Nuñez said the reduced amplification is barely adequate for his congregation, which meets in the courtyard of an apartment complex in Las Tunas. (MS)

Judge quits over feared Pakistani mob attack

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — The judge set to preside over a Pakistani mother's last appeal against her death sentence suddenly resigned from his position in late October, according to The Christian Post.

His resignation highlights the rise in hatred against Christians, according to a

Pakistani Christian group, and highlights the uncertainty of the future of Asia Bibi, a Christian mother of five sentenced to death on blasphemy accusations in 2010.

The judge gave no specific reason. A justice, Iqbal Hameed, also had recused himself from the case earlier in October.

"Mr. Hameed did not want to face the outright condemnation that people in the West would have for his sentencing of Asia Bibi to death by hanging," Wilson Chowdhry, chairman of the British Pakistani Christian Association, wrote on the group's website.

The judge's resignation "illustrates the power of extremists who are the real authority in Pakistan," Chowdhry added, alluding to demands by Islamist groups for Bibi's execution.

She was sentenced to death after two colleagues accused her of insulting the Muslim prophet Muhammad. (TAB)

Christians attacked, house burned in Uganda

KOBOLWA, Uganda — Muslims attacked Christians in two incidents in eastern Uganda in October, burning the house of a Christian family and injuring dozens working on a food project.

Muslims gutted the home of a Christian family Oct. 30 for housing two boys fleeing from threats after they left Islam.

Stephen Muganzi said the boys sought refuge with him Oct. 16 in Kobolwa village after their parents learned of their conversion, began questioning them and threatened to kill them. The boys' fathers organized a group of sharia (Islamic law) vigilantes to punish them for apostasy, and the mob, including the boys' fathers, set fire to Muganzi's house.

In predominantly Muslim Nalidi village, Pallisa District, a mob of armed jihadists recently injured 27 Christians working at a food-producing project because people were coming to Christ through the outreach, sources said. (MS)

Christians in Iran to be lashed for communion wine

TEHRAN, Iran — Three Iranian Christians sentenced to receive 80 lashes for drinking wine during a communion service filed an appeal Oct. 25 to have their case overturned, a noted advocacy group reported.

In a trial that lasted a mere 10 minutes, the three converts from Islam, Mohammadreza Omid, Yasser Mossayebzadeh and Saheb Fadaie, were all sentenced Sept. 10 to receive 80 lashes for drinking wine. It was the second time Fadaie and Omid have been sentenced to flogging for taking communion.

Although Christians are allowed to consume alcohol in Iran, Muslims are not. (MS)

Chrismon Tree

A Chrismon, first developed by Frances Kipps Spencer in 1957, is a Christmas ornament based on a Christian symbol.

All Chrismons are symbols from the Bible or other signs that early Christians used to identify one another.

Many churches today celebrate the Advent season by decorating a Chrismon Tree to tell the story of the life of Christ — with the goal of focusing believers' hearts on God's great gift to the world during the Christmas season — Jesus Christ.

The first set of ornaments are featured below and more will be showcased for three weeks in December.



8-pointed star: Represents hope, the close relationship between the birth and death of Jesus (forms a cross).



Candle: Represents Jesus as the Light of the world.



Chalice: Represents the Lord's Supper.



Alpha Omega: First and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Jesus was the Beginning and the End.



Angel: Proclaimed the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.



Chi Rho: CHRist in Greek letters



Bethlehem: The rooftops of the city are bathed in the light of the star announcing Jesus' birth.



Christmas rose: Represents the nativity of the Lord.



Butterfly: Represents new life and resurrection.



Circle: Represents God's love that is without beginning or end.

(Compiled by TAB)



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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.

BESSEMER

► **Shady Grove Church, Bessemer; Raimund Heights Church, Bessemer; and Seventh Street Church, Bessemer**, will hold a joint community Thanksgiving service at Shady Grove Church on Nov. 20, 5 p.m. All are welcome to attend. Refreshments will follow the service. For more information call Shady Grove at 205-424-6443. Pat Buckner is pastor of Shady Grove; Tommy Chesser is pastor of Raimund Heights; and Sam Davidson is pastor of Seventh Street. ► **The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla**, will hold a special Hanging of the Green service highlighting the meaning and customs of Christmas on Nov. 27, 6 p.m. Everyone is invited. Bill McCall is pastor.

BIBB

► **First Church, Woodstock**,

will host The Blackwood Brothers Quartet in concert Dec. 2, 7 p.m. For more information call the church office at 205-938-7479. Larry Bonner is pastor. ► **Lowerytown Church, West Blocton**, will host gospel singer Mitchel Jon in concert Nov. 19, 7 p.m. For more information call the church office at 205-938-2436. Roy Lowery is pastor.

CHEROKEE

► **Calcedonia Church, Centre**, celebrated its 169th anniversary and homecoming Oct. 9. The celebration included special music and a welcome for Calcedonia's



STINSON

new pastor, Tim Rittenberry. He received an appreciation gift for his ministry during the interim. Kenneth "Tater" Stinson, the church's longest tenured member, spoke during the service.

MADISON

► **Murphy Hill Church, Toney**, will hold a Christmas season gospel singing Dec. 4, 6 p.m. Alliance Quartet from Huntsville and Unity Quartet from Scottsboro will perform special music. For more information call 256-693-7381 or 256-828-3171. Mike McFarlen is pastor. 🇺🇸

Want to see your news in *The Alabama Baptist*?

Email your information to news@thealabamabaptist.org, fax it to 205-879-6026 or call 1-800-803-5201.

Church announcements should arrive three weeks prior to the event.

The Across Alabama's Associations column will not run in next week's issue.

We Are All Leaving a Legacy . . . What is Yours?



Meet Walter and Suzanne Blackman. Walter is the Pastor of East Highland Baptist Church in Hartselle, Alabama. Through The Baptist Foundation of Alabama, the Blackmans participated in legacy planning and then introduced a Legacy Ministry to the East Highland congregation. **After finishing planning and making it available to their church family, the Blackmans said, "If someone truly wants to give to the Lord all they can, for as long as they can, and still provide for their children, this is the process to be involved in."**

Every day, we are each crafting our legacy. Whether we know it or not and whether we like it or not, the way we live our lives and the choices that we make **will** impact others. **So, what will your Legacy be?**

At The Baptist Foundation of Alabama, we are committed to helping Alabama Baptists create a Legacy that will honor not only their family, but also their faith. To learn more about how we can help you, please visit our website at tbfa.org or contact us at (334) 394-2000.



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Want to know GOD?

By Jenni Ingram
Member, First Baptist Church, Gantt

Do you know that Jesus' ministry only spanned three short years? Look at what He accomplished during that time.

What have you done in the last three years of your life? Have you:

- ▶ healed a blind person?
- ▶ fed 5,000 people with two fish and five loaves of bread?
- ▶ raised someone that had been dead and buried for three days? And not only raised them but called them forth from the grave fully restored?

I know I haven't.

Think about why Jesus came — to save our eternal souls from sin and sure hell. Why did He sacrifice Himself to save dirty, wayward souls like ours?

Why He came

Because of one simple reason that can be explained by one simple word: love. When God created you, He knew everything about you — your sins, your pain, your joy. God knew we would need someone to redeem us and the amazing thing is that He loved us all so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to be tortured and endure unbearable humiliation and pain.

Another incredible fact is that Jesus loved us enough to be willing to endure that suffering so we could spend a joyful eternity with Him in heaven.

Do you realize that even though Jesus is God, He still endured everything we do as humans? He experienced the temptations. Just take Luke 4 for example. Jesus was tested by Satan three times when He was in the wilderness. And each time He resisted great temptations.

Can you imagine if you knew you would die a death like His to save someone? Even someone you loved. Would you do it?

Honestly, I don't know if I could.

Want to know God? Read the Bible with an open heart and then look at the cross. There is nothing else you need to know. ☛

Starting your own business

Quick-start guide to moving your service, craft to official level

So you've been tinkering with that thing for quite a while, that contract work or product or craft.

People are starting to tell you that you should start your own business. There are lots of resources out there on how to hone your idea. But when it comes to the nuts and bolts of making it a legal, official business, where do you start?

Which type of business structure is right for me?

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), there are six kinds of business structures ranging from a single person to large, established companies.

If you're going into business in a big way, setting up some sort of corporation may be right for you now, or it may be right for you one day as you grow. But many sources advise starting more simply.

If you choose to start simply, the place you may want to begin is with a sole proprietorship or a limited liability company (LLC).

How would I start a sole proprietorship? And why?

A sole proprietorship is "by far the most common type of business, the easiest to set up and the one that most businesses end up starting as," said Jerry Osteryoung, director of outreach services at the Jim Moran Insti-



Unsplash.com photo

tute for Global Entrepreneurship at Florida State University's College of Business in Tallahassee, according to *Inc.* magazine. "You can always migrate up to an LLC or a corporation, but when first starting a business you need to make sure it's easy to start."

How do you start it? According to SBA, it's so simple you may already have one and not know it.

"You do not have to take any formal action to form a sole proprietorship. As long as you are the only owner, this status automatically comes from your business activities," according to SBA. "If you are a freelance writer, for example, you are a sole proprietor."

The only startup costs involved are obtaining state business licenses and permits. And you

have complete control of your business decisions without having to consult anyone else. Tax prep also is easy because your business is not taxed separately.

You're entitled to all the profits, but also responsible for all the business' debts and liabilities.

How would I start an LLC? And why?

Not being solely responsible for your business' debts and liabilities would be one of the appealing features of migrating up to an LLC structure instead, according to NOLO.com, which publishes do-it-yourself legal guides.

"You should consider forming an LLC if you are concerned about personal exposure to lawsuits or debts arising from your

business," NOLO.com writes. "For example if you decide to open a storefront business that deals directly with the public, you may worry that your commercial liability insurance won't fully protect your personal assets from potential slip-and-fall lawsuits or claims by your suppliers for unpaid bills."

According to howtostartan-LLC.com, more than 1.2 million LLCs are started in the U.S. every year.

"Forming your business as an LLC brings added credibility," the website says. "An LLC is recognized as a more formal business structure than a sole proprietorship or partnership."

In addition to business licenses, you have to pay formation fees, filing fees and an annual state fee. But the structure still benefits from simple, pass-through taxation. "In the eyes of the federal government, an LLC is not a separate tax entity, so the business itself is not taxed," SBA writes. "All federal income taxes are passed on to the LLC's members and are paid through their personal income tax." (TAB)

For more information about small business structures and to explore which one is right for you, visit www.sba.gov/starting-business/choose-your-business-structure.

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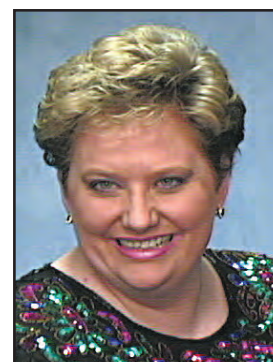
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Northeast voters oppose gambling's expansion

By Neisha Roberts
The Alabama Baptist

Four states were recently faced with guiding the direction of the gambling industry within their state lines when they voted on the Nov. 8 ballot.

Massachusetts and New Jersey residents voted a resounding "no" on their individual ballot measures, equating to both states limit-

ing further gambling and casinos within their borders.

Massachusetts voters opposed bringing a slot machine parlor into Greater Boston.

New Jersey voters crushed the ballot question to expand casinos into northern counties, which would have ended a four-decade ban on casinos outside of Atlantic City.

Statewide voters in Rhode Island said "yes" to Question 1 on their ballot, which would allow the Twin River Management Group to build a new casino in Tiverton. However, before the measure can move forward it also must earn the approval of Tiverton residents. On Nov. 10 mail and emergency ballots were counted and confirmed the measure's passage; however, provisional ballots were not yet included and recount requests were entertained until Nov. 16, so official results were not available at press time.

'Squashed' measures

Arkansas residents "squashed" a proposed ballot question to push casinos into the state," according to an email from Stop Predatory Gambling's national director, Les Bernal.

"The Arkansas Supreme Court, in language that rings true in every state where predatory gambling has been thrust into the lives of everyday people, ruled that the ballot question title 'does not honestly and accurately reflect what is contained in the proposed amendment. The voters are entitled to a ballot title that is honest, impartial and intelligible and will give them a fair understanding of the issues presented,'" according to the email. ☼

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The Gospel According to JOHN

The Word of Jesus Christ
1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. 6 One who came into the world, who was the true Light which enlightens every man. 7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all who believe through Him, might not be judged. 8 He came to the world, but the world did not know Him. 9 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 10 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 11 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

The Word Made Flesh
14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me, has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" 16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

The Testimony of John
19 This is the testimony of John when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20 And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." 21 They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." 22 Then they said to him, "Who are you?"

those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" 23 He said, "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,' as Isaiah the prophet said." 24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25 They asked him, and said to him, "Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" 26 John answered them saying, "I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. 27 It is He who comes after me, the worthy of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." 28 These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. 29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' 31 I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water." 32 John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. 33 I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' 34 I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

Jesus' Public Ministry, First Converts

35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 And Jesus

turned and saw them follow. 39 He said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), we have followed you, because we have seen the signs which you do." 40 He said to them, "Come, and you will see." And they stayed with Him that day. 41 The two who heard John follow Him, were Andrew Peter's brother, and Philip. 42 He found Simon and said to him, "You are Simon the son of John, are you not?" Simon answered and said, "Yes, Lord." 43 The next day He purposed to go to Galilee, and He found Andrew and Philip. 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 He said to Andrew, "We have found Him of whom we wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." 46 Andrew said to him, "Come, and you will see." And he brought him to Jesus. 47 Jesus said to him, "You are Simon the son of David, you shall be called Cephas (which translated means Peter)."

48 The next day He purposed to go to Galilee, and He found Philip. 49 Philip said to him, "We have found Him of whom we wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." 50 Philip said to him, "Come, and you will see." And he brought him to Jesus. 51 Jesus said to him, "You are Simon the son of David, you shall be called Cephas (which translated means Peter)."

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Famous Christians from previous centuries

Heroes of the Faith

By Joanne Sloan

Joanne Sloan, a member of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, has been a published writer of articles and books for 30 years. She has a bachelor's degree double majoring in history and English from East Texas State University (now Texas A&M—Commerce) and a master's degree specializing in English from the University of Arkansas (1978).



Brother Lawrence's book still making impact 325 years after his death

Brother Lawrence is known for his book, "The Practice of the Presence of God." This classic focuses on how to pray unceasingly with God throughout the day — even during times of work and suffering.

This year is the 325th anniversary of his death. Different sources say he was born anywhere from 1610 to 1614 and died in 1691.

He was born Nicolas Herman to peasant parents in Hériménil in the region of Lorraine, France. To escape poverty he joined the army, which guaranteed him meals and a small stipend.

At the age of 18 he had a spiritual conversion that changed his life. One day in the winter he gazed at a barren tree stripped of its leaves and fruit, but waiting for another season of growth. He compared himself to the tree. He was seemingly dead but God had life

waiting for him. He understood for the first time the extent of God's grace and the sovereignty of divine providence. At that moment, he said, the leafless tree "first flashed in upon my soul the face of God." His love for God never ceased.

Thirty Years' War

He fought in the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). After an injury left him crippled and in chronic pain, he quit the army. He worked briefly as a valet. According to his own words, he was a "great awkward fellow who broke everything."

Believing he was not good at doing anything and as a form of self-punishment, he entered the Discalced Carmelite Priory, a monastic brotherhood, in Paris. Here he eventually became a lay brother. He took the name of Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection.



LAWRENCE

He spent most of his time working in the priory's kitchen. He never advanced beyond being the cook, but he developed the spiritual gift of constant communion with God, which he called the "practice of the presence of God."

To Brother Lawrence, the status of the task was not important but the motivation behind it.

"We can do little things for God," he said. "I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for love of Him, and that done, if there is nothing else to call me, I prostrate myself in worship before Him, who has given me grace to work. ... It is enough for me to pick up but a straw from the ground for the love of God."

He developed a reputation for experiencing profound peace and visitors came to him for spiritual guidance. He passed on

to them wisdom in conversations and in letters. By 1666, Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, had learned about Brother Lawrence's unusual insight. He sent his investigator, Father Joseph de Beaufort, to interview Brother Lawrence who granted four interviews in which he described his way of life.

After Brother Lawrence's death, his fellow monks found several pages of maxims or sayings, the only written material he had left. These, with the conversations and 16 letters, represent Brother Lawrence's teachings.

In 1691 he died peacefully within days of writing his last letter. Joseph de Beaufort compiled his work in 1692 under the original title "Spiritual Maxims."

"The Practice of the Presence of God" has greatly influenced generations of Christians, both Catholics and Protestants alike.✠

Montgomery church remains missions-minded as it closes its doors; leaves legacy through archived records, CP giving

By Neisha Roberts
The Alabama Baptist

In recent days Keith Gambill, pastor of McGehee Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, has heard the phrase, "I'm sorry your church is closing," many times. But he knows there's no reason to be sorry. As the church closes its doors at the end of December, "the kingdom of God is being advanced more so than we could do on our own."

Organized in 1979, McGehee Road Baptist has "always been missions-minded and Kingdom-focused," said Gambill, who's served as pastor for just under four years.

For two decades the church thrived in its community, Gambill explained, but about 10 years ago its members began to grow older and the community began to change.

'Not physically able'

"We have the heart to (reach the community) but we're not physically able to do it," Gambill said, noting that the median age of the church's members is 80.

About two years ago Gambill began to speak with Ken May, who was director of missions of Montgomery Baptist As-

sociation at the time. With the help of May, Gambill and church members began to process and pray to "discern the Lord's will, be that in relocation, merging or dissolving," Gambill said.

For the Kingdom

"After a lot of prayer we decided to disperse and give our assets to Kingdom work."

On Sept. 28 church members voted to give the building and campus to Montgomery Association, who in turn is going to carry the mortgage for the church building as it sells it to an African-American church plant in the association, Engaged Christian Church.

Gambill said members and leaders of Engaged Christian Church are excited and "will be able to reach the community where we could not."

McGehee Road Baptist's records and files will be handed over to the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission (ABHC), where Pat Musselwhite, administrative assistant, and Lonette Berg, executive director, will place the materials in the Alabama Baptist Historical Collection, housed in the Special Collection Department of Samford University's library in Birmingham.

"We take care of church materials seriously," Musselwhite said.

This service of cataloging and archiving the material — something that's important to McGehee Road Baptist's charter members as it is with many Baptists as their church closes — is "totally free," Musselwhite said.

She appreciates when church members and leaders recognize the importance of contacting ABHC when they decide to close.

"It is sad when a church closes and their records are either trashed or wind up in someone's basement," she said. "Although the church doors are closing the story of God's work in that place lives on and should be remembered and accessible to future generations."

To further assist local ministries and leave even more of a legacy, McGehee Road Baptist is dispersing its \$950,000 in assets in

several ways through the expertise of The Baptist Foundation of Alabama, Gambill said.

The two houses on the church property will be donated for use in the association's Samaritan Inn Ministry and other outlets. About \$250,000 will be given through the Cooperative Program and to church planting ministries at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, according to Gambill, and other money will be donated to a scholarship fund.

'God's will'

"In the end what I see is God's will in that the Kingdom is being advanced," Gambill said. "Even though the church is not here all the assets have gone to expand the Kingdom and that's really who we are as a church anyway."✠

"Even though the church is not here all the assets have gone to expand the Kingdom and that's really who we are as a church anyway."

Pastor Keith Gambill
McGehee Road Baptist Church, Montgomery

For more information about how to preserve church records, contact ABHC at 205-726-2363.



Rashional THOUGHTS

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

SNAPSHOTS OF LIFE WHEN LIFE HAPPENS

Could too much 'church' actually hurt believers' spiritual growth?

The concept intrigued me — worship, Sunday School, discipleship and service. Those were the only four commitments my seminary buddy said he was requesting of the members of the congregation he served as pastor.

He cut out all extracurricular activities. He urged the members to move away from the once-pushed plan to build a recreational facility. And he asked the ministers on staff to eliminate any unnecessary meetings.

He wants the congregation and staff members to dedicate themselves to growing in Christ and being salt and light in the community, not being busy at church.

If church members are so busy doing church activities, then they aren't out in the community, he said. And if they are exhausted from all the church obligations, then they won't have much energy left for their own spiritual growth, much less sharing with nonbelievers.

Overwhelmed with life

I thought more about what my friend was attempting to do in his church and remembered a strong Christian family I learned about who pulled away from church recently solely because of being overwhelmed with life. Church — which had been a major focus of this family's life for years — had diminished into one more distressful obligation riddled with guilt for not doing enough. I'm sure no one actually forced these feelings on the mother and father, but it was certainly how they were feeling and it influenced their decision to pull their family out of the church.

Many are reaching out to the family, urging them to return and sharing concerns of how being out of church is not the answer. But I'm not sure anyone is finding a way for them to simply come worship without feelings of unrealistic expectations.

Calm instead of bustling?

What if our experience in church was truly a Sabbath experience of complete and full worship of the one true living God rather than a schedule of bustling activities where we zip into the parking lot still getting ready, run into the church service five or 10 minutes late,

then rush to our Sunday School (or life group) class while catching up with friends along the way?

What if we knew our time attending church services each week would be energizing and filling but not hectic? What if we could truly clear our minds, calm our hearts and still our souls so we could hear from God in those moments and give sacrificially through our complete worship? What if we could leave our church services ready to face the world again?

Responsibility to be prepared

Of course, it is our responsibility as individual Christians to be prepared for worship and not the church staff's issue. We have to be disciplined enough to spend time in the Word throughout the week so our hearts are prepared for the corporate worship service. And we have to be disciplined enough to guard our schedules appropriately to prevent the chaos that sometimes revolves around church time.

But still I wonder if our church leaders could do more to help members see the importance of being still (Ps. 46:10). If there are constant requests to sign up for endless activities at church, then members will feel obligated and sometimes even pressured to participate, which adds one more thing to the schedule.

Rested and revived

While there are certainly special events we would not want to give up for various reasons, it would be an interesting exercise to make note of how many requests are made of us on any given Sunday morning. Do we feel rested and revived in the Lord when coming to church or do we feel overwhelmed?

I would venture to say it is somewhat seasonal based on individuals and what is happening in their lives. Sometimes we are energized by all the activity; sometimes it discourages us.

Maybe we could find a way to alternate roles based on our seasons. When we are on top of things and feeling empowered we could serve more, and when life is difficult to balance we could be given a guilt-free sabbatical from our church roles — but not attendance. ☘

RASHIONAL Extras ...



Unresolved issues

Unresolved issues in our lives prevent us from being at peace and doing our best in our work and being our best in relationships with others.

There is no Sunday School answer for how to deal with unresolved issues but when I'm faced with an unresolved issue, I remove myself if need be and get alone with God. I pray it out. For me, there is no other way to deal with it.

I may take steps such as writing a letter or making notes to follow up with whomever may be involved but never do I move forward until I have bathed it in prayer. Prayer offers me the peace I need and the resolve from Scripture through the leading of the Holy Spirit to wait on God until I know that my next move is truly His next move for me.

Years ago, while preaching through the book of Philippians, I was working diligently through Philippians 4:10-13 (I highly encourage that you read through these verses a few times before reading on) while at the same time facing internal struggles of a personal and professional nature when the Holy Spirit turned the light on so brightly for me that I couldn't see and I was gently allowed to remain still long enough to absorb the truth of Paul's "secret" as he calls it.

The secret of being content in all circumstances was just that, a secret. I needed to discover the answer before doing anything else. The answer to the secret is prayer. Certainly there is much more in the details of this truth but the heart of it is found in prayer whereby I came to know and connect all that was taking place on my behalf via God.

I recalled how in Hebrews 4 the Scripture teaches Christ is at the right hand of the Father interceding for me. In Romans 8, I know the Holy Spirit is communicating to the Father on my behalf when I am unable to pray or pray rightly. Philippians 4:6-7 tells us that the Father quiets our anxiety with His peace that passes all understanding.

My conclusion was the same as Paul's as he states in verse 13 of Chapter 4 that he/I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. To God be the glory.

Pastor Greg Walker
First Baptist Church, Helena

The best evidence of character is not rule keeping but building and maintaining healthy relationships. We often assume that relationship building is easier for people with extroverted personalities. I am less sure of that than I used to be. It is easier to convey the image of caring as an extrovert and when our personality projects warmth, but building and maintaining relationships require effort and intentionality regardless of the personality type. I wish I had learned this earlier in life.

Gary Fenton
Characterpath.com

Leaders and entrepreneurs are measured by the results they produce, not the amount of tasks they accomplish.

Michael Hyatt
Author and productivity expert

If you've stopped growing as a leader, you've stopped leading well. But often, the leaders who have stopped growing don't realize it's happened. After all, the people who lack self-awareness are never aware they lack it. Sadly, too many leaders stop growing long before they stop leading [and] they become leaders in title only.

Signs that you have stopped growing include: you prefer answers to questions; you sift through evidence only to back up your existing opinion; you spend most of your

time doing what you like; your expertise has started working against you; and you've surrounded yourself with people like you.

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Praise and worship isn't a substitute for service. But praise goes hand-in-glove with service. In fact, we may praise God best while we serve others in our world, exalting the name of the One who sent us.

Pastor Michael J. Brooks
Siluria Baptist Church, Alabaster

Alabama Baptists featured in 'Disturbances' documentary on 1966 Nigerian genocide

By Mary Wimberly
Samford University

During a bloody 1966 genocide in Nigeria that ended with as many as 50,000 Igbo tribe members murdered, a group of Christian missionaries risked their own lives to save others.

Among them were former Samford University professor Bill Cowley and his wife, Audrey (a past treasurer of national Woman's Missionary Union), who were Southern Baptist missionary educators in Jos, Nigeria, at the time. Their daughters, Carol and Karen, were ages 10 and 8.

Sharing memories

The retired missionaries are now members of Shades Crest Baptist Church, Hoover, and active in Alabama Baptist life.

Although they haven't spoken about it much through the years, the Cowleys and others have begun to share their memories



Photo by Preston Little/courtesy of Samford University

Former Samford University professor Bill Cowley (left) and his wife, Audrey, are among those featured in the new documentary on the 1966 mass killing in Nigeria. The Cowleys and other missionaries risked their lives to save others.

of the atrocities. They and other missionaries who assisted the targeted Nigerians are featured in a documentary that chronicles the tribal bloodshed in and around Jos in September 1966.

"The Disturbances," produced by the Baptist Center for Ethics, was shown at Samford on Nov. 10 and Shades Crest Baptist on Nov. 13. It will be shown at McElwain Baptist Church, Birmingham, on Dec. 6.

In September the couple spoke at Samford about the events that led to their dramatic transport of a van load of Igbos to an airplane and, ultimately, to safety.

Cliff Vaughn, one of the film's producers, joined in the discussion hosted by Samford's Global Center and religion department.

The Cowleys were assigned to Nigeria in 1955 to help start schools in anticipation of the nation's

independence in 1960.

Bill Cowley said there were at least 200 tribes in Nigeria, with 30 to 50 in the immediate area of the school. "Each had their own customs, friends and enemies."

The documentary details the events centered around the missionaries as they worked to save the lives of those threatened by the tribal genocide.

For more information, visit www.thedisturbances.com. (TAB contributed)

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Finding purposeful, passion-driven work is key, pastor says

(continued from page 1)
might have at this age just isn't there, McCarson said. But they're finding fulfillment in that kind of hands-on, purposeful work, he said.

"They want to do things that are of significance, things that are missions-minded," he said.

"In their Bible study groups here, they are very committed and outreach-oriented."

McCarson is finding that it's important to tailor events toward their unique schedules and needs.

"We had a recent trip to help flood victims, and it was a great trip, it was just kept to a shorter

duration. And once a month we try to plan a hands-on missions project for them to be a part of," he said. "It's finding things for them to do that are of substance but fit their availability."

Kenny Hoomes, associate pastor for spiritual maturity/senior adults at First Baptist Church,

Montgomery, said he also has seen an opportunity with baby boomers to harness their desire to serve for the good of the Kingdom.

Hands-on service

"For the most part these boomers are healthy, mobile, educated and have spent their lives perfecting their careers. They want to be hands-on and be involved in an atmosphere of service, not eating and meeting," Hoomes said. "Therefore the Church should discover the boomers' passion and plug into their desire to use their passion for service in God's kingdom."

Billy Dickey, discipleship and senior adult pastor at Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery, said he also has noticed an increased need for significant roles among the baby boomers in his church.

They "really like to lead the study groups, they want to feel like they are needed, a feeling of accomplishment in whatever endeavor they choose to serve," Dickey said.

They also are in need of being ministered to in a way that meaningfully fits their generation's needs, McCarson said.

"People need to start thinking about the boomers — there are a lot of needs there," he said. "I had a caregiving seminar a few weeks ago, and people wouldn't even hardly let the speaker leave because they wanted to share

their story with him. They need to know how to deal with their parents."

Another need is to help them know how to deal with financial concerns, said Barry Bledsoe, president of The Baptist Foundation of Alabama.

"As the baby boomer generation moves into retirement, they may need to sit down and re-evaluate where they are in terms of finances," he said. "Some may be ready for a full retirement, but others may realize, 'The reality is, I've got to be more careful than I thought I would; my retirement needs to include a part-time job.'"

Living longer

Boomers are poised to live longer and their parents are living longer too, Bledsoe said.

And, McCarson said, many boomers who are preparing to end their career may end up spending money earmarked for retirement to care for their aging parents instead.

"I think we'll be surprised how many boomers will end up not having enough money for retirement when we get there," he said.

So one thing churches can keep in mind when they plan their adult ministry is helping boomers be equipped to navigate this phase of life.

"We want to try to help them finish well, to help them live this season of their life to the fullest," McCarson said. ☞

LETTERS

CONFLICT ISSUE ON TARGET BUT LIGHT

I welcomed the "Faith and Family" issue on conflict with so many good articles.

I have experienced many conflicts in churches, in families and in marriages over my 50 years of ministry.

I counted 23 Scripture passages referenced and I want to say we only scratched the surface of all God says about the subject.

We too often either forget or ignore all God says whenever we engage in conflict. Out the window goes the Scripture and submission to the Spirit and in comes the flesh and the destruction that follows.

That's why I wrote "Resolving Conflict God's Way," with more than 100 commands about how we should handle and resolve everyday conflict, especially in our churches. Read on.

Jerry Wilkins

Director of missions emeritus
Tuscaloosa Baptist Association ☞

IMB trustees celebrate balanced budget, trend reversal; 50 new missionaries appointed

International Mission Board (IMB) trustees celebrated a balanced budget, unanimously approving the 2017 budget during their Nov. 10–11 meeting near Richmond, Virginia. Trustees also appointed 50 new missionaries during a Sending Celebration.

"I am pleased to share with you that because of generous giving from Southern Baptist churches to the IMB, disciples have been made and churches have been multiplied over the last year among the nations in truly breathtaking ways," IMB President David Platt told trustees.

"We have a sense of glad celebration with responsible projections," Platt said. "As we are communicating to churches, we want to say two resounding words: Thank you."

The budget presented to trustees

represents a reversal in a trend of recent years that has seen a decline of missionaries on the field. The budget proposes an increase in full-time, fully funded missionary appointments for 2017, Platt said, while also opening the door for missionaries to go through other pathways.

The 2017 budget request is balanced with receipts and expenses both projected at \$270 million. Rodney Freeman, vice president of support services and IMB treasurer, noted the budget proposal reflects short-term financial responsibility and long-term organizational stability.

Key factors presented with the budget include:

- ▶ The budget relies on the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO).
- ▶ LMCO giving projections for

the 2016 calendar year are on pace to be the largest offering in IMB history, with projections the offering could exceed the 2015 record giving by 10 percent.

▶ The 2017 budget proposal projects growth in fully funded missionaries plus new pathways that take the gospel to all peoples.

New personnel

IMB projects appointing 451 new personnel in 2017, which represents a 3 percent net increase in total field personnel (100 additional field personnel). Of those newly appointed, 351 will replace personnel who retire, complete a mid-term assignment or transition

through resignations or other departures. In 2016, 310 missionaries were appointed, bringing IMB field personnel to 3,651. This is down from a high of 5,600 missionaries in 2009.

Freeman also reported that IMB contingency reserves are projected to be at 5.5 months of operational expenses in 2017.

Platt also shared a video of the Cregg family sharing the gospel in South Asia. The video represents the upcoming Dec. 4–11 Week of Prayer for International Missions, which launches the 2016 LMCO emphasis. The appointment of 50 missionaries highlighted the meeting. (IMB, TAB)



IMB photo by Roy Burroughs
IMB President David Platt recognizes the support of 40,000 Southern Baptist churches to spread the gospel message.

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CHURCH POSITIONS

SENIOR PASTOR

Edgemont Baptist Church of Shelbyville, TN, a traditional Southern Baptist congregation, is seeking a theologically conservative, nonreformed senior pastor. Resumes may be submitted to Attn: PSC, 150 Fairfield Pike, Shelbyville, TN 37160 or email to gmf615@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Pleasant Valley Baptist Church located in Jacksonville, Alabama, is accepting resumes for a bivocational pastor. Please submit a resume of experience to pfndley63@gmail.com or to Anthony Findley, 79 Summit Crest Drive, Jacksonville, AL 36265.

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 musicsevices-committee@fbc-ac.org.

MINISTER OF MUSIC/YOUTH

Liberty Hill Baptist Church, Clanton, AL, is currently seeking a full-time minister of music and youth. Please submit resumes to: search@libertyhillonline.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@graceba.net. For more information call Joe @ 334-796-8136.

MINISTER OF CHILDREN/PRE-SCHOOL

Full-time, benefits. Parkview Baptist Church, Decatur, AL. Send resume to jenny.russell@parkviewdecatur.org.

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.

University of Mobile breaks ground on new tradition

The University of Mobile's (UM) new Great Commission Globe will be a focal point on campus, the centerpiece of a new graduation tradition and a reminder of the purpose of the Christ-centered academic community, university officials said during a groundbreaking ceremony Nov. 10.

"This will be a reminder for each of us that our primary focus as a Christ-centered academic community is to point students to Christ in preparing their minds and hearts for service to our Holy God," said UM President Timothy L. Smith.

Honoring the Lackeys

The project honors the late Fred Lackey, who died July 2, and his wife, Sue, of Athens. Lackey was a pastor, UM trustee and regent, Alabama Baptist State Convention president and leader in Southern Baptist life.

The Great Commission Globe is a granite sphere engraved with a map of the world. Water emerging from the top will cascade over the globe into a pool at the base of the fountain. The overall project includes installation of landscaping, lighting, sod and sidewalks on the front lawn of Weaver Hall, the university's first building and a signature landmark for the institution.

It will be completed in time for graduation ceremonies in May 2017, which will be held on campus for the first time in 41 years.

The upcoming graduation will mark the 50th graduating class of the Baptist-affiliated university. Previously, graduation was held on the front lawn from 1967 to 1976, then commencement moved off campus.

Smith, who was named the fourth president of the 55-year-old university in April 2016, said the project "evolved out of the establishment of our new biblical worldview that serves as the educational framework for this institution, and appreciation for Dr. Lackey, for his many years of ministry and service to the church, community and university."

The new tradition begins and ends with students placing their hands on the globe, first as they start their college journey and again as they graduate.

"When students arrive on campus, the student will touch this globe, signifying their commitment to God for the transformation of their head and heart in preparing for God's calling on their personal and professional life," Smith said.

'Ready to be sent'

Students will again touch the globe at graduation, "signifying to God that he or she is ready to be sent out in fulfilling the Great Commission," Smith said.

The Great Commission refers to Matthew 28:18-20 where Jesus instructs His disciples to spread His teachings throughout the world.

The project is being funded through donations to the "Dr. and Mrs. Fred Lackey Great Commission Tradition" campaign. (UM)



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile

Timothy L. Smith, president of the University of Mobile, speaks during the groundbreaking ceremony for the Baptist university's new Great Commission Globe, a project which will be completed in time for graduation ceremonies in May 2017.

UM reaches goal to become 'All-Steinway School'

The University of Mobile (UM) has been named an "All-Steinway School" after completing a year-long fundraising campaign to replace its inventory of aging pianos with 24 Steinway pianos.

Now students in the Christian university's music and performing arts programs are practicing and performing on pianos considered by many professional

musicians to be the finest instruments in the world.

"We are delighted to welcome University of Mobile to our family of All-Steinway Schools," said Sally Coveleskie, Steinway's national director of higher education, in notifying the university of its status as the world's 185th All-Steinway School.

The designation of All-Steinway School means 90

percent of the university's piano inventory, from the practice room to the recital hall, are designed by Steinway & Sons.

Coveleskie will tour the UM Center for Performing Arts on Nov. 18 prior to making a presentation that evening.

'World of difference'

UM raised \$518,950 in one year through the "All Steinway, All Together" campaign.

Music composition and piano major Emily LaForce said practicing on a Steinway "makes a world

of difference. My ear is better developed; my dynamics are getting so much better. As far as touch goes, it's consistent; you don't have to adjust for each piano. I think the audience hears a truer portrayal of the music I'm playing, because I have a clearer idea of what I'm practicing."

The university will celebrate the accomplishment Nov. 18 during Christmas Spectacular, UM's 14th annual holiday musical extravaganza featuring more than 250 musicians.

Christmas Spectacular audiences will have an opportunity to hear the difference when LaForce and other students are featured performing on a Steinway.

LaForce said she is excited that "everybody has rallied together to support our cause to become an All-Steinway School."

"This is huge for our piano department, and significant for our community, that we are upholding excellence in this way," she said.

'Truly blessed'

Tonya Gollotte, executive director for corporate and foundation relations, said raising all the funds needed within one year "is just remarkable."

"We are so thankful to all of our donors who graciously gave to this campaign and weren't afraid to dream big with us. This campaign was successful for two reasons: God and our donors. We are truly blessed," Gollotte said.

Christmas Spectacular performances at Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, will be Nov. 17-19 at 6:45 p.m. and Nov. 20 at 3:45 p.m. For more information, visit umobile.edu or call the UM Center for Performing Arts at 251-442-2383. (UM)



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The Alabama Baptist to mark 175 years with book, symposium, birthday party

The Alabama Baptist, a weekly subscription-based Christian newspaper, will commemorate its 175th year of continuous ministry with a year-long celebration beginning February 2017.

As part of the 175th anniversary observance, the first history of *The Alabama Baptist* will be published in a four-color fully illustrated book to be released in September 2017. Author Elizabeth Wells is drawing together material from the archives of Alabama Baptist life and stories from the paper itself to illustrate ways the state Baptist paper has impacted individuals, churches, communities and the state itself.

Other events include a birthday party in Marion, site of the paper's founding, and a symposium on the ministry of *The Alabama Baptist*.

Celebration year

During the entire celebration year, stories and pictures will be published in the paper and on the publication's website to illustrate the ongoing impact of the ministry.

"It is unusual for a weekly publication to have an unbroken min-

istry for 175 years," observed Bob Terry, editor of *The Alabama Baptist*. "Only the blessings of God, the hard work of those associated with the paper and the graciousness of Alabama Baptists made this possible."

The Alabama Baptist was independently founded in 1843 to work alongside the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

Today a formal working relationship exists between *The Alabama Baptist*, located in Birmingham, and the state convention, headquartered in Montgomery.

While covering wars, political upheaval, depression, cultural changes, civil rights, technology shifts and more, *The Alabama Baptist* has served its readers with the three-fold mission of informing readers for perspective and understanding, inspiring believers for growth as Christian disciples and connecting Baptists for missions and ministry.

As an entrepreneurial publica-

tion the paper changed owners and names several times during its early years. Since 1918 when the relationship with the Ala-

bama Baptist State Convention was established, the paper has functioned under a board of directors.

The Alabama Baptist became what some call "a trusted voice and a welcomed friend" in

the homes of Alabama Baptists. Today it is the largest circulated Baptist newspaper in the nation. For each of the last 20 years the publication has been chosen as one of the top regional Christian newspapers by Associated Church Press, Evangelical Press Association or Religion Communicator's Council.

Information on reserving copies of *TAB*'s 175th anniversary book is available at www.thealabamabaptist.org or by calling 1-800-803-5201. (*TAB*)



Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

Latest CP giving below anticipated amount

NASHVILLE — The opening month of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) 2016–2017 fiscal year was 4.54 percent below the opening month for 2015–2016 and 2.73 percent below the projected budget for the first month, according to a news release from Executive Committee President and CEO Frank S. Page.

As of Oct. 31, gifts received distribution through the Cooperative Program Allocation Budget totaled \$15,320,010, or \$728,429.92 below the \$16,048,439.92 received in October 2015.

The October total of \$15,320,010 is \$429,990 below the \$15,750,000 monthly allocation budget projection to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America.

Meanwhile, designated giving of \$3,518,636.92 during October was 3.59 percent, or \$121,877.29, above gifts of \$3,396,759.63 received in October 2015. (BP)

'Insanity of God' DVD to be released Nov. 21

NASHVILLE — For those who missed the two simulcasts of the feature documentary film "The Insanity of God" on Nov. 9 and 13, a DVD of the film will be released Nov. 21.

Produced by the International Mission Board and Cooke Pictures and distributed by LifeWay Films, "The Insanity of God" tells the story of missionaries Nik and Ruth Ripken. After the death of their son, the couple traveled to 72 countries into the depths of the persecuted Church to find out if God actually makes a difference in difficult places. The film is based on a best-selling book of the same name.

More than 1,000 churches registered for the two simulcasts. (BP, *TAB*)

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The Alabama Baptist
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Historical HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



50 Years Ago November 1966

The 144th Alabama Baptist State Convention, meeting in Birmingham, had to deal with a “problem” that most Southern Baptist leaders would welcome — raising the annual budget goal because of greatly increased missions giving from the churches. The convention expected to ap-

prove a budget of about \$5.8 million but instead passed a more than \$6 million budget because of numbers showing that Alabama Baptists had surpassed their giving goal. It was an all-time record, and messengers from the 2,902 Baptist churches in the state reaffirmed the fact that 35 percent of all Cooperative Program gifts would be earmarked for Southern Baptist causes.

displaying “firmness of speech” and “effectiveness of action.” The House of Representatives was petitioned in protest of a bill introduced by a New York delegate which gave the postmaster general power to exclude religiously offensive publications from the mail.

150 Years Ago November 1866

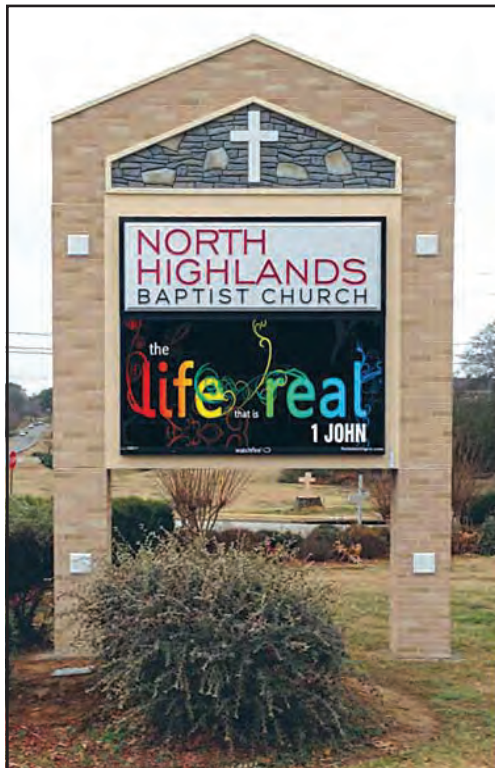
April 16, 1865, was the last issue of the *South Western Baptist* in Tuskegee. Federal troops went through the town and placed the editor, Samuel Henderson, under \$20,000 bond with orders to cease publication of the newspaper.

Although Henderson was given a reprieve for the debt and permitted to again publish, because the South’s mail system was almost suspended and its economy was so bad, Henderson decided not to continue at that time.

However, Henderson searched for an answer believing the need for a religious newspaper was so great during this lamentable time. According to the report of Jan. 6, 1866, opportunity came for he and J.J. Toon, editor of Georgia’s *Christian Index* to unite with offices in Atlanta. Therefore, the *Christian Index and the South Western Baptist* publication began. ☞

100 Years Ago November 1916

The Alabama Baptist published a resolution passed by the Northern convention “to show that the Baptist protest against the aggressiveness of Catholicism in America is not merely confined to the South.” The resolution resolved that traditional doctrine of separation between Church and state be reaffirmed to guarantee religious liberty. The resolution reflected opposition to taxpayers maintaining parochial schools, which Baptists believed should remain private institutions. They also protested attempts in various sections to prevent freedom of speech by mob violence, to curtail freedom through mail and to stop the press from discussing the questions arising from these issues. Baptists were called upon to be moderate and kind while still



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 20

Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

ON GUARD

2 Peter 2:1-3; Jude 1:16-25

Exposed (2 Pet. 2:1-3; Jude 1:16)

Peter is warning the Church. The Church has a Chief Shepherd (Jesus), shepherds, sheep and, unfortunately, wolves. Martin Luther said: "With the wolves you cannot be too severe, and with the weak sheep you cannot be too gentle."

Peter describes the false teachers who secretly bring into the Church destructive heresies. A heresy is when someone who claims to be a Christian denies a first-order truth taught in the Bible. Heretics secretly introduce false teachings into the Church to lead people astray. These heresies will be contrary to what Christ and the apostles laid down as foundational truths, resulting in spiritual ruin rather than life.

Their sensuality will appeal to many people. They will advocate loose living by teaching low standards on sin. These false teachers do not seek to restrain sin. Oftentimes they will encourage sensual living. The result of their false teaching is that the way of truth will be blasphemed. No fear of God leads to the slander of God. Blaspheming includes judging what God did. False teachers judge God. They act as if God must give an account to them.

Greed also drives the false teachers. They spell the word prophet as "profit." They exploit believers with their false words for the sake of material gain. Throughout history false teachers have been characterized by sexual sin, a lust for money and dishonesty. The Bible assures us that all such false teachers will face condemnation and destruction.

Predicted (Jude 1:17-19)

Jude also warns the Church. He calls them "beloved," emphasizing his personal concern for the readers and God's love for them. Jude wants them to remember the

apostles had predicted the emergence of ungodly scoffers within the Church during the last days. These scoffers come from within, having become part of the Church by deceptive means and acting like true Christians. But they are led astray by following their subjective feelings and ungodly passions that are contrary to the Word of God.

These scoffers cause divisions and are described as worldly people who are devoid of the Holy Spirit. These worldly people are causing divisions within the Church over many things, but especially over issues of doctrine and morality. Jude describes them as unbelievers, natural men who do not have the Holy Spirit. We know from Romans 8:9 that the presence of the Holy Spirit is a mark of a Christian. People who lack the Holy Spirit do not belong to God.

This secret infiltration should not catch Jesus' followers off guard. The apostles had forewarned the disciples that false teachers would arise. Foreseeing the arrival of false teachers should strengthen the faith of the Church since it confirms the truth of the faith that was delivered to the saints.

Countered (Jude 1:20-25)

Jesus' followers are to keep themselves in the love of God by growing strong doctrinally, persevering in prayer and "waiting" for the Lord's coming. Believers are to keep themselves in God's love, but Jude writes that God Himself keeps His people (1:1-2, 24-25). God promises to keep and preserve the faith of His own people, so that no true believer will ever lose His salvation.

We are called to show mercy to everyone, even our opponents. To save some people involves snatching them out of the fire of God's judgment. Others caught in immorality also should be shown mercy, yet with fear, lest the Christian be influenced for evil by the person he is seeking to restore. We should hate the sin but treat the sinner with mercy.✠

Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Religion, Samford University

UNSTOPPABLE IMPACT

Acts 17:16-18, 22-23, 30-31

The introduction to the Gospel of Luke, the first volume of the Luke-Acts series, suggests Luke was writing to correct some misconceptions that had developed concerning the movement we now know as Christianity. Luke's use of the title "most excellent" suggests he was writing to a Roman official (see Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25) who needed to know "the truth concerning the things about which you have been informed" (Luke 1:4).

As Christianity began to move into the wider Roman world, it could hardly help but stir up trouble. When Paul spoke in Jewish synagogues, many embraced his message. Others though found his message to be blasphemous and sought to run him out of town or worse. When it came to Gentiles, some accepted Paul's messages, but some were on the verge of starting riots over his preaching (Acts 19). Luke apparently wrote to Theophilus to assure him that these "Christ followers" were no threat to Rome. They were a peaceful sect of Judaism, followers of a religious leader named Jesus and obedient in every respect to their Roman rulers.

But, of course, this was only partly true. While this new movement was indeed stocked with followers of Jesus who were peaceful and submissive to a fault, their message would ultimately strike an absolutely mortal blow to the gods of Rome. Within three centuries the very emperor of Rome would declare himself a Christian.

Engage the culture around you. (16-18)

What could have led to such a radical transformation? Well, it began with the early Christians' determination to reach out to the Gentile world around them. Having escaped from several close calls in Thessalonica and

Berea, the apostle Paul found himself in the important city of Athens. Though Athens was rightly famous as a center of learning and erudition, as Paul walked around the city, he was more troubled by its idolatry than impressed by its wisdom. Never one to back down from a challenge, Paul began to preach the message of Jesus each day in both synagogue and marketplace.

Find a common ground for introducing the gospel. (22-23)

Paul's preaching in the marketplace led to his being led up to the Areopagus itself, the place where all the talking heads of the day would ply their trade. Paul's first step was to find some common ground with his audience. Having seen all their idols, Paul commended the Athenians for being a religious people. His message would be different from what they had heard before though. Having seen an idol to an unknown god, Paul declared, "What you worship as unknown, this I will proclaim to you."

Help others understand the truth of the gospel. (30-31)

The beginning of Paul's message to the Athenians was one they must have found fascinating: God made heaven and earth and He made human beings. Surely that sort of deity could not be confined to a house or an idol made by human hands. The end of his message though was bound to elicit a negative response. Not content to while away the time with philosophical reflections on the nature of God, Paul quickly moved to the heart of his message: repentance. God had overlooked the times of ignorance from humanity's past. But now a new era had been heralded by the arrival of God's Son in human flesh. Having sent His Son as the last act of His plan for humanity's salvation, the time to make a choice had arrived. As Paul and those who followed in his footsteps continued to press this message, the very world itself was changed.✠

Christian Crossword

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Across

1. Thou shalt call His ____ Jesus. (Matt. 1:21)

5. They shall call His name _____. (Matt. 1:23)

11. Revises.

13. A cry of pain.

14. Avenue. (abbr.)

15. His name shall be called _____. (Isa. 9:6)

18. Married.

19. Rhode Island. (abbr.)

20. The meek shall ____ and be satisfied. (Ps. 22:26)

21. Good, better, ____.

23. Soon.

28. Characteristic.

30. King of Tyre. (1 Kings 5:1)

31. Be of good _____. (Acts 23:11)

33. Purpose.

34. South Carolina. (abbr.)

35. Damaged.

37. And, ____, the angel of

the Lord came upon them. (Luke 2:9)

38. Estimated time of arrival. (abbr.)

39. Aramaic "son of."

40. Greek letter.

41. Egg-shaped.

43. On all sides.

45. Cure.

46. Rim.

47. Serpent.

48. Extra sensory perception. (abbr.)

50. Light. (abbr.)

51. I will ____ up mine eyes. (Ps. 121:1)

52. The ____ of a trumpet. (Ps. 47:5)

Down

1. Sing unto him a ____ song. (Ps. 33:3)

2. "Come, let us ____ Him."

3. Pastor.

4. Estimated time of

departure. (abbr.)

6. My ____ shall speak of wisdom. (Ps. 49:3)

7. A tool.

8. United Auto Workers. (abbr.)

9. ____ Father, The Prince of Peace. (Isa. 9:6)

10. But if ye be ____ of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:18)

12. Southeast. (abbr.)

16. Musical note.

17. When they ____, I will not hear. (Jer. 14:12)

21. Composer of organ music.

22. Ye that ____ at his word. (Isa. 66:5)

24. Buckeye state.

25. Edge.

26. Transpose. (abbr.)

27. Young Men's Christian Association. (abbr.)

29. Region.

32. The ____ is the end of the world. (Matt. 13:39)

33. Continually.

36. Cart.

38. Left-handed man. (Judg. 3:15)

40. Edgar Allen ____.

41. Spoken.

42. Unit of electrical current.

44. Whatsoever ye do in word or _____. (Col. 3:17)

48. ____cetera.

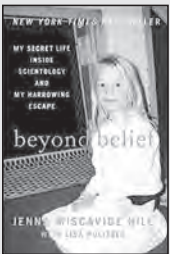
49. Postscript. (abbr.)

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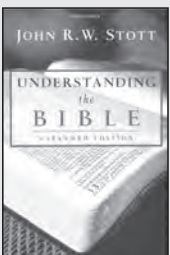
1. Beyond Belief

By Jenna Miscavige Hill
& Lisa Pulitzer
(William Morrow)



2. Shaken

By Tim Tebow
& A.J. Gregory
(WaterBrook)



3. Understanding the Bible

By John R.W. Stott
(Zondervan)



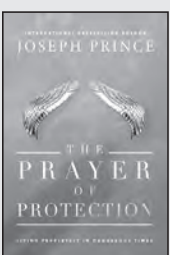
6. The Prayer of Protection

By Joseph Prince
(FaithWords)



7. Hope

By Bill Crowder
(Our Daily Bread Ministries)



9. The Purpose Driven Life

By Rick Warren
(Zondervan)

10. Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time

By Marcus J. Borg
(HarperOne)

Source: popvortex.com at press time



Photo courtesy of BEC Recordings

Alabama rock band aims for life-changing encounters

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The message behind the music starts with the name for the Birmingham-based Christian rock band Nine Lashes.

"The name came from the whip that they used on Jesus during the crucifixion, and it's a reminder of everything that He went through for us and the intense level of torture that He endured to save us," lead singer Jeremy Dunn said. "We thought the name would be a good conversation starter. When people ask what it means, we are able to share what we're all about and tell about our living hope that endures and His sacrifice for us."

More than having a passion for music, the group has a desire to see lives changed for God's glory.

The group enjoys interacting with students and providing opportunities for them to experience the gospel message being lived out through authentic relationships.

"Psalm 119 has really spoken to me about our purpose," Dunn said. "It's the longest chapter and right in the center of the Bible. This chapter really clicked with me about a love for the Word of God and His promises. It talks about His Word being such a sure thing that you can build your life on. It really spoke volumes to me and reminded me of the importance of having a daily relationship with Him and spending time in His Word."

Steadfast commitment

Wherever the group performs, they offer more than a concert. They hope to provide students and young adults with a life-changing encounter.

As the group maintains a busy touring schedule performing in concert venues and Christian music festivals around the country, they remain committed to the music, mission and message that will help connect students to Christ.

Dunn feels strongly about leading teenagers to Christ

because it was his profession of faith in Christ that led to creating Nine Lashes.

"I hope people leave our concerts being drawn closer to God," Dunn said. "If they don't already have a relationship with Christ, our prayer is that there is a stirring in their heart to find out more about Him and a desire to have a personal relationship with Him. For those who are already believers, we hope they are encouraged to go deeper in their walk with Him."

With their new album, "Ascend," the group wanted to focus on rich imagery while inspiring students to pursue Christ.

"For this album we really wanted to focus on the theme of having a relationship with Christ and the hope of eternity," Dunn said. "When I'm working on new songs, I often get a picture in my mind of the story that I'm sharing. Lately what's been on my mind a lot is Christ's return and how amazing it's going to be to meet our Savior."

"I took that picture in my mind and ran with it to create these songs. Hopefully people are connecting with these songs, and there's an eagerness and

longing to see our Savior face to face."

The group is encouraged and inspired by the testimonies of students who are finding hope and healing as a result of these songs.

"We love being able to make a difference in people's lives and hearing the testimonies," Dunn said. "Each night we've had kids come up to us who have shared about their thoughts of suicide and have told us that our songs helped get them through those dark times and offered hope and a way out."

"That's the most incredible and humbling thing — to know that the Lord is using these songs to make a difference in someone's life and they find encouragement and the strength to go on. It's been huge to see the impact of how the music is reaching people. It's such a God thing." ¶



Motivated by faith



Former Alabama Baptist Holly Frew recently went to Azraq Refugee Camp in Jordan (pictured here) to minister amid the refugee crisis.

Photo by Mary Kate MacIsaac/CARE

International aid worker 'built' in Alabama

By Carolyn Tomlin
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Assisting with recovery efforts in Haiti following the destruction created by Hurricane Matthew is just one of the latest disaster areas in 37-year-old Holly Frew's life.

The former Alabama Baptist serves as the emergency communications officer for Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), an international humanitarian organization based out of Atlanta. She attributes the preparation for her life's work to her upbringing at home and as part of Gardendale First Baptist Church.

"I'll never forget the first time I saw poverty," Frew said, noting her first missions experience was to Jamaica during her sophomore year in high school.

And after studying abroad for a semester during her college years at the University of Alabama, Frew discovered the need for volunteer work but she stuck to her plan to work for a pharmaceutical company after graduation. She moved to Atlanta and began her career.

Even though Frew loved her work, she could not shake the feeling that God was calling her to something special — something she couldn't identify. During this same time period, she and a friend volunteered for a missions trip to Africa and it was there she discovered what that something was.

Preparing for Africa

"This was a mountain-top experience," Frew said. She returned home only to quit her job and begin preparations to return to Africa.

"I had to raise my own money to pay for the trip and six months of living expenses. Donations came from churches, speaking engagements on 'why' I was going to Africa and fund-raising parties," she said. "In 2005, I was in Swaziland, Africa — an area with one of the highest AIDS rates in the world. I was involved in a 'Beat the Drum' program where I spoke to students and encouraged abstinence. During this time, I was the student."

It was a humbling experience, Frew said, noting she has grown in her perspective on how to help others in need since that first missions trip to Jamaica. And through it all she is motivated by faith as she serves God while serving others.

"As an example, when I was in Africa, people had very little in material wealth," she said. "Yet, they had simple homes, love of family and they were happy people."

'Deeper calling'

"I might add, I was a novice when I first went to Africa," Frew noted. "As Christians, we should go with good intentions. And go when we feel the 'call,' but we must be mindful of what we do. There is a deeper calling and it makes you humble. Those of us who do this work are not heroes. The heroes are those people whose homes have been destroyed, refugees who are struggling just to feed their children, those who are trying against all odds just to stay alive. These are the real heroes."

Noting her current focus on the Middle East, Frew said, "The desire of my heart is to serve God and people." And when life becomes difficult, she

is reminded of a favorite verse, John 16:33: "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart. I have overcome the world."

Frew's mother, Stephanie, said her daughter's heart for missions was always present.

"As a teenager, Holly was always involved in local missions opportunities," Stephanie Frew said. "Once they gave out light bulbs, connecting it with the verse, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life'" (John 8:12).

And after Holly Frew returned from Haiti recently, the mother-daughter duo stopped by a store to pick up a few personal items.

Stephanie Frew said, "Suddenly I noticed tears streaming down her cheeks [and asked her what was wrong]."

Holly Frew answered, "Oh, Mom, we have so much in this country. I see people in disaster areas that have nothing." ☕

For more information about
CARE, visit www.care.org.

RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services

Iowa churches safe from anti-bias law, judge says

DES MOINES, Iowa — An Iowa church is dropping its lawsuit against the state and the city of Des Moines after a federal judge issued a ruling protecting the church's religious liberty.

The District Court judge has ruled that churches do not count as "public accommodations" under the Iowa Civil Rights Act and are not subject to censorship of their views on marriage and sexuality.

Fort Des Moines Church of Christ filed suit in July seeking protection from nondiscrimination laws in its city and state.

Amid growing debate over the use of public restrooms by transgender people, the church wanted to publish clear guidelines that men and women should use the restrooms and showers corresponding with their biological sex. But the church feared repercussions from the state after it read statements from the Iowa Civil Rights Commission that implied churches must comply with a 2007 amendment to the Iowa Civil Rights Act that made sexual orientation and gender identity protected classes.

The commission revised the brochure, saying it did not intend to apply the law to churches.

Christiana Holcomb, counsel for the Alliance Defending Freedom, which represented the church, lauded the ruling and said it would not take the lawsuit further.

"This lawsuit was necessary to ensure that the state won't try to enforce the law against churches, and we're pleased that Iowa churches now have the reassurance and clarity that they need," she said. (WORLD News Group)

Supreme Court to hear transgender restroom case

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court announced Oct. 28 that it would hear the case of Gavin Grimm, a transgender high school student born female but seeking the right to use the boys' restroom.

Grimm, who attends Gloucester High School in southeastern Virginia, was allowed at first to use the boys' restroom, according to The Christian Post. Later the school implemented a policy requiring students to use restrooms matching their birth gender but providing three private restrooms for "students with gender identity issues."

Grimm filed a lawsuit against Gloucester County Public Schools in 2015 that went to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in Richmond, which ordered school leadership to allow Grimm to use the boys' restroom.

In September 2015, U.S. District Court Judge Robert G. Doumar backed school officials, ruling against Grimm. But in April the Fourth Circuit ruled against Doumar.

Now the Supreme Court will hear the case, which has wide-reaching ramifications on the political debate over the extent to which public schools should accommodate transgender students, according to The Christian Post. (TAB)

Atheist billboard removed in Nebraska

LINCOLN, Neb. — An atheist billboard has been removed from where it was posted in Lincoln, Nebraska, after residents in the area said they would boycott surrounding businesses if it wasn't taken down.

The billboard, which said, "The Good Life Without God? It's possible," was sponsored by the Lincoln Atheists and was meant to stay up until Nov. 10, according to The Christian Post.

The advertising company, Lamar Advertising, took it down, saying they had to respect the landowners at Subway-Phillips 66, which leases the company space for the billboard.

"At this point, we're just going to refund them all of their money, even though they got some display time," said Scott Morton, general manager of Lamar's Lincoln branch.

Shawn Capler, marketing director of the Lincoln Atheists, was quoted as saying that the group was "disappointed that we don't get an equal platform to share ideas." (TAB)