

# THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



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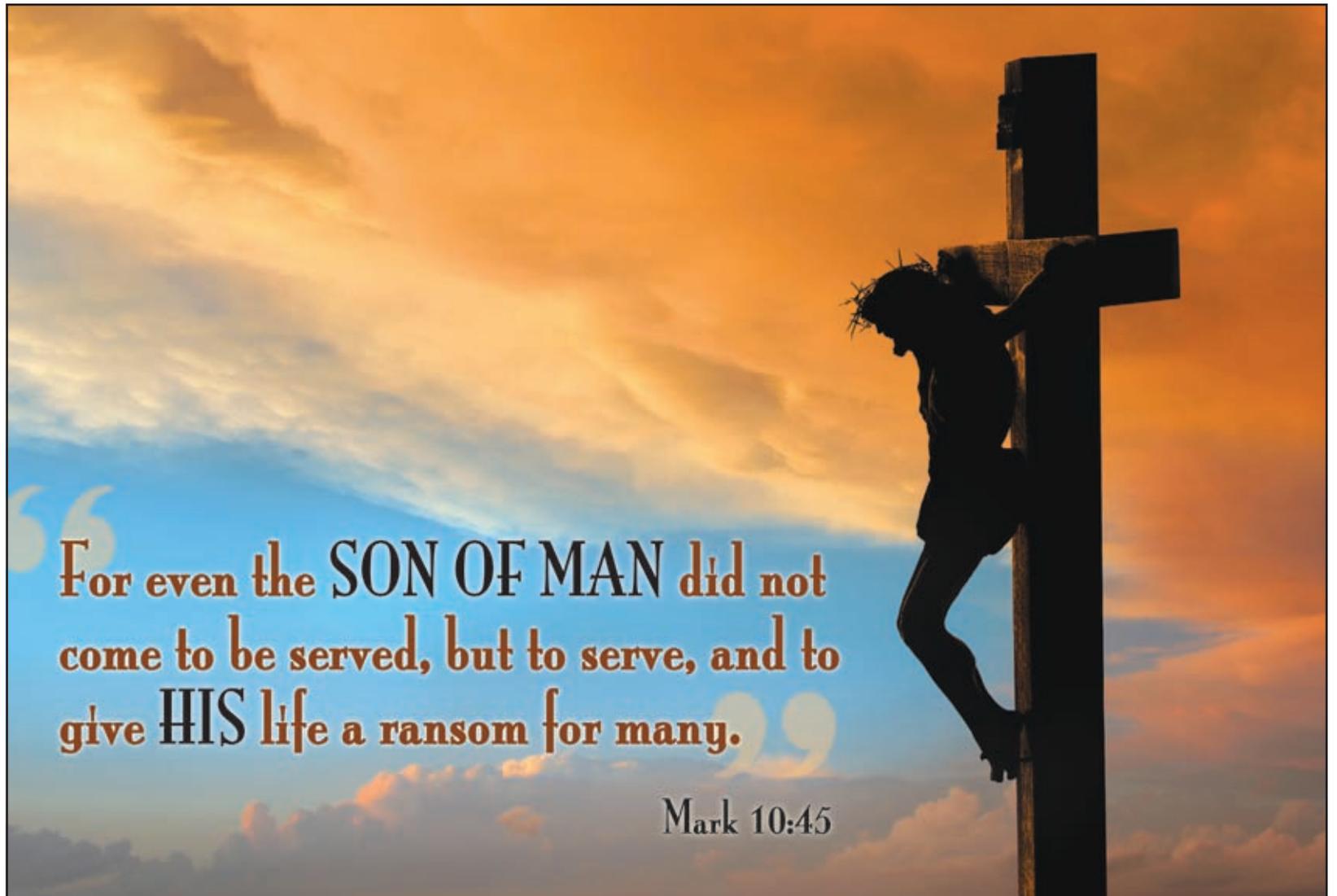


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## 'A simple, personal invitation'

### Americans open to being invited to church, recent study shows

Despite worries among evangelicals that Americans are set against attending church, most people would attend if invited in a way that sparks their responsiveness.

A recent study by the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and LifeWay Research found that 67 percent of Americans say a personal invitation from a family member would be effective in getting them to visit a church. A personal invitation from a friend or neighbor would be effective for 63 percent of those surveyed.

"We want to help Christians discover what approaches work best in today's culture," said Ken Weathersby, NAMB senior strategist for evangelization. "It's not about changing the gospel but determining how best to share it."

Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) are willing to receive information about a local congregation or faith community from a family member, and 56 percent are willing to receive such information from a friend or neighbor.

"The primary lesson North American believers should learn from this research is that many of your unchurched friends are ready for an invitation to conversation," said Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research. "Unbelievers next door still need a simple, personal invitation to talk, to be in community and to church. Clearly relationships are important and work together with marketing."

The survey, commissioned by

NAMB and conducted by LifeWay Research, may be the largest survey ever conducted of Americans' receptivity to different methods of church invitations. LifeWay Research, the research arm of LifeWay Christian Resources, surveyed more than 15,000 adults in December 2008 using a random, demographically balanced, stratified sample of Americans. NAMB commissioned the research as one of the steps to prepare for God's Plan for Sharing, its national evangelism initiative that will launch nationwide in 2010.

Of 13 approaches tested, personal invitations from family members or friends is the only method that a majority of Americans say would effec-

tively draw them to church. Visiting door to door received the least favorable reception.

Less than a quarter of Americans (24 percent) are willing to receive information from a local congregation through a visit to their door. Nevertheless 31 percent say a visit to their door would be effective in getting them or others to visit a church.

Church advertising efforts take a back seat to personal invitations from family and friends. Americans say they are somewhat willing or very willing to receive information about church via newspaper ads (46 percent), radio ads (41 percent) and television ads (40 percent).

(See 'Advertising,' page 3)

Invite your friends  
and family to church  
on Easter Sunday,  
**April 12**

# COMMENT

## Just as God Promised

**R**ead the verses and many people will swear they come from the New Testament.

“He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. ...

“[H]e was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities ...

“He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth ...

“He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death ...”

The words read like an eyewitness description of what happened to Jesus before, during and after His crucifixion.

Yet these words were written more than 700 years before Jesus was born. These verses come from what scholars call the fourth Servant Song of the Book of Isaiah. The term “Suffering Servant” is frequently used to describe the passage. The complete text is Isaiah 52:13–53:12, and these verses are the closest thing to the cross of Christ found in the Old Testament. Perhaps that is why portions of the text can be found in all four of the Gospels, as well as in Acts, Romans, Philippians, Hebrews and 1 Peter.

In Israel recently, a group of Alabama Baptists visiting the Holy Land was told the verses describe the nation of Israel, an interpretation that has grown popular since the Holocaust. It is true that the Servant in some parts of Isaiah refers to the people of God, or Israel. But not here. Several technical issues argue against such an interpretation. More importantly, the text is clear that the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 is not Israel. Throughout the chapter, the Suffering Servant is described as the innocent suffering for the guilty. The Servant is the perfect sacrificial lamb described in Leviticus 5–6.

### Falling short

No one contends that Israel, as a people, was such a lamb. Like all others, Israel has always been characterized as falling short of the glory of God.

Perhaps that is why ancient scholars such as the great and pivotal Moses Maimonides wrote in the Letter to the South that Isaiah 53 referred to “King Messiah.”

But he would be a strange king. People would have trouble believing he was a king. His body would be disfigured and his form unlike any man’s (Isa. 52:14). Ancient rabbis tried to understand such a Suffering Servant or king, and some concluded he would be a “leper messiah.” They had no idea what a Roman cat-o’-nine-tails could do to a body.

By the time the words of Isaiah 53 were written, the house of David had been cut down like a giant tree felled by an ax. But from the roots of God’s promise of an everlasting throne to David’s seed, a tender shoot would grow. Maimonides called it “a sucker.” From an unlikely source, God would



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

surprise the world with His message of reconciliation. Misfortune would be the constant companion of this King Messiah. And so it was with Jesus. His family thought Him crazy. The temple priests plotted His death. His hometown friends rejected Him. Even places such as Capernaum where He performed miracle after miracle refused to believe in Him, and its unbelief earned it a curse (Matt. 11:20–24).

Of Himself, Jesus said, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head.” Surely He was acquainted with grief.

The writer seems astonished as he pours out verb after verb describing the actions inflicted on this king: took, carried, stricken, smitten, afflicted, pierced, crushed and more. Finally the writer declared that “all ... have gone astray.” But in taking on “the iniquity of us all,” this Suffering Servant — this King Messiah — brought all back together again.

In Philippians 2:8, Paul wrote, “And being found in appearance as a man, [Jesus] humbled Himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!” In that death, He was pierced first by spikes through His hands and feet, a crown of thorns around His brow and then a spear to His side. The event was marked by disdain and ridicule. Some shouted for Him to “save Himself” as He saved others. He was spat upon as people found perverse joy in His torture.

But there was another side to this experience. Jesus said of His life, “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord” (John 10:18). He told Peter that He could call legions of angels to protect Him but He did not (Matt. 26:53).

Instead, like that perfect sacrificial lamb, Jesus went to His own slaughter without a word or a whimper — “He opened not His mouth.” The guiltless taking on Himself the guilt of the world. He who knew no sin was made to be sin that we might be saved (2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus died — “cut off from the land of the living” — for our transgressions.

Maimonides’ King Messiah would be assigned a grave with the wicked. And Jesus was. He died between two thieves. Like all who died that way, His body was to be cast into the Valley of Gehenna to be burned with the rest of the garbage. Yet this

Suffering Servant was also to be with the rich in His death (Isa. 53:9).

It was Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, who claimed the body of Jesus and buried it in his own tomb, a place where no other had yet been laid. How like Isaiah’s words were the circumstances of Jesus’ death, even down to the smallest detail.

Does the Lord will suffering as Isaiah 53:10 contends? Yes. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed “not as I will, but as You will.” Earlier He told Nicodemus that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” In the crucifixion, those words became reality.

### Suffering with purpose

Jesus’ suffering was not useless suffering. It was suffering with a purpose. It was willing suffering. Jesus’ suffering brought salvation for all who believe on the name of the only begotten Son of God. Isaiah wrote that even though the Suffering Servant died, he would “see the light of life and be satisfied.” That is a description of Easter. On the third day, the One into whose care Jesus committed His soul reached into the grave and raised His Son to life eternal. Sin was overcome. The grave was defeated. Salvation was offered to all who believe.

And now the Suffering Servant, the King Messiah, Jesus the Christ sits at the right hand of God making intercession for all who will believe. As Isaiah said, He is satisfied.

And it all happened just as God promised more than 700 years earlier. Praise be to God. 

## THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

“If ye continue in my word, then ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31–32).

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## Advertising can enhance invitations

(continued from page 1)

People reacted similarly to receiving information from a local congregation through outdoor advertising (46 percent) and letters mailed to the home (45 percent). Just more than 10 percent are very willing to receive information from those forms of advertising; up to a third, somewhat willing. Less than 10 percent, however, think such ads would be very effective in getting them or others to visit a church.

"This research confirms that media advertising efforts can undergird and enhance those personal approaches while not relying on them alone," said Brandon Pickett, leader of NAMB's communications team.

Internet communication from churches also is unwelcome by most Americans; 66 percent of those surveyed are unwilling to receive information through an e-mail message, and 70 percent say e-mail would be ineffective in getting them to visit a church.

In addition to the method of inviting, the inviter's denomination makes a difference. Americans are most open to invitations from nondenominational churches and least open to invitations from Mormons.

Twenty percent of respondents selected a nondenominational church when asked in the survey, "Considering your response to the methods used by a local congregation or faith community ... would the invitation be more effective, less effective or about the same if you knew the invitation was from one of the following types of churches?"

Southern Baptist invitations are more effective for 11 percent of Americans, while Roman Catholic invitations are more effective for 15 percent.

### Denominational identity 'a factor'

More than two-thirds (67 percent) find invitations from Mormons less effective. Invitations from a Pentecostal church are less effective for half of Americans.

"It is not surprising that denominational identification is a factor," Stetzer said. "Other studies have shown that many have background, experience or some connection with one or more denominations that would shape their opinions about congregations that bear these titles."

At particular points in life, people are more open to considering matters of faith, the survey found. For nearly half of the respondents (47 percent), the Christmas season is the most common time for them to be open to spiritual matters. Americans also are open to matters of faith during the Easter season (38 percent), after a major national crisis such as 9/11 (38 percent), after a natural disaster (34 percent) and following the birth of a baby (28 percent).

But once people receive information from a community of faith, there are very few follow-up steps they are willing to take. The only scenario to which a majority of Americans (52 percent) might visit a church is by receiving a postcard from a church about upcoming talks on topics that matter to them.

The least appealing follow-up option is making a phone call. If Americans see an ad with interesting information about matters of faith and an 800 number to request more information, then less than 20 percent say they would call.

Finally the survey asked Americans about their likely first response if they wanted more information about God. A third say they would read a Bible, 19 percent would attend a church service and 10 percent would talk to a Christian friend. Only 1 percent would watch a preacher or worship service on television, and 1 percent would explore the Web site of a local church. Less than 1 percent would ask questions in an anonymous chat room or online community.

"Churches may be discouraged to see potential responses of less than 10 percent, yet even Jesus Christ referred to small percentages when He referred to leaving the 99 to go after one lost sheep," Stetzer said. "Believers are a people committed to faithful sharing of the gospel, and we can trust the Holy Spirit in His faithful work in drawing people to a saving knowledge of Christ." (BP)

# Changes in personal, corporate prayer can freshen up church's prayer ministry

By Donna J. Wright

Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Has your church's prayer ministry become stale? Has the initial excitement died down and energy dwindled? Does it need revitalization?

A fresh look at this ministry can help your church start again or begin one for the first time, according to Elaine Helms, prayer/spiritual awakening coordinator for the North American Mission Board (NAMB). And your new start might look completely different than what you first had in mind, she said.

"God blesses obedience and not technique," said Helms during the Great Commission Prayer Conference sponsored jointly by NAMB and the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and held Feb. 6-7 at First Baptist Church, Montgomery. "Your prayer ministry may not look like any of the rest. The first step is to seek Him first. Pray for God's vision."

Often churches attempt to "re-do" their prayer ministry by simply repeating what they have done in the past. But the culture and community around the church is changing, so those old methods may need to be updated, she explained.

Helms offered these suggestions for a renewed prayer ministry:

#### ► Expand the options.

Prayer ministries oftentimes focus on a location, such as a prayer room at the church, but prayer can take place anywhere, so that allows for more options, Helms said. To increase participation, she suggested expanding the opportunities past the pastor's prayer partners or those who pray during the services.

"The key is to make the ministry appeal to a wide range of prayer interests and availabilities," Helms said. "Some will want to focus on missions, others on the lost, still others on

health needs. Making the focus too narrow will leave out the passion of some prayer warriors. Any focus that increases prayer is a positive."

#### ► Keep participants updated.

Promote the ministry so that members know how to get involved and how to share and update their prayer needs and answers to prayer, Helms said. "Prayer rooms are great, but

prayer needs lists often can become outdated if follow-up is not made. People are quick to request prayer but often do not call back to report results."

Keeping request lists updated is something volunteers should do to help prayer ministry participants see how God is answering their prayers, Helms said, adding that e-mail and text messaging can also help keep intercessors informed without having to travel to a central location.

#### ► Consider changing the way corporate prayer is handled.

"Some of the common complaints of corporate prayer time are that people cannot hear each other pray and the prayers are often too long and on a variety of topics," Helms said. "Prayers in a circle often result in people thinking of what they are going to pray rather than agreeing in prayer with the other intercessors."

Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's guidance so that people can join together and focus on the same topic, she said.

"It is hard to admit prayer is boring. But if you can't hear and someone prays so long that you cannot participate, there is not another word for it," Helms said. "Popcorn prayers work well because groups of people can pray for the same topic together. They don't have to wait their turn and prayers are shorter and to the point. Allow the Holy Spirit to direct your prayer." ❏



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## Eastdale Church takes in homeless

By Anna Swindle

Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

When Eastdale Baptist Church, Montgomery, in Montgomery Baptist Association became interested in a new missions outreach, it wanted to keep things local. Family Promise, a Montgomery organization that helps homeless families gather resources and support, seemed to be worth a try.

"It's been a great opportunity to do missions without leaving Montgomery," said Lead Pastor Josh Lansford. "We needed a way to get involved in missions and this was right here."

Family Promise is a way for homeless families to be connected to a community and try to get back on their feet. During their 30 days in the program, parents take part in job searches, as well as financial and emotional counseling, while their children are in school.

"The church's role is to be a place to stay at night and to be a comfortable place for them to fellowship," Lansford said. The families stay at Eastdale for a week of the 30-day period.

Now Eastdale Baptist is planning its third week of Family Promise sponsorship and volunteer numbers are increasing as more church members express interest in the ministry.

Beth Ann Marra, executive director of Family Promise, said the organization's ultimate desire is for families who don't have a church home to find one. "Our volunteers, without ever having to say it, are truly the hands and feet of Christ. It's a beautiful model of providing a very valuable service — the basic needs of life — during a very difficult time for a family."

Initially recruiting volunteers was one of the most difficult aspects of the ministry, according to Zina Elston, a member of Eastdale and a key player in the church's involvement with Family Promise. Part of the problem was overcoming preconceived notions attached to the homeless.

"A lot of people believe that these are problems people created themselves, but Family Promise really stresses that they don't deal with people who are chronically homeless but situationally homeless," Elston said. She added the ministry humanizes the word "homeless" for volunteers and once they help with it, they want to be a part of it again.

Since Eastdale's first Family Promise outreach last November, Elston said she and her fellow planners have learned a few things. Before the next group of families comes to the church May 31-June 7, it will offer volunteer training to help people feel more prepared to contribute.

Volunteer Lori Deal pointed out that there are a number of ways to contribute from providing food and linens to praying for a family.

### Seeing 'who we really are'

Not only do volunteers have the chance to bring comfort to families in their time of need but they are also able to share God's love in a very real way.

"One of the women in the Family Promise program was Muslim, but she got to be loved and embraced by Christians," Elston said. "I love the fact that they can come in and see who we really are."

Lansford has enjoyed watching members of his congregation leave their comfort zones to reach out to members of the community. "Just to see the people get involved in some areas they weren't familiar with was wonderful," he said.

One of the main things Deal has learned from her involvement with Family Promise is that the people in the program are no different from anyone else — they have just run into tough life situations. "I guess you expect conversations with them to be different because they're homeless but they're not," she said. "It really educates you about the plight of the homeless." ❏

# Across Alabama's Associations

## BESSEMER

► The adult choir of **Concord Highland Church, Hueytown**, will present the Easter musical "Worthy! The Song of the Ages" April 12, 11 a.m. Johnny Dunn is minister of music. Richard W. Larson is pastor. ► The Women on Missions group of **Eastern Valley Church, Bessemer**, will hold its annual tablescape dinner April 18, 6:30 p.m. Creative worship artist Noel Mills, of Moundville, will speak. For tickets call 205-428-8211. Proceeds will go to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. Richard Austin is interim pastor. ► **Tannehill Valley Church, McCalla**, will hold an Easter egg hunt April 11, 10 a.m.–noon. The church will also hold its annual children's yard sale April 18, 7 a.m.–3 p.m. Proceeds will go to children grades 1–6 going to Kidz Kamp at Camp Lee in July. To make a donation or request a pickup for bulky items, call 205-477-6811. Jonathan Reaves is pastor.

## BIRMINGHAM

► **Breck T. Ladd** is the new pastor of **Lakeside Church, Birmingham**. His first Sunday will be



LADD

April 12. He comes from Dauphin Way Church, Mobile, where he served as executive pastor. Ladd holds a bachelor's degree in secondary education from Mississippi State University in Starkville and master of divinity in biblical languages from New Orleans Seminary. While at seminary, he also earned hours in pastoral ministry

and Christian education. He is currently pursuing a doctoral degree specializing in leadership. Ladd and his wife, Laura, have three children. ► The choir of **Lake Highland Church, Birmingham**, will present the Easter musical "Come See the Place" April 12, 11 a.m. Ken Daniel is pastor. ► **First Church, Overton**, in Birmingham, will hold a community Easter egg hunt April 11, 2–3 p.m. The church will also hold a Sunrise service April 12, 6:30 a.m. Jimmy G. Ray is pastor. ► Members and friends of the former **South Avondale Church, Birmingham**, will hold a reunion April 25, 11 a.m., at First Church, Irondale. Sack lunches will be available. For reservations call Fannie Daniel at 205-956-5407 or e-mail LaVelle Wright at lavellewm@bellsouth.net.

## COLUMBIA

► The adult choir of **Mount Enon Church, Dothan**, will present the Easter musical "Eyes of Faith" April 12, 6 p.m. James Nance is minister of music. Jerry Hood is pastor.

## FRANKLIN

► **Franklin Association** will hold its children's Bible drill April 19, 2 p.m., at First Church, Vina. Jerry Swimmer is pastor of First, Vina. Larry D. Dover is director of missions for Franklin Association. ► **Concord Church, Russellville**, will hold Showers of Blessings, a ladies spring renewal, April 18, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. Former Miss Alabama and recording artist Denise Davis will speak. Lunch will be included. For information call Sarah Thorn at 256-332-3931. Ed Williams is pastor.

## GENEVA

► The adult choir of **Union Church, Hartford**, will present the Easter musical "Arise My Love" April 12, 6 p.m. Carolyn Watford is minister of music. John Johnson is pastor.

## LIMESTONE

► **Clements Church, Athens**, will hold a dedication for its new worship center April 19. The worship service will be 10 a.m., and lunch will follow in the family life center. The dedication service will be at 1:30 in the worship center. Tim Anderson is pastor.

## MOBILE

► **First Church, Citronelle**, will hold a women's conference called PRAY with PURPOSE, LIVE with PASSION April 25, 9 a.m.–1 p.m., with national Christian author and Bible teacher Debbie Taylor Williams. Jenn Weber Sinclair will provide special music. Lunch will be included. To register visit [www.citronellefbc.com](http://www.citronellefbc.com) or call 251-866-5793 by April 20. Elbert D. Charpie is pastor. ► **Shiloh Church, Saraland**, will host a homeless ministry block party April 19, 11 a.m.–2 p.m., in downtown Mobile. Lunch, clothing and toiletry items for the summer months will be given away. Robert Lutz is pastor.

## NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Glenn's Chapel Church, Gardendale**, will hold revival April 12–14, with Evangelist Zac Reno. Services will be Sunday at 6 p.m. and weeknights at 7. Gene and Dee Frydendaul will be special singers. Thomas Perkins is pastor.

## TUSCALOOSA

► **Bobby Holladay** resigned as pastor of **Rosedale Church, Tuscaloosa**, Feb. 28. Ken Cheek, recently retired pastor of Northridge Church, Northport, is the new interim pastor.

## WINSTON

► **Winston Association** will hold a Vacation Bible School clinic for Boomerang Express April 21, 6:30 p.m., at First Church, Addison, and April 23, 6:30 p.m., at First Church, Double Springs. The training is for teachers of all ages. Samuel Tucker is pastor of First, Addison. John A. Whaley is pastor of First, Double Springs. The association will also hold a music festival April 26, 6 p.m., at First Church, Haleyville. All churches are encouraged to participate. Jim Cooley is pastor of First, Haleyville. The association will also hold a meeting for its missions trip to Portland, Tenn., April 19, 2 p.m. For information call 205-489-5137. Al Hood is director of missions for Winston Association. ► **Beech Grove Church, Haleyville**, will hold revival April 27–29, 7 p.m., with Evangelist Junior Garman. Glenn Bridgmon is pastor.



Photo courtesy of Lamar Baptist Association

## LAMAR ASSOCIATION FOCUSES ON MISSIONS

More than 100 children and adults from eight Lamar Baptist Association churches gathered at Kennedy Baptist Church on Feb. 28 for the association's Missions Madness 3, an opportunity for children to learn about Southern Baptist missionaries and their work around the world. Ben Goodman is director of missions.

## Alabama updates

People, churches making news across the state

### Parker celebrates 20-year ministry at FBC Russellville

"A fixture at First Baptist and in Russellville" is how Pastor Barry Holcomb of First Baptist Church, Russellville, described Richard Parker, minister of education and students, who is celebrating his 20th year at the Franklin Baptist Association church.

"Richard is a unique individual. He's in his early 50s and still going strong as a youth minister. As a new pastor that's only been here a year, I couldn't be more pleased," Holcomb said. "Our entire church thinks he's the greatest. He is known and loved all over the city."

After serving at First Baptist Church, Sheffield, for several years, Parker came to First, Russellville, in April 1989 as minister of education and activities. But it wasn't long before his passion moved him back into the youth role.

"I was a youngster in youth group in Columbus, Ga., when I felt the very distinct call of God into student ministry. It was one of those things you're just confident that is what you're supposed to do. So I've followed that path," said Parker, a graduate of the University of North Alabama in Florence and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

And at 53 years old, he is continuing with what he knows is "the overarching thing I've always felt a call and passion toward."

In addition to his commitments at the church, he is also active in the community through his sports announcing for Russellville schools; serving as host of "Thursday Night Live," a two-hour television show broadcast for the Russellville school system; and working at a local Christian radio station. He and his wife of 31 years, Amy, have two daughters.

"Richard does as good of a job with student ministry as anyone I've ever seen," Holcomb said. "He's highly committed to youth ministry. ... And I know the impact he's made on student's lives has been great."



PARKER

### Judson graduate leaves bequest to alma mater

Leaving a major gift bequest to her alma mater, Judson College in Marion, Nancy White Thomas died Oct. 7 in Richmond, Va. She was 103.

A native of Marion and a 1924 graduate of the school, Thomas began giving to Judson in 1961 and in 1996, began making special donations to the college each year on her birthday, calling the gifts "her best birthday presents."

Over the years, Thomas made many donations to Judson including the Flentrop organ housed in the Ramsay-McCrummen Chapel, funds for the construction of the Thomas Choral and Recital Room in Tucker Hall dedicated in 1990 and her collection of church music and hymnals.

In 1980, Judson awarded Thomas the Outstanding Alumnae award, as well as a board of trustees resolution of appreciation on her 100th birthday in 2005. She also served on the college's board of advisers.

### Schoolteacher Dollar writes student apologetics book

With the focus of "teaching young people how to defend the Christian faith," Jason Dollar, a member of Ridgcrest Baptist Church, Trussville, in Birmingham Baptist Association, wrote the book "Contend: A Survey of Christian Apologetics on a High School Level."

As a high school apologetics teacher at Shades Mountain Christian School and youth apologist for the Apologetics Resource Center, both in Birmingham, Dollar knew there was little apologetics curriculum geared toward high school students, so he decided to create his own.

In his book, Dollar presents The Four Squares of Apologetics — a methodology he developed that "allows people to grasp several major defenses of the Christian faith all at the same time" — at a level students or apologetics newcomers can easily grasp.

Dollar's book, published by Aventine Press, will be available in May.

For more information, visit [www.jasondollar.net](http://www.jasondollar.net) or e-mail [Jason@jasondollar.net](mailto:Jason@jasondollar.net).

# Alabama native goes 'Xtreme' for gospel

By Emily Flack  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Graham Michael, an Alabama native and self-professed inexperienced outdoorsman, knows what it means to commit to the ministry to which God calls you. For him, it meant swinging machetes in the jungles of Peru and farming potatoes in the mountains of Bolivia just to have the chance to reach people who have yet to hear of Jesus Christ.

In February 2007 — just one year after graduating from Auburn University — Michael committed to doing something extreme for the sake of the gospel. Soon he was off to South America to spend two years as an International Mission Board (IMB) journeyman on an Xtreme Team focused on church planting. He returned to Alabama in February.

## Learning the culture

Based first in Peru, Michael learned how to build huts and work with machetes, among other things.

"We learned of the local culture and how to enter into it. We were not allowed to speak anything in English. Speaking in English equaled having to do push-ups," he said with a laugh.

Disciplined in their training, Michael and the other members of the Xtreme Team spent three to four hours a day learning about the New Testament church and the biblical model of going out into the community two by two.

"We had to memorize 35 to 40 Bible stories in chronological order for the sake of oral history

since most of the indigenous people could not read. We memorized the story of creation all the way up to the resurrection," he said.

It was in between Michael's first and second segment of training that he was starkly reminded that the Lord would have to carry him through the uncharted waters of the next two years.

Michael and his partner — the only one who spoke Spanish at the time — were assigned to visit a village of Chayahuita people. Within the first few days, Michael came down with typhoid and his partner with malaria, and it would take two days on a boat to return to the city.

"Of course, there was a strike in the city we were going to, so we prayed for the strike to end," he said. "Then there was no water so we prayed for rain. Then there was no person to take us, so we prayed for a person."

A person became available but he didn't have a boat, Michael said. "We prayed for a boat, and then there was a boat."

During the ordeal, the only person he could communicate with was his partner.

"I was sick. I was miserable. I questioned God a lot about His sovereignty," Michael said.

It was at that point that "God broke down any pride I had. I had no strength or power without God."

He carried Michael through that first year in Peru and led him to Bolivia for the second year of his term. There he lived in a mud-brick house and ate potatoes every day.

"They would work seven to eight



Photo courtesy of Graham Michael

**'BLESSED'** — Alabama-native Graham Michael, working as part of an International Mission Board Xtreme Team, visits a village in one of the South American countries in which he served.

hours a day to help plant potatoes or to harvest wheat in order to have 30 minutes during a meal with [the people] to share the gospel," said Ed Cox, director of the IMB's international prayer strategy office, who made a three-week visit to the Xtreme Team during its time on the field.

But Michael said all the hard work was worth it for the end result. "I was able to see a work started with the Cechua people, and

I am blessed to have been a part of that, as well as to know the Xtreme Team is still furthering the work," he said.

Cox noted that Michael has a mature, gentle faith; a heart for the Lord; and a strong belief in prayer — something fostered by the church he grew up in, First Baptist, Clanton, in Chilton Baptist Association and the church that commissioned him, Lakeview Baptist, Auburn, in Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association.

Michael said he is thankful for these two congregations, which supported and prayed for him during his time on the missions field.

And even though Michael is back in the United States, his work in furthering the gospel hasn't stopped.

"I pray that I have opportunities to speak of Christ in any form or fashion," he said.

"I'm hoping to engage in Hispanic and cross-cultural ministries in the near future."

# Foundation problems halt Maple Springs Church rebuild

By Jeremy Henderson  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

The same water that flowed under the 116-year-old foundation of Maple Springs Baptist Church, Clanton, in Chilton Baptist Association as it burned to the ground in late 2007 is keeping it from being rebuilt 16 months later.

Tommy Vines is trying not to let the irony get him down.

"When we got started with our new building, we ran into some foundation problems almost immediately, with there being springs under the building site," said Vines, the church's music leader.

The former building was destroyed by arson in the early morning hours of Dec. 29, 2007. The case remains unsolved.

The church is rebuilding in almost exactly the same spot, where the old building housed all the portraits of the former pastors and the piano Vines' wife, Donna, used to play each Sunday. It also housed the old iron-tub baptistry where their two daughters were baptized, the tub beneath that great mural of a stream that looked as though it flowed right into the baptistry.

"Taking care of [the foundation issues] kind of set us back quite a bit financially and time-wise," Vines said. "We had to go through a process of engineering and testing and actually removing the unsuitable soil and replacing that with engineered material to get that water out of the church site."

The unforeseen expenses aren't just costing the church money — they're preventing the church from saving it, too.

"We had a group of Carpenters for Christ from Eastern Hills Baptist in Montgomery that were going to come and do their summer project here, but we missed their timeline due to this foundation problem," Vines said. "The most blunt way to put it is that we're missing out on all this free labor."

Since the fire, the approximately 30-member congregation has been meeting in the old sanctuary of nearby Samaria Baptist Church, also in Chilton Association. Samaria Baptist offered use of its building the day after Maple Springs Baptist was destroyed, which kept the congregation from missing a single Sunday service.

"They've been very gracious in letting

us use their facility," Vines said. "Some of the people at their church went over and put some chairs out and made us feel right at home since the day right after our church burned."

## Not like home

It feels like home, Vines said, but it isn't. "It's not a complaint at all, but it just doesn't feel like you can do a whole lot that you might want," he said, speaking of any of Maple Springs' special programs that might require Samaria's fellowship hall. "It's like inviting somebody to come over to your friend's house with you."

Maple Springs Pastor Roland Davis agreed.

"I'm very appreciative of Samaria," Davis said. "But where we're worshiping now, it's just not in our community. It's hard to do community outreach if you're not in the community; that's the main thing."

Vines said Sunday morning attendance has dropped slightly and some people have left the church. "But we've also had some join."

Despite having insurance on the old building, the foundation complications with the site and a sluggish economy have left the church's rebuilding efforts in a state of semilimbo.

"We have erected our building, and we've

got some interior framing done, and the interior walls are framed up and ready to go," Vines said. "The point we're at now is that we're trying to do our mechanical and plumbing and Sheetrock and stuff like that."

"Of course, we've got some things — a local church donated some pews and pulpit furniture that was a big burden lifted off of us — but we still basically have every other speck of stuff you need that has to be purchased."

Vines said in addition to a parking lot, the new 80-by-80-foot metal building still needs electrical work, plumbing work, Sheetrock, ceilings, paint, floors, furniture for classrooms and the fellowship hall, a piano and equipment for its kitchen.

## 'God's going to provide'

It's nothing fancy, he said, just an updated version of the old.

"The reasoning of our building program is because somebody burned our church," Vines said. "If that hadn't happened, we'd still be in the building we were in. I hate to say we've bit off more than we can chew, because we know God's going to provide for us."

Davis isn't worried either.

"We're just trusting in the Lord," he said. "It's His building, not ours. We're still just chompin' away."

*"We're just trusting in the Lord. It's His building, not ours. We're still just chompin' away."*

Pastor Roland Davis  
Maple Springs Baptist Church

# Who's in? Who's out?

## Sweet Home Alabama bill amended to take away, add 'points of destination'

By Sondra Washington  
and Jennifer Davis Rash  
The Alabama Baptist

Promising jobs and millions in taxes for Medicaid and education, the Sweet Home Alabama bills would seem to be the state's economic savior. But legal experts who have studied Senate Bill (SB) 471 and House Bill (HB) 676 say the bills throw "table scraps" to Alabama citizens and "open the flood gates" for large-scale, high-stakes electronic gambling around the state.

And when the once identical bills passed from their respective committees with differing amendments, even more questions surfaced about the legislation's true purpose.

Before the barrage of amendments, both bills sought to change the state's charity bingo to a for-profit industry and set up nine "points of destination" across Alabama with large "self-regulated" electronic bingo gambling facilities valued from \$25 to \$100 million. Two facilities were to be located in Calhoun, Greene, Jefferson, Lowndes and Walker counties while one facility would be placed in Etowah, Houston, Mobile and Macon counties. Now, Calhoun County has been removed from both bills.

In the House version of the bill, Lowndes County was also removed as was the connection to the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

In the Senate version of the bill, Walker County facilities were removed and a facility was added in Mobile County. The Mobile Racetrack was the original "point of destination" for Mobile County. The new facility would be located in any Alabama Foreign Trade Investment Zone in Mobile County similar to the one in Prichard, which is a special tax district that allows for the importation of duty-free and quota-free articles.

Rep. Lea Fite, D-Jacksonville, presented the House amendment to remove Calhoun County from HB 676 noting that the people of Calhoun County already voted and it was only for "high-stakes paper bingo."

"In Calhoun County, we have determined our own destiny (and) we want to continue to determine our own destiny and not have someone else do it for us," he told *The Alabama Baptist* in an April 2 interview.

Contrary to comments made by the bills' sponsors and supporters who stated that legislators from the included areas worked together on the bill, Fite said he did not know

who included Calhoun County in the initial bill or why it was placed there.

"To my knowledge, none of the Calhoun County delegation was asked to be in the bills," he said.

Sen. Quinton Ross, D-Montgomery, admits "many groups and individuals that came together to draft this legislation" including members of the Sweet Home Alabama Coalition — the group headed by executives of the Ronnie Gilley Properties, LLC, which is planning to build a large entertainment complex and electronic bingo gambling facility in Houston County.

"I have spoken with and worked with many people in drafting this legislation," Ross said. "It has been a process that has gone on for many months and I believe, as the bill came together, individuals and organizations realized they had a common set of goals and interests so they created the Sweet Home Alabama Coalition."

### Limiting or expanding?

Both the Sweet Home Alabama Coalition and some state legislators like Ross say the bills will stop gambling expansion in the state.

"My bill ensures that bingo is only at a limited number of destination facilities rather than the hundreds or potentially thousands of fly-by-night facilities that can and do crop up on street corners near our neighborhoods," Ross told *The Alabama Baptist*.

But other state leaders like Sen. Jabo Waggoner, R-Birmingham, do not agree.

"When it creates more facilities in Jefferson County and other counties, I feel that's expanding it (gambling)," said Waggoner, who issued the only dissenting vote against SB 471 before it passed out of the Senate's Tourism and Marketing Committee April 1. "I plan to vote against it at every opportunity I have. ... I am opposed to any gambling legislation I feel will not deliver the kind of Alabama I think we need to have."

A supermarket owner, Fite likened the potential growth of electronic bingo gambling to someone in his line of work acquiring new stores.

"If there is money to be made (in another location), I'm going to put a grocery store there," he said. "I'm scared it's (gambling) going to keep expanding. ... I don't want gambling on every corner. I want some guarantee that this stuff will be strictly regulated, and it could never be expanded."

"If a camel gets his nose in the tent, he's in the tent," Fite added.

Ashville Mayor Robert McKay, who just won the right to operate electronic bingo gambling in his city thanks to a ruling from St. Clair County Circuit Judge Charles E. Robinson (see story, page 7),

**"The [bill] is terrible. ... It is supposed to start with a legitimate charity anyway. These people are opportunists."**

Mayor Robert McKay  
City of Ashville



TAB photo

is also against this legislation.

"The Sweet Home Alabama bill is terrible," he said. "They've (the Sweet Home Alabama Coalition) pooled their money together and are running these ads. What we don't like is that they left us out of that amendment. They want to leave St. Clair out of it and monopolize it for the big-game interest. They want to control it."

### 'Opportunists'

"We want to play electronic bingo, but we are not for Sweet Home Alabama," McKay explained. "It is supposed to start with a legitimate charity anyway. These people are opportunists. We are a legitimate charity."

One of the bills' most advertised promises is the elimination of illegal gambling in Alabama by

limiting bingo operations and creating a state gaming commission to "regulate bingo ... and enforce the gambling laws of the state."

"As for the regulation of bingo, the bill provides for the establishment of a gaming commission to help oversee bingo in Alabama," Ross said. "To me, this is a win-win for the state."

But Eric Johnston says the bills' bark is bigger than their bite.

"They don't really have any substantive authority," said Johnston, president of and general counsel for the Southeast Law Institute in Birmingham. "They are really superficial. They can regulate the issuing of a license and opening of a facility but they don't have any oversight over what kind of gambling activity the facility would have."

## Dothan Baptists make commercial to counter Sweet Home Alabama ads

As Sweet Home Alabama ads saturate the state to encourage the legalization of electronic bingo gambling, some Dothan Baptists have decided to fight back.

Wes Morgan, a member of Bethel Baptist Church, Dothan, and owner of M3 Productions Inc., recently worked with Pastor Ricky Plummer to produce a 30-second commercial pointing out the woes of legalized gambling.

The commercial, made to counteract the pro-gambling media campaign of the Sweet Home Alabama Coalition, lists the high statistics of social problems in Nevada, where gambling is legal. It ends with a message to visit [ncalg.org](http://ncalg.org), the Web site of the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling.

"We got permission from

them to use that (information)," Plummer said. "We feel that they have some of the best statistics and accurate information out there."

Morgan donated his time and abilities to the project, and anonymous donors provided enough financial backing to get the commercial started up.

"It's on YouTube and we plan on putting it on the air locally to start with," Plummer said of the ad. "We want to put some heat here (in the area) and stir things up."

More commercials may follow, he said, especially if the issue does make it to a statewide vote of the people in 2010.

To watch the ad and for more anti-gambling resources, visit [www.thealababaptist.org](http://www.thealababaptist.org). (TAB)

# Electronic 'bingo' ruled legal in Ashville; Argo wants it

By Jennifer Davis Rash  
and Sondra Washington  
The Alabama Baptist

The decision to attempt even more expansion of gambling in St. Clair County took only seconds following Circuit Judge Charles E. Robinson's March 30 ruling that electronic bingo gambling is legal in Ashville.

While Ashville was the city of focus for the ruling, the town of Argo was ready to move as soon as the ruling was released.

Argo Mayor Paul Jennings said electronic bingo would be a strong revenue source for the town and, at press time, planned to present an ordinance similar to the one in Ashville during the Argo Town Council meeting April 6.

Days before Robinson's ruling, the town clerk's office reported that the mayor was waiting to see how the ruling went before presenting the ordinance to the Argo Town Council.

A second reading of the ordinance is required before a vote can be taken and Jennings said in other media reports that he planned to call a special meeting April 7 for the second reading and vote.

## Expected revenue

It has also been reported that Mississippi businessman John McCleod who is ready to open a 15-acre electronic bingo gambling complex in Argo will write the town a check for \$250,000 if it votes to allow the expansion of gambling in its area April 7.

McCleod has also promised to give \$1 million per year in business license fees plus \$50,000 to town charities monthly from his proposed 2,500 machines.

But Argo resident Phillip Nelson believes this type of contribution is problematic not only because the businessman stands to earn much more than he said he would give Argo, but also because of the amount he plans to give the town.

With Argo having an annual budget of about \$600,000, "he would control the town by monetary influence alone," said Nelson, a deacon at First Baptist Church, Pinson, in Birmingham Baptist Association.

"Normal people would lose their influence to city government. Priority would be given to the person creating the most wealth."

Nelson also said McCleod was in Argo March 30 looking at property.

"Mr. McCleod claims he simply wants to help Argo, but we must remember he is using the town's current financial condition to try to bring something in that most people would never agree with given more prosperous times," he said. "It's all about profit to him."

And "despite what the mayor says, he cannot limit electronic bingo to only one operation in our town," Nelson added. "Argo would effectively become a bingo mecca as no doubt other establishments would soon follow."

Back in Ashville, Mayor Robert McKay said he wished Jennings well in his endeavor, but he was afraid it would not be an easy win.

"He has three council members adamantly against it," McKay said. "My council was 100 percent for this."

"We want the benefits from it," he explained. "It will bring millions of dollars into this community. ... We are trying to put people to work around here."

But McKay said he is "not stupid" and won't put in any machines until "the legality issues are done and we have protection on our side."

"I'm going to do what our attorney (William Trussell) says we can and can't do," he said. "At this point, there is not one piece of electronic bingo equipment in our building."

And while Shooting Star Entertainment Group LLC has an approved permit for electronic bingo gambling as well as a contract on 75 acres of land just off I-59, it has not broken ground yet on its proposed facility, McKay noted.

"It is stupid for anyone to go and spend millions of dollars on property before going through the legal aspects of this," he said, noting there will likely be an appeals process.

McKay did confirm that Shooting Star is the only gambling business currently with a permit to build a "gaming facility" and American Legion Post 170 is the only charity with an approved permit to play



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

**IN SESSION** — Circuit Judge Charles E. Robinson enters the St. Clair County courtroom for a full-day hearing on electronic bingo gambling March 17. He ruled in favor of electronic bingo gambling March 30.

bingo of any kind in a "gaming facility."

But he admitted others would be able to obtain a permit "if they meet the criteria of the ordinance (allowing electronic bingo gambling machines to be played in the city)."

Still "until we get through legal hearings here that are necessary, we are not going to discuss further permitting of any kind of bingo," McKay said. "It would be stupid for us to start handing out permits."

"We said all along that we are not going to create another Walker County," he added. "Walker County is a fiasco of a mess up and down the streets. If we are lucky enough to get this same thing through the system, you will not see metal buildings and everyone renting everything they can up and down the street."

McKay added that while he is pleased with Robinson's ruling, he does understand why the ministers in the county would be against it due to the moral issue.

"They weren't for bingo when it was first approved in 1992 either," he said.

"I'm a Christian. I love God and God has been good to me and mine," McKay said. "But this is an economic issue for the city of Ashville. The city can prosper. ... If it's legal in all these other counties, it's legal here. ... This is a pie in the sky for us."

James Sampley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Ashville, is one of those ministers McKay referred to as being opposed to electronic bingo gambling.

"I'm greatly disappointed but not surprised," he said. "I suspected that would be the case. Our church members have been severely disappointed and a little bit discouraged but they are not willing to give up.

"I think the next step will be the Court of Civil Appeals," Sampley noted. "However the ruling goes, it will eventually be appealed by the Supreme Court. That's an excellent thing because I think the Supreme Court will rule in our favor."

Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program, is also hopeful for a Supreme Court ruling "so we can get a definite answer to the illegality of these bingo slots."

## Ruling questioned

The Ashville ruling, which was filed March 30, states the machines proposed for use at the Ashville American Legion are "in compliance with [State] Amendment No. 542 and Ordinance No. 2008-0011 of the City of Ashville." (Visit [www.thealabamabaptist.org](http://www.thealabamabaptist.org) to read the full ordinance and the ruling from Robinson.)

But that's what Gary L. Willford Jr., who represents St. Clair County Sheriff Terry Surles and St. Clair County District Attorney Richard Minor, says is wrong with the ruling.

"We respect Judge Robinson but firmly disagree with [the ruling]," Willford said.

"We believe he is incorrect as a matter of law on all issues of the case. Primarily ... the part that authorizes electronic bingo, which was described in the hearing as session bingo.

"They don't have the authority to expand it beyond the narrow exception (that currently exists)," he added.

Minor agreed.

"Although I respect Judge Robinson's decision, we disagree as to the issue of whether electronic bingo is authorized by the laws of the state of Alabama and the constitutional

amendment pertaining to St. Clair County," he said.

While expert witness Robert Sertell's testimony that bingo can be legal when played electronically is being used as part of the reasoning in this case, Minor explained that Sertell was describing true, traditional bingo played on a screen rather than on a paper card.

Willford filed a notice of appeal and a motion to stay (which would leave things as they are until a final ruling takes place) April 2. He said both sides are currently waiting on the official transcript to be finalized, even though they do have copies of Sertell's testimony in hand already.

An attorney in the White Hall case (visit [www.thealabamabaptist.org](http://www.thealabamabaptist.org) to read the latest on this case) used Sertell's testimony from the St. Clair case before the official transcript was finalized, but it could not be confirmed before press time how that part of the transcript found its way to the White Hall hearing.

"We are asking for an oral argument before the Supreme Court," Willford said. "It is up to them, but I would think that a case of this magnitude, they would want to hear it."

He also noted that the St. Clair case could be "the" case the Governor's Task Force on Illegal Gambling is seeking to make the official and final decision on electronic bingo gambling in the state. (Visit [www.thealabamabaptist.org](http://www.thealabamabaptist.org) to read more about the task force.)

This case is moving toward the appeals process, while a case out of Etowah ruling electronic "bingo" legal has also been appealed.

The Bessemer case from 2008 where Jefferson County Circuit Judge Eugene Verin ruled electronic bingo machines in Bessemer as illegal was not appealed, and the White Hall case has no final ruling.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

**PLANS IN PLACE** — Shooting Star Entertainment Group LLC plans to build a 75-acre gambling facility just off I-59 in Ashville.

# Silverhill GED Program fills void

By Deirdra Drinkard  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Those involved in the education ministry of First Baptist Church, Silverhill, in Baldwin Baptist Association hope to give people a chance to better their lives permanently, and they plan to do this by enhancing the education level of the community.

First, Silverhill, along with neighboring Silverhill Covenant Church, began offering General Education Development (GED) classes last August to members of the community. The idea for this ministry — called Silverhill General Education Development Program — grew from a conversation between Alan House, pastor of First, Silverhill, and Dana Wolfe, a member of the church who works with GED classes.

## Reaching dropouts

“Our church has been reaching out to two local mobile home parks and had a number of residents from the parks attending our church,” House said. “Some of those residents were pretty hardworking. But because of a lack of education, they were only capable of working at minimum wage jobs.”

According to Wolfe, who works at Faulkner State Community College, the high school dropout rate in the area is around 19 percent. In certain small pockets of the community, the

rate is actually about 50 percent, he added.

A partnership was formed with Silverhill Covenant to offer GED classes, with Wolfe leading the way as program classroom coordinator.

She trains volunteers from both churches to mentor participants. Every Tuesday and Thursday, 9–11 a.m. and 6–8 p.m., volunteers meet at First, Silverhill, to mentor students.

“The goals ... are to establish a ministry that would help the public help themselves and, in doing so, be a light for Christ,” Wolfe said.

House also noted the dual opportunities presented by the ministry. “We want to give people a chance to better their lives and to encourage them to be the best they can be and to lead them to Christ along the way. I tell my church, ‘It’s nice to help people’s temporary needs. But isn’t it better to give them a chance to permanently change their lives for the better?’” he said.

But there are other benefits such as a stronger sense of partnership between two churches, Wolfe added.

Currently seven volunteers mentor 15 students enrolled in the self-paced program.

Nearing her completion of the program, Jamie Adams said with a GED, she is considering becoming a nursing assistant or going into business management. “The program

has really helped me,” she said.

House said although it is a new ministry, “I feel that if just the two or three graduate in the short term, it is all worth it.”

## One step at a time

Anyone is welcome to participate in the program. It first offers participants a chance to take an assessment test to see where they need to work the most. From that point, mentors guide the students through each level, making sure every participant understands the information.

Not only do the participants benefit from the program but the volunteers also agree that mentoring is a rewarding experience.

Regina Kanne — a member of First, Silverhill, and graduate student at the University of South Alabama — said, “It feels really good when they reach that milestone and get one step closer to earning their GED.”

Wanda Patterson, education coordinator for Baldwin Association, said the partnership of First, Silverhill, and Silverhill Covenant is the only one to offer a GED program in the association, and because of the great need for this type of education ministry, she hopes other churches will begin a similar program.

For more information about the Silverhill GED program, call 251-945-5182.

# Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

## Former missionary, pastor Posey dies at 81

MOBILE — Former International Mission Board (IMB) missionary Jesse Earl Posey died March 9. He was 81.

Posey served in the U.S. Navy and earned degrees at Auburn University; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

He served three years as pastor of First Baptist Church, Chalkville, in Birmingham Baptist Association before heading to the Philippines to serve with the IMB for 33 years.

While there, Posey worked in field evangelism, church planting and high school and college ministry and as a professor at Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary in Baguio City.

After retirement, he joined Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, in Mobile Baptist Association, where he taught an adult Bible study and served in other ministry capacities.

Posey is survived by his wife of 55 years, Mamie Lou Eubanks Posey; two children; seven grandchildren; and one great-grandson.

## Missouri appeals panel refuses to rehear MBC suit

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — A Missouri appeals panel announced March 31 that it will not rehear the Missouri Baptist Convention’s (MBC) argument against Windermere Baptist Conference Center, nor will it transfer the case to the state’s highest court.

Convention officials had hoped for an opportunity to argue that a three-judge panel of the Missouri Court of Appeals for the Western District erred in a Feb. 3 decision.

The appeals court had upheld a lower court’s ruling that Windermere trustees had acted legally in 2001 when they changed the agency’s articles of incorporation, removing the convention’s control over appointment of the Windermere board.

In their February ruling, the appellate judges agreed with Cole County Circuit Judge Richard Callahan. He originally ruled that the MBC is not a member of Windermere’s corporation and that no contract exists between the two entities. The appeals court action is the latest in the nearly seven-year-long legal saga that began when the convention sued five formerly affiliated institutions in an effort to force the entities to rescind corporate charter changes.

The Baptist Home retirement home system changed its articles of incorporation in 2000 to elect its own trustees. Windermere, the *Word & Way* newspaper, the Missouri Baptist Foundation and Missouri Baptist University took similar actions in 2001. The convention filed suit Aug. 13, 2002.

## Saddleback Church baptizes 800 in service

LAKE FOREST, Calif. — Saddleback Church baptized 800 people in a marathon three-and-a-half-hour ceremony March 28, after nearly 2,400 people attended a four-hour class for people interested in becoming members of the church.

Several hundred people made first-time professions of faith during the CLASS 101 session, according to a statement released by the Lake Forest, Calif., church’s public relations firm.

Senior Pastor Rick Warren said the new members class — the largest in the congregation’s 30-year history — could be related to the economic and social turmoil people are experiencing these days.

The new members class, which Warren taught himself for the first time in 10 years, introduces the fundamentals of Christian faith and Saddleback’s history. It explains that church membership requires commitment and accountability, including an expectation that members serve in ministry.

More than 35,000 people have completed CLASS 101.

## March CP giving down 6 percent from last year

NASHVILLE — Contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention’s (SBC) Cooperative Program (CP) for March 2009 totaled \$15,332,557.49 — 6.16 percent, or \$1,005,940.29, below the \$16,338,497.78 received in March 2008, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Morris H. Chapman. The monthly CP budget requirement is \$17,143,069.50.

Year-to-date contributions through the CP are 3.72 percent below the same time frame last year. As of March 31, the year-to-date total of \$100,625,646.89 for CP missions is \$3,887,846.11 below the \$104,513,493.00 received at the end of March 2008.

For the CP Allocation Budget, the year-to-date total of \$100,625,646.89 is 97.83 percent of the \$102,858,417.00 budgeted to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. The SBC operates on an Oct. 1–Sept. 30 fiscal year.

## Someone You Should Know

By Brittany N. Howerton  
The Alabama Baptist

### DANNY RANDALL

First Baptist Church, Aliceville  
Pickens Baptist Association



RANDALL

**FAVORITE BIBLE VERSE:** John 3:16  
**FAVORITE HYMN:**  
“How Great Thou Art”

**HOBBIES:** Taking care of his dogs  
**FAMILY STATUS:** Widowed after 30 years of marriage to Sara Frances

After his wife passed away last August, Danny Randall began to understand the difference between having Christ as Savior and truly making Him Lord of your life. Randall committed to following Christ and felt God drawing him to establish a ministry — distributing “I love Jesus” pins to anyone who would take them. Because of his passion for the cross and relating to others Christ’s forgiveness of sin, he budgets his paycheck to allow for the purchase of the pins and distributes them anywhere he can, from restaurants to church vestibules to the hands of friends and strangers.

**Q: How did you decide to begin distributing “I love Jesus” pins?**

A: I was taking a nap one afternoon, and I had already started wearing the “I love Jesus” pins,

and it seemed like God was telling me He wanted me to give them out. ... And that’s how the ministry was born. I give them out at church, restaurants or wherever. It’s just something the Lord laid on my heart after my wife passed away. I felt like He wanted me to get into the pin ministry and help out.

**Q: What do you get from the ministry?**

A: It just makes me happy to know I’m able to do something for people in this way.

**Q: What kind of difference do you hope to make with the pins?**

A: I guess, in a way, I’m adding a little bit to somebody’s life by giving them out.

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

A: I don’t know what the future holds. He may want me to con-

tinue doing what I’m doing or not, I don’t know ... but I believe no matter what comes, I’ll be ready for it. Whether good or bad, I’ll just do the best I can.

**Q: What difference has being a Christian made in your life?**

A: It’s brought me closer to wanting to try to do my best to live the life the Lord would have me to live, including reading my Bible more. I’m not saying I’m a good person; I’m still like a baby Christian, but I’m doing what I think I should, and maybe it will help somebody along the way.

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

# Proposed legislation in Alabama would legalize home-brewed beer

By Greg Heyman  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

A new bill in the Alabama Senate not only would legalize home production of alcohol but also would allow the makers to transport their products to competitions in other states and legalize these contests in the state.

Sen. Larry Dixon, R-Montgomery, who is the sponsor of Senate Bill 492, said he anticipates the legislation will pass out of the Senate Tourism and Marketing Committee during the first week of April.

The bill would permit production of home-brewed beer, mead, cider and wine for personal use, as well as display at organized tasting and judging events.

## Just a hobby?

Both Dixon and a home-brew advocate group characterize this legislation as a move to let law-abiding citizens pursue a hobby and participate in competitions with other home-brewers. However, Joe Godfrey, executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program, offered a different perspective on the issue.

Godfrey said those who want to legalize home brewing compare themselves to those who compete in barbecue competitions.

"My response to that is that I've never heard of anyone being killed while under the influence of barbecue," he said.

Godfrey said all this bill really does is remove the illegality of making alcoholic products in one's home. He fears the situation could get out of control if the alcohol produced is not licensed. The matter of licensing is not covered by the bill.

"When you manufacture alcohol, you have to have a license. There's

no control over [home-brews]," Godfrey said.

He also expressed concern that this legislation would make alcohol more accessible to minors.

"We would have no idea of who's drinking this. This is another reason we need to discourage home brewing," Godfrey said.

Dixon explained that he introduced the bill after members of the

Auburn Brew Club approached him during the Legislative Tourism Bash on March 10 in Montgomery. The bash is an annual event sponsored by the Alabama Tourism Department in which individuals and groups highlight foods and attractions available in different areas of the state.

"These people from the Auburn club came, and they had different kinds of beer. They were giving out little samples," Dixon said.

According to John Little, a member of the club, home-brewers in Alabama just want to participate in a hobby allowed elsewhere. Currently Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky and West Virginia prohibit home brewing, he said.

## Entering competitions

Little said home-brewers enjoy studying beers produced in other countries and attempting to recreate them. From there, the brews are entered into competitions in which they are rated by judges who have completed a certification program

in analyzing the products in terms of flavor and aroma.

"We enjoy sending off our beers, wines, meads and ciders to these competitions to get feedback and try to do better next time," Little said.

He stressed that the bill would not allow anyone under legal drinking age to make home-brew and would not permit distillation of liquor.

"It only has to do with beer, mead, cider and wine," Little said, noting the home-brews "cannot be offered for sale at all."

## In other news:

► House Bill (HB) 735, sponsored by Rep. Johnny Mack Morrow, D-Red Bay, is pending action in the House Tourism and Travel Committee. It would allow Alabama wineries to sell wines at festivals and wine tastings in the state. Morrow is a member of First Baptist Church, Red Bay, in Franklin Baptist Association.

► HB 175, sponsored by Rep. Jimmy Martin, D-Clanton, passed the House on March 12 and is pending action in the Senate. This measure would allow municipalities that have a population of 500 or more and are located in "dry" counties to hold a wet/dry referendum. Currently a municipal population of 7,000 or more is required to hold such a referendum. Martin is a member of First Baptist Church, Clanton, in Chilton Baptist Association.

*"When you manufacture alcohol, you have to have a license. There's no control over [home-brews]."*

Joe Godfrey  
ALCAP



## April: Tax Month

By Jim Williams  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

Many people associate April more with taxes than with rain showers. It is a good month to think about how much we pay, particularly in federal income taxes, and what is done with the money.

The individual income tax is the largest source of revenue for the federal government. In 2006, it accounted for more than 43 percent of federal revenues.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) publishes statistics on the federal income tax returns received from the various states. The most recent IRS data shows that Alabamians filed just more than 2 million federal income tax returns in 2006. The federal tax liability on these returns amounted to \$11.6 billion, which was 1.1 percent of the U.S. total and represented \$2,526 for each Alabama resident.

Taxpayers can deduct certain state and local taxes in computing their federal tax liability, allowing a rough comparison of state and federal tax burdens. About \$3 billion in state and local taxes were claimed as deductions on federal returns from Alabama in 2006; this was less than a third of the federal income tax paid by Alabamians in that year. Thus many Alabama taxpayers pay more federal income tax

than they pay for income, sales and property taxes to their state and local governments.

What does this money buy? The federal budget in 2006 was allocated in the following way: 50 percent for direct payments to individuals (such as Social Security), 20 percent for national defense, 10 percent for grants to state and local governments, 8 percent for interest on the national debt and 12 percent for everything else.

## Alabama ranks ninth

It is, of course, important where federal money is spent. The U.S. Census Bureau tracks federal spending in the various states, and its data indicates that Alabama ranks ninth among the 50 states in the amount of federal expenditures per capita. In 2007, federal spending in Alabama amounted to \$10,348 per capita and was 1.9 percent of the U.S. total. This compares very favorably to the percentage and per capita amounts paid in federal income taxes from our state, as noted above. It shows why we have to consider both sides of the budget when thinking about taxes.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Jim Williams is executive director for the nonprofit, nonpartisan Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama.*

## Former Alabama pastor Wise dies

Philip Douglas Wise, a former Alabama Baptist pastor, died March 30. He was 60.

A native of Andalusia, Wise was a graduate of Samford University in Birmingham and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS). He also completed three years of post-graduate study at the University of Oxford in England.

Wise served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Dothan; Fairview Baptist Church, Selma; and Morningview Baptist Church, Montgomery. He was pastor of Second Baptist Church, Lubbock, Texas, for five years before returning to the Birmingham area earlier this year.

Wise also held various leadership positions with the Alabama

Baptist State Convention, The Baptist General Convention of Texas, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Baptist World Alliance.

He served as a trustee of Samford, as chair of the board of the Christian Ethics Today Foundation and on the Habitat for Humanity board of directors in Dothan and Lubbock.

Wise was president of the Montgomery Lions Club and Rotary Club of Dothan.

In addition to being the co-author of two books, he taught theology and ethics at Culham College in Abingdon, England, and NOBTS.

Wise is survived by his wife of 40 years, Cynthia; three children; and one grandson. (TAB)

## ERLC's Land backs coal-fired power plants

Coal-fired power plants have received the blessing of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) top lobbyist for social and moral concerns, who is urging opposition to a market-based attempt to limit greenhouse-gas emissions.

Friends of Coal, a volunteer organization with ties to the West Virginia Coal Association, is running an article on its Web site that includes a link for readers to enter their ZIP code and send an e-mail to their senator opposing a "global-warming tax" it said would raise energy costs.

The link goes to the Web site of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, where the agency's president, Richard Land, warns in an article that Democratic Senate leadership plans to move ahead with a "cap-and-trade" bill.

The bill would limit the amounts of greenhouse gases industries can emit and punish them with fines if they exceed those limits. But it

would also allow them to pay less-polluting industries for the right to increase their emissions.

"Such a bill would put the brakes on our already slowed economy, forcing industries and businesses to slash jobs and to pass their taxes onto individuals and families in the form of price increases on commodities and energy," Land wrote. "This would make it even more difficult for America to climb out of its current economic troubles."

## Not a settled issue

What's worse, Land contended, is that the whole basis behind the policy — that it will help avoid catastrophic, human-induced global warming — "is not even settled among scientists, who are growing increasingly skeptical, especially since we have been experiencing a decadelong cooling trend."

"Christians should take every reasonable step to care for God's creation," Land said. "But rushing into

environmental policies based on questionable science that will create greater economic hardships on every American, especially the poor, is the wrong approach."

Christian anti-global-warming activists disagreed with Land's reasoning.

Jonathan Merritt, national spokesman for the Southern Baptist Environment and Climate Initiative, said Christians who care about God's creation and recognize that something must be done about the global energy and environmental crisis "are growing increasingly weary of those claiming to represent us who preach relentlessly about what [they] oppose yet refuse to offer policy alternatives."

He added, "I find it curious that we are first in line to support the coal industry that is polluting our air and destroying the Appalachian Mountains, yet when it comes to actual pro-environmental legislation, we are nowhere to be found." (ABP)

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# Mainline Protestant clergy growing even more liberal, study shows

Over the last decade, mainline Protestant clergy have inched leftward, with more identifying as Democrats, supporting gay rights and calling on the government to solve social problems, according to a recently released survey.

The Clergy Voices survey published March 6 builds on similar studies conducted in 1989 and 2001, according to scholars at Public Religion Research in Washington.

Sometimes called the "quiet hand of God" for their social justice work outside the media's glare, mainline Protestants make up 18

percent of the country, according to researchers. But they are "arguably the most neglected of the major religious groups in the American religious landscape," said Robert P. Jones, president of Public Religion Research, who co-authored the survey.

Mainline Protestant clergy have shown "remarkable consistency over the last 20 years in politi-

cal ideology and party affiliation," Jones said. Fifty-six percent of the 1,000 clergy surveyed identified as Democrats, compared to 53 percent in 2001 and 1989.

Meanwhile more than three-quarters of mainline clergy say the federal government should be more involved in solving problems like poverty, low-income housing and unemployment. Sixty-eight percent said the same in 2001.

Nearly 70 percent of mainline clergy called for more environmental protection, up from 60 percent in 2001. And two-thirds favor outlawing capital punishment, a jump of 8 percentage points from 2001.

At the same time, clergy support for gay rights — an issue that has vexed almost all mainline denominations — has steadily increased. In August 2008, when the survey was conducted, nearly eight in 10 clergy said gays and lesbians should have the same rights and privileges as other Americans, up 9 percentage points from 2001.

Researchers found significant disparity among clergy from the seven mainline denominations surveyed, however. Clergy from the United Church of Christ and Episcopal Church tend to be more liberal, while those from the United Methodist Church and American Baptist Churches in the USA are more centrist or conservative on political and social issues.

There's also a gap between the pulpit and the pews: mainline clergy are more likely than their congregants to identify as Democrats, support legalized abortion and gay "marriage" and strongly agree that the government should guarantee health care.

Conducted by mail, the survey is composed of a random sample of 1,000 senior clergy from each of the seven largest mainline Protestant denominations: the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, American Baptist Churches in the USA, the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ.

With 2,658 clergy responding to the survey, the margin of error is plus or minus 2 percentage points. (RNS)

**Mainline clergy support for gay rights ... has steadily increased.**

Clergy Voices survey

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**BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR:** Mount Olive Baptist Church in Monroeville, Ala., is seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resumé to: Chuck Hartsough, Pastor Search Committee, 775 Thompson Drive, Monroeville, AL 36460.

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**BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC:** Small Shelby County church seeks

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**MUSIC/YOUTH DIRECTOR:** Marshall Baptist Church, Thomson, Ga., is seeking a full-time music/youth director for blended worship services. Send resumé to: Marshall Baptist Church, 436 Marshall Church Road, Thomson, GA 30824 or johnprater@marshallchurch.org.

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# Berney Points shares facility with Presbyterian church

By Cary Hughes  
Special to The Alabama Baptist

More and more often, Christian denominations are seeking unique ways to cooperate.

But nothing says unity like meeting together under the same roof.

And ever since the congregation of Trinity Presbyterian Church moved in with the congregation of Berney Points Baptist Church, Hoover, members of the two congregations not only have passed each other in the halls but they also have become friends and ministry partners.

"We have been able to reach more people for the kingdom of God because of the relationship that He has established between us," said Rich Lusk, pastor of Trinity Presbyterian.

## A welcomed help

Formerly known as Heritage Reformed Presbyterian Church, Trinity was in need of a bigger facility after outgrowing its building in Vestavia Hills.

While seeking out facilities in the area, Trinity approached Berney Points Baptist

in 2004 about the possibility of holding its services in the Birmingham Baptist Association church's building.

Berney Points' members welcomed the congregation with open arms, moving their Sunday School to an earlier time so that while they are in their classes, Trinity's members can worship in the sanctuary. Afterward they swap.

## Strong bond

The bond between the two churches is a strong one. Every Wednesday morning, members of both Trinity and Berney Points go to The Ministry Center at Green Springs to serve the poor.

They serve each other, too.

When Berney Points' parking lot was in need of resurfacing, about 20 men from Trinity showed up on a Saturday morning to work on the asphalt.

The Trinity congregation also took up a love offering to help a single mother who cleans the building each week.

And that's just the beginning of its kindness, said Anton Fourie, pastor of Berney Points.

"When we have members who are in the hospital, several of the people from Trinity come to visit them," he noted.

In turn, Fourie's congregation has reached out to Trinity's members, with the senior adults serving as "grandparents" to the young people of the Presbyterian church.

"It is such a joy to see our church be so kind and loving," he said.

And Fourie, who came on staff at Berney Points in 2007, has served as a "great mentor" to Lusk.

"As a young pastor, it has been very beneficial to have someone like Anton help me in my ministry," Lusk said.

The churches also have been a financial blessing to each other.

Trinity came at a time when Berney Points was struggling financially, and the rent it has paid has helped Berney Points minister more effectively.

Trinity also is able to put money toward its building fund as it saves for its own building.

"We will always be grateful for Berney Points giving us this unique opportunity, but the most lasting memory that I will have is the relationship God has given us during the past several years," Lusk said.

## Join in celebration

And when Trinity moves into its new building in Cahaba Heights this spring, Fourie said Berney Points will rejoice with its sister congregation.

"We will celebrate with them and encourage them with the gospel," he said. "We will exhort and pray that God will continue to

bear much fruit among their congregation. We will join our hearts together with them and praise God for the great work He has done in us."

*"[T]he most lasting memory that I will have is the relationship God has given us during the past several years."*

Pastor Rich Lusk  
Trinity Presbyterian Church



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# Beckners plant Calera New Life Church

By Megan Norris Jones  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

When Jim Beckner accepted his current pastorate, there was no meet-and-greet, no trial sermon.

It was just an agreement between him and the Lord.

"We realized that the church God had planted in our hearts didn't exist yet," Beckner said of his family's decision to start the soon-to-be-launched New Life Community Church in Calera. "We really have a burden for young couples and young adults with a church background who, when they got to college, dropped out."

## Making moves

To follow that call, Beckner left his position as children's minister at Trinity Baptist Church in Morgan Baptist Association in July 2008; moved his wife, Nannette, and their two children into his parents' home in McCalla; and took a job at Best Buy while preparing to start this new church.

New Life opened its doors — which are also the doors of Calera High School — for its first preview service Feb. 22. The youth band of First Baptist Church, Columbiana, in Shelby Baptist Association led the music, and Beckner preached the church's first message — that true change comes through faith in Christ.

"This kind of intentional church start is the best way to start a church," said Otis Corbitt, an associate in the office of associational missions and church planting for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

For churches just starting out like New Life, the SBOM serves as a supporting partner in the church-planting process by offering a course designed to equip pastors for the challenging work of developing a congregation from scratch.

And several Shelby Association churches — Calera Baptist; Northside Baptist, Calera; and First,

Columbiana — have pledged to support New Life, too, in keeping with the association's aggressive church-planting strategy, said Bob Brown, church-planting strategist for Shelby Association. First Baptist Church, Helena, also sent supplies for the new church's nursery and preschool department.

## Reaching the community

Beckner and volunteers have been reaching out to the community through mailings, door-to-door visits, fliers and signs. The group generated a crowd of about 40 on the first preview Sunday.

According to Corbitt, more than 40 percent of the residents of the average Alabama county are not members of a church, and those are the people whom New Life is aiming to reach.

The church's official launch will be Easter, April 12, at Calera High.

For more information, visit [www.newlifecalera.org](http://www.newlifecalera.org).

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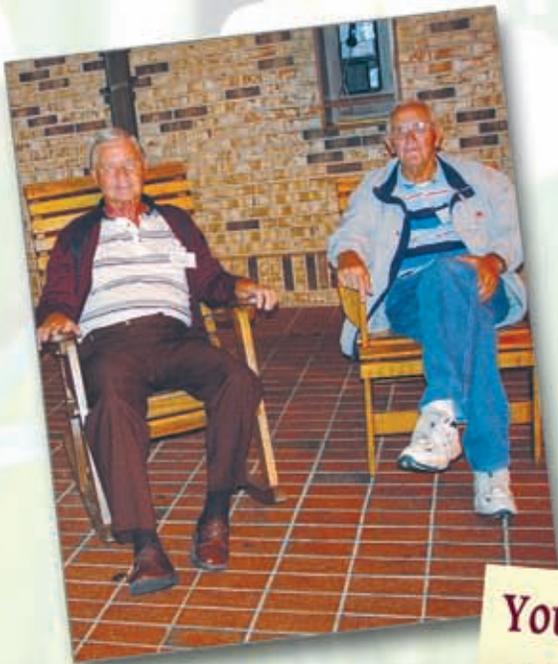
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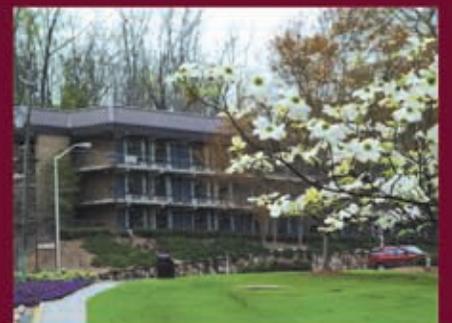
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## Want to know God?

By Pastor Edwin F. Jenkins  
First Baptist Church, Athens

All of us encounter difficulties during our journeys through life. Sometimes the obstacles are large, and other times, the problems are small. Nonetheless challenges come. It is even possible for us to feel so deeply burdened that we wonder whether we can continue.

Permit me to offer a few suggestions from a fellow struggler, which may be helpful the next time you face "the wall."

Undeniable evidence verifies your personal value. Do you doubt your worth? You shouldn't. Just for starters, look at your hand. It is an amazing instrument. Look at what your hand can do. Examine the remarkable usefulness of the appendage located conveniently at the end of your arm. Turn it over and over. Think of all it has done and can do. I told you it was amazing.

How much is your hand worth? \$1,000? Perhaps \$2,000 or \$3,000 or \$4,000? Wouldn't the word "priceless" be an appropriate value to place on that phenomenal tool? Well, yes, but "so what," you may say. What does my hand have to do with issues I face in life?

Fellow pilgrim, be aware that there is more — so much more. You are not only a body; you are also a spiritual being. And you have a mind with which you can reason and dream. All in all, while you may face many challenges and sometimes the difficulties seem to be overwhelming, you have some astounding possessions in and on you as a person.

To be completely honest with you, however, I must point out that the biggest problem any of us face is actually the basis of all our problems. We have sinned. Sin separates us from God now, and unless it is dealt with, sin will separate us from God forever.

The good news I have for you today is this: Jesus Christ, God's only Son, died on the cross for your sin. He was buried. He arose from the grave. He is alive. He has paid the price for all your sin. If you turn away from your sin and ask Him into your life, then He will forgive you and restore you to a right relationship with God.

Dear friend, that will get you going and keep you going when you think you can't. ☩

# 'Small, simple and holy'

## Historic Cahaba Valley Church carries long line of family roots

By Jeremy Henderson  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

It's almost as though the Little Cahaba River is whispering. Or singing. That's the way it sounds. That's what folks say.

And it never stops.

Tom Fancher's aunt said she couldn't be buried at the church like all the others because she'd have to listen to the whispering river for all eternity.

But Fancher thinks it's beautiful. He comes up at night sometimes to hear the song that never stops on the steps of the church that hasn't stopped for 10,000 Sundays. It feels like home.

Or maybe he'll listen up close down on the two concrete slabs that serve as the church's fellowship hall, right on the bank.

Either way, he's never alone. There, spread out under the oak trees among the ancient graves

that come all the way up to the tiny building's new vinyl siding, are pioneers of the ancient Alabama jungle who in 1817 gave birth to Cahaba Valley Baptist Church, Centreville, in Bibb Baptist Association.

Many of them are veterans from almost every war America has fought since the country started fighting wars. Many are Fancher's relatives — five generations' worth.

The church is one of the oldest still active in the state.

"There were 11 families that started that church," said Fancher, 65.

One of them was his. Four of them were black. That means a lot to Fancher. Cahaba Valley Baptist isn't big. It's not as if the whites were down front and the blacks were cordoned off in a balcony somewhere, he said. The church even ordained a black man to be a preacher in the 1850s, he added.

But back then, the congregation did get onto folks about a lot of things.

When Sister Martha Dun was suspected of dancing, it sent Elisha Fancher, Tom's great-great-something, to investigate, same as it did when it heard the cussing coming from Brother Bankston's house. When Brother Mitchell was caught selling the same team of hogs twice, it sent H.F. Fancher, another ancestor.

The church was small, simple and holy — and Stanley Dawson said it still is.

"There's no pretense in the church," said Dawson, Cahaba Valley's newest pastor. "We're all just humble, you know? Nobody's put-

ting on a show. We're just there to worship God and do His will."

And they get to do His will inside this incredible time machine of a church, with the heroes buried

outside and the music of the Little Cahaba, which, when the time comes, will serve as the soundtrack for Dawson's first-ever river baptism.

"Well, yes, let me just say it like this — I'm a history buff," Dawson said. "I love old stuff and just knowing the history of the place is a thrill. I think what really

put the icing on the cake was when one of the members was showing me around the church and they opened the crawl space door and there were the original, hand-hewn floor joists.

"You could see where they cut them out with an ax."

Since Dawson's arrival last November, those joists have been supporting a lot more weight than normal — more than 20 people.

Fancher chalks that up to the Lord and to Dawson's youth. He's 56.

"Well, he's just real energetic and young," Fancher said. "He's just real active and it's really helping. We've had our lean years. One time, we got down to eight members, but they were here every Sunday. We're picking back up now." ☩

*"Nobody's putting on a show. We're just there to worship God and do His will."*

Pastor Stanley Dawson  
Cahaba Valley Baptist Church



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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For April 12

## Explore the Bible By Dale Younce

Professor of Christian Studies, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

### THE LORD IS ALIVE Matthew 28:1-17

People often devise reasons to justify almost anything they want to believe or do. They have made up their minds and don't want to be confused by the facts. Some dismiss the biblical record about Jesus' death and resurrection and the salvation He offers. They describe it as myth or superstition. Nevertheless persuasive factual evidence undercuts such false preconceptions and conclusions. The Scriptures, changed lives and the incredible spread of Christianity witness to the truth of Jesus' resurrection. God wants all people to hear the gospel, place their faith in the Lord Jesus and worship Him daily.

#### Recognize the Abysmal Failure (1-4)

Jesus' resurrection occurred on Sunday, the first day of the week. The Jewish Sabbath ended at sundown on Saturday. Some of the women who were followers of Jesus came, in the early dawn, to His tomb. What they discovered was astounding. An earthquake occurred as they approached. On arriving, they saw the Roman soldiers who had been guarding the tomb lying unconscious on the ground and an angel, in brilliant light, sitting on the stone used to close the entrance to the tomb. The tomb was open and empty. The purpose for removing the stone from the entrance was not to let Jesus out but to let the women see that the tomb was vacant. The stunned incapacity of the guards who had been assigned to secure the tomb against anyone stealing His body was extraordinary. The guards' failure to keep Jesus in the tomb is an excellent reason to believe in His resurrection and worship Him above all earthly authority.

#### Consider the Angelic Announcement (5-7)

The angel had two sets of instructions for the women. The first was to calm their fears and verify Jesus' resurrection. The women looked into the empty tomb and saw that Jesus had come back alive just as He said He would (John 10:18). The remarkable news on resurrection Sunday was (and still is) "He is not here, for He has risen."

The second message was that the women were to report to the disciples Jesus' resurrection and that He would meet them in Galilee as He had said (Matt. 26:32). The angel announced Jesus' resurrection to the women, showed them the empty tomb and told them to report these facts to the disciples and tell them where to meet Jesus. The women's witness and the empty tomb are excellent reasons for believing in His resurrection and thus worshipping Him as the risen Lord.

#### Reflect on the Authenticating Appearance (8-10)

Jesus authenticated the angel's announcement by appearing to the women as they were on their way to the disciples. They were filled with joy and fell on their faces, worshipping Him. In fact, they touched His feet as they worshiped. Then He told them exactly the same directions the angel had given them. Jesus would meet His disciples in Galilee. The women's encounter with the risen Lord Jesus is another reason to believe in His resurrection and worship Him as the living Lord.

#### Analyze the Authorities' Motives (11-15)

To obscure the fact of Jesus' resurrection, the religious leaders were determined to discount any possible report that He had risen from the dead. They paid the guards to say His disciples had stolen His body, and the leaders assured the guards that they would not be punished for their dereliction of duty. The effort of Jesus' enemies to hide the truth of His resurrection is another excellent reason to believe in it and worship Him as the Lord of truth.

#### Make the Right Choice (16-17)

The disciples met Jesus in Galilee and worshiped Him, but some doubted He was Jesus alive from the dead. This seems strange that there was doubt even among the disciples. But it may be they were only uncertain until He arrived. When given the biblical evidence and personal testimonies of believers that the Lord lives and saves today, each of us has the opportunity to choose to receive Him as Savior and worship Him daily as Lord.

## Bible Studies for Life By Thomas Fuller

Director of Ministry Leadership Development, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

### JESUS' RESURRECTION: FACT OR FICTION?

#### Luke 24:1-8, 36-40, 44-46

On Easter, we celebrate Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead. For Christians, no other claim about the person and work of Jesus is more central to the gospel than "He is risen!" It is also fair to say no other claim is more widely contested. The apostle Paul reminded the Corinthians "if Christ has not been raised, then ... your faith is in vain" (1 Cor. 15:14). Without the resurrection, Jesus is nothing more than another great teacher, miracle worker and tragic figure of history. "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead," Paul wrote (1 Cor. 15:20). Therefore we worship a living Savior; by faith, we have hope for victory over sin and death; and we await Jesus' return. This lesson highlights the testimony of those who first received the good news that Jesus lives and encountered the living Lord. Today we share in the joy of their discovery and affirm once again, "He's alive!"

#### Remembering Jesus' Promise (1-8)

It was early Sunday morning ("the first day of the week"), and a group of women came to the tomb to complete the burial process by anointing Jesus' shrouded corpse with spices. Sabbath laws and darkness had undoubtedly prevented them from doing this sooner. Some of the women are identified for us in verse 10 as Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary, the mother of James. They made two unexpected discoveries: The stone that should be sealing the entrance to the tomb had been rolled away, and Jesus' body was not in the tomb. "Two men ... in shining garments" appeared; their description and activity are consistent with other biblical accounts of angels. The angels' question, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?," is a preface for the announcement that Jesus "is risen" and the reminder that He had told them of this.

Verse 8 reads, "And they remembered His words." We may be tempted to marvel at His disciples' forgetfulness, but He often spoke in parables and metaphors. Like the angels on that day, we today enjoy the aid of the Holy

Spirit, who brings to our remembrance all that Jesus spoke (John 14:26). In the midst of their fear and uncertainty, the women at the tomb were prompted to believe the angels' announcement because it squared with what Jesus had promised beforehand.

#### Confirming Jesus Lives (36-40)

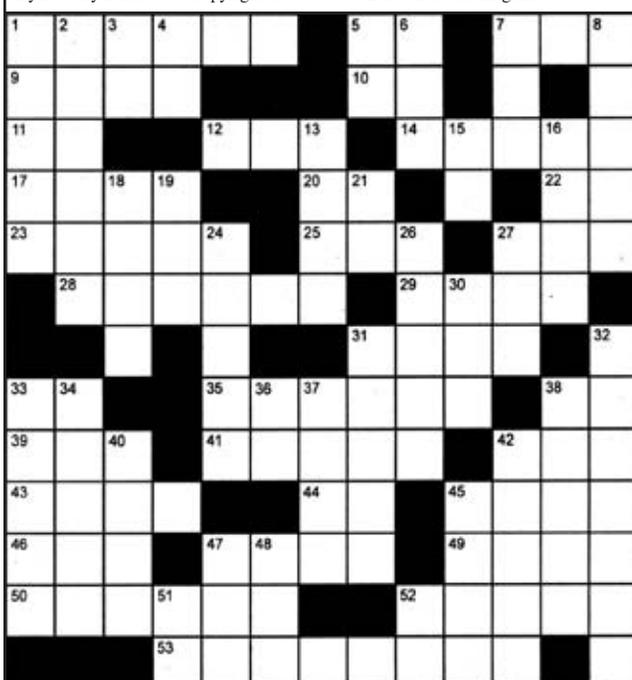
In legal proceedings, it always strengthens a case when a witness's testimony is corroborated by someone else. Here the women's testimony was corroborated by two disciples — Cleopas and an unidentified man — who encountered the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus (13-35). They reported their encounter with Him to "the eleven" that "[t]he Lord is risen indeed." But the disciples did not have to trust only others' reports, for Jesus appeared in their midst, offering the traditional greeting, shalom. Similar accounts of this appearance can be found in Mark 16:14 and John 20:19ff. The disciples' initial reaction was one of fear, supposing they were seeing a ghost. But He dispelled any such notion. Jesus was there in the flesh, though we know that His was a resurrected body (1 Cor. 15:35-49). He invited them to touch Him and confirm His bodily form. Their faith was now based on a firsthand experience of the risen Lord.

#### Believing Scripture's Testimony (44-46)

Much as He had done with the disciples in Emmaus, Jesus expounded the Old Testament texts that pointed to His (the Messiah's) suffering, death and resurrection. The reference to "the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms" drives home the point that all of Scripture testifies to God's saving work and its fulfillment in Jesus. Furthermore He "opened their understanding" to these things, just as the Holy Spirit functions to do in believers' minds and hearts today (John 14:26). Just as those first disciples were prompted to trust Scripture's testimony concerning Jesus, we, too, can trust the biblical witness to all things concerning our Lord. And the one thing of which we can be most fully confident, on Easter and every day, is that Jesus was raised from the dead.

## Christian Crossword

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### Across

- By their \_\_\_ ye shall know them. (Matt. 7:20)
- Jesus loves \_\_\_.
- Lean \_\_\_ unto thine own understanding. (Prov. 3:5)
- Bad grammar.
- \_\_\_ are of God, little children. (1 John 4:4)
- Intensive Care. (abbr.)
- The beginning and the \_\_\_. (Rev. 21:6)
- A little \_\_\_ than the angels. (Heb. 2:7)
- I will never leave \_\_\_. (Heb. 13:5)
- Each. (abbr.)
- Delaware. (abbr.)
- I am meek and lowly in \_\_\_. (Matt. 11:29)
- American Medical Association. (abbr.)
- Let thy words be \_\_\_. (Eccles. 5:2)
- Opposite of "brave."
- Unto us a child is \_\_\_. (Isa. 9:6)
- The head of the \_\_\_, the church. (Col. 1:18)
- Postscript.
- Opposite of "depart."

### Down

- \_\_\_ be it.
- A hot cereal, \_\_\_ meal.
- \_\_\_ him, and let him go. (John 11:44)
- A bicycle's handle \_\_\_.
- A little bird.
- Missouri. (abbr.)
- Leave these out of your diet.
- Cause thine \_\_\_ to hear. (Ps. 10:17)
- A has \_\_\_.
- A continent.
- One who works in a belfry.
- Jesus saith unto her, give Me to \_\_\_. (John 4:7)
- \_\_\_ evil with good. (Rom. 12:21)
- If any man be in Christ, he is a \_\_\_ creature. (2 Cor. 5:17)
- \_\_\_ stones at him. (2 Sam. 16:13)
- Was \_\_\_, and is alive again. (Luke 15:24)
- Ohio. (abbr.)
- God sent him forth from the garden of \_\_\_. (Gen. 3:23)
- Charity ... toward \_\_\_ other. (2 Thes. 1:3)
- Period of time in history.
- I \_\_\_ the way. (John 14:6)
- The \_\_\_ of your faith. (1 Pet. 1:7)
- Every perfect gift is from \_\_\_. (James 1:17)
- To cook in a skillet.
- Musical poem.
- Buffalo.
- He will not fail thee, neither \_\_\_ thee. (Deut. 31:8)
- All \_\_\_ is given unto Me. (Matt. 28:18)
- Abram took \_\_\_ his wife. (Gen. 12:5)
- Rule out. (abbr.)
- All Jews to depart from \_\_\_.



# World Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

## British scientist proposes use of aborted fetal organs

LONDON — A top British scientist has recommended research into the transplantation of kidneys and livers from aborted babies, prompting an outcry from pro-life advocates.

Richard Gardner, an Oxford University stem cell specialist and an adviser to Britain's Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, proposed studies using organs from aborted human beings. He made his comments at a biomedical conference, according to a March 11 report in the *Daily Mail*, a British newspaper.

"It is, at least, a temporary solution" to the organ donor shortage, Gardner said.

Nearly 7,000 of the 8,000 Brits on transplant lists need kidneys, the *Daily Mail* reported.

Stuart Campbell, a British obstetrics and gynecology professor, endorsed the proposal. If babies "are going to be terminated, it is a shame to waste their organs," Campbell said, according to the newspaper. "I am sure very few of those on the transplant list would rather die than accept an organ from an aborted fetus."

Pro-life advocates on both sides of the Atlantic decried the suggestion. Some said it presented the possibility of abortions being scheduled to coincide with transplants, the *Daily Mail* reported.

"This is about as scary as the news can get," Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. wrote in a March 16 commentary. "Here we confront a serious proposal to use aborted fetuses as factories for spare organs and tissues. Having commodified the human embryo and then allowing its destruction in the name of medical progress, the fetus is next in line. ... The use of fetal tissues in medical research is grossly immoral — but so is the use of human embryos."

## Fate of Christians in Pakistani area unknown

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Just over a month since Pakistan's Swat Valley turned into a Taliban stronghold where Shariah rules, the fate of the remaining Christians in the area is uncertain.

In an effort to end a bloody two-year battle, the Islamabad administration struck a deal with Taliban forces, surrendering all governance of Swat Valley in the North-West Frontier Province.

Sources said that in the violence that has killed and displaced hundreds, an estimated 500 Christians remain in the region. In the past year, more than 200 schools for girls in Swat were reported to have been burned down or bombed by Islamic extremists.

Remaining schools for girls were closed in January but have been reopened since the peace agreement in mid-February.

An associate pastor of the sole Church of Pakistan congregation in Swat told Yousaf Benjamin of the National Commission for Justice and Peace that with the bombing of the schools at the end of last year, all Christian families migrated to nearby districts.

After the peace deal and with guarded hope for normalcy and continued education for their children, most Christian families have returned but are reluctant to attend church.

The associate pastor, who requested anonymity, said that "people don't come to the church as they used to come before." He said that Christians have yet to believe the Taliban will keep promises of peace.

## China aid group urges help for tortured Christian

MIDLAND, Texas — Certain that Chinese authorities are torturing Christian human rights activist Gao Zhisheng following the escape of his family to the United States, advocacy group China Aid Association (CAA) urged the international community in March to take action by signing a petition on his behalf.

Earlier this year, Gao had authorized CAA to release his account of 50 days of torture by state-sponsored officials in September and October 2007. Gao had written the account in November 2007 while under house arrest in Beijing after prolonged beatings and electric shocks on his mouth and genitals.

"Every time when I was tortured," Gao wrote, "I was always repeatedly threatened that if I spelled out later what had happened to me, I would be tortured again, but I was told, 'This time it will happen in front of your wife and children.'"

On Jan. 9, before state security agents in his home village in Shaanxi province abducted him again Feb. 4, Gao's family members began their escape from China. Gao's wife, Geng He, along with 16-year-old daughter Geng Ge and 5-year-old son Gao Tianyu, fears for his safety, according to CAA.

In his 2007 account, Gao had written that those who captured and tortured him warned that if he revealed his treatment, he would be killed.

# Religious liberty violators list released

Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice issued a long-overdue list of the world's worst violators of religious liberty four days before the end of the Bush administration and failed to add any countries recommended by a federal commission.

Rice formally designated the same eight governments as "countries of particular concern" (CPCs) Jan. 16 but did not publicly release the list, according to a March 27 news release from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

The commission learned of Rice's action only during the week of March 23–27, when the State Department, now under Secretary Hillary Clinton, released the list

in response to a USCIRF request.

Rice had not made any CPC designations since November 2006. Federal law requires the State Department to review international religious liberty conditions by Sept. 1 of each year.

CPC designations are expected to take place soon afterward, though no deadline is set, according to USCIRF.

## Redesignation

In Rice's January action, she redesignated Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Uzbekistan as CPCs. In addition, Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan received waivers, according to USCIRF.

The commission — a nine-member,

bipartisan panel that advises the White House and Congress on global religious liberty issues — had urged Rice to add Iraq, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Vietnam to the list.

USCIRF makes CPC recommendations but only the secretary of state decides which countries receive such a designation.

CPC designation is reserved for governments that have "engaged in or tolerated systemic and egregious violations of religious freedom."

The president selects three members of USCIRF, while congressional leaders name the other six. Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, is a USCIRF commissioner. (BP)

# Study Bible wins Christian Book of the Year award

The ESV Study Bible has been named the Christian Book of the Year by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association, marking the first time the honor has been given to a study Bible.

The Bible, which is in the English Standard Version, includes study notes from evangelical Christian scholars and other reference materials.

## 'Best Bible'

Published by Crossway Books & Bibles, it also won in the best Bible category.

The honoring of the study Bible follows two previous first-time wins of other products.

In 2008, The Word of Promise New Testament Audio Bible became the first audio product to

win; in 2007, Karen Kingsbury became the first woman and the first novelist to win, for her book "Ever After."

The award was announced March 19 at the kick-off for the 2009 Christian Book Expo in Dallas. The Christian Book Awards, which previously were known as the Gold Medallion Book Awards, were established in 1978 to recognize Christian books for excellent content, design and literary quality.

## Other winners included:

► **Bible Reference & Study:** "Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings," edited by Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (InterVarsity Press)

► **Children & Youth:** "For

Young Men Only" by Jeff Feldhahn and Eric Rice with Shaunti Feldhahn (WaterBrook Multnomah Publishing Group)

► **Christian Life:** "Spectacular Sins" by John Piper (Crossway Books & Bibles)

► **Fiction:** "The Shape of Mercy" by Susan Meissner (WaterBrook Multnomah Publishing Group)

► **Inspiration & Gift:** "Holiness Day by Day" by Jerry Bridges (NavPress). (RNS)

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The screenshot shows the new al.com website layout. At the top, there's a search bar and a navigation menu with links for Home, News, Weather, Sports, Entertainment, Interact, Jobs, Autos, Real Estate, Classifieds, Shopping, and Place An Ad. Below the navigation, there's a "Statewide" section with a map and a link to "See another view of this page by choosing local coverage below. How to set your local coverage: Birmingham | Huntsville | Mobile". The main content area is divided into three columns: "Alabama Real-Time News" with a photo of a tree, "Sports" with a headline "Midfield's Shackelford heading to Mississippi Valley" and a sub-headline "Midfield linebacker James Shackelford, number 51 on your roster, has committed to Mississippi Valley State.", and "Alabama Weather" with a headline "Birmingham, AL change location" and a temperature of 38°.

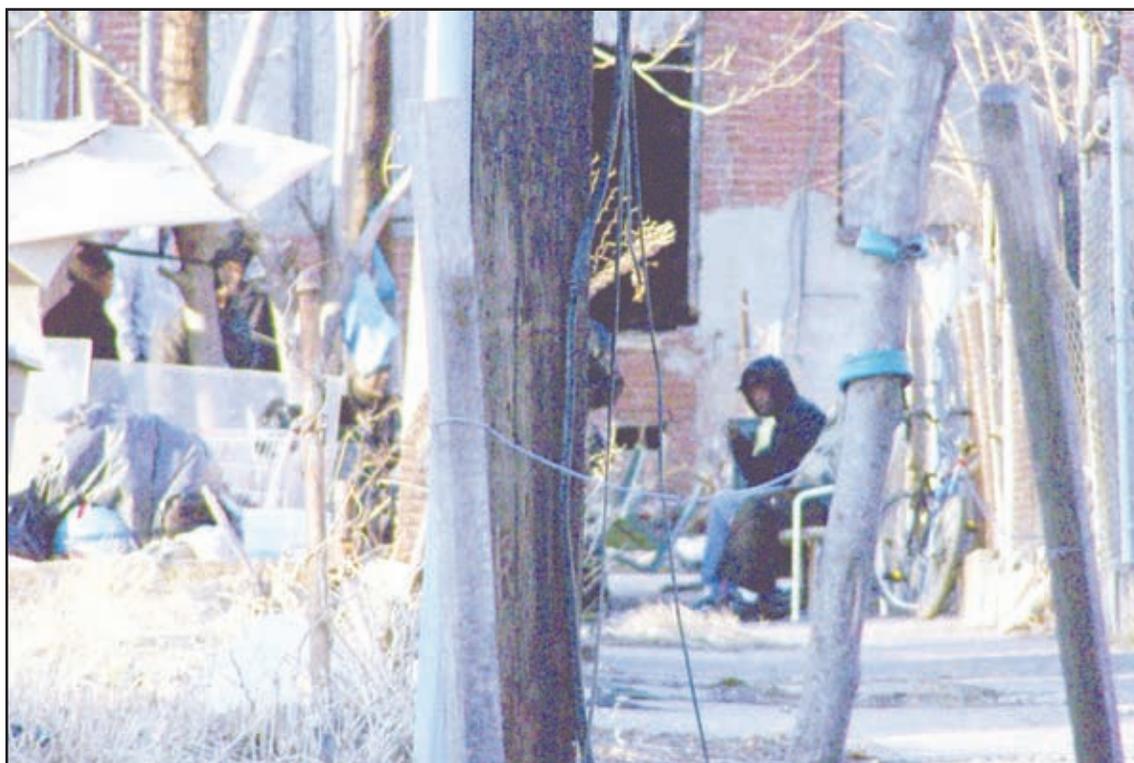
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**30 PERCENT BELOW POVERTY LINE** — Bill Simpson, executive director of Open Door Community Development Corporation, calls Baltimore's McElderry Park the 'poorest neighborhood in Maryland.'

## Fulfilling needs

### Open Door provides help to hurting in Baltimore

It's an economic reality. The poor are becoming poorer. Amid the economic downturn, people with little education are losing entry-level service jobs to high school and college graduates. With dwindling opportunities to work, the poverty-stricken often wind up roaming the streets in a survival mode that often includes drugs, crime and despair.

Bill Simpson's office, nestled in a row house in what he calls the "poorest neighborhood in Maryland" — Baltimore's McElderry Park — is surrounded by distress.

Within one-third mile of Simpson's office, 846 households scrape by on less than \$15,000 a year — 30 percent below the U.S. poverty level for a family of four. Reach out to two-thirds of a mile and the number triples to 2,559 households.

"In any given month, about 60 percent are unemployed. Our high school dropout rate is over 65 percent, and our teen pregnancy rate exceeds 80 percent," said Simpson, executive director of Open Door Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing families and neighborhoods on Baltimore's lower east side. "Business as usual won't get it done here."

For Simpson, who moved his office into the neighborhood this past summer, it is worth the hourlong commute to simply "show up" and seek to make a difference in the

hurting community. The Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware helped the ministry get started.

Simpson said he feels McElderry Park is "quarantined" from the rest of the city because of its overwhelming needs. But he also knows through Christ, much can be accomplished there.

"Emphasizing the redemptive principles of renewal, restoration and reconciliation, we believe it's wrong for 140,000 Baltimoreans to live in poverty in the nation's most affluent state," Simpson said. "We are strong advocates for addressing the generational poverty that devalues life, immobilizes families and communities and feeds a cycle of failure and futility."

Open Door's mission, he explained, is threefold: "To be a source of hope and encouragement for people who need a new start; to be a community hub that links folks to positive and constructive activities; and to be a safe haven where God's heart for hurting people and struggling families is made real every day."

Open Door's initiatives include adult learning, workforce development, life skills training, computer literacy and family services, information and referral.

"We also place a strong emphasis on emergency compassion outreach and strategic community organizing," Simpson added.

"In the final analysis, we're con-

vinced that if you help parents and adults with their education, employment, housing and other 'felt need' issues, you really are helping the whole family and the larger community."

Simpson saw that happen when Open Door helped a 45-year-old man find a full-time job for the first time in his life.

#### A place to turn to

"We helped him develop a resumé, strengthened his soft skills (appearance habits, ability to fill out forms, communication and motivation skills) and practiced interviewing with him," Simpson said. "It felt really good to know that we helped him get meaningful employment."

In spite of the great challenges they face, the people Open Door serves are remarkably proud, resilient, determined and optimistic, Simpson said.

"Most believe life can be better for their families. Nearly all just need a helping hand from someone who cares," he noted.

Because the need in the community is so great, Simpson describes Open Door's ministry as a "long-term proposition."

"Our goal is to not only provide short-term emergency relief but to also form relationships that can help lead to larger life solutions for those in need," he said.

It is necessary to build trust in the community, and it takes time for Open Door to be a place people turn to if they need food for the day or simply somebody to talk with, Simpson said.

"We may not be fully resourced, but they can see us work to help them," he said. (BP)

## Religion In America

Compiled from Wire Services

### Grassley praises moves toward accountability

WASHINGTON — The senator who has investigated six prominent ministries for questionable finances has praised one of them — Joyce Meyer Ministries — for joining the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA).

"This is a positive development," said Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, who is the ranking Republican on the Senate Finance Committee. "It's good to see increased financial accountability, transparency, board governance and ethical fund raising taken seriously."

The council announced the new membership of Meyer's Missouri-based ministry March 17, the same day it announced that Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Okla., had also been approved for membership. Grassley said his investigation into the six ministries is continuing.

Meyer's ministry and Benny Hinn Ministries in Grapevine, Texas, have given him "extensive answers" to questions his staff has sent them. Creflo Dollar Ministries in College Park, Ga., has declined to provide any information.

And the three other ministries have given "incomplete responses": Bishop Eddie Long's New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Ga.; Kenneth Copeland Ministries in Newark, Texas; and Randy and Paula White of Without Walls International Church in Tampa, Fla.

Meyer's ministry is the only one of the six that has affiliated with the ECFA, a group Grassley compared to a "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval."

Joyce Meyer Ministries reaches a potential audience of 3 billion people each day with its "Enjoying Everyday Life" television and radio program.

"We are pleased to include in our membership a ministry which seeks to strengthen Christian individuals and the environments in which they live, work and worship," said ECFA President Dan Busby.

### Appeals court rules against Christian student group

SAN FRANCISCO — A federal appeals court has upheld an "open membership" rule for student organizations at a University of California law school, making a Christian student group ineligible for recognition because the group requires adherence to a faith statement and denies membership to gays.

"The conditions on recognition are ... viewpoint neutral and reasonable," the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in a March 17 decision.

The Christian Legal Society (CLS) chapter at the university's Hastings College of the Law had sought official recognition (and school funding) as a student organization but was denied because of its membership requirements.

"We certainly believe that the First Amendment rights of the CLS chapter are being violated," said Timothy Tracey, litigation counsel for the Springfield, Va.-based society.

Tracey, who said his organization is considering an appeal, is concerned that this case could affect other college groups.

Nell Newton, chancellor and dean of the law school in San Francisco, said the school's board of directors determined that the CLS group's membership rules violated the school's nondiscrimination policy.

### Catholic leaders report rise in abuse cases

WASHINGTON — U.S. Catholic leaders processed more than 800 allegations of clergy sexual abuse in 2008, a 16 percent increase from 2007. The majority of the allegations involved abuse that occurred decades ago.

A report issued March 13 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops showed 803 allegations were filed by 706 victims last year against 518 clergy. The church also spent more than \$436 million in legal settlements, attorney fees and counseling costs.

Just 13 of the 803 cases involved alleged abuse of a minor that occurred during 2008. Nearly all of the cases involved accusations of molestation that occurred decades ago. The church said 83 percent of the accused clergy were dead, defrocked or missing.

The increase from 692 total allegations in 2007 to 803 in 2008 appears to be fueled by a 93 percent spike in abuse involving members of religious communities. Those allegations nearly doubled, from 92 to 178; 40 percent of the 2008 allegations involved one religious order.

By comparison, the total number of allegations reported by the nation's 195 dioceses increased by 26, or 4 percent, from 2007. ❧



# Senior Living Resource Guide

an advertising supplement • April 9, 2009



## America's trusted source for non-medical home care

Being able to live at home can be one of the most important comforts in a senior's life. Our carefully selected CAREGivers<sup>SM</sup> help make that possible, with a wide range of nonmedical services, welcome companionship and a ready smile. At Home Instead Senior Care<sup>®</sup>, we treat each senior as we would a member of our own family.

### WE PROVIDE

- Wide variety of services, including:
  - meal preparation
  - light housekeeping/laundry
  - medication reminders
  - personal care (bathing, dressing, toileting, etc.)
  - shopping
  - errands
  - incidental transportation
- Bonded, insured CAREGivers<sup>SM</sup> who complete a stringent background check
- Short-notice staffing, including 24 hour, long-term and weekends
- Thorough, ongoing training process for each care professional
- Regular quality control checks to ensure prepared, responsive care



### Alabama Locations

**AUBURN:** 334-321-1050, Service areas: Lee, Macon, Russell, Chamber

**BIRMINGHAM:** 205-822-1915, Service areas: Jefferson and Northern Shelby

**DOTHAN:** 334-699-6815, Service areas: Barbour, Henry, Houston, Dale, Geneva

**FLORENCE:** 256-764-4316, Service areas: Lauderdale, Franklin, Colbert, Lawrence

**HUNTSVILLE, DECATUR & GUNTERSVILLE:** 256-883-3080  
Service areas: Limestone, Morgan, Madison, Marshall, Jackson

**MOBILE & DAPHNE:** Mobile: 251-342-6655, Daphne: 251-626-7732  
Service areas: Mobile, Baldwin (Eastern Shore area)

**MONTGOMERY:** 334-215-9577, Service areas: Montgomery, Elmore, Autauga



### Why Home Instead Senior Care<sup>®</sup> is your best choice

#### • Trusted by clients and the community

For more than a decade, Home Instead Senior Care<sup>®</sup> has been a reliable source of care for individuals and families. We are referred by thousands of health care, medical and social services organizations throughout North America.

#### • Experienced, reliable company

Since Home Instead Senior Care<sup>®</sup> began in 1994, Home Instead CAREGivers<sup>SM</sup> have helped more than 1 million clients.

#### • The world leader in senior care services

There are more than 600 locations across North America and the world.

#### • Locally owned and operated

Not a registry or independent contractor, Home Instead Senior Care<sup>®</sup> is a network of locally owned and operated offices providing trusted services. Each office has a staff and CAREGivers<sup>SM</sup> that are engaged in their community and know the resources that are available.

#### • Experienced CAREGivers<sup>SM</sup>

Three out of four CAREGivers<sup>SM</sup> have experience in caring for an older family

member, half have cared for older friends and one-third have cared for both older relatives and friends.

#### • Reliable, dependable service and support

Whether you desire a little extra help with meal preparation, light housekeeping or simply need an escort to your doctor, the grocery store or the mall, Home Instead CAREGivers<sup>SM</sup> are willing and able to serve you.

#### • Compatible CAREGivers<sup>SM</sup>

We get to know you and your needs and services before a CAREGiver<sup>SM</sup> arrives at your door. The information we gather allows us to determine a compatible match with your CAREGiver<sup>SM</sup>. You'll also receive a personal introduction to your CAREGiver<sup>SM</sup> to ensure the relationship begins positively.

#### • Thorough pre-employment screening

Home Instead CAREGivers<sup>SM</sup> are fully bonded and insured and undergo a detailed screening process, including reference checks and a thorough criminal background check.

#### • Quality Control Program

To ensure the client/CAREGiver<sup>SM</sup> relationship meets expectations, we also conduct

quality assurance visits.

#### • Ongoing communication and documentation

Each Home Instead Senior Care<sup>®</sup> client receives a journal, where they, their family members and their CAREGiver<sup>SM</sup> maintain a daily diary of activities.

#### • Responsive staff

Home Instead CAREGivers<sup>SM</sup> and office staff are accessible 24 hours-a-day, every day of the year to respond to schedule changes, arrange service, communicate with CAREGivers<sup>SM</sup> and more.

#### • Comprehensive employee training program

Home Instead CAREGivers<sup>SM</sup> are required to complete a multi phase training program that enables them to respond to unique situations.

#### • Free consultation

To help your family better understand these trusted, affordable, in-home services, you can request a free, no-obligation consultation. Let us help you live the life you want.

Seven locations throughout Alabama

[www.homeinstead.com](http://www.homeinstead.com)

Each Home Instead Senior Care<sup>®</sup> franchise office is independently owned and operated.  
Call for a free, no obligation consultation.

# The truth about reverse mortgage: not for everyone

By Ray Daffron  
Paid Advertising

It may surprise you to hear a reverse mortgage lender saying this, but it is true. The loan is intended to be the last loan you will ever need and not a short-term financial instrument.

Borrowers looking for a short-term loan may be better suited for a different type of financing as reverse mortgages require mortgage insurance, origination fees and third-party fees that all must be paid upfront making the loan impractical for a short-term solution.

However for those borrowers who want to remain in their homes and need extra income or cash to do so, a reverse mortgage may be exactly what you need. There are a few questions to ask yourself:

- Do you find yourself short of funds before the end of every month?
- Are your retirement plans delayed due to the economy?
- Are medical expenses/needs demanding too much of your disposable cash?
- Would you like to be able to help family members with college or other expenses?
- Do you need additional cash or income to enjoy your retirement for travel, leisure activities or to just be more comfortable?
- Do you have a mortgage payment that if gone, would make a difference in your life?

If you are 62 or older, want to stay in your home and answered yes to any of these questions; or if you find you need additional cash for your own unique reasons, then a Reverse Mortgage may be the right answer for you and your family.

A reverse mortgage is designed to be the last loan you may ever need. It works opposite of a traditional mortgage. Rather than making monthly payments to pay off a loan as with a traditional or forward mortgage, a reverse mortgage allows the equity in your home to pay you. Since there are no

monthly payments, there is no income or credit qualification required.

The loan is safe and is government-insured by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), a division of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This loan was signed into law as a government-insured product by Ronald Reagan in 1968 and has helped thousands of senior homeowners safely access the equity in their homes.

Reverse mortgages did not originate in 1988. There were previous versions but they were flawed and contained provisions that could hurt homeowners. Many of those misconceptions about the current government product linger still today. But you can rest assured the home equity conversion mortgage (HECM or "Heck-um") insured by FHA is an excellent opportunity for seniors to access the equity in their homes without the pitfalls of previous programs.

Borrowers have a choice of how they can receive their money. After the current liens on the property are paid off, borrowers can choose a number of different ways to get their cash. You can choose to receive the funds all at once; in monthly installments; as a line of credit accessible as you choose; or a combination of any of the above. Regardless of how you choose to receive your money, you never have to make a monthly payment for as long as you live in your home.

Each person's situation is unique and that's why speaking one-on-one with a knowledgeable, trained expert is vital. If I can answer any of your questions and help you determine if a reverse mortgage is the right decision for you, then call 205-532-9962 or e-mail [rdaffron@valuefinancial.net](mailto:rdaffron@valuefinancial.net). I am also available to speak to groups on this topic at no cost or obligation.



Ray Daffron



Prices starting at \$699

## MAGNOLIA PARK RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

An independent living senior community now leasing in St. Clair County

Designed for adults 55 and better, this peaceful and private neighborhood of distinctive apartment homes features superior design, southern comfort, and the most beautiful setting in the area.

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## A change for the better.

That will give you something to cheer about.



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ACTS Retirement-Life Communities has come to Huntsville at Magnolia Trace (formerly Carlton Cove) — and we're excited to be here! If you're looking for a lively, engaging lifestyle with real peace of mind, you'll be excited, too.

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ACTS is a not-for-profit organization pledged to the letter and spirit of U.S. policy for the achievement of equal housing opportunity throughout the nation. We encourage and support programs in which there are no barriers to obtaining housing because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin. © 2009 ACTS All eligible communities are CCAC accredited.

# Spring Senior Adult Retreat

**Monday-Wednesday, April 13-15, at Shocco Springs**  
 Begins with registration at 10 a.m. Monday and lunch at noon.

- PLATFORM PERSONALITIES:**
- Larry Fields, preacher
  - George Fields, celebration leader
  - Bruce Fields, musician
  - Mary Taylor, pianist
- SPECIAL FEATURES:**
- Bruce & George Fields, Monday night
  - Doug Rogers, Tuesday night

**REGISTER:**  
[www.shocco.org/reser](http://www.shocco.org/reser) or 1-800-280-1105

**COST:**  
 \$139 per person (double-occupancy)  
 \$129 per person (triple-occupancy or quad-occupancy)  
 \$179 per person (private room)  
 Price includes two nights' lodging,  
 seven meals, two snacks and the program.



## SENIOR COMMUNITIES

DIVISION OF EAST ALABAMA MEDICAL CENTER  
 Offering Continuum of Care



- RETIREMENT LIVING**  
 Azalea Place, Camellia Place,  
 Magnolia Place,  
 The Terrace at Oak Park
- ASSISTED LIVING**  
 Camellia Place, Azalea Place,  
 Magnolia Place
- DEMENTIA CARE**  
 Camellia Place, Magnolia Place
- OAK PARK NURSING HOME**

For information on all our communities  
 call (334) 501-0904 and  
 ask for Sybil Haugery  
 1601 Professional Pkwy. • Auburn, AL 36830



## Senior Benefit

The United States Congress has designed a  
 "HOME LOAN" program that you do **NOT** have  
 to pay back as long as you live in your home!

# REVERSE MORTGAGE

For seniors age 62 and up  
 Supplement income / Stop foreclosure  
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[www.americanreverse.com](http://www.americanreverse.com)



Advantage Diabetic & Medical Supply, LLC has been serving the diabetic community on the Gulf Coast as well as Alabama and the Southeast since 2004, with quality products for glucose (sugar) monitoring, insulin pump supplies, therapeutic shoes and diabetes education (within the Mobile area.)

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**FREE** glucose monitor with your first order! We ship your diabetic supplies to your home for **FREE!**

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## Covenant's Promise.

# Excellence in compassionate care.

In honor of National Volunteer Week,  
 April 19 - 25, we would like to thank over  
 2,000 volunteers for the support that you  
 provide our patients, families and staff.

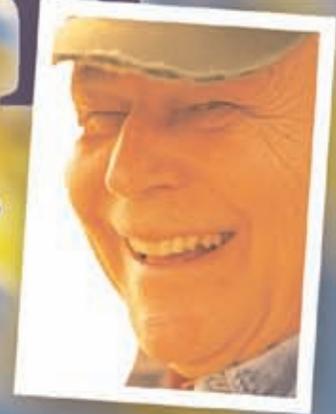


877-244-7379 • [covenanthospice.org](http://covenanthospice.org)



MAY 4,  
2009

# Senior Adult Evangelism Conference



Birmingham First Baptist Church  
2209 Lakeshore Drive, Homewood



**MUSIC:** Paid In Full  
**SPEAKERS:** David Platt, Church at Brook Hills  
Charles T. Carter, pastor emeritus,  
Shades Mountain Baptist Church  
**TIME:** 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Lunch is on your own.  
Admission is **FREE** (no registration required).

Call 1.800.264.1225 for more information,  
Marcus Merritt, ext. 368, [mmerritt@alsbom.org](mailto:mmerritt@alsbom.org),  
or Eileen Mitchell, ext. 221, [emitchell@alsbom.org](mailto:emitchell@alsbom.org),  
or visit [www.alsbom.org/saec](http://www.alsbom.org/saec).



Alabama Baptist Convention  
**State Board of Missions**

This conference is made possible by gifts of Alabama  
Baptists through the Cooperative Program.