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123rf.com

Grandparents parenting grandchildren

Facing emotional, physical, financial realities of new role

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Grandparents parenting grandchildren is not a new situation, but an increase in substance abuse and incarceration in the last 40 years has led to a steady increase in the number of grandparents who have taken on this role. Today nearly one in four grandparents in Alabama and one in 10 nationally are raising at least one of their grandchildren under age 18.

For adults who find themselves par-

enting the second time around, there are unique emotional, social and legal concerns, according to an online article by Yanyi Djamba, director of the Center for Demographic Research and associate professor of sociology at Auburn University Montgomery.

On an emotional level, grandparents are torn between their concern for their adult children and their grandchildren, Djamba explained. Some of these grandparents may be caring for their own aging parents as well, pulling the caregiver between several distinct generations.

"In these intergenerational households, who to care for and how much time to devote to each generation becomes an everyday challenge," Djamba said.

Less time for themselves

In addition, grandparents raising grandchildren often have less time for themselves and their own interests, leaving them feeling socially isolated, according to Wanda Ruffin, a retired family life specialist for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System who worked with many grandparent support programs in

north Alabama during her career.

"Most of these adults have made many plans for their retirement, and suddenly, all their plans are changed," Ruffin said. "They are at a certain stage of life chronologically, but they have essentially gone backward to another stage in life to be parents again."

Grandparents who are parenting lose the role of grandparents for these children, Ruffin said, and may not have as much time for other grandchildren as a result.

For those grandparents whose (See 'Restoring,' page 5)

Second time around...

Thomas and Sarah thought they would spend their retirement traveling, serving more at church and spoiling their five grandchildren. But it didn't work out that way. Their lives changed dramatically when their daughter was arrested, and her children — ages 9 and 12 — came to live with them. They now have custody of the children and are thankful they can provide a safe and loving home for their grandchildren. However, they have a lot of questions about the future. Will they be able to keep up with the busy lives of two preteens? Will health issues be a problem? How will they balance their role as grandparents and caregivers? Can they really afford to raise two children at this stage of their lives?



Coming next week...

Digital devices
in worship services

How far is too far?

COMMENT

Ministering in a Changing Culture

Who would have imagined that Alabama Baptist churches would be considering how to involve openly gay couples in active congregational life? Even though it is not politically correct, most Alabama Baptists believe Romans 1:21–26 where the apostle Paul calls homosexual relationships a “perversion” and says the practice demonstrates what happens when people claim to be “wise” but behave as “fools.”

That understanding is expressed in the most recent Baptist Faith and Message Statement of Faith where Article XV states, in part, “Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality including adultery, homosexuality and pornography.”

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) constitution goes even further. Article III, Section 1, says, in part, “Among churches not in cooperation with the convention are churches which act to affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior.” Some understand Article III, Section 1 to mean that churches that accept openly gay members are excluded from SBC membership.

With such policies, one would expect little reason for cooperating churches to consider the role of openly gay couples in the ongoing life of a cooperating Baptist church.

But that changed in 2013 and promises to change more in the days ahead.

The June 26, 2013, U.S. Supreme Court decision striking down a major portion of the federal Defense of Marriage Act was a giant step toward changing the culture of marriage in the United States. By a 5–4 decision, the court ruled that same-sex couples are entitled to the same federal benefits as heterosexual couples. As a result of that decision major companies in Alabama and across the nation have changed their benefits policies to provide marriage benefits for same-sex couples.

Since that Supreme Court decision, various federal courts have ruled same-sex “marriage” legal in California, New Jersey, New Mexico and Utah and state Legislatures approved the concept in Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois and Minnesota. These recent moves amount to a lot of historic change in only a six-month time period.



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

That is why Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., recently sponsored a conference on Ministering in the New Marriage Culture. And that is why Alabama Baptist pastors openly shared about ministering to homosexuals who are already participating in the congregational life of numerous Alabama Baptist churches.

Respond with humility

Baptist leaders at the New Marriage Culture conference and those interviewed by this publication were unanimous that churches must respond with humility to homosexuals because none of us live life as Jesus wants. The leaders counseled that churches must respond with grace because Jesus responded with grace to us in our sin. They said same-sex couples should be welcomed to worship just as any other person who genuinely desired to worship God through faith in Jesus Christ (see the Jan. 9 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*, page 1).

Such counsel seems to create a dilemma. How can a church demonstrate humility and grace to same-sex couples and at the same time hold to its understanding of biblical teaching that condemns homosexual behavior?

Perhaps a more basic question is why Southern Baptists singled out the sin of homosexuality in its constitution but did not include any of the other sins grouped with homosexuality in Scripture in its statement of faith.

The answer to that question might provide guidance. If a church seeks to minister to the greedy, the slanderers, those with alcohol problems, those

caught up in adultery, vice or dishonest behavior, then why would a church not be open to those living a homosexual lifestyle (1 Cor. 6:9)? The apostle Paul also reminds us that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

But is participation in a local Baptist church the same as membership in that church?

In many churches the two are equated. So strong is the goal of growing the membership in these churches that they do not even have orientation classes for new members. Some churches leave the membership question entirely to participants and accept all who seek membership without ever voting as a local church body.

In the early days of Baptist life, and still among some Baptist bodies, the church placed claims on the lives of its members. Members were expected to regularly participate in worship, to evidence a growing faith, to support the church financially, to participate in missions and service and to share their faith with others.

These commitments were expressed through a church covenant and members were held accountable for living up to their covenant promises. The purpose of the covenant was to “spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (Heb. 10:24–25) in order that the “body of Christ may be built up” (Eph. 4:11–12).

Participation in the church, its activities and programs, was open to all but members were held to a higher standard expressed in the church covenant. This allowed the local church opportunity to help people caught up in publically recognized sinful behaviors to repent and return to a lifestyle consistent with biblical standards.

Over time that system collapsed under the weight of pettiness and abuse but misuse in the past should not prevent looking again at the values of the concept. Today covenant membership may provide an opportunity for a church to be welcoming to all while holding true to its doctrinal commitments and biblical understandings. Covenant membership may provide an opportunity to change the focus from recruiting members for the church to making Christian disciples.

The idea of placing doctrinal and ethical commitments on members will not be popular with those committed to making homosexual practices as acceptable as a heterosexual lifestyle. Others will hesitate because we are all uncomfortable becoming “judge” of another’s behavior.

Yet there is general understanding that violation of basic Baptist understandings of faith and practice places limits on involvement — even in a local church. As the secular “marriage culture” changes in this nation, it is incumbent on the church that it find ways to communicate the love of God for all people in grace and humility while holding true to its understandings of what the Bible teaches. Covenant church membership might offer such an opportunity.

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

REAL-LIVE VS. VIDEO

Referring to an article in the Jan. 2 issue (“Most Americans prefer real-live preaching, LifeWay survey shows”) concerning people preferring in-person to video preaching, it would be interesting to know just who was contacted in the survey. Particularly since the results fly in the face of the

results the Church of the Highlands, which is Alabama’s largest church, has seen. Starting just about 13 years ago, it now sees about 20,000 active members each week, at 10 locations.

Obviously video sermons pose no problems for them.

I can understand people in a conventional church saying they pre-

fer doing things the way they do. But in an era when peo-

ple can (and do) get a seminary degree online, I’m not sure the physical presence of a preacher is that important (See ‘Letters,’ page 13)





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

(ISSN 0738-7741;
 USPS 011-080)

© The Alabama Baptist, Inc. is published weekly except for one week in July and December by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 1-800-803-5201. Fax: 205-870-8957. Website: www.thealabamabaptist.org. Email: news@thealabamabaptist.org or circulation@thealabamabaptist.org. Periodicals postage paid at Birmingham, Ala., and at additional mailing offices.

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 Individual — \$22.25

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Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is Jan. 19.

123rf.com, graphic by Lauren C. Grim

Online organization connects women with crisis pregnancy centers

The positive pregnancy test sent Brittany's life into a tailspin. She had plans — college, career and, potentially, the Miss Pennsylvania pageant.

Her boyfriend Andy, a fellow student at California University of Pennsylvania, had pro football aspirations. The couple considered themselves pro-life but when they were confronted with an unplanned, life-altering pregnancy, all options were on the table.

Their Internet queries ranged from searches for free ultrasounds to abortion clinics.

Tech-savvy businesses wrangle their way to the top, or at least the first page, of those searches. With enough money, for-profit abortion providers and Planned Parenthood can do the same, leaving nonprofit crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) at a disadvantage in getting their message before desperate women.

Brittany and Andy's Web search gave them options not available just a few years ago.

There among the hits and advertisements for abortion services was an ad for a CPC offering free ultrasounds. The cash-strapped couple made an appointment, and their daughter was saved.

Using its marketing and technology expertise, an organization called Online For Life (OFL) is turning Internet searches for abortion services into encounters with 50 life-affirming pregnancy centers in 23 states. No longer will Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers be the only results at the top of a page when a person types "abortion clinic" in the Google search bar.

Drawing on the expertise of professionals in the business and technology industries, OFL has developed cutting-edge online marketing techniques to direct abortion-minded women to CPCs and their life-affirming message.

Working from a base in Florida in 2007, OFL co-founder Brian Fisher and his cohorts tested the idea of online marketing for pregnancy centers.

"We're business guys, and we test things so we can maximize the number of babies we save," Fisher said.

One of the elements of the strategy is a smartphone application that asks followers to pray at the exact moment a woman is re-

searching abortion. Being able to pray in real time for a woman considering abortion has powerful potential, Fisher said. "When you have that many people interceding, you're going to have babies saved," he said.

The first OFL baby was rescued on June 21, 2010, and that reality crashed over Fisher in a wave of gratitude to God. All of the hard work and dedication wrought a priceless reward — the life of a baby rescued and a mother saved from the heartache of abortion.

'That's our baby'

"That's our baby," declared Lori Szala, executive director of Pregnancy Resource Center South Hills in Pittsburgh.

One of three CPCs involved in the 2007 test project, the Pittsburgh center became the first CPC in the nation to affiliate with Online For Life, and the partnership has proven invaluable.

For a monthly fee, the Pittsburgh center partners with OFL to get the clinic's foot in the marketing door. That has translated into a 75 percent increase in inquiries from abortion-minded women, Szala reported.

OFL works with 50 CPCs in 23 states to direct women in crisis to their affiliated

centers as quickly as possible. Research indicates 80 percent of the Internet traffic OFL monitors is on mobile devices. That puts a woman just one tap away from an abortion provider or a life-affirming pregnancy center.

Tim Gerwing, OFL vice president of technology, called OFL an extension of a pregnancy center's ministry.

"Our goal is to get her talking to a pregnancy resource center as fast as possible," Gerwing said. "It's like a 911 call. Clearly she's shopping for an abortion."

As a result, staff at CPCs have been re-trained to counsel women on the phone. Szala said getting callers to calm down and think clearly is the greatest challenge. Once that is done, the counselor details the options available, including a visit to the CPC. Callers are told in the initial conversation the center does not provide abortions or abortion referrals.

Gerwing said it is gratifying to be a part of that connection. From its Dallas office, OFL connects scared, panicked, vulnerable women to "people willing to love and care for [them] in the name of Christ."

For more information, visit onlineforlife.org. (Compiled from BP stories)

Online For Life prayer app

prolifeapp.com

- ▶ Shows real-time prayer requests from crisis pregnancy centers.
- ▶ Calculates the number of people praying at a given time.
- ▶ Resource to post notifications to social media.
- ▶ Tool for churches and pregnancy centers to post needs or



events advancing the pro-life cause in their communities.

- ▶ Notification of the number of babies saved.

Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

AUTAUGA

► **The Church at Pine Level** has relocated and changed its name to **Living Faith Church, Millbrook**. It will remain in Autauga Association, and the new address is 233C Deatsville Highway, Millbrook, AL 36054. For information visit livingfaith-millbrook.com. The church also voted in interim pastor **TJ Conwell** as its pastor. Conwell holds a master's degree in information



CONWELL

systems and business management. He previously served as the pastor of County Line Church, Deatsville, and Bethlehem Church, Marbury. He retired from the U.S. Air Force in October 2010. He and his wife, Michelle, have three children.

BESSEMER

► **The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla**, will host singer-songwriter Squire Parsons on Jan. 19, 11 a.m. Bill McCalla is pastor.

BETHLEHEM

► In mid-November 2013, **Old Salem Church, Frisco City**, completed the structure that will house the church's fellowship hall and youth facility. Pastor Tom Lindsey

said the church has fully paid for the building but will continue to save in order to complete the inside of the building in 2014. The downstairs will house the Sunday School rooms, storage rooms and a fellowship hall and the upstairs will become the youth sanctuary and game room.

BLOUNT

► **Pleasant View Missionary Church, Holly Pond**, will hold its regular third Sunday night singing Jan. 19, 6 p.m. with "Blue Grace" from White Oak. For information call 256-796-5986. Randy Burtram is pastor.

CALHOUN

► Divorce Care will meet Wednesdays from Jan. 22–April 16, 6:30 to 8 p.m. at **Mount Zion Church, Alexandria**, in the Fireside Room. Child care will be provided. Rodney Gardner, minister to single adults, will lead the group. For information call 256-820-3931. Garry Ragsdale is pastor.

CENTRAL

► **Rockford Church** exceeded its Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal of \$6,000 by \$700. Jeff Fuller is pastor.

CHILTON

► The women's ministry of **First Church, Jemison**, will hold a women's brunch with Dawn Smith Jordan, a Christian speaker and singer/pianist, Feb. 8, 10 a.m.–noon. All ladies are invited. Rex Kent is pastor.

CLEBURNE

► **Chulafinnee Church, Heflin**, called **Philip R. Morris** as pastor effective Jan. 1. Morris previously served at Heflin Church for 18 years and retired there Dec. 31, 2013. He was the longest serving full-time pastor in Cleburne Association upon his retirement. Morris is a 1991 graduate of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He and his wife, Debbie, have two daughters.



MORRIS

LIMESTONE

► Everyone is invited to join **Clements Church, Athens**, on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. as Pastor Tim Anderson begins a new sermon series "Strengthening Your Marriage." This series will conclude Feb. 9. This will be an incredible and encouraging time of investing in the life of your family. For information visit www.clements baptist.org. ► **First Church, Tanner**, will celebrate its 50th anniversary Jan. 26, 10 a.m. Lunch will follow. Gary Enfinger is pastor.

MONTGOMERY

► **Eastmont Church, Montgomery**, will host the "What Did You Expect?" marriage conference Feb. 7–8. The conference will provide a gospel-focused view of marriage with author and speaker Paul Tripp. Tickets are available online or through sponsoring churches. Discounted hotel accommodations are available. For information visit montgomerytrippconf.wordpress.com. Mike Northcutt is pastor.

PICKENS

► **Carrollton Church** will hold revival Feb. 9–12. Gary Bowlin, of Summit, Miss., will be the evangelist. Louis Johnson, of Tuscaloosa, will be the worship leader. Revival services will be Sunday at 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. and Monday–Wednesday at 7 p.m. A nursery will be provided. Everyone is welcome. For information call the church office at 205-367-8577. Tommy Winders is pastor.

TUSKEGEE LEE

► **Chewacla Church, Opelika**, will host Christian humorist/musician Bro. Billy Bob Bohannon on Jan. 26, 5 p.m. Aaron Pruitt is pastor.

Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

Stephen Olford's wife Heather dies at 89

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Barbara Heather Olford, who served in ministry throughout her life alongside her husband Stephen Olford, died Dec. 21, 2013. She was 89.

Barbara Olford, who went by Heather, was born in Northern Ireland and surrendered her life to Christ as a teenager. She married Stephen Olford in 1948 and the couple served together in ministry in London and New York City from 1953 to 1973. Her recent book "Together with God" was based on the marriage motto she and Stephen Olford shared.

Roger Willmore, pastor of Deerfoot Baptist Church, Trussville, said, "Mrs. Olford has been a close friend for more than 40 years. She, like her husband, lived only and fully for Christ. She was a model Christian, wife and mother. She was an encourager of pastors and pastors' wives. Many Alabama Baptist pastors — like me — received encouragement from her along the way."

Franklin L. Kirksey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Spanish Fort, is another one of those pastors. "Heather Olford graciously took time to write the preface for my upcoming book titled 'Don't Miss the Revival!' She shared the hope of genuine revival and spiritual awakening with her late husband, who commissioned me to write this book. Her kindness to me down through the years will be remembered with gratitude."

In 1988, the Olfords developed the Stephen Olford Center for Biblical Preaching in Memphis, Tenn., as a training center to encourage and equip preachers. Later Olford Ministries International was formed and in 2007, three years after Stephen Olford died, the 18-acre complex in southeast Memphis became a ministry of Union University, with its main campus located in Jackson, Tenn. Heather Olford was a member of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, and served on several boards. She later established The Stephen Olford Ministry Legacy Project, which serves under the umbrella of Global Ministries Fellowship.

She is survived by two children and five grandchildren. (TAB)



OLFORD

African-American to be nominated Va. WMU head

RICHMOND, Va. — A longtime Baptist minister and social worker will be recommended Feb. 8 to be the ninth executive of Woman's Missionary Union of Virginia (WMUV) — the first African-American to hold the post in the organization's 140-year existence.

Valerie Carter, associate pastor for glocal (global-local) ministries at Bon Air Baptist Church, Richmond, Va., will be nominated as executive director/treasurer by WMUV's board of trustees.

Carter has been on the staff of Bon Air Baptist for the past 10 years. Earlier she was associate of Christian social ministries for WMUV for five years, developing Hope Builders/Christian Women's Job Corps sites across Virginia.

A native of Long Island, N.Y., Carter holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from Adelphi University in Garden City, New York, a master of divinity degree from the School of Theology at Virginia Union University in Richmond and a doctor of ministry degree from Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond.

Baptists host interfaith Christmas in Georgia

TBLISI, Georgia — Baptists in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia initiated a historic Christmas Day gathering of Muslims and Christians hailed as a model for interfaith relations.

Muslim clerics from both Shia and Sunni traditions from Georgia, Iran, Turkey and Azerbaijan gathered with Orthodox and Baptist clergy Dec. 25, 2013, at the event hosted by the Evangelical Baptist Church of Georgia.

Malkhaz Songulashvili, archbishop of the 72-church Baptist union, led the service along with Imam Zurab Tsetskhladze, the head of Georgian Muslim Union.

The service featured readings about the birth of Jesus from both the Bible and Qur'an and culminated with the exchange of gifts. Muslim clerics gave Georgian-translation copies of the Qur'an to Christian clergy and Christians gave copies of the New Testament to Muslims.

REFLECTIONS

"IF GOD SAYS I'M PRECIOUS, I MUST BE!"



Famous Christians from previous centuries

Heroes of the Faith

Baptists celebrate 225th anniversary of Ann Judson's birth

Ann Hasseltine Judson was America's first woman international missionary. This year — 2014 — marks the 225th anniversary of her birth, the same year George Washington became president.

Born in Bradford, Mass., Dec. 22, 1789, Ann became a Christian as a teenager. While a schoolteacher, she felt led to become a missionary. It was unthinkable then for a young woman to go to primitive lands. And a woman couldn't go — unless she was married.

Believer's baptism

Fortunately, Ann met Congregational minister Adoniram Judson. They married Feb. 5, 1812. Soon they sailed to Calcutta, India. During their voyage, they were convinced of the biblical basis for believer's baptism, and when they reached India they were baptized. In 1814, Baptists in America officially organized as the Trien-

nial Convention and adopted the Judsons as their first missionaries.

Prevented from working in India, they traveled to Burma, where the gospel had never been preached. They settled in Rangoon and began learning the language.

They prepared a Burmese grammar, and Ann also translated the Books of Daniel and Jonah into Burmese. She significantly translated the first "catechism," or statement of beliefs about the Christian faith, into Burmese and later the Books of Daniel and Jonah and the Gospel of Matthew into Siamese.

It was difficult to convince the Burmese Buddhists to accept Christ, but after six years, they had their first convert.

In 1822, Ann returned to America because of a severe liver problem. While home, she wrote a history of the Burmese

mission that was widely read and encouraged others to become missionaries.

Soon after she returned to Rangoon in 1823, war broke out between Britain and Burma. Adoniram was thrown into a vermin-infested prison. Ann walked several miles every day to the prison to take food to Adoniram.

Adoniram caught a tropical fever, and Ann moved to a small hut near the prison to care for him. When he was forced to walk barefoot for 12 miles to another prison, she followed after him with her 3-month-old. Staying in a tiny room next to the room of the jailer and his family, she contracted smallpox and spotted fever. She wrote later to Adoniram's brother that, through her trying circumstances, her faith "taught me to look beyond this world, to that rest ... where Jesus reigns and oppression never enters." When the war ended, Adoniram re-

turned to his missions work. Ann, though, died of a fever Oct. 24, 1826. Their daughter died six months later and is buried next to Ann.

Ann was an advocate for women's education when formal education for women was rare. In 1838 several visionary people supported a school for young women in Marion. They enlisted the help of Milo P. Jewett, a graduate of Andover Theological Seminary, who had come to Alabama to establish a school for young women so they could obtain the same quality of education that young men received at Harvard and Yale. The founders named their school The Judson Female Institute after Ann Judson. They declared that she "glorified God and benefited society better than any other woman of their time." Her legacy at Judson College in Marion has continued for almost 176 years.

Today Ann Judson remains the most influential missionary woman in American history. (Rosalie Hunt contributed)

By Joanne Sloan

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



JUDSON

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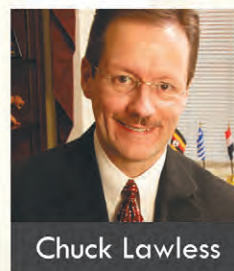
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This resource is made possible by gifts from Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

Adjusting to a **new home**

Helping grandchildren adjust to new home vital to establishing good foundation

By **Carrie Brown McWhorter**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

A child who arrives in a new home faces both an initial adjustment to the situation and a long-term adjustment to becoming part of a new family. In their book “Grandparents as Parents, Second Edition: A Survival Guide for Raising a Second Family” (Guilford Press, 2013), authors Sylvie de Toledo and Deborah Edler Brown write that children who come into a new family situation may not trust adults because their birth parents have proven untrustworthy.

“Reassurance, nurturing and acceptance are what your grandchild needs, as well as consistency and routine,” they write.

Grandparents can take steps early in the transition process to establish a foundation for their new family unit’s future, including the following, which were adapted from “A Guide for Foster Parents” by Irvin G. Sarason (Human Services Press, 1992):

- ▶ Welcome the child to your home.
- ▶ Help the child settle down to a regular routine as quickly as possible to establish a

sense of security in his/her new home.

- ▶ Let the child know the rules of your home and be consistent in enforcing them.

- ▶ Do not be disappointed if the child does not respond to you immediately.

- ▶ Give the child the opportunity to talk to you and respect his feelings for the past. Take his lead but do not probe into his past life or criticize his parents.

- ▶ If social services are involved, encourage the child to trust and talk to her counselor or caseworker.

- ▶ Help the child develop a feeling of pride and confidence by giving him tasks within his ability.

- ▶ When the child succeeds at something, express sincere pleasure and recognition of her abilities.

Authors de Toledo and Brown suggest that grandparents consider parenting classes, such as those held at family service agencies, hospitals or local colleges, to learn new methods and “sort through issues

that weren’t even on the table when you first raised children.”

“It’s not that you are necessarily doing anything wrong with your grandchildren, but parenting classes can teach you new

methods for helping them learn responsibility, accountability, confidence and self-esteem,” they write.

It is important to remember that children adjust to new living situations at different rates and times, said Lisa Keane, a licensed professional counselor with Pathways Professional Counseling, a ministry of the Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries. According to Keane, signs that a child is adjusting well may include:

- ▶ eating well (not too much, not too little)
- ▶ sleeping well (not all the time, but also not having insomnia)
- ▶ seeking comfort and being willing to

accept comfort from their new caregivers

- ▶ opening up to caregivers about feelings and emotions

- ▶ exhibiting fewer anxiety symptoms, such as bed wetting, nightmares, inconsolable crying or a lack of engagement in the new living situation

- ▶ enjoying the good times at the new home

- ▶ showing a range of emotions (not just displaying happiness or sadness all the time)

- ▶ performing better at school, including better concentration and stable grades

Throughout the transition, family therapy and support groups can help family members cope with issues as they arise. Pathways Professional Counseling provides services and support for families statewide. Contact Pathways via email at pathways@abchome.org or call 1-866-991-6864. Local offices of the Alabama Department of Human Resources can connect grandparents with local resources as well. Alabama Pre/Post Adoption Connections (APAC) also hosts support groups throughout the state. Contact APAC at 1-866-803-2722. ☞

“Reassurance, nurturing and acceptance are what your grandchild needs.”

Sylvie de Toledo and Deborah Edler Brown authors

9 biblical principles

Scripture offers encouragement to grandparents raising their grandchildren

By **Kathy Steele**
New Orleans Seminary

Almost 5 million children are being raised by their grandparents in the United States today. It is unlikely that any of these grandparents ever dreamed they would be raising their grandchildren. Raising grandchildren is challenging, especially as the grandparents enter a season of life in which they expected to have more time to focus on careers, hobbies or other interests. The Bible does not speak directly about grandparents raising grandchildren. However, there are some general principles that offer encouragement to grandparents who find themselves as parents once again.

Principle 1

God is in control. You can trust God with whatever He allows to come into your life (Rom. 8:28).

Principle 2

Grandparents can call on God for strength to raise their grandchildren.

The psalmist asks for God’s strength, even in old age, to share Him with the next generation (Ps. 71:18).

Principle 3

God expects family members to care for family members. James asserts that “True religion — accepted by God as pure and faultless — is to look after orphans (grandchildren) and widows in their distress” (James 1:27).

Principle 4

Guard your heart from anger or resentment.

Whether your children abandoned their children, became addicted or made some other poor life choice that caused this situation, it is important that you do not allow your anger or resentment toward your child to affect how you respond to your grandchildren (Eph. 4:30–32).

Principle 5

“The prayer of a righteous man (grandparent) is powerful and effective.” Through your prayers, you will have a powerful and effective impact on your grandchildren. Because they are living with you, you will be more aware of how you can pray for them and their development of godly character (James 5:16b).

Principle 6

Our grandchildren will know God’s righteousness through our fear (obedience) of God. As you parent your grandchildren, you have the opportunity to set a spiritual example and leave a legacy of faith to the next generation, just as Lois passed the example of sincere faith onto her grandchild, Timothy (Ps. 103:17–18; Ps. 128:4–5; Prov. 13:22; 2 Tim. 1:5).

Principle 7

Our grandchildren may be protected from the total impact of the sin of their parents. Unhealthy patterns of their parents could be repeated in them. Scripture teaches the son does not share in the guilt of the father (Ez. 18:20). However, it is likely that one of the punishments of sin is

that the children learn that behavior from their parents and will likely repeat it (for three to four generations). Perhaps this is one of the reasons God is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin (Ex. 34:6–7; Num. 14:18).

Principle 8

Teach your grandchildren all the wonderful things God has done in your life.

Grandparents have an opportunity to help the grandchildren know and understand all the wonderful things God has done in their lives. A large part of maintaining faith and passing faith onto following generations is through memorials of all God has done. Numerous times the Israelites were told to help the following generations to remember all He had done. (Esther 9:28; Ps. 48:12–13; Ps. 78:4, 6, 8; Ps. 79:13; Ps. 145:4–7; Dan. 4:34; Joel 1:3)

Principle 9

Grandchildren are a reward for us (our crown).

Proverbs 17:6 says that “Children’s children are a crown to the aged.” Grandchildren can be our crown. Take joy in the opportunity to love them, teach them about our wonderful Savior and rejoice in God’s work in their lives.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Kathy Steele is associate professor of psychology and counseling and director of clinical training at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. ☞

Restoring, building faith of grandchild important

(continued from page 1)

own children have abdicated parenting responsibilities, guilt is a big factor too, Ruffin said.

"They often feel they are in the situation they are in (parenting their grandchildren) because they did something wrong as parents," she said.

Such feelings can have negative legal and financial repercussions, Ruffin said. Grandparents often refuse to pursue legal guardianship or child support because such actions force them to take their children to court. The financial realities of a household that has suddenly gone from one or two people to several may mean that a retired grandparent is forced to go back to work in order to provide for the family.

What these families have in common is that they do not feel that they had any other options, Ruffin said.

"There may not be anyone else in the family who can take responsibility for the children, and they don't want to see their grandchildren go into foster care," she said.

One of the best ways for grandparents parenting again to combat these emotions is to talk to others in the same situation, Ruffin said.

"It doesn't make the problem go away or lessen the issues, but it helps when the grandparent can open up to someone else and realize they are not the only ones going through these things," she said.

The best encouragement comes from members of a support group or friends in the community who also are parenting their grandchildren, since they can relate directly to the concerns of this new family structure, Ruffin said.

For Christian grandparents, restoring and building the faith of their grandchild is of utmost concern as well, said Lisa Keane, a licensed professional counselor with Pathways Professional Counseling, a ministry of the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries. Often children who have experienced hurt or loss, such as abandonment by a biological parent, may view God negatively.

God's character

"If their parent was abusive, they may picture God in a similar way. If their parent left them, they may fear that God will abandon them. If their parents died, they may see God as evil or bad for taking their parents away," Keane said.

To help a child through these feelings, Keane said it is very important to talk about God's character and to review Scripture with children that emphasize that God is always present in our lives. Verses like Deuteronomy 31:8, which says, "It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed," are great discussion starters, Keane said.

"Read that verse together, then spend some time talking with your grandchild about the passage. Does she struggle to believe that? Does he think it does not apply to him? Help your grandchild see that while people and circumstances on this earth will let them down or make them sad, our Heavenly Father is perfect and cannot let them down. It simply is not in His character."

Keane also warns that grandparents should not directly bring up the bad choices of the children's parents while discussing these issues.

"While it may be tempting to point out how this relates to their situation, let them connect the dots," she said.

Through Scripture, Keane said, grandchildren, grandparents and even wandering parents can find comfort in that while bad things will happen on this earth, we have a God who is constant and steady that we can trust, regardless of the present circumstances. ☞

Facing reality

Grandparents urged to seek help of counselors, church body

By Rod Campbell, MA, LPC-S and Lisa Keane, MAMFC, LPC-S, RPT-S, NCC

www.pathwaysprofessional.org

I get a call like this nearly every week: the person says, "Mr. Campbell, we got your name from our pastor and we hope you can help. We have custody of our grandchildren and they are having some problems. We need to get an appointment with you as soon as we can."

The story unfolds from there. Maybe there has been abandonment, drug use, an arrest, a death or some other major issue with one or both of the parents. Or maybe the grandparents have simply had to step in for some other reason. Regardless this family has just become one of the growing numbers of families where grandparents find themselves as the primary caregivers for their grandchildren.

According to the 2010 U.S. census, approximately 5.4 million children live in a grandparent-headed household. Of those, just more than half live in a situation where the grandparents have the primary responsibility for meeting the child's basic needs.

These numbers began to climb in the 1970s and have continued to climb since, with researchers noting a spike since the economic downturn of 2007 and 2009.

In Alabama, 67,653 children under the age of 18 live in a grandparent-headed household without a parent present and the number is growing.

And the realities faced by grandparents raising their grandchildren can be quite difficult. Grandparents will have to deal with the emotional toll this situation has taken on the children. They also will need to face the emotional toll it takes on them since the circum-

stances leading to this situation usually involve their own pain and loss.

They will be faced with the loss of their "grandparent" identity and will have to set aside their desire to spoil the grandkids rotten and figure out how to transition back into "parent" mode. They may experience financial strain of adding one or more children to their household. Many find themselves parenting in a completely different culture than they experienced the first time around.

I often hear from grandparents who are overwhelmed at how technologically advanced their grandchildren are and they admit having a hard time providing proper oversight of screen time because they simply cannot conceive of the possibilities.

Recently I was asked by a young teen for the WiFi password in my office. When I asked the grandmother if it was OK, she immediately said it was. I double checked with an explanation of how it worked, and she seemed shocked to learn he could access the Internet on an iPod.

Of all of these challenges, I think the most difficult to face may be dealing with the emotional impact a change in custody is likely to have on the kids. Karyn Purvis, director of the Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University, said there is no such thing as adoption or foster care without pain and loss.

Children being raised by their grandparents have often experienced significant loss. They may have lost one or both parents to death, abandon-

ment, incarceration, addiction or any number of other circumstances. They may have been required to move, incurring the loss of their home, friends, a familiar school or other extended family members. Even the loss of a pet due to the change in custody can be traumatic for a child at this point. And this loss can have a devastating effect on children.

They may become irritable, withdrawn or outright angry. Children who were good students just a few months ago might suddenly struggle to bring home Cs or Ds.

They may experience sleep disturbances, nightmares, have difficulty getting to sleep or be scared to sleep in a room alone. They may become controlling and demanding, especially

in new circumstances, and may have difficulties with food, either eating too much or not enough.

If these symptoms do not seem to decrease as time in your home grows, it could be time to seek help from a professional, like the ones you'll find at Pathways Professional Counseling and the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries.

Raising grandchildren in a culture that is much different than the first time you raised children can be overwhelming.

Whether you speak to a youth pastor, pastor, counselor or other friends, allow them to help you see what might be going on and allow them to help you. This is what the church body is for. Allow them to help you raise up your grandchildren in a healthy, loving environment. ☞

Allow your church family to help you raise up your grandchildren in a healthy, loving environment.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR GRANDPARENTS

1. ASK for help.

2. Do not be afraid to **SAY YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND** something or need a younger person to explain how something works.

3. BE IN CONTACT with your child's school counselor. They can be a great resource for you.

4. TAKE A COURSE on technology from a local group. Many local libraries offer these services.

5. CONNECT WITH OTHERS who are in a similar situation as you are. Ask at your church or job to see if there is someone you can connect with that has been down this path before.

6. BE CONSISTENT with your grandchildren. Children need boundaries and need to know what to expect. Although it may not have been your role before, embrace being the one who is going to set limits for them.

7. FIND RESPITE CARE for your family when possible. You need a break.

8. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. You need to focus on self-care and making sure you are physically and mentally in good shape. If you are taking care of yourself, you will be better able to take care of your grandchildren.

9. PRAY. Pray that the Lord will provide help and understanding for you. Pray that the Lord will grant you serenity and peace among the chaos. The more you can be an emotional anchor for your grandchildren, the better this situation will be.

10. CONTACT A COUNSELOR if you feel your grandchild needs outside help to deal with the loss or transition.

Source: Rod Campbell and Lisa Keane
www.pathwaysprofessional.org

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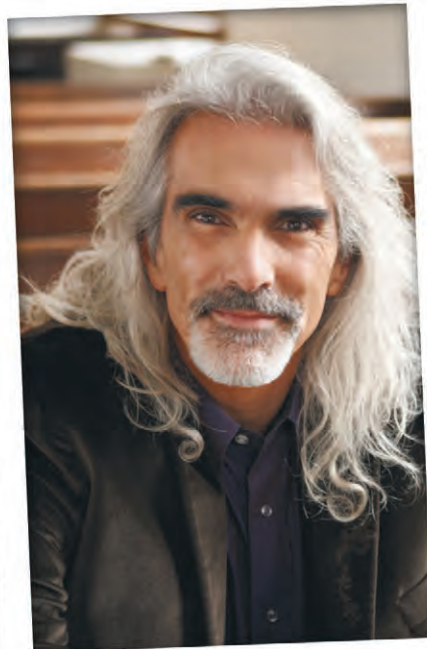
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Bob Pitman, Muscle Shoals; **Brett Pitman**, Highland Park Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals;

Vance Pitman, Hope Church, Las Vegas, Nev.

MUSIC: **Frank Jones**, music evangelist, Birmingham; **Kenneth McWilliams**, Enon Baptist Church, Morris;

Guy Penrod, award-winning Gospel music artist; **Voices of Mobile**, University of Mobile.

For more information, please contact Office of Evangelism Amy Nelson at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 258, or (334) 613-2258, anelson@alsbom.org.



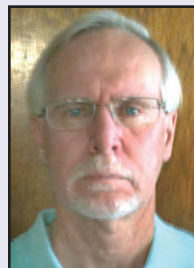
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This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Tom Lindsey



LINDSEY

*Old Salem Baptist Church, Frisco City
Bethlehem Baptist Association*

FAVORITE VERSE: Psalm 23:4

FAVORITE HYMN: "Days of Elijah"

HOBBIES: Fishing and golfing

FAMILY STATUS: Married to wife of 41 years, Willie; children: Paul Lindsey and Dee Barfield; five grandchildren

*P*astor Tom Lindsey, 61, of Old Salem Baptist Church, Frisco City, is in his first pastorate, which began in 2010. In 2013, he was chosen as the Troy L. Morrison Leadership Award recipient for bivocational work. Worship attendance at Old Salem Baptist averaged about 15 in 2010. Now it is 80–85. Lindsey's journey to the pulpit began 30 years ago with a calling to teach Sunday School. Five years ago, he was led into lay preaching and was ordained in 2010. A graduate of the University of Alabama, Lindsey worked in engineering from 1976 to 2010. He also earned a paramedic degree from the University of South Alabama in Mobile and works with an ambulance service in Monroe County.

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

A: I was raised in a Christian home. My mom always read Bible stories to us. I've always had that desire to know more. I accepted Christ as my Savior when I was 18. I was living in Tuscaloosa at the time and had just started at the university.

Q: When and how were you led into the ministry?

A: I was led to be a Sunday School teacher. I remember it vividly. That was the anointing of the Holy Spirit. In 2010, He spoke to me again. It has been a great ride with the Lord.

Q: What does the ministry demand?

A: It demands my whole life. It demands my attention. It demands that I focus more on do-

ing the Lord's work and doing the Lord's will. It is the most rewarding work anyone can do. I thank the Lord every night for calling me into the ministry. You can't be a preacher without receiving the calling. It is an honor.

Q: What do you get from the ministry?

A: The feeling the Lord gives me of seeing people's lives change. It's the most rewarding feeling that anybody can get.

Q: How do family members support you?

A: My wife supports my ministry. She works in the church with me. She goes visiting with me. She helps me when I need something. She gives me advice. She is a great help in my ministry. My children support me and my church.

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

A: I see myself doing this until the Lord calls me home. From being a man of God and a pastor, I don't see myself retiring.

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

A: It brings full meaning to life.

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

A: He has set me free from the bondage of sin I was living under. He has changed my outlook on life. He has showed me how to love people who are unlovable. He has changed my attitude on how to look at things in life. I try to look at things through the eyes of Christ. ☞

Respect for clergy takes 'sharp drop'

Clergy used to rank near the top in polls asking Americans to rate the honesty and ethics of people in various professions. For the first time since Gallup began asking the question in 1977, fewer than half of those polled in 2013 said clergy have "high" or "very high" moral standards.

Overall 47 percent of respondents to the survey gave clergy "high" or "very high" ratings, a

sharp drop in confidence from the 67 percent of Americans who viewed them this way in 1985.

Young people aged 29–34 tend to rate professionals more highly than those 55 and older, but the pattern does not hold for clergy. Less than one in three young people (32 percent) give clergy high moral marks.

In 2014, clergy took a back seat to nurses, pharmacists, school-

teachers, medical doctors, military and police officers.

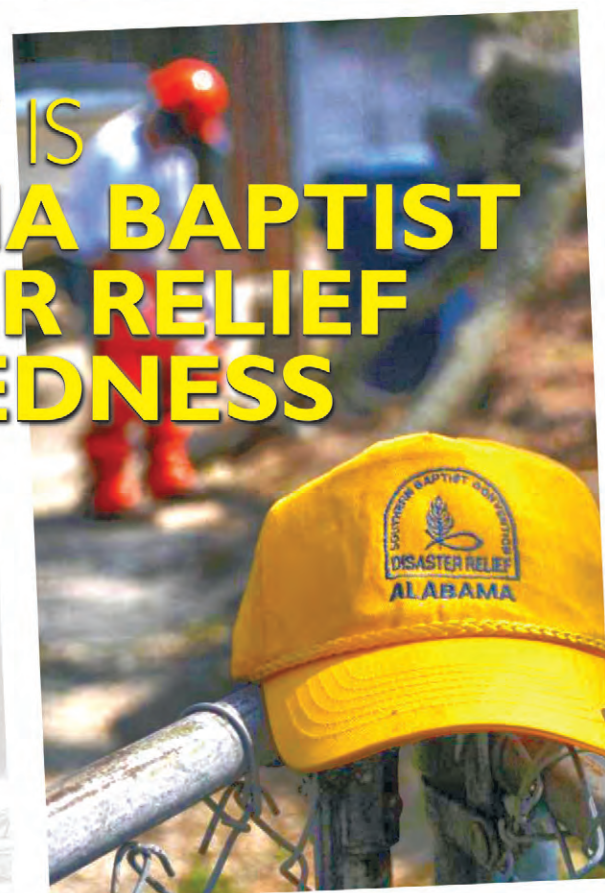
Gallup Managing Editor Art Swift said priest abuse stories from the early 2000s led to the sharp drop.

Reading from the bottom of the list up, the poll ranks lobbyists, members of Congress, car sales people, state office holders and advertising practitioners as the least ethical. (RNS)

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CAMPUS

News



SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► Nabers to Head Center for Ethics and Leadership:

Former Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Drayton Nabers Jr., a veteran Birmingham attorney and business executive, is the new head of Samford University's Frances Marlin Mann Center for Ethics and Leadership.



NABERS

He was named following a national search to replace founding director John Knapp, who resigned in 2013.

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"Drayton Nabers brings an unusual blending of law, business, theology, leadership and service to Samford and to the Mann Center," said Samford Provost J. Bradley Creed. "As director, he will work ... to ensure that the principles of ethics and leadership that are foundational to Samford are interwoven into the fabric of all that we do."

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POTTS

Potts was chosen as the recipient for the depth and breadth of his voluntary service to the commission.

Potts was appointed president of Judson in 1990. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Alabama; he earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees from Samford University in Birmingham.

He and his wife, Nora Beth, have two children.

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SENIOR PASTOR: Send resumés to: FBC of Chalkville, 2100 Old Springville Road, Birmingham, AL 35215.

PASTOR: The Fellowship, a Southern Baptist church in Albertville, Ala., is seeking a seminary degreed pastor. Our pastor should be able to express a vision for the church and demonstrate an ability to care for and love others. Ten years experience leading a mid-sized church with a contemporary style of worship is a plus. If the Spirit leads you to apply you may do so at scl@fellowshipal.com.

MUSIC LEADER: First Baptist Church, Foley, Ala., is seeking a full-time minister of music and senior adults. Worship style is blended. We are looking for a leader who is gifted in music and building a dynamic worship ministry. Minister also will oversee our senior adult ministries. Email resumés to: scollins@fbcfoley.com. Please include a video of you leading worship.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC: Westwood Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala., is currently seeking resumés for the position of minister of

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PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER: Concord Baptist Church, Hueytown, Ala., is seeking a music minister to lead a blended service with both a choir and praise band. Send resumés to: concordbaptist@bham.rr.com.

MINISTER TO STUDENTS: First Baptist Church in Bells, Tenn., is seeking a full-time minister to students (K-12). Parsonage is provided. For more information or to apply, email: ddavisfbc@bellsouth.net.

FULL-TIME YOUTH PASTOR: Whorton Bend Baptist Church is searching for youth pastor/leader. Please send resumé to: Joey Jones, pastor, joeyjones@bellsouth.net or call 256-312-6455.

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Pastor Ken Phillips
Oak Mountain Baptist Church, Pelham

To know a life-changing decision of following Christ is the right one for you, let me encourage you in a few things; God cares about you so much He sent His only Son to live on earth as a human and die a cruel death because of the wretched sin of all mankind. There is nothing you or anyone has ever done or will do that will keep us from being able to know God through Jesus. You do not have to get anything fixed or right in your life before you come to know Jesus. He wants you to surrender your life over to His rule just as you are right now. So there is nothing stopping you other than you. No more excuses, and no pressure from anyone — this is only between you and God Himself.

Stop playing games and admit you have sinned. God already knows, but you have to admit it to Him.

Believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life and died for you and you alone. If you had truly been the only person for which to die, then He would have died just for you.

Commit your life over to Him as your Master and Savior of your life. You say you can't do it alone? That's great; at least you know it starting off. Here's the great news: Jesus sent us a Helper, the Holy Spirit, so we could live this new life through Him.

Get in a Bible-based church that will tell you sin is wrong and the Bible is God's Holy Word cover to cover then start reading it as often as you can and ask other spiritual leaders in the church if you have questions.

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POTTS

Potts was chosen as the recipient for the depth and breadth of his voluntary service to the commission.

Potts was appointed president of Judson in 1990. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Alabama; he earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees from Samford University in Birmingham.

He and his wife, Nora Beth, have two children.

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Pastor Ken Phillips
Oak Mountain Baptist Church, Pelham

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BEYOND BEAUTIFUL



PERSECUTED CHURCH
Compiled from Wire Services

More than 30 Christians killed in attack in Nigeria
RIYOM, Nigeria — Survivors of a Jan. 6 slaughter of 33 Christians in a village in Nigeria's Plateau state said Special Task Force soldiers stationed to protect them turned their weapons on those fleeing the attack.

Speaking from her hospital bed with bullet wounds in her legs, 25-year-old Antele Alamba said hundreds of Muslim Fulani herdsmen armed with guns and machetes attacked Shonong village in Riyom Local Government Area without provocation, burning homes and butchering women and children.

"The soldiers stationed in the village to protect us joined the Fulani herdsmen in shooting, and in the process most of our people were killed," Alamba said as tears dripped down her cheeks. "I was shot by soldiers I ran to for protection. We were all trapped in the village as there was no way of escape for us. We ran to the premises of the church, and some soldiers followed us there. They were shooting, and the herdsmen were shooting too. It was chaos and confusion everywhere."

Pastors of the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) conducted a funeral service Jan. 7 for the 33 slain Christians amid tight security provided by soldiers, sources said.

Yakubu Fom, pastor of the COCIN congregation at Riyom town, said the victims' corpses were recovered amid charred houses and surrounding bushes.

Alamba said all the Christians killed in the Shonong attack were members of the COCIN congregation. The church has about 300 members.

Defining marriage

Missouri Baptists sue state over gay 'marriage' order

Representatives of the Missouri Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission (CLC) filed a lawsuit Jan. 8 challenging a recent executive order by Gov. Jay Nixon allowing same-sex couples legally "married" in another state to file joint tax returns with the state Department of Revenue.

Nixon, a Democrat serving his second term, issued an executive order Nov. 14, 2013, after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June 2013 that the Defense of Marriage Act, a federal law defining marriage as only a "legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife," unconstitutionally denied same-sex couples legal rights that are available to heterosexuals.

Nixon decided that same-sex couples living in Missouri who file joint federal tax returns can do the same on their individual consumer state tax return.

Plaintiffs including Don Hinkle, editor of the Missouri Baptist newspaper *The Pathway* and director of public policy for the Missouri Baptist Convention executive board, filed a lawsuit in Cole County Circuit Court in

Jefferson City, Mo., claiming the governor's order shows "flagrant disregard" for the Missouri Constitution, amended by voters in 2004 "so that to be valid and recognized in this state, a marriage shall exist only between a man and a woman."

The lawsuit describes implementation of the executive order as "an unconstitutional and wasteful expenditure of government resources" that harms Missouri taxpayers.

"The governor took an oath to uphold the Missouri Constitution, which includes our marriage definition," Michael Whitehead, a Kansas City attorney who filed the lawsuit, said in a story published Jan. 8 in *The Pathway*.

Whitehead said statements by the governor that he would like to see the people of Missouri reconsider the issue of same-sex "marriage" amount to "putting his thumb on the scales of justice."

"His job is to enforce the constitution as it is, not as he wishes it to be," Whitehead said. "If the governor wants to launch a campaign to repeal this section of our state Bill of Rights, he is welcome to try. But for now, the people of Missouri have spoken, with landslide clarity. Until the people speak otherwise, the governor

should respect the rule of law and respect Missouri voters."

Joining Hinkle as plaintiffs are Justin Mosher, pastor of Fifth Street Baptist Church, Hannibal, Mo., and chairman of the Missouri Baptist Convention's CLC, and Kerry Messer, legislative liaison for the CLC in the Missouri Legislature and founder of the Missouri

Family Network.

The fourth plaintiff is Joe Ortwerth, executive director of the Missouri Family Policy Council, one of more than 30 such state organizations formally associated with Focus on the Family, a Colorado Springs-based ministry started in 1977 by James Dobson.


Missouri Baptist

leaders lobbied for the gay "marriage" ban in 2004, delivering more than 10,000 signatures to state legislators calling for a constitutional amendment.

At their 2013 state convention held Oct. 28-30 in Kansas City, Missouri Baptists passed a resolution voicing "continued opposition to and grave disappointment in" the Supreme Court decision striking down the Defense of Marriage Act and reaffirming our historic and consistent support of the biblical definition of marriage as the exclusive union between one man and one woman." (ABP)

"[The governor's] job is to enforce the constitution as it is, not as he wishes it to be."

Michael Whitehead attorney



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LETTERS



(continued from page 2)
to the people we're trying to reach, for what we're trying to do.

Robert G. Cleveland
Pelham, Ala.

NEW FEATURES

I really am enjoying the new format for the paper. The changes have helped to achieve the mission as stated on the website (www.thealabamabaptist.org). The topics are much more informative and challenging toward spiritual growth. Keep up the good work.

Don Belcher
Hoover, Ala.

THANKS FOR GIVING

My name is Stephen. I am serving in Southeast Asia with the In-

ternational Mission Board. I wanted to write a thank you note to all Baptists in Alabama who have selflessly given to the Cooperative Program and especially the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Your generosity has allowed thousands who are without hope to have a chance to hear about forgiveness of sins through Jesus. My team and I are thankful every day for your support.

Stephen
IMB worker

EDITOR'S NOTE — Name has been changed for security reasons.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For January 19

Explore the Bible By Dale Younce, Th.D. Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

VALUE EVERY LIFE! Psalm 139:1-10, 13-16, 23-24

In American culture, there is a persistent devaluing of life in the womb as well as threats to the elderly and other vulnerable human beings. Murder and crimes of violence speak of the cheapness of human life. Some believers may not have worked through the issue that every human life — from womb to tomb and at every point in between — is valuable because every person is made in God's image. Other Christians believe this is true, but their actions rarely support their belief. Still others have weighed in heavily, perhaps by helping fund pro-life centers, assisting victims of abuse and violence, or by caring for dying or elderly family members.

Many churches set aside this Lord's Day in a special effort to be advocates for the unborn and to permeate our culture with the biblical teachings regarding the sanctity of human life. This Bible passage focuses on reasons that we, like our Creator, are to show we value every human life from conception to the end of natural life.

Every Life Worth Knowing (1-6)

The psalmist David marveled that God knew everything about him — where he was, what he was doing and thinking — and that God valued him enough to keep His hand on David. No individual can know about — much less personally be acquainted with — every other human alive on the planet at any one particular given time. However, when we take the initiative to get to know more people on some level, the more likely we will appreciate those persons and will show that we value them. For example, people who affirm the unborn as persons — not things — are more likely to show they value them even while in the womb. Because God values every human being as worth knowing and keeping up with, we too are to value every human life and can take the initiative to see each person as God sees him or her.

Every Life Worth Relating To (7-10)

To acknowledge the presence of God everywhere at all times can be both frightening and comforting. David expressed his sense of wonder and praise when he considered that every person from conception to the end of physical life is never beyond God's care and guidance. In these verses, David declared his confidence that he would never be outside God's presence or without God's providential guidance. Because God is willing to be present with and to give guidance to every person, we also are to value every human life as worth relating to in positive, helpful ways.

Every Life Purposeful from Beginning to End (13-16)

David praised God for creating him in his mother's womb and for having a purpose for him from the beginning to the end of his days. The phrase "in secret" (v. 15) refers to the mystery associated with human conception. The psalmist, in spite of his limited understanding, praised God for creating him with a purpose in mind. How much more should we, with the prenatal knowledge we have through modern advances in science and medicine, praise God and demonstrate our respect and value for every human life, including persons yet in the womb. Because God creates every human life in His image and has a meaningful purpose for every person, we are to value every human life.

Every Life Accountable To God (23-24)

Notice the opening and closing of Psalm 139. In verse 1, David acknowledged God had searched his thoughts and ways; in verse 23, the psalmist invited God to do so again. This encourages us to open our hearts to God's guidance, including the area of showing that we value every human life. David prayed for God to search and to test his heart for any offensive way and to lead him in the everlasting way. So we, being accountable to God who values every human life, can ask for His help in removing offensive attitudes and actions about life's value that we may be harboring.

Bible Studies for Life By Thomas L. Fuller, Ph.D. Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

IS EVERY LIFE SACRED? Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

Is every life sacred? That question is central to many of the ethical issues and decisions facing us in these days. While various arguments are made on the bases of rights, freedoms, benefits, justice and so on — which, rightly construed, are concerns expressed in the Scriptures — for Christians, the fundamental question is, "How does God regard human life?"

Psalm 139 is a psalm of David. It is a prayer of praise, specifically acknowledging Yahweh's omnipresence and omniscience. David does not articulate these truths in technical or abstract terms but in a poetic, personal reflection on how the all-knowing God is intimately involved in our lives.

(1-6)

The opening declaration of David's prayer sets the theme and speaks volumes: "O Lord, you have searched me and known me!" It is an astounding observation in two respects. First the combination of "searched" and "known" reflects the scope and depth of God's knowledge, that it is not a general knowledge or awareness but an intensely personal and thorough familiarity. Second, and most astounding, is that the Creator and Sovereign God gives such personal attention to "me." He knows my every movement, my every thought, my every word, from the least to the greatest. Wherever I go, at all times Yahweh is there ahead of me and with me.

Such intimate knowledge of each individual, such personal attention to the details of each life clearly reflects the value God places on us. The psalmist is overwhelmed at the thought of it: He cannot fully comprehend the fact of it, nor can he fathom fully the meaning or implications of it (v. 6). In economic terms, it is the Creator's sole prerogative to decide what goes on the price tag of each life. By His character and His works, it is evident that God has deemed each life to be priceless.

(13-16)

As David continues to marvel at Yahweh's boundless presence in spatial terms (vv. 7-12), his focus then turns to God's knowledge and presence in temporal terms. He confesses that there has not been a time when God's watchful eye was not upon him, even before he was capable of knowing or being known. This is the knowledge and care of the one who "formed my inward parts" and "knitted me together in my mother's womb." He had detailed familiarity with me, with my ways and with the moments of my life when I was yet "unformed substance." Once again, David is awed by both the immensity and the intimacy of Yahweh's works. He praises the Lord for all His creations.

Many questions and concerns are raised in regard to the circumstances and outcomes of human life. When does life begin? Can we measure quality of life? Do we have the prerogative to end a life? How we address these questions and concerns must be rooted in the clear conviction that life is sacred because God is the creator and sustainer of all life. Our regard for all life — born or unborn, healthy or afflicted, friend or foe — should be an expression of our praise to God.

(17-18)

For a third and final time in this prayer, David is overcome by wonder and exclaims his praise to God. What God has revealed to him, David declares "precious" (or "weighty"), though he cannot fully comprehend it all. Like counting the grains of sand, there can be no end to plumbing the depths of God's thoughts and ways.

More amazing still is the realization: "I awake, and I am still with You." The sanctity of life is rooted not only in its divine origins but also in the persistent presence and care of God across our days. He values each of us from beginning to end, never wavering. Let us acknowledge His creative work and His attentive presence in all human life.

Christian Crossword

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Across

- Let him deny ___ and take up his cross. (Mark 8:34)
- ___ Lincoln.
- Spirit of the Lord came up ___ David. (1 Sam. 16:13)
- Being exceedingly ___ against them. (Acts 26:11)
- We.
- ___, and also our fathers. (Gen. 46:34)
- Tower, whose ___ may reach unto heaven. (Gen. 11:4)
- Defeats.
- Environmental Protection Agency. (abbr.)
- To and ___.
- The ___ was upon the earth 40 days. (Gen. 7:12)
- Take the widow's ox for a ___. (Job 24:3)
- Tool for weeding.
- Mary anointed the Lord with ___. (John 11:2)

- God gave them up unto ___ affections. (Rom. 1:26)
- New Testament. (abbr.)
- United States. (abbr.)
- Mary ___ Joseph.
- And thine ___ as the grass of the earth. (Job 5:25)
- Is able to.
- Is the correct size.
- Hereafter ye shall ___ heaven open. (John 1:51)
- A grain.
- As he is Christ's, even ___ are we Christ's. (2 Cor. 10:7)
- Pound. (abbr.)
- Mother.
- Yea.
- Teach us to ___ our days. (Ps. 90:12)

Down

- A prophet is not without ___. (Matt. 13:57)
- Not out.
- O thou ___, go. (Amos 7:12)
- 950 in Roman numerals.
- Do, re, me, ___.
- Unclean animal (Deut. 14:18)
- It ___ not good. (Gen. 2:18)
- And to ___ is gain. (Phil. 1:21)
- Jesus went ___ to Jerusalem.
- For ___ are his workmanship. (Eph. 2:10)
- Remember all thy ___. (Ps. 20:3)
- Christian Era. (abbr.)
- The Lord heard ... and looked on ... our ___. (Deut. 26:7)
- Sickness (French).
- He was ___ at that saying. (Mark 10:22)
- One of the king's most ___ princes. (Esther 6:9)
- What every director hopes for.
- Charged particle.
- Cast the ___ on the right side. (John 21:6)
- Be not among ... riotous ___ of flesh. (Prov. 23:20)
- ___ top of that.
- Something worn to

- warm the ears or hands.
- A form of car.
- 450 in Roman numerals.
- I have commanded my sanctified ___. (Isa. 13:3)
- Physical therapy. (abbr.)
- A group of people working for a common cause.
- Hear, O Lord, when I ___. (Ps. 27:7)
- Yes, in the navy.
- Printer's measure.
- Pound. (abbr.)
- To exist.



TOP 10

BOOKS FROM LIFEWAY IN 2013

1. **Jesus Calling**
By Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
2. **Happy, Happy, Happy**
By Phil Robertson (Howard Publishers)
3. **Duck Commander Family**
By Willie & Korie Robertson (Howard Publishers)
4. **Follow Me**
By David Platt (Tyndale)
5. **Jesus Today**
By Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
6. **Not a Fan**
By Kyle Idleman (Zondervan)
7. **Si-Cology 1**
By Si Robertson (Howard Publishing)
8. **You'll Get Through This**
By Max Lucado (Thomas Nelson)
9. **Whispers of Hope**
By Beth Moore (B&H Publishing)
10. **The Reason for My Hope**
By Billy Graham (Thomas Nelson)

Source: blog.lifeway.com/christianfiction



Photos courtesy of The Media Collective

In 2013, The Digital Age released their debut album, 'Evening:Morning,' which is a concept record with 12 songs corresponding to the hours between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.

'We'll keep on singing'

Former David Crowder Band members transition into new worship band, continue to share Christ's love, redemption

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

After leading worship for events and performing concerts for more than a decade, the Dove Award-winning David Crowder Band caught many fans off guard when they announced their final season together.

As the Lord was providing unique opportunities and allowing Crowder to lessen his hectic touring schedule, he joined the worship team at Passion City Church, Atlanta, to have more time to focus on creatively communicating the gospel through songs.

During this time, the Lord was also giving a new vision and direction to Crowder's former band members.

Mike Dodson, Mark Waldrop, Jack Parker and Jeremy Bush still desired to influence a generation of worshippers with songs about Christ's love and redemption.

These four musicians embarked on a new season as they transitioned into a worship band called The Digital Age.

"We feel like our group name fits what we're trying to do as a band — trying to be relevant in the digital age," Waldrop said. "There is nothing better than singing praises to the King of Kings, the Creator of the Universe, the author and perfecter of our faith. That is why we do this — to lead people to His throne and offer adoration to Him for who He is and what He has done.

"As a band, we want to modernize worship just a little bit and actually take it back to the days when

we were singing old hymns with our parents and everyone's voice was just as loud while singing in one accord. That's such a cool moment when everyone's voice is joined together."

The Digital Age recently released their debut album, "Evening:Morning," which is a concept record with 12 songs corresponding to the hours between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.

"Songwriting is a very collaborative process for us," Waldrop said. "We discussed what message we wanted to convey with this album and gave each song a theme. We knew that we wanted to center the songs around the creation story, resurrection, beauty from ashes and going from dark to light.

"We wanted to share these messages because during a new season you don't really know what God has in store for you. A lot of the songs were inspired by Romans 8. There's a song called 'Through the Night' that is our midnight song, and the chorus is,

'Through the night we'll keep on singing.' We felt like that was our motto for the record. We still don't necessarily know where we are going, but we know that God has a plan, so we're going to keep singing and praising Him.

"When people come to our concerts, our focus is leading worship and facilitating a time when they can sing praises to God," Waldrop said. "The most fulfilling moment is when we're playing a song and we get a chance to step back from the microphone, letting the audience know that we are just there to sing praises to God alongside them. I love moments when we can do that." ❧



BOOK REVIEW

Secrets of Shiloh

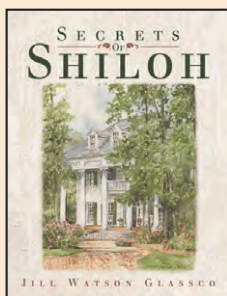
Jill Watson Glassco. Bloomington, Ind.: West-Bow Press, 2013. 44 pp. (Large paperback).

"Secrets of Shiloh," by Birmingham author Jill Glassco, is billed as a mystery story for older children and teens. The first thing the reader notices is the incredibly beautiful illustrations — watercolors done by Birmingham artist Donny Finley. The book isn't about the illustrations, though — it should stand on its own merits.

And it does, in a way. The book is well written with an engaging story. The problem is that it is too good a story

for a book of this length. Read in only a few minutes, the story leaves the reader feeling cheated. The author has created a great setting with solid characters and an engaging plot, only to rush through it in 44 pages. Too short. I would like to savor the story a while longer; I'd like time to wonder about the clues in the old man's cryptic message.

On the plus side, the author does weave in a Christian message and includes questions to be discussed by families. I would certainly recommend it for older children, but I hope for her next effort, the author will use her abundant talent in a book that realizes its full potential. ❧



Meet the reviewer

Martine Bates Sharp, Ed.D., reviews books and movies for The Alabama Baptist. She is a university professor and retired principal. She is a member of Central Baptist Church, Decatur.





IMB photo

Abraham (right) makes plans on campus with other Connexion leaders. Through the Connexion ministry, they try to be intentional in building relationships that lead to Christ.

Transformed by God's grace

Ministry helps European students connect to God

Martha Moore doesn't waste time dreaming small. The Southern Baptist representative from Tampa, Fla., has learned to fully expect that God will do something miraculous.

Without question, she expects that will happen tonight when her apartment in northern Germany will be filled with students — some excited to be with other believers, some still wondering if this Christianity they are hearing about can be trusted.

As students escaping a cold drizzle fill her apartment, she's quick to make newcomers feel welcome in seemingly effortless German.

This is the way she approaches each day of ministry — expecting big things from God.

Moore cut her teeth doing student ministry in the university hubs of Vancouver, Canada, and Los Angeles. When asked why she had come to live in Jena, Germany, in 1998, she said that she was a Christian and was going to help people explore who God is.

The person responded, "Good luck. Do you know where you are? You're in East Germany. Nobody cares about God here. You don't have a chance."

Not one to back down from a challenge, that's all Moore needed to hear. Her big dream took shape.

Seeking out the few Christians she could find, she started building relationships among college students in Jena. Fellowship dinners led to discussions about the Bible. Laying out tables full of sandwiches and gummy bears (a variety of the popular candy made in Germany), Moore opened her apartment to anyone who would attend.

Even before she had an established campus ministry, she could see her prayers being answered.

Within two years of beginning her ministry in Germany, the students who had been meeting faithfully in two small group studies became known as Connexion in 2000.

It is exactly what Moore dreamed about — a reproducible evangelistic campus ministry staffed and led by national believers. Today it has spread to two other German campuses and one in Seville, Spain.

She said that most U.S. churches don't realize the spiritual lostness of the European region because many people perceivably have access to the gospel there. But what's worse in Moore's mind than not having access to the truth of God's Word is having it and not caring. Evangelicals, Moore explains, are typically viewed as a cult in Western Europe.

Some cling to the atheist teaching of past communism. Others are content with a nominal relationship to the state church.

The majority of students Moore meets follow the post-modern view that belief in any absolute truth is ignorant. Biblical teachings seem antiquated and constricting of their personal freedoms. Families discourage involvement in groups that teach a change of lifestyle or need for repentance.

Routinely ridiculed

For example, it had taken time for Moore to lead to faith a young woman she had met when she first moved to Jena. But when the young woman's parents discovered her Bible, they tore it up.

With only a few exceptions, the more than 30 students active in Connexion in Braunschweig are the only Christians in their families. Those who choose to actively follow Christ are routinely ridiculed as religious fanatics.

The spiritual ground of Germany is hardened to the gospel, but Moore remains strong in her belief that God will continue to do a great work in hearts there.

The list of students radically transformed by God's grace is lengthy, and Moore expects it to continue to grow. She loves the challenge of reaching a community that most think won't turn to God. (IMB)



World of RELIGION

Compiled from *Wire Services*

Church of England tests alternative baptism liturgy

CANTERBURY, England — The Church of England has been accused of "dumbing down" the baptism service following the introduction of an alternative liturgy in which parents and godparents need not repent of their "sins" or reject "the devil."

In the traditional version of the service, parents and godparents are asked: "Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?" and "Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbor?"

In the alternative version, now being tested in 400 churches, parents are instead asked to "reject evil and all its many forms and all its empty promises."

Writing in the *Mail* on Jan. 4, former Bishop of Rochester Michael Nazir-Ali said the new service is part of the "constant dumbing down of Christian teaching."

"It is best to call a halt to this well-meant effort before it further reduces the fullness of the Church's faith to easily swallowed sound bites," Nazir-Ali said.

A limited trial aimed at making the baptism service more acceptable to people who do not believe in a physical devil, sin or the need to repent was approved by the church's governing body, the General Synod, at the end of 2012.

The trial version ends at Easter (April 20); the alternative texts have no formal status until they are approved by the General Synod.

Israel offers women aged 20 to 33 free abortions

JERUSALEM — Israel has made it easier for economically distressed women to obtain an abortion.

The 2014 "health basket" of medical services and medications approved by Israel's cabinet Jan. 5 includes free abortions for Israeli women aged 20 to 33, regardless of the circumstances.

The \$4.6 million earmarked by the Health Ministry committee will cover some 6,300 abortions for women who cannot afford the procedure.

In 2013, almost 20,000 women received permission to abort from hospital termination committees, according to Efrat, an organization that encourages women considering abortion to have their babies.

Until now, government-funded abortions have been reserved for women younger than 19 or older than 40, and in cases where the fetus has a severe defect, the mother's life is endangered or the pregnancy is a result of sexual abuse. If a woman believed the pregnancy would cause her harm, physically or emotionally, she had had to pay for the procedure herself.


Number of Roman Catholics decline in England, Wales

CANTERBURY, England — The number of Roman Catholic adherents in England and Wales fell by more than 90,000 in 2012, despite a wave of immigrants from Poland and other Eastern European countries with historically Catholic backgrounds.

Prominent Catholics say the recent wave of sex abuse scandals involving priests and children is responsible for the decline.

According to research by the Pastoral Research Centre Trust, an independent research organization, population increases, baptisms and the reception of newly confirmed and older people into the church should have added 31,873 people to the Catholic rolls in 2012.

At the end of 2011, there were 4.1 million Catholics in England and Wales, but in the next 12 months it fell back to 4 million.

The number of Catholics attending Mass has fallen to 858,000 in 2012, from 985,000 in 2001, suggesting that only one-fifth of the Catholic population now goes to Mass. 

VOICE YOUR

OPINION

SPEAK UP on issues in the Baptist world by writing a letter to the editor of *The Alabama Baptist*.

Remember to:

- Include your name and address
- Focus on issues, not people
- Be as concise as possible

