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A man in the town of Obrenovac, southwest of Belgrade, Serbia, shows how floodwaters reached beyond the second floor of his house. In some places the water was 9 feet or more.

# Rebuilding lives

## Alabama couple shares Christ's love to flood victims in Serbia

Alabama Baptists David and Joanne Hendon may not hold out long doing physical labor, but they know there is still a place for them on the missions field.

"God will find something for you to do," Joanne Hendon said during their recent week spent helping with cleanup efforts in Serbia. "Everybody needs to do missions whether it's across the street or across the world."

The Hendons, who are members of Northside Baptist Church, Jasper, happened to pick the across-the-world option when the call came for disaster relief needs in the Balkan region of Europe — specifically in Bosnia and Serbia. Unusual amounts of rain have caused devastating floods, leaving thousands homeless and wondering how to begin rebuilding their lives.

Flood survivors tell stories of how

floodwaters broke through local dams, leaving residents with only minutes to evacuate.

They now spend their days sorting through the remnants of their lives, searching for anything that can be salvaged.

"It was devastating," one homeowner, Marina, said through her tears. "When I got here and saw what remained of my house, my whole world collapsed. I could not believe it. I had a nice house and a nice life, but now I am left with nothing."

Marina, a widow with two teenage boys, represents one of dozens of families in an area outside of Belgrade where Baptist Global Response (BGR) volunteers, alongside International Mission Board (IMB) workers, are helping people rebuild their lives.

IMB worker Jim Andrews has helped to coordinate much of the

For information about BGR, visit [www.gobgr.org](http://www.gobgr.org).



IMB photo

cleanup and recovery work in the area. "People here are at a point of desperation," he said. "They are grabbing at straws or whatever they can for hope."

### Providing resources

Andrews said that is where the work of BGR comes in — providing not just money and resources but also helping to activate and coordinate volunteers who are trained in disaster response to come to the field on short notice.

The Hendons are trained for international disaster relief and had previously determined to participate in missions trips now that they are retired. They decided within a day they would go on this trip.

Joanne Hendon said she has al-

ways felt her spiritual gift was to serve others.

"When I found out about this need, I knew that I was supposed to be the hands and feet of Jesus," she said. "There's not much I can do; I can't do manual labor like everyone else did. The manual labor is needed but (so is encouragement). ... A smile is in every language ... hugs are in the same language."

Spending most of her time talking to and encouraging people, she said, "When I saw [someone whose] face was so fallen I would give them a hug and often they would just hold on to me and cry, and I was able to console them even though we don't speak the same language," she said. "There

(See 'Rewarding,' page 8)

Coming next week...

**Dealing** with **self-injury**

Faith and Family



# COMMENT

## Living in a Confusing Time

For Cleopas and his companion, the journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus must have been exhausting. Not that the 7-mile journey was physically taxing — it would have taken about three hours at an average pace — rather their bodies were drained of hope and energy before the trip ever started.

The two travelers were followers of Jesus of Nazareth. Some early traditions even say that Cleopas was the brother of Joseph, the foster father of Jesus. While that is uncertain, the story as related in Luke 24:13–35 tells us the two were closely associated with Jesus. That very day they had been with the disciples even though the disciples were keeping to themselves for fear of the Jews. The Emmaus-bound duo even knew the latest rumors circulating among the handful of Jesus-followers who had staked their lives on the ministry of this prophet from Nazareth.

In fact, both the weary travelers had placed their own hope in Jesus. “We had hoped that He was the One who was going to redeem Israel,” they told a stranger who joined them on the way.

But Jesus had been crucified. The chief priests and other Jewish leaders had conspired to have Jesus put to death by the Roman rulers. A week ago, Jesus had been cheered by thousands who had crowded Jerusalem for the Passover feast. It looked like Jesus might really be able to seize power and restore Israel to its proper place in the world — the prestige known under King David.

Before the week was over many of those who cheered had been manipulated by the priests to call for Jesus’ execution. Jesus wasn’t the only thing that died on the cross that Friday. The hope of all Jesus’ followers died with Him. Their disappointment was so deep it almost killed their souls.



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Almost. But on Sunday some of Jesus’ followers had gone to His grave and found the tomb empty. They said an angel told them Jesus was alive. In the back of their minds Cleopas and his friend remembered words about “the sign of Jonah” and about “rebuilding the temple in three days.”

#### The third day

And this was the third day. Surely if such a miracle occurred, Jesus would rise in glory and honor. He would show Himself publicly to atone for the public disgrace heaped upon Him on Friday. But so far Jesus had not shown Himself to anyone as far as the two travelers knew.

Yes it was a confusing time. The two talked about all that had happened trying to learn from one another, trying to understand more, trying to make sense out of the nonsense of the past days. The confusion, the disappointment, the grief left them “downcast” and everyone could see it.

To the stranger who approached, they summed up their predicament in one phrase — “We had hoped that He was the One who was going to redeem Israel.” Jesus was acknowledged as a

prophet. He was popular with the people. His words penetrated the heart. His deeds demonstrated He was from God. He gave them reason to hope.

But now that reason was gone. When Jesus died on the cross hope disintegrated into chaos and confusion.

“But we had hoped.” How often that phrase sums up our confusion too. We had hoped to get the job. We had hoped for good test results. We had hoped for a good report from the doctor. We had hoped for a strong marriage. We had hoped for a successful ministry.

Like Cleopas and his friend, we often start with good reasons for high hopes only to be brought low by the bitterness of disappointment. Like Cleopas, we are often “downcast” by the confusion in which we live. Sometimes we feel alone as if forgotten by God.

The Emmaus-bound travelers hoped Jesus would redeem Israel. That is exactly what Jesus had done. But He had redeemed Israel in a way that Cleopas nor anyone else expected. The stranger chided the two. “Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter His glory?” he asked. For the rest of the journey the stranger explained how the Scriptures foretold the death, resurrection and glorification of the One who would redeem Israel.

Later as the weary travelers began to share a meal with the stranger, they realized He was none other than Jesus of Nazareth, the One in whom they had hoped. Jesus had been their companion for miles but their confusion had prevented them from recognizing the risen Lord.

In the midst of confusion and disappointment it can be difficult to see God’s presence. Yet Jesus said, “I am with you always.” That covers every time, every place, every circumstance. His presence does not depend on our recognition. It depends on His promise.

God’s Word also promises that “in all things God works for good” (Rom. 8:28). God works to bring order out of our chaos, hope out of our failures and wholeness out of the fragments we create. Even when we cannot feel God’s presence because of the numbness caused by circumstances, God is at work.

Cleopas had to look backward with the new understanding provided by the stranger met on the road before he could see the presence of God in the terrible events of that past week. Sometimes we have to look back from the far side of our journey to see the golden thread of God’s grace at work in the midst of life’s confusions.

“But we had hoped” — whether these words are said by Cleopas or by us they signal confusion and disappointment. The best way to live in a confusing time is to look for the presence of the risen Lord and the “good” for which He is working. 🙏

## LETTERS

### TO THE EDITOR

#### TRUTH ABOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS

As a layperson, there are many theological concepts, such as justification, sanctification, reconciliation, etc., that are difficult to understand, much less explain. Some of these are spiritually thought provoking; however, few may or may not have much impact on our daily Christian lives. We all struggle with everyday temptations, and trying to live a Christian life is demanding for the soul. Thus we tend to leave these deep theological concepts to the theologians to discuss. Yet one of these does affect our everyday lives and has a direct manner on how we interface with God, and that is righteousness.

Within the New Testament, Judaism, as taught by the Pharisees and Sadducees, was defined largely in terms of

conformity to the Torah, that is, to the Law of Moses and to the oral scribal traditions. Jesus and the Pharisees had many a conflict about this issue. There are dozens of verses that narrate this dispute, but Mark 7:1–23 depicts clearly that the religious leaders were concerned with traditions of the elders and specifically concerned with details of ritual. Romans 3:21–26 essentially states that true righteousness as revealed in Christ rests not upon obedience to law but on faith in God’s act of redemption in Christ.

Thus righteousness is not primarily an ethical quality but a right relationship. George Eldon Ladd in “A Theology of the New Testament” explains this best: “To seek the Kingdom means to seek God’s righteousness (Matt. 6:33) and to receive the

Kingdom of God means to receive the accompanying righteousness.”

Righteousness is simply a “right” relationship with God. You cannot make yourself righteous. Nothing you can do by yourself can make you righteous in God’s eyes. Only God can make you righteous through having a relationship with Him.

Bob Schrimsher  
Retired professor emeritus  
Samford University

#### STOP JUDGING

A recent letter writer made misleading and inaccurate critical comments. (See ‘Letters,’ page 9)





"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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# Setting a milestone

## Supreme Court ruling in favor of Hobby Lobby continues religious liberty legacy

**R**eligious liberty set another milestone in its long-running legacy when the United States Supreme Court ruled June 30 in favor of Hobby Lobby and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

The 5-4 Supreme Court decision struck down a key mandate of the Affordable Care Act, providing protection against government mandates — like the contraceptive mandate — that violate the religious conscience of individually or family-owned businesses.

The victory reflects back on the history of religious liberty and the acts of the late George W. Truett, former pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, specifically his famous sermon on religious liberty.

The Southern Baptist Convention held its annual meeting in Washington in 1920, and with no scheduled activities on Sunday afternoon, May 16, the city's Baptists asked Truett to present an address on religious liberty. Some 15,000 people were in attendance, including Supreme Court justices, presidential cabinet members, senators, congressmen and foreign ambassadors. Truett spoke for an hour and 15 minutes without notes or a microphone. His words became what one Baptist historian called "one of the most often quoted Baptist statements of religious liberty in the 20th century."

"It is the natural and fundamental and indefeasible right of every human being to worship God or not, according to the dictates of his conscience," Truett said in his 1920 address, "and as long as he does not infringe upon the rights of others, he is to be held accountable alone to God for all religious beliefs and practices. Our contention is not for mere toleration but for absolute liberty."

The basis for religious liberty is "the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ," Truett said. The New Testament is Christ's standard of faith and practice, and it emphasizes that each individual must approach God for himself or herself.

### Free church, free state

"There can be no sponsors or deputies or proxies in such vital matter," Truett said.

All human governments should grant religious liberty, he said, because the Bible implies that a free church in a free state is God's will.

"The utterance of Jesus, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the



SBHLA photo  
SBC President J.B. Gambrell (center left with white beard) and George W. Truett stand amid the crowd gathered on the U.S. Capitol's east steps to hear Truett's 1920 address 'Baptists and Religious Liberty.'

things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's' is one of the most revolutionary and history-making utterances that ever fell from those lips divine," Truett said.

"That utterance once and for all marked the divorcement of church and state. It marked a new era for the creeds and deeds of men. It was the sunrise gun of a new day, the echoes of which are to go on and on and on until in every land, whether great or small, the doctrine shall have absolute supremacy everywhere of a free church in a free state."

### Baptist innovation

Truett hailed religious liberty as a uniquely Baptist innovation.

"We are very happy for all our fellow religionists of every denomination and creed to have this splendid flower of religious liberty, but you will allow us to remind you that you got the seed in our Baptist garden," he said.

O.S. Hawkins, pastor of First, Dallas, from 1993 to 1997, and current GuideStone Financial Resources president, said, "I think I have probably read every word [Truett] wrote, visited at length with those left who knew him best and had access to minutes of the church's long history. And there is no doubt in my mind that Dr. Truett would have been in the forefront of those celebrating the Hobby Lobby victory."

GuideStone has filed its own legal challenge to the abortion/contraceptive mandate, which still imposes objectionable require-

ments on certain religious non-profit organizations despite the Hobby Lobby ruling.

"Tolerance" meant something different to Truett than it does to 21st century secularists and pluralists, Hawkins said. "On the

Capitol steps [Truett] declared, 'Toleration is a concession, while liberty is a divine right. ... Toleration is a gift from men, while liberty is a gift from God.' Today some are using ... [a] different dictionary," Hawkins said. (BP, TAB)





About 120 people attended FBC Springville's Summer Blast event each night. Kids up to age 12 participated.

# 'Summer

Photo courtesy of FBC Springville

# Blast'

## FBC Springville takes VBS to Big Springs Park

By Julie Payne  
The Alabama Baptist

Some churches write their own Vacation Bible School (VBS) material but hold VBS on church grounds. Other churches choose to conduct VBS offsite but use pre-written materials. First Baptist Church, Springville, chose an even more unique approach this year and took its VBS one step further — by both writing its own material and holding the event outside of the church walls to reach its community.

The result? "It caught on like a firestorm," said Andy Waits, associate pastor of First, Springville. "We had more nonchurch kids attend ... than church kids."

The idea for an offsite, personalized VBS started with church member Angi DuPre.

Waits explained, "We had been doing the traditional VBS for many years and always seemed to get the same results — mostly our church kids and kids from other churches. We wanted to reach kids who did not go to church anywhere. Angi came up with the idea of taking [VBS] to [Big Springs Park in downtown Springville] where they had a splash pad that many kids come to during the summer."

First, Springville, fully embraced the idea to minister to its own community and do something designed to reach the lost and disciple believers, Waits added.

The church wrote its own material for the event based on the Book of Jonah and created its own graphic art — even the theme, crafts, snacks, music and games were all envisioned in-house.

The term "VBS" was repackaged as "Summer Blast," and every child attending the event received an orange glow-in-the-dark T-shirt, which attracted other children to participate, Waits said.

DuPre, who served as Summer Blast's director, added, "[Summer Blast] was all outdoors and just a different kind of setting that was ... very much a success."

She noted that seeds of the gospel were planted during the event, which was held June 2–6 from 6 to 8 p.m. "I think that our church made a difference in our community," she said.

Waits agreed. "Deeper disciples were made; when the kids left Summer Blast they knew the entire story of Jonah — not just that he was swallowed by a fish but why and how that applies to our life," he said. "The community now sees that we are interested in building relationships with them. ... Most of all, God was glorified because His people chose to step out of their comfort zone and take the gospel to a lost and sinful world."

He added, "For generations we have asked the community to come to us, but this year we went to them. We don't want to be seen as the high church, looking down from our hill. We want to be seen as the historic church that is still alive with the Holy Spirit ... and that cares about people."

Waits noted that if "a 198-year-old First Baptist Church" can produce this type of event, other churches can too.

"We believe the Scripture teaches that if you focus on spiritual growth and making disciples, the numbers will take care of themselves. We were much more concerned about the spiritual growth of this event than how many kids showed up each night," he said.

### Looking ahead

Both Waits and DuPre noted that with the success of the recent event, the church plans to conduct Summer Blast again next year.

"We learned a lot and have a few minor adjustments," Waits said, adding that the event's overall format will remain the same for 2015.

DuPre wanted Summer Blast's format and materials to be easily reproducible for others to use — and even implemented in other countries. She said First, Springville, recently sent a missions team to Ecuador and, while there, the team used some of Summer Blast's materials to minister to children.

For churches interested in learning more about First, Springville's Summer Blast and how they can reach their own community through this type of outreach, call the First, Springville, church office at 205-467-7979.

"We would love to speak with them and share more of the story of what God is doing through this event," Waits said. 🙏



### Morgan Association's New Salem marks 200 years

New Salem Baptist Church near Somerville, which was established before Alabama was a state, celebrated its 200th anniversary May 18.

Approximately 125 attended the celebration at the Morgan Baptist Association church, which is in the Center Grove community.

David Estes, chairman of deacons and church historian, said the exact date in 1814 that the church began is uncertain. For that reason, the church chose to mark the occasion on its decoration and homecoming day, which it observes the third Sunday in May.

New Salem Baptist started as two churches about 2 miles apart, Estes said. One church — Salem Indian Mission — began with 11 men and met in a log structure. Its mission was to evangelize American Indians. The other church — Center Point Baptist — began with nine men meeting in a wooden building.

In August 1903, the two churches combined, using Center Point's building and Salem's name, Estes said. It was called New Salem Baptist.

At the 200th celebration, Estes presented medals to preachers who came from New Salem, former pastors and deacons. He gave the church a plaque to commemorate its bicentennial. The day's theme was "Don't Stop Now; Let Us Continue for Another 200 Years Serving God."

Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, gave the church a certificate. She noted it is one of the oldest Southern Baptist churches in the state.

Former New Salem pastor Gary Peebles — now pastor of Westside Baptist Church, Eva — delivered the message based on Hebrews 10. Following the service was a meal and a singing featuring New Beginning. Terry Hudson, a member of the group, is a former pastor of New Salem.

Pastor Eric Thomas said New Salem's longevity is the result of members following God's leadership, loving people, serving the community and instilling those attributes in subsequent generations. "There has been a strong commitment to the Lord," Thomas said.

His vision for the church, which has an average Sunday morning worship attendance of 30–35, is growth and service. "We still have a good calling that we're there (to fulfill)," Thomas said. (Leigh Pritchett)

### Ariton's Rocky Head Baptist celebrates 125 years

Rocky Head Baptist Church, Ariton, celebrated its 125th anniversary May 4 with a service at 9:30 a.m.

According to music director Lynn Andrews, the service began with music by the trio Resting Place from Cottonwood. The music was followed by a memorial service component where the Dale Baptist Association church honored the memory of church members who had died since the last homecoming.

Pastor Bill Weed introduced Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative Don Donald, who presented a plaque to the church.

Former pastor Joe Underwood delivered the morning message, and Andrews noted there were approximately 125 in attendance during the service.

Following the anniversary service, everyone gathered for lunch at the community center, which served as Rocky Head Baptist's former location.

"For 125 years, Rocky Head Baptist Church has been meeting the needs of others and supporting missions throughout our nation and the world," Weed said. "The ministry of the church centers on spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. The church has been able to continue over the years because of the dedication and hard work of its former and present membership. It is an honor to be the pastor of Rocky Head Baptist Church as it continues to grow." (Julie Payne)



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# Self-segregation

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123rf.com

Political, social, cultural issues cause separation in churches, 'silence' in pulpits

**T**here was a time in America when a pastor could raise significant social matters of the day and correlate them to Scripture, all without offending most folks in the pews, Pastor Craig Carlisle recalled.

"I remember the days when we could speak openly on issues without fear of retribution because there was unity and uniformity in the beliefs of the congregation, community and even our nation," said Carlisle, pastor of Twelfth Street Baptist Church, Gadsden.

Rob Nash, an associate dean and professor of missions and world religions at Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta, agreed.

"As late as the '60s and into the '70s you could take on some of these issues from the pulpit and people didn't tend to get their dander up about it," Nash said.

Just how radically that's changed became obvious in mid-June when the Pew Research Center released a study on political polarization in America. It found that Americans are increasingly identifying with political views on the far right or far left, and that the center is constantly shrinking.

The trends uncovered by the survey help explain why much of American preaching today, except in churches at the ideological and theological extremes, is muted when it comes to the hot-button topics of the day — like immigration and health care reform, Nash said.

"There's been a great silencing of the pulpit on these issues that are significant and need to be addressed," he said. "I think it's causing us to compromise our ability to proclaim the Word of God in these contexts."

Carlisle said most of the cultural issues the Church faces today "are issues we never thought we would have to deal with as a society, much less as churches."

"The changes and challenges are occurring so quickly that it is difficult to keep up with the trends. ... It is almost as if we were

blind-sided by the current cultural shift, wishfully thinking that the issues we are dealing with today would never materialize to the point we would have to deal with them," Carlisle said.

Several other Baptist pastors say they've felt the tug to avoid difficult political and social subjects but have pushed through by promoting cultures of tolerance and respect for those of differing viewpoints in their congregations. Carlisle said that although he has not preached a series dealing specifically with political issues he does deal with such issues as they come up in Scripture and as he preaches through the Bible.

But the Pew poll suggests that speaking on difficult topics like politics can be an increasingly tall order in many American houses of worship.

For example, the survey found that the negative views Republicans (43 percent) and Democrats (38 percent) have of each other have greatly increased in recent years. The survey of 10,000 adults also found that the percentage of Americans who associate only with like-minded people is huge — 63 percent for conservatives and 49

percent for liberals.

The survey also reported lifestyle trends associated with the two increasingly isolated camps. For example, conservatives generally like to live in homes with lots of space between them and neighbors, while liberals like smaller homes, closer together and located near stores, restaurants and schools.

## Culture focused on conflict

That so many Americans have self-segregated along political and ideological lines isn't surprising in a two-party political system and a media culture that focuses on conflict, said Paul Froese, associate professor of sociology and a research fellow with the Institute for Studies of Religion at Baylor University.

That's why the Pew poll isn't a surprise. But Froese said it is surprising to learn how the American division by political ideology seems to be dictating lifestyle and aesthetic

choices — such as the kinds of neighborhoods and homes to live in, he said.

"You can piggy back onto that a whole host" of other choices, such as, "I should dress like this, I should drive this kind of car and drink this kind of drink," he said. "You can build an entire identity around it."

And another choice influenced by that dynamic is what kind of church to belong to, he added.

"These liberal/conservative identities map onto religious stuff too such as denominational types and the language that is going to come up in churches."

It's why a liberal and conservative church may read the same biblical passage on a given Sunday morning, but interprets, preach and talk about it in starkly contrasting ways, Froese said.

The implications of the polarization described in the poll is a likely continuing slide in social civility because of the resulting isolation between groups with differing beliefs.

"The conservative looks at the liberal and thinks they're completely nuts, and [vice] versa," Froese said. "They don't understand each other because there's so little interaction."

But public engagement of cultural and political issues in a "Christ-shaped manner" is crucial for pastors and other Christians, according to Russell D. Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC).

"So many of our (Baptist) pastors think they have to choose between speaking about the gospel or speaking about issues in the culture, and one of the things we're trying to do at the ERLC is show that it's not an either/or situation but rather a both/and," Moore said.

"We have a Great Commission that demands we both make disciples and observe all that our Lord has commanded us — including the need to work for justice and righteousness and be a voice of conviction and kindness as we seek to persuade an increasingly secular society," he said.

And in regards to talking about politics in church, Moore said, "We see in the New Testament that in this age the power of the sword is given to the government," referencing Romans 13. "Even more, in America in our democratic republic we as citizens are

asking elected officials to wield the sword on our behalf. So it's critically important not only to honor and pray for our government officials, as Scripture calls us to do, but also to be engaged in the public square on issues of gospel significance."

And churches must be vigilant not to succumb to the draw toward uniformity. By nurturing and defending an environment that puts God and worship first, the church makes it safe for people to disagree on issues secondary to that.

## United in essentials

That work must be done by ministers and laypeople alike, pastors in the poll suggested.

Church should be a place where participants are united in the essentials and are free to celebrate their differences. But getting there can be pretty messy, said Andy Hale of Mosaic, a Baptist congregation in Clayton, N.C.

Mosaic is made up of members with a variety of political and ideological perspectives but agree on the need to be of service to the community around the church.

"We have found a way to work through those," he said of the philosophical differences. But it's not an easy process.

"It didn't come without some difficult conversations with each other, and that's not to say we haven't lost people who aren't OK with that," he said.

It's worth the effort because the resulting church culture is one that fosters relationships, Hale said.

But he added that's an issue the wider Church is going to have to grapple with.

"We just live in a day and age when people think it's more productive to separate from those

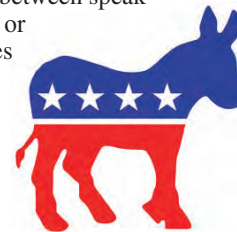
they don't agree with," Hale said.

And Carlisle said that although the Pew poll found certain trends in the population, cultural battles "do not seem to be respecter of geographic region."

"Perhaps we have been protected by the 'Bible Belt' moniker ... but I fear we are no longer the 'Bible Belt' and the cultural battle is being brought to our doorstep. ... I believe the answer to all of these (political and cultural) problems, issues and more is a national spiritual awakening and revival." (ABP, BP, Neisha Fuson)

**"It's critically important not only to honor and pray for our government officials ... but also to be engaged in the public square on issues of gospel significance."**

**Russell D. Moore  
president, Ethics & Religious  
Liberty Commission**



# Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

## BESSEMER

► **Raimund Heights Church, Bessemer**, will celebrate homecoming July 20, 10:45 a.m. with former pastor Don Cunningham. Everyone is invited. There will be a covered dish fellowship after the service. Tommy Chesser is pastor.

## BIRMINGHAM

► **Deerfoot Church, Trussville**, will celebrate its 20th anniversary July 27. Former pastor Wayne Scott will speak at 10:30 a.m. A covered dish lunch will follow, along with snapshots and testimonies. Everyone is invited.

## BLOUNT

► **Pleasant View Missionary Church, Holly Pond**, will kick off its summer revival the third week in July beginning with a singing with One Accord and Melanie Thomas on July 20, 6 p.m. Ray Sport will speak. Services will run July 21–25 at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. with Chad Allbright as speaker. Lunch will be served each day after the morning service, and prayer band will be at 10:15 a.m. and 6:45 p.m. before each service. Randy Burtram is pastor.

## CALHOUN

► **John P. White** is the new pastor of **Meadowbrook Church, Oxford**. He holds a master of divinity and a doctorate in New Testament from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He previously served as pastor in Dallas and Marshall, Texas; Danville, Ca.; and for the last 11 years at First Church, Lake Charles, La. He and his wife, Lou, have two sons.

## COFFEE

► **Calvary Church, Enterprise**, will celebrate homecoming July 20. There will be no Sunday School. Derek Snellgrove and Chosen will sing at 9:45 a.m. and Don Graham will speak at 11 a.m. A covered dish lunch will follow. Kerry Mitchell is pastor. ► **Church on the Circle, Enterprise**, purchased land June 18 on Boll Weevil Circle. The church plant currently meets in a private school building, and the land will be used to construct a church building. John Granger is pastor.

## GENEVA

► **Mount Calvary Church, Slocomb**, will celebrate homecoming July 20. Sunday School will be at 10 a.m. and morning worship at 11 a.m. Former pastor John Anderson will speak. Special singing and lunch will follow. ► **New Home Church, Samson**, will celebrate homecoming July 20. Sunday School will be at 10 a.m. and morning worship

will be at 11 a.m. Former pastor Billy Williams will speak. John Granger will lead the singing. The Basin Quartet will sing after lunch. There will be no evening service. Duane Delmain is pastor.

## HALE

► **Concord Church, Moundville**, will hold revival July 20–23 with Larry Draper of Sound the Trumpet Ministries. Sunday will be at 6 p.m. and Monday–Wednesday will be at 7 p.m. Wyatt Rhone is pastor.

## SHELBY

► **Michael J. Brooks** is the new pastor of **Siluria Church, Alabaster**. He began serving the church July 1. He previously served Pine Flat Church, Selma, for 12 years as bivocational pastor. He has taught at several colleges including Judson College in Marion and New Orleans Seminary extension centers. He holds a master of divinity and doctor of ministry from Southern Seminary. He and his wife, Donna, have two children and three grandchildren.



**BROOKS**

## MOBILE

► **Cloverdale Church, Grand Bay**, will celebrate its 50th anniversary with homecoming July 27 with the theme “Cloverdale Baptist Church ... Yesterday, Today and Forever Hebrews 13:8.” Sunday School will be at 9:30 a.m. and the worship service will be at 11 a.m. There will be a history of the church, testimonies and former pastor Kenny Goff will speak. A fellowship meal will follow at noon. The regular Sunday night service will be at 5:30 p.m. James Messer is interim pastor.

## MUSCLE SHOALS

► **Muscle Shoals Association** sent 61 men and women from 12 associational churches to Colcord, Okla., on a missions trip June 21–27. It was the fourth trip to the area to work with the Cherokee Nation. The volunteers did construction work and put up Sheetrock at two churches in the area. They also led two Vacation Bible Schools and held a revival. Robert Smith is director of missions.

## NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Eddie Hughes** is the new pastor of **Cedar Mount Church, Pinson**. He is a graduate of the University of Montevallo and Southern Indiana Baptist College

in Dupont, Ind. He previously served as the pastor of Pineywood Church, Gardendale. He and his wife, Vivian, have two children.

## TUSCALOOSA

► **Circlewood Church, Tuscaloosa**, will hold July Jubilee on July 23 and July 30 at 7 p.m. A fellowship meal will be at 6 p.m. before these services. Special guest preachers are Brett Pitman on July 23 and Sammy Gilbreath on July 30. Everyone is invited, and a nursery will be provided. Herb Thomas is pastor.

## TUSKEGEE LEE

► **Northside Church, Opelika**, will celebrate homecoming July 27. Bill King will speak at 11 a.m. and will put on a music concert after lunch. Revival will be July 28–30, 6:30 nightly. Rusty Sowell will speak and Gary Mitchell will lead the music. Wayne Ivey is pastor. ► **Salem Macon Church, Notasulga**, will celebrate homecoming July 20. William Casaday, of Talladega, will speak and Spoken For Trio from Montgomery will sing. The singing will be at 9:30 a.m. and the worship service will be at 11 a.m. A covered dish meal will follow in the fellowship hall. Mike Stephens is pastor.

## WEST CULLMAN

► **Eric Martin** is the new pastor of **Seventh Street Church, Cullman**. He holds a bachelor of arts degree from Union University in Jackson, Tenn., with a double major in religion and psychology.



**MARTIN**

He is currently completing his master of divinity degree in pastoral studies from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He previously served as pastor of Grace Church, Pinson, Tenn. He and his wife, Sarah, have two children.

## WINSTON

► **New Prospect Church, Haleyville**, will hold its 19th annual revival celebration July 20–23. Sunday services will be at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., and Monday–Wednesday services will be at 7 p.m. Speakers will be Sammy Gilbreath from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (Sunday); evangelist Phil Waldrep (Monday); Decatur pastor Scotty Hogan (Tuesday) and evangelist Junior Hill (Wednesday). The music evangelist will be Bob Smith. Ron Horton is pastor. ☞

# Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

## Kenneth Stinson



**STINSON**

*Calcedonia Baptist Church, Centre Cherokee Baptist Association*

**FAVORITE VERSES:** John 3:16; John 11:35; John 14

**FAVORITE HYMNS:** “Amazing Grace”; “The Old Rugged Cross”

**HOBBIES:** Watching college football, particularly the University of Alabama, and also Atlanta Braves baseball

**FAMILY STATUS:** Widower for six years after 36 years of marriage to wife, Linda; one sister

*Kenneth Stinson, 75, has attended Calcedonia Baptist Church all his life and was recently recognized by his church for 63 years of membership. As a greeter, he is often the first to welcome people to his church, frequently speaking to them while they are still in the parking lot. In addition, he is an usher, offering chairman and his church's representative to Cherokee Baptist Association, a lay minister and an 18-year member of the association's executive board. He visits churches in the association and prays for the pastors. Though retired now, Stinson has been a farmer, a property caretaker, a sportswriter, a sports director for a local radio station and a radio ad salesman.*

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

A: My faith in Christ is that He went up on the cross and shed His blood for my sins and other people's. I started reading the Bible. My mother and daddy carried us to church. I was 14 when I accepted Christ during a revival.

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

A: I was on a tractor clearing land. And God dealt with

me and called me to preach. I had to get down off that tractor and get on my knees. I had been running from God.

**Q: What does the ministry work demand?**

A: It demands that we get out and work, help one another and love one another.

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

A: I get a great joy out of it. If I get happy, I turn loose and shout!

**Q: How do family members support you?**

A: They continue to pray for me.

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

A: I hope I can keep walking and keep talking and telling people about Jesus.

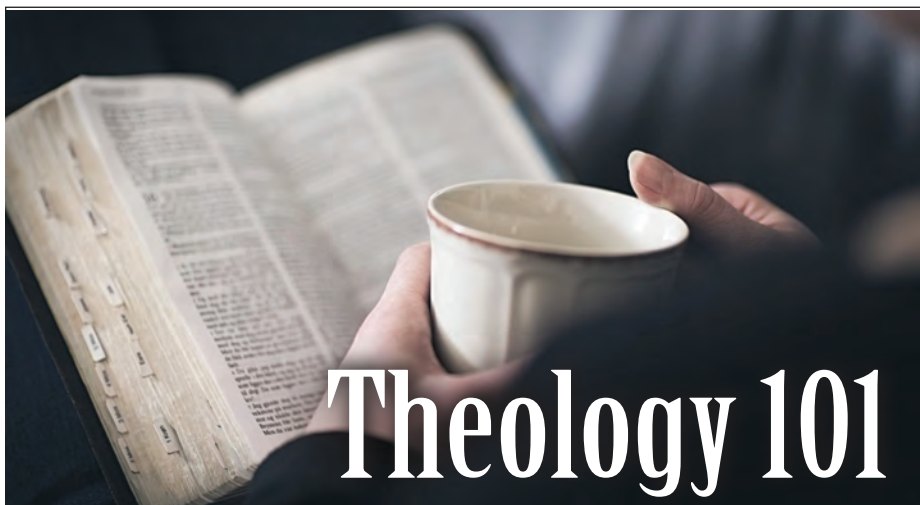
**Q: What difference will this ministry work make for you in the future?**

A: I just have to keep on going and praying and being a witness. As long as I can, I'll get out there and work and get people in church.

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

A: He's made a great, 100-percent difference. ☞

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



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Holy Spirit and Holy Scripture

# Inspiration in Its Writing

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

Over the past four weeks we have focused on the four times that Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit in His discourse with the disciples in the upper room on the night before His crucifixion. He alerted them that the Spirit would have an ongoing ministry of teaching them “all things” (John 15:26). A bit later Jesus said directly to them, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth” (John 16:12–13).

One of the results of the Spirit’s work of guiding the disciples into further truth was that some of them like John, Matthew and Peter would commit to writing what the Spirit revealed to them. Later their number would increase with the conversion and ministry of Paul, whose name is the first word in 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament. Writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, their writings had the character of Holy Scripture. In a sort of backhanded way, Peter equated Paul’s writings with inspired Scripture, saying, “Count the patience of our Lord as salvation just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures” (2 Pet. 3:15–16). The equating of Paul’s letters and “the other Scriptures” is obvious.

### The Holy Spirit at work

We think of the Spirit’s work of revealing truth to the apostles as inspiration. As 2 Peter 1:21 says concerning the Old Testament prophets, we can say about the New Testament writers of Scripture, “Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

The apostle Paul affirmed the idea of revelation from God by the Holy Spirit, saying, “When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known

to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph. 3:4–5).

Inspiration clearly describes the process by which Scripture came into existence. Does inspiration also describe the product of that process? Christians across the centuries have often confessed their faith that the Bible is not only Spirit-inspired as to process, but also the inspired product of the Spirit working through the writers. Quite evidently, the Holy Spirit used the writers’ unique personalities, vocabularies and circumstances to produce the written account of revealed truth.

### Divine revelation

The phrase “the mystery of Christ” further endorses the truth of the divine revelation that we have in Holy Scripture. In short, in the New Testament a mystery is not something eerie or confounding. The term refers to truth that humans could never discover by reason and reflection but rather is truth God discloses. And God’s method of disclosing it involved the work of the Holy Spirit through the human writers.

When we hold the Holy Bible in our hands or experience a worship leader reading to us from it, we can thank God for the Holy Spirit’s inspiration that was at work when the writers were putting truth into words. We receive the words of Scripture in confidence that we have a sure word from God — His revelation that is true and trustworthy. We can affirm with the psalmist that the Bible is thus a lamp for our feet and a light for our path (Ps. 119:105). ☩

*Jerry Batson, retired associate dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and professor at several schools of religion, is pastor of First Baptist Church, McCalla.*



# ‘A shocking night’

## Clayridge BC members adjusting after fire

By Julie Payne  
The Alabama Baptist

It was a horrible night — but a good morning.

That’s how Pastor Ron Hudgens described two very different parts of July 5, when first a fire erupted at his church, Clayridge Baptist Church, Clay, and then an outpouring of support followed from the community in the hours that followed.

“We saw love in action like crazy when the sun came up, and it’s continuing,” said Hudgens, who was contacted by the fire department about the blaze around 3:30 a.m.

“It was a shocking night, driving down the road not knowing what you’re going to see,” he noted, recalling how the church’s parking lot was full of fire trucks when he arrived at the scene.

Most of Clayridge Baptist’s building sustained heavy smoke damage from the fire, with the damage to the sanctuary the most severe. Hudgens noted it’s believed the cause of the fire was electrical.

The church is currently involved in the evaluation and initial cleanup stages with professional work crews. At press time, the next stage of cleanup — taking items and equipment from the building to be cata-

logged, evaluated and removed — was about to start.

Hudgens, who has served as Clayridge’s pastor for about eight years, noted he has been encouraged by the support of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions,

which will provide a mobile unit to serve as a temporary sanctuary.

The day after the fire, the congregation met outside on the church’s property for the Sunday worship service. Hudgens said they will continue to meet outside until they obtain the mobile unit.

Many from the community — including individuals and other churches — have rallied around the church, offering their help in numerous ways and providing generous donations in the fire’s aftermath.

“I’ve just had a great outpouring” of support, Hudgens said. He added that

one church in particular, Clearview Baptist Church, Pinson, has been “super gracious” by hosting Clayridge’s day care that has been displaced since the fire.

It will take a long time to have the church building fully restored, but Hudgens noted the church is more than a building. He added the attitudes of church members “are great ... (and) everyone is willing to do what needs to be done.” ☩



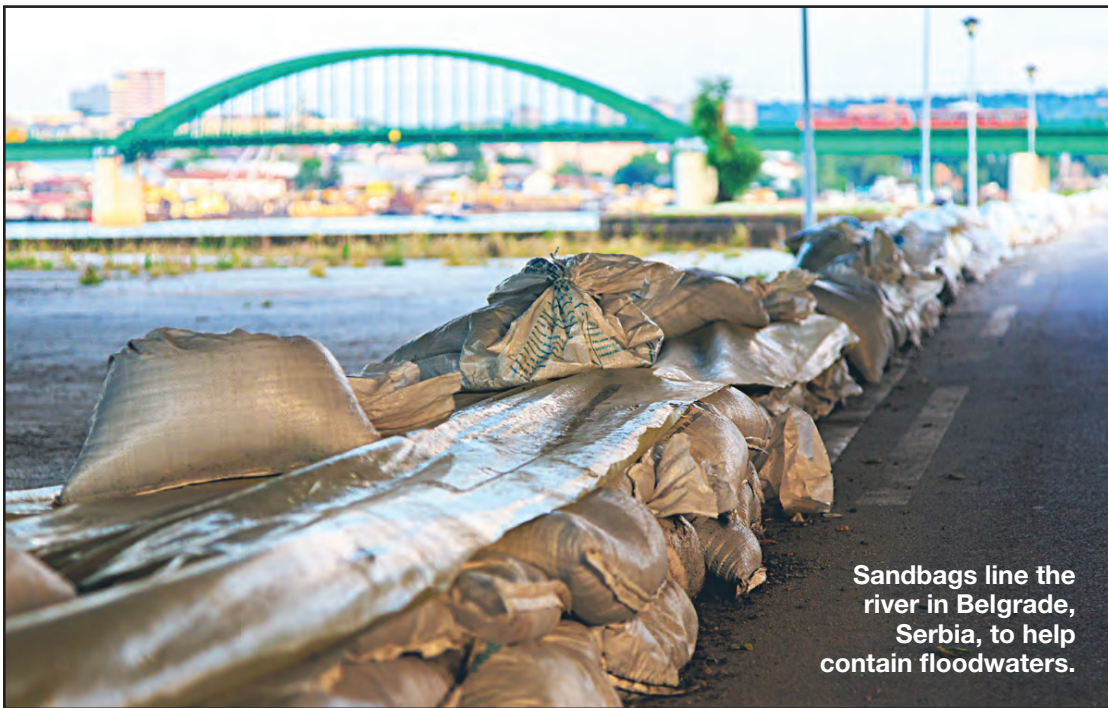
Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Light fixtures dangle from the ceiling outside the sanctuary of Clayridge Baptist Church, Clay, following a fire that erupted on the church’s campus July 5.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

The sanctuary of Clayridge Baptist Church, Clay, suffered the most damage while other parts of the building sustained heavy smoke damage from the fire. The church is currently involved in the evaluation and initial cleanup stages.



Sandbags line the river in Belgrade, Serbia, to help contain floodwaters.

IMB photo

# 'Rewarding work'

## Disaster relief help, prayers still needed in Serbia

(continued from page 1)  
were times when they would ask why, and I would say, 'I do this because Jesus loves you and I do too.'"

David Hendon added, "This is as rewarding work as there is because you're coming at a time of someone's most personal needs because they've lost everything. They've lost their house; they've lost who they are. Some of them will not be able to build back because of financial reasons.

"I wrote back to my church in an email ... that we needed a thousand people here instead of just a few because there's so much need," he said. "We could stay here a month, six months and not get everything done. But these are resourceful people. They're helping each other; we saw that time and time again. Some people did not have things to work with and we were able to supply some of that. It was just amazing that so few have responded so far, and I just ask that people really prayerfully consider coming and helping out with the disaster here because the people here are very much in need."

Gary Capshaw, a veteran of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma's Disaster Relief efforts served as team leader for the BGR volunteer team. "If you want to see the Church come alive, come and do disaster relief," he said. "If you don't get off your pew and get out into the field, then you will never know how alive the Church is."

Andrews said the group spent a week in less than ideal conditions as they helped numerous families.

### Not much to salvage

"When the floodwaters came, they also overflowed the sewage system, so it was not just the water that came into people's homes, it was sewage too," he said. "There was almost nothing that could be salvaged because of that."

Volunteers had to do some "really disgusting" work, he said.

"Yet they did it with a smile on their faces."

Marina and others said they have trouble understanding why a group of Americans would want to come to Serbia to help them. Yet they are grateful for the assistance.

"I don't know what we would have done if they had not come," Marina said. "I will always remember the day the Americans showed up to help."

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Some names changed for security reasons. (IMB, TAB)*

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### Claude Otis Brooks

#### Vestavia Hills pastor emeritus Brooks dies

Claude Otis Brooks, pastor emeritus of Vestavia Hills Baptist Church, died July 6. He was 91.

A native of Grayson, Ga., Brooks was a combat medic in the European Theater during World War II. After the war, he completed his college degree at Emory University in Atlanta, Ga.

He later received both a master of divinity degree and master of theology degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He also received an honorary doctorate from Samford University in Birmingham in 1987.

Brooks served as pastor of churches in Alabama, Kentucky and Georgia. He served as pastor of Vestavia Hills Baptist from 1969 to 1988.

After his retirement in 1988, he served as interim pastor of Kowloon Baptist Church in Hong Kong. He also served as Samford's first Minister to the University; chaplain with Unity Hospice; several interim pastorates in Birmingham; and minister to senior adults at Vestavia Hills Baptist.

Brooks served for many years as a trustee of the Baptist Medical Centers board and wrote for both national Woman's Missionary Union and Baptist World Alliance.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Olive, and his son, Mark. He is survived by two children and four grandchildren. (TAB)



BROOKS

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## Friendship Baptist celebrates centennial



Photo courtesy of Lookout Mountain Baptist Association

Members and guests of Friendship Baptist Church, Gaylesville, in Lookout Mountain Baptist Association gathered recently to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the church. The original handwritten record of the dedication of the site was read and descendants of charter members were recognized. Larry Reynolds is pastor.

# LETTERS



(continued from page 2)  
ments about the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). She accused the SBC of not allowing a Muslim to attend a Baptist seminary and for shamefully squandering a witnessing opportunity.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's president Paige Patterson did admit a Palestinian Muslim as a special student without the usual qualifications into the doctoral archaeology program and received heat for the decision. He later apologized, but Patterson's decision was the right one. The Muslim student has been exposed to the gospel message since 2008 from Baptist students at Southwestern's Tel Gezer dig in Israel and now at Southwestern's campus. That's putting Acts 1:8 into practice.

The letter writer said the SBC is a club and needs to stop judging others. No denomination is an exclusive club; we're all sinners saved only by the grace of God. No denomination sits in judgment on others; only God is judge, but we are all judged by

the same standard as Christ said in John 14:6.

The writer correctly said Christ mingled with sinners, lepers and the downtrodden of the day.

He would do the same today. He loves sinners, but the Scriptures do not say Christ condoned their sins; He came to seek and save those who were lost (Luke 19:10).

The letter writer chastises the SBC for not ministering to people in everyday life because of race, religious views, social or economic status. She should read Matthew 25:35-40 to see what dedicated SBC churches do 24/7.

What chaps the critical letter writer and most of the secular world is the unwavering commitment and noncompromising position of the SBC and other like-minded denominations toward God's Word.

The secular world seeks to conform God and His Word to mankind's way rather than mankind conforming to God's way.

Larry Dunagan  
Wetumpka, Ala.

In reading that paragraph, my thoughts were: Why did the "some" argue the convention would drift toward liberalism if not controlled as opposed to drifting toward conservatism if not controlled?

Bill Garner  
Birmingham, Ala.

### ALABAMA ROADS

In response to the June 26 About Alabama article by Jim Williams concerning our state roads, it is my experience that the problem in our state road system lies not in a lack of money but in a serious lack of efficiency and cooperation. Having served as a county commissioner in one of the largest districts in the state, we often had to deal with a slow, inefficient, unmotivated or even adversarial state highway department.

Over and over, I found that simple projects would get delayed for months, if not longer, by a bureaucratic nightmare. Rather than "re-engineer" or "second guess" everything while paying for overhead that never goes to resurface an existing road or pay for projects that improve traffic, I encourage Gov. Bentley and the highway director to get serious about streamlining the state highway department.

Don Wallace, CPA  
Former County Commissioner  
Tuscaloosa, Ala. ☞

### 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

### UNITY

In reference to your June 19, 2014, editorial — "Unifying Efforts Obvious at SBC" — and the paragraph that reads: "Still some argued in an EC subcommittee meeting that not requiring church compliance 'leaves no teeth' in the recommendation and warned the convention would drift toward liberalism if it did not control what cooperating churches were allowed to endorse."

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# CAMPUS

## News



### JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson Graduates Accepted Into Veterinary Medicine Schools:** Margaret "Maggie" Ingram has been accepted into the Auburn University School of Veterinary Medicine.

Jessica "Coby" Quigley has been accepted into the Tuskegee University School of Veterinary Medicine's doctor of veterinary medicine program.

Olivia Breimhorst, of Warrior, was accepted into the Tuskegee University's School of Veterinary Medicine.

### UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **University of Mobile**

**Reaches 50th and 51st Countries:** The University of Mobile (UMobile) School of Christian Ministries recently sent 15 students and professors to Moldova and Haiti, the 50th and 51st countries ministered to through University Missions.

Joe Savage, executive dean of the School of Christian Ministries, led seven students on the trip to Moldova. His team partnered with Pastor Jeff Copeland of First Baptist Church, Robertsdale, and a member of the UMobile board of regents. Bo Rice, an adjunct professor at UMobile, led the Haiti team. Rice and his team partnered with Pastor Monoit Mercilus, who oversees 10 churches across Haiti.

The Haiti and Moldova teams focus on orphan care, outreach at schools and universities and developing long-term plans to help curtail human trafficking and poverty.

Missions efforts continue this summer in Germany with a student team led by Christian Ministries Dean Doug Wilson and Center for Performing Arts Assistant Dean Bruce Earnest.

### SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing Receives Grant:** Samford University's Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing for the third time has been awarded a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) New Careers in Nursing (NCIN) Scholarship Program. It is one of 52 schools of nursing that will comprise the final cohort of the program.

For the 2014-15 academic year, Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing will receive \$50,000 to support

traditionally underrepresented students who are making a career switch to nursing through an accelerated second baccalaureate nursing degree program. NCIN is a program of RWJF and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

Each NCIN Scholar has already earned a bachelor's degree in another field and is making a transition to nursing through an accelerated program, which prepares students to assume the role of registered nurse in 12-18 months.

Five Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing students will be awarded NCIN scholarships in 2014-15. The school has had 13 previous NCIN scholars.

In addition to a \$10,000 scholarship, NCIN scholars receive other support to help them meet the demands of an accelerated degree program. ☪

## MARKET PLACE

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT PLACING A CLASSIFIED AD, CALL THE ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST, 205-870-4720, EXT. 102, OR EMAIL ADS@THEALABAMABAPTIST.ORG. COPY DEADLINE IS TWO WEEKS BEFORE PUBLICATION.

### CHURCH POSITIONS

**SENIOR PASTOR:** First Baptist Church, Cookeville, Tenn., seeks an experienced pastor to serve as our senior pastor. We are a multigenerational, Southern Baptist congregation. Average worship attendance of 650. See [www.fbccookeville.org](http://www.fbccookeville.org). Minimum education is a master's degree from an accredited Southern Baptist seminary. Please submit a cover letter and resumé to: First Baptist Church, Cookeville, 18 South Walnut Avenue, Cookeville, TN 38501. Email: [SearchCommittee@fbccookeville.org](mailto:SearchCommittee@fbccookeville.org). Deadline is July 31 for submission.

**SENIOR PASTOR:** First Baptist Church, Mt. Sterling, located in east central Kentucky, seeks full-time senior pastor. Please prayerfully submit resumé and references by July 21 to: [FBCpastorsearch@roadrunner.com](mailto:FBCpastorsearch@roadrunner.com). Seminary degree and experience preferred.

**PASTOR:** Louisville Baptist Church, Louisville, Ala., is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resumé to: Norma Beaty, 1364 CR 27, Louisville, AL 36048 or email to: [nbeatyandbeaty@aol.com](mailto:nbeatyandbeaty@aol.com) by August 15. Contact number is 334-367-9712.

**PASTOR:** Shorterville Baptist Church, Shorterville, Ala., is a loving, rural congregation seeking a full-time pastor. The church is located between Dothan, Ala., and Eufaula, Ala., and just east of Abbeville, Ala. Please contact Jimmy Mobley, P.O. Box 27, Shorterville, AL 36373. 334-585-5735 or 334-790-6873.

**BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC:** Haven Baptist Church, Madison, Ala., is currently seeking a bivocational minister of music. The music minister must be a Christ follower willing to be a member of the Haven family. He is to lead our choir and congregation in traditional worship. In our music, we aim to be multigenerational and seek to glorify God by singing Christ-centered songs. To inquire more, please email resumé to: [havenbap@knology.net](mailto:havenbap@knology.net). [www.havenbaptist.org](http://www.havenbaptist.org).

**PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER:** Meek Baptist Church in Arley, Ala., is seeking a godly man to lead our choir and congregation in blended-style worship.

Email resumé: [meekbaptist@att.net](mailto:meekbaptist@att.net). [www.meekbc.com](http://www.meekbc.com).

**MINISTER OF STUDENTS:** Golden Acres Baptist Church is accepting resúmes for a full-time minister of students (grades 9-college). Resúmes may be sent to: 3405 South Railroad Street, Phenix City, AL 36867, ATTN: Gina Harper or emailed to: [gabcgina@att.net](mailto:gabcgina@att.net).

**STUDENT MINISTER:** Circlewood Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, Ala., is now accepting resúmes for a full-time student minister. Please submit resúmes or questions by email to: [info@circlewood.org](mailto:info@circlewood.org).

**MINISTER OF STUDENTS:** Union Hill Baptist Church is seeking a full-time minister of students (grades 1-12). Resúmes may be sent to: P.O. Box 823, Oneonta, AL 35121 or [bbarnett@otelco.net](mailto:bbarnett@otelco.net).

**BIVOCATIONAL STUDENT PASTOR:** FBC Dawes is seeking a student pastor in west Mobile. Previous experience with grades 7-12 with a spiritually focused program. Please send resumé to: [jimglazejr@gmail.com](mailto:jimglazejr@gmail.com).

### OTHER POSITIONS

**NATIONAL WMU POSITION VACANCIES:** Three positions: Controller, graphic designer and human resources associate are available at National WMU in Birmingham. For information about each and how to apply, visit [www.wmu.com/employment](http://www.wmu.com/employment).

**DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS:** West Cullman Baptist Association is currently taking resúmes for the position of director of missions. Please send resúmes to: West Cullman Baptist Association, ATTN: D.O.M. Search Committee, P.O. Box 806, Cullman, AL 35056-0806, or email to: [westcullmanbapti@bellsouth.net](mailto:westcullmanbapti@bellsouth.net). Resúmes will be accepted until August 10.

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## Want to know GOD?

Pastor Benjamin Smothers  
First Baptist Church, Holly Pond

The word "gospel" means good news and refers to Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. Notice three elements:

1. The reason for the gospel. Why is Jesus' death, burial and resurrection good news? The answer: sin. The Bible is clear — all have sinned (Rom. 3:23) and our sin is damning news.

God is holy and will not dwell with sin (Isa. 59:2). God is just and will destroy sin (Ps. 7:11-12; Rev. 21:8). Thankfully God is merciful and can deliver from sin (Ps. 86:5). As our sin separated us from God and made us worthy of hell, our merciful God sent His perfect Son to take our punishment on the cross. Jesus died in the sinner's place. Jesus endured hell on the cross, was buried and three days later rose to verify that sin's full price had been paid. That is good news.

2. Think about the response to the gospel. Forgiveness is granted only to those who respond to the gospel according to the instructions of Jesus. Those instructions are given clearly in Mark 1:15 where Jesus says "repent and believe in the gospel."

A proper response to the gospel means a sinner must repent. Repentance involves turning from all one knows about sin and turning to all one knows about Jesus. Repentance is not a one-time act, but it is a lifestyle of running from sin and running to Jesus as the boss of one's life. But a new attitude toward sin alone does not save. Notice Jesus says "believe in the gospel." One can never stop doing enough wrong and start doing enough right to pay sin's price. So God calls for us to trust in Jesus' payment for our sin, and He promises to count that faith as righteousness (Rom. 10:9-13).

3. The results of the gospel. Repentance and faith are always followed by a new nature (Ezek. 36:26-27). All things become new.

Do you need forgiveness? Do you desire a new life in obedience to Christ? Then turn from sin, travel with Jesus and trust His work on the cross as payment for your sin. ☪

# A Certain Trumpet

Sermons by Alabama Baptists

The Ten Commandments — Seventh in a series

## The Flaming Snake of Adultery

The Shreveport-based CBS affiliate KSLA reported a fire that destroyed a woman's home occurring in the Liberty Eylau area of Texarkana just before 7 p.m. March 21, 2013. The woman reported she had been doing some cleaning work when she encountered a snake. She promptly doused it in gasoline and set it ablaze. The flaming snake then slithered into a brush pile by the house and set the house on fire. The fire resulted in a complete loss.

In retrospect, I'm sure this woman regretted her actions that destroyed her home. Can anything burn down a home quicker than a flaming snake? Yes ... an adulterous affair.

Solomon asked, "Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched? So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; none who touches her will go unpunished" (Prov. 6:27-29). Those who mistakenly think they can manage an affair find their world quickly on fire.

### I. A Biblical View of Marriage

God created the marriage and family as one of two foundational institutions for society (the second being the Church). Let's study marriage in order to understand how adultery undermines this sacred institution.

"Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him'" (Gen. 2:18). God created marriage; therefore God defines it ... not man.

Verse 18 states clearly, "It is not good for man to be alone." On several occasions during the creation account, God looked on what He created and called it "good" (cf. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). Yet now God notices something "not good," the man's aloneness. While naming the animals in Genesis 2:19-20, Adam is looking for a suitable mate. "But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him" (v. 20b).

In response, God put Adam into a deep sleep and from his rib created a woman and brought her to Adam (vv. 21-22). A rib is taken from Adam and returned to him in the form of a bride, once again making him whole, now with a perfect complement. Through marriage, God creates a one-flesh cov-

By Bradley Rushing

Bradley Rushing is pastor of Mount Gilead Baptist Church, Dothan. He previously served as pastor of churches in Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama. He and his wife, Misty, have three children.



enant relationship, not a contract that can be dissolved through mutual consent.

Modern evangelical marriage ceremonies depict this scene as the father brings his daughter down the aisle and presents her to the groom as his bride. Through the commitment ceremony a one-flesh covenant is created.

The marriage is finalized through the one-flesh consummation of the marriage bed. Thus Genesis 2:24 records, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

This understanding clarifies why it is impossible for homosexuals to marry. First a one-flesh covenant requires a man and a woman, since woman was made as the helper fit for man. Second male and female anatomy is required for the covenant to be consummated. Alistair Begg rightly noted, "A light bulb needs a socket if there is to be light. Two sockets can't produce light any more than two bulbs can."

Homosexual "marriage" is a distortion of the institution of marriage. In the same way, adultery is a violation of the institution of marriage. Marriage has a deeply spiritual purpose.

In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul shows that marriage is a visible display of the covenant Christ has with His bride, the Church. The groom fulfills the role of Christ who provides sacrificial love and provision to his bride. The bride fills the role of the Church by respecting and honoring her groom by following his leadership. Adultery destroys this analogy by either portraying an unfaithful church or an unfaithful Savior.

Adultery also undermines the oneness

of marriage. Adultery so wounds the trust intended to exist between husband and wife that it often never heals.

### II. Adultery-Proof Your Marriage

**A. Marry a Christian and be one yourself.**

Paul urged, "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14a). Christian marriages are not exempt from divorce. However, Christians are more likely to understand that the marriage covenant includes a lifelong commitment to their spouse.

I heard of a couple who changed their vows from "as long as we both may live" to "as long as we both may love." The wedding napkins will likely last longer than this marriage.

**B. Maintain a strong devotional life.**

A strong devotional life encourages a life that pursues God. "You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13). We find whatever we spend our lives chasing after, whether its pornography or God.

Include Scripture memory in your devotional life to war against temptation. "I have stored up Your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Ps. 119:11). Include others in your devotional life for accountability. James teaches us to "confess our sins to one another" (James 5:16).

**C. Pursue an active intimate life with your spouse.**

"Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. ... Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love" (Prov. 5:18-19). The word "intoxicated" means "led astray." Proverbs 5:3 contrasts a forbidden woman who seeks to lead a man astray. Pursue such a satisfying intimate life that your thoughts are "led astray" but by desires for your spouse.

**D. Think clearly about the cost of adultery.**

"He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself" (Prov. 6:32). Pastor Jim Henry once said to a group of seminary students, "I have never had an affair, but I can't say that I won't. I am a sinful man. But I can say that up to this point, I have never met a woman that is worth losing my wife, my children, my church, my friends and the fellowship of my God for." Me either! ❏

# Sexual liberalism

## Study shows young evangelical Christians defy cultural trend

Young evangelical Christians are defying America's sexual liberalism despite predictions to the contrary, two Southern Baptist ethicists said in an op-ed based on a new study.

Some Americans outside conservative Christianity have forecast young evangelicals soon will reject the church's standards and join the culture in its liberal views on such issues as same-sex "marriage," premarital sex and gender identity, Russell D. Moore and Andrew Walker wrote July 9 in a piece on National Review Online. But research by a University of Texas sociologist indicates otherwise, Moore and Walker reported.

A study by Mark Regnerus, an author and associate professor of sociology at the University of Texas-Austin, suggests "churchgoing evangelical Christians are retaining orthodox views on biblical sexuality despite the shifts in broader American culture," Moore and Walker wrote.

Moore is president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), and Walker is the ERLC's director of policy studies.

### Other results

Among the study's findings, according to Moore and Walker, are:

- ▶ Only 11 percent of evangelicals between the ages of 18 and 39 say they support same-sex "marriage," while a "solid majority" of self-identified atheists, agnostics, liberal Catholics and liberal Protestants back it.

- ▶ About 6 percent of evangelicals support abortion rights, while more than 70 percent of their nonbelieving peers agree with such rights.

- ▶ Only 5 percent of evangelicals believe cohabitation by unmarried couples is acceptable, but about 70 percent of those who are religiously unaffiliated or consider themselves "spiritual but not religious" agree with cohabitation.

The study's results are both encouraging and unsurprising, given evangelicals' identification with Christ, Moore and Walker wrote. The research suggests younger evangelicals "aren't hewing to the culture's expectation that they conform to its values," they wrote.

"That's a welcome reality, especially given the significant cultural pressures that young Christians face in today's culture." (BP)

**"Churchgoing evangelical Christians are retaining orthodox views on biblical sexuality despite the shifts in broader American culture."**

Russell D. Moore and Andrew Walker

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

# While we have time

## Ukrainian Baptists continue ministry amid conflict

**U**krainian Baptists have stepped up ministry as conflict continues to tear at their country, Slavik Pyzh told pastors and lay leaders in Missouri recently.

Pyzh, the president of Ukrainian Baptist Theological Seminary, spoke to a small gathering July 1 at First Baptist Church, Jefferson City, one of several stops in Missouri to continue building a partnership with Baptists in the United States.

One partnership is with the Future Leadership Foundation, which includes the Macedonia Project to partner U.S. congregations with Ukrainian church planters.

"We see how fragile our freedom is," Pyzh said. That awareness "emphasizes everything we do. ... Now we have time [to share the gospel] but we may not have time later."

The seminary, with its main campus in Lviv, is 12 hours away from the conflict in eastern Ukraine and in Crimea between government forces and rebels. Baptists are ministering to a flood of refugees, including Muslims from the Crimea, Pyzh said.

Baptist churches in the conflict zone have been destroyed, and some pastors have lost their homes.

Pyzh believes the conflict has helped churches realize the importance of cooperation and of sharing the gospel. "People are more united as difficulty comes," he said.

### A different attitude

Evangelicals in the Ukraine always had viewed the state as an enemy because the state had persecuted Christians in the past, Pyzh explained. Because the people, including believers, fought for the country's freedom, they no longer consider the government an enemy. The fact that a Baptist served as the interim president also helped change attitudes toward the government.

The people became proud to be Ukrainian, and

believers became more open to the world, he said.

Pyzh told listeners he had grown up under Soviet rule that persecuted the Church. He did not feel the effects of that persecution personally because he did not grow up in a Christian family. However, his wife did.

At that time, families were not allowed to take their children to church. If they did so, the state could remove the children from the home.

### Godly grandmother

Pyzh became a believer because his grandmother defied his father's wishes. Pyzh's grandmother taught him to pray, read the Bible with him and took him to church whenever he visited her. She prayed for her grandson as well.

When he was 13, Pyzh met a U.S. missionary with the Navigators. That encounter led Pyzh into ministry, he said.

He encouraged listeners to share their passion for the Lord every time they go minister. "You don't know what it will mean to others," he said.

Pyzh earned a master of divinity degree from Moscow Seminary and a doctorate from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

The All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists and the Ukrainian Baptist Union of the USA and Canada founded the Ukrainian seminary in 2000. The seminary has several extensions in Ukraine, Europe and the U.S.

Pyzh desires the seminary to be missional. "God didn't call us to start a new seminary but to share the gospel with people," he said.

The seminary will begin a new initiative in international missions this fall. Leaders want Ukraine to become a missions-sending country to reach the countries of the former Soviet Union, he added. (ABP)



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# Accusations of abuse cover-up resurface in Birmingham

A story published by the *Birmingham News* on July 2 resurfaced accusations against Birmingham Baptist Association (BBA) Executive Director Mike McLemore. These accusations have been circulated by the accuser since at least 2009.

Andrew Guffey, a nephew of a former staff member at Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham,

where McLemore once served as pastor, charges that McLemore knew about and covered up incidents of sexual abuse by Guffey's uncle Mack Allen Davis, the church's youth pastor from 1977 to 1999.

Guffey says he was abused by Davis starting at age 9 and that McLemore "had to know" about the abuse.

McLemore flatly denies the charge. "I knew nothing about Andrew's situation until he started making public accusations against me," he said.

## Recent charges

Davis was recently arrested and charged with 15 counts of sexual abuse in three counties involving at least two boys. The charges are

coming up now because two men have stepped forward with the accusations — Guffey and another man not identified at press time.

McLemore told *The Alabama Baptist* that in 1999 he learned of accusations that Davis had molested a member of Lakeside Baptist, but that charge had nothing to do with Guffey. McLemore said he confronted Davis with the molestation charge and Davis admitted the action. When McLemore met with the family of the victim, he told them they could have Davis arrested and charged.

Instead the family asked to keep the matter confidential. "That guided everything I did from that point on," McLemore explained. Davis was forced to take early retirement at age 59 and agreed to pay for counseling for the victim. He was told he would never again work around children in a church, McLemore said.

In order not to call attention to the separation, McLemore said he followed normal procedures for a departing staff member, which included a reception and financial gift for his 22 years of service.

In 2009 Guffey, who was never a member of Lakeside Baptist but visited occasionally while his uncle was on staff, put up a website about the molestation. He accused McLemore of knowingly covering up sex abuse by Davis and of money laundering for allowing Davis' payments for counseling to be routed through the church's benevolence fund.

In December of that year Guffey sent emails stating the same information to more than 300 pastors and lay leaders of BBA churches.

As a result of Guffey making the accusations public, Breck Ladd, then pastor of Lakeside Baptist, and the church's attorney

had a series of communications and conversations with Guffey. They also met with BBA's executive committee and human resources committee, which handles personnel issues.

In a report to BBA's executive board Jan. 29, 2010, the BBA executive committee stated, "Neither the executive committee nor [the attorney] nor Rev. Ladd has seen any information to support the charge that Dr. McLemore knowingly protected a pedophile during his tenure as pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church.

"Furthermore Rev. Ladd reported there is nothing in the financial records at Lakeside Baptist Church to support the allegation of 'money laundering.'"

The statement also expressed "genuine concern for Mr. Guffey," adding "evidently he has been through traumatic experiences. We sincerely regret Mr. Guffey's pain and suffering. The executive committee hopes continued dialogue can help bring resolution to this matter."

## Website taken down

Shortly after the 2010 BBA report, Guffey took down his website, and there was no further contact with the association.

Guffey's latest attempt to bring the accusations back to the surface spurred meetings by BBA's executive committee and human resources committees which continue to review the situation. The *Birmingham News* story did not provide any new information, and McLemore said he has been overwhelmed with support from pastors and churches in the association.

At press time, Davis was being held in the Jefferson County jail awaiting a ruling about reducing his \$150,000 bond. (TAB)



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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For July 20

## Explore the Bible By Douglas K. Wilson, Ph.D. Dean, School of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

### HOPE OF NEW WORSHIP Ezekiel 43:1-12

“My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.” This hymn is a declaration that we have something to live for because we have hope; namely Jesus died so that we may no longer be the enemies of God. Each one who trusts in Jesus may have confident assurance that he has an intimate relationship with the Creator and Sustainer of life.

Many people have not yet found this hope. They attempt to fill their lives with sports, politics, entertainment, relationships, education, travel, acquisitions, substance abuse or religious ritual. All of these are diversions and false foundations that offer no real hope.

Once again, we have the opportunity to glean principles from the Word of God. Ezekiel 43 is part of a larger section dealing with the vision of the temple. Bible interpreters do not agree as to a singular way to approach the text, so we will look at the principles they hold in common rather than the distinctions between them. Through the gleaning process we can learn how to live with hope.

#### Deserving of Worship (1-5)

God makes His presence known. While God is understood to be omnipresent, He reveals Himself in discernable ways. The glory of the LORD is one way in which He manifested Himself in numerous occasions in Scripture. During the exodus from Egypt, the glory of the LORD gave direction to the Israelites through the cloud by day and fire by night. The manifestation of God’s glory was a sign of His blessing.

Earlier in Ezekiel, the prophet wrote of the departure of the Glory of the LORD from Jerusalem (10:4, 18-19). This was a sign of God’s judgment upon the people and the city. The vision was confirmed when the great temple of Solomon was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar’s troops in the winter of 587-586 BC.

The present vision of this passage is

part of a larger vision recorded in Ezekiel 40-48. Here God speaks of the return of His glory to the city and the return of His blessing to the people. God’s glory would bring heaviness upon the people, leading them to repentance and obedience. The Hebrew root word here for “glory” also is the root for “to be heavy.” In the end His presence would bring hope (see Luke 2:9).

#### Doorway of Worship (6-9)

Many of us have attended worship services in comfortable, ornately decorated auditoriums where the presence of God was not experienced. Such is the case in many of the ornate cathedrals found all over Europe or the opulent church campuses that pepper the Bible Belt.

Like the temple worship in the last days of Judah, there was plenty of ritual and religious activity, but the hearts of the people were far from God. In a similar way, churches have often become gathering places for people guilty of spiritual harlotry. Repentance from such ritual is the doorway of worship.

We have worshipped with believers in many parts of the world. Often with little material wealth, they pour out their hearts in gratitude for the transforming gospel. When a person or a group experiences the manifest presence of God, lives change. Disobedience is confessed, sin is turned away and holiness becomes the desire of God’s people. These are the results of meeting with God.

#### Design of Worship (10-12)

The entire purpose of the temple was for God to offer redemption to a people who had disobeyed and rejected Him. Ezekiel had the task of recording all the details of this temple vision so the people would recognize God’s purpose. What an awful thought to know that God offers redemption, atonement and forgiveness, and then to reject God and His plan. He offers redemption to those who turn from their sin and turn to Him. Only then can they live holy lives. ☩

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

### ACTIVE FAITH

#### 1 Peter 1:14-19, 22-25

Holiness, at its root, has the idea of difference. God is holy; He is altogether different, highly exalted. When the Bible speaks about being holy, it means how we are set apart for sacred service. A person is holy if they are set apart for God’s will and purpose, a purpose in which our lives are made pure by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes we talk about someone being a “cut above the rest.” This is ultimately true of God. He is above us, beyond our grasping as we only comprehend a little of who He is and what He is like. Every aspect of His character is holy. It is a part of everything He is and does. God’s power is a holy power. God’s love is, as P.T. Forsyth commented, a holy love. God’s wisdom is a holy wisdom. Holiness is not an aspect of God’s personality; it is one characteristic of His entire being. In the presence of God, people like Isaiah are overwhelmed with a sense of God’s glory and majesty for He is “high and lifted up.”

#### Be Holy Because God is Holy (14-16)

As God’s people we are called to be characterized by holiness. We are urged to “be holy as He is holy” in all our conduct. We are to be “set apart” as unique and holy people.

My mother had to the very end of her life, even when she entered into a nursing facility in Scotland, a display cabinet where she displayed her wedding china from 1939. In all of my life, I don’t think I ever remember her actually using it to have a cup of English breakfast tea. It was too special — it was set apart for special use — perhaps just in case her majesty Queen Elizabeth II visited us one day. Holy is to be seen in our daily conduct, in the way we live in relationship with others at work, college as well as in the home. There is a distinctive lifestyle that should characterize our attitudes and actions.

### Be Holy in a Life Characterized With Fear and Reverence (17-19)

One particular attitude that should mark our lives is that of “reverent fear.” This does not refer to being frightened of God but to an attitude of reverence, respect and awe. Knowing that our Father in heaven is defined by holy love ought to influence the way we act. God is not to be trifled with or His love presumed upon for one day we will give an account of our lives to Him. Peter reminds us that our lives on this planet are temporary. We are foreigners on this earth because our real citizenship is in heaven. This reverential awe is based also on a sense of deep gratitude and wonder at what God has done for us. The cost of our redemption was the precious blood of Christ, shed freely for our salvation.

#### Be Holy in a Life Manifesting Love and Obedience (22-25)

Peter moves on to speak about what it means to be holy in our daily living. We must not think of holiness in terms of separation from but of separation to. Separation from is a function of survival, but sadly the result is the cutting off of the people of God from the reality of life in the world, a world that God loves and gave Himself to redeem. Jesus expressed holiness that was earthed in daily living. His holiness was grounded in life and was approachable, demonstrating love to people in need. In a similar way, Peter urges us to show our obedience to God by living a life of genuine mutual love for one another. True holiness will not keep us from the world but drive us into the world. ☩

## Christian Crossword

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### Across

- Ruth’s second husband. (Ruth 4:13)
- Special attention. (abbr.)
- Donkey’s cry.
- He is \_\_\_ even to subdue all things. (Phil. 3:21)
- Note of debt.
- Citrus fruit.
- Frog’s cousin.
- Paul’s companion. (Acts 13:2)
- Israeli Jew. (abbr.)
- Took care of.
- But Peter followed Him \_\_\_ off. (Matt. 26:58)
- Concise; to the point.
- Engraves.
- He that hath an \_\_\_, let him hear. (Rev. 2:7)
- Reserve Officers’ Training Corps.
- Assist.
- Capital of Peru.
- For there is \_\_\_ God. (1 Tim. 2:5)
- Approximates.
- Pertaining to Norwegians.
- Become pale.

- The blood of Jesus Christ ... cleanseth us from \_\_\_ (1 John 1:7)
- British fliers. (abbr.)
- The Lord our \_\_\_ Lord. (Mark 12:29)
- Tale.
- The golden calf was one. (Acts 7:41)
- Cereal grass. (sing.)
- We have seen His \_\_\_ in the east. (Matt. 2:2)
- And straightway they forsook their \_\_\_. (Mark 1:18)
- Speed measurement. (abbr.)
- Segment of time served.

### Down

- Body wash.
- Woodwind instrument.
- Gypsum.
- The letter “Z” to a Britisher.
- Lake \_\_\_. (Sea of Galilee)
- Allow temporary possession.
- Coagulated milk.
- Knife part.
- Eve was created from one.
- Physicians group. (abbr.)
- Affirmative reply.
- Let down your \_\_\_ for a draught. (Luke 5:4)
- Roofing substance.
- Government airwaves overseer. (abbr.)
- Repeat.
- Jesus Christ, the \_\_\_ yesterday, and today and forever. (Heb. 13:8)
- He shall rule them with a rod of \_\_\_. (Rev. 2:27)
- Unacceptable deed. (informal)
- Tiny portion.
- Knowledge puffeth up, but charity \_\_\_. (1 Cor. 8:1)
- Boy.
- Slippery fish. (plural)
- What is \_\_\_, that thou art mindful of him? (Ps. 8:4)
- Travels by water.

- Cloth producer.
- Break suddenly.
- Mount Sinai. (Gal. 4:25)
- Barn locale.
- Cotton \_\_\_. (Eli Whitney invention).
- Lengthy lyrical poem.
- Speck.
- Ultrafast airplane. (abbr.)

**BOOKS**



# Media reviews

# TOP 10 best-selling books

**FICTION**

1. **Child Of Mine**  
By David Lewis (Bethany House)
2. **The Harbinger**  
By Jonathan Cahn (Frontline)
3. **Bridge to Haven**  
By Francine Rivers (Tyndale)
4. **A Mother's Secret**  
By Amy Clipston (Zondervan)
5. **The Hope Chest**  
By Wanda E. Brunstetter (Barbour)
6. **The Last Bride**  
By Beverly Lewis (Bethany House)
7. **The Shack**  
By William Paul Young (Windblown Media)
8. **Redeeming Love**  
By Francine Rivers (Multnomah)
9. **The Beaches and Brides Romance Collection**  
By Cathy Marie Hake (Barbour)
10. **Land Run Brides**  
By Janet Lee Barton (Barbour)

**NONFICTION**

1. **Jesus Calling**  
By Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
2. **Heaven Is For Real — Movie Edition**  
By Todd Burpo (Thomas Nelson)
3. **Good Call**  
By Jase Robertson (Howard Books)
4. **Heaven Is For Real**  
By Todd Burpo (Thomas Nelson)
5. **Instinct**  
By T.D. Jakes (Faithwords)
6. **The Five Love Languages**  
By Gary Chapman (Moody)
7. **The Total Money Makeover**  
By Dave Ramsey (Thomas Nelson)
8. **I Am A Church Member**  
By Thom S. Rainer (B&H)
9. **Four Blood Moons**  
By John Hagee (Worthy)
10. **The Circle Maker**  
By Mark Batterson (Zondervan)

Source: Christian Book Expo

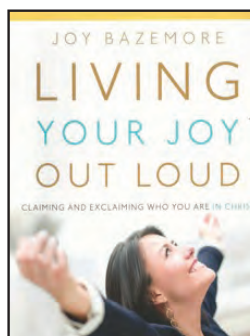
## Living Your Joy Out Loud: Claiming and Exclaiming Who You Are in Christ

Joy Bazemore. Nashville: Crossbooks, 2014. 208 pp. (Paperback).

Are you ready for another women's Bible study? Tired of those bothersome questions at the end of each chapter? Well, take heart, this one has no questions to ponder — but it does have songs to sing.

Alabamian Joy Bazemore has written this book primarily for women who are already Christians, but she does note, "I hope it contains the gospel message so those who are not saved may come to believe." Each of the 18 chapters is based on one word from the Book of Philippians Paul used to describe the early believers. Chapter headings such as "Saint," "Peacemaker," "Servant" and "Wrestler" — wait a minute. Wrestler? OK Paul didn't actually use that word in Philippians, but he did describe his struggling, or wrestling, with several issues.

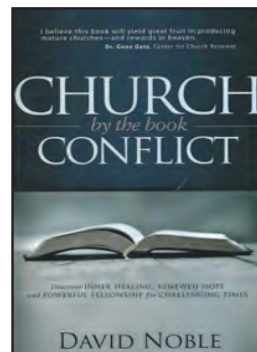
Each segment of the book is short and easy to engage with; the joy the writer feels in her Christian walk bounces exuberantly on each page, yet there is meat to fuel the growth of the reader in each chapter. Each chapter ends with the words to a hymn chosen to summarize the teachings of that portion. "Living Your Joy Out Loud" is a good book for personal devotion or study. To use as a group study, the book would require some work on the part of the facilitator.



## Church Conflict by the Book

David Noble. Kansas City, Mo.: BHC Publishing, 2013. 271 pp. (Paperback).

Church conflict. Is there anyone who has attended church for long and hasn't experienced conflict, at least to a degree? Conflict can tear congregations apart, disrupt relationships and destroy the witness of the Church.



Some interesting and heartbreaking statistics were presented in the book: more than 19,000 congregations experience conflict every year, and of those, only 2 percent are over doctrinal issues. The rest are interpersonal; a survey of pastors revealed 85 percent of the conflicts are over control issues.

Sadly only 16 percent of pastors reported positive outcomes from their conflict.

What if there was a way to stop church conflict, to turn it around so that it becomes an opportunity for growth rather than all-out war? Author David

Noble is convinced that there is — and his advice is persuasive. Laying the blame squarely at the feet of Satan, the enemy of the Church, Noble writes starkly of the way Christians allow themselves to be used by Satan, how to recognize when we are the guilty parties (probably more often than any of us wants to recognize, much less admit) and how we can show love and serve as peacemakers.

There is a study guide that accompanies the book; I suspect that any church, whether currently experiencing conflict or not, would benefit studying "Church Conflict by the Book."

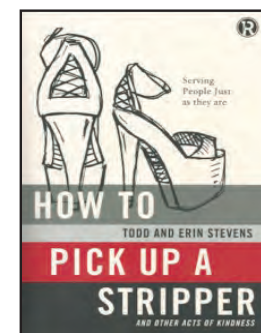
## How to Pick Up a Stripper and Other Acts of Kindness: Serving People Just as They Are

Todd and Erin Stevens. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2014. 213 pp. (Paperback).

What a shock it was to open a package and find this book. The first six words were very large, with the other words small and barely noticeable. Always willing to take one for the team, I gulped and opened the book. From the first page, I was hooked.

Todd Stevens is pastor of Friendship Community Church, Nashville, and his wife, Erin, ministers through the Nashville Strip Church. They wrote this story of how they do outreach, which is a fairly radical approach called "servant evangelism," or "kindness outreach." Feeding strippers at the local strip club once a month is only a part of what they do. The idea behind the approach is that if Christians will show love to others in practical ways, barriers are more likely to fall. The book is full of engaging stories about how the church, whose members appear to be fully engaged, is reaching people through acts of kindness.

As Todd puts it, "Without love, outreach methods become nothing more than marketing gimmicks." Ouch ... I mean, Amen. 🙏



## 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.



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IMB photo

Dan Mahaffie (left, holding Bible) and Donnie and Juanita Land (front, right) talk with representatives of a local church about their desire to share the gospel in Kisi villages. Their congregation, Sequoia Heights Baptist Church, Manteca, Calif., is committed to regularly visit Tanzania to share the gospel and to train local believers to share their faith.

## California Baptist church impacts Tanzania's Kisi people from 10,000 miles away

**F**or an outsider looking in at Sequoia Heights Baptist Church, Manteca, Calif., it would be hard not to ask the question, "Who are the Kisi?"

Signs in each hallway and bathroom implore members to "pray for the Kisi;" the church website features the Kisi people; photos and prayer guides are on many members' refrigerators and bedside tables. In services church members pray for the Kisi and speak of Kisi individuals by name. It is evident that the Kisi (pronounced KEY-see) are deeply embedded in the hearts of the church members.

Why? Because the members of this small church have committed to bringing the light of salvation into the spiritual darkness that surrounds the Kisi people.

In spring 2011, pastor Mark Mahaffie returned from a missions conference thinking it was time for his church to take the next step in missions.

He then read David Platt's book "Radical" and felt God's call confirmed. He presented the idea of people group engagement to the congregation and, after praying, the church supported the idea with a unanimous vote of approval.

Once a decision was made the church connected with the International Mission Board (IMB) to learn more about choosing a people group and the process of engagement. The IMB website, [gettingthere.imbresources.org](http://gettingthere.imbresources.org), showed a map of the 3,400 people groups around the world that are less than 2 percent Christian. Those groups have no known evangelism among them.

Donnie Land, a member of the church's missions team, said, "The goal is to connect with them emotionally and spiritually so

that we can share the most important thing ... the love of Jesus Christ."

The church chose Acts 1:8 as its missions verse and started thinking about how it could obey that specific command from God.

Mahaffie said, "The Scripture says to go ... to the ends of the earth. We looked at that list [of 3,400 people groups] and said, 'God, what do you want us to do?'"

The church began by looking at its history and the direction God had been leading it up to that point. Church members saw trends that indicated Africa and they eventually settled on Tanzania, where one of their church members was serving as a missionary. That decision narrowed their list of people groups significantly, and they prayerfully moved from a list of 30, to seven, to three and then one.

### Working together

Ultimately God sent the church to the Kisi people of southern Tanzania.

Choosing the Kisi was an exciting step that spurred the California church to a year of prayer, research and planning. The whole church is working together to obey God's command to reach the Kisi for Him.

Carol Jones, a Southern Baptist representative, said, "It is important to have the whole church behind the mission." Jones helps train and facilitate churches working with sub-Saharan African people groups. "They need a lot of people involved: praying, giving, going."

Engaging a people group does not work

as a project championed only by a church's leaders or a specific Sunday School class. As leaders change, engagement with a people group can be threatened.

"In 3 John, we read that we should send them out in a manner worthy of the gospel," Jones said. "I don't know what all that might have entailed ... but to me it means a great deal of prayer support as well as

financial support. ... Some people can't go because of health reasons, but they can all pray."

Jones' husband, Daniel, is an affinity research strategist responsible for researching people groups and making sure they are engaged. Southern Baptists'

gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and Cooperative Program enable the Joneses to help churches like Sequoia Heights Baptist follow God's call to engage unreached people groups.

Pastor's wife Lanell Mahaffie said, "I think our church feels very much like a team. Everybody is not going to go [to Tanzania] and everybody is not going to stay home, but we do feel united in what we're doing."

Carmen Baugh volunteered to help the church with one of the more worrisome parts of their planning: the finances. Initial calculations showed that for their church to send three teams a year they would need to raise roughly \$36,000 on top of their normal budget. That amounts to \$700 a week beyond normal tithing.

"We figured we can't do 500 carwashes

or anything like that because there's just no way to earn that amount," Baugh said. "So we prayed about it and did a pledge drive."

With roughly 200 members, the church knew the project could not be funded without serious help from the Lord. The ministry has been funded for more than a year now, and the congregation sees their financial success as evidence of God's blessing on their work.

### Prayer efforts

John Garza took charge of the prayer efforts for the Kisi and leads the church in around-the-clock prayer coverage each time a team goes out to the Kisi. From the time team members arrive on Tanzanian soil until they're safely back on a plane to the United States, a member of the church body is lifting them up to the Lord, asking for their safety and the wisdom to act according to God's will.

Sequoia Heights has been among the Kisi six times so far. Eleven church members have set foot in Kisi villages, but the entire church has taken part in the ministry.

In addition, the youth engaged in missions training and spent more than a month learning about witnessing and how to use it in their lives as well as among the Kisi. Children and teenagers are encouraged to pray and sacrifice financially for the project just as the adult members do.

Dan Mahaffie said, "It's unbelievable that God is allowing us to do this. And it's all because ... we say 'yes' to the Lord with no exceptions. He has blessed that."

"The greatest adventure of your life is just about ready to start if you will say 'yes.'"

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Names have been changed for security reasons. (IMB)*

**For information on how churches can help get the gospel to unengaged people groups, visit [call2embrace.org](http://call2embrace.org).**