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# Worship spaces

▶ SELECT THE **WINDOW** IMAGE THAT IS MOST APPEALING TO YOU ◀



All Millennials	35%	All Millennials	9%	All Millennials	22%	All Millennials	35%
Churched	40%	Churched	6%	Churched	23%	Churched	32%
Marginally Churched	31%	Marginally Churched	4%	Marginally Churched	28%	Marginally Churched	37%
Unchurched	33%	Unchurched	11%	Unchurched	21%	Unchurched	35%

Barna/CKN, October 2013, N=843 U.S. adults ages 18 to 29 years old. The segmentation percentages above are among Millennials who participated in the study.

## Survey shows which church designs best resonate with Millennials

Many churches today are explicitly constructed not to look and feel too much like a religious place. A stark contrast to the ancient cathedrals and churches of old — the very design of which was intended to help people experience the divine.

How does this design shift impact worshippers? What about outsiders? What do church buildings say about the faith of those inside? And when it comes to the next generation of believers — who leaders worry will darken the church doors less and less often — does the building itself have anything to do with their resistance or attraction to the church?

To understand the principles of

design that best resonate with Millennials, Barna Group conducted a multiphase research project. Barna recruited Millennials from a variety of religious backgrounds to tour urban cathedrals, suburban megachurches, city parks and coffee shops.

### ‘Visually’ polled

Barna’s researchers asked what they did and didn’t like about each space, what they would use spaces for and how they might change each

place if given the opportunity.

An online survey was developed for a nationally representative sample of 18- to 29-year-olds and participants in the survey also were “visually” polled — asked to respond to different sets of images. The questions focused on the design and aesthetic of church buildings and worship environments.

One series of pictures showed four different images of church windows (see graphic, above).

Windows 1 and 4 tied as most

appealing, with both garnering 35 percent of participants’ votes. This is a drastic split; 1 is the most modern, least “churchy” of the images, while 4 is the most ornate and traditional.

These survey results are consistent with the field group findings: Millennials like both. During the field test, participants saw a space with both styles of windows in Church of the Redeemer in downtown Atlanta. It has a small prayer chapel with an ornate stained glass image of Jesus

(See ‘Myriad,’ page 9)

*Happy*  
**NEW YEAR**

Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.  
Lamentations 3:22–23

# COMMENT

## Teach Us to Number Our Days

The New Year begins with vast possibilities. A whole year — 365 days — lies before us. So much can be accomplished in a year. We make new resolutions, set new goals. The horizon seems almost limitless.

“A new year? Where did the old one go?” we ask. It seems like only yesterday we entered 2014. What happened to all the plans and hopes for that year? Time seems to be going by faster and faster.

At the intersection of the past and the future the Psalmist prays in Psalm 90:12 that God will “teach us to number our days.” The prayer is not to know the number of days one has on this earth. That is known only to God. Nor is the prayer to keep track of the days on a calendar or in a diary.

Instead the Psalmist prays for a realization about the days one has. That realization grows out of observations made in the foregoing verses. God is “everlasting to everlasting” (v. 2) but humankind “turns back to dust” (v. 3). We are all mortal. We all are going to die, says the Psalmist.

Life itself is precarious. One may start with all the promise of a beautiful spring morning (v. 5) but one can quickly wither away like a tender plant withers against a scorching dry wind (v. 6).

### ‘Trouble and sorrow’

Life is not easy, the Psalmist continues. Whatever the length of our lives, they will be filled with “trouble and sorrow” (v. 10). Life is not finished with a cheer but with a “moan” (v. 9). So much for the notion that a Christian lives above trouble and sorrow.

As if to drive home his theme the Psalmist declares that one’s days pass quickly, almost flying by (v. 10).

It is because of the nature of human life that it is important to “number our days,” the Psalmist argues. Life is temporary. Life is passing away. Everyday life wobbles on the edge of eternity. One does not have enough time to let it carelessly flutter away.

Seize the day, the Psalmist practically



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

shouts. Life is short and must be wisely spent. Teach us to number our days so we have a heart of wisdom, he pleads.

Psalm 90 is generally attributed to Moses. It may be the only Psalm attributed to the leader from exile. If Moses did write the Psalm then insights from his writings such as Deuteronomy 5:29 may help us know what he meant by “a heart of wisdom.” There Moses quotes God as saying, “Oh that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always.”

A heart of wisdom is a heart that is inclined toward God. It is a heart that obeys God and follows God. On this side of the cross it is a heart that believes “God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

That belief opens one’s heart to God so the process of loving God with heart and soul, mind and strength can transform us into the image of our Savior and Lord, Jesus the Christ.

Learning to number our days has other implications. Recognizing mortality forces us to concentrate on how we want to invest our

lives. Life is short and cannot be wasted. Decisions are important. They open doors of infinite possibilities and they close others, never to be explored. No mortal can go everywhere or do everything. Each one has to choose where to go, what to do, who to be.

The Psalmist prays that learning to number our days will help us make choices that reflect values consistent with the love of God in our lives. When a Christian seizes the day, the day is filled with those things that reflect God’s love and grace. Our days are fleeting. Opportunity cannot be wasted.

Numbering our days also causes us to value “being” as well as “doing.” Genesis 1 describes God’s doing, His creation. Tucked away amid the marvelous verses are two references to God pausing to reflect and appreciate

what He had done. In verse 25, God looks over the created order and calls it good. In verse 31, God took time to rest and reflect on creation, this time with living plants, creatures and humankind. God’s conclusion was that it was very good.

If God took time to rest, reflect and evaluate then shouldn’t we? Shouldn’t we take the time to enjoy the beauty of a sunrise, the sound of rolling waves along the shore or the majestic grandeur of a mountain?

Shouldn’t we take time to

enjoy the company of friends and loved ones, to hug a child, to say I love you? After all they are all gifts from our loving God.

Precisely because our days are numbered we need to number our days. With the realization of our own mortality we seize the day we have. We develop a heart toward God. Our lives demonstrate godly values. Love for God and love for others fills our being.

If you were to receive a terminal diagnosis on your next visit to the doctor, how would it change your life? Would you go back to your job; continue teaching your Sunday School class; take the trip you’ve planned; continue pretty much as normal? If so then maybe you have already learned to number your days. Perhaps you are living in the will of God and doing those things that reflect God’s love and godly values in your choices.

If a terminal diagnosis would cause drastic changes in what you do or who you are, then perhaps you need to hear the prayer of the Psalmist. Learn to number your days because your days are numbered. 🙏

**“Precisely because our days are numbered we need to number our days. With the realization of our own mortality we seize the day we have. We develop a heart toward God.”**

## LETTERS

### TO THE EDITOR

#### RIGHTEOUS ANGER

The news coming out of Iraq that four Christian children have been beheaded by ISIS is appalling. According to a British “Vicar of Baghdad,” Canon Andrew White, four children under the age of 15 were beheaded for refusing to deny Jesus Christ and accept Islam.

My question is where is the outrage

from the Christian community? Where is the righteous anger from our government, especially our president?

Natalie B. Smith  
Selma, Ala.

#### WHY HOST LAURA BUSH?

An ad in a recent issue of *The Alabama Baptist* features Laura Bush as the special speaker at a fundraiser

to benefit Children’s of Alabama. The children’s hospital is a worthy organization, but it is ironic that Laura Bush would be scheduled to speak since she endorses a woman’s right to choose (abortion). (See ‘Letters,’ page 10)





"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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Church planting intern Chris Baker (second from left) leads a vision team made up of Alabama Baptists around the town of Red Lodge, Mont., while discussing potential partnership opportunities.

Photo by Doug Rogers

# A place to connect

## Alabama Baptist prepares to take gospel to Montana service-industry workers

By Doug Rogers  
State Board of Missions

**P**low the snow off an elderly woman's sidewalk. Check. Help serve meals to 80-plus people on a cold November evening. Check. Drive a team of missions volunteers around town hoping to catch a glimpse of a moose. Check.

The to-do list is quite different these days for Chris Baker and he absolutely loves it. After serving eight years as Clarke Baptist Association's director of missions (DOM), Baker and his family moved from Alabama to Red Lodge, Mont., in May 2014. He has been working as a church planting intern with the North American Mission Board and helped launch Church of the Rockies in September.

"It's part of the process, coming to a place like this to spend six months to a year on the field without having the responsibilities of being a lead church planter," Baker said. "It's been great ... learning the Montana culture and understanding who it is we're ministering to."

Baker knew the process would ultimately lead to the planting of a new church somewhere else in Montana but he didn't know where. After two months of praying and talking with Montana Southern Baptist Convention leadership, Baker visited the Kalispell-Whitefish-Columbia Falls area — 450 miles northwest of Red Lodge, near the Idaho and Canadian borders — and knew he had found the answer.

"As we pulled in we sensed the Lord's leadership there," he said. "It's a resort kind of area much like Red Lodge with great opportunity."

Their target audience is not tourists, however, but the people who live and work there, Baker said, noting the thousands of hotels and 40-plus restaurants represent a huge missions field made up of those who work in the service industry.

About 110,000 people live in the Kalispell-Whitefish-Columbia Falls area but only 6 percent would be considered evangelical and only seven-tenths of 1 percent of the population is Southern Baptist, he said. "People come to this state because of its beauty ... but the lostness is also great and the opportunities are vast."

Building relationships has been a key part of the strategy in Red Lodge and will continue to be in their new location. One of the ministries Baker has been involved with in Red Lodge that he hopes to continue in the Whitefish area is Common Ground, a weekly meal provided free of charge to anyone in the community.

"There will be a millionaire sitting across the table from somebody on the verge of homelessness. There will be a senior adult couple that's just trying to make ends meet sitting across the table from a single mom with four children," he said. "A place like Common Ground gives a community atmosphere, a place to connect, since many don't have that church home they can connect with."

### Vital team members

Baker is quick to point to his family as vital members of the team. His wife, Kim, and sons Andrew, 18, and Samuel, 17, are involved in a variety of ways from worship leadership to cooking to hosting volunteer teams to building relationships in the community.

"I couldn't do this on my own," Baker said.

"I couldn't do this if they were just 'okay' with it. They're not just okay with it, they're all in."

The Bakers move to Whitefish in early January and will begin the process of building relationships and gearing up for a busy summer. The need for volunteer teams from Alabama will be great, helping with sports camps, cooking and serving meals, connecting with the community and prayerwalking.

"One of the things I've learned here the last few months is that presence is so important," Baker said. "I just can't tell you what that does for a community to see volunteers coming and not taking but giving."

Baker's roots in Alabama are deep. He was raised in First Baptist Church, Wetumpka, schooled at Samford University in Birmingham and served as pastor of two Alabama Baptist churches before his role

as DOM. Being connected to Baptists in the state through the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions' Alabama Acts 1:8 Connections means a lot to him.

"It's a source of encouragement to me," he said. "I'm humbled by it ... and I am grateful that Alabama Baptists would take on that Acts 1:8 challenge and partner with us in this Great Commission work."

To learn how to partner with the Bakers or other Alabama-based missionaries around the world, visit www.a18c.org or call the office of global missions at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 239. ☞



Photo by Doug Rogers

Chris Baker plows snow at Legacy Lodge, the site of a weekly meal provided to the community as part of the ministry Common Ground.



123rf.com

**S**uch a church-state split — already endorsed by some Catholic and evangelical leaders — is showing surprising popularity in two new surveys released Dec. 2 by LifeWay Research.

In a survey of 2,000 American adults, the Nashville-based Christian research company found:

▶ Nearly 6 in 10 Americans (59 percent) say marriage should not be “defined and regulated by the state.”

▶ Nearly half (49 percent) say “Religious weddings should not be connected to the state’s definition and recognition of marriage.”

▶ About a third (36 percent) say clergy should “no longer be involved in the state’s licensing of marriage.” More than half (53 percent), however, disagree.

▶ Those most likely to favor a split between religious weddings and government or civil marriage include 54 percent of men, 53 percent of Catholics and 45 percent of Protestants.

LifeWay also conducted a parallel survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors. It found that 1 in 4 favors separating the religious rites from their signature on a government-issued marriage license that makes the ceremony legally binding. This is how it’s done in many foreign countries already,

but not — so far — in the United States.

Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research, called it noteworthy that so many pastors are willing “to stop saying ‘By the power vested in me by the state’ during a church wedding.”

### ‘Sacred covenant’

“Christians tend to see marriage as a sacred covenant between God, the Church and the couple being married,” Stetzer said in a press release. “Many others see marriage as a contract that ties the couple together in the eyes of the state.”

The rapid expansion of gay “marriage” to 35 states and the District of Columbia

spotlights the tension between these views.

Although clergy cannot be compelled to officiate at either gay or straight weddings, many traditionalists say the trend is moving toward redefining marriage in ways they see as far from God’s intent.

In November the traditionalist magazine *First Things* launched a campaign for clergy to pledge to stop signing marriage certificates. So far, more than 330 clergy have signed the pledge.

But the “I don’t” campaign to alter the “I do” patterns has support from liberals as well.

Paul Waldman wrote in *The American Prospect* in July, “The state doesn’t tell you how to celebrate Christmas or Ramadan and it shouldn’t tell you how to get married.”

Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput told the nation’s Catholic bishops that Catholic priests might consider opting out of certifying civil marriages as a sign of “principled resistance” to growing legal recognition of same-sex “marriage.”

### ‘Spouse A’ and ‘Spouse B’

“It’s hard to see how a priest or bishop could, in good conscience, sign a marriage certificate that merely identifies ‘Spouse A’ and ‘Spouse B,’” Chaput said in his prepared remarks.

Meanwhile many brides and grooms are voting with their feet — moving away from clergy officiants at their wedding.

For more than a decade state offices of vital statistics have not distinguished between clergy and nonclergy wedding officiants, so there are no national statistics to prove a trend. However, an unscientific 2010 study by TheKnot.com and WeddingChannel.com found a shift away from clergy ceremonies: 31 percent of the websites’ users who married in 2010 said they used a family member or friend as their officiant, up from 29 percent in 2009, the first year of the survey, according to *The Washington Post*. (RNS)

## Watchdogs disagree with right of conscience in marriage laws

If a government clerk has a religious objection to gay “marriage,” he or she can lawfully delegate the responsibility to issue a license to a deputy or assistant who doesn’t have the same objection, according to a legal memorandum submitted by Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF).

But Americans United for Separation of Church and State (AU) disagrees. Government clerks have no legal right to refuse to issue a marriage license to same-sex couples in a state where gay “marriage” is legal, according to an AU legal memo released Dec. 1.

The ADF memo, released earlier in the year, argued that requiring clerks to issue a marriage license against their conscience would violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which requires employers to “reasonably accommodate to an employee’s or prospective employee’s religious observance or practice without undue hardship on the

conduct of the employer’s business.”

“No one in America should be forced to choose between following their conscience and serving his or her employer,” said Kellie Fiedorek, litigation staff council for the ADF. “The First Amendment protects the right to basic freedoms, including the freedom to live and work according to one’s conscience. These freedoms are guaranteed to every American, including those issuing marriage licenses.”

### Freedom argument

But Ayesha Khan, AU’s legal director, said ADF “is employing a bogus religious freedom argument to shield a crude form of discrimination, bigotry and bias against LGBT Americans.”

AU said nothing in the law “gives government clerks the right to an exemption from the legal requirement that they treat same-sex couples no differently than different-sex couples.” The Washington-based church-state watchdog group offered to rep-

resent for free any government employer sued by a worker after denying such an exemption.

AU Executive Director Barry Lynn said, “Government’s first duty is to treat all people equally. If same-sex ‘marriage’ is legal in a state, clerks and municipal officials must serve all comers. It’s part and parcel of doing your job.”

The legal memo said a government employer that allows clerks to discriminate against same-sex couples risks violating both the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment and the 14th Amendment guarantee of equal protection under the law.

Asking a same-sex couple to move to another counter or office unduly burdens the applicants in both practical and “dignitary” ways, the memo said. “Not only would the couple face the logistical harm of undue delay, but they also would be subjected to the sting of unequal and inferior treatment.” (BNG)

# 'Be a Blessing'

## Alabama Baptists continue to bless others

**D**uring the 2014 annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, *The Alabama Baptist* handed out dollar bills at its display booth at Lakeside Baptist Church, Birmingham, on Nov. 11–12. Messengers were challenged to “Be a Blessing” — to take a dollar and touch a life. Below are personal stories of how the dollars were used to bless someone’s life. Share your story with us. Email [pr@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:pr@thealabamabaptist.org).

**I** had the privilege of planting the dollar as a seed provided by you all to two orphaned children who have been graciously taken into our family temporarily and hopefully permanently. We have shared the gospel with both of them and are proceeding to show by example Christ’s love for them. Thank you again for encouraging people to “Be a Blessing” to a lost and dying culture. We appreciate you.

**Laurie Carlisle Barnett**

**I** gave my Blessing Dollar to my granddaughter, Savanna Hughes. She and five other cheerleaders have been collecting donations for their trip to Orlando, Fla., for the cheerleader competition in January at the Capitol One Bowl.

**Jim Richardson**

**A**fter being sensitive to opportunities to do so, I was finally able to pass along my dollar on Thanksgiving Day. My family had our Thanksgiving meal at a local

restaurant. Conversation with the waitress revealed she was going through a difficult time including almost losing her home. Before we left I told her I had been blessed with a dollar a couple weeks before and I wanted to bless her by giving it to her. The look on her face was reward enough for me. She acknowledged her faith in God to provide for her needs. It was a blessing to be a blessing to someone.

**Dennis Trimble**

**M**y wife and I gave our dollars to buy food to place in backpacks that are sent home on the weekends with school children who otherwise would go hungry.

**Marvin and Susan Minton**

**T**hanks for the dollar and the opportunity to share it with a friend who is going through a lot of complicated financial issues involving her family. She put the dollar in her Bible.

**Betty Hunt**

**I** gave the dollar, given to me at *The Alabama Baptist* booth, to an elderly lady ringing her bell for the Salvation Army in front of Kmart. It was cool weather and I told her that this money (I added another dollar) was for her to get a cup of coffee in Kmart to warm her up on her break. This sweet lady smiled so big and thanked me for my kindness. I also put money in her collection bucket. Again she thanked me. What a blessing.

**Arlinda Coleman** ☞

# Stand & greet

## Rainer aims to help churches retain first-time guests

**L**ifeWay Christian Resources President Thom Rainer said he wasn’t trying to be controversial when he posted a blog Nov. 1, 2014, on things churches inadvertently do to drive away first-time visitors. The No. 1 on the list — “having a stand-up-and-greet-one-another time in the worship service” — took on a life of its own.

More than 750,000 page views later Rainer discussed the “tidal wave” of comments pro and con in a leadership podcast Dec. 5. On Dec. 8, LifeWay, the publishing arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, rolled out “114 Things You Need to Know About Revitalizing Churches,” a new resource aimed at helping congregations do a better job of retaining first-time guests.

Rainer said interest in the list — which started out as an informal, unscientific Twitter poll with “a margin of error of plus or minus 90 percent” — continues to grow.

“I didn’t realize that this is such an issue,” he said. “Churches are really concerned about this.”

In a later post based on reader comments, Rainer summarized seven things first-time visitors don’t like about the tradition.

1. Many guests are introverts.
2. Some guests perceive that the members are not sincere during the time of greeting.
3. Many guests don’t like the lack of hygiene that takes place during this time.
4. Many times the members only greet other members.
5. Both members and guests at some churches perceive the entire exercise as awkward.
6. In some churches the people in the congregation are told to say something silly to one another.
7. Not only do some guests dread the stand-and-greet time, so do some members.

Rainer said studies differ on how many people are introverts but for the sake of discussion he supposed 40 percent. “You’ve got 4 out of 10 first-time guests who may be just turned off by this greet-one-another time where people come and shake your hand.”

Rainer said No. 3 is a bigger concern during cold-and-flu season but “there are germaphobes” as well. If 10 percent of the population has some obsession with cleanliness and another 40 percent are introverts, he said: “Already you’ve got half of your potential first-time guests that don’t like this thing one way or another. And if you have an introverted germaphobe, they’ll never come back.”

“To all church leaders I would say at all times look through the eyes of others in your church,” he said. “You can get so used to the way you do church and the way the church looks and the way you do worship that you really don’t know why you do church.”

“When it’s all said and done you might do things differently because it will be more effective, not only in worship for all who are believers there but also for reaching those who are attending first time or second time.”

Rainer said he is confident that some churches use the practice effectively, but he cautioned about the common response from church members who defend it by saying they have been told their church is the friendliest in town. Rainer said every pastor hears that from time to time.

“When I do consultations every leader I can remember told me that, and most of them were of declining churches because you only hear the positives,” he said.

### Strong opinions

Rainer said a lot of people don’t like the stand-and-greet and some really don’t like it. As one comment put it: “I am not one to feel comfortable in the spotlight and literally everyone in the congregation smelled new blood and cornered me before I could make an exit.”

One called it “a personal, psycho-contrived exercise that is not only too much but too soon.” A shy introvert called it “terrifying.” One reader described as “nowhere near an introvert” nevertheless termed it “the most awkward part of the service.” Another confessed to arriving late on purpose in order to avoid it. (BNG)



**RAINER**

# Ministry Tips



## CHURCH WEBSITES THAT ARE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE

**By Brian Harris**

Web and social media strategist  
Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

**R**eady to take your web presence up a notch? Here are a few tips to get you started:

### 1. Determine who’s in charge.

You’ll need a person ready and willing to spearhead and take ownership

of the site. This might mean you need to look to hire a company to help.

**2. Go with an online content management system.** You will be able to access it from any computer wherever you are. I ran a Google search for “Church Websites” and came up with many responses.

**3. Responsive sites have become the standard for websites.** Having a respon-

sive site means that it will automatically adjust and “respond” to the display size that someone is viewing your site on. In a mobile world having this bit of technology is a must.

**4. Start small with your content and grow from there.** Focus on information a visitor needs — service times, directions, pastor/staff.

### 5. Be consistent in your content.

Having out-of-date information on the site is actually worse than not having a site at all. It must be consistently updated.

Hopefully this will help you get a great start on improving your web presence or getting your church on the web for the first time. ☞

# Across ALABAMA'S Associations

To submit news items, email [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org) or call 205-870-4720, ext. 100, at least three weeks prior to the event.

## AUTAUGA

► **Ron Burns** is the new minister of music for **Prattmont Church, Prattville**.

He previously served as minister of music for Siluria Church, Alabaster, for four years. Burns attended the University of Alabama and serves as a chaplain with Marketplace Chaplains. He and his wife, Patty, have two children. Randall J. Tucker is pastor.



**BURNS**

## BIBB

► **Ashby Church, Brierfield**, will host The Steels in concert Jan. 4, 5 p.m. For more information call Barbara Edwards at 205-665-1531 or 205-665-0800. Shannon Allen is pastor.

## BIRMINGHAM

► Former **Ruhama Church, East Lake**, will host a reunion Jan. 17, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information call Susanne Shepherd at 205-822-4728 or Brenda Boggan at 205-243-1114.

## BLOUNT

► **Pleasant View Missionary Church, Holly Pond**, held a Watch Night service Dec. 31 with guest singers Point of

Honor. Participants prayed the old year out and the new year in. Randy Burtram is pastor.

## FRANKLIN

► **First Church, Russellville**, will host "Into the Light" women's conference Jan. 10, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The conference will feature Dove Award-winning new artist of the year Ellie Holcomb as worship leader. For tickets visit [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com). Patrick Martin is pastor.

## MORGAN

► **Shoal Creek Church, Decatur**, ordained **Brandon Bailey** to the ministry Nov. 2. Bailey has served as the church's youth minister since March 2014. He is pursuing his bachelor's degree in Christian ministries through Blue Mountain College in Mississippi.



**BAILEY**

He is married to Stacey. Gary Linville is pastor.

## LIMESTONE

► **Clements Church, Athens**, will host Laugh All Night Comedy Concert on Jan. 11, 6 p.m. The concert will feature Clayburn Cox and David Dean. For more information call 256-729-

1328 or visit [www.clements baptist.org](http://www.clements baptist.org). Tim Anderson is pastor.

## SHELBY

► **Dogwood Grove, Montevallo**, held Victory Sunday on Dec. 14 and had a goal of raising \$9,600 for its Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. The church raised \$10,500. Todd Burr is pastor.

## TUSKEGEE LEE

► **John Sparks** resigned from his position as pastor of **River Road Church, Tallassee**, after 11 years of service. Sparks is going to serve as pastor of Antioch Church, Florien, La. He previously served as pastor of First Church, Uriah; Center Church, Lafayette; and Southwest LaGrange Church, LaGrange, Ga. His last Sunday at River Road was Dec. 28. ☞

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# ALABAMA UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

## UMobile's Lee receives Meritorious Service Award

Steve Lee, vice president for business affairs and chief financial officer at the University of Mobile (UMobile), was awarded the Meritorious Service Award by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) during its annual meeting Dec. 6-9 in Nashville.

The award was presented in recognition of Lee's "untiring service on 19 committee visits and as a member of the Accreditation Process Project and the finance subcommittee," according to SACSCOC President Belle S. Wheelan.

UMobile President Mark Foley said Lee is widely recognized as "one of the foremost financial resources" for schools accredited by SACSCOC.

Lee has served as vice president for business affairs and chief financial officer for UMobile since 1995 and is a certified public accountant. Prior to that he was audit manager at Wilkins Miller CPA and was president and co-owner of Paulk Moving & Storage.

Most recently Lee oversaw the university's \$7 million campus enhancement project, the most far-reaching campus-wide renovation effort in the school's history.

He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Alabama Society of Certified Public Accountants, National Association of College and University Business Offices and the Southern Association of College and University Business Offices, where he served on the audit committee.

Lee is a member of the board of trustees of St. Luke's Episcopal School in Mobile and has served as board treasurer. He is a member of the West Mobile Rotary Club, where he has served as president.

He holds a bachelor of science in business administration from the University of South Alabama and has been a certified public accountant in Alabama since 1990. (UMobile)



**LEE**

## Former pastor Jackson celebrates 60 years in ministry

As he nears his 87th birthday, former Alabama Baptist pastor Bill Jackson reflected on 60 years of active ministry service.

"Being able to serve people and be close to Jesus" have been the most rewarding aspects of ministry service, he said.

Jackson earned a bachelor of arts degree in religion from Samford University in Birmingham, a master of religious education and a master of divinity from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and a doctor of ministry from Luther Rice Seminary in Lithonia, Ga.

He has served as pastor of Five Points Baptist Church, Northport; First Baptist Church, Foley; Gilbertown Baptist Church; Bethel Baptist Church, Columbiana; Beechwood Baptist Church and Westmont Baptist Church, both in Birmingham. He also has ministered in Missouri and Hawaii.

Currently Jackson is a member of Magnolia Springs Baptist Church, but he continues to be available for supply preaching and interim positions.

Gary Patrick, pastor of Magnolia Springs Church, said Jackson takes the privileges, responsibilities and opportunities that come with ministry very seriously.

"He's very diligent about doing what he's been called to do," Patrick said. "He's always conscious about being a Christian and representing Christ."

Jackson said of ministry life, "You have some ups and downs and the ups are always so much greater than the downs — I've never majored in the downs."

Magnolia Springs celebrated his 60-year commitment with a recognition service as part of its homecoming celebration Nov. 9. Many members from previous churches he has served attended and most of the churches sent letters of appreciation for Jackson.

He and his wife, Jessie Ann, have four children and five grandchildren. (Maggie Walsh)



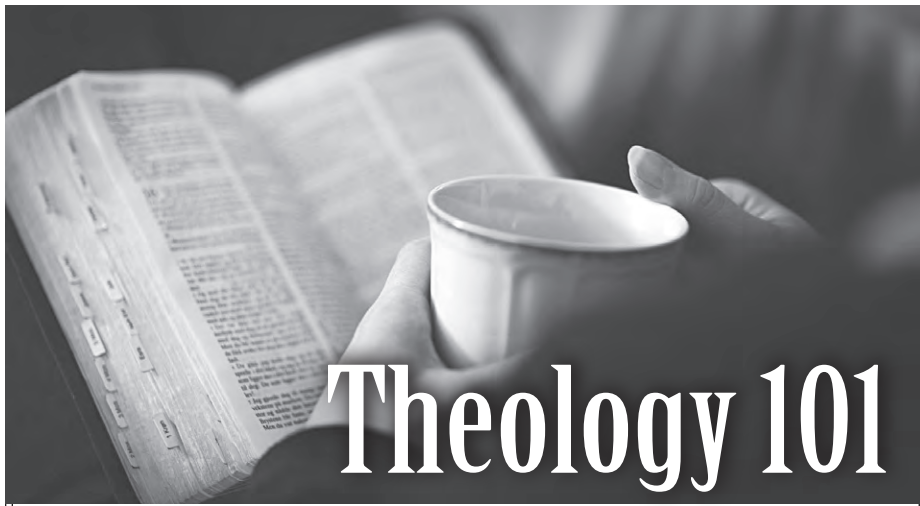
**JACKSON**

## Alabaster's Siluria Baptist elects new deacons



Photo courtesy of Siluria Baptist Church

Siluria Baptist Church, Alabaster, elected six new deacons in December. Four of the men previously served as deacons in other churches and two were ordained Dec. 7. Pictured are (l to r) Donald Palmer, Elliott Ward, Jerry Cox (newly ordained), Lee Griffin, Greg Sims and James Culberson (newly ordained). Michael J. Brooks is pastor and Clark Boyd is deacon chair.



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Songs of Christmas

# Nunc Dimittis: Simeon's Song

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

Being only a week beyond Christmas and our celebration of Jesus' birth, we consider another of the "songs of Christmas" — songs that surrounded Christ's coming as the promised Messiah.

It also was shortly after that first Christmas when Joseph and Mary took the infant Jesus to the temple in obedience to the Old Testament law. Mary was there to fulfill the law of purification required of a new mother (Luke 2:22).

That occasion marked Mary's ceremonial purity for full participation in Jewish worship. Mary and Joseph also had the infant Jesus there to fulfill the law of the redemption of the firstborn (Luke 2:23-24). The ceremony exempted a firstborn son from priestly service. This temple visit became the occasion for Simeon's encounter with Jesus and a fourth "song of Christmas," found in Luke 2:29-32.

### Righteous and devout

Simeon is introduced to us as a man who was righteous and devout. Furthermore he was waiting for "the consolation of Israel," a way of referring to God's redeeming plan to send the Messiah into the world through His chosen people and for their benefit. Simeon also was a man intimately involved with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit had revealed to him that he would not depart his earthly life before having seen the Lord's Christ (Luke 2:25-26).

The Spirit also led Simeon into the temple on the very day and at the very hour when Jesus' parents arrived for their ceremonies. Enabled to recognize Jesus as the Promised One, Simeon took the infant Messiah into his arms and blessed God. Simeon's opening two words as found in the Latin version, "Nunc Dimittis" (now you are letting depart), have become the traditional title of Simeon's song.

### The sovereign Lord

We consider three focal points in the song. Our attention is drawn first to the sovereign Lord who is faithful to His Word. Addressing God as "Lord,"

Simeon confessed what was unfolding for him was according to the Lord's Word (v. 29). In addressing God as Lord, Simeon used the term that gives the English language the word "despot." Although this word has come to possess negative connotations because of countless ungodly human kings and emperors it does point to one who possesses absolute authority and rules with sovereign might.

### 'In the presence of all'

A second focal point in the song is the salvation the sovereign Lord has prepared "in the presence of all peoples" (vv. 30-31). The Holy Spirit — who was upon Simeon that day enabled him to see what others, even the apostles, would struggle to see — namely that Christ came to be the Savior of both Gentiles and Jews.

The final focal point is Simeon himself, a servant of the sovereign Lord who was at peace and ready to depart his earthly life because he had seen the salvation prepared for the world: "Now You are letting Your servant depart in peace" (v. 29).

In the afterglow of Christmas and at the beginning of a new year we can affirm three precious truths from Simeon's song. First God keeps His saving promises. What the past should teach us at this point is He can fortify us for the future we all face — God will continue to be faithful to His Word. Second salvation is for all people. This truth is the inspiration for our world missions commitments of going, giving and praying. Third saved people can depart this life in peace. He who came as the Prince of Peace is at His princely best in life's dying hour. ☩

*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.*



# Church van ministry

## FBC Eclectic member works to provide church vans to Alaskan missionaries

By Hannah Muñoz  
Intern, The Alabama Baptist

Bo Worthy, president of Worthy Promotional Products and member of First Baptist Church, Eclectic, is asking Alabama Baptist churches to donate their unneeded church vans for a missions field 4,400 miles away.

The Alabama/Alaska connection actually began 15 years ago for Worthy's dad, Charles Worthy Sr., who was serving as pastor of Jacksons Gap Baptist Church. He took a three-month sabbatical to serve as a summer missionary pastor in Alaska in 1999 and came back to announce he felt called to serve as pastor of Alaska's First Baptist Church, Willow.

Brother Charles, as he is known in Willow, has served in numerous local and associational capacities and has served two terms as president of the Alaska Baptist Convention. He also is currently serving a four-year term on the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee.

While visiting family in Alabama in August 2014, Bro. Charles mentioned some troubles missionaries have when they go to Alaska.

"The churches that host the missionaries don't have sufficient transportation and neither do the missionaries," he said. "And there isn't enough funds to rent vans because it can be very expensive."

Worthy began to question his dad about the need and a thought came to mind — a thought he is certain came from the Lord.

"What if we put together a plan to gather vans from churches that are under-using them and drive them to Alaska and give them to churches in need?" Worthy thought.

That thought developed into a ministry.

"The goal is to take 12 vans that are 15 passenger and have been well maintained and still have a long useable life," he said. "We have already started working with two churches that want to participate."

A group of seven men prayed with Worthy about the idea and since have committed to help gather the vans and drive them to Alaska.

"This is a tremendous opportunity to serve God," he said. "People and churches from all over can be involved by the giving of their time and vans." ☩

### VAN-DRIVING MISSIONS TRIP May 22-31, 2015

.....  
Anyone interested in driving or giving a van should contact Bo Worthy at **334-541-4070** or **334-303-0515** or by email at **bo@boworthy.com**.



**"This is a tremendous opportunity to serve God."**

**Bo Worthy**  
president, Worthy Promotional Products



Photo courtesy of Chance Hill

Roy and Chance Hill are joined by others as they venture on horseback from the Tennessee River to the USS Alabama Battleship Park in Mobile Bay in 13 days in late 2014.

# Horseback riding fundraiser

## FBC Satsuma member rides for Guatemalan town

By Anna Keller  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Chance Hill grew up going on missions trips, but when he began traveling to a small town in Guatemala called Conevisa three years ago he was moved to do something dramatic to help.

The people were without a water supply so building a well was at the top of the list. Chance also wanted to raise scholarship money to send some of the children in town to a nearby Christian school, especially when he learned that most of the village kids didn't make it beyond third grade. Finally he wanted to help build a facility that could house Sunday School classes on Sundays but also be a functional space during the week to help locals learn a trade.

Roy Hill, Chance's father and pastor of First Baptist Church, Satsuma, said, "He really felt convicted that he could do something for the village. He felt like the Lord had challenged him to raise the money and support to do these things."

Chance kicked off a fundraising venture in the spring of 2014 to help meet these missions goals. He also organized smaller events such as selling hamburgers and hot dogs at local car shows and hosting a fundraising banquet at the church.

However, Chance has always had a passion for horses and used that as a way to earn money to help the town of Conevisa.

"My dad and I both have a love for horses and we've had horses for years and decided to take our

horses to the top of the state of Alabama and ride to the bottom," he said. "We had people sponsor us. We just took what we love doing and tried to honor the Lord with it."

Roy and Chance accomplished their goal of riding horseback from the Tennessee River to the USS Alabama Battleship Park in Mobile Bay — a 355-mile trip — in 13 days in late November and early December 2014. They wrapped up the trip Dec. 6.

### Financial support

The Hills had others join them along the way. Through sponsors' funding and additional supporters the riding venture helped bring the total fundraising tally to "somewhere between \$22,000 and \$25,000," according to Roy — putting Chance at the halfway point of his \$50,000 goal.

Even though Chance still has more than \$25,000 to go, he's not discouraged by missing the initial fundraising timeline.

"At first we wanted to raise all the money within a year but I know we're not going to make that goal," he said. "It's actually cool the way it worked out because I don't think it would be a good idea to bring all these new things to the village at one time.

It's worked out for the best that it's going to take two years or so to raise all the money."

What's at the top of the list of projects for Conevisa? The well, Chance said.

"When you see how much poverty is in this little village and you see what they have and compare it to what we have, it just makes you want to help them — to give them a little bit of what we have." ❧

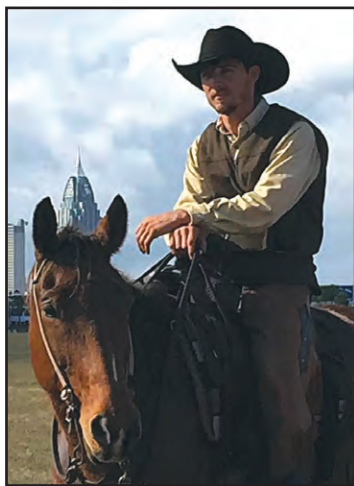


Photo courtesy of Chance Hill

Chance Hill's love of horses helps him raise money so he can minister to the town of Conevisa, Guatemala.

# 'Fresh look'

## The Baptist Foundation of Alabama announces new logo, motto

Giving. Growing. All for God's glory." The Baptist Foundation of Alabama (TBFA) may have a new motto and a new logo but its purpose remains the same, according to Barry Bledsoe, TBFA president, and that is to take care of the "responsibilities entrusted to us" through stewardship development, management of financial resources and much more.

The new green and blue logo resembles a cross and shield and is a "modern take on the traditional cross of Christ." It "signifies the protection and security of a shield, reflecting the responsibility TBFA takes to administer gifts given for the growth of God's kingdom," according to TBFA.

The logo and motto's official release was at the Alabama Baptist State Convention in November 2014, replacing the more than 13-year-old logo.

"Over the past five or six years we've been developing a way to serve churches by helping them serve their members," Bledsoe said. "As we've gotten our feet wet in new areas and had new, competent employees come on board we said, 'Let's take a

fresh look at everything and ... see what kind of Kingdom impact we can have by serving Alabama Baptist churches.'

"We're really going at it as hard as we know how and this (new motto and logo release) is just a line in the sand saying 'Here we come.'" (Neisha Roberts)

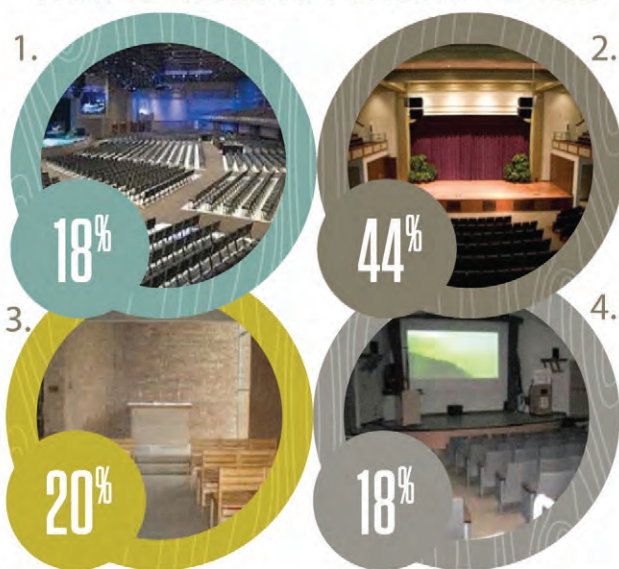


For more information, visit [tbfa.org](http://tbfa.org).

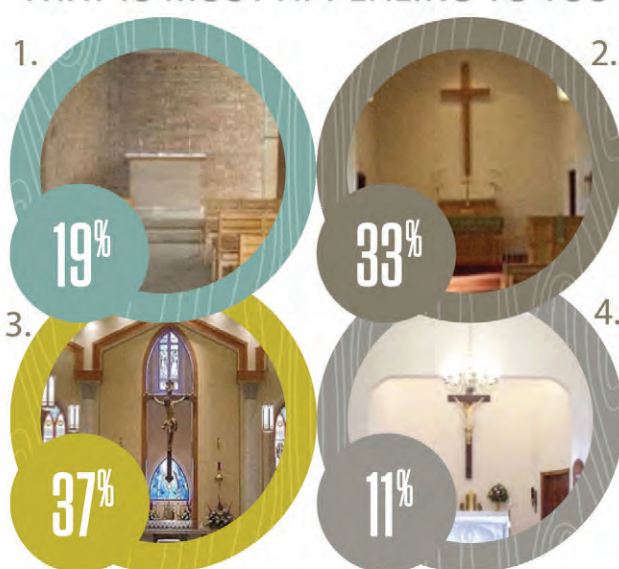
## REFLECTIONS



SELECT THE **SANCTUARY** IMAGE THAT IS MOST APPEALING TO YOU



SELECT THE **ALTAR** IMAGE THAT IS MOST APPEALING TO YOU



SELECT THE **NATURE** IMAGE THAT IS MOST APPEALING TO YOU



Barna/CKN, October 2013, N=843 U.S. adults ages 18 to 29 years old. The segmentation percentages above are among Millennials who participated in the study.

# ‘Myriad ways to design’

## Most Millennials want community that calls them to deeper meaning, researcher says

(continued from page 1)

at the front, flanked by two large, open windows. Middle-class young adults were more likely (45 percent) than average to prefer window 1, as were Midwesterners (41 percent). This also was the case, by a wide margin, with those adhering to non-Christian faiths (61 percent). On the other side, Catholics (55 percent), residents of the West (44 percent) and Hispanics (44 percent) were all more likely than average to find window 4 most appealing.

Another series of images showed four different kinds of worship spaces (see graphic, this page) and asked which respondents found most appealing. Just under half of participants (44 percent) selected sanctuary 2, with the remaining respondents split almost evenly among the other three images. Those who profess a faith other than Christianity (32 percent) were more likely than average (20 percent) to prefer sanctuary 3; this image is devoid of Christian symbols.

Sanctuary 2 was the “Goldilocks” space for many respondents — not too big, not too small. Just right. It’s big enough to retain some anonymity as a visitor — the marginally churched (63 percent) and those who are not practicing Christians (50 percent) preferred it more strongly than the average — but small enough to feel part of a community. Parents with children under 18 (50 percent) also preferred sanctuary 2 more than average.

For many, size is a necessary evil rather than a selling point. Participants acknowledged that a successful church would grow and therefore need to increase the size of its services and facilities. But they also expressed a bit of tacit distrust for very large churches. One young man put it starkly: “It seems like a really big business.”

Another series of images showed four different altar areas with varying levels of ornamentation and iconography (see graphic, this page).

### Altar areas

Altars 2 (33 percent) and 3 (37 percent) were the overall favorites. Both are unambiguously Christian and are more traditional in appearance than altar 4. Nearly half of nonmainline Protestants (48 percent) preferred altar 2, with an even stronger preference among evangelicals (55 percent). By contrast Catholics (63 percent) were more likely than average to prefer altar 3. Half of those professing a faith other than Christianity (51 percent) found altar 1 most appealing — it lacks overt Christian iconography — and 3 in 10 of those with no faith (29 percent) also chose altar 1. Both these proportions were much higher than the average (19 percent).

Barna found that Hispanic participants strongly preferred altar 3 (54 percent), while twice as many blacks (21 percent) as the national average (11 percent) found altar 4 appealing. Midwesterners were more likely to prefer altar 2 (40 percent) and Southerners more likely to choose 3 (46 percent). Married people (30 percent) and adults ages 25 to 29 (25 percent) were more likely than average to find altar 1 appealing.

These patterns illustrate most Millennials’ overall preference for a straightforward, overtly Christian style of imagery — as long as it doesn’t look too institutional or corporate.

The final series of images showed varying degrees of nature brought into or around the church space (see graphic, this page). Most Millennials preferred images with greater realism and more immersion into the outdoors. Nature 4, the garden path, was the favorite by far, with 62 percent choosing it as most appealing; a majority in nearly every population segment preferred it. Just 9 percent of all adults chose nature 1 — the more child-oriented paper cutout of a tree.

### Perceptions uncovered

The research also posed a wide range of questions about Millennial perceptions of churches, church buildings and worship environments. When asked to choose between contrasting words to describe their vision of the ideal church, a majority of Millennials chose the following:

- ▶ Community, 78 percent was selected over privacy, 22 percent
- ▶ Sanctuary, 77 percent (auditorium, 23 percent)
- ▶ Classic, 67 percent (trendy, 33 percent)
- ▶ Quiet, 65 percent (loud, 35 percent)
- ▶ Casual, 64 percent (dignified, 36 percent)
- ▶ Modern, 60 percent (traditional, 40 percent)

While “sanctuary,” “classic” and “quiet” are more often associated with traditional church buildings, less than half of survey respondents preferred the word “traditional” over “modern.” And herein lies a cognitive dissonance common to the young adults interviewed in the survey. Many of them aspire to a more traditional church experience, in a beautiful building steeped in history and religious symbolism, but they are more at ease in a modern space that feels more familiar than mysterious.

“It’s tempting to oversimplify the relationship between Millennials and sacred space,” said Clint Jenkin, vice president of research at Barna and the lead designer of the study. “For instance it might be easy to believe such a place needs to look ultra modern or chic to appeal to teens and young adults. But the reality, like so much about this generation, is more complicated — refreshingly so. Most Millennials don’t look for a church facility that caters to the whims of pop culture. They want a community that calls them to deeper meaning.”

Jenkin said there are questions a community can keep in mind as it builds to include the whole church body. He suggests gathering leaders — and key members of the church body, including Millennials — to discuss questions such as the following:

- ▶ How do our facilities present visual cues? Can people easily answer the questions “Where am I?” and “What’s expected of me?”
- ▶ How do our facilities offer respite from the outside world? Can people find a place of peace that is accessible and comfortable?
- ▶ How do our facilities connect to Christian history and traditions? What symbols or design elements evoke a sense of the sacred and tell the story of God’s actions in the world?

“There are myriad ways to design sacred and communal spaces that call people of all ages to deeper relationships with God, self and others.” Jenkin said. “No two churches will (or should) incorporate them all in the same way.” (Barna)

# 'Call to action for all fellow believers'

## Georgia Baptist Convention leaders defend Atlanta fire chief

**G**eorgia Baptist Convention (GBC) leaders are rallying to defend Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran, who has been suspended without pay for a month and ordered to undergo sensitivity training over a book he wrote that upholds a biblical view of sexuality.

Cochran is a deacon, Sunday School teacher and Bible study leader at Atlanta's Elizabeth Baptist Church, which is affiliated with GBC.

J. Robert White, GBC executive director, said in a news release issued by the convention's public affairs committee, "It is time for believers to stand up for their religious beliefs, biblical principles and fellow Christians who are punished or marginalized for their faith." White affirmed the Public Affairs Committee for its "call to action for all fellow believers to take a stand."

The news release called on

Christians and people of faith across Georgia to:

▶ Sign a petition on behalf of Cochran at [gabaptist.org/petition](http://gabaptist.org/petition) on GBC's website;

▶ Support Cochran by purchasing his book on Amazon, "Who Told You That You Are Naked?" which is at the center of the firestorm and

▶ Enlist as many churches and believers as possible to contact Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed to reverse his actions against Cochran.

To the mayor, the Georgia Baptist committee called on Reed to:

▶ "Acknowledge Chief Cochran's First Amendment Rights,

▶ "Make a public apology for the suspension and grief it has caused the Chief and his family and

▶ "Restore Chief Cochran's pay and reputation as an honorable Fire Chief."

Reed suspended Cochran over such passages in the chief's 162-page self-published book as a definition of uncleanness being

the "opposite of purity; including sodomy, homosexuality, lesbianism, pederasty, bestiality and all other forms of sexual perversion."

Cochran's book stemmed from a series of men's studies at Elizabeth Baptist titled "A Quest for Authentic Manhood."

*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* also cited a passage in which the chief compared sexual relations between a man and women to the pursuit of "sexual fulfillment through multiple partners, with the opposite sex, same sex and sex outside of marriage and many other vile, vulgar and inappropriate ways."

The newspaper noted Cochran defined his role as fire chief in the book as cultivating a culture "for the glory of God" as well as saving lives and property.

Mayor Reed, in a statement targeting Cochran's statements about biblical sexuality, declared, "I want to be clear that the material in Chief Cochran's book is not representative of my personal beliefs and is inconsistent with the administration's work to make Atlanta a more welcoming city for all of her citizens — regardless of their sexual orientation, gender, race and religious beliefs."

In addition to suspending Cochran and ordering sensitivity training the mayor ordered the chief not to distribute the book on city property.

Reed's spokeswoman Anne Torres also said Cochran is being investigated for whether he had discriminated against any em-

ployees and whether his personal views had interfered with his management of the fire department, according to the *Journal-Constitution*.

Gerald Harris, editor of the state convention's newspaper,

*The Christian Index*, wrote in an editorial about Cochran's suspension, "I realize our churches are open and our religious institutions continue to function and everything on the religious front may look copacetic. But when you begin to look beneath the surface, acknowledge the threats and analyze them, you

begin to realize our religious liberty is under an organized and concentrated assault."

### Sharing truths

Cochran as a layman, "never tried to market his self-published book but has shared the book with his church and has given books to his colleagues at work," Harris wrote. "After work on Mondays the chief has hosted a Bible study for those who were interested. Other colleagues have frequently sought him out for spiritual counseling. He consistently provided counsel by sharing truths from the Word of God."

Cochran is a native of Shreveport, La., who joined that city's fire department in 1981, serving as fire chief from 1999–2008 until being tapped as Atlanta's fire chief. He holds an undergraduate degree from Wiley College in Marshall, Texas, and a master's degree from Louisiana Tech University in Ruston. (BP)



COCHRAN

## LETTERS

(continued from page 2)

She also disbelieves that marriage is only between a man and a woman.

The fundraiser is titled, "A Night of Hope." Her position on the life of the unborn certainly doesn't give hope to them.

Ronald McCrary  
McCalla, Ala.

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — According to news reports and an interview with CNN and another with CBS,

*Laura Bush supports gay "marriage," stating, "When couples are committed to each other and love each other, that they ought to have ... the same sort of rights that everyone has." She also was quoted as believing abortion should "remain legal because I think it's important for people, for medical reasons and other reasons."*



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### CHURCH POSITIONS

**PASTOR:** East Centre is seeking a full-time pastor with pastoral experience. We are a Southern Baptist church holding to traditional Baptist biblical views. Please submit resumés to: East Centre Baptist Church Committee, ATTN: Jimmy, 1220 East Main Street, Centre, AL 35960.

**BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR/CHURCH PLANTER:** Bay Side Baptist Church, Lillian (Gulf Shores area) seeking a bivocational pastor/church planter. Send resumés to: P.O. Box 533, Lillian, AL 36549.

**BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR:** Union Baptist Church, Honoraville, Ala., is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Union Baptist Church is located

near the Crenshaw-Butler county line, approximately 40 miles south of Montgomery. Please submit resumés to: UBC Search Committee, P.O. Box 158, Honoraville, AL 36042. For more information, please contact Jeff Burns at 334-525-0344.

**MUSIC MINISTER:** Piney Grove Baptist Church in Ardmore, Ala., is accepting resumés for a part-time music minister. Send resumés to: PGBC, ATTN: Search Committee, 28430 Pinedale Road, Ardmore, AL 35739, or [laryequick@gmail.com](mailto:laryequick@gmail.com).

**INTERIM MUSIC/WORSHIP LEADER:** Resumés should be sent to: Greensboro Baptist Church, ATTN: Music/Youth Search Committee, 908 Main Street, Greensboro, AL 36744, or

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## Want to know GOD?

Pastor Charles King  
Paint Rock Baptist Church

One of my favorite Scriptures is the 23rd Psalm. The Psalm's theme is stated in verse one, "The Lord is my Shepherd." Knowing God comes from discovering the truths about Him that are boldly proclaimed by the author of Psalm 23. The sheep, the one speaking, acknowledges the presence, protection and provision of the shepherd as well as his confidence in the promise of the shepherd's goodness and mercy following him always.

The promise of God is stated clearly in Genesis 3:15. God promises a deed of Eve will defeat Satan. Reading through the Old Testament the "seed promise" also is revealed as the "Lamb promise," the Lord Jesus. The sacrificial system of the Old Testament points to the cross. John 1:29, speaking of Jesus, states, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John 10:11 defines Jesus as the "Good Shepherd" who "gave His life for the sheep." In John 10:7 and 9, Jesus states, "I am the door." Once we enter that door through faith we can boldly declare, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

The Bible shows that "all like sheep have gone astray" or as stated in Romans 3:23, "all have sinned and fall short." Romans 6:23 tells us that "the wages of sin is death" but hope is found in that "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

The miracle of becoming a sheep of the "Good Shepherd" is this: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9).



# Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

## Charlie Seabolt



SEABOLT

*Emmanuel Baptist Church, Scottsboro  
Tennessee River Baptist Association*

**FAVORITE VERSE:** John 3:16

**FAVORITE HYMN:** "Amazing Grace"

**HOBBIES:** Being involved in church-related activities

**FAMILY STATUS:** Widower for more than 25 years after 47 years of marriage to wife, Myrtle; twin daughters, Linda Wallingsford and Glenda Eastham; son, Charles Seabolt Jr.; three grandchildren; one great-grandson

Charlie Seabolt, of Scottsboro, has preached for more than 70 years, most recently in October 2014 at the age of 101. For 47 years he served as full-time pastor of churches in Tennessee River Baptist Association. The first was Skyline Baptist Church, Scottsboro, and the last was Central Baptist Church, Scottsboro. In-between he served at Mount Ararat Baptist Church, Woodville; New Home Baptist Church, New Prospect Baptist Church, Bethany Baptist Church and Emmanuel Baptist Church, all in Scottsboro. A pianist, Seabolt used his talents in church music ministries and in singing schools. At Emmanuel Baptist he was pastor first, then music director. A machinist by trade, Seabolt also worked on military fighter planes and made tents for the Army. He believes a person never retires from Kingdom work, which is why he still witnesses to people whenever he can.

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

A: I've always been in church. My daddy and mother always carried us to church, rain or shine. I was about 12 years old, I think it was a Methodist preacher preaching, when I got saved. We were baptized in a creek. I've been in church all these years and it is so wonderful.

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

A: I've always helped in revivals. I'd sing. That has been my life always. I've been preaching the Word 70 years.

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

A: When they ordained us to carry the message, they set us aside for a year to see if we would stand up to the vow that we made. And not just stand up, but to live what the Bible said. They worked with us a year. When you accept something from Jesus Christ, you're supposed to do that.

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

A: I enjoyed it to be able to tell people and uplift Jesus Christ to a lost world. Without Him you can do nothing right.

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

A: They back me up 100 percent.

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

A: I have a desire and determination to be involved and never give up. That's what God called us to do. He saved us to do something, to tell people about Him.

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

A: I hope it will illustrate in the life that I live that Jesus Christ is my Savior. ... If you hang around people very long, you can find out what they believe. Let your life shine for Jesus Christ. Help somebody, pray for somebody, tell somebody about Jesus Christ.

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

A: I have a new life. Jesus said, "You must be born again." You accept that by faith and trust in Him. It's not just a vow. 𐄂



Photo courtesy of Samford University

Matthew S. Kerlin, assistant dean of spiritual life and university minister at Samford University, delivers the fall commencement address to about 2,200 people in Wright Center on Dec. 13.

# Changing the world

## Samford graduates 318 students at fall commencement

Samford University commencement speaker Matthew S. Kerlin told a class of about 318 fall graduates what the world needs is "a few billion normal people committed to making the world a better place."

Kerlin, assistant dean of spiritual life and university minister at Birmingham-based Samford, suggested to the graduates it was OK for them to be normal.

"Statistically most of you aren't going to be exceptionally wealthy or famous or powerful."

In a seven-minute talk titled "In Defense of Normal," Kerlin said the world needs "a few billion normal people willing to live like Christ ... willing to fight poverty and disease and racial inequality and violence ... people who love their families and their communities."

"And the sum total of all that normal would indeed be exceptional."

Kerlin spoke Dec. 13 to an audience of about 2,200 in Samford's Wright Center.

He said what the world needs now "is not a few more exceptional superstars trying to fix what is broken."

Kerlin told the seniors they should feel "no pressure to achieve the outlandish or to live up to the nearly impossible expectations" they may have.

"As a theologian I believe that the meaning of life consists not in what you accomplish but in what God through Christ has accomplished. This sets you free you to be faithful in the small things, to be

kind when no one is watching, to be honest when it profits you nothing and to be hardworking when nobody thanks you."

He reminded the seniors that "as Samford graduates you have learned how to live by a higher standard. You may not become famous but as Samford graduates you will change the world."

Samford President Andrew Westmoreland noted Kerlin was speaking in place of Birmingham banking executive Donta Wilson, who was invited to speak but was unable to do so because of a death in his family.

"I am deeply grateful to Dr. Matt Kerlin for his willingness to take on this important role," Westmoreland said.

Also part of commencement weekend, graduates of Samford's Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing received their nurse pins in a program Dec. 12.

One member of the class, Kimberly Scott, received a big surprise when her husband, Army Capt. Stephen Scott, showed up at the ceremony to present her pin. Capt. Scott had been deployed in Kuwait and, unbeknownst to his wife, had flown 24 hours to be at

the program. Kimberly Scott said the moment was "overwhelming."

Included in the weekend, physics major David Brown was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force as a graduate of Samford's Air Force ROTC program. Brown has been selected for pilot duty and will attend training at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas. (Samford)



Photo courtesy of Samford University

During Samford's nursing pinning ceremony, Kimberly Scott is embraced by her husband, Capt. Stephen Scott, who flew in from his deployment to Kuwait to surprise her.

# Seminary degrees

## Alabama Baptists earn doctorates, master's degrees

Alabama Baptists graduated with degrees at the master's level or higher from Southern Baptist seminaries and divinity schools in December 2014. *The Alabama Baptist* was provided the following list of graduates by the schools.

► **Beeson Divinity School:**

Master of Divinity — William Brandon Bennett, Birmingham; Kristopher Noah Broadhead, Birmingham; Charles Keith Cisco, Birmingham; Jason Dwayne Cook, Hueytown; Sherrad Clyde Hayes, Birmingham; Daniel Spencer Hightower, Alabaster; Clayton Paul Hornback, Vestavia Hills; Gabriel Joseph Hughes, Birmingham; Trilon Deven Johnson, Vestavia Hills; Carlea DeWanna Jordan, Millbrook; Daniel Henley Logan, Hoover; Kyle Vincent Logan, Vestavia Hills; Jennifer Hardy Lusher, Hoover; Chase Nicholas McLain, Calera; Jon Eric Meads, Birmingham; Nicolas

McClain Seaborn, Hoover; Benjamin Grant Stephenson, Hoover; Hannah Kay Tucker-Flarity, Birmingham; Demetrea Lynae Weakly, Bessemer; Lydia Ruth Whitley, Vestavia Hills; Ryan Taylor Whitley, Vestavia Hills.

Doctor of Ministry — Reginald Wayne Calvert, Birmingham; Victoria Jones Gaston, Birmingham; Randall Blair Hemphill, Sterrett; Adlene Rutendo Kufarimai, Anniston; Ronald Dean Sterling, Pelham; David Mitchell Watson, Birmingham.

► **Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Master in Theological Studies — Thomas Patrick Hudson, Enterprise.

► **Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling — Ashley Claire Farrow, Ashland.

Master of Arts with Christian Ministry — Andrew O'Neal Hardiman, Enterprise.

Doctor of Ministry — Deborah Ann Bowers, Birmingham.

► **New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Master of Arts in Christian Education — Matthew Anthony Goins, Bay Minette.

Master of Divinity — Timothy Andrew Poates, Mobile; William Peter Burmeister, Daphne; Sidney Chris Tortorice, Birmingham; David Hicks, Millbrook; Brian Kramer Mize, Montgomery; Brett Warren Self, Trussville; Steven Michael Nelson, Tuscaloosa; Nicholas Channing Hughes, Panama City, Fla., pastor of Forest Avenue Baptist Church, Jackson.

Doctor of Ministry in Worship — Ronald Reid, Alexandria.

Doctor of Ministry — Jackie Leon Praytor, Hueytown; James William Collins, McCalla; Alan Reid Queen, Hartselle; Otis Hendrick Corbitt, Columbus, Ga., director of missions for Covington Baptist Association.

► **Southern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Master of Arts in Theological Studies — Frank Spires, Killen.

Master of Divinity — Nathan Sing, Birmingham.

Doctor of Philosophy — Benjamin R. Bailie, Roanoke; Jason A. Mackey, Muscle Shoals.

Doctor of Ministry — Frederick C. Muse, Birmingham; James E. Taylor III, Muscle Shoals.

► **Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

Master of Theological Studies — Eric Michael Albright, Decatur; Michael Jonathan Green, Athens; Jason Nathaniel Odom, Birmingham; Jack M. Redfearn Jr., Hartselle.

Doctor of Educational Ministry — Benjamin Thomas Graham, Rainbow City. (TAB)

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary did not have any Fall 2014 graduates from Alabama.*

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## Reverse Mortgages to Change

By Jimmy Dixon

Starting March 2, 2015, FHA will require a credit analysis and proof of a certain amount of income for anyone applying for a reverse mortgage. They've been talking about this for some time and now will drop the ax very soon.

I plan to give you more details after the lenders study and discuss the 78-page memorandum and issue their policies on compliance.

Meanwhile, if you or someone you know is considering a reverse mortgage, you may want to encourage them to think about applying before March 2 to avoid the added

paperwork and scrutiny.

In FHA's defense, they are implementing these changes to make sure seniors are able to pay for their homeowner's insurance and property taxes. All mortgages require that the property be insured, so this is nothing new.

Remember, like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives. He is a Sunday School

teacher and deacon at Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown. For a free brochure, quote or discussion, call him direct at 205-567-4800 or email [jdixon@mcgowinking.com](mailto:jdixon@mcgowinking.com).



**Jimmy Dixon**



*My wife, Pat, and I wish you a Happy New Year!*

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### **Albertville's Central Baptist Church celebrates past, present, future**

Central Baptist Church, Albertville, celebrated its 50th anniversary for three consecutive Sundays with past-, present- and future-themed services Oct. 5, 12 and 19, respectively.

The Oct. 5 service focused on the Marshall Baptist Association church's history and had Central Baptist former pastor Mike Johnson bring the message. Past members were invited to share in the day.

Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions Executive Director Rick Lance preached a sermon on the future of the church Oct. 12. Central Pastor Keith Williams said a special aspect of the day was the opening of a 25-year-old time capsule. The capsule's contents were displayed during the meal and time of fellowship after the service and were placed back inside the capsule along with additional items such as a current church directory following the meal.

The final celebration service was Oct. 19 and centered around the future of the church. Daniel Wilson, pastor of West End Baptist Church, Clanton, spoke about the importance of maintaining the health of the present church and continually being spiritually refreshed.

Williams said the three-part celebration was "a good time for our church." (Maggie Walsh)

### **Vance's Evergreen Baptist marks centennial anniversary**

Evergreen Baptist Church, Vance, officially celebrated its 100-year anniversary Oct. 19, however, the Pleasant Grove Baptist Association church actually celebrated the whole year, according to Elaine Bricken who served on the anniversary committee.

Throughout the year the church played video testimonies during the worship service of members sharing favorite memories from the church. The church also hosted a July celebration picnic.

On Oct. 18 there was a celebration reception in the gym with tables set up to represent each decade, a table recognizing former pastors, another table representing the weddings held at the church and a table for charter members, Bricken explained. A hot-dog supper followed the reception where Britt Bricken, former music minister, led worship.

On Oct. 19, Pastor Jack Clary shared

a message and Angie Cooper, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative, presented the church with a plaque. Alabama Sen. Gerald Allen also spoke and presented the church with a plaque. A fellowship lunch followed.

In the future Clary said he hopes to "see more souls saved, more lives changed, more people in Sunday School and in discipleship and more people meeting the needs of the people in our community. ... I want us to just keep on keeping on and continue what we've been doing." (Neisha Roberts)

### **Double Branches Baptist in Gordo celebrates 150 years of ministry**

Deacon and former pastor James Cunningham said the 150-year celebration of Double Branches Baptist Church, Gordo, Oct. 26 was "a pretty good time."

The 11 a.m. service featured three speakers — Cunningham, Pickens Baptist Association Director of Missions Gary Farley and former member Irene Burgess — who shared about his or her experiences with Double Branches Baptist through the years. Burgess' mother remains a longtime member and Burgess grew up attending Double Branches.

Angie Cooper, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative, presented the congregation with a plaque for its years of dedicated service. Following the service the 25 to 30 participants gathered for a fellowship meal. (Maggie Walsh)

### **Town Creek Baptist Church hosts quartet for 75-year anniversary**

Talladega-based southern gospel quartet Heaven's Express joined members and visitors of Town Creek Baptist Church, Alexander City, to celebrate its 75th anniversary Oct. 5.

The group led the 11 a.m. celebration service, alternating between performing and speaking about their faith journey. Interim pastor Tommy Beckman said the group did a "tremendous" job.

Lunch on the grounds for the more than 50 participants followed the morning service. An additional afternoon performance by Heaven's Express concluded the celebration, which wrapped up around 3 p.m.

The Tallapoosa Baptist Association church also received a plaque from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission for its years of dedicated service. (Maggie Walsh)



Photo by Patrick Akers

# Bags of Hope

## Alabamians send Christmas cheer to homeless

A new matching scarf, toboggan and gloves might not seem like a lot for Christmas, but for 250 women and 120 children and youth at Nashville Rescue Mission it could be everything.

Along with the new winter accessories, the women at the shelter received a bag of toiletries and other goodies as well as a Bible. The children received fun items appropriate for their age.

"They are 'bags of hope' because of the

Bible inside," said Shea Lowery, executive director of Lives Being Restored, the Alabama-based ministry that sponsors the Bags of Hope outreach to the rescue mission.

About 200 churchgoers from northwest Alabama and northeast Mississippi gathered in Russellville on Dec. 13 to bring items for the bags. They also wrote letters to the women who would receive the bags, which were delivered Dec. 18. (Jennifer D. Rash)

## SACSCOC reaffirms UMobile accreditation without recommendations for improvements

The Southern Association of Colleges & Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) has reaffirmed accreditation for the University of Mobile (UMobile) for the next decade during its December 2014 annual meeting in Nashville.

The Christian university's reaffirmation came without recommendations for improvement from the accrediting body.

SACSCOC is the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the southern states. Its mission is to assure the educational quality and improve effectiveness of its member institutions.

Member institutions must go through an extensive self-examination and reporting process every 10 years to demonstrate their compliance with SACSCOC standards. The

review culminates in an on-site visit from a SACSCOC reaffirmation committee that can make recommendations for improvements that institutions must address in order to move forward in the process.

UMobile President Mark Foley said the university was among a select few institutions that received no recommendations following a site visit in February 2014 by the reaffirmation committee.

"The reaffirmation committee's report of no findings is an anomaly, almost unprecedented," Foley said. "We have just joined a unique group of schools and it happened because we work hard every day to excel. Our constant work of self-examination and adjustment in light of the SACSCOC principles of accreditation has produced a good and stable institution." (UMobile)

## SBOM to host tax preparation conferences

Tax preparation for churches and its staff can be a daunting task. That's why the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) will host two conferences to help answer questions regarding tax season.

The church tax conference will be held 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the following dates: Jan. 8 at the SBOM building in Montgomery; Jan. 13 at First Baptist Church, Robertsdale; Jan. 22 at First Baptist Church, Pelham; Jan. 27 at Calhoun Baptist Association's building in Anniston; and Jan. 29 at First Baptist Church, Madison. For

more information, visit [www.alsbom.org/upcoming-events/church-tax-conference](http://www.alsbom.org/upcoming-events/church-tax-conference).

For ordained ministers the minister's tax conference will be held 9 a.m. to noon on the following dates: Feb. 3 at the SBOM building; Feb. 10 at Calhoun Association's building; Feb. 12 at First, Robertsdale; Feb. 19 at First, Pelham; and Feb. 26 at First, Madison. For more information, visit [www.alsbom.org/upcoming-events/ministers-tax-conference](http://www.alsbom.org/upcoming-events/ministers-tax-conference).

For questions about both conferences, call Nancy Cornett at 1-800-264-1225 ext. 208 or email [ncornett@alsbom.org](mailto:ncornett@alsbom.org). (TAB)

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For January 4

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

### GOD COMMANDS OBEDIENCE EZRA 7:1-10

God gifts men and women to bring Him glory and serve the needs of His people. In so doing He places them in positions where their gifts and abilities can be developed and used effectively for His purposes. Through His servants God is actively involved in His redemptive work. In this context readers will note Ezra was both a priest and scribe whose purpose was to record the activities of post-exilic Jerusalem and to rebuild Scriptural-centered faith among the Jewish residents of the city.

Ezra received permission to relocate from Babylon to Jerusalem during the reign of Artaxerxes I (circa 458 B.C.). This places his pilgrimage to Jerusalem some 80 years after the initial return led by Zerubbabel and Jeshua. The reader also will note Ezra's emigration was about 20 years after Esther became the queen of Persia.

Focal verses of our lesson are located within a short section recorded in Hebrew (6:19-7:11). The sections on either side (4:8-6:18; 7:12-26) were originally recorded in Aramaic. The linguistic separation was used to illustrate the ceremonial distinction between Israelites and Gentiles and between priests and other Israelites.

#### Ezra's Heritage (7:1-6)

Direct male descent from Aaron, the brother of Moses, was essential for serving as a Levitical priest in accordance with Mosaic Law (Lev. 8-10; Num. 18:7). The first five verses of the text record Ezra's lineage through 16 generations. Even among the priests Ezra had a distinct role as one of the scribes, designated men whose task it was to render faithful handwritten copies of the Torah.

His training likely included years of Hebrew reading, writing, studying and counting letters and words before beginning the serious task of copying the words of the Law to parchment. Nearly 2,000 years more of hand copying Scripture would pass

before a Bible was published on Gutenberg's printing press. In an age of smart phones, e-books and blogs we sometimes forget how significant a scribe was in his own culture.

#### Ezra's Journey (7:7-9)

Ezra took the four-month-long trek from Babylon to Jerusalem but he did not travel alone. In fact people whose families had served as worship leaders in the first temple also were granted permission to relocate with the scribe.

Let the reader note two calendars were utilized here. First the seventh year of Artaxerxes's rule (7:7; 8) was 458 B.C. Second the first lunar month of their agrarian calendar was "Nisan" (March/April) and the fifth month was "Av" (July/August). According to Carl Anderson's commentary in the Holman Christian Standard Bible Study Bible, "Nisan" probably began April 8 and "Av" began around Aug. 4, 458 B.C.

While 500 miles across a desert takes little time in a motorized vehicle these immigrants with beasts of burden for transportation needed water to survive. From Babylon they probably traveled a route similar to Abraham, following the Euphrates north and west into Syria before heading south into Canaan, which would be closer to 900 miles.

#### Ezra's Goal (7:10)

Ezra determined to accomplish three tasks. First he wanted to study the Torah. As a scribe he was familiar with the words but he also was determined to know (or inquire frequently from) the Law. Repetitive reading, writing and/or reciting of the Scriptures leads to the familiarity necessary for meditating on them. Second he desired to obey God's Law. His intent was to do what the Law instructed Israel to do and abstain from what was forbidden. Only in his obedience was he qualified to train others. Finally Ezra determined to instruct Israel in the application of the Torah. The remainder of Ezra and Nehemiah indicate the scribe accomplished his goal. 📖

## Bible Studies for Life By Kevin Blackwell, D.Min. Assistant to the President for Church Relations, Samford University

### THE SHELTER OF GOD'S PEACE PSALM 46:1-11

This Psalm was written for corporate worship. The great hymn "A Mighty Fortress" is based upon the words of this Psalm. While the historical setting of this passage is unknown, certainly one can assume the writer of the hymn recalled God's faithfulness in the midst of uncertainties. It is widely known Psalm 46 was Martin Luther's favorite Old Testament passage. In times of great distress and difficulty Luther would ask his lifelong friend Philipp Melancthon to sing the words of this Psalm with him. The words still have the ability to strengthen our resolve through difficult times as we are reminded our God is a "safe place" for us. The Psalm is broken down into three sections, each ending with the word "selah." This was done as a break in the music to reflect on the words that had been sung.

#### Peace is ours because no calamity can overwhelm our God. (1-3)

"God is our refuge." The Hebrew word for "refuge" also could be translated "bulwark." Immediately we notice the focus is on God Himself. He alone is our Bulwark, our Refuge. A refuge or bulwark is something that represents lasting security. We find that in nothing else but God. Our possessions, our jobs, even our families do not offer us consistent refuge and security. A fitting bulwark never shifts or moves; it is strong in the storm and it is trustworthy to protect. So it is with our great God. Notice it says God is a "present help," not One who sympathizes with us from a distance. Verses 2-3 list the worst of circumstances: the roaring waters, the shaking mountains, an unsettled earth. None of these disasters will overcome our God. If you find yourself in an earth-shattering situation don't lean on your strength — grab hold of the Bulwark which is never failing.

#### In the middle of any calamity or turmoil we can have peace. (4-7)

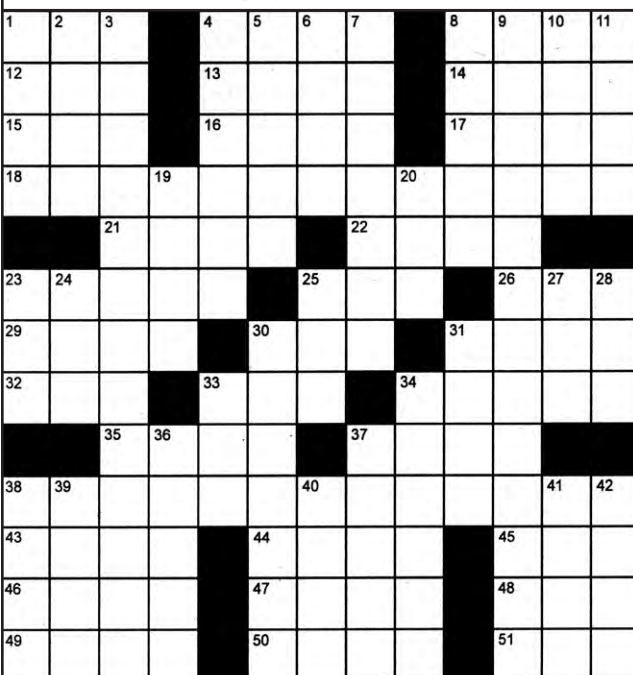
These verses indicate the Psalmist witnessed God's intervention from a foreign army seeking to destroy Jerusalem. The "river" mentioned would have been the stream of Siloam that delivered fresh water to the city. The "holy place" would have been the temple mount. The temple mount represented the presence of God in the middle of the city. The Jews would confidently trust that God would protect their city because He was "in the midst of her." Some have suggested that the reference to this event was 2 Kings 18-19. But it also is noted by scholars that the author never intended to only speak of the earthly Jerusalem but, more importantly, the heavenly one. The earthly Jerusalem was conquered. The heavenly one will never be overwhelmed. The writer of Hebrews spoke of this in Hebrews 11:10 as "the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God."

#### Peace is ours because no nation or act of humanity is greater than our God. (8-11)

The author uses the most feared weapons of his day, the bow and the chariot, as examples of what God's people may face. Today that would be the equivalent of the high-powered machine gun and tank. Yet his conclusion is God would break the bow and burn the chariot. The Lord reminds Isaiah, "No weapon formed against you shall prosper" (Isa. 54:17). The same is true for us. There will come a time when God will ultimately conquer and utterly destroy every earthly power. "He makes wars to end," not because He brings peace but because He destroys those who oppose. That is the believer's victory and promise. So how should we prepare for the battle? What action are we to take to help Him? None. We are called to simply "be still and know that I am God." And not just any God but "the Lord of hosts." Today trust in the Lord of hosts, the One who will deliver you. Take time to "be still" and claim the truths of this Psalm. 📖

## Christian Crossword

By Evelyn M. Boyington Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



### Across

1. Health resort.
4. \_\_\_ them in pieces. (Mic. 3:3)
8. Chemical symbols for Calcium and Francium.
12. Tamar was \_\_\_ wife. (Gen. 38:6)
13. Of the oaks ... they made thine \_\_\_. (Ezek. 27:6)
14. Capital of Norway.
15. And the \_\_\_s grew. (Gen. 25:27)
16. American chemist.
17. Bachelor of dramatic arts. (abbr. plural)
18. But \_\_\_, but as of God. (2 Cor. 2:17)
21. The \_\_\_ and the Thummin. (Ex. 28:30)
22. Noggin.
23. And \_\_\_ lifted up his hand. (Lev. 9:22)
25. A thousand thousands. (abbr.)
26. Upon the great \_\_\_ of their right foot. (Ex. 29:20)
29. The name of Abram's

- \_\_\_ was Sarai. (Gen. 11:29)
30. An ocean. (abbr.)
31. Blessed be the Lord God of \_\_\_. (Gen. 9:26)
32. Greek letter.
33. Cast him into a \_\_\_. (Gen. 37:24)
34. Equals.
35. Jog.
37. Both low and high, \_\_\_ and poor, together. (Ps. 49:2)
38. God gave them the like gift \_\_\_. (Acts 11:17)
43. Competes.
44. Take thine \_\_\_, eat, drink and be merry. (Luke 12:19)
45. Our country.
46. \_\_\_ the son of Chelub. (1 Chron. 27:26)
47. Allowance.
48. And God \_\_\_ the in the firmament. (Gen. 1:17)
49. And God did \_\_\_. (Heb. 4:4)
50. Mixture.
51. Come down \_\_\_ my child die. (John 4:49)

### Down

1. The kings of Sheba and \_\_\_ shall offer gifts. (Ps. 72:10)
2. Some athletes.
3. Be ye not \_\_\_. (Zech. 1:4)
4. Behold, thy \_\_\_ Elisabeth. (Luke 1:36)
5. The third to \_\_\_. (1 Chron. 24:8)
6. Ram the first born, and Bunah, and \_\_\_. (1 Chron. 2:25)
7. Of the mind.
8. Hooded snake.
9. He ... did evil in the sight of the Lord, \_\_\_ of \_\_\_ of Ahab. (2 Kings 8:27)
10. Level.
11. Blushing.
19. Cleaving tool.
20. Snake-like fish.
23. Stand in \_\_\_, and sin not. (Ps. 4:4)
24. Little island.
25. A pad.

27. Above. (poetic)
28. German river.
30. The Lord \_\_\_ them that fear him. (Ps. 103:13)
31. There rose up certain of the \_\_\_ of the Pharisees. (Acts 15:5)
33. Hull.
34. Gnasheth with his teeth and \_\_\_ away. (Mark 9:18)
36. When legislatures sit a second time.
37. Tricks.
38. Vow.
39. Bigness.
40. Son of Zerah. (1 Chron. 2:6)
41. Consumer.
42. Satisfy.



**BOOKS**

By Martine Sharp

**MUSIC**

By Rick Sharp

**7eventh Time Down**

*A Christmas Wish List*  
BEC Recordings

Rockers 7eventh Time Down have released a new Christmas EP (extended play) called “A Christmas Wish List.” I call them rockers because their first two records on BEC Recordings have been straight-up rock’n’roll with a Christian message. This new Christmas project seems a little different. Yes it still rocks with much of the same intensity that they’re known for, but this record employs some decidedly R&B techniques that, for me, shows a musical diversity I hadn’t heard before. 7eventh Time Down as a boy band? Hmm.



Three new songs are on the new EP: “This Christmas,” “Wish List” and my favorite “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day.” Throw in a rap version of “Little Drummer Boy” (tongue-in-cheek) and you have a surprisingly good Christmas album. As a bonus track they’ve included their big hit “Just Say Jesus.”

**Jean Watson**

*Christmas ... Not the Way It Seems*  
Shadowlands Music

As we look for new music to brighten our Christmas holidays we can sometimes be overwhelmed by the sheer number of new Christmas albums. A lot of really good music is often overlooked. Jean Watson’s new Celtic-flavored Christmas record “Christmas ... Not the Way It Seems” is one you should seek out.



Watson, a classically trained violinist, has created a very traditional Christmas album that delights with ethereal vocals and rich, textured orchestral arrangements. Celebrated guitarist Phil Keaggy lends his enormous talent to a beautiful interpretation of “Do You Hear What I Hear?”

Many favorites are here including “Do You Hear What I Hear?” “Angels We Have Heard On High” and “The First Noel” along with less familiar holiday songs like “Pat a Pan,” “Coventry Carol” and “Lo How A Rose.” Watson penned the only new song on the CD, “Not The Way It Seems.”

**Meet the reviewers**

Rick and Martine Sharp are writers and musicians who are members of Central Baptist Church, Decatur, where Rick plays guitar in the praise band.



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Hartselle, AL 35640.

**Media reviews**



**Crushed: A Physician Analyzes the Agony of Jesus**

J. Shan Young. Nashville: Glass Road Media, 2013. 403 pp. (Kindle Version).

I refused to go see Mel Gibson’s movie, “The Passion of the Christ.” I cringe every year when, reading through the Bible, I get near the end of the four gospels. I just have a hard time dealing with the details of Jesus’ suffering. So when I got “Crushed” in the mail, I was less than enthusiastic about reading it. I can’t say that it made me any more eager to read about what Jesus experienced leading up to and during His crucifixion but I



learned some amazing things from the book.

Did you know there is a name for sweating blood as Jesus did? It is “hematidrosis” and there is a lot more to it than just a few bloody drops of sweat. It likely made the nerve endings in Jesus skin much more sensitive to the beatings and other cruelty that followed the agony in Gethsemane.

The author goes into great detail in explaining many specifics surrounding the death of Jesus and not just the physical aspects. Besides being a medical doctor Young also is an accomplished theologian and biblical scholar. The book carefully describes the need for Jesus’ substitutionary atonement, drawing on both Old and New Testament writings. At the end of each chapter are pages of references for the author’s assertions.

This book would be instructive for any Christian but I think it would be especially helpful on the bookshelves of pastors and Bible scholars.

“Crushed” is an enhanced e-book. It has embedded videos and links that add to the experience of reading the book. It worked better on my Kindle than on the Kindle app on my iPad.

**A Season to Remember: Faith in the Midst of the Storm**

Carson Tinker with Tommy Ford. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2013. 180 pp. (Paperback).

Who in Alabama doesn’t remember April 27, 2011? It is a day that, for this generation, will live in our memories forever. “A Season to Remember” is an account of that day and beyond by Carson Tinker, whose girlfriend was killed as he desperately tried to protect her from the tornado.

Tinker was a football player for The University of Alabama who was living in Tuscaloosa in a house he shared with three other young men

when the tornado hit. Heeding frantic warning calls from parents telling them to take cover, the four roommates and Ashley Harrison were taking shelter in a closet when the storm swooped down and sucked them all out of the house as the structure was demolished. The boys survived, battered and bruised. Ashley did not.

“A Season to Remember” would be an interesting story if it was just about the tornado but it doesn’t stop there. What makes it a great story is Tinker’s determination to be a blessing to others — “to live in vision, not circumstance.” Wow. What a message this young man shares in the book.

Get it, read it, then pass it along to others.

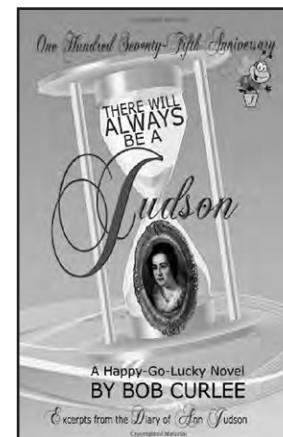


**There Will Always Be a Judson**

Bob Curlee. Birmingham: Jonah Publishers/CreateSpace. 298 pp. (Paperback).

As you might have guessed the “Judson” in the title of this book is Judson College in Marion; the book was written to commemorate the school’s 175th anniversary.

I’m not sure I have ever read a book quite like this one. It was actually two stories woven together — one, the true story of Ann and Adoniram Judson, and the other,



a fictional story of a pastor’s family in Crossroads. At first the switching back and forth from the 1800s to the present was a little jarring but once into the book, I began to look forward to the shifts.

The segments on the Judsons were enlightening and inspirational, containing excerpts from Ann’s diary woven into the story of the couple’s

life as missionaries to Burma. The vignettes from the pastor’s family were funny and inspirational; building a story that highlights Judson College and loosely connects back to Ann and Adoniram and their sacrificial ministry to Burma.

The book is well written by former pastor and prolific writer Bob Curlee. You don’t need to have a connection to Judson College to enjoy the book, but anyone connected to the school would certainly enjoy reading it.



IMB photo

International Mission Board missionary Heather McAfee and her son, Ben, sing in Sunday morning worship at a Baptist church in Abobo, Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

# In one accord

## Arkansas church accepts challenge to impact African city

**D**inner was a far cry from an Arkansas Baptist church supper.

On this night six members of Arkansas' Valley Baptist Church, Searcy, squeezed into a modest Muslim home in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and dipped their spoons into African groundnut stew and fish sauce served over "attiéké," the staple Ivorian food made from cassava, a root vegetable. They were eating with a local family who was breaking their Ramadan fast.

"Man, you could not have told me 10 years ago I'd be over here eatin' with a Muslim," Paul Yingling said with an incredulous shake of his head. But then you couldn't have told Yingling and his wife, Jan, that God would so burden their hearts for Muslims that they would find themselves traveling to West Africa to tell stories about Christ. Yingling is an auto technician in Searcy, a town about an hour northeast of Little Rock. The Yinglings were part of the team of Valley Baptist volunteers who first journeyed to Abidjan in 2013 to see how their hometown church might impact a West African city far away.

The room is cramped on this summer evening. It's July and the hosts haven't eaten a bite or sipped a drink since before dawn.

### Hospitable host

The small home belongs to a hospitable and dignified man named Seidou. He shares it with his immediate family as well as a brother and his two wives. Seidou and his three brothers have gathered for this meal. Like many immigrants they came to Abidjan from Burkina Faso looking for work.

Along with typical Ivorian dishes Seidou pours traditional drinks. The Arkansans tentatively sip "bissap," a sweet ruby red drink made from dried hibiscus petals.

International Mission Board missionaries Mike

and Heather McAfee and their three children are present also, thanks to the Cooperative Program. The McAfees, friends of Seidou's family, are urban church planters in Abidjan, the economic capital of the country. Its ever-growing population of at least 6 million reflects the diversity of West Africa. Islam, Catholicism and African tribal religions influence daily lives. Mike estimates there are about 30 small Baptist congregations in this city of millions.

### New church plants

Mike and Heather wear many hats as they work with Ivorian churches and seek to establish new church plants in this sprawling metropolis. They network and partner with U.S. Baptist churches, including Valley Baptist. On the church's first visit the McAfees introduced the team of five women and one man to areas of the city where they saw the potential for a church plant. The team worked with translators and members of the local Treichville Baptist Church to meet neighborhood residents and engage them with Bible stories.

Yingling said, "The believers here ... want to reach this city for Christ. They are capable of sharing the gospel; it just kind of helps that we're here — it kind of gets their foot in the door, you know. ... They love God and even though I'm a country boy from Arkansas we're able to come together in one accord and share the gospel for Christ."

Back at Seidou's home on that summer evening before dinner was served, Yingling had walked with his dinner hosts to the neighborhood mosque so the men of the family could pray.

"That was saddening to see them so dedicated to doing their work and praying ... [because] they don't really know for sure their sins are forgiven and where they'll stand with God on judgment day," Yingling said.

To view a video on the McAfees, visit [vimeo.com/99838886](http://vimeo.com/99838886). (BP)

## RELIGION in America

Compiled from Wire Services



### Campaign for Wi-Fi filters at McDonald's, Starbucks fails

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Despite nearly 25,000 supporters, a public campaign asking McDonald's and Starbucks to install anti-pornography filters on their in-store free Wi-Fi networks has so far been unsuccessful.

The "Porn Free Wi-Fi" campaign, organized by the Internet safety group Enough is Enough (EIE), is urging the fast-food and coffee giants to implement Internet filters in their U.S. stores to stop customers from accessing or distributing child pornography and graphic adult pornography via their free Internet connections.

"The 'Porn Free Wi-Fi' campaign is not just about protecting our children from viewing hard-core pornography using public hotspots — it's also about limiting the safe haven that open Wi-Fi creates for sexual predators," said Donna Rice Hughes, EIE's CEO.

EIE sent letters to McDonald's and Starbucks in April 2014 applauding both businesses for proactively implementing Internet filters in their U.K. stores. McDonald's U.K. website claims it was the first company to join a family-friendly Wi-Fi filtering initiative called Mumsnet. Earlier in 2014, Starbucks in the U.K. joined an industry-wide public Wi-Fi filtering effort called "Friendly Wi-Fi."

Hughes noted other major chains, like Chick-fil-A and Panera, already filter their free Internet access voluntarily.

McDonald's has continued a dialogue with EIE, Hughes said, but in the more than seven months since the letter exchange neither McDonald's nor Starbucks has added filters to their U.S. stores.

### Evangelicals support EPA's plan to cut coal pollution

WASHINGTON — Evangelicals are teaming up with environmentalists to support President Barack Obama's administration's Clean Power Plan to substantially reduce carbon dioxide emissions from coal-burning power plants.

Mitchell Hescox, president and CEO of the Evangelical Environmental Network, submitted comments from more than 100,000 "pro-life Christians" who he said are concerned about children's health problems that are linked to unclean air and water.

"From acid rain to mercury to carbon the coal utility industry never has acted as a good neighbor and cleaned up their mess on their own," Hescox said Dec. 1, 2014. "Instead of acting for the benefit of our children's lives they've internalized their profits while our kids (have) borne the cost in their brains, lungs and lives."

Despite recent findings that almost 4 in 10 evangelicals remain skeptical about climate change, Hescox said the comments he provided to the Environmental Protection Agency reflect a belief that "climate change is the greatest moral challenge of our time."

Bob Keefe, executive director of Environmental Entrepreneurs, said, "Acting on climate change, cutting carbon — this isn't something that knows politics or religion or business or occupation. It's something that's good for America. It's good for our economy. It's good for our environment."

### Bread for the World celebrates advocacy victory

WASHINGTON — Bread for the World is celebrating a victory in Congress that benefits people who are hungry around the world through U.S. food aid. Congress passed a bill funding the Coast Guard for 2015 that rolled back proposals to increase subsidies to the world's largest shipping companies to ship U.S. food aid.

"This is the fruit of faithful, persistent advocacy," said David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World. "We have been working hard on U.S. food aid issues through our partnerships and our Offering of Letters campaign in 2014. In that work (we) were able to ensure money for U.S. food aid goes to feed people in need and not line the pockets of a few shipping companies."

The Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2014 originally introduced by the House of Representatives in 2013 sought to increase the percentage of food aid that is shipped on American vessels from 50 percent to 75 percent. The change would have increased transportation costs for food aid by \$75 million annually.

"This is a great win for us but we must remain vigilant and continue to hold our leaders accountable," Beckmann said. "We must ensure that resources set aside for food aid go to the 805 million undernourished people around the world and not to a few shipping companies." ☞