



## INSIDE



**Grace Life Church of the Shoals takes gospel message to Jaqaru people of Peru**

◆ Page 5



**Heroes of the Faith: 100th anniversary of evangelist Amanda Berry Smith's death**

◆ Page 8



**Spotlight on Christian Higher Education**

◆ Pages 9-15

**The U.S. has more people and higher percentages of its population locked up than any other country.**

Source: HR Ministries



Photo courtesy of Hell is Real Ministries

The Rubies for L.I.F.E. program was created by Hell is Real Ministries (HR) of Princeton, Ky. HR looks for opportunities to minister to inmates through programs and events like the one pictured above.

# Changing lives

## Pickens Association helps reach inmates for Christ at FCI Aliceville

**By Maggie Walsh**  
The Alabama Baptist

**T**he land where the Federal Correctional Institute (FCI) in Aliceville now sits used to be farmland.

Although buildings have replaced the rows of crops a harvest is still being produced. Only now it's something more eternal thanks to the ministry efforts of Pickens Baptist Association (PBA).

While many people would be discouraged or displeased by the prospect of a correctional facility coming to their county, PBA Director of

Missions Gary Farley saw it as an opportunity.

"When we learned of the plan to build a federal prison here back in 2008 we began to pray, prepare and research," Farley said.

He and other ministry-minded individuals immediately began to reach out to those who had started federal prison ministries and learned about the strategies employed and the impact of a prison on a community.

"We even prayed that it would be a prison for women — in part because we knew of several great women who would be good volunteers for ministry," Farley said.

When it learned FCI Aliceville would be an all-female institution, PBA conducted workshops and

training events to prepare potential volunteers for this kind of ministry work. PBA also organized two missions trips, one in 2008 and the other in 2012, to areas where groups could participate in prison ministries.

Cynthia Colvin, a retired third-grade teacher, and Debra Abston, an investigator with the Pickens County Sheriff's Office, both went on the 2012 missions trip to Princeton, Ky., and partnered with Hell is Real Min-

istries (HR), a ministry of reconciliation through prisons, jails and halfway houses.

Initially Abston didn't want to spend her missions time at the prison. Because she works in law enforcement she had hoped to serve with children.

But God had other plans and it was at the Western Kentucky Correctional Complex that Colvin and Abston's eyes were first drawn to the need for ministries like HR.

HR operates through two programs that focus on redemption, reconnection and re-entry: Malachi Dads for men and Rubies for L.I.F.E. (Living In Freedom Endures) for women.

### 'Change confirmed'

Abston said, "We were able to meet with women who had gone through the (Rubies) program and we heard the ladies' testimonies ... and hearing that change confirmed was huge."

Colvin agreed and added, "There's nothing like seeing and hearing the testimonies of the women who have been through this program."

After witnessing the effects of the Rubies program, Colvin and Abston (See 'Harvest,' page 4)

**For more information about Rubies for L.I.F.E., contact PBA at 205-367-8632 or email [pbassn@centurytel.net](mailto:pbassn@centurytel.net).**

# COMMENT

## Cooperation or Conflict in Christian Higher Education

**T** rue or false? Alabama Baptists support three colleges/universities through their missions gifts to the Cooperative Program (CP).

Most would answer “True.” Judson College in Marion has been associated with the Alabama Baptist State Convention since its founding in 1838. So has Samford University in Birmingham (originally Howard College) since its founding in 1841. The University of Mobile (UMobile) came along much later, 1961, at the behest of Alabama Baptists and has been a cooperating entity ever since.

Each year these three schools receive missions funds from the state convention CP budget to help underwrite their respective ministries. Therefore, the answer of only three is true, right? Wrong.

Alabama Baptists also provide financial support through CP to six other colleges operated by the six Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)-related seminaries. Altogether, Alabama Baptists support nine different institutions providing baccalaureate (college) level education.

That fact becomes important when some voices advocate reducing CP support for the three schools historically connected to Alabama Baptists in order to increase CP support for the college programs of the six seminaries.

Originally, Southern Baptists reached an understanding that state conventions would provide college level education and the national SBC would provide seminary (graduate) education for those called to vocational ministry.

### Denominational struggles

That agreement began to break down when Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., formed Boyce Bible College in 1974. Then in 1988, Samford started Beeson Divinity School and began providing seminary education for ministers of several denominations. However, neither Boyce nor Beeson were included in the complicated formulas used by Alabama Baptists and Southern Baptists to determine CP support.

Some years later in the midst of denominational struggles, the seminary presidents led Southern Baptists to assign baccalaureate level education to the seminaries and to include the work in the CP formula. Today all six seminaries have thriving college level programs which make up between 25–30 percent of all credit hours earned at the various institutions.

Little attention was paid to the increased competition with state convention-related Baptist



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

colleges or the impact the decision would have on the seminaries themselves when the decision was first made.

It did not take long for that to change. In 2008 the SBC Funding Study Committee reported “the convention is funding the equivalent of a seventh seminary exclusively for pre-baccalaureate and baccalaureate programs” (2008 SBC Annual, Page 149). The report continued “the potential exists for the growth of pre-baccalaureate and baccalaureate hours to cause harm to the optimal and sustainable ratio of graduate degree production by our seminaries.”

### CP support

Partly because of that report, the Great Commission Task Force Report adopted by messengers attending the 2010 annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., called on the seminaries to “give primary attention to master’s and doctoral level programs.” However, little has changed in that regard and pressure has increased in Alabama and elsewhere to reduce CP support for state-sponsored colleges and give more CP dollars to seminaries which means greater support for their college programs.

According to the 2014 SBC Annual, Page 192, CP provided \$9,207 for each SBC student attending Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., for the last year of record. That was the highest amount. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, received \$6,010 per SBC student; Southern Seminary, \$4,704. New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary received the least amount per student, \$4,551, partly because of its large off-campus student population.

No difference is made between whether the student is doing graduate ministerial education or college-level work.

In Alabama for the last year of record, Judson received about \$3,126 per student from CP support; UMobile, \$1,622 and Samford, \$930. Since Samford requested its CP allocation be reduced by about 50 percent over the next five years in order to help other Alabama Baptist ministries, the average CP support per Samford

student will drop to about \$450 if all other factors remain equal.

The difference in CP support for college students studying at an SBC-related school or at an Alabama Baptist-related school makes a difference in other costs experienced by students. In most of the seminary-related colleges, the cost per credit hour for Baptist students is about \$225. The credit hour costs for Alabama Baptist-related schools is about twice that.

According to the SBC Executive Committee, Alabama Baptists gave 9.28 percent of all national CP dollars for the last year of record. If that percentage is applied to the \$40,895,620 CP dollars directed to the six seminaries, that means Alabama Baptists contributed \$3,795,113 of that amount. When that amount is broken down between baccalaureate and graduate education, Alabama Baptists gave about \$1 million to support college-level education in the six seminaries.

Break the numbers down another level and Alabama Baptists provided every student at Midwestern College about \$850. For those attending Leavell College (New Orleans Seminary), Alabama Baptists provided about \$420.

We join the SBC Funding Study Committee in asking if Southern Baptists would be better served if SBC funds used to support college education at the six seminaries were used to underwrite graduate ministerial education.

That question is important to the seminaries because they have to cover expanding educational ventures with limited financial resources. The question is important to state-related colleges because the historical relationship between state and national educational ministries has changed and the amount of national CP funds supporting seminary-related college education makes for an uneven playing field.

The question is important to all Baptists because tensions created by competition for CP dollars to underwrite college and seminary education makes for friction and misunderstanding, things which work against healthy partnerships in the Lord’s service.

### Valuable contributions

Judson, UMobile and Samford have made valuable contributions to Baptist life across the years and they continue to do so. Alabama Baptists’ investments in these schools through CP dollars is returned with dividends not only through Bible teachings but through championing Christian values and providing an educational experience in a Christian environment.

The churches of Alabama are stronger because of the contributions of the countless graduates of these schools.

We believe Baptists need to return to the day when our educational institutions, whether state or national, worked in cooperation with one another, not in competition with one another. 🙏

## LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

See page 20





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

(ISSN 0738-7741;  
USPS 011-080)

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

#### PRINT

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**  
Church Budget — \$13.75  
Individual — \$22.25

#### DIGITAL

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**  
Church Budget — \$8.50  
Individual — \$14.95

**DR. BOBBY S. TERRY**  
EDITOR

Jennifer Davis Rash  
Executive Editor

Neisha Roberts  
Editorial Production Coordinator

Maggie Walsh  
News Writer

Lauren C. Grim  
Designer

Wanda Bergeron  
Local Editions

Linda Harrison  
Financial Administrator

Bill Gilmore  
Advertising Director

Debbie Campbell  
Director of Circulation  
and Public Relations

#### NEWS SERVICES

Baptist Press (BP), Baptist News Global (BNG), Religion News Service (RNS), Forum 18 (F18), Morning Star News (MS).

#### POSTMASTER

Send address changes to:  
The Alabama Baptist  
3310 Independence Drive  
Birmingham, AL 35209

#### ADDRESS CHANGE

Send old and new addresses, and name of church to:  
Circulation Department  
3310 Independence Drive  
Birmingham, AL 35209  
Allow two weeks.

To the best of our knowledge, all of the ads in *The Alabama Baptist* represent legitimate companies and offerings. However, one should always exercise normal business caution in responding to ads.

Full member of  
Alabama Press Association

'Nation's Top Regional  
Christian Newspaper'

1999, 2004, 2007, 2008,  
2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013  
as judged by Associated  
Church Press, Evangelical  
Press Association or Religion  
Communicators Council

# Growing attack on biblical marriage

## SBC ethics leader Moore foresees national legalization of gay 'marriage'

**E**ven though Feb. 9 officially marked the legalization of gay "marriage" in Alabama, some hope the ruling won't stand after the United States Supreme Court rules on the case once and for all in June.

But Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said at a recent meeting in Orange Beach that the Supreme Court's denial of a stay to halt the legalization of gay "marriage" in the state "is a signal of what the Court intends to do." He thinks the Court likely will legalize gay "marriage" nationwide.

"I think we do see the Court moving toward handing down a decision that would place same-sex 'marriage' as a 14th Amendment issue," Moore told state Baptist executive directors and state Baptist paper editors at the meeting.

"The citizens of Alabama are rightly concerned about the non-action action by the United States Supreme Court in refusing to stay same-sex 'marriages' in the state. ... The same Court that ruled in 2013 that marriage should be a state, not a federal matter, is now imposing a federal definition of marriage on a state."

### Issuance of licenses

In an effort to stop the issuance of gay "marriage" licenses Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore advised probate judges to deny licenses to gay couples and to follow state law in a letter he issued Feb. 8.

The letter stated in part: "Effective immedi-

ately, no probate judge of the state of Alabama nor any agent or employee of any Alabama probate judge shall issue or recognize a marriage license that is inconsistent" with a constitutional amendment and a state law banning same-sex unions, Roy Moore wrote.

While commending a biblical view of marriage, Russell Moore said state judges should not disobey federal court orders.

### Conviction and respect

"As citizens and as Christians, our response should be one of both conviction and of respect for the rule of law (1 Pet. 2:13; Rom. 13). Our system of government does not allow a state to defy the law of the land," Russell Moore said.

"In a Christian ethic, there is a time for civil disobedience in cases of unjust laws. That's why, for instance, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. went to jail. In the case of judges and state Supreme Court justices, though, civil disobedience, even when necessary, cannot happen in their roles as agents of the state. Religious freedom and conscience objections must be balanced with a state's obligation to discharge the law," he said.

A judge or other government official who is "faced with a decision of violating his conscience or upholding the law would need to resign and protest against it as a citizen if he could not discharge the duties of his office required by law in good conscience," Russell Moore said.

Meanwhile in Mobile, a federal judge ordered Mobile County Probate Judge Don Davis to start granting marriage licenses to gay couples. Davis had kept the marriage license office closed since Feb. 9, according to *The Birmingham News*.

But after U.S. District Court Judge Callie V.S. Granade heard from lawyers of James Strawser and John Humphrey, who had not been able to get marriage licenses in Mobile, she "laid out specific reasons why the plaintiffs want to get married, including health problems ... to have full spousal authority to make medical decisions," according to the *News*, and ordered the office to issue licenses.

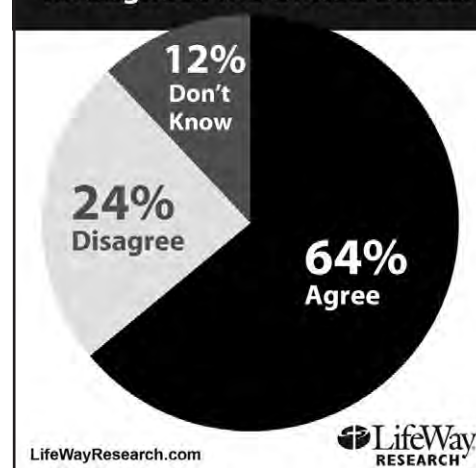
After Granade's order, Strawser and Humphrey were "married" Feb. 12.

Davis was one of dozens of probate judges who cited Roy Moore's administrative order on Feb. 8 to not issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

At press time information indicated that probate judges in 50 counties would be issuing same-sex "marriage" licenses by Feb. 16. In 10 counties marriage licenses will still be issued to traditional couples while seven counties will not be issuing licenses at all.

Online Survey of Adult Americans:

**It is inevitable that same-sex "marriage" will become legal throughout the United States.**



In Huntsville volunteer minister Ellin Jimmerson, a member of Weatherly Heights Baptist Church, performed at least one same-sex wedding ceremony the week same-sex "marriage" was legalized, and it was the first in Madison County, sources reported.

Jimmerson is a member of the Madison Baptist Association church but is not on the staff, according to news reports.

In regards to Jimmerson's actions Pastor David Freeman said, "Our congregation has not addressed this and formed a consensus of opinion. Our congregation would have a diversity of opinion on the issue of same-sex 'marriage.'"

The Alabama Baptist State Convention stated Feb. 10 that ministers who conduct marriage ceremonies for same-sex couples in Alabama risk losing their standing with the convention.

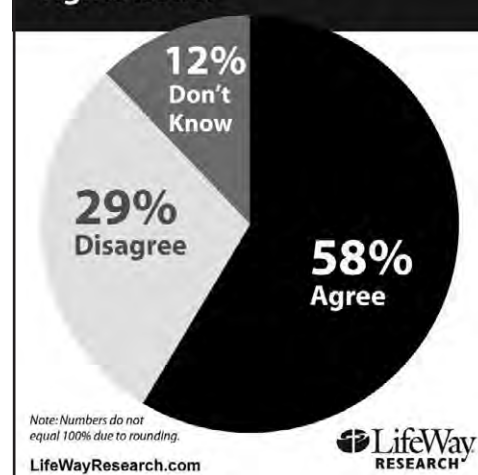
### Joint plea

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, and Travis Coleman Jr., president of the convention and pastor of First Baptist Church, Prattville, issued a joint plea to "stand strong for biblical marriage."

"Any church that allows staff members to officiate at same-sex ceremonies is clearly outside biblical teachings about marriage and human sexuality, and they demonstrate that they are not in like-minded fellowship or friendly cooperation with Alabama Baptists and Southern Baptists." To read the full statement, visit ricklance.com. (BP, TAB)

Online Survey of Adult Americans:

**Like age, race and gender, homosexuality is a civil rights issue.**



# Harvest is great

## Rubies program helps incarcerated women make changes to impact their future

(continued from page 1)

approached Harrell Riley, HR director and North American Mission Board missionary, about the possibility of starting such a program at FCI Aliceville.

That missions trip marked the beginning of a nine-month process of training and coordinating between Riley, FCI Aliceville and PBA to be able to start the program. Steps that had to be taken included acclimation to the prison itself, equipping and training program volunteers, obtaining the warden's approval and becoming familiar with the internal system of the prison, among other things.

The process was so extensive that although the prison opened in 2013, it wasn't until Sept. 8, 2014, that Colvin, Abston and 10 other volunteers, also called coaches, held the first-ever Rubies meeting at FCI Aliceville.

That first meeting attracted more than 80 inmates. Although that number lessened from the initial meeting, many women of FCI Aliceville were faithful to attend the weekly Monday meetings from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Each meeting began with coaches addressing the group as a whole before breaking into clusters of six to eight women, and concluding with the collective group.

Colvin said, "[The program's] hard — ladies have to really look at their lives and examine their past and actions.

"They need to realize that 70 percent of

incarcerated women's children will also be incarcerated ... so we've talked a lot about 'what choices will you make in the future to change this for your family?'"

The Rubies program is broken down into two stages. HR's website describes the first 18 weeks as "laying the foundation" and the following 12-month course as "building the structure."

A graduation ceremony follows both stages.

The 18-week stage is based on becoming a Proverbs 31 woman and requires participants to memorize Scripture, keep a daily journal, memorize the Rubies mission statement and write two letters to family members every month. The women also must participate in Bible studies and memorize Proverbs 31.

By the third Rubies meeting, some of the FCI Aliceville inmates were already receiving feedback from

family members thanks to the letter-writing exercises and Abston said she could "already see a change taking place in the ladies in the group."

### Staying in the Word

This change is in part thanks to the emphasis the program places on staying in the Word and fellowshiping with other believers, two habits the coaches strongly encourage, Colvin said.

The committed presence of the coaches cannot be overstated, Riley emphasized. One of the hardest aspects of his ministry

**In 1970, fewer than 200,000 Americans were incarcerated. Today more than 2.3 million are in prison or jail. Adding those on probation and parole, more than 7 million are under penal supervision.**

Source: HR Ministries



Photo by Robert Fouts/courtesy of Yates Construction

Pickens Baptist Association began praying in 2008 when they learned of the plan to build the Federal Correctional Institute (FCI) in Aliceville.

is communicating to churches and potential volunteers that Rubies is not just a program, it's an attempt to change a person's culture.

"Coaches are signing on to change lives, not just lead a group," Riley said. "I've been very pleased with the commitment the coaches and leaders [of PBA] have shown."

Essentially Rubies is a tool and a presentation to get a lady to find her own vision, Riley said. HR's vision statement quotes Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Ga.: "If you don't see it before you see it, then you'll never see it."

### 'Entrusting your heart'

It means that "if you don't have the faith of entrusting your heart and looking at yourself to see the issues then you'll never get to where you want to be," Riley said.

The end goal of Rubies is to help female inmates figure out how to make that vision a reality.

FCI Aliceville graduated 55 women from the first stage of the program Feb. 9 who are on their way to realizing that vision. For some of the women it was the first time they had ever graduated from anything.

Riley and 11 Rubies-affiliated colleagues from Kentucky drove down for the ceremony in which FCI Aliceville Warden Arcola Washington-Adduci presented each graduate with a certificate. This was the first Rubies graduation in Alabama and the first in any federal facility.

One graduate observed that the class began the program as prodigal daughters, but are now Kingdom women.

At the end of the ceremony, Riley issued an invitation for salvation and 75 women accepted Christ and two re-dedicated their lives. That same night 198 women signed up for the Rubies program.

As there are only 12 Rubies coaches at FCI Aliceville, PBA has requested that people pray at 10:02 a.m. or p.m. every day for the Lord to send coaches for the willing inmates. The 10:02 time is based on Luke 10:2, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." ☞

## WMU influences Rubies for L.I.F.E. coaches

By Maggie Walsh  
The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) played a large role in the success of the Rubies for L.I.F.E. ministry at the Federal Correctional Institute (FCI) in Aliceville through the lives of Cynthia Colvin and Debra Abston, coaches for the reconciliation ministry for female inmates (see story, this page).

Both women were strongly influenced by WMU in years past and attribute their missions attitudes to WMU programs.

Colvin, a retired third-grade teacher and member of First Baptist Church, Aliceville, has been involved in local jail ministries for more than 20 years, long before the creation of FCI Aliceville. However, "God just called" her into jail ministry after reading an article in a WMU publication on the topic.

### 'Backbone of missions'

Abston, an investigator with the Pickens County Sheriff's Office and member of Highland Baptist Church, Gordo, grew up in Acteens as an adolescent and now serves as Pickens Baptist Association's WMU director. She calls WMU "the backbone of missions."

Alabama WMU Executive Director Candace McIntosh sees the two women as shining examples of how to apply godly principles to real life.

"One of the objectives of WMU is to 'develop spiritually toward a missions lifestyle,' and I believe this is what you see demonstrated so beautifully in the lives of these two ladies as they are living out the missions mandate," McIntosh said. ☞

Participants in Rubies for L.I.F.E., a Hell is Real Ministries program, are incarcerated women who meet for 18 weeks with coaches to learn how to become a Proverbs 31 woman. A 12-month course follows.



Photo courtesy of Hell is Real Ministries



Photos courtesy of Grace Life Church of the Shoals

**Main photo:** A team from Grace Life Church of the Shoals, Muscle Shoals, hikes through the village of Aiza, Peru. On the trip is Steve McAlister (right), the church's associate pastor for missions and congregational care. **Small photo:** Pastor Juan Tasca (left) baptizes a new believer in a 50-gallon bucket in the village of Aiza, Peru.

# 'Obey & trust'

## Grace Life Church of the Shoals takes gospel message to Jaqaru people of Peru

By Neisha Roberts  
The Alabama Baptist

**T**he Jaqaru people of Peru, population 2,400, had never heard the name of Jesus. That was until 1997 when members of Grace Life Church of the Shoals, Muscle Shoals, took the gospel high into the Peruvian mountains.

On the invitation from then-International Mission Board (IMB) missionary Mike Weaver, a small group of Grace Life members went on a vision trip to see if the Colbert-Lauderdale Baptist Association church would "adopt" the unreached, unengaged Jaqaru.

Today some of the areas have roads and are accessible by motorcycle or car but 18 years ago the Grace Life team hiked several hours to get to the villages of Aiza and Tupe, southeast of Lima. Weaver led the way on that trip but told the team there were no IMB workers assigned to reach the Jaqaru and that if Grace Life did adopt the people group it would be up to them to take the gospel there.

### Created for His glory

Steve McAlister, Grace Life's associate pastor for missions and congregational care who was on the first trip, said, "After we hiked and hiked to reach the people I remembered a Psalm that refers to all nations praising His name. Here was an unreached people that God created and He created them for His glory. We were convinced early on that we wanted to go preach the gospel (to the Jaqaru). ... One night on

that trip we shared the gospel through our translator and one man and one woman were saved."

After returning from the trip and conveying what the team had seen in Peru, church members began to pray about adopting the Jaqaru and in 2000 decided they wanted to "be more personally involved in missions."

Since 2000, Grace Life has sent teams to Peru several times a year to take the gospel to their adopted people.

Around 2005, Grace Life sent former youth group member Chad Haygood as a short-term missionary to Peru. Haygood preached in Spanish in the villages and made connections in the town of Cathawasi. During his two-year assignment he also built relationships with other believers in the area, which led to meeting pastor Juan Tasca.

McAlister said, "We knew we needed a national that could do so much more than we (Americans) could ever do (in reaching the Jaqaru)."

So as Haygood was finishing his time in Peru, he passed the torch to Tasca and

Grace Life began to support him in his outreach to the Jaqaru.

Now there are two Baptist churches in the area — Grace Life Church of Aiza and Grace Life Church of Tupe — both shepherded by Tasca with about 50 Jaqaru believers each.

"Now there are groups down there in Aiza (and Tupe) that are worshipping God and they weren't doing that 15 years ago," McAlister said.

Carlos Verdeguer is another national believer who has been vital to Grace Life of the Shoals. He began to serve as a translator several years ago, McAlister said, and the two formed a close relationship.

Those close relationships are why Grace Life of the Shoals asked Verdeguer and Tasca to speak at its annual missions and preaching conference — True Church Conference to be held Feb. 19–22.

In its ninth year, True Church is expected to host more than 350 participants representing more than 70 churches from around the world, McAlister said.

Speakers include Tedd Tripp, Grace

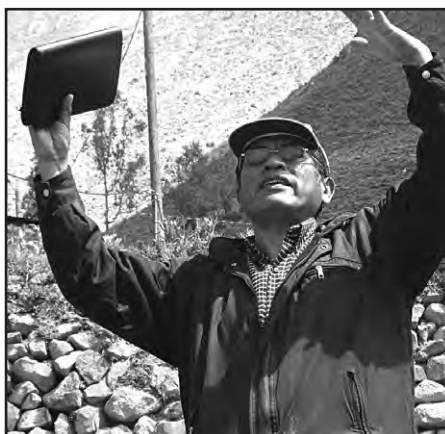


Photo courtesy of Grace Life Church of the Shoals

Pastor Juan Tasca leads both Grace Life Church of Aiza and Grace Life Church of Tupe, both in Peru. Tasca is supported by Grace Life Church of the Shoals, Muscle Shoals.

Life pastor emeritus; Barry King, general secretary of Grace Baptist Partnership of the United Kingdom; David Miller, former pastor and director of missions in Arkansas; Jeff Noblit, Grace Life pastor; and Brandon Elixson, pastor of Grace Life Church of Lake City, Fla.

For more information about the True Church Conference, visit the ministry arm's website, anchoredintruth.org.

Verdeguer and Tasca will both share a report Feb. 20 on what has taken place in Peru and what God is doing, as well as their testimonies, McAlister said.

### American football league

According to McAlister, Verdeguer loves American football and started an American football league with about 35 players — Dire Wolves — as a way to share the gospel. Grace Life of the Shoals sponsors the league and has provided helmets and other equipment.

Verdeguer said he is excited to meet with other believers at the conference and expects to "learn many things and apply all this" to his life.

"Also, I would like to do some missions in the town, talk with people about the Good News and share with them that God's love is for everybody.

"The Lord invited us to do simple things: believe and be saved. Also ... it is very important as Christians to ask the Lord what is our personal mission to be accomplished for Him," he said. "Maybe you don't need to travel to Peru. ... The most important (thing) is to receive a God-calling and obey and trust." ❏

# 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.

## BESSEMER

► **Maytown Church** will host Florida Boys in concert Feb. 22, 5 p.m. A love offering will be collected at the end of the concert. For more information call 205-786-5359. John Killian is pastor.

## BETHEL

► **Linden Church** will host Frontline, a youth event for students in grades 6–12, Feb. 27, 6:30 p.m. The event will feature J.D. “The Iceman” Anderson and Matt Littlejohn Band will perform. There will be a pizza party after the service. For more information call 334-295-4278, email [frontlinelbc@gmail.com](mailto:frontlinelbc@gmail.com) or visit [www.lindenbaptist.net](http://www.lindenbaptist.net). Randy Creel is pastor.

## BIGBEE

► **Leon Ballard** is the new pastor of **York Church**. He has returned to the position after 16 years of ministry in Mississippi. He began his recent ministry with York Church on Dec. 7, 2014.

## LIMESTONE

► **Clements Church, Athens**, will host its annual Sunday School spring training event, “Life Happens-N-Groups,” on March 7, 8 a.m.–12:15 p.m. Doors open at 7 a.m. Speakers will include: Georgia Baptist Convention — Tim Smith, general session; Tim Anderson, pastors

session; Justin McAlpin, youth session; Jill Arrington, children session; and Annette Whitton, preschool session. For registration information call 256-729-1328 or visit [clements baptist.org/spring-training](http://clements baptist.org/spring-training). Tim Anderson is pastor.

## EAST CULLMAN

► **Lake Catoma Church, Cullman**, will celebrate 25 years of ministry March 1. The service will begin at 10:15 a.m. Lunch will follow. Bobby Crawford is pastor.

## SHELBY

► **Daven Watkins** is the new pastor of **First Church, Pelham**, effective March 1. He previously



WATKINS

served as pastor of First Church, Pleasant Grove. He holds a bachelor of arts degree from Georgetown College in Georgetown, Ky., a master of divinity from Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, and a doctor of ministry in preaching from Gordon-Conwell Seminary in South Hamilton, Mass. He and his wife, Jane, have two children.

## LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

► **Southeast Church, Fort**

**Payne**, will host the Lookout Mountain quarterly youth rally Feb. 22, 5 p.m. Jerome Manley is associational youth director.

## ST. CLAIR

► **David Jones** is the new

pastor of **St. Clair Springs Church, Springville**. He previously

served Chandler Mountain Church, Steele. He also has served at Westside Church, Talladega, and Seddon Church, Pell City. He and his wife, Genevieve, have four children.



JONES

## MONTGOMERY

► **Catoma Church, Montgomery**, will add a contemporary worship service starting March 1, 8:30 a.m. Sunday School will start at 9:45 and the traditional service will follow at 11. Chad Underwood is pastor.

## TUSCALOOSA

► **Crestline Church, Tuscaloosa**, will hold revival services March 1–4. Sunday services will be at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday services will start at 6:30 nightly. Speakers will be: Albert Lyles, Sunday; Daniel Wilson, Monday; Sammy Gilbreath, Tuesday; and Tim Tyndale, Wednesday. Irby Jackson is pastor. ► **Northport Church** will hold a retirement fellowship for Stephen and Carol Brown on Feb. 22, 7 p.m. in the fellowship hall. The event will follow the evening worship service. There will be a gift table set up. For more information call the church office at 205-345-0100. ☞



## West Mobile Baptist celebrates 25th anniversary

West Mobile Baptist Church, Mobile, celebrated its 25th anniversary with the conclusion of its “What’s Right with the Church: Our Future” series taught by Pastor Charles Gibbs.

Gibbs said the Jan. 23 service at the Mobile Baptist Association church was different than most Sundays thanks to two separate worship sets, many testimonies and invitation song “God Of This City,” which youth group member Grayson Holt led.

Founding pastor Sid Sample spoke along with former members Gary and Sondra Henley about what the church had meant to them through the years.

The Alabama Baptist Historical Commission sent a plaque commemorating the event and the planning committee put together video clips of former staff who are currently serving elsewhere. Member Becky Pepper also shared a “challenging video testimony which helped transition the service from focus on the past to the future,” Gibbs said.

“I have challenged our people to help me reach the next generation. ... If we don’t reach the next generation, we have a past but no future,” Gibbs said.

There was a breakfast and fellowship in lieu of Sunday School. Following the 10:30 a.m. service the congregation reconvened at Camp Grace, a nonprofit organization in Mobile, and spent the afternoon eating and playing games before closing with a special observance of the Lord’s Supper. (Caitlin Lea)

## Hollywood Missionary Baptist marks 125 years

Hollywood Missionary Baptist Church in the northeast corner of the state commemorated its 125th anniversary and honored its veterans in a joint service in November 2014.

The 10:30 a.m. service featured a message by former pastor Donald Jacobs and a special presentation by Wendell Dutton, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission representative. A trio from Hollywood Missionary Baptist led worship and special music for the more than 125 participants.

Because of its proximity to Veterans Day, the service included the recognition of about 10 veterans. Each veteran received a flag.

Lunch followed the service and Pastor Dale Haynes said “lots of fellowship” took place. Historic displays were set up in the fellowship hall of the Tennessee River Baptist Association church for participants to view during the mealtime. (Maggie Walsh)

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

Email your information to [news@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:news@thealabamabaptist.org); fax it to 205-870-8957 or call 1-800-803-5201. Church announcements should arrive three weeks prior to the event.



## VOICE YOUR OPINION

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

### Remember to:

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

# Ministry Tips



## TIPS AND TOOLS FOR MINISTRY TEAMMATES

By Pastor Jay Wolf  
First Baptist Church, Montgomery

Every minister functions as a Kingdom leader. John Maxwell may provide good leadership mentoring but Jesus provides the best instruction and example of how to be a leader.

A leader is simply someone other

people follow because the leader values people and they trust him to lead.

For instance Jesus calls us to follow His example and become a servant-leader. “I have not come to be served but to serve and give My life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Jesus defines His purpose as leading by serving. Therefore we must move beyond dictatorial and authoritar-

ian leadership and assume the posture of humbly serving others. Jesus illustrated His leadership style when He found the disciples bickering about who was most important and He washed their feet. “If the Lord and Teacher washed your feet you should wash one another’s feet for I gave you an example and you should do it” (John 13:14–15).

From Nicodemus to Zacchaeus, Jesus valued the people He encountered. When you sincerely value people and desire to help them become genuine Christ-followers, they will trust your leadership and follow your vision for the ministry.

Remember: The speed of the lead is the speed of the team. ☞

# Changing culture

## Church leaders discuss Christ, culture

By Michael J. Brooks  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Russell Moore said his first experience with a clash of cultures was when he served as a youth pastor.

“We were near a military base and our church kids were from there,” he said. “But the neighborhood kids were different. They had absentee parents and hadn’t been raised in church. What I taught in Bible study seemed very foreign and foolish to them.”

Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission since 2013, was one of two principal speakers at “Beyond the Bible Belt” on Feb. 3. The event was sponsored by The Gospel Coalition and Samford University’s Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham.

Collin Hansen, editorial director of The Gospel Coalition, said his organization has 5,000 affiliated global congregations, all seeking to renew the church in rapidly changing cultures.

Moore said evangelical Christians in the United States have assumed they are the “moral majority” and that all Americans agree on a set of values.

“Actually what we agree on is really thin gruel and not the sharply distinct ethics of the Bible,” he said. “We’ve wrongly identified American culture with the kingdom of God and, accordingly, are often wringing our hands and clenching our fists over the latest outrage. Just being a ‘red state’ today isn’t enough to protect us from the assault of godless culture.”

Moore said what the modern Church faces is actually nothing new since the first century Church faced a Greco-Roman world that saw the Christian message as “ridiculous and nonsensical” and the idea of a crucified God as “strange.”

“Paul is very clear in the Epistles that the world sees the Christian message as foolish, but he urged pastors to faithfully pray and preach the Word of God,” he said. “People who come to Christ aren’t simply out argued or won over by our media platform. They stake their life on the truth of the gospel.”

Moore cited 2 Timothy 3 in which Paul said, “here’s what’s coming,” but “preach the Word.”

“The ‘end times’ in Scripture is the time

between the resurrection of Jesus and His return,” Moore said. “It’s a godless time, but we are ambassadors for Christ and must have a prophetic ministry and speak to our culture. The golden calves of the world never really satisfy.”

Harry L. Reeder, pastor of Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, and the second presenter, suggested the biblical model of being “in the world but not of the world” was a good one for understanding the Church’s mission.

“An old illustration is about a boat,” he said.

“If the boat is out of the water in dry dock, it’s no good, but if the boat is in the water and springs a leak, it’s no good. The Church must be in the culture but be sure the culture doesn’t seep into it.”

Reeder agreed that American culture cannot be equated with the kingdom of God, but declared the “common grace” of godly patriots and founders made our nation a better place.

“We cannot dismiss our past,” he said. “Two great awakenings in America transformed lives and we still enjoy the benefits. But we must remember that it’s not Pennsylvania Avenue, Wall Street or Hollywood Boulevard where the ultimate truth is. The truth comes from Church Street.”

Reeder said the American civil rights movement is a good model for changing culture since the movement won victories one at a time with the “weapons” of truth, patience and love.

### ‘Spiritual vitality’

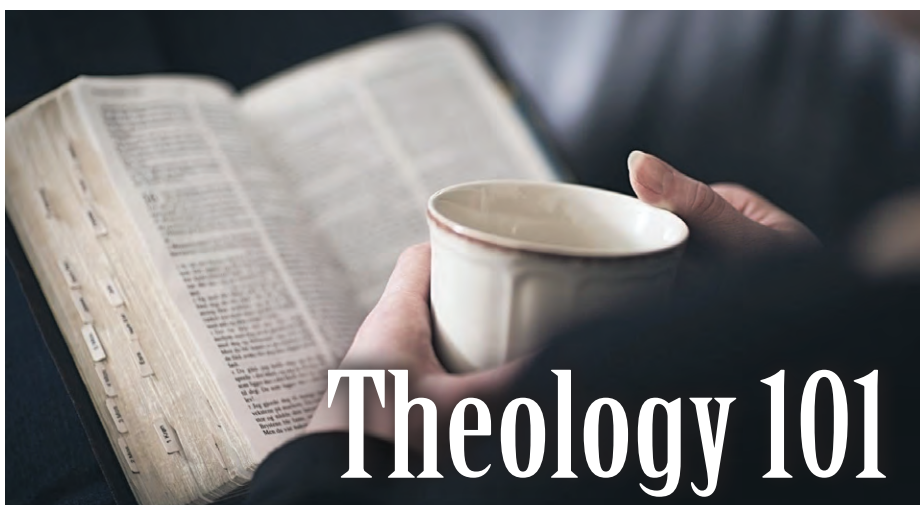
“Worship can become entertainment and draw a crowd,” he said. “We’re prone to take something somebody’s doing and bring it to our church, but we should establish spiritual vitality as our objective, not merely statistical growth. If the church is on mission, on message and in ministry, then growth will come. I call it a ‘well’ church that worships, evangelizes, learns and loves. That kind of church will impact its culture for Christ.”

Reeder urged pastors to be patient, not passive, in growing vital churches, to take time to know their people and to faithfully preach the Scripture.

“The two books that are most important are the Bible and your membership book,” he said. “Let your people see that you love Scripture and know and love them.”



MOORE



## Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

### Images of the Church

## The Church as God’s Building (Part 1 of 3)

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

Last week our attention was on 1 Corinthians 3:9 where we read that as God’s people, we are His field. With hardly a breath between the next phrase Scripture adds that we are God’s building. This image of the Church occurs or is hinted at in several places in the New Testament. One of the better-known passages is Ephesians 2:19–22. While these verses do not make it as explicit as the Corinthian reference, the image of a building is clearly in view.

Our concept of a physical building matches with the Ephesian verses. When we think of a building we include its foundation and its superstructure built upon the foundation. We also think of a completed building of some significance as having a cornerstone, maybe even placed with some fanfare or public ceremony. Guided by the Bible verses we can think about God’s building, the Church, as having a foundation and a Cornerstone (Eph. 2:20), as well as the “whole structure” that is built together and resting upon the foundation.

### Apostles and prophets

Jesus declared in Matthew 16:18, “I will build My Church.” As He began His building project, Jesus chose 12 disciples, whom He later named apostles. Before He came, God had sent the Old Testament prophets who predicted Jesus’ coming and something of His ministry. The predictive truth through the prophets and the realized truth through Jesus and the disciples combine to give the Church its foundation. The Church is “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets” (Eph. 2:20).

While the Church is revealed in the New Testament, we cannot ignore the preparatory revelation God sent through the Old Testament prophets. For example the prophet Isaiah declared, “Thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I am the One who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation’” (Isa. 28:16). The Church must be a “whole-Bible” church. Jesus began to teach His

followers during His earthly ministry (Acts 1:1). To the words of Jesus in the Gospels (the red ink passages), we must add all He continued to teach through the Holy Spirit’s inspiration of the apostles’ writings found in the Epistles. God’s old covenant revelation and His new covenant revelation combined to lay the foundation for His Church.

### Foundation stone

Modern building methods usually consider the cornerstone ceremonial, placing it at the conclusion of construction. In former times the foundation stone was set first. It set the angle for the corner and established the line for the other foundation blocks. The image of the Church as a building leads us to understand that Jesus, as the Cornerstone, was the first and only totally perfect stone in the Church’s founding. God’s truth — as it is revealed in His Son and illuminated by His Spirit for the disciples — furnished the essential guidelines for the foundation-laying work of His disciples. We do well to count the living Cornerstone the basic and most important stone in God’s building and always honor Him as such.

Since the foundation was set in place centuries ago the superstructure has been going up. Believers are said in 1 Peter 2:5 to be “living stones.” Christ is continuing to build God’s Church using people who have been made alive through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. When we look at our church’s weekly gathering for worship, we are looking at the very building material out of which God’s building is composed.

But more about this next week. 🙏

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.



**“The Church must be in the culture but be sure the culture doesn’t seep into it.”**

**Pastor Harry L. Reeder  
Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Birmingham**

## Famous Christians from previous centuries

# Heroes of the Faith

## February 2015 marks 100th anniversary of first female African-American international evangelist's death

By Joanne Sloan

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



**A**manda Berry Smith (1837–1915) was the first African-American woman to serve as an international evangelist. This month is the 100th anniversary of her death.

Smith was born to slave parents Jan. 23, 1837, in Long Green, Md. After her father, Samuel Berry, purchased his freedom and then the freedom of his wife and five children, they moved to York County, Pa. Her parents had seven more children. Their home became a station on the Underground Railroad.

### Learning to read and write

She had only three months of formal schooling, but her parents taught her to read and write. At an early age she helped support her family as a washer-woman and maid.

Smith married Calvin Devine in 1854 and had two children.

On March 17, 1856, she experienced a conversion. In her autobiography she wrote, "O, Lord, if Thou wilt help me I will believe Thee, and in the act of telling God I would, I did. O, the peace and joy that flooded my soul! The burden rolled away; I felt it when it left me and a flood of light and joy swept through my soul such as I had never known before."

After her husband, a Union soldier, died in the Civil War, she moved to Philadelphia. In 1863 she married James Smith, a deacon in the African Methodist Episcopal church. She had three more children. By 1869, her husband and all but one child had died.

Smith began preaching in churches and camp meetings in New York and New Jersey. In 1870 she committed herself to evangelism and for the next several years preached in the East and Midwest. Never

ordained, she was an independent evangelist, getting no support from any organization. She relied completely on prayer for all her needs.

Popular with both black and white audiences, Smith was known not only for her inspired teaching but also for her beautiful voice.

Her work as an international evangelist began in 1876 when white friends asked her to go to England. They provided her with a first class cabin on the ship. She preached a year and a half in England and Scotland.

From there she went to India, where she ministered from 1879 to 1881. For the next eight years she worked as a missionary and an evangelist in Liberia and Sierra Leone. After returning to America, she settled in Chicago and continued to preach.

She opened an orphanage in

Harvey, Ill., for African-American children.

The orphanage was made possible by money from her savings, support from friends and the proceeds from her autobiography, which she had published in 1893.

### Retirement

In 1912 she retired to Sebring, Fla., because of her failing health. The state of Illinois took over the orphanage and named it the Amanda Smith Industrial School for Girls.

She died in Sebring on Feb. 24, 1915. A wealthy white friend, George Sebring, arranged for her body to be buried near Harvey. Her funeral on March 1, 1915, was one of the largest ever in Chicago.

After her death the *Chicago Defender*, a leading black newspaper, called her "the greatest woman that this race has ever given to the world." ❧



SMITH

## SBC leaders emphasize value of CP giving; tie convention's future to IMB success

By Jennifer Davis Rash  
The Alabama Baptist

**S**upport for Southern Baptist's primary funding source — the Cooperative Program — became a consistent theme of convention leaders speaking to members of the Association of State Baptist Publications during the group's annual meeting Feb. 9–12.

The various Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) entity heads participating in the meeting, held in conjunction with the state executive directors' annual meeting on Alabama's Gulf coast, also stressed the importance of helping the International Mission Board (IMB) succeed.

Jason Allen, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, said, "Our work will not supersede the work of the IMB. We need the IMB to succeed. Let's labor for David Platt (IMB president) and the IMB's success."

"Platt deserves our full support and prayers," said Allen and echoed by Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB).

Platt expressed his appreciation for the CP as part of the overall success of SBC ministries.

"I've been reminded in a needed way the responsibility of the stewardship of the SBC," he said.

"When you realize what God has given to the SBC ... associations and conventions ... six strong seminaries raising up leaders every year, IMB and NAMB combined with ERLC (Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission), LifeWay and the CP as an engine that fuels all that ... then take some of those networks out there and it would take 100 years to get what we have with the SBC," Platt noted. And at that point "they would have similar challenges as we have in the SBC now."

### 'Not perfect but valuable'

"The CP ... is not perfect, but it is extremely valuable," Platt said, noting it is best to help work on the "not perfect" parts while continuing to support it.

Ezell and Allen urged Southern Baptists to stay positive.

"Everything has an underbelly but there's so much good going

on," Ezell said. "Don't get distracted with the underbelly. God is doing some incredible things. ... We are not a perfect family but we are a very blessed people."

Allen noted, "We've lost a sense of our imagination. ... I'm not sure if our vision ran dry first or our funding, but I am sure that when your vision runs dry your funding will as well."

"We need to be willing to dream collectively and ambitiously," he said. "We need to think beyond our individual entities or ministries and advance the [SBC] as a whole."

SBC President Ronnie Floyd said the threats to cooperative giving are independent mindsets and "perhaps" disappointments with people and/or processes.

"We are [urging] increased CP giving and looking at ways we can further this," he said.

Editors also heard from Warren Smith, vice president of WORLD News Group, and elected new officers. Terry Barone of California is the incoming president and Todd Deaton of Kentucky is president-elect. ❧

## REFLECTIONS

"ALL THIS TIME WE THOUGHT HE HAD A DOCTOR'S DEGREE, IT TURNS OUT HE'S HAD DISASTER RELIEF TRAINING!"



SPOTLIGHT ON CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

# Returning to COLLEGE

## Colleges target adult learners with increased credit options, flexibility



Photo courtesy of Samford University

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

**M**any working adults are highly motivated to return to college. For job seekers a college education can mean the difference between getting hired or not. For those already employed a degree can lead to raises or promotions.

The decision to add college classes to an already full schedule of family and work responsibilities is not an easy one, however. That's why many institutions, including Alabama Baptist colleges and universities, now offer more flexible options geared especially toward nontraditional adult learners.

Credit by examination is perhaps the most familiar way of earning college credit for prior knowledge. Most people are familiar with the

College Level Examination Program (CLEP), developed by the College Board to test mastery of college-level material in 33 subjects including history, literature and math.

In recent years other exams also have become widely accepted such as the Excelsior College Examination Program, offering 63 exams, and DSST Subject Standardized Tests aimed at students with military experience and offering 38 exams.

### Verifying information

Education Portal, an online provider of study materials for credit exams, advises students who are considering credit by examination to first make sure their college accepts the specific exam and subject and to confirm scoring requirements for credit. Once that information is verified students can prepare for the exam using

(See 'Credit,' page 10)

HUNTSVILLE  
RAINSVILLE  
BIRMINGHAM  
TUSCALOOSA  
MONTGOMERY

Graduate & Undergraduate ☆  
Graduate ○

# MINISTRY TRAINING

*Close to Home*

## FIVE ALABAMA LOCATIONS

<b>BIRMINGHAM</b> Meets at Church at Brook Hills (205) 313-7800	<b>HUNTSVILLE</b> Meets at Legacy Christian Univ. (256) 810-7640	<b>MONTGOMERY</b> Meets at Heritage Baptist Church (334) 279-9976
<b>RAINSVILLE</b> Meets at First Baptist Church (256) 706-2478	<b>TUSCALOOSA</b> Meets at Forest Lake Baptist Church - (205) 339-2273	

★

**READY TO APPLY? VISIT [WWW.NOBTS.EDU/APPLY](http://WWW.NOBTS.EDU/APPLY)**

**NEW ORLEANS**  
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

NOBTS offers quality, affordable theological training and flexible class schedules designed with working students in mind.

[www.nobts.edu/Extensions](http://www.nobts.edu/Extensions) | 800.662.8701

**TRAINING LEADERS  
IMPACTING COMMUNITIES**

**CERTIFICATES**  
Biblical Studies  
Biblical Languages  
Youth Ministry

**UNDERGRADUATE**  
Religion  
Business  
Interdisciplinary  
Elementary Education  
*(coming Fall 2015)*

**GRADUATE**  
Christian Education  
Biblical Studies  
Ministry  
Theology




**ENROLL TODAY!**  
Classes start March 16, June 1 and August 17.

6806 Whitesburg Dr., Huntsville, AL 35802 | 256-924-0511 | www.legacyu.net  
Ask us about our freshman year experience that begins Fall 2015!



Photo courtesy of Samford University

An adult student prepares for a class at Samford University's Evening Studies program. Evening College provides working adults the flexibility and access they need while also building a sense of community between instructors and other students.

Advertise in *The Alabama Baptist*  
Contact Bill Gilmore  
at 1-800-803-5201, ext. 107 or bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org.

## Credit by examination is one way to earn college credit

*(continued from page 9)*  
a variety of online and print materials. Students who earn the required scores on these exams can earn college credit at a fraction of the cost of college tuition for the same courses.

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is another strategy increasingly used to help adult learners reach their higher education goals. To earn PLA credit, qualified students document experiential knowledge or occupational training equivalent to a college-level

experience through an extensive learning portfolio. Upon approval of the portfolio, students can earn up to 30 semester hours for their prior learning.

### Distance learning

Kathy Chen, director of distance learning at Judson College in Marion, said the goal of PLA is to help students move forward rather than dwell on learning materials they have already mastered. "Awarding prior learning credit speeds up the students' progress

in gaining their college degree, shows our acknowledgement of the skills and knowledge they have gained through their life experiences and recognizes their prior learning achievements," Chen said.

According to a study of PLA by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, adult students with PLA credit are more likely to persist in their studies and complete degrees faster than adult learners without PLA credit.

The benefit of alternative credit



**JUDSON COLLEGE**  
*Knowledge and Faith for a Purposeful Life*

*Judson students:*

- Live on one of the safest college campuses in the U.S. (*USA Today*)
- Rate the quality of their relationships with faculty members significantly higher than do students at other 4-year private colleges. (*National Survey of Student Engagement*)
- Are challenged to be the best possible versions of themselves--women who aspire to high endeavor, lofty thought, and noble need. (*Judson Alma Mater*)

## Introducing a New Degree Master of Arts in Ministry



### Graduates are trained with these Program Learning Objectives:

- Interpret the Bible in light of its historical-grammatical context.
- Utilize the Church's theological heritage as an important resource in your personal spiritual development and ministry.
- Evaluate ministries in light of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.
- Lead in developing, designing, and implementing ministry programs.

### Master of Arts in Ministry

Biblical Studies  
OT 5200 – Introduction to Old Testament  
NT 5200 – Introduction to New Testament  
BH 5201 – Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics  
Theological Studies  
TH 6301 – Systematic Theology I  
TH 6302 – Systematic Theology II  
Ministerial Studies  
AP 5901 – Foundations of Apologetics  
BE 7404 – Preparing an Expository Message  
CM 7402 – The Work of Ministry  
CO 5704 – Marriage and Family Counseling  
EV 7401 – Personal and Church Evangelism  
LD 5801 – Leader and Follower Theory  
TH 5300 – Spiritual Formation

A new degree designed specifically for ministers and church leaders. Acquire practical skills on how to lead in a local church or support ministry. An accelerated degree that can be completed in 18-24 months. Available 100% online.

**LUTHER RICE**  
UNIVERSITY & SEMINARY  
[www.LRU.edu](http://www.LRU.edu)

**SPOTLIGHT ON CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION**



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile

Nursing students participate in class at the University of Mobile.



Photo by Bill Mathews

Students in Judson College's Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) program check the vital signs of METman, a patient simulator in the nursing skills lab.

paths is that adult learners with relevant experience earn college credit for that knowledge, said Danny Chancey, director of adult and professional studies at the University of Mobile (UMobile).

For example nursing students in the RN-to-BSN program at UMobile can take a two-hour validation course that awards up to 34 semester credit hours in their nursing curriculum. Those credit

hours, roughly equivalent to one year of full-time study, give students a tremendous head start on their path to a four-year degree, Chancey said.

"Earning credits for prior life experience is an opportunity for adult students to save time and money in addition to building confidence about returning to school," he said.

Flexibility is another impor-

tant word when it comes to the way colleges and universities are reaching out to adult learners. For example Judson has a unique rolling admissions policy for distance learning students, which means students can begin their studies immediately upon acceptance into the program. The flexible calendar and individualized instruction from professors allow students to progress at their own pace, according to Chen.

"Because they are not constrained by the cohort model at (See 'Life,' page 12)

***"Earning credits for prior life experience is an opportunity for adult students to save time and money."***

**Danny Chancey**

director of adult and professional studies, University of Mobile

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE**



*Are you looking for a community ...*

That is committed to academic excellence?

That will encourage a maturing understanding of your relationship with God?

That laughs together, supports one another, pushes each other and plays together?

***SEBC might be the place for you!***

**IMPACT THE WORLD**



**SOUTHEASTERN  
BIBLE COLLEGE**

2545 VALLEYDALE ROAD  
BIRMINGHAM, AL 35244


205.970.9211 | 1.800.749.8878  
admissions@sebc.edu | www.sebc.edu

**Holy Bible**

**Our Textbook.**  
**TRUETT SEMINARY**

The Bible is the foundation of the Truett Seminary curriculum. We believe the Scriptures are the inspired, authoritative, written Word of God. Truett students engage in thorough study of the Scriptures, examine a wide range of Christian texts and employ critical-thinking skills paramount to developing innovative ways to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

**Spring Preview  
March 26-27, 2015**

 **BAYLOR  
TRUETT SEMINARY**

**LEARN MORE [baylor.edu/truett](http://baylor.edu/truett)**



Photo courtesy the University of Mobile

Online classes are not for every student. Many adults returning to school after being out of the classroom for several years need to feel more connected to the campus environment.

# Life is a valuable TEACHER

## Online classes provide flexibility for adult students

*(continued from page 11)*

all times they are allowed to concentrate on the areas in which they need further study or ... move on quickly to new learning materials and gain new skills. This establishes momentum in a course and in the end often leads to a faster path to graduation," Chen said.

Online classes are another popular option with nontraditional students. The benefit of online programs is that students are not bound to on-campus classes and schedules, Chancey said. Once again, the key word is flexibility.

"Flexibility is an important issue for adults who are starting or completing a college degree, particularly if they are juggling work and family responsibilities," he said.

For example UMobile now offers a fully online bachelor's degree in Marketplace Ministry, a program geared toward new or returning college

students interested in careers in church ministry, chaplaincy or faith-based nonprofit work. The flexible schedule allows students to integrate schoolwork into the routine of their lives.

"We've had students tell us they are submitting projects online at 2 a.m. because that worked for them and professors answering questions online at 3 a.m. We even had a student who took an exam for an online course while he was on a vacation cruise," Chancey said.

Online classes are not for every student, however. Many adults returning to school after being out of the classroom for several years need to feel more connected to the campus environment.

For that reason programs like Samford University's Evening Studies program are popular with adult learners. Evening College provides working adults the flexibility and access they need while also building a sense of community be-

***"We pride ourselves on building a community of excellence that prepares our students."***

**Chris McCaghren**  
assistant to the president  
for external programs  
Samford University



**FLEXIBLE**  
UNAPOLOGETICALLY CHRISTIAN

**AFFORDABLE**  
FULLY ACCREDITED

**B** Blue Mountain  
College 1873

Find us on Facebook

@NewatBlue

[bmc.edu](http://bmc.edu)

1.800.235.0136

**SPOTLIGHT ON CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION**



Photo courtesy of Samford University

tween instructors and other students, said Chris McCaghren, assistant to the president for external programs at Samford in Birmingham.

“We pride ourselves on building a community of excellence that prepares our students for advancement in their professional careers and personal lives, all within a supportive and encouraging environment,” McCaghren said.

Chancey said opportunities for adult learners are all about recognizing that life is a valuable teacher and rewarding that knowledge.

**Preparing students**

“Many people forget that raising a family and working a full-time job are filled with opportunities to develop the same skills and gain vast amounts of knowledge that traditional-aged college students gain through their collegiate experiences,” Chancey said.

“Adults spend the majority of their time solving problems on the job and at home which develops analytic skills and collection of knowledge that can be translated into earned college credit.”



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile

*“Adults spend the majority of their time solving problems on the job and at home which develops analytic skills and collection of knowledge that can be translated into earned college credit.”*

**Danny Chancey**

director of adult and professional studies, University of Mobile

university of  
**mobile**



**ONLINE**  
**BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MARKETPLACE MINISTRY**

Your Alabama Baptist university can help equip you to answer God’s call in your life with

- An Affordable College Degree
- Relevant Practical Applications
- Delivered to you Completely Online

This **ONLINE** college degree is ideal if you are

- Starting or Continuing a College Degree
- Beginning or Transitioning to a career in Ministry
- Ministering in Non-traditional or Traditional settings
- Desiring Biblical Knowledge and Understanding
- Needing a Flexible Online College Program
- Seeking an Affordable Option

**REGISTER NOW FOR ONLINE CLASSES**

Learn more at [learnonline.umobile.edu](http://learnonline.umobile.edu)  
or call the University of Mobile at 855.446.9571

\*The Bachelor of Science in Marketplace Ministry is Pending approval by SACSCOC



#BELIEFINU | UMOBILE.EDU | 800.WIN.RAMS | 855.446.9571

# Tips for college SUCCESS

1. Learn how to take notes.
2. Learn how to communicate with your teachers.
3. Do your homework.
4. Practice writing essays.
5. Remember that college is not an extension of high school.
6. Put your phone down and study.
7. Eat healthy.
8. Ask for help.
9. Learn to research.
10. Get involved in campus life activities, service projects and missions.

(Source: UMobile)

# Addressing worldly CULTURE

## Colleges seek to avoid sexual assault on campus

**T**he horrific volume of sexual assaults on United States college campuses is not only a reflection of the wickedness in individual assailants' hearts, it is the fruit of a campus culture awash in sexual immorality.

Though perpetually an issue at colleges and universities, the blight of rape was highlighted Jan. 27 by the conviction of two former Vanderbilt University football players for sexually assaulting an unconscious female student in 2013. Ultimate blame for this crime lies with the men who committed it, illustrating the truth of Jeremiah 17:9 that "the heart is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable — who can understand it?" These men, having been found guilty by jury trial, deserve to be punished in accordance with the law.

### University culture

But there is more that must be said. During the trial one defendant's attorney argued that the "university's culture of hard drink-



Photo courtesy the University of Mobile

ing and easy hookups" contributed to his client's behavior. *The New York Times* reported. Though the claim "infuriated" many Vanderbilt students who defend their school's "party culture," according to the *Times*, and though the claim does not excuse his client's behavior, sociological data and Scripture suggest the attorney may be on to something.

Consider the sociological data

first. In December 2014, the U.S. Department of Justice released a report stating that the rate of sexual assaults among college-age females is three times higher than among non-college-age women. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism found that 4 out of 5 college students drink alcohol, and half of those binge drink. Combine that with statistics reported by Ohio State University

Apply today @ [www.hlg.edu/admissions](http://www.hlg.edu/admissions)

## Southern Baptist Heritage 50% TUITION SCHOLARSHIP

### SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFICATIONS:

- Active member of a Southern Baptist Church  
(Church recommendation required)
- Full-time, degree-seeking enrollment
- Meet all admission guidelines
- Residential student at HLGU

"Hannibal-LaGrange University's heart for the Lord is both encouraging and refreshing to be around, which makes for a unique college environment. I love my HLGU and I am so glad God led me here!"

- Arielle Willis



**Hannibal-LaGrange  
UNIVERSITY**

*Knowledge for Service*

Hannibal, MO | 800.HLG.1119

[www.hlg.edu](http://www.hlg.edu)

For more information scan the code



SPRING PREVIEW DAY

FRIDAY March 13th 2015

A CHANCE FOR A \$500 SCHOLARSHIP!

- Enjoy Lunch on Us
- Connect with Faculty & Students
- Join us in Student-led Worship
- Financial Aid Briefing

Reserve Your Spot by March 9!

[baptistcollege.edu/previewday](http://baptistcollege.edu/previewday)  
or call 800.328.2660 x460

YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS IT!

FACULTY VS. STUDENT BASKETBALL GAME!



MARK YOUR

CALENDAR!



The Baptist College of Florida  
est. 1948

**SPOTLIGHT ON CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**4 out of 5 college students drink alcohol, and half of those binge drink.**

**National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism**

researcher Morgan Van Epp that 70 percent of college males and 60 percent of college females report becoming sexually active before age 17.

Sexual promiscuity seems to be embraced officially at some college campuses with “Sex Week” occurring at Harvard, Yale, Brown, Northeastern, the University of Kentucky, Indiana University and Washington University, among others, the *Times* reported. Typically sex weeks feature instruction on sexual health and pleasure, according to the *Times*, without emphasizing abstinence until marriage.

Sexual assault seems a predictable outcome of this setting, with young women as its most frequently abused victims.

The Bible addresses rape as well, with sexual assaults often presented in Scripture as symptomatic of a wicked culture.

► Sodom’s wickedness was epitomized by the attempted gang rape of two angelic messengers (Gen. 19:4–11).

► In Judges, the rape of a Levite’s concubine by the men of Gibeah illustrated the extent to which God’s people collectively had departed from Him (Judg. 19:22–30). As the author of Judges notes repeatedly, “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever he wanted” (Judg. 17:6; 21:25).

► Following King David’s

adultery with Bathsheba, the moral decline of his family included Amnon’s rape of his sister Tamar (2 Sam. 13:1–22) and Absalom’s sexual assault of his father’s concubines (2 Sam. 16:22).

► When the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem their rape of Jewish women illustrated the extent of pagan culture’s brutality (Lam. 5:11; Zech. 14:2). This was a stark contrast to God’s standards for Israel, where rape could be a capital offense (Deut. 22:23–29).

In these instances Scripture implicates not only the guilty individuals but also suggests the sexual assaults were the fruit and manifestation of a sinful environment.

Of course, wicked acts do not always stem from a sinful environment. For example Judas betrayed the Son of God. Surely his behavior did not stem from a sinful culture among Jesus and the disciples. And at times sexual assault occurs

at godly churches or Christian schools. It would be wrong to link each instance of sexual assault on campus with a university culture of promiscuity and alcohol.

Yet when as many as 25 percent of women in U.S. higher educational institutions will be victims of rape or attempted rape, according to a National Institute of Justice report, the problem is more than a few deviant assailants. As in Old Testament cases of rape, a

culture of immorality surrounding the offenders appears to help fuel their misdeeds.

Any lasting solution to sexual assault on college campuses must address the underlying culture in which drunkenness and illicit sex are viewed as permissible.

Kris Nelson, director of residential life at the University of Mobile (UMobile), said their campus culture tackles that problem head on.

“Our students are not immune from social pressures and they

come from all walks of life and from all parts of the world, including places where alcohol use is more of a social norm,” Nelson said. “I believe the difference is that as a university we’re very intentional and unapologetic about our standards.”

**Dry campus**

As a completely dry campus — and a campus that enforces strict visiting policies in the residence halls — UMobile keeps hurdles in

place that curtail the possibility of sexual assault, he said. Removing alcohol from the equation means students are statistically at much less risk, Nelson said.

“There are many studies that show students don’t want to binge drink; they binge drink because they think that’s what’s expected of them,” he said. “They think that’s the social norm. On our campus it’s not the social norm. They know it’s not going to be accepted.” (BP, TAB)

**“We’re very intentional and unapologetic about our standards.”**

**Kris Nelson  
director of residential life  
University of Mobile**

HELPING YOU BECOME THE PERSON  
GOD IS CALLING YOU TO BE.

Combining *faith* with **ACTION!**

**SAMFORD**  
UNIVERSITY

www.samford.edu

Produced by Samford Office of Marketing and Communication  
Samford University is an Equal Opportunity Educational Institution/Employer.

**Choose Faulkner**

A Christian university located in Montgomery with extension campuses in Birmingham, Huntsville and Mobile. Degrees offered on-campus and online. Experience the Faulkner difference!

**Faulkner University**  
A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

faulkner.edu | 1-800-879-9816

# Sharing across Alabama

## FBC Trussville to host 2015 State Evangelism Conference

By Maggie Walsh  
The Alabama Baptist

**I**nspiration. That is the mission of the 2015 Alabama Baptist State Evangelism Conference — to inspire participants to share the gospel across the state and around the world.

Built on the foundation of the 2014 theme, “Serving Across Alabama,” the 2015 conference will focus on “Sharing Across Alabama” and will feature three strategies for sharing the gospel: the CAST method, the 3 Circles method and the My Hope with Billy Graham method.

The two-day conference will be held at First Baptist Church, Trussville, beginning Feb. 23 with an evening rally at 5:45 p.m. The Feb. 24 sessions start at 9 a.m., 1:55 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. The Tuesday evening rally will be centered on worship, said Sammy Gilbreath, director of the office of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM), which sponsors the event.

Rick Lance, executive director of SBOM, said that “much is in store” for participants of this year’s conference.

“In a world starving for the good news of the gospel, we can be people who share what Jesus Christ offers to those who do not know Him,” Lance said.

Gilbreath said the event’s mission of inspiration will encourage participants who may feel like their spiritual well is running dry.

### ‘Spiritually fed’

“I find a lot of pastors and staff hurting and maybe they can come and just get spiritually fed as well as enjoy the fellowship of pastors they do not get to see often,” Gilbreath said.

“Keeping evangelism on the front burner” paired with the potential for the Lord to speak to them should be strong motivators for pastors and lay people to attend, Gilbreath said.

Speakers for the Monday session will be Charles T. Carter, pastor emeritus of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, and Robert Smith, professor of preaching at Samford University’s Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham.

Tuesday’s speakers include Scott Dawson, founder of the Scott Dawson Evangelistic Association; Dan Garland, regional

director of LifeWay Christian Resources; Kevin Hamm, pastor of Gardendale First Baptist Church; Thomas Hammond, pastor of First Baptist Church, Alpharetta, Ga.; Josh Lancaster, pastor of Underwood Baptist Church, Florence; and Herb Reavis Jr., pastor of North Jacksonville Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.

Worship will be led by the Gardendale First choir and it’s minister of worship, Roy McNiel. Frank Jones, founder of Frank Jones Ministries, will provide the pre-session music for the Monday evening rally. Daniel Crews, resident artist at First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla., will

provide special music for each of the Tuesday sessions.

A Ministers’ Wives Luncheon will be held at First, Trussville, on Feb. 24 at noon with Charlotte Madison as the guest speaker. Madison’s husband, Ron, is pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church, Huntsville.

Hamm, one of the conference speakers, said he can’t wait for the event to begin.

“If we ever needed an awakening or a God-movement in our state of Alabama, in our nation, now’s the time,” Hamm said.

### ‘Set us on fire’

“My prayer is that God would just set us on fire and that we’ll go back to our areas of ministry and spread that fire ... and that in the end the glory of God will be increased and the kingdom of God would grow.”

**For more information about the conference, visit [alsbom.org](http://alsbom.org). To register for the luncheon, visit [alabamawmu.org](http://alabamawmu.org) or call 1-800-264-1225, ext. 325.**

## LEEDS STAINED GLASS, INC.

SINCE 1995

Toll-free: 888.699.9679

AL local: 205.699.9679

Call for **FREE** on-site consultation

Ask for Terry Barnes, Owner

information@LeedsStainedGlass.com

Visit [www.LeedsStainedGlass.com](http://www.LeedsStainedGlass.com) for online gallery!



## Living with a Reverse Mortgage

By Jimmy Dixon

“What is it like to have a reverse mortgage?” Max and Carolyn Youngblood (a retired pastor and wife) have answered:

“Carolyn and I took out a reverse mortgage a little over two years ago after reading Jimmy Dixon’s article in *The Alabama Baptist*. Jimmy came to our home and he was most knowledgeable, kind and patient — a true Christian gentleman.

We decided to apply because we had a mortgage that was a struggle to pay each month. Plus there were some improvements that we wanted to make to our home.

Since we closed on our reverse mortgage, life is better because we no longer have any monthly payments

and our home looks so much better.

Each month we receive informative statements from the lender. We are pleased that we have a reverse mortgage and we highly recommend Jimmy to you.”

Remember, like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives. He is Bible study director and an active deacon at Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown. For a free brochure, quote or DVD, contact him directly at 205-567-4800 or [jdixon@mcgowinking.com](mailto:jdixon@mcgowinking.com).



Max and Carolyn



Jimmy Dixon



— Paid Advertising —

## in Loving Memory

of Alabama Baptist leaders, friends

### William “Bill” Franks

#### Retired pastor Franks dies at 82

William “Bill” Franks, who served as pastor of several Baptist churches, died Feb. 3. He was 82.



FRANKS

Franks served in the United States Air Force for 22 years. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Campbell College (now Campbell University) in Buies Creek, N.C., an associate of divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., and a master of divinity from Luther Rice Seminary in Lithonia, Ga.

He was pastor of a Baptist church in Tarrant and of another in Crane Hill. He also served as pastor of churches in Mississippi, Tennessee, Florida and North Carolina.

He was a member of First Baptist Church, Pelham, at the time of his death. Franks is survived by his wife, Ann; four children; six grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. (Neisha Roberts)

## ALL INCLUSIVE CHRISTIAN TOUR MINISTRY

for adults of all ages



Offering first-class, life-changing travel to all 50 states, with fellow believers from 23 states.

Now with pick up and return to Anniston, Birmingham and Tuscaloosa on most tours.

### Join us at our first Alabama Tour Preview Meetings (dutch treat):

March 2 — Supper meeting in Tuscaloosa  
March 3 — Lunch meeting in Birmingham  
March 3 — Supper meeting in Anniston

### UPCOMING 2015 TOURS INCLUDE:

March — Texas	Sept. — Alaskan Fall; D.C. Christian
May — Iowa; Biblical Creation	Heritage; Circle Lake Michigan
Grand Staircase	Oct. — American Treasures
June — Dakotas and Sota	Lancaster
July — Nicaragua	Nov. — Arkansas Fall
August — Pacific Northwest	Dec. — Christmas in GA & SC

Call 601-371-8733 for a catalog or meal reservations. Visit us on the web at [www.purposedriventours.org](http://www.purposedriventours.org).

# ‘Building the kingdom of God’

## NAMB missionary Lashey sees spiritual growth in Delaware community

**M**ark Lashey had zero desire to live in Delaware. There was no sweet tea, no biscuits. Children there didn’t say sir and ma’am. The Northeast seemed cold in terms of relationships, not to mention climate. Yes he understood his wife, Tammy, wanting to raise their children close to her parents, but the state held no other attraction for him.

Then he started praying during his regular neighborhood jogs. Through his prayers, God gave Lashey a burden for the community.

“There were times I would cry as I was running and praying for people,” Lashey said. “When I started praying for the people in this community, I started loving them.”

When the Lasheys moved to Delaware a few years after college, he was working as an accountant. Corporate America was good to the Lasheys, but their passion was music. With Tammy Lashey’s sister, Stephanie, and her husband, Rob Leight, the two couples formed Calling Levi. Along with a sound technician and a nanny, the couples traveled for 10 years throughout the United States, including Alaska, singing in churches and at special events. Most of their engagements were in the South.

Mark Lashey thought music would be his ticket out of Delaware and he wanted to move back to the Bible Belt where he spent many of his formative years in a military family.

“Every weekend we were traveling south,” Mark Lashey said as he continually rationalized the move, particularly as Calling Levi was on the verge of signing with a record label. “God was saying to us, ‘No, you are to stay in Delaware.’”

Now Mark Lashey knows why: “It was for such a time as this.”

Their community was a burgeoning suburbia comprised of four towns: Middletown, Odessa, Townsend and Smyrna. Mark Lashey learned that about 130,000 people lived within 15 miles of his family. Other families there were commuting to Philadelphia, Wilmington, Dover, Baltimore, Washington and even New York City for work. The families are mostly young and raising children.

### Singing accountant

“We prayed as we lived here that God would plant a church in our community,” he said, not realizing that God was calling a singing accountant to do something that pastors from the South were not willing to do — start a church in Delaware.

The Lasheys and Leights started a Tuesday night home Bible study called LifeHouse based on John 10:10.

The Lashey family has made Middletown, Del., their home where they helped launch LifeHouse Church. Mark and Tammy are parents of Abby-Jane (left), 14; Hudson (second from left), 12; and Sophia (front), 9.



NAMB photos by Colby Ware



**Main photo:** 2015 Week of Prayer missionary for Send North America Mark Lashey (right in sunglasses) greets participants at the Middletown, Del., Peach Festival. Lashey’s church plant, LifeHouse Church, sponsors a parade float and booth at the annual festival. **Small photo:** Church planter Mark Lashey (left) prays with Dana Steele at the LifeHouse Church’s booth hosted during the Middletown, Del., Peach Festival.

Fifteen came to the first meeting.

“It wasn’t pretty,” Mark Lashey recalled. “It was raw.”

The Bible study grew to about 100. Soon they were meeting at the Townsend Firehall on Tuesdays, which had space for their growing gathering. As the Bible study expanded, so did the team’s vision. LifeHouse would become a new church, and it launched Feb. 12, 2012. By August 2012, they were able to rent space at a school. The growth continued, and now averages about 650; about 200 are sixth grade or younger. Those 10 years of building relationships in the community are now bearing fruit.

“Our community is very receptive to the gospel,” Mark Lashey said. “They are (spiritually) hungry.”

Neither accounting nor music ministry prepared Mark Lashey for explosive growth. Not only did he not want to live in Delaware, he didn’t want to be a pastor. He had begun online seminary studies while with Calling Levi, but that was out of his hunger to better know God’s Word. His family had been traveling about 45 minutes one-way to attend the closest Southern Baptist church.

When the members of Calling Levi became the core group for a new church, little about the experience was conventional. Mark Lashey had no church planter training but he received much coaching from David Jackson, Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware’s (BCM/D) team strategist for church multiplication.

BCM/D’s June Holland prepared them for children’s ministry. Since the launch the North American Mission Board’s Farm System has provided one church planting intern and several student missionaries.

Mark Lashey knows their rapid growth is not typical for a new church, which is more reason to celebrate and pray.

“Hundreds of people have made professions of faith,” he said.

“Between 150 and 200 have been baptized by immersion. We are blown away.”

One of those conversions was Mike Wright, a former college wrestler who was teaching at the elementary school where LifeHouse met on Tuesday nights. He inquired about what was happening, and joined them the next week. Then he attended an Easter service.

“He started running after Jesus,” Mark Lashey said.

Today, Wright is married to Sheri, LifeHouse’s media director and the former technician for Calling Levi.

### Anticipating growth

No longer is Mark Lashey longing to leave Delaware. The state has become his home, and he plans to be there a long time as pastor of LifeHouse.

“I anticipate continued growth,” he said of the new church. “We want to be involved in church planting.”

“My heart is not to build a megachurch. We’ve not been focused on building a church, we’re building the kingdom of God.” (NAMB)

**ANNIE ARMSTRONG**  
EASTER OFFERING

National goal  
**\$60 million**

Alabama’s goal  
**\$6.1 million**

**SEND**  
NORTH AMERICA

For more information, visit  
[anniearmstrong.com](http://anniearmstrong.com).

**FREE** *ADMISSION*

# 2015 State Evangelism Conference

February 23-24

First Baptist Church,  
Trussville

**Monday at 5:45 p.m.  
Tuesday at 9 a.m.**

**Speakers: Charles Carter, Robert Smith, Josh Lancaster, Dan Garland, Herb Reavis, Scott Dawson, Thomas Hammond, Kevin Hamm**

**Special Music: Daniel Crews** with additional worship leadership by **choirs from FBC Trussville and Gardendale FBC**

*For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Amy Nelson at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 258, or (334) 613-2258, [anelson@alsbom.org](mailto:anelson@alsbom.org).*



Alabama Baptist Convention  
**State Board of Missions**

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



# DIGITAL SIGNS



"The response to our digital sign has been amazing! We are able to get so much information to our community on a daily basis. The color and clarity of the digital sign make it an attraction for all those passing by. We could not be more pleased with the digital sign and our new ability to reach more people with our message. Thank you Reliable Signs!"

— Allen Drew, Crossroad Baptist Church

[www.reliablesigns.com](http://www.reliablesigns.com)  
1.800.729.6844 • 205.664.0955



Follow us on Twitter  
@AlabamaBaptist



**\$20 Heart Screenings on Love Your Heart Day at Baptist.**

# CAMPUS News



## JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson College to Host Spring Preview and Scholarship Day on Feb. 21:** Prospective Judson College students and their parents are invited to visit the Marion campus, explore the college's academic programs, meet current students and faculty and learn more about admissions and financial aid at the February Preview and Scholarship Day on Feb. 21.

Check-in will begin at 8 a.m. Prospective students may spend the night in a residence hall (optional), meet faculty and staff in breakout sessions, have lunch in the college dining hall and participate in campus tours guided by Judson student ambassadors.

High school seniors and college transfer students who have applied to Judson may take an academic scholarship test to compete for one full- and five partial-tuition institutional scholarships. For more information, visit [www.judson.edu](http://www.judson.edu).

► **Judson College Students to Participate in Singing Competition:** The Music Department at Judson College will send six voice students to the Alabama State National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) competition.

Betty Campbell, professor of music, will present Christy Miller, Laura Thompson and Ana Williams.

Sadie Frazier, adjunct professor

of voice and music history, will present Jordan Ross, Kaitlyn Garrison and Blair Carrier.

A concert featuring the winning vocal finalists will be held Feb. 20 at 7 p.m. at the University of Alabama's St. Francis Catholic Church & Student Center in Tuscaloosa.

For more information, contact Frazier at 727-709-5951 or [sfrazier@judson.edu](mailto:sfrazier@judson.edu).

► **Judson College to Host Only Intercollegiate Horse Show Association Western Show in State on Feb. 21:** Judson College will host two Western shows at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. featuring riders from Intercollegiate Horse Show Association Zone 5, Region 2. Select schools also are invited to participate, including the University of Alabama and Samford University in Birmingham.

The public is welcome to attend the event. For more information, contact Judson equine coach Jennifer Hoggle at 334-683-6866 or by email at [jhoggle@judson.edu](mailto:jhoggle@judson.edu).

## UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **University of Mobile Receives Grant:** The University of Mobile (UMobile) has received a \$140,000 grant from the Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation Inc., to provide scholarships for women attending the university during the 2015-2016 academic year.

For information about scholarships and financial aid at UMobile, contact enrollment services at 251-442-2222 or visit [umobile.edu](http://umobile.edu).

► **University of Mobile Crowns Miss University of Mobile:** Emily Danforth, a vocal performance major from Pensacola,



DANFORTH

Fla., won the title of Miss University of Mobile at the 50th anniversary of the pageant Feb. 7. Danforth will compete for the title of Miss Alabama in June in Birmingham at Samford University.

First runner-up was Miranda Freeman, a music education major from Lucedale, Miss. Freeman also won the swimsuit portion of the competition and the People's Choice award. Second runner-up was Chelsea Seitz, a senior music education major from Mobile.

Ashton Lewis, a sophomore worship leadership and communication major from Gilbertown, won the talent portion. Miss Congeniality was Barbara Scott, a junior political science major from McCrory, Ark. (Ember Langley)

## SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Samford Professors Receive Top Awards:** Samford University professors Moya Nordlund and Steven Epley were recognized during the 2015 spring semester opening convocation Jan. 27. Each has taught at the school for more than 20 years.

Nordlund, chair of academic studies in the School of the Arts' Division of Music, received the George Macon Memorial Award for outstanding performance as a teacher, counselor and friend.

Epley, professor of English in the Howard College of Arts and Sciences, received the Jennings B. Marshall Service Award for significant and sustained service contributions to the university.

Each received a \$1,000 cash prize presented by Samford provost J. Bradley Creed.

► **Samford Professor Inducted into Gold Key Society:** Samford University communication studies professor Michael Janas was inducted into the 2015 Barkley Forum Gold Key society Jan. 23.

The Gold Key society recognizes significant contributions to forensics education and is the most prestigious honor given by the Barkley Forum of Emory University in Atlanta. 🏆

For one day only on February 28th, Baptist South is offering heart screenings for only \$20. We'll test your **cholesterol, blood pressure and resting EKG**, and assess your risk for heart trouble. It's all part of Baptist's Love Your Heart Day, and includes a free light breakfast after your tests. So join us and show your heart just how much you love it.

**Love Your Heart Day  
February 28th**

**Call 334.273.4304 to register**



[BaptistLoveYourHeart.com](http://BaptistLoveYourHeart.com)

# LETTERS

## TO THE EDITOR



### REALITY TV SHOW

It was brought to my attention a few days ago that a new reality TV show will be launched Feb. 24 on the Women's Entertainment (WE) tv called "Sex Box." There will be an enclosed room with people seated around it. A couple will enter the box and have sex in it. After they finish they will join the group and discuss the experience. It is my understanding that a sex therapist will be present.

I am outraged at the idea of putting something so private on TV for public consumption.

This is going way too far. Even though most of us will simply not watch such a show, we must be concerned about many children and teenagers whose parents do not monitor their children's viewing habits.

It is time for Christians to rise up and be the salt of the earth before it is too late.

The WE tv is owned by AMC Network Entertainment. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is ultimately responsible. Please call and complain. The FCC number is 1-888-225-5322. The AMC number is 212-324-8500. Let us join together and stop this.

Louise Garrett  
Dothan, Ala.

### HOMOSEXUALITY

Let me preface these statements from the Bible by saying, yes, God loves gays and all sinners. However, He expects us to repent and turn away from our sins. The Bible says homosexuality is a sin, marriage is between a man and a woman and that a man should not lay with another man. It is the only sin that God put extra emphasis on by calling it an abomination.

God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah for the sin of homosexuality plus several other towns not mentioned by name in the Bible. Any minister who condones homosexuality and performs gay "marriages" is in direct conflict with God and is not obeying His Word. This would make you a false prophet and as the Bible says, the truth is not in you.

In summary, the Bible also says that in the latter days right will become wrong and wrong shall become right. Evidently we are in those latter days.

True Christians should hold true to the Scriptures and be

not deceived by false prophets (preachers) and those who claim to represent God and His Word but promote sin. The Bible tells us we shall know them by the fruit they bear. We are seeing it all come to pass with our own eyes.

Billy E. Price  
Ashville, Ala.

### 'CHURCH LIFE'

The "Church Life" series in the January issues of *The Alabama Baptist* was very much in agreement with my church experience in recent years. Both my family and my son's family were members of churches where the worship services became about attracting and entertaining a certain demographic of the unchurched rather than true inclusive worship.

Two generations of my fam-

ily were on the way to becoming "dones" until we changed churches recently. Our son is now attending an Episcopal church where his family found authenticity in traditional liturgy and the sacraments. We have joined a nearby Southern Baptist church where there is love, joy and reverence in the worship services.

It was encouraging to learn from the Church Life series that the importance of God-centered worship is becoming more widely recognized.

Name withheld  
Hoover, Ala. ☞

## Download Our Free Church Bus Buyers Guide.

**THEBUSCENTER**.com



Find us on  
**Facebook**  
*The Alabama Baptist*  
newspaper.

## MARKET PLACE

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

### CHURCH POSITIONS

**SENIOR PASTOR:** Loxley First Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a senior pastor. Send resumé to: info@fbcloxley.com or to: First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 114, Loxley, AL 36551.

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

**MINISTER OF MUSIC:** Greensboro Baptist Church is accepting resúmes for the position of full-time minister of music. Interested parties should mail resúmes to: Greensboro Baptist Church, c/o Search Committee, 908 Main Street, Greensboro, AL 36744 or email resúmes to: greensboro@bellsouth.net.

**PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER:** First Baptist Church of Red Bay, Ala., is seeking a part-time music minister. Send resumé to: First Baptist Church, c/o: Music Minister Search Committee, P.O. Box 616, Red Bay, AL 35582. 256-356-9505.

**STUDENT PASTOR:** First Baptist Church of Alexander City announces a full-time position for student pastor grades 7-12. Resúmes are accepted at P.O. Box 400, Alexander City, AL 35011 and spsc@fbc-ac.org.

**YOUTH MINISTER:** Red Bay First

Baptist Church is seeking a full-time youth minister. Resúmes may be sent to: Glen Vinson, P.O. Box 360, Red Bay, AL 35582, or emailed to: glen93@bellsouth.net.

### OTHER POSITIONS

**CHURCH SECRETARY:** Eastside, Birmingham, is seeking an exemplary Christian to support the pastoral staff as part of a dynamic ministry team leading the church in reaching the community. Proficiency in MS Office, publication design, office equipment, office administration and good communication skills required. 30 hour week. Send resúmes to: bfmurphy@bham.rr.com.

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANT:** FBC Birmingham is accepting resúmes for the position of full-time financial assistant. Please send resumé to: Cyndy James at cjames@fbcbh.org.

**PIANIST:** First Baptist Church, Union Grove, is seeking a pianist. For more information, call 256-753-2704.

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY:** Cloverdale Baptist Church is seeking a financial secretary. Applicants must be a Christian and have previous experience as a financial secretary. The church uses the ACS software. Therefore, ACS experience is preferred. Resúmes will be received through March 4. Please address resúmes to: Cloverdale Baptist Church, Personnel Committee, 806 Dexter Street, Dothan, AL 36301. Re-

sumés may also be emailed to: ray@cloverdaledothan.com.

**DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS:** Limestone Baptist Association is accepting resúmes for director of missions through Feb. 28. Please send to: P.O. Box 1530, Athens, AL 35612 or robert@limestonebaptist.org.

### BUSINESS

**WEBSITES:** Website design, hosting and support. Simple, inexpensive and effective websites by http://www.simplewebsites.info. Contact us by contact form on website or by email: crcking@knology.net (church or ministry \$100 total).

**TIME TO REPLACE THAT OLD CHURCH SIGN?:** Reliable Sign Services, a Christian-operated, full-service sign company for two decades, is ready to assist you as you expand your church sign ministry. From electronic message boards to traditional signs, Reliable will fabricate and install statewide or ship anywhere. www.reliablesigns.com. 1-800-729-6844, 205-664-0955.

**MOVING? LOCAL, STATEWIDE OR LONG DISTANCE:** Coleman American/Allied Van Lines. Special rate and programs for Alabama Baptist ministers, staff and church members. Contact Gary Washington at 205-942-0009 or birmingham.al@covan.com.

**FOR SALE NEW & USED STAIR-**

**LIFTS:** Lift chairs, power wheelchairs, car lifts, scooters and walk-in tubs. We service Alabama. 1-800-682-0658.

### CHURCH CONSTRUCTION

**CHURCH PROJECT:** If you are planning a church project, new building, remodeling or upgrade of existing building, for free estimate or budget price, call Central Associates Inc., at 251-421-2075.

### TRAVEL/VACATION

**AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE CONDOS:** Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Ala. Rent direct, Christian family owners. Lowest prices on the beach. Call 205-752-1231, 205-556-0368, 251-752-2366 or www.gulfshorescondos.com.

**PIGEON FORGE:** Great rates, prime location, 3 blocks from The Parkway. 2 BRs, 2 BAs. Sleeps 6. Fully furnished. Phone Denise at 205-275-9684 or visit www.vrbo.com/493050. Mention ad.

**LOG CABIN:** Lake Guntersville area, beautiful view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log on to www.paradisevista.net to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.

### FOR SALE

**MONITOR SYSTEM:** 1 M3R audio-technical stereo personal monitor system. Used only 5 times. New \$550. Price now is only \$400. Contact Randy Boone at Grove Hill Baptist Church, 251-275-3238 or randy@grovehillbaptist.org.

## Want to know GOD?

**Pastor Ray Jones**  
Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Dothan

Some years back researchers in Britain went door-to-door to get an idea about people's belief in God. One of the questions they asked was, "Do you believe in a God who intervenes in human history, who changes the course of affairs, who performs miracles, etc.?" When the results were in and the study was complete and printed, its title was taken from the response of a man who was considered fairly typical of all those who had responded. His answer was, "No, I don't believe in that God; I believe in the ordinary God."

Whatever you may think of God, the fact is He is anything but ordinary. He has demonstrated that fact by sending His only Son into the world to die for you. No other founder of any religious system has ever died for their followers — only Christ. And that is what sets Christ apart and what makes Him anything but ordinary. Romans 5:8 says, "But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Even more extraordinary is the fact that Jesus' dying for your sins is God's gracious gift of life for you. Paul said, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). You see, because Jesus died you can live. God offers this new life as a gift. It's not something you can earn; it's not about whether your good deeds outweigh your bad deeds. No one is so good that they do not need to be saved and no one is so bad that they can't be saved. It's not something you can purchase; you can't put a price on grace — it's a gift. All you can do with a gift is receive it.

Have you received the gift of eternal life? It really is that simple. Why not let today be the day that you acknowledge your need for Christ, recognize His everlasting love for you and call on Him to be your Savior and Lord. ☞



ALABAMA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES &amp; FAMILY MINISTRIES

# Legacy

protect.  
nurture.  
restore.

## Wills Do Not Work In Many Cases

Bob Dewhurst, VP, Ministry Development

**N**o, I am not saying you do not need a will. But I am saying that not everything that God has entrusted to your care can be passed through a will. Here are some things that WILL NOT.

- Property jointly owned passes to the co-owner. This includes funds in checking, savings and certificates of deposit.
- Real estate in joint names with rights of survivorship will pass to those who outlive you.
- Life insurance payable to named beneficiaries will pass directly to the beneficiaries and in order of survivorship unless otherwise stated. For instance, if an individual

has four children and wants distribution made equally, the beneficiary documents must indicate 25 percent (1/4) goes to each of the named beneficiaries. A list of the oldest to youngest without notation will often result in the oldest child receiving the entire amount.

- Pensions, retirements and other employee benefits payable to a named beneficiary also pass to the named beneficiary.
- Property transferred to a trust will pass to the beneficiaries named in the trust.

Regardless of these considerations, if you are seeking to be a good steward of all that God has entrusted to you, a Last Will and Testament is needed. Whether your stewardship responsibilities are simple or complex, help is available free, without cost or obligation and you will not be asked for a charitable gift. You can call me at 205-982-1112 or email me at [bdewhurst@alabamachild.org](mailto:bdewhurst@alabamachild.org).

## Grace Gifts

### MEMORIALS :

(The name of the deceased is bolded)

**Aiken, Annie April:** Patricia Loftin  
**Andrews, Dusty, Ozark:** Rusty Andrews  
**Andrews, Evelyn Garvin,** Dothan: Rusty Andrews  
**Andrews, Lomax,** Ozark: Rusty Andrews  
**Bice, Doris:** Mary Ann Short  
**Bray, Max,** Monroeville: Eastwood BC of Monroeville, Men's Adult II SS of Eastwood BC  
**Brooks, James,** Atmore: Eastwood BC of Monroeville  
**Bryan, James:** Carlton & Virginia Sharpless  
**Bush, Lucille,** McKenzie: Mrs. John E. Fischer  
**Catrett, Elsie,** Butler: Pine Hill BC  
**Chastang, Annie Lou:** Durant Chapel BC of Bay Minette  
**Chitwood, Dorris:** Ken & Betty Schroeder  
**Cole, Lois B.:** West Highland BC of Andalusia  
**Dumas, Benny,** Jackson: Forest Avenue BC of Jackson, Lloyd & Catherine Gaddy  
**Esary, D.L.,** Concord: Concord BC of Bessemer  
**Farrior, Miss Myrtha:** Wilma Revel  
**Farrior, Mr. & Mrs. W.C.:** Wilma Revel  
**Fleming, Delaine,** Jackson: Forest Avenue BC of Jackson  
**Flowers, Winnie:** Pleasant Grove BC of Salem  
**Foreman, Hannah,** Dickson: Lloyd & Catherine Gaddy  
**Gaddy, Johnny,** Thomasville: Lloyd & Catherine Gaddy  
**Gibbs, Molly Anderson,** Mobile: Mildred Ratcliffe  
**Gibson, Beth G.:** Sarah A. Gibson  
**Giles, Eloise Gunn:**  
 Elva W. Hubbard & Mary Charles Giles  
**Gullatte, John W., Sr.,** Salem:  
 Pleasant Grove BC of Salem  
**Gullett, Evelyn,** Valley Grande: Clifford & Sara Melton  
**Harden, Ann,** Monroeville: Eureka BC of Franklin

**Holder, Ray,** Georgiana: Brushey Creek BC of Chapman  
**Huckabaa, Will,** Pine Hill: Pine Hill BC  
**Hudson, Lloyd,** Opelika: Pleasant Grove BC of Salem  
**Isherwood, Alice Jo,** Fairhope: Mildred Ratcliffe  
**Knight, Terrell Ann:** Mary Ann Short  
**Langley, Ralph,** Linden: Providence BC of Gallion  
**Lindsey, Charles:** Dorcus SS of Ebenezer BC of Butler  
**Loomis, Keith:** Frances Ryles  
**Lumpkin, Mary Lou:** Ken & Betty Schroeder  
**McIntosh, Eva,** Georgiana: Brushey Creek BC of Chapman  
**Mandy, Robert:** Mary Ann Short  
**Melton, Mrs. Jonlee,** Centreville: Centreville BC  
**Moore, Nanny D.:** Mr. & Mrs. J. Wray Pearce  
**Neighbors, Billy,** Valley Grande: Clifford & Sara Melton  
**Nichols, Patricia,** Conroe, TX: Naheola Credit Union, Mr. & Mrs. Mark Johnson, Mr. & Mrs. Alan Sharpe  
**Nolen, Harold,** McKenzie: Brushey Creek BC of Chapman  
**O'Connor, Carson, Jr.,** Greenville:  
 Brushey Creek BC of Chapman  
**Osborne, Jack,** Duncanville: Centreville BC  
**Overstreet, Joe,** Atmore:  
 Carlton & Virginia Sharpless  
**Reed, Lillian,** Gadsden: Charles & Jeanette Taul  
**Reed, Wayne,** Mt. Olive: Pine Hill BC  
**Roberts, Chester,** Grove Hill:  
 Lloyd & Catherine Gaddy  
**Salter, Sylvia Dianne:** Brushey Creek BC of Chapman  
**Scruggs, Buddy,** Georgiana:  
 Brushey Creek BC of Chapman  
**Scurlock, Mary:** Centreville BC  
**Sharpless, John E.,** Fairhope:  
 Carlton & Virginia Sharpless  
**Short, Donald H.:** Mary Ann Short

**Stabler, Bessie,** Franklin: Eureka BC of Franklin  
**Stoudenmire, Tootie,** Eastaboga: Clifford & Sara Melton  
**Ward, Eldrid,** Jackson: Forest Avenue BC of Jackson  
**White, Bobbie Glenda (Strickland),** Cantonment, FL:  
 Charles & Cindy Jackson  
**Williams, Eunice:** Lloyd & Catherine Gaddy  
**Williams, Tom,** Bellamy: Mildred Ratcliffe  
**Williamson, Byron Wesley:** Joan A. Larkin and Michael  
**Wood, Curtis,** Grove Hill: Lloyd & Catherine Gaddy  
**Yelverton, Kip,** Gallion: Providence BC of Gallion

### HONORS :

**Abbott, Rev. Bill & Susan,** Southside:  
 Mrs. Zoe Benefield  
**Farrior, Miss Myra:** Wilma Revel  
**Gibson, Joseph David,** Butler: Sarah A. Gibson  
**Gibson, Samuel G., Berea,** KY: Sarah A. Gibson  
**Hall, Mr. & Mrs. Joe,** Gadsden: Mrs. Zoe Benefield  
 Love, Glenn & Family, Mountain Brook:  
 Mr. & Mrs. J. Wray Pearce  
**Lowery, Mr. & Mrs. Bob,** Gadsden:  
 Mrs. Zoe Benefield



Alabama Baptist  
**CHILDREN'S HOMES**  
 & Family Ministries

P.O. Box 361767  
 Birmingham, AL 35236-1767

Telephone: (205) 982-1112  
 Toll Free: (888) 720-8805

[www.alabamachild.org](http://www.alabamachild.org)  
[www.pathwaysprofessional.com](http://www.pathwaysprofessional.com)

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For February 22

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

### COMMIT YOUR WAY TO THE LORD Nehemiah 10:28-39

When Ezra read the Torah to the people of post-exilic Jerusalem their immediate response was brokenness, bitter tears and religious fervor (Neh. 8). Those who had been entrusted by God with civil, noble and spiritual leadership led the people who understood the Law and repented of their sins to make a public confession (Neh. 9) followed by this public commitment. This culture had great respect for those in authority and decisions were made for the group rather than the individual. This joint commitment — under the authority of leaders, Levites and priests — was a first step in corporate repentance. To fail in fulfilling their commitment was to bring shame to the people of Judah.

As we consider the promises made in this week's passage let us keep two items in mind: first, their promises had been revealed by God in the Torah nearly a millennium before and second, their commitment to God was sincere, for a time.

#### Commitment Made (28-29)

Who made the commitment to follow Yahweh and order their actions after His Torah? Everyone old enough to understand that they had broken God's Law. Nobles and common folk, old and young, rich and poor had been called to repent. Those who did repent joined the group who promised allegiance to the Law. Note this: Not everyone who heard the Law of Moses repented.

#### Holiness Sought (30)

In Leviticus 11:44 Yahweh calls His people to holy living, separate from the Canaanites who were living in the Promised Land. Their call to holiness included abstinence from numerous sexual activities which the land's inhabitants practiced in their fertility rites during worship of Baal and Asherah (Lev. 18:1-30). The Torah clearly forbade marriage of polytheistic Gentiles (Deut. 7:1-6), explaining that "they will turn your sons away from Me

to worship other gods" (7:4). After hearing the public reading of the Law by Ezra (Neh. 8), the people were committing to honor the Torah and remain separate from the unbelieving people groups who surrounded Jerusalem.

Unless this verse is read in historical context some might claim that the Jews were practicing racism. The issue here, however, is not about race or ethnicity. Instead, it is a matter of faith. Jews who believed Yahweh to be God of heaven and earth had divorced their Jewish wives to marry unbelieving Gentile women. The "surrounding peoples" mentioned in this verse were remnants of polytheistic peoples who, though they had been exposed to the teaching of the one true God, rejected His authority and created gods in their own image, including Ammonites, Arabs and Philistines.

#### Worship Pledged (31-39)

We promise. "We promise to keep the Sabbath and observe the Sabbath year in our fields and in our debt cancellation. We promise to pay temple tax and annual offerings. We promise to bring wood for sacrifices when it is our turn. We promise to bring first fruits from our fields and trees, first fruits from our flocks and herds and a tenth of all our harvest and new livestock. We, the Levites, promise to gather a tenth of the tithe into the storerooms and we promise not to neglect caring for the temple. We promise to do what our God has already required us to do according to His Torah. We are the leaders of Jerusalem and we approve of this message."

In their study materials for the Multiply Movement, Francis Chan and David Platt discuss how religious fervor following a challenging message differs from discipleship. Pastors and leaders get excited when decisions are made, when altars are full and when eyes are full of tears. But how long do the emotions linger? Read Nehemiah 13 to discover what happened in Jerusalem. Are you committed for the long haul? Time will tell. 📖

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

### READY WHEN PORNOGRAPHY CONTROLS 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

I write this lesson the very week the highly anticipated theatrical version of the book "Fifty Shades of Grey" is set to hit the big screens. It comes to theaters on Valentine's Day all across America. I would ask every Christian to read our selected passage before taking part in such an outing.

The creators of this movie are anticipating millions in revenue as they allure people to enter a highly sensualized world in which sex is cheapened and perverted. Paul's words to the Thessalonians are very direct. In the opening verses of the chapter Paul urges and exhorts the believers to abound in purity and honor the Lord with their lives. I can imagine Paul standing at the ticket counters at theaters all over America urging and exhorting believers to not support a movie that sickens the heart of God and perverts His will. It is pornography and it will poison your life.

#### The Call to Purity. (3)

The will of God for every believer is your sanctification. The words sanctification and holiness come from the same root word meaning "to separate yourself." For a Christian to truly experience the will of God we must separate ourselves from sexual immorality. God's highest desire for your life is sanctification and holiness. The call to purity in this verse is clear and intense. Therefore when we view or read pornography we are immediately out of God's will.

James Dobson found that when a person views pornographic images it causes a chemical reaction which leaves an indelible copy of the images in the person's mind, leaving immoral pictures that slowly eat away at a person's purity for years to come.

A recent survey showed 70 percent of men from 18 to 34 view a pornographic website at least once a month. We must make up our mind to not leave ourselves susceptible to viewing pornography.

#### The Action of Purity. (4-5)

"You should know how to control your own body." The literal Greek reads "to win mastery over your own vessel." Through the power of the Holy Spirit within the Christian, he or she has the ability to master or possess actions of the body. The power of the Holy Spirit in you is greater than the power of the lust of the flesh.

Paul gives a stark comparison of the mind of a believer and the mind of an unbeliever in this passage. The indwelling Spirit gives the Christian the power to possess and control his or her vessel while the unbelievers are not spiritually led to do so. When we are saved we are called to begin using our bodies as vessels of honor (Rom. 6:13).

Christians should be held accountable for what they view on television, computers and in magazines. Purchasing filters for your online experience will protect you and your family from intentionally or accidentally wandering on to a sensual website. Take action, be prepared and possess your vessel for the glory of God.

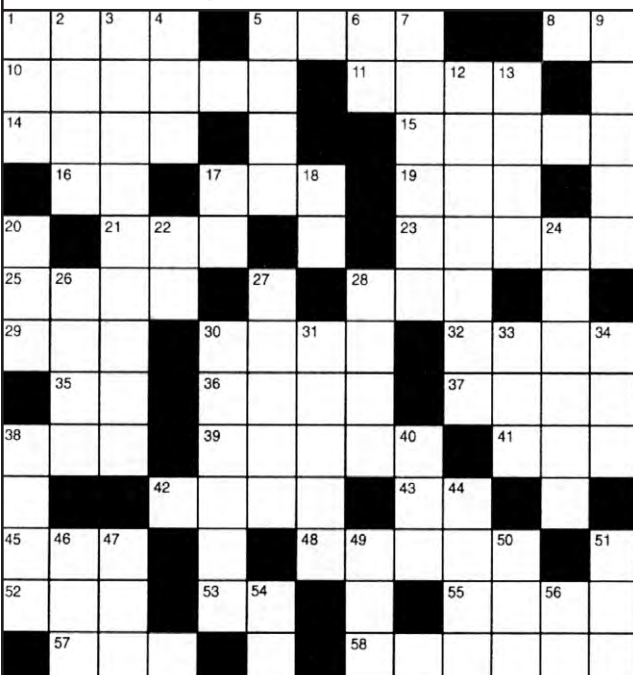
#### The Relational Aspect of Purity. (6-8)

Perhaps the phrasing of verse 6 gives us some idea of sins within the church of Thessalonica. Rarely does a person involve themselves in immorality without it having devastating effects on the people around them. Adultery, affairs, porn addiction, lustful eyes, inappropriate conversations or innuendos all affect other people in our lives.

Before making the decision to practice sexual immorality one must count the cost of that action. Pornography destroys marriages and thus destroys families. It leaves a wake of emotional distress as those closest to you are replaced with a fantasy. God has called all believers to holiness. Paul said when we view pornography we reject Him and His Holy Spirit within us (v. 8). Reject the temptation to view things that will pollute your mind. We are called to have the "mind of Christ" (Phil 2:5). Don't let your shades become grey — keep them white as snow through the purity of Christ. 📖

## Christian Crossword

By Udena McKee Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



### Across

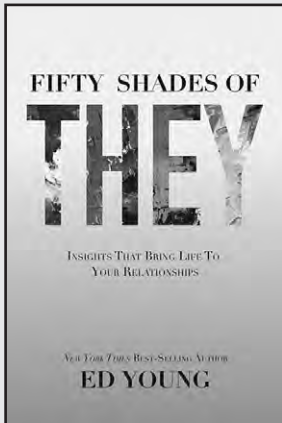
- If one went unto them from the \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 16:30)
- Sixth month of the Hebrew calendar. (Neh. 6:15)
- Give tribute unto Caesar, or \_\_\_\_\_? (Luke 20:22)
- A rod of an \_\_\_\_\_ tree. (Jer. 1:11)
- He made him to suck honey out of the \_\_\_\_\_. (Deut. 32:13)
- A good \_\_\_\_\_ is rather to be chosen. (Prov. 22:1)
- Satan ... smote Job with sore \_\_\_\_\_. (Job 2:7)
- Month. (abbr.)
- American Medical Association. (abbr.)
- Vase or vessel.
- The absence or reverse of.
- God set them in the heaven to give \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen. 1:17)
- \_\_\_\_\_ up thy strength. (Ps. 80:2)
- Legislator. (abbr.)
- A favorite.
- His enemy came and sowed \_\_\_\_\_s. (Matt. 13:25)
- The shepherds who \_\_\_\_\_ my people. (Jer. 23:2)
- Direction.

- To give off or out. (Gen. 19:38)
- A fine grit stone for sharpening.
- Do you submit to \_\_\_\_\_ rules. (Col. 2:20)
- And all the \_\_\_\_\_ of the land. (Lev. 27:30)
- To find fault.
- Behold, I send an angel before \_\_\_\_\_. (Ex. 23:20)
- Wind direction.
- \_\_\_\_\_ no man anything. (Rom. 13:8)
- There came two angels to \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen. 19:1)
- \_\_\_\_\_ consider how great this man was. (Heb. 7:4)
- Elkanah went to \_\_\_\_\_mah. (1 Sam. 2:11)
- \_\_\_\_\_ your heart and not your garments. (Joel 2:13)
- It shall bring forth \_\_\_\_\_ fruit. (Ezek. 47:12)
- Condemned, especially to hell.
- Female deer.
- Wilderness of \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Kings 3:8)
- Home of Abram. (Gen. 11:28)
- Small or partial lobe.
- At the beginning.
- Home of Aquila and Priscilla. (Acts 18:1-2)
- Now make us a \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Sam. 8:5)
- The weight thereof was \_\_\_\_\_hundred and thirty. (Num. 7:13)
- Arizona. (ZIP code abbr.)
- Child shall play on the hole of the \_\_\_\_\_. (Isa. 11:8)
- Either/\_\_\_\_\_.
- Wife of Elkanah. (1 Sam. 1:2)
- Do not \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord your God. (Deut. 6:16)
- Fiber.
- Third son of Adam and Eve. (Gen. 4:25)
- To fasten or restrain.
- Last \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen. 35:25)
- Variant of aeon.
- Degree. (abbr.)
- Iron sharpeneth \_\_\_\_\_. (Prov. 27:17)
- I shall keep it unto the \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 119:33)
- But I am a \_\_\_\_\_, and no man. (Ps. 22:6)
- They also may without the word be \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Pet. 3:1)
- Man had nothing, save one little \_\_\_\_\_ lamb. (2 Sam. 12:3)
- Remember the days of \_\_\_\_\_. (Deut. 32:7)
- Sons of God saw the daughters of \_\_\_\_\_. (Gen. 6:2)
- Strange or different.
- Morning time.
- Nebraska. (abbr.)

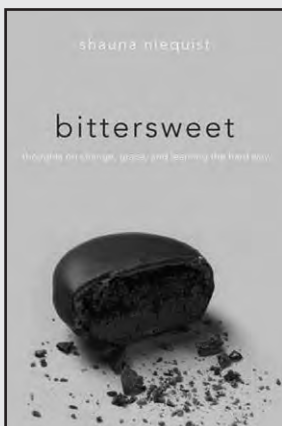


# TOP 5

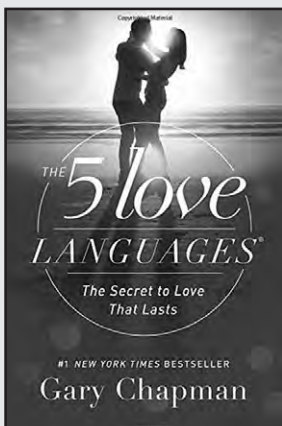
best-selling Christian books  
on Amazon at press time



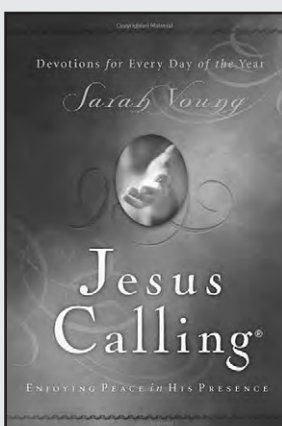
**1. Fifty Shades of They: Insights That Bring Life to Your Relationships**  
By Ed Young  
(Creality Publishing)



**2. Bittersweet: Thoughts on Change, Grace and Learning the Hard Way [Kindle Ed.]**  
By Shauna Niequist  
(Zondervan)



**3. The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts [Paperback]**  
By Gary D. Chapman  
(Northfield Publishing)



**4. Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence**  
By Sarah Young  
(Thomas Nelson)

**5. Scary Close: Dropping the Act and Finding True Intimacy**  
By Donald Miller  
(Thomas Nelson)

Source: amazon.com



Photo courtesy of Turning Point Media

# 'Real meaning'

## Hip-hop artist helps audiences find hope, healing

By Leann Callaway  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**B**y sharing the message behind the music, Christian hip-hop artist Nate Feuerstein — better known to audiences as “NF” — hopes to connect audiences to Christ’s un-failing love to sustain them during life’s darkest moments.

Although the 23-year-old Michigan native grew up attending church, many real-life struggles during his teenage years left him questioning the existence of God.

“I had a lot of problems growing up,” Feuerstein said. “My parents divorced when I was really young. My two sisters and I stayed with my mom for a little bit but my mom’s boyfriend was physically abusing me and one of my sisters. My dad took us from my mom and that whole situation got really messed up.

“Because of a lot of things that were going on, we kind of stopped having a relationship with my mom and didn’t really see her much. These experiences left me questioning a lot of things and I went through my teenage years wondering if God was real. Obviously that was a sketchy time in my life.”

A turning point came when Feuerstein realized his personal struggles and burdens were too much to deal with on his own. During this time Feuerstein sought comfort by returning to church and found the answers he had been searching for.

“God kind of smacked me in the face one day and gave me a wake-up call,” Feuerstein said. “I started going back to church and this lady came up to me. I remember her saying, ‘I feel like I need to remind you that God is real and wants to have a relationship with you. You need to know that.’”

During his senior year of high school Feuerstein

relied on his faith to sustain him when he received the devastating news that his mother died of a drug overdose.

“With her death, it made me realize all the moments that we will never spend together. It’s true that sometimes you don’t know what you have until it’s gone. Even with all her struggles she was still my mom and I loved her no matter what she did. With that happening during my senior year, it was a real struggle for me.”

In an effort to express his emotions Feuerstein turned to music and continued to find strength in God’s Word.

“God used music to allow me to express my emotions, my pain, my anger and my guilt,” he said.

“I feel like God has given me the opportunity to write songs that admit Christians struggle and have serious issues they are dealing with. I feel like my music reflects those struggles and the need for a Savior.”

Today as Feuerstein performs concerts and writes songs he desires to help others who are hurting find redemption and restoration through a relationship with Christ.

By sharing his personal struggles with audiences Feuerstein has been able to reach many teenagers and young adults who are facing difficult situations.

“Through all this God has given me a passion for all the kids out there that might be going through some of the things I did,” Feuerstein said. “That’s why I rap and write songs the way I do. That’s why my music is raw and real. I believe music should have real meaning, for real-life problems. God has used some of the worst things in my life for good.

“I still struggle with things but I feel like God has been teaching me to trust Him. ... I feel like God has been pressing into me and reminding me to let Him take control and turn my struggles over to Him.”

**“I feel like God has given me the opportunity to write songs that admit Christians struggle.”**

**Nate Feuerstein  
hip-hop artist**

# Jesus means 'everything'

## Sacramento Kings' Miller uses basketball as platform for faith

By Bill Sorrell  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Quincy Miller learned a lesson from an embarrassing on-court experience: Don't rag on a teammate. After laughing and joking about a teammate missing a dunk, Miller, a 6-foot-9-inch forward who was then playing for the Denver Nuggets, missed one of his own the next game. "That was probably the most embarrassing moment ever," said

Miller, now with the Sacramento Kings.

During his basketball career Miller has laughed and cried.

Growing up with 13 siblings, Miller's older sister died at age 17 in a car accident and other family members have died including his grandmother, Viola.

"My grandmother and my mother used to always take me to church," said Miller, who credits Viola with leading him to Christ.

"I stay strong in faith and God led me through," he said of personal setbacks he's endured. Growing up in North Chicago, Ill., Miller moved to North Carolina for high school.

Named the No. 2 high school prospect in the nation behind Anthony Davis, now a New Orleans Pelicans power forward, Miller played his freshman year at

Baylor University in Waco, Texas, leading the Bears to a 17-0 start in 2011-12, the best in school history. They were ranked as high as third in the nation and Miller was named Big 12 co-freshman of the year, honorable mention All-Big 12 and to the All-Big 12 rookie team. The Sporting News named him the league's top freshman. The Bears finished that season with a 30-7 record and went to the Elite Eight of the NCAA basketball tournament. Miller averaged 10.6 points and 4.3 rebounds and was drafted by the Nuggets in the second round (No. 38 overall) in 2012.

"Getting to the Elite Eight, the championship game of the Big 12 tournament, the 17-0 start playing with those group of guys" have been Miller's biggest basketball thrills. "We were like brothers. You felt like family when you were there," said Miller, whose own family provided enough manpower to field a team of their own.

He learned that his mother, who is a nurse, is "definitely a strong person. She is trying to help everybody. I commend my mother."

Through her and God he finds inspiration. He

depended on God when he wasn't playing as much when he got to the NBA. "That was real hard because I was used to playing all my life," he said.

Miller, 22, has spent time in the NBA's Developmental League with Iowa and Reno. At Denver he averaged 6.8 points and 5.2 rebounds.

Denver power forward Darrell Arthur said, "(Miller) is still learning his game. He is going to come out and play hard. Even if he makes a mistake, he still wants to keep learning."

Wilson Chandler, a Denver forward, has been im-

pressed with Miller's athleticism.

"He is young, athletic and real hungry to play so that is always good. Quincy is very long and athletic. He brings a lot of energy. I have been around him for two years now. He is a great kid. He is real humble. He is willing to listen to coaches and teammates. I think the sky is the limit for him."

Miller said, "I learned that I've got a lot of work to do, a lot to learn about myself still but I definitely learned that I am capable."

Toronto Raptors forward James Johnson, who has played against Miller, said, "He can do it all, dribble, shoot." Johnson encouraged Miller, "Just believe in yourself that God put you here for a reason and let Him guide you."

Jesus means "everything" to him said Miller, who sends messages about God through Instagram and Twitter. He recently tweeted Mark 9:23, "Everything is possible for him who believes."

### Enthusiastic about life

Miller, who said he can draw anything and likes to write, go-cart race and play laser tag and paintball is enthusiastic about whatever he does.

Former Denver teammate Evan Fournier called Miller his best friend on the team when both played for Denver.

"We are very close because we got drafted the same year. He is always smiling, always happy. He is very enthusiastic. That is what you need on a team, be positive," said Fournier, a shooting guard now with the Orlando Magic.

Miller is positive about the NBA being a platform for his faith. He said, "My faith has grown immensely. The more and more I focus on God, the more things happen for me. I definitely appreciate Him." ❧



Quincy Miller

Photo by Rocky Widner/NBAE via Getty Images

RELIGION  
in America

Compiled from Wire Services



### FCA had 'stellar year' of ministry in 2014

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) has released its annual ministry report for 2014, which proved a stellar year in FCA's history.

In 2014, FCA marked its 60th anniversary celebration. Founder Don McClanen said, "FCA is God's amazing, miraculous dream being fulfilled still to this day." FCA's 2014 ministry theme encompassed being "All In" for Christ.

Les Steckel, FCA president and CEO, said, "In 2014, FCA was 'All In,' committed 100 percent to our Coach, the Lord Jesus Christ."

FCA's Coaches Ministry reaches coaches through Huddles, events, training and resources. In 2014, FCA saw great impact with a record 700 certified Coaches Huddles and tremendous impact through 3Dimensional Coaching, an online curriculum that allows coaches to determine their transformational purpose in coaching.

The campus ministry focuses on equipping, enabling, empowering and encouraging coaches, student athletes and adult leaders to impact and influence their campus for Christ. Outreach events take place on the campus, such as the annual Fields of Faith events. In 2014, more than 450,000 students were reached through 10,568 Campus Huddles worldwide. The tenth annual Fields of Faith event saw more than 185,000 students participate on more than 500 athletic fields.

FCA Camps experienced a record-shattering year with a total participation of 86,557 at 516 FCA Camps. (FCA)

### American Bible Society relocates to Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA — After nearly 200 years in New York City, the American Bible Society (ABS) has announced a relocation of its headquarters to Philadelphia.

Though the ministry will "maintain a presence" in New York, it will open a 10,000-square-foot office in Philadelphia's historic district in summer 2015, according to an ABS news release.

ABS President and CEO Roy Peterson said, "For 20 decades, American Bible Society has worked to make the Bible available where needed most so that all may experience its life-changing message. As we work toward the goal of having 100 million Americans engaging with God's Word and 100 percent of the world's languages open for Bible engagement, our new Philadelphia headquarters will become the launching pad for Bible ministry in the U.S. and around the world."

ABS works to distribute Scripture across the world and equip Bible translators, according to the organization's website.

ABS leaders selected Philadelphia as the site of their new headquarters because of "strategic collaboration opportunities, affordability and livability" among other considerations, the news release said.

Peterson said, "We are thrilled that we will be starting a third century of service headquartered here in Philadelphia. Home to America's first hopes as a new nation, Philadelphia is now home to a very bright future for American Bible Society." (BP)

### Theologian Edwards' works now free online

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — The collected works of Jonathan Edwards, the 18th-century preacher and one of America's most famous theologians, are now available for download thanks to Logos Bible Software. But for those who don't want to cough up \$1,289.95 to purchase them, they can be viewed online for free at [edwards.yale.edu/](http://edwards.yale.edu/) via The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale Divinity School.

The colonial preacher was instrumental in America's Great Awakening and is known for fiery sermons such as "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

The 26-volume collection, "The Works of Jonathan Edwards" comprises more than 10,000 sermons, articles and letters that were indexed from 1953 to 2008.

"Edwards is widely recognized as one of the most important American thinkers and religious figures and as a major figure in the history of Christian thought," said Kenneth Minkema, executive director of Yale's Jonathan Edwards Center.

According to Minkema, there are more than 4,000 books, articles, dissertations and other writings on Edwards. (RNS)