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# TARGETING Christians

## Students in Kenya separated by faith before Islamic group kills at least 147

As Kenya comes to grips with the worst attack on its soil since the 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, survivors revealed grim details of early-April's Islamic extremist assault.

Separating out Christian students from Muslims, members of Somalia's Muslim extremist group al-Shabab killed 148 people April 2 and wounded 104 at Garissa University College in northeastern Kenya, sources said. The gunmen first targeted a chapel service where Christians had gathered for prayer at 5 a.m., area church leaders said.

The assailants sprayed them with bullets, killing 22 students. Millicent Murugi, a female student and member of the East Africa Pentecostal Church (EAPC), lay in a pool of blood among the bodies, feigning death.

"One terrorist picked up a call from a phone on a dead body close by and he said that they were continuing to kill their children and that they need to know that Garissa is for Muslims only," Murugi said.

Among those killed at the chapel were five members of EAPC, six Roman Catholics, five Anglicans and four members of the Africa Inland Church, church leaders said. The church affiliation of two others has not been established, they said.

Another Christian survivor, Esther Kawira of EAPC, verified statements that the assailants targeted Christians.

"Bullets missed me narrowly as I fled for my life while the terrorists were separating Muslims from non-Muslims before gunning down the Christians," she said.

Family and friends who lost loved ones wept as they gathered in Chiromo Mortuary in Nairobi to identify and receive bodies. On April 7 hundreds of mourners gathered at Nairobi's Uhuru Park, placing 147 crosses into the ground. A later tally said 148 had been killed besides four assailants; the onslaught reportedly took the lives of 142 students, three security officers and three university security personnel.

### #147notjustanumber

Kenyans created the hashtag #147notjustanumber to share photos and comments about the victims on Twitter.

According to CNN, vigil organizer Boniface Mwangi said, "We need to talk about the bright futures cut short."

"Today's meeting will be a calling to say, 'We need to remember the 147; they are not just a



Reuters photo

Kenyans attend a memorial vigil April 7 for the victims of an attack by al-Shabab gunmen at Garissa University College in Nairobi, Kenya, on April 2.

number.' We are trying to avoid remembering these people as just a number."

On April 4 several students were rescued inside a university building as they hid above a ceiling, a church leader reported.

Open Doors, a group that raises awareness about the persecuted church, had staff in Garissa at the time of the attack. One staff

member reported, "The situation is very tense and we are seeing some heartbreaking things."

Other staff members visited some of the injured who have been transferred to hospitals in Nairobi, Open Doors reported. They prayed and encouraged the wounded students and visited a funeral home where they witnessed scenes of

(See 'Challenging,' page 8)



RNS photo

A Red Cross worker comforts a mourner as bodies of the students killed in an April 2 attack arrive at the Chiromo Mortuary in Nairobi, Kenya. At least 147 people died in an assault by Somali extremists at Garissa University College as anger grew among local residents over what they say was a government failure to prevent bloodshed.

# COMMENT

## Indiana Is Only the Beginning

The white hot debate over Indiana adopting a Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) is only the beginning of a national debate about public policy and the role of religion. At stake are two founding principles of this nation's government — equal treatment under the law for all people and religious liberty for all. Where the nation will come out is anybody's guess.

Until recently most observers believed the battle would be fought in the courts. Several cases are already working their way to the U.S. Supreme Court. A photographer in New Mexico, a baker in Colorado, a florist in Washington — all refused services for same-sex weddings based on sincerely held religious convictions that same-sex “marriages” are wrong. Yet all have been found guilty of violating civil rights laws.

Even a church in New Jersey faces legal trouble because it refused to rent its pavilion for a same-sex wedding but did rent to heterosexual couples for weddings.

Observers anticipated careful consideration of the implications of legal concepts about equal protection and due process as they went up against free exercise of religion and the church autonomy doctrine. What Indiana demonstrated is that the battle will be a political battle, not a legal battle, complete with demagoguery, economic blackmail, polarizing rhetoric, half-truths and a win-at-all-costs mentality.

### ‘Compelling interest’

Until recently RFRA was a noncontroversial issue. Congress adopted the first RFRA law in 1993 by a 97–3 vote. The law stated government could not burden religion without a “compelling interest.” And when there was a “compelling interest,” government could burden religion only in the “least restrictive” means.

When the Supreme Court ruled in 1997 (*City of Boerne v. Flores*) that RFRA did not apply to most state and local laws, a movement started to provide citizens the same protection against state and local laws they enjoyed against federal laws.



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

At last count 20 states (including Alabama) have RFRA laws and 13 other states have court rulings putting RFRA-like protections in place. RFRA enjoyed bipartisan support and was adopted with little public fanfare.

All of that changed with the famous Hobby Lobby case. In a 5–4 decision the Supreme Court ruled June 30, 2014, that closely held businesses have religious liberty rights just as individuals do. Some concluded the ruling gave the right to photographers, bakers, florists and others to refuse services that violated their religious beliefs.

Accommodating religious beliefs through public policy is not new. Doctors, nurses, pharmacists and others routinely are exempt from actions related to abortions which they judge violations of their religious beliefs. Businesses such as faith-based hospitals are exempt from providing abortion services. Extending this accommodation to others seemed a natural extension of the principle.

But when does religious liberty become discrimination? Should a family-owned restaurant be allowed to refuse services to gays or lesbians? Should hotels be permitted to refuse them service? Should a business owned by a Muslim of the Wahhabi sect be allowed to refuse services to women unaccompanied by men because a woman alone violates religious belief? Where does the practice stop?

If nondiscrimination is the policy, some have asked if that means a T-shirt company owned by an African-American has to print shirts with the Ku Klux Klan's burning cross symbol? Does it mean a Jewish gift shop owner has to put Nazi symbols on coffee cups or that Muslim-owned businesses have to sell crosses?

As University of Notre Dame law professor Richard Garnett said, “It is not right to see RFRA as a response or a reaction to what's happening with sexual orientation discrimination or

marriage. It is bigger than that.” RFRA is about religious liberty for all.

Stanford University law professor Michael McConnell said in an interview that “in the decades that states have had RFRA statutes, no business has been given the right to discriminate against gay customers or anyone else.”

That is a point Indiana Gov. Mike Pence repeatedly made in news conferences. State-level RFRA laws around the country have never been used to undermine local nondiscrimination laws. Some have attempted to make that argument but the government's “compelling interest” of nondiscrimination has always trumped the religious liberty defense.

It will be interesting to see if that pattern continues in light of the Hobby Lobby decision.

Expecting understanding and grace to prevail in the political debate about the relationship of religious liberty and equal treatment under

the law is unrealistic. Those opposed to religious liberty seem bent on stamping out all dissent.

As Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said, “The idea that sexual freedom trumps everything else and that it ought to be able to pave over the consciences of anyone else — that is what we are seeing all over the country right now.” That conclusion is bolstered by voices calling for repeal of RFRA laws as if religious liberty is an outdated

value to be discarded.

Such hostility should be expected whenever the principles of the gospel are taken into the public square. In 1612 when Thomas Helwys famously wrote King James I of England that “The King ... hath no power over the moral souls of his subjects,” he was jailed and died in Newgate Prison. Yet the principles for which Helwys died — religious liberty and separation of church and state — are still true. Neither government nor popular culture should ever force one to violate the principles of conscience.

The Christian faith does not endorse discrimination. The Christian faith does call for living by the teachings of Jesus even in the public square. Balancing government's “compelling interest” and every citizen's right to religious liberty will be a challenging task.

The confrontation in Indiana is just the beginning. Make no mistake, unless Christians tenaciously contend for religious freedom in this debate, it may be lost. 🙏

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

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# MADE IN *His* IMAGE

## ERLC summit addresses racial reconciliation's connection to gospel

**R**acial reconciliation in the Church calls for a strong view of the image of God in all people, a deep commitment to understanding others and an intentionality in achieving diversity, speakers said at "The Gospel and Racial Reconciliation," a summit conducted by the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC).

Black, white and Hispanic pastors and leaders addressed participants March 26-27 at the summit in Nashville.

Longtime civil rights leader John M. Perkins told the audience of about 500, "I think that we are putting reconciliation back where it belongs — within the gospel itself."

There is "no room in the gospel that minimizes its power [to reconcile]," Perkins said. "That's supposed to be that ongoing miracle. They will know we are Christians by our love."

"I want to preach a gospel that is stronger than my black interests," said Perkins, founder of the Christian Community Development Association. "I want to preach a gospel that is stronger than my economic interests — a gospel that can burn through these racial barriers and bring blacks and whites into the Kingdom."

Probably the best way for racial reconciliation to be addressed from a gospel perspective, Perkins told participants, "is to develop multicultural churches and be absolutely intentional."

Trillia Newbell, author and ERLC staff member, told the audience Jesus "gave me Himself. But what He didn't do was strip me of my brown skin. He created me in His image. He has created us uniquely for our good and for His glory."

Washington D.C. Pastor Thabiti Anyabwile agreed. He said believing the Bible's teaching on God's image in all human beings affects racial reconciliation.

"You cannot be a Christian renewed in the image of God and be indifferent to or opposed to reconciliation in the body of Christ," he said. "The reconciliation flows necessarily from the saving and sanctifying work of the Lord. You can't break those two things apart without breaking the cross."

Anyabwile, pastor of Anacostia River Church, said racial reconciliation "must begin with our learning the habit of seeing each other as together made in the image of God and therefore possessing inestimable, unfathomable dignity and worth and preciousness."

Pastors are pivotal in achieving racial reconciliation in churches, ERLC President Russell Moore said. They need to pray, preach and equip church members "to start being on mission together," he said.

"[W]hat we need to have are pastors who are



John M. Perkins (right) interviews Russell Moore during the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission's 'The Gospel and Racial Reconciliation' summit March 26-27. BP photo

preaching and teaching the whole counsel of God and what it means to be reconciled to God and to be reconciled to one another," Moore told the audience during a Q-and-A session.

Moore said Christians must realize racial reconciliation is about the gospel.

"The reason that we are here today is that these are not simply cultural issues, although they are. These are not simply political issues, although they are. These are not simply social issues, although they are. Above everything else, these are gospel issues," Moore said.

It appears God is "giving us another chance to get this right, but in order to do that, we must repent, not just re-brand."

Moore addressed the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) history, noting 2015 is the 20th anniversary of the SBC's racial reconciliation resolution. That 1995 statement expressed repentance for the convention's past racism and asked African-Americans for forgiveness.

In Ephesians 3, Paul is saying "the Church is a living representation of the kingdom of God. If you want to know what the Kingdom looks like, you ought to be able to see it within the Church. The kingdom of God is not about co-existence. The kingdom of God is about reconciliation. And that reconciliation is within the Church," Moore said.

Jim Richards, executive director of SBC of Texas, said Christians must repent of racism,

pray for gospel oneness and act intentionally. "There is no silver bullet" to racial reconciliation, just a process, he said.

### Suggestions for unity

Lee included the following in his suggestions for fighting for reconciliation and unity:

- ▶ "Don't treat people who are different too different.
- ▶ "Don't assume stereotypes.
- ▶ "Try not to flock with people who look like you all the time.
- ▶ "Intentionally look to understand. Go deep relationally. Ask questions.
- ▶ "You should ask yourself if you have assumptions about other races" and socio-economic groups.

Dallas megachurch Pastor Tony Evans told summit participants, "God wants you to embrace your uniqueness for the purposes of His kingdom, not to deny it. God is not asking you to like soul music, and thank God He is not asking me to like country and western (music).

"God is not asking you to be me or me to be like Him," said Evans, pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship.

Other speakers included Kevin Smith, assistant professor of preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; Afshin Ziafat, pastor of Providence Church, Frisco, Texas; Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, La.; H.B. Charles, pastor of Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.; Robert George, professor at Princeton University in New Jersey; Trip Lee, hip-hop artist and author; and Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. (BP)

**"The kingdom of  
God is not about  
coexistence. The  
kingdom of God is  
about reconciliation."**

**Russell Moore**  
ERLC president

# HONK

if you love

# JESUS



Photo by Michael J. Brooks

John Galpen Brown has been preaching every weekend for the past 12 years just off I-65 in front of the Sam's Club and Wal-Mart Plaza in Homewood. He brings his own van, amplifier and signs to encourage people to trust the Lord.

## Homewood street preacher shares gospel to passersby each Saturday rain or shine

By Michael J. Brooks  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Jesus said, "The field is the world" (Matt. 13:38) and John Galpen Brown's pastoral field is a big part of the world. He estimates 20,000 motorists drive past his "pulpit" every Saturday in Birmingham.

Brown has been preaching every weekend for the past 12 years just off I-65 in front of the Sam's Club and Wal-Mart Plaza in Homewood, about two miles from Samford University. He brings his own van and amplifier and about 100 signs to encourage people to trust the Lord.

"I'm here in the sunshine, rain and wind even when I'm hungry and tired," Brown said.

One of his signs exhorts passersby to honk if they love Jesus and many sound their horns and wave as they pass by.

### 'Bless you'

"Sometimes people will shout 'bless you' or 'keep up the good work' as they drive by. But sometimes people will drive by and curse me," Brown said. "Sometimes drivers get stopped by the traffic light and I get to preach to them another minute," he said with a laugh.

The second part of the sign exhorts drivers to stop if they don't know Jesus.

"Every Saturday people stop and ask me to pray with them," Brown said. "Some want me to pray for them when they're sick and others want me to pray they find the Lord. I've seen people come to the Lord every Saturday."

Brown said seekers sometimes avoid the fast-moving traffic on Lakeshore Drive and approach him from the parking lot on the other side of the plaza fence, asking him to come over to the fence and pray for them. He said he's always happy to do so.

"The Holy Spirit knows the needs of the people and the Spirit brings them to me," he said. "Someone told me recently they'd returned to church to serve the Lord after I prayed with them. This is God's work."

Brown was born in Jamaica and grew up in New York City. He became a Christian at age 21 and did some street preach-

ing in the city while earning his living doing construction work including carpentry, electrical wiring, plumbing and roofing. He moved to Birmingham in 1974 where he served as pastor of a church in the Five

Points West area for a number of years. When the church burned down eight years ago he felt God leading him to give more time to his present ministry in Homewood.

Now at age 75 he does supply preaching on Sundays whenever and wherever he's invited, but sees his work on Saturday as his unique calling from God.

"This is a great place to share the gospel," he said. "I've had people from many nations stop and talk to me about the Lord right here in Birmingham."

When not dealing with individuals, Brown or one of his two young associates stand beside the highway and preach from Scripture. The two younger men joined Brown about two years ago and afford the older preacher time to rest when he needs to.

But Brown doesn't break for long since he loves to preach.

"I don't have sermons like most pastors do — I don't write anything down," Brown said. "The Spirit of God gives me a message to share. God put His boldness in me."

The large signs Brown posts in the area adjacent to the highway range from the Ten Commandments to verses of Scripture to warnings about eternal judgment. But none have a particular denominational slant or doctrine.

"I stay away from doctrine," he said. "I don't want conflict. I want people to know that God loves them and they can be saved."

Brown remembers his first Saturday at his current ministry station did bring some conflict — a visit from local law enforcement.

"The officer told me to leave — that I couldn't preach there," he said. "I came

*"I want to be faithful with the message God has given me so that I can hear Him say 'well done' when I get to heaven."*

John Galpen Brown



Photo by Michael J. Brooks

John Galpen Brown brings about 100 signs to his preaching spot just off I-65 in Homewood. Some passersby cheer him on while others curse at him.

back the next Saturday and I've never seen the officer again."

Brown said he went to the Birmingham City Hall to apply for a permit, only to discover that the spot he'd chosen belongs not to the city, but to the state of Alabama. He's continued to preach every week without a permit and without further visits from law enforcement.

"Now I know why God directed me to choose the spot I did," he said with a laugh.

Tommy Littleton, who works with the Christian Medical Ministry of Alabama and is an adjunct teacher for the Apologetics Resource Center in Birmingham, has had wide experience in street preaching. His experience includes some 10 years working with David Wilkerson, author of "The Cross and the Switchblade," which tells the story of Wilkerson's ministry in New York City.

"The effectiveness of street preaching depends on the individual and the situation," Littleton said.

"For example I've found that street evangelism at a secular concert isn't effective because people see it as an intrusion. As long as the setting isn't intrusive or threatening, street evangelism can be a good way to reach some people the church could not."

### Facing ridicule

"You face ridicule in the public arena," he said. "That's just part of the price you pay when you choose a nontraditional place to share the gospel."

Littleton said he admires Brown's tenacity.

"I think he gets the respect of many due to his dedication. He's always there despite the weather. They know something genuine is behind this. And he offers a friendly wave and a smile. This is disarming; he's not a threat to anyone."

Brown said he has no plans to stop preaching or to retire.

"I want to be called 'a friend of God' just like Abraham was," he said.

"The Bible says there is joy in heaven when one sinner repents. I see people repenting every week. I want to be faithful with the message God has given me so that I can hear Him say 'well done' when I get to heaven." ❏

# 'Extremely proud'

## UMobile alumna becomes 1st full-time female NFL game official

The NFL's first full-time female game official is former University of Mobile (UMobile) women's basketball player Sarah Thomas.

Thomas, who played basketball at UMobile from 1992 to 1995, will be a line judge for the 2015 season. She will have the ability, based on performance, to move into other roles including the highest position of referee. The NFL made the formal announcement April 8, capping days of speculation by major sports media outlets.

Athletics officials at Thomas' alma mater said the 1995 graduate and former Lady Ram has always performed at the highest levels and shown the determination to succeed at anything she undertook.

"We are honored that one of our former athletes is achieving the highest level in her profession," UMobile athletics director Joe Niland said. "We're extremely proud of what she has accomplished."

During Thomas' three seasons at UMobile the Lady Rams won 61 games, including two seasons with a 13-3 record in Gulf Coast Athletic Conference (GCAC) action. Thomas helped guide the 1992-93 team to a District 30 Championship and a berth in the NAIA National Championship.

### 779-point career

She was a two-time GCAC All-Academic selection and a Daktronics-NAIA Scholar-Athlete in 1995. In her career she totaled 779 points, 411 rebounds, 108 as-



Photo courtesy of University of Mobile  
Former University of Mobile basketball player Sarah Thomas will be an NFL line judge for the 2015 season.

sists and 192 steals, currently sitting fifth in all-time steals.

Martha Gore-Algeron, an assistant coach with the UMobile women's basketball program during Thomas' playing career, praised her former player's work ethic.

"I'm not surprised she's made it this far," Gore-Algeron said. "She didn't set

out to do this but she just worked hard at it and they took notice of her. It couldn't happen to a nicer person. She was a great player to coach."

Thomas decided to become an official in the 1990s after attending a coaching meeting with her brother. Then in 1996 she became the first female to officiate a Division 1-A high school football game in Mississippi. In 2007 she became the first female to officiate college football games and in 2009 she became the first female to officiate a bowl game.

### Professional sports

Having former athletes succeed in the professional sports world isn't new for UMobile.

Former UMobile baseball players J.C. Romero, Joe Espada, Saul Rivera and Kyle McPherson have all reached the Major Leagues, with Espada currently serving as the New York Yankees' 3rd base coach. In 2008 five current and former softball players competed in the Summer Olympics for the Venezuelan National Team. Former UMobile men's soccer player Michael Azira plays for the Seattle Sounders of MLS and former Ram Deshorn Brown was recently transferred from the Colorado Rapids to Valerenga. Former women's soccer players Anne Stangeland-Horpestad and Danielle Small faced each other in the 2007 Women's World Cup, playing for Norway and Australia, respectively.

For more information about UMobile, visit [www.umobile.edu](http://www.umobile.edu). (UMobile)

## 'God, family & country'

### American values see shift in order

God, family and country" might make for a good country music tune but that's not really how most Americans see the strongest influences on their personal identity.

The real order is family first (62 percent), followed by "being an American" (52 percent). "Religious faith" lolls way down in third place (38 percent) — if it's mentioned at all, according to a survey released March 19 by Barna Group.

The California-based Christian research company found another 18 percent of those surveyed said faith had a little to do with the idea of who they are and nearly 20 percent scored it at zero influence.

Christians were the largest self-identified group in the survey. "Practicing" Christians — defined in the survey as self-identified Catholics, Protestants and Mormons — scored faith first, at a rate more than double the national average. But they're not most Christians. The survey also found only 37 percent of self-identified Christians are "practicing" while 64 percent are nonpracticing.

### Skewed by age

Results also were skewed by age:

► Family first: Millennials (53 percent); Gen X-ers (61 percent); Baby Boomers (64 percent); Elders (76 percent).

► Being an American: Millennials (34 percent); Gen X-ers (37 percent); Baby Boomers (66 percent); Elders (80 percent).

► Religious faith: Millennials (28 percent); Gen X-ers (34 percent); Baby Boomers (45 percent); Elders (46 percent). (RNS)

## Ministry Tips

### HIS WAYS, NOT OUR WORRIES

By Dawn Stephens

Women's Minister  
The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham

As a women's ministry leader in any church, in any city and in any country of the world you will encounter discouraged women in your ministry.

As you have opportunity (and there

will be many) to encourage women in their daily struggles, I'd like to encourage you with these reminders.

► Stay in God's Word — commit to helping your women find a small group Bible study that teaches them how to study God's Word and apply it to their lives. Commit to recruiting mature believers and train them to be able to teach your women in a

small group community. Encourage your women to set their minds on His ways, not their worries.

► Stay in community with God's people — help women who are struggling to find a healthy, growing community of women in your church. Whether it's a small accountability group or a one-on-one discipleship or mentoring relationship, helping these

women find a loving and consistent environment in which to grow is key.

► Stay strong, looking forward in faith — encourage your women to stay strong in Christ, His salvation and His Spirit that lives within them. Encourage them to focus on the goal and prize as believers, which is the home Christ is preparing in heaven. 🙏





## Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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### AUTAUGA

► **Autauga Association** will hold its bimonthly ministers conference at the association office April 28, 10:30 a.m. Joe McKeever, pastor and former director of missions of metro New Orleans and cartoonist for *The Alabama Baptist* and Baptist Press, will speak. Bill Morgan is director of missions. ► **Jones Church** will host the West Autauga County Evangelistic Rally on April 26. Joe McKeever will speak. The evening will include a drawing demonstration, 4-5 p.m.; a gospel concert, 5-5:45 p.m.; and worship, 6:30 p.m.

### BIRMINGHAM

► **First Church, Trussville**, will hold a Mass Feeding Training on May 1-2. The event is provided by Birmingham Association Disaster Relief. To register visit [www.alsbom-gm.org](http://www.alsbom-gm.org). Buddy Champion is pastor. ► **Westwood Church, Birmingham**, will present "Love like an Ocean" on April 17, 7 p.m., and April 18, 2:30 p.m. Doors will open 30 minutes prior to the event. Live streaming will be available at [www.wbclive.com](http://www.wbclive.com). The event is inspired by the book "The Boy and the Ocean" by Max Lucado. For more information call the ballet office at 205-798-0900 or the church office at 205-798-3341. Steven Potts is

pastor. ► The recreation ministry of **Dawson Memorial Church, Birmingham**, will host the ninth annual Golf Scramble on April 18. The scramble is open to everyone. Sign up at the family recreation center front desk. For more information contact Justin Palmore at 205-879-1758 or [jpalmore@dawsonchurch.org](mailto:jpalmore@dawsonchurch.org). Gary Fenton is pastor.

### COFFEE

► **First Church, Enterprise**, will hold a Priscilla Shirer simulcast April 25, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. A Chick-Fil-A lunch will be served. For ticket information call the church office at 334-393-5683. Sonny Moore is pastor. ► **Mount Gilead Church, Elba**, will celebrate homecoming April 26. Sunday School is at 10 a.m. and worship is at 11 a.m. Larry Grimm will speak. Lunch will follow the worship service. For more information call Phyllis Smith at 334-494-2278. Fred Fowler is pastor.

### CONECUH

► **Evergreen Church** will hold revival services April 19-22. Sunday's service will be at 6:30 p.m., Monday-Wednesday services will be at 7 p.m. Dinner will be at 5:30 p.m. on Monday-Wednesday. Guest speaker will be Jonathan Reaves, pastor of Tannehill Valley Church, Mc-

Calla, and recipient of the 2014 Troy L. Morrison Leadership/Church Health award Vince Melvin will lead worship. Jim Collins is pastor.

### DALE

► **Ariton Church** will host a Vacation Bible School clinic April 26, 3 p.m. The clinic will feature Group's "Everest" theme. Training will be provided on crafts, lessons, music and missions, among other aspects. Anyone interested in teaching or helping is welcome. For more information call the church at 334-762-2523. Dave Walsh is pastor.

### ELMORE

► **Mount Hebron East Church, Eclectic**, will celebrate its 119th anniversary with a "Service in Song" on April 26, 10:30 a.m. Holy Destiny, of Prattville, will perform. Lunch will follow. Bob Williamson is pastor.

### LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

► **Little River Church, Cedar Bluff**, will host the annual Children's Rally on April 25, 1-3 p.m. The event is conducted by the Woman's Missionary Union of Lookout Mountain Association. Ricky Clanton is pastor.

### NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Waterstone Church, Warrior**, will host the North Jefferson Association Vacation Bible School clinic April 21, 7 p.m. The training will be on LifeWay's "Journey off the Map" and will be offered for all age groups. Training on crafts, missions, recreation and music also will be provided. For more information call Sue Brown at 205-608-3112 or 205-631-4126. Jerrel Brown is pastor.

### SHELBY

► **Ric Callahan** is the new pastor of families for **Westwood Church, Alabaster**. He previously served as minister to children and families for First Church, Pell City. He also has served at Hunter Street Church, Hoover. He holds a bachelor's degree in church recreation from Samford University in Birmingham and a master's degree in education ministry from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Matt Brooks is pastor. ☞



CALLAHAN

## Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

### Sandra Peel



PEEL

*First Baptist Church, Slocomb  
Geneva Baptist Association*

**FAVORITE VERSES:** John 3:16; Isaiah 1:16-17

**FAVORITE HYMN:** "I Can Only Imagine"

**HOBBIES:** Doing yard work and church work; leading an exercise class for seniors

**FAMILY STATUS:** Wife of 50 years to husband, Bobby; daughters, Kim Woodham and Kay Battle; son, Bart Peel; six grandchildren; two great-grandsons

*When I see a need, I feel God wooing me toward that need," said Sandra Peel, 70, of Slocomb. As a result, Peel through the years has served as Sunday School superintendent, Vacation Bible School director and nursery coordinator. When it became apparent in 1988 that a children's church was needed, she started one and led it for 20 years. Right now she is the GROW ("God Rewards Our Work") outreach leader, which she has done since 2003. Operation Christmas Child coordinator and a Sunday School teacher with 35 years to her credit. She also serves with a ministry that rearranges the live sanctuary flowers into individual vases and delivers them on Mondays to homebound people and nursing home residents. In 2010 she was named the city's "Woman of the Year."*

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

A: Starting as a Sunday School teacher, really getting into the Bible. Dan Raley, our pastor (now deceased), was a godly man. He knew how to seek out people to serve. When he came to the church, my service grew. God just gave him a special knack for knowing who would fit well into an area of service. When I accepted the call to children's church, my friend, Sharon Lee, stayed with me for 19 years.

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

A: Planning, praying, being organized, knowing what you've got and when. Manag-

ing your time. It's got to be a matter of the heart. You've got to serve the way God has called you to serve.

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

A: It is a satisfaction. It is a great feeling of helping people.

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

A: As long as God gives me the strength of body and strength of mind to do it, I hope, to the day that I die, that I'm doing something for the Lord.

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

A: I think it is going to make me a stronger Christian. I think it will touch many people's lives. It will keep me close to God and in His obedience.

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

A: Oh, it's unreal at the difference. It changes you. You are just a changed person. You just strive to be whatever He wants you to be every day when before you didn't. It is the change He brings into our lives and our hearts. He brings a fire that wasn't there before. It makes you feel responsible to do what God would have you to do.

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

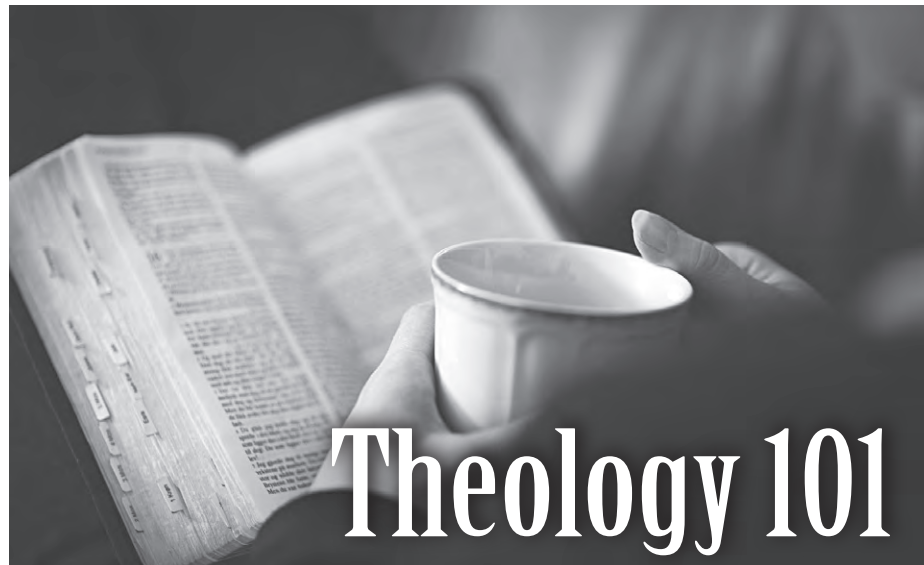
A: Very, very well. One-hundred percent. I have many friends who say they're praying for me and encourage me. That helps. ☞

## REFLECTIONS

"NO, THE PASTOR DOESN'T HAVE A HEAVY DUTY AUDIO SYSTEM — HE'S JUST LISTENING TO A SERMON FROM REVEREND HEADKNOCKER!"



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



## Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

### Images of the Church

## The Church as God's Flock (Part 3)

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

**T**he beloved 23rd Psalm presents the Lord as Shepherd. Passages in the New Testament add adjectives to the image. As noted two weeks ago, our Lord is the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd and the Chief Shepherd. To think of Jesus as the Chief Shepherd is to imply that other shepherds exist, among whom He stands out as the Chief one. This week we probe the imagery of the Church as God's flock a bit further by pondering the role of the earthly shepherds over whom the heavenly Shepherd rules as their Chief.

Probably the most helpful passage is Acts 20:17-38 which records Paul's charge to the church leaders at Ephesus. At the outset of the passage the church leaders are referred to as "the elders of the church" (v. 17). In the midst of the charge to the elders Paul cautioned them to be on guard both for themselves and for "all the flock that the Holy Spirit has appointed you to as overseers" (v. 28).

Having been referred to as both elders and overseers, the Ephesian church leaders were then given the charge "to shepherd the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood" (v. 28). The verb form of shepherd — also a word for pastor — was used to urge leaders to attend to the task of shepherding (pastoring) the Church as God's flock. Therefore when we use the title pastor to refer to the leader of a local church, as is done in Ephesians 4:11, we imply the pastor's leadership is to be like that of a shepherd — feeding, tending, leading, protecting and caring for the flock.

### Undershepherds

One way of pondering the role of local church pastors is to think of them as undershepherds. In the big picture of the Church as God's flock, the Chief Shepherd ministers to God's flock through God-called, Spirit-filled undershepherds. As we might say the well being of the sheep is largely dependent

on the character and heart of their shepherd, so we might say the same is true of churches. Their spiritual well-being rests largely upon the character and heart of their under shepherds.

### Sound doctrine

From the imagery of the Church as God's flock we can glean several qualities that befit the undershepherds. For one thing a good and caring shepherd seeks to feed the flock on sound doctrine that nourishes the soul. Jesus highlighted this truth in His three responses to Peter's confession of love for Jesus, saying, "Feed My lambs," "tend My sheep" and "feed My sheep" (John 21:15-17).

What Jesus urged upon Peter, He did Himself. Mark 6:34 records that when Jesus saw a great crowd, "He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And He began to teach them many things." He fed them with truth from the Father.

### Reflecting God's heart

Again we might say a faithful undershepherd seeks to bring others into the fold. To do so a pastor reflects the heart of the Good Shepherd who said, "I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also" (John 10:16).

A caring pastor also seeks to gather wandering sheep back into the fold. In doing so undershepherds are sharing the burden of the Good Shepherd who commended shepherds that leave the 99 sheep that are safely within the fold in order to seek and find the one that has strayed (Luke 15:4-5). ☞

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.



# Grateful to God

## Arkansas Boys Ranch withstands tornado

**S**everal buildings and residences at the Arkansas Baptist Boys Ranch were damaged by a tornado early April 3 in northern Arkansas.

The 27 residents and 10 staff members were shaken up during the EF1 tornado, but there were no injuries at the 500-acre ranch located seven miles north of Harrison. The National Weather Service confirmed the twister had winds from 86 to 110 mph.

"When the boys began getting alerts on their phones about the storm, it was (supposed to come through)" at about 12:45 a.m., said David Perry, executive director of Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries.

The ranch's Independence Hall collapsed in the storm, but no one was in the building that serves as independent living quarters for older teens. A chimney was ripped off at the Arapaho Family Home, leaving a hole in the ceiling; a hay barn was blown away; and a horse barn's new roof was heavily damaged. Two additional family homes sustained major roof damage while four other buildings received some damage. The Jones Chapel and Hannah House received minimal damage.

### 'Everybody is okay'

"The first words I heard when I answered the telephone at 4 a.m. was, 'Everybody is okay,'" Perry said. "Those words put everything in perspective. We are thankful to God that all our residents and staff were not hurt. That's all that matters.

"Our house parents and kids are handling the situation amazingly and with grace. ... With God's help and the help of Arkansas Baptists ... we will come back stronger."

The Boys Ranch serves boys who need



Photo by Charles Flynn, ABCHomes

The Arkansas Baptist Boys Ranch's Independence Hall collapsed during the EF1 tornado April 3.

a place to live, boys with family conflict or boys in need of behavioral guidance. Residents range in age from 6 to 17.

Perry estimated the damage to the ranch to be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, saying the hay barn will need to be rebuilt. Other rebuilding decisions will be made at a later date. "It could have easily been a lot worse," Perry said. "We're grateful; God's blessed us."

Ranch resident Camerson Kinzer, 16, won't soon forget the experience. "When it hit it was loud and ... scary," Kinzer said.

Originally from Arizona, Kinzer said he's never experienced a tornado before. "I'm really just grateful that my Lord was there to protect all of us and no one got hurt," he said.

Two Arkansas Baptist disaster relief teams were deployed to the ranch April 3. A chainsaw crew from White River Baptist Association helped cut up downed trees and clean up debris. The North Arkansas Baptist Association feeding unit began serving breakfast, lunch and dinner April 4 to residents, staff and contractors.

Additional help may be requested at a later date. Those interested in volunteering should email [jhunt@abchomes.org](mailto:jhunt@abchomes.org). (BP)

## 'Be a blessing'

### Alabama Baptist blesses others through \$1

**D**uring the 2014 annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, *The Alabama Baptist* handed out dollar bills at its display booth. Messengers were challenged to "Be a Blessing" — to take a dollar and touch a life. The results continue to surface. Below is a personal story of how the dollar was used to bless someone's life.

I am the financial administrator at Wynnton United Methodist Church, Columbus, Ga. I wanted to let you

know we received two of your envelopes, No. 27 and No. 28. The donations were made to our Back Packs of Grace Ministry, which sends backpacks of food home with needy children for the weekends. These children would likely be without food for the weekend if not for this program. We appreciate the donations received and they will go a long way to feed the children.

Thank you,  
**Gena Tinch** ☞

# CHALLENGING & TRAUMATIC

## Family of victims identify loved ones after Kenya attack

(continued from page 1)

family and friends attempting to identify their children. The identification process has been challenging and traumatic, Open Doors reported, because of the severity of the wounds the victims sustained and the poor preservation of the bodies because of the heat.

Representatives of al-Shabab, which has ties to al-Qaida, said the attacks came in retaliation for Kenya's involvement in helping the Somali government fight the al-Shabab insurgency. The rebels also oppose education for women.

### Attacks in the past

Al-Shabab militiamen or their sympathizers have carried out several attacks on Kenyan soil in the past two years. For instance the group took responsibility for killing four Christians on March 17 in Wajir and for another attack March 15 in Mandera, in northeastern Kenya.

The Garissa attack caused greater loss of life than al-Shabab's assault on Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall on Sept. 21, 2013, which killed at least 67 people, with dozens still unaccounted for. The

assailants killed those they could identify as non-Muslims.

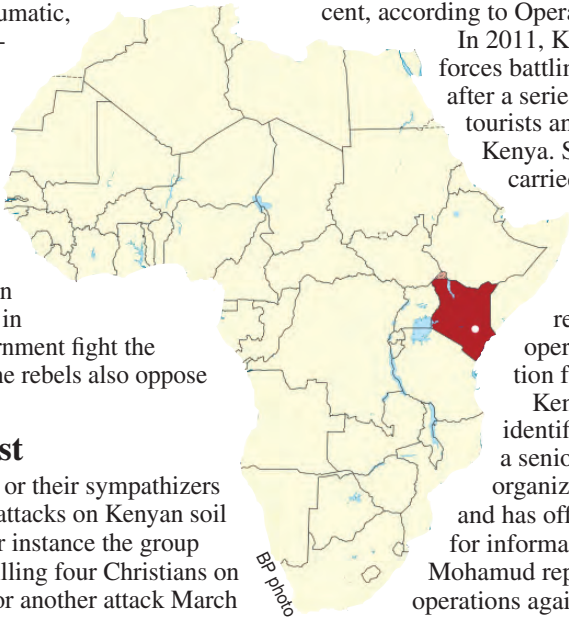
The Muslim population of Kenya is about 8 percent, according to Operation World.

In 2011, Kenya joined African Union forces battling the al-Shabab insurgents after a series of Somali attacks on tourists and other targets in northern Kenya. Since then al-Shabab has carried out several retaliatory attacks on Kenyan soil.

Airstrikes on April 6 against al-Shabab training camps in Somalia were reportedly part of ongoing operations and not in retribution for the attack in Garissa.

Kenya's Interior Ministry has identified Mohamed Mohamud, a senior al-Shabab leader, as the organizer of the Garissa attack and has offered a reward of \$215,000 for information leading to his capture. Mohamud reportedly heads up external operations against Kenya and commands a border militia.

Also involved in the attacks, authorities said, is Abdirahim Abdullahi, a Kenyan-Somali and the son of a government chief in Mandera in northern Kenya. (MS, Open Doors)



BP photo

## Americans vary on religious liberty stance

A host of governors, CEOs and church leaders call Indiana's new religious freedom law a backdoor opening to anti-gay discrimination, but Americans appear more divided on whether a wedding-related business should have the right to turn away a gay customer.

The law, which critics say would allow owners of small businesses to invoke their faith to refuse service to LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) customers, applies most apparently to wedding vendors who cite their faith in opposing same-sex "marriage."

Where is the American public on this debate? It depends on how the question is asked.

An Associated Press poll found that 57 percent of Americans believe a wedding-related business should have the right to refuse service to a gay couple on religious grounds, as opposed to nearly 4 in 10 Americans (39 percent) who said that religious exemption — which Indiana's new law explicitly allows — is wrong.

In addition, 50 percent said local magistrates shouldn't have to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples if it contradicts their religious beliefs.

Other polls show less sympathy for business owners who support Religious Freedom Restoration Act laws.

A survey on wedding services and gay couples, released September 2014 by the Pew Research

Center, found 47 percent of respondents thought it should be legal for businesses to turn away gay couples on religious grounds, compared with 49 percent who said they should be required to accept them as customers.

### Change of attitude

But Americans register far different attitudes about service to gay customers when the question does not mention a wedding. Then there is little sympathy for those who would invoke religion to turn away gay customers. A 2014 Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) survey found a mere 16 percent of Americans supporting small-business owners who would turn away a gay customer for religious reasons.

Asking specifically about turning away gay couples headed to the altar does seem to make a difference to Americans, who come out strongly against anti-gay corporate discrimination, said Dan Cox, PRRI's director of research.

Americans don't like the government telling people what to do when it comes to religion, Cox said, but they also strongly reject discrimination against gays in the marketplace.

"But when these two values conflict and the question is so narrowly constructed, they may answer it narrowly, and reason that allowing a small subset of businesses to turn away gay customers would not have such sweeping discriminatory effects." (RNS)



### RANDALL ATCHESON IN PIANO AND ORGAN CONCERT

SUNDAY, APRIL 26  
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A benefit concert to provide needy children with scholarships to attend Camp Sumatanga.

Randy recently performed his 12th solo piano concert at Carnegie Hall.

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## Reverse Mortgage Change Delayed

By Jimmy Dixon

FHA will begin Financial Assessment for all reverse mortgages with an FHA case number on and after April 27 of this year. At present we do not care about income and do not do a credit analysis, but that's about to change. If you or someone you know is considering getting a reverse mortgage I would encourage them to contact me and let me help them get an FHA case number so they can avoid the financial scrutiny. I'm sure I will have people in the next few months who will want to qualify for a reverse mortgage, but they will not. I don't have any better avenue than this article to try and get the word out, so please pass the word to your relatives and friends.



Jimmy Dixon

I still have a couple more training sessions on Financial Assessment and I plan to keep you up to date as time passes, but for now, it wouldn't hurt to let me help you secure that case number. That way you can avoid proving a certain amount of income and having a credit analysis.

Remember, like The Alabama Baptist, Jimmy covers our great state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives. He is a Sunday School teacher and deacon at Valley Creek Baptist Church, Hueytown.

For a free brochure, quote or discussion, call him direct at 205-567-4800 or email [jdixon@mcgowinking.com](mailto:jdixon@mcgowinking.com).



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## ALCAP continues to educate believers about social issues, Godfrey says

By Michael J. Brooks  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Keeping up with state legislators and helping educate believers about various social issues are among the current top agenda items for Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP) leaders.

Joe Godfrey, who recently completed eight years as ALCAP executive director, said ALCAP's work is divided into three areas — legislative, consultative and character building.

Character building is the focus of ALCAP's sister agency, American Character Builders (ACB).

While ALCAP deals with political issues and serves as a lobbying organization for people of faith, ACB provides resource kits to educate young people about moral issues such as alcohol, drug use and bullying. These kits can be used in churches and schools.

In his report to the ALCAP board of directors meeting April 7 in Montgomery, Godfrey said ACB has received enough financial gifts to begin producing videos to accompany the kits.

Godfrey also shared with the board a few of the bills moving

through the state Legislature he is monitoring.

House Bill (HB) 382, sponsored by Rep. Craig Ford, D-Gadsden, and HB 421, sponsored by Rep. Chris Pringle, R-Mobile, both would counter the federal government's approval of powdered alcohol.

Godfrey is encouraging passage of the legislation.

### Danger to others

"We believe the product is dangerous because small packets can be taken to school and mixed or put in someone's drink at a social event and could create a danger to innocent people," he said.

ALCAP is lobbying against the passage of Senate Bill 115, however.

This bill would privatize liquor sales in Alabama.

"The stated purpose of this bill is to save money but in other states this hasn't proven true," Godfrey said. "The states lose money and the consumption of hard liquor increases when state ownership is surrendered. We believe the present system is a better way."

Godfrey also voiced support for HB 28 — the church vandalism

bill — that has passed judiciary committees in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

"This bill mandates that convicted vandals must make restitution to the churches they vandalize even before court fees are paid," Godfrey said. "Most of this vandalism occurs in the rural areas of the state and the judiciaries seem to let the paying of restitution drop after their fees are taken care of."

In ALCAP's consultative area, Godfrey said the group joined with several others to sponsor an information meeting at Samford University in Birmingham in March. Some 230 church leaders came to hear about the issue of same-sex "marriages" in Alabama.

In other business, the board approved a 2015 budget of \$470,069, presented the 2015 Dan Ireland "Salt and Light Award" to legal counsel Eric Johnston, of Birmingham, and recognized ALCAP administrative assistants Sharon Cook for 20 years of service and Cheryl Corley for 15 years of service.

Mike McLemore, executive director of Birmingham Baptist Association, is chairman of the ALCAP board of directors. ☛

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## Famous Christians from previous centuries

# Heroes of the Faith

## 2015 marks 150th anniversary of medical missionary Grenfell's birth

Sir Wilfred Thomason Grenfell (1865–1940), a British missionary to Labrador and Newfoundland, was one of the most visionary medical missionaries in history. This year is the 150th anniversary of his birth.

Born Feb. 28, 1865, at Parkgate, England, he was the son of Algernon Sidney Grenfell and Jane Georgiana Hutchinson.

He was educated at Marlborough College in Oxford and London Hospital Medical College (now the University of London). He received a medical license from the Royal College of Physicians and membership in the Royal College of Surgeons in 1888.

### Moved by a simple message

In 1887 during his second year of medical training, Grenfell attended a tent meeting where he heard evangelist Dwight L. Moody preach. He was moved by Moody's simple message for living the Christian life. When the call came to "stand up" for Christ, he com-

mitted his life to practical service for others.

That same year he joined the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen, working as a medical missionary on a hospital ship traveling from Iceland to the Bay of Biscay. In 1892 he was transferred to Labrador and dedicated the remainder of his life to the people of Labrador and Newfoundland.

In 1893 the Labrador Medical Mission opened its first hospital in Battle Harbour, Labrador. Until then hospitals were nonexistent in Labrador and no resident doctor practiced there.

Grenfell, who helped open the hospital, worked as a doctor meeting the needs of not only citizens of Labrador and Newfoundland but also migratory fishermen.

He recruited doctors, nurses and volunteers to help his mission. He also spent much of his time raising funds and support.

The mission grew and in 1899 it acquired

the large medical vessel *Strathcona*. The ship was one of the world's first to carry X-ray equipment. Grenfell cruised annually along the northern Newfoundland and Labrador coasts in his hospital ship. In 1901

a hospital was established in St. Anthony, Newfoundland. In 1912, Grenfell opened King George V Seamen's Institute in St. John's, Newfoundland.

By 1914, Grenfell's mission had gained global status. He founded the International Grenfell Association, a nonprofit mission society, to support his work.

Grenfell had a vision not only to meet medical needs but to promote social, educational, agricultural and industrial development. By his retirement in 1932 he had started six hospitals, four hospital ships and seven nursing stations. He also founded two orphanages, two schools, 14 industrial centers, a cooperative lumber mill, three agricultural stations and 12 clothing distribution stations.



GRENFELL

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).



After his retirement he devoted his time to raising funds for the International Grenfell Association.

He received numerous honors throughout his life. They included an honorary doctor of medicine degree from the University of Oxford in 1907 (the first ever granted) and the Murchison Award from the Royal Geographical Society in 1911 for his charts of Labrador. He was knighted in 1927 for his medical, educational and social work.

He died of a coronary thrombosis in Charlotte, Vt., on Oct. 9, 1940. He was survived by his wife and three children. His ashes were placed inside a rock face at St. Anthony overlooking the harbor.

His legacy continues today through the Grenfell Historical Society which continues to operate a museum, interpretation center and archives at the former Grenfell home in St. Anthony.

"The purpose of this world," Grenfell once wrote, "is not to have and hold, but to serve." ☛

# Invitation to pray

## ERLC launches 'Pray for Marriage'

The Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) is inviting Christians to pray regarding what might be a landmark decision on marriage by the U.S. Supreme Court.

ERLC launched its Pray for Marriage initiative April 7, three weeks before the high court's April 28 oral arguments involving same-sex "marriage." The justices are expected to issue an opinion by late June or early July.

"The outcome of this decision will shape the landscape of the Church's ministry in the United States for generations to come," according to ERLC, "and it will have significant consequences on the future of religious liberty."

ERLC and its president, Russell Moore, have signed on to friend-of-the-court briefs urging the justices to uphold the authority of states to limit marriage to a man and a woman. ERLC provided a sample prayer guide based on various biblical passages:

▶ "Pray that all people, including governing authorities, would honor the institution of marriage.

▶ "Pray for the Supreme Court justices, that they would be receptive to the arguments being made passionately before them.

▶ "Pray for lead attorneys who will be arguing on behalf of the states seeking to uphold marriage. Ask God to give them clarity and wisdom, for their arguments to be persuasive and for God to give them favor before the justices.

▶ "Pray for those who disagree with us, that God would help them understand and respect the opinions of those whose definition of marriage is grounded in the biblical witness.

▶ "Pray and hope for the best

but plan for [an adverse ruling]. Even in the event of a bad decision, marriage will always be what marriage truly is."

Most importantly, Moore said, Christians "must pray that, regardless of whether our land's highest court recognizes the unchangeable or not, we will hold steadfast. We must love our neighbors enough to have the confidence of people who have heard a word from God and the compassion of a people who are on mission with God."

### Oral arguments

On its website, ERLC urged churches and organizations to pray specifically April 28 at 9 a.m. when the oral arguments begin.

The Supreme Court's oral arguments will come in a case from the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, which became the first federal appellate court to rule that states have the authority to define marriage as only a heterosexual union. Five other appeals courts have invalidated state laws that prohibit gay "marriage." The opinion by the 6th Circuit Court took place in challenges to laws in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee.

Same-sex "marriage" is now legal in 37 states, nearly tripling the 13 states where it was legal in mid-2013. It also is legal in the District of Columbia.

The expansion of legalized same-sex "marriage" has resulted in a growing clash between the rights of gay couples and the religious freedom of individuals and organizations. Florists, bakers, photographers and other business owners who have conscientious objections to providing their services for same-sex ceremonies have been penalized or are facing penalties for their refusal. (BP)



## Melbourn Ray 'M.R.' Bradley

Former Selma DOM Bradley dies at 85



BRADLEY

Melbourn Ray "M.R." Bradley, former Selma Baptist Association director of missions (DOM), died March 28. He was 85.

Bradley served in ministry positions in Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama for more than 60 years, serving as pastor of the former Westlawn Baptist Church, Mobile, before acting as DOM for Selma Association for 10 years. In Alabama, he also was pastor of Benton Baptist Church.

At the time of his death Bradley was a resident of Brookhaven, Miss.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Doris; two children; and four grandchildren. (Maggie Walsh)

### VOICE YOUR



### OPINION

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### CHURCH POSITIONS

**PASTOR:** Southside Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, Southside Baptist Church, 1213 West Bypass, Andalusia, AL 36420, or email resumes to: southside@sbcandalusia.com. Resumes should be received by May 15.

**PASTOR:** Hughes Memorial Baptist Church seeks bivocational person for the position of pastor. Mail resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, Hughes Memorial Baptist Church, 8786 Bradford Trafford Road, Pinson, AL 35126, or email resumes to: hughesmbc@att.net.

**PASTOR:** East Side Baptist Church of Cullman, Alabama is accepting resumes for a full-time position as pastor. Email resumes to: eastside1111@att.net

**PASTOR:** Forest Avenue Baptist Church is seeking a God-called, spirit-filled pastor to lead a growing

congregation. Salary based on experience and education. Degree preferred. Send resume to FABC7637@att.net or mail to Forest Avenue Baptist Church Search Committee P.O. Box 611, Jackson, AL 36645.

**BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR:** Bynum Baptist Church is seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, Bynum Baptist Church, P.O. Box 326, Bynum, AL 36253, or 141 Victory Drive, Eastaboga, AL 36260 or email resume to: BynumBaptistChurch326@gmail.com.

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

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## Want to know GOD?

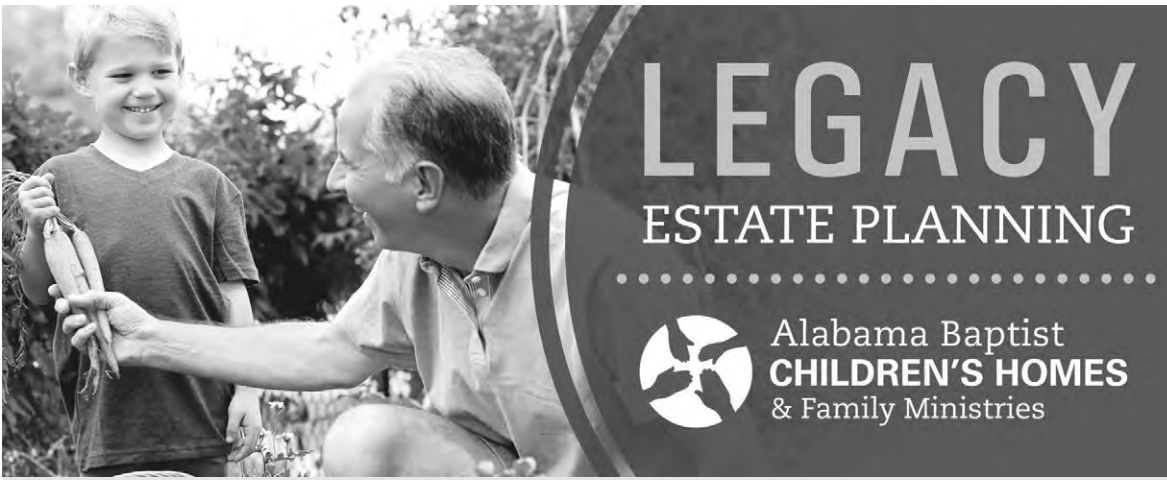
Pastor Olan Strickland  
Devco Baptist Church, Geneva

What was the purpose of the incarnation? To misunderstand the purpose of the incarnation is to misunderstand the necessity of a sinless sacrifice for the pardon of sinners. When it comes to giving pardons there are only two possibilities: the pardon will either be legal (upholding the law) or illegal (violating the law). God never gives illegal pardons. God will never do anything wrong. So how can God pardon sinners and remain right in the process?

The Old Testament sacrificial system illustrated the innocent would have to die in the place of the guilty for pardon to be extended. The sinner's death penalty for violating God's law had to be paid by an innocent substitute. Could the death penalty for a man really be paid by an animal? Never. That is why the Bible says, "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). The sinner's death penalty for violating God's law would have to be paid by an innocent man (Heb. 2:14–18). Therefore the incarnation of Christ was a necessity for legal pardon for sinners.

This was the primary purpose of the incarnation — to provide a legal pardon for sins (Rom. 3:23–26). The Son of God had to become a man to achieve our legal pardon (John 1:14). There has never been nor will there ever be a greater demonstration of love than the truth that God sent His only begotten Son into the world as a man to die as a substitute for sinners (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8). The incarnation is a precious, marvelous and crucial doctrine. No one can be saved apart from a pardon based on faith in Jesus.

Jesus lived a sinless life, died a sacrificial death, was buried and three days later, because He was indeed innocent, was raised from the dead by the power of His Father. "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9). Have you received a legal pardon for your sins through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? 🙏



# LEGACY

## ESTATE PLANNING



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

### RESHAPING YOUR LEGACY

By Bob Dewhurst, VP, Ministry Development

**A**s spring approaches, my mind turns to renewal and growth. And with this, comes my responsibility to be a good steward. This past winter, I pruned my blueberry plants so that they would produce a good crop later in the year.

I prune and shape these plants because I enjoy fresh blueberries. However, they cannot compare to my love of God, the Church, and my family. That's why it is my desire to leave a legacy of love after my life ends on this earth. I want my family to know they were my greatest earthly love, but more importantly, I will want them to know my relationship with GOD is most important. Like my blueberry bushes, your Last Will and Testament may need some pruning and reshaping to fully express your love of God.

Patrick Henry, one of our nation's founding fathers, is known for his statement, "Give me liberty or give me death." But he also shared in the final paragraph of his Last Will and Testament, the greatest inheritance that they could receive, "This is all the inheritance I can give to my dear family. The religion of Christ can give them one which will make them rich indeed." . . .What a legacy!

Today, many Christians neglect their love for Christ through their Last Will and Testament. So here are a few questions I have for you:

- Do you have a will or estate plan that is up-to-date, considers life changes that have occurred, and demonstrates good Christian stewardship?
- Have you made provisions to leave a continued legacy of love for those dependent on you such as a spouse, children, disabled family member, or worthy ministries?
- Have you prepared a signed Letter of Instruction expressing your love of God, family and other special people, directing gifts of certain items such as heirlooms, specific items of jewelry, or even Grandfather's shotgun or the quilt that Grandmother made? (I suggest also including a handwritten letter sharing your Christian testimony.)

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries offers Estate Planning in partnership with PhilanthroCorp. We want to help you protect your family and be a wise steward of what God has entrusted you with. Contact Bob Dewhurst at 205.982.1112 or email [bdewhurst@alabamachild.org](mailto:bdewhurst@alabamachild.org) to learn more.

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**Rives, Virginia P.:** Ken & Betty Schroeder  
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**Welsh, Sara Bob:** Sadie Sherum & Family  
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## THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who made a Grace Gift to Alabama Baptist Children's Homes. To learn more about Grace Gifts or how to make one, visit [alabamachild.org/give](http://alabamachild.org/give) or call 205.982.1112.



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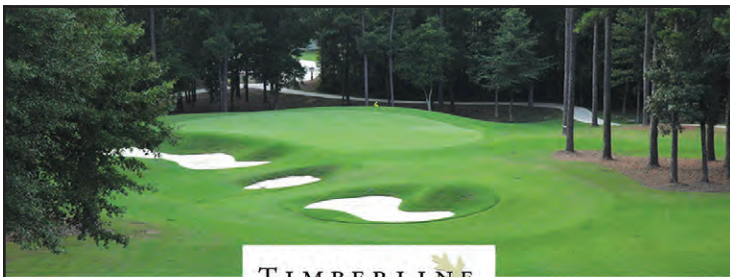
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**JUDSON COLLEGE**

► **Judson College Professor and Students Make Presentation at English Teachers of Alabama Conference:**

A Judson College English professor and two freshman students made a presentation at the recent Associate of College English Teachers of Alabama Conference in Fairhope.

Stacey Parham, assistant professor of English; Sarah Green, of Sumiton; and Victoria Douglas, of Jacksonville, Ark., presented a panel discussion at the conference March 13-14.

The three Judson presenters led a session titled "Defining Success: An English Composition Class Writes 'Their Place in the Sun.'"

► **Art Exhibit 'Hindsight' Features Student's Work:** The exhibition, "Hindsight," featured original graphic prints and works by Judson College senior art student Lindsey Holt, of Arab.

The show was open April 6-10 at the Marian Acree Tucker Gallery on Judson's campus in Marion.

In 2013, Holt created the logo for Siloam Baptist Church, Marion. Her printmaking work was featured in a 2014 exhibition at the Selma Arts Guild.

For more information, call Jamie Adams at 334-683-5251.

► **Judson College's Nursing**

**Department Hosts Vital Signs**

**Clinic:** Judson College's nursing department hosted its second Vital Signs Clinic on its Marion campus March 20. The clinic was supervised by Vera Davis, assistant professor of nursing, and Susanne Barry, adjunct nursing instructor.

► **Judson College Holds French Film Festival:** The Tournées French Film Festival was held at Judson College in Marion, from April 6 to 15. This was the fourth year Judson held the festival.

The films selected for the festival were "Ernest et Célestine," "Copie Conforme," "2 Automnes, 3 Hivers," "À Bout De Souffle," "À Perdre La Raison" and "L'Image Manquante."

**UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE**

► **University of Mobile Offers Musical Theatre Concentration:**

The University of Mobile has expanded opportunities for students by adding a concentration in musical theatre to its bachelor of music in vocal performance program.

The musical theatre concentration will be offered along with the current opera concentration in the university's vocal performance major.

Courses will include acting 1, 2 and 3; jazz and ballet dance; musi-

cal theatre history; directing; vocal pedagogy; and applied voice. The curriculum includes a "New York Showcase" each spring for students to attend workshops in New York and audition for agents and casting directors.

The musical theatre concentration will be offered beginning Fall 2015. For information, call Bruce Earnest at 251-442-2325 or email [bearnest@umobile.edu](mailto:bearnest@umobile.edu).

► **University of Mobile Presents 'The Merry Widow':** The University of Mobile performing arts series presents "The Merry Widow," an operetta based on an 1861 comedy play about a rich widow, a Baron who wants her money and the rekindling of an old flame.

The performances will be April 18-19 at the Saraland Performing Arts Center.

For more information, visit [umobile.edu/event/merry-widow/](http://umobile.edu/event/merry-widow/).

**SAMFORD UNIVERSITY**

► **Samford University Will Present 'Live at the Library':**

Samford University in Birmingham will present "Live at the Library" on April 17, 6:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served at 6.

Jerry C. Armor will speak on his book "A Home for Wayward Boys: The Early History of the Alabama Boys' Industrial School," which recounts how reformer Elizabeth Johnston persuaded the Legislature to establish the Alabama Boys' Industrial School in 1890.

Armor served as a juvenile probation officer for seven years, two years as a psychologist in one of the state's prisons and taught 30 years at Calhoun Community College in Tanner and Athens State University.

For more information, visit [library.samford.edu/about/exhibits.html](http://library.samford.edu/about/exhibits.html).



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**Contact Russ for concert information.**

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For April 19

## Explore the Bible By Robert Olsen, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

### A REFINED PEOPLE Zechariah 13:1-9

#### The Fountain that Cleanses (1-6)

In the Old Testament the Israelites were to sacrifice in order to experience forgiveness of sins. It is important to remember the forgiveness of sins was not because of the sacrifice but because of the faith the sacrificer had in God providing forgiveness through the sacrificial system.

Sometimes people think the act of sacrifice itself was what caused the forgiveness of sins but throughout the Old Testament it is clear God does not delight in sacrifice but in a pure and contrite heart (Hos. 6:6). The method of forgiveness never changes — it is always a salvation by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). Otherwise if the sacrifice itself brought about forgiveness, forgiveness would be based on works.

However, this sacrificial system was foreshadowing the sacrifice of Christ which is one that never needs to be repeated (Heb. 10). Zechariah 13:1 points toward Christ's sacrifice and the forgiveness that comes through it. The sacrifice of Christ is one that provides salvation for those who believe — based upon faith, not works. In spite of this clear teaching there are many people today who think if they are good enough they will go to heaven.

But we can never be good enough. God is holy — He cannot be in the presence of sin, which means even one sin is enough to keep us from experiencing eternal life. Christ is the only One who was ever perfect and, as fully-God and fully-man, He was able to pay the price for us. We owe the debt but cannot pay it. Christ did not owe the debt but He was able and willing to pay it. Therefore it is only through Christ we can experience salvation.

#### The Strike that Frees (7)

Jesus referred to Himself as the Good Shepherd — a reference to the fulfillment of this term from the Old Testament. It also is evident from this passage that the "shepherd" will be a man, referring to the

humanity of Christ, and also "One who is close to Me," referring to Christ's deity. This passage is a reference to Christ who is both God and man.

Once again we are presented with a prophecy that refers to Christ. Remember the Old Testament points toward Christ — it is not just some book that has no relevance for us.

The Old Testament shows us fulfilled prophecy and tells us of prophecy yet to come. Since we can read the Old Testament and see time and time again how so many prophecies have already been fulfilled, we can trust that the ones yet to be fulfilled also will come to pass. Reading the Old Testament should encourage us and strengthen our faith. Zechariah 13:7 is fulfilled in Matthew 26:31 where Christ is telling the disciples about His impending arrest. Jesus knew once the authorities came to arrest Him all of His disciples would leave Him alone, even Peter who denied that he would do so.

#### The Fire that Refines (8-9)

These verses show a remnant of Israel being preserved in spite of judgment. Throughout the Old Testament, God always mentioned a remnant that would be kept safe. God made His promise to Abraham, and even though there were times when it seemed like Israel would be wiped out, God always kept His promise to Abraham and kept some of His people safe. Even today God has preserved a remnant; those who are His people. Paul tells us in Galatians 3:7 the true children of Abraham are those who believe in the promises of God, the promises fulfilled in Christ the Messiah. We can be assured that He loves us and provides for us even in the midst of great tragedy and turmoil because God has made the ultimate provision for us — salvation in Christ. This knowledge of our salvation should fill us with hope and inspire us to live a life pleasing to God even when we are not prospering as the world understands the term. ☞

## Bible Studies for Life By Michael K. Wilson, M.R.E. Director, Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence, Samford University

### EXALTED LIKE NO OTHER Ephesians 1:7-10, 18-23

Intergraph Corporation in Huntsville is one of the leading providers of sophisticated engineering and geographical software. The company has customers around the world, including industries such as ship building, plant design and construction and governments. Their key software capability is a way to integrate huge amounts of complicated information from multiple sources, presenting it in a manner that helps save time and is more easily understood. One of their geographical information products is widely used by 911 services.

Intergraph's strategic plan for the 2000s was based on three blocks of time used to describe the phases of their plan: "Now," "Next" and "After Next." One might think a company dealing with complicated bits and bytes of information would use a more sophisticated description of their strategy. Not so. Smart companies understand the importance of communicating complicated ideas in ways that are easy to understand.

We can apply Intergraph's strategic plan description to the gospel story of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension. The Gospels tell the story of the "now" and "next" of Jesus. What about "after next?" Jesus' parting left His disciples gazing slack-jawed in wonder as they watched His ascension. What would follow next?

#### Jesus brings unity to all things. (7-10)

Ephesians 1:3-14 is thought to be a hymn of praise used in the early church. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us" (v. 3). Why such a hymn of praise? Because we have redemption through His blood (v. 7). We understand the word "redeem" to mean make free, restore or gain something by some kind of an exchange. The biblical example of redemption that comes to mind for many is the redemption of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Blood of Passover

lambs was placed over entrances of Hebrew homes as a sign to the angel of death to "pass over." The homes of Egyptians were visited and great sorrow was the result. Our redemption has come through the blood of another Passover Lamb, the Christ of Calvary. Through Him we are able once and for all time to understand the extent to which God has gone to demonstrate His love and grace for humanity. God's plan for all of creation — broken, sinful and longing for hope — need not be unclear or misunderstood any longer. No wonder Paul wrote a doxology.

#### Jesus reigns as eternal Ruler over all. (18-21)

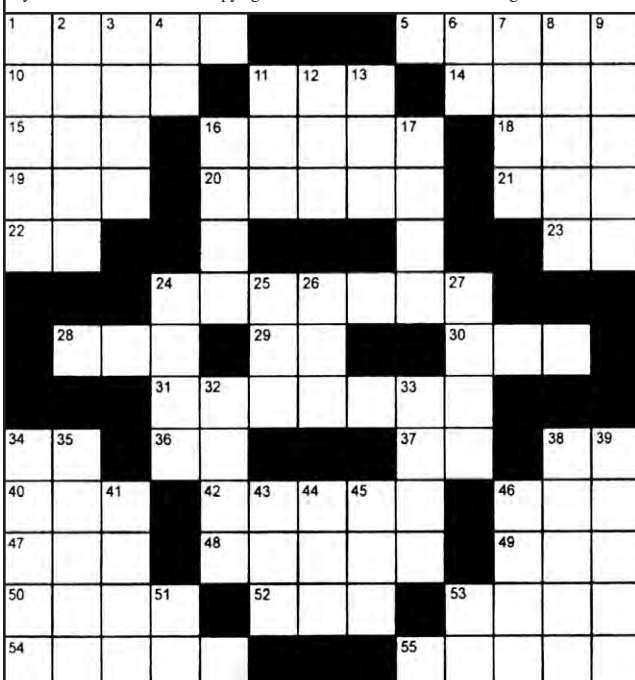
The apostle moves from a doxology hymn to a prayer. No longer should there be lack of clarity of God's power and plan. Christ's death and resurrection are testimony enough. He prays that the Ephesian believers would be fully aware of their hope and the great power that comes in obedience and trust in Jesus. This kind of power is what raised Jesus to life again. How might that kind of power be evident in their lives and futures as they trust in Jesus' teachings and example? Across eternity there is no other power or authority that can contain or control this divine energy and initiative, made real not just to the Ephesians, but also to us through the Spirit of the risen Christ.

#### Jesus leads His body, the Church. (22-23)

What is the expression of the risen Christ in the world today? "The Church is Christ's body, in which He speaks and acts, by which He fills everything with His presence" (v. 23). The risen Christ is now made known to all by means of His Church, which consists of Christ followers like you and me. How else will a broken and lost world — both near and far — come to know the hope His Church knows unless His Church — His body — speaks and acts and fills everything with His presence? ☞

## Christian Crossword

By Janet W. Adkins Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



### Across

- Where she is nourished for a time, and \_\_\_\_\_. (Rev. 12:14)
- I am ... a \_\_\_\_ woman. (2 Sam. 14:5)
- \_\_\_\_ and Thummim. (Ex. 28:30)
- Father of Kish and Abner. (1 Chron. 26:28)
- Grain storage building.
- Scottish cap.
- Jacob served \_\_\_\_ years for Rachel. (Gen. 29:20)
- Edge.
- Pull out the m\_\_\_\_ out of thine eye. (Matt. 7:4)
- \_\_\_\_ in me, and I in you. (John 15:4)
- Madame Peron.
- Concerning.
- Half an em.
- For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, \_\_\_\_\_. Amen. (Matt. 6:13)
- \_\_\_\_ did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. (1 Kings 15:11)
- Eldest son of Judah. (Gen. 38:3)

### Down

- God shall \_\_\_\_ them. (Deut. 7:2)
- Address word. (abbr.)
- Per. (abbr.)
- Exist.
- Cubic. (abbr.)
- The ungodly shall not stand ... \_\_\_\_ sinners in the congregation. (Ps. 1:5)
- Moses said, Why \_\_\_\_ ye with me? (Ex. 17:2)
- Sea eagle.
- \_\_\_\_ boy!
- So he bringeth them unto their desired \_\_\_\_\_. (Ps. 107:30)
- Food from a tree.
- \_\_\_\_ your heart, and not your garments. (Joel 2:13)
- Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto \_\_\_\_ virgins. (Matt. 25:1)
- Legwear.
- The \_\_\_\_ dwelt therein in times past. (Deut. 2:10)
- Thou madest him a little \_\_\_\_ than the angels. (Heb. 2:7)
- Is under \_\_\_\_ s ... until a time appointed of the father. (Gal. 4:2)
- Angry.
- Silent actor.
- Printer's measure.
- Exists.
- Dreadful.
- In her mouth was an \_\_\_\_ leaf. (Gen. 8:11)
- Out of man.
- Bird's beak.
- King of Midian. (Num. 31:8)
- Scarlet.
- The next day we arrived at \_\_\_\_ s. (Acts 20:15)
- Glacial snow.
- The strangers shall \_\_\_\_ away. (Ps. 18:45)
- Religion. (abbr.)
- A son of Gad. (Gen. 46:16)
- It is a \_\_\_\_ thing that the king requireth. (Dan. 2:11)
- Every.
- Israel pitched beside \_\_\_\_ ezer. (1 Sam. 4:1)
- The \_\_\_\_ is laid for him in the ground. (Job 18:10)

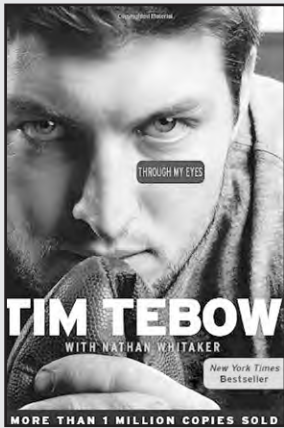
- A symbol.
- A little oil in a \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Kings 17:12)
- Under. (German)
- Indian princess.
- Headwear.
- I have.
- O king, he shall be cast into the \_\_\_\_ of lions. (Dan. 6:7)
- Sufficient. (arch)
- Data management. (abbr.)
- \_\_\_\_ everyone that thirsteth. (Is. 55:1)



# TOP 10

best-selling books from LifeWay

At press time



**1. Through My Eyes**  
By Tim Tebow and Nathan Whitaker (HarperOne)

**2. The Story of Easter**  
By Patricia A. Pingry (CandyCane Press)

**3. The Love Letters**  
By Beverly Lewis (Bethany House)

**4. Jesus Calling**  
By Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)

**5. Counter Culture**  
By David Platt (Tyndale)

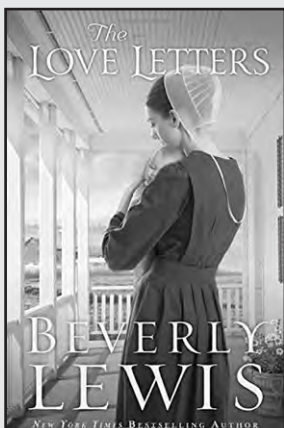
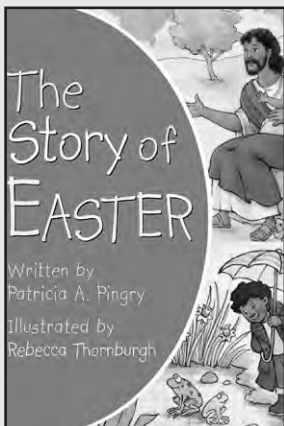
**6. The Circle Maker**  
By Mark Batterson (Zondervan)

**7. Before Amen: The Power of a Simple Prayer**  
By Max Lucado (Thomas Nelson)

**8. Praying Through the Names of God**  
By Tony Evans (Harvest House)

**9. The Bridge**  
By Karen Kingsbury (Pocket Books)

**10. The Christ of Easter**  
By Calvin Miller (B&H)



Source: lifeway.com

# Holy atmosphere of worship

## Grace Covenant finds perfect fit with blind pianist

By Anna Keller  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**G**race Covenant Worship Center, Birmingham, is a special place, according to Barry Cospers, director of missions for Bessemer Baptist Association.

Grace Covenant — along with two other churches in the area — came under Bessemer Association's watch care in October 2014, meaning they're under review for membership within the association. This October the association will vote on membership for the churches currently under watch care.

"Grace Covenant Worship Center is a remarkable church that is highly celebrative in its worship and service to God," Cospers said. "The worship atmosphere is so holy. The singing and preaching is an experience that brings the people into an awareness of God's presence in their midst."

Behind some of that powerful worship music is Marlon Spears, the church's keyboard and piano player. But there's something special about Spears as well — he's completely blind.

Spears started playing piano in the early 90s when he was in high school. Initially he was largely self-taught and his favorite styles of music included jazz, gospel and R&B. He later earned a music technology degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Grace Covenant is the second church he's played for as a staff member, and he said he loves the church's "family atmosphere."

"I've played for lots of different churches for different events and Grace is just a really great

church," Spears said. "They're just doing really great things in the community and the praise and worship style of music they use is what I enjoy playing, so it's a good fit."

Cospers said Grace Covenant feels the same way about Spears — that he's a perfect fit for the church.

"Marlon is such an outstanding pianist and his love for the Lord is contagious," Cospers said. "His talent is amazing and he plays each Sunday for the glory of God."

Michael Frazier, pastor of Grace Covenant, said his church's congregation is thankful for both Spears' talent as well as his personality.

"The congregation enjoys Marlon's playing as well as his sense of humor," Frazier said. "Marlon is not just a church musician, he is a member of Grace Covenant. He participates in continued Christian education courses as well as ministry training."

And Spears said he's proud to be a part of such a loving church community.

"I like watching the way they handle people in the community," Spears said. "Grace really goes out

and checks on people. They don't stay in their four walls. Pastor Frazier is really inspiring by the way he handles people and deals with people."

### No slowing down

In addition to playing for Grace Covenant, Spears provides music for events like weddings, private engagements, studio work and more. Although he's been blind since birth, Spears said his disability has never slowed him down and he largely credits his family for his positive attitude. ☪



Photo courtesy of Marlon Spears

**"Marlon is such an outstanding pianist and his love for the Lord is contagious. ... He plays each Sunday for the glory of God."**

**Barry Cospers**  
DOM, Bessemer Baptist Association

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# 'DREAM COME TRUE'

## Sacramento Kings' McCallum credits God for success

By Bill Sorrell  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**R**ay McCallum gave his father a birthday gift that both will never forget.

Playing for his father, Ray McCallum Sr., the head basketball coach at the University of Detroit Mercy, McCallum helped the Titans win the Horizon League tournament championship March 6, 2012, earning a berth in the NCAA tournament. It was his father's 51st birthday.

"That was my present to him — to get him to the NCAA tournament," said McCallum, a point guard for the Sacramento Kings, who was drafted in the second round in 2013 and 36th overall.

As a junior in 2013, McCallum led the Titans to the National Invitation Tournament after being named Horizon League Player of the Year and topping the league in scoring with an average of 18.3 points per game.

Throughout his life, his parents provided guidance on and off the court.

"At a young age my family always had me in church. Being in church on Sunday is something that is always good to do. I am a big believer. I give all the credit to my family. I grew up with a great family," said McCallum, 23. "My parents always tell me to do the right thing and good things will happen to you and give your praise to the Lord and let Him know how thankful you are for everything."

### NBA season

"To get the opportunity to wake up every day is a blessing, but obviously to be in the NBA is a dream come true."

Considered a "true" point guard, McCallum gets other players involved by being aggressive on both ends of the court.

Averaging 6.8 points, 2.4 rebounds, 2.6 assists, McCallum wants to be a "true floor leader."

Sacramento guard Ben McLemore said McCallum brings a lot of energy and support.

"He helps with the team in different ways, communicating, moving the ball, hitting guys in good positions. His drive is just tremendous. He is one of my best friends on the team."

"Playing for his dad gave him good understanding

on how to learn the game more and help others be on the same page as him."

To play for his father, who scored 2,109 career points at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., and was Mid-American Conference Player of the Year in 1983, was the main reason McCallum passed on offers from basketball powerhouses Florida, Oklahoma, Arizona and UCLA.

McCallum was highly recruited after leading Detroit Country Day School to the 2010 state championship, was a McDonald's High School All-American and finished third in Michigan's Mr. Basketball voting.

### All-Horizon League team

He was the first freshman in Detroit history to make the All-Horizon League team and led the team in scoring (13.5 points), assists (4.9) and total steals (54). CollegeInsider.com named him a freshman All-American.

As a sophomore McCallum was first team all-conference after averaging 15.4 points, 4.5 rebounds and 4.0 assists. He was first team all conference as a junior also. He averaged 4.5 rebounds and 4.0 assists per game.

During the NBA's Summer League in 2014 the Kings won the championship and McCallum was the most valuable player of the championship game.

At every level McCallum has stayed true to himself.

"You continue to be the person you are and continue to do the things that got you to this level," he said, claiming Philippians 4:13 as his favorite verse.

He stays spiritually sharp through prayer and said the Lord is his "role model."

"Just being a good person, always trying to do the right thing and trying to have a high character and carry myself the right way all the time" are his personal goals, McCallum said.

Memphis Grizzlies guard Nick Calathes has attended pre-game chapel services with McCallum. "Obviously he is a good kid. It is good to see."

Calathes called it great to see other Christians in the league.

For McCallum "every day is truly a blessing to be doing what I am doing. I am very thankful for everything that He has allowed me to do,"

he said. "I've had a great life. Everything in life is something special for me."

I know that none of that would be possible if it wasn't for Him." ❧



Photo courtesy of Sacramento Kings

## RELIGION

in America

Compiled from Wire Services



### Christian florist raises over \$100K for legal fees

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — A Washington state great-grandmother, who was ordered to pay \$1,001 to the state for refusing to create a flower arrangement for a long-time customer's same-sex wedding, has raised more than \$100,000 from supporters.

Barronelle Stutzman, 70, reportedly raised the funds in a crowdfunding campaign through gofundme.com that was set up in February. As of April 6, the total had risen to reportedly more than \$100,000. The donated money is intended for potential legal bills, a note for Stutzman on the gofundme.com site said.

Stutzman sold flowers to Robert Ingersoll and Curt Freed for more than nine years. But when Ingersoll asked her to create the flower arrangements for the couple's wedding in 2013, Stutzman said she couldn't because of her "relationship with Jesus Christ."

The Washington state attorney sued Stutzman for sexual orientation discrimination under the state's Consumer Protection Act (CPA). Ingersoll and Freed then filed their own lawsuit against her. A ruling Feb. 18 settled both suits by summary judgment in the plaintiffs' favor.

On March 27, Stutzman was ordered to pay a \$1,000 "civil penalty" to the state and \$1 in attorneys' fees. (BP)

### Latino evangelicals call for end to death penalty

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. — A leading group of Latino evangelicals has called for an end to state-sanctioned capital punishment, the first national association of evangelicals to do so.

In a unanimous vote March 27 the National Latino Evangelical Coalition urged its 3,000 member congregations to end capital punishment across the country.

"As Christ-followers we are called to work toward justice for all," said coalition president Gabriel Salguero. "And as Latinos we know too well that justice is not always even-handed."

Salguero said the decision came after a years-long discernment process that included prayer and dialogue with anti-death penalty groups like Equal Justice USA (EJUSA) since at least 2013.

EJUSA executive director Shari Silberstein said, "EJUSA has found that evangelicals are eager to take another look at this issue, reflecting what we're seeing in the country as a whole."

American support for the death penalty has hit the lowest levels in 40 years and a 2014 poll by Barna Group showed Christian support for the practice also is waning. (RNS)

### Kansas bans dismemberment abortions

TOPEKA, Kan. — Abortionists in Kansas will soon be banned from performing dismemberment abortions thanks to legislation passed by the state Legislature March 25.

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback promised in January he would sign the bill making the state the first to ban abortions that tear children limb from limb in the womb. The federal government already criminalizes partial birth abortions, but dismemberment abortions — also known as dilation and evacuation abortions — are still legal. The legislation is part of a new strategy pioneered by National Right to Life Committee (NRLC). Kansans for Life (KFL) promoted the bill based on NRLC's model legislation.

KFL legislative director Kathy Ostrowski said, "With the discussion about and passage of this bill the public will see that dismemberment abortions brutally — and unacceptably — rip apart small human beings who have ... perfectly formed fingers and toes." (BP)

### 'Hour of Power' founder Robert Schuller dies at 88

GARDEN GROVE, Calif. — Televangelist Robert H. Schuller, who attempted to integrate the teachings of John Calvin with the positive thinking of Norman Vincent Peale and who lost his famed Crystal Cathedral to bankruptcy, died April 2 at age 88.

Schuller was best-known for his four decades of televised Sunday services, "Hour of Power," broadcast from Crystal Cathedral.

In 1950, after receiving his bachelor of arts degree from Hope College and a master of divinity from Western Theological Seminary he was ordained by the Reformed Church in America.

He soon entered the pastorate at one of the denomination's churches in Chicago which grew from 38 members to 400 in Schuller's five years there. In 1955 he was sent to Orange County, Calif., to establish Garden Grove Community Church.

Schuller is survived by five children and more than a dozen grandchildren. His wife, Arvella, died in 2014. (RNS)