

# THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



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Zaza farmers work on a plot of land in Central Asia.

*Reaching the*

# ZAZA PEOPLE

IMB photo

## FBC Montgomery helps mobilize volunteers to go to Central Asia through Zaza Alliance

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

**I**magine traveling throughout the entire state of Alabama and meeting less than 40 Christians on your journey. It's an apt comparison to what Baptist representatives who work among the 3 million or so predominantly Muslim Zaza people in Central Asia face, said Brian Gay, minister of missions at First Baptist Church, Montgomery.

"The task to share the hope they can have in Jesus Christ is so urgent," Gay said, which is why a group of volunteers formed the Zaza Alliance in

2010. The Zaza Alliance is a coalition of churches who have committed to pray for the Zaza people and help mobilize volunteers to go to Central Asia. Gay serves as president and First, Montgomery, is a major supporter of the organization.

Ten years ago no Christian workers were engaging the Zazas at all, so the ministry is still in its early stages, said a Baptist representative in Central Asia. Yet every once in a while he sees how God is at work among this little known people group.

Mehmet is a good example. Though he is Muslim, Mehmet often hosts Christians in his home to

share a meal and a cup of chai tea. One night the Christian workers told Mehmet stories about Jesus' teachings on helping the poor, explaining that while we were poor in our sins, Jesus reached down and helped.

### Hospitable culture

The next day Mehmet was walking in town and saw two women sitting on the steps of the local government building. He noticed their distress and stopped to talk to them. He learned that the woman's husband had beaten her and kicked her and her mother out of their home. They were seeking government help

but had been turned away. Mehmet offered to introduce them to a friend who might employ the younger woman. When Mehmet shared the story of the encounter with his Christian friend, his enthusiasm was uncontainable.

"He got this big smile on his face telling me about the women and how before, he would have walked past them," the Baptist worker said. "He said the difference this time was that he thought about what the Bible said about helping poor people. He said it just felt so good to help people, and in that little tea (See 'Share,' page 10)



Coming next week ...

What would **your church** say to **Caitlyn (Bruce Jenner)?**

# COMMENT

## The Upcoming SBC Annual Meeting

Southern Baptists may set a record next week when they gather in Columbus, Ohio, for the 2015 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). Unfortunately the record may not be one most people boast about. The June 16–17 meeting may have the smallest number of registered messengers since the 1940s.

In three of the last four years the annual meeting has drawn the fewest number of messengers of any annual meeting since 1944. The 2011 meeting in Phoenix, Ariz., registered 4,821 messengers followed by 5,103 in 2013 in Houston and 5,294 in 2014 in Baltimore.

Some are quick to point out that the trend line for annual meeting participation is up since the 2011 low, but whether that direction can be maintained is an open question.

A core group of Baptists attend the annual meeting wherever it is held so meeting outside traditional SBC territory is not a concern for them. Others seem to need additional motivation. Sometimes that is the site itself. New Orleans in 2012, for example, attracted 7,868 messengers. But even that figure was less than half the attendance figures from two decades earlier.

Elections, controversy or some driving issue are traditional motivators that impact attendance. A week before the annual meeting, none of these seem likely for Columbus. SBC President Ronnie Floyd is almost certain to be re-elected to a traditional second term. No passionate issue has surfaced that would generate convention attendance.

### Overseas missionaries

The only hint of controversy has been some reactions to the new guidelines for overseas missionary serviced adopted by the International Mission Board (IMB) on May 13. Localized opposition has surfaced to a few of the changes such as allowing persons who practice speaking in unknown tongues as a private prayer language, “glossolalia,” to serve as missionaries.

Others are questioning if IMB is headed toward financially supporting only church planters and strategists for unreached people groups with all other team members providing some or all of their financial support. This would be a significant change for IMB.



### THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Whether any of these concerns will be expressed on the floor of the convention is doubtful. SBC bylaws specify that each entity must reserve one-third of its annual meeting reporting time for questions from messengers. Since the IMB has only 12 minutes (9:15 to 9:27 Wednesday morning) to report on its worldwide program, it is doubtful any meaningful time for questions will be available. The North American Mission Board (NAMB) also has 12 minutes (9 to 9:12 Wednesday morning).

A resolution objecting to IMB action would not likely get beyond the Resolutions Committee and a motion about the matter would automatically be referred to the IMB trustees as SBC bylaws require because it would deal with an internal matter of the entity.

The 2015 program does have three unique features which may attract participation. The Tuesday evening program will be devoted to “prayer for the Next Great Awakening.” Floyd has traveled extensively across the nation calling Southern Baptists to prayer for a Great Awakening.

Tuesday evening he will be joined by leading SBC pastors like Jack Graham, James Merritt and former Alabamians Ted Traylor and Steve Gaines to kick off the prayer emphasis.

Wednesday morning messengers will witness a joint commissioning service of IMB and NAMB missionaries in a two-hour service that will capsize Southern Baptist commitment to reach the

world — near and far — with the message of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

That afternoon Floyd will moderate a panel discussion designed to help prepare churches for the upcoming ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court on same-sex “marriage.” That discussion should be both interesting and helpful.

Additionally the Committee on Order of Business for the 2015 annual meeting has attempted to demonstrate the diversity of SBC. Sometimes forgotten is that SBC is the most ethnically diverse Protestant denomination in the United States.

That point will be illustrated with Asians, Hispanics, African-Americans and Anglos reading Scripture and leading prayers. The committee also reached out to a number of younger pastors and included this age group on the program.

Alabama Baptist participation in the annual meeting will not be prominent even though the

state is the largest contributor to Southern Baptist work around the world through the Cooperative Program. Kathy Litton, of Mobile, is the only Alabamian appointed to serve

at this year’s annual meeting. She will serve on the Resolutions Committee.

History indicates about 125 of Alabama’s more than 3,000 churches will send messengers totaling about 250. Overall across the SBC only about 2,200 churches are expected to send messengers to this annual meeting.

The late Hudson Baggett (former editor of *The Alabama Baptist*) used to look at this trend and ask “Which Southern Baptist Convention?” He pointed out that such a small fraction of the whole was not a reliable sample of the whole SBC. He often said the same thing about the annual meeting of the state convention.

Dr. Baggett was correct, but the only way Baptists have to make decisions is through their annual meetings. That means those who go make the decisions about the budgets, convention priorities, the make up of governing bodies and all the rest. That makes the meetings important every year no matter where they are, how many participate or what other issues buzz around them.

*The Alabama Baptist* will be there providing a complete report of the annual meeting in the June 25 issue along with daily updates through our Top Story of the Day and news feed.

Please pray for the annual meeting, for President Floyd and other convention leaders, for the messengers from the churches, for entity leaders and all that transpires during this important time. Pray that God will be honored and that Baptists will be encouraged as we work together in the cause of Christ. 🙏

Follow alerts.[thealabamabaptist.org](http://thealabamabaptist.org)  
for news highlights from the SBC  
annual meeting in Columbus.

## LETTERS

### TO THE EDITOR

#### HEARING LOSS

Knowing I have profound hearing loss, a Baptist friend and neighbor passed on to me pages from the May 28 issue of *The Alabama Baptist*, specifically the article “‘Patience’ is key. First deaf M.Div. student graduates from Beeson.”

After the headline and great photograph, my focus went to the enlarged

quotation: “I am called by God to preach and minister to the deaf and hard of hearing community.”

Yes. “The deaf and hard of hearing community.”

As one who was left with a significant (and progressive) hearing loss at the age of three from ear infections and is now 67, I’ve lived in a “between” world, not hearing and yet not deaf, and I know of no church or any

denomination in which a pastor, deaf or hearing or “between,” ministers to the deaf and hard of hearing community (until now).

Thank you for publishing “‘Patience’ is key.”

Lucy Taylor Chapman  
Homewood, Ala. 🙏





"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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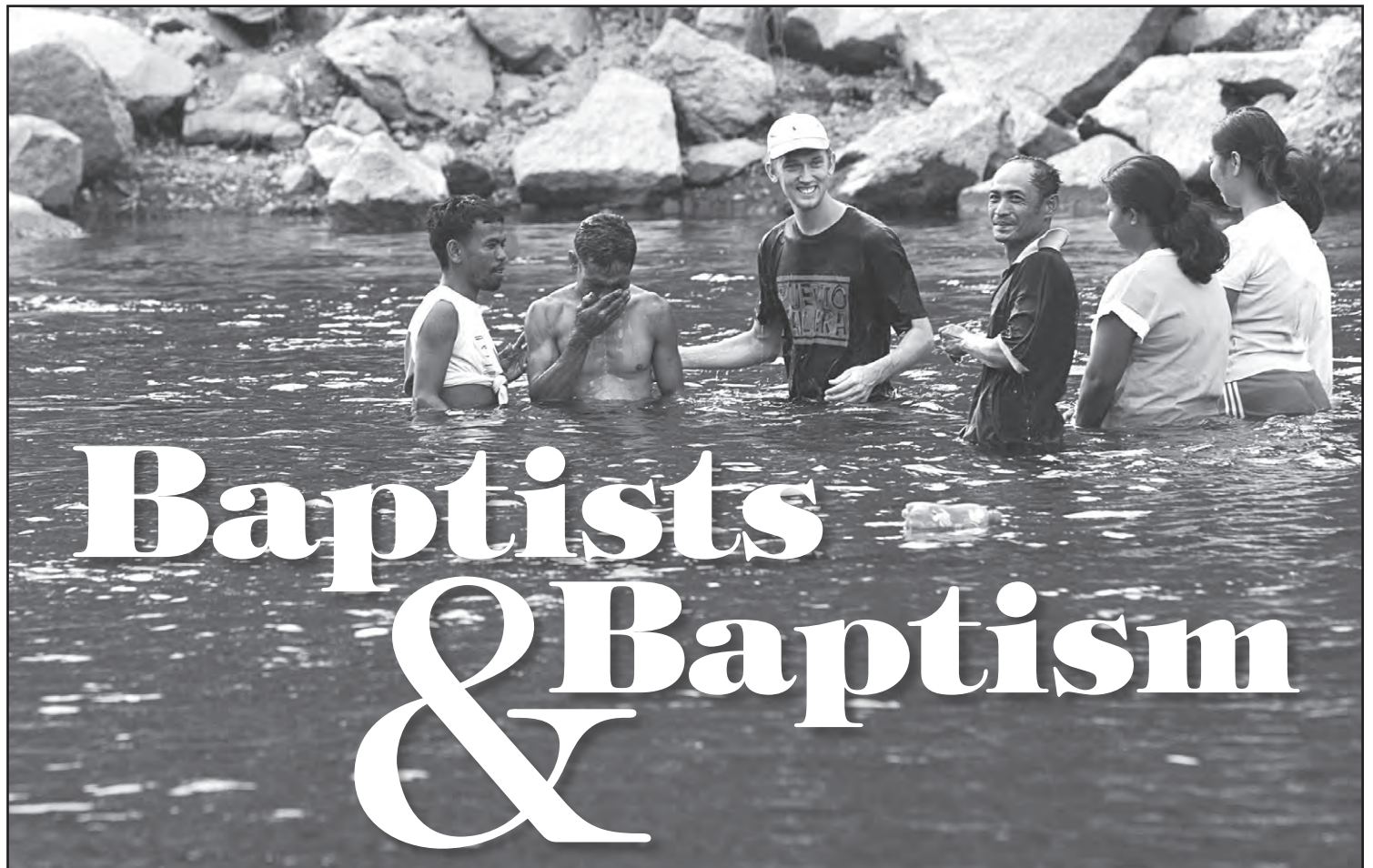


Photo by Neisha Roberts

## The Alabama Baptist speaks with Timothy George, dean of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School, about the topic of Baptists and baptism.

### **Q: Why do Baptists and other Christians practice baptism?**

**A:** We practice baptism because we follow Jesus who asked us to do that. It is part of what we call the Great Commission. It is at the very core of the mandate we as believers received from the One we regard as our Lord. That is one level of answer. There is a deep, rich theology of initiation related to baptism which flows from that so it isn't merely a command we are obeying. Baptism also is an entrance into a new life in Christ, as Paul talks about in Romans 6. Baptists often cite it as a central New Testament text about the meaning of baptism. We are buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life. So I think we baptize because Jesus asked us to as a way of identifying with Him and because it marks our entrance into the Christian life in a special way.

### **Q: Is there a relationship between baptism and the name we hold as Baptists?**

**A:** As best we can tell, the term Baptist was a term of derision — of abuse-baptizer and dipper. Some Baptists are called dippers because the word 'baptisto' in Greek means to immerse or to dip beneath the waters. It was a term in the early 17th century that became attached to those who practiced baptism by immersion. That became almost as universal as anything among Baptists. Baptism by immersion has been a key for Arminian Baptists, Calvinistic Baptists, for all different kinds of Baptists. But it did draw the attention of those

who were opposed to the Baptist movement, particularly Anglicans in England at the time and Presbyterians and others who thought this was an unusual and somewhat weird way to baptize when infant baptism was the universal practice. It is hard for us now in our culture to think ourselves back into that condition. Baptists were a small, harassed and even persecuted sect. The thing that made them stand out was this practice of baptism. It didn't take too long before Baptists began to own that name for themselves.

### **Q: What is the role of faith as it relates to baptism?**

**A:** Well it has to be integral to baptism. Baptism divorced from faith in any context does not have the meaning the New Testament attaches to baptism. Baptists have always insisted that baptism presupposes two things. One is faith; the other is repentance. Both are the work of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, not just human acts and responses but what God is working in those drawn to Himself. I think sometimes in our speaking about "believer's baptism" we neglect the repentance part. If you go to Russia today or many places in Eastern Europe the Baptist Christians are called Repenters. Repentance means saying "no" to something; it means turning your back on something, going in a different direction. Repentance has to be associated in a negative way along with faith in a positive way when embracing faith not just as mental assent but fiducial trust. Trust is as close as we can come. Clinging to, depending on, that is what faith

means. Faith has to be twined with repentance. Repentance without faith does not lead to salvation. Faith without repentance is not genuine faith in the New Testament sense of the word.

### **Q: How does that relate to the concept of the Believer's Church?**

**A:** Another phrase that has come into our discussion is 'regenerative church membership.' Baptists say the Church is composed of those who are regenerated, who trusted in Jesus Christ, who have been born again and have the Holy Spirit living within them. In baptism and through repentance and faith, we announce that. So the Believer's Church is an intentional church community and, in the European context especially, it is contrasted to the state church or to the legally established church which sometimes includes everybody who is born into a certain parish. To be an Englishman, as one would say, is to be an Anglican. Well in the Believer's Church movement, not only Baptists — although Baptists were leaders in this — said church membership required an intentional act of repentance and faith and commitment.

### **Q: Can a community such as a congregation make a commitment for another person be they an infant, a child or an adult?**

**A:** Of course, infant baptism itself has  
(See 'Baptismal,' page 4)

## Baptists & Baptism

*“I don’t believe that baptism, whether it is infant baptism or believer’s baptism, ipso facto removes the guilt of original sin apart from the superintending grace of God.”*

— Timothy George —

# Baptismal theology

## Beeson’s Dean George addresses infant, preschool baptism, Baptist history

(continued from page 3)

many different theologies. There isn’t just one theology of infant baptism. The Catholic and some of the more liturgical Anglican and Lutheran traditions hold that the infant is grafted into Christ in the sacramental sense through baptism. There also is a view of infant baptism that is more Presbyterian in which the infant is embraced in the bosom of the church with the idea that the baptism received in infancy will bear fruit in a personal commitment to Christ at some point in their life. Methodists probably come close to this today. Baptists do something similar to that in what we call dedication. We dedicate infants. Dedication involves prayer, involves commitment and it involves the family, the parents and the child being embraced by the larger community of faith. Because an infant is dedicated we do not think that exempts that dedicated infant from needing personal faith and coming to Christ. We do not say to our children, ‘Be a good Christian boy or girl.’ We say to our children ‘Love God, repent, have faith and believe the gospel.’

**Q: How have Baptists across the years generally viewed infant baptism, whether it be of the Catholic tradition or the Presbyterian tradition?**

**A:** Most Baptists do not regard infant baptism as a proper New Testament form of baptism. I think there have been a lot of polemics in our history between those who practice infant baptism and the Baptist Church that doesn’t. It is one of the distinctive marks of the worldwide Baptist fellowship with some few exceptions here and there. Most Baptist churches have a confession of faith that includes baptism in the name of the Triune God by immersion for believers as essential to what it means to be a part of a believing community of faith.

**Q: Is there any reason to re-examine that position, to revise our view of infant baptism?**

**A:** My friend, John Piper, a very well-known Baptist pastor, discussed opening the doors of membership to those who had experienced infant baptism but not believer’s baptism. Now the church itself, to my knowledge, was not contemplating beginning to perform infant baptism but accepting those who had been baptized as infants, who had a living personal faith in Jesus Christ and evidenced it by the fruits of their life and wanted to be a part of that community. I heard Piper when he was speaking here at Beeson say we don’t want to make the door of the church any more narrow than the door of salvation. An interesting way to think about it. He is a Calvinist in his theology. That might have been something behind it. But that is one example of a very well-known pastor in a church that took seriously this question.

But I think, certainly in the United States and I think around the world generally, that is still a minority view. It is not a view that is winning the day in any large number.

I do think it would be a good thing for us to think about baptism as a part of the whole initiation into the Christian life. We understand, I think rightly, that one is drawn to faith by the Holy Spirit in different ways and in different sequences. God doesn’t just begin to work in our life for the first time when we are baptized or when we make a profession of faith. God is working in our life by letting us be born in a certain culture where the gospel is known, the Bible is available and certainly in families where Christ is honored. This is part of what we used to call ‘conviction.’ John 6:44, ‘No one comes to the Father unless they are drawn on by the Holy Spirit.’ Well the Holy Spirit is the sovereign Lord and draws people to Himself and that includes many things prior to the



Timothy George

Photo courtesy of Beeson Divinity School

moment of repentance and faith. Baptism in that sequence is a crucial moment in the initiation into the Christian life. It can be prepared for in all kinds of different ways that involve families, communities, churches and personal friendships. God uses all of these things to draw people to faith in Christ. Baptists say baptism is the place where that comes to focus in your own profession where you embrace it and become identified by it in a public way. That’s one reason we’ve been reluctant to baptize infants because we see that element missing in infant baptism.

**Q: What counsel would you give to a Baptist pastor who was asked by parents to do an infant baptism?**

**A:** I can only speak for what I myself could or would think about doing. I don’t think I could in good conscience baptize an infant. I would want to embrace the family of the infant and encourage them in every way possible in their own Christian spiritual lives. But I don’t find infant baptism is true to the meaning of baptism as the Scriptures teach it or as I understand it to be. I think most Baptist pastors in the world would agree with what I just said. But I still want to reach out and encourage the step of faith that is evidenced by the request. But baptism of an infant for Baptists is not the appropriate way or the Scriptural way to do that.

**Q: If a pastor should resist the pressure to baptize an infant then what about the Southern Baptist practice of baptizing preschoolers? Figures for the last year of record show 3,547 preschool baptisms SBC-wide and 204 in Alabama.**

**A:** Wow. Well I have faced this as an interim pastor in Alabama and elsewhere. I know some of the pressure here. I have a couple of thoughts about it. First of all, we want our children to come to Christ. We want to encourage them when they begin to respond even at a tender age to the gospel. We don’t want to slap them on the hand and say, ‘No, you are too young for that. Come back in 10 years.’

The question is what is the right way to deal with that when they are very young — preschool and younger? I have heard of three year olds being baptized. As I said in something I wrote, there is a theology for believer’s baptism that I adhere to and another theology for infant baptism that I don’t agree with but there is no theological rationale for toddler baptism. That’s what we are really talking about. It is neither infant baptism in the conventional sense nor is it believer’s baptism where a personal confession

## Baptists & Baptism



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'I don't find infant baptism is true to the meaning of baptism as the Scriptures teach it or as I understand it to be. I think most Baptist pastors in the world would agree with what I just said,' George says.

based on repentance and faith is at work.

Here's what I have tried to do and I would not hold myself out as an example of perfection on this. I don't think I have baptized any preschoolers but I have baptized children under 10 years of age. Sometimes I wondered but the family was there so I have baptized a few eight and nine year olds and 10 year olds for sure.

The best answer I have found on this in a Baptist context comes from the late W.A. Criswell. Criswell published a pastor's manual in which he addressed this issue and talked about what he did at First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas. For many, many years when a very young child came forward making a profession of faith — technically seeking baptism and membership in the church — Criswell said he would embrace that child, affirm that child publicly and talk about that as a step toward Jesus, a step toward faith in Jesus. Then he would begin a process of working with the child and the parents to that point where there was a clear acknowledgement of repentance and faith. That doesn't give you any rigid parameters — you can't do this with a six year old, you have to be 12 before you are baptized. I would resist that kind of strict age limit. One thing about believer's baptism that distinguishes it from infant baptism that I think we risk losing when we baptize children at younger and younger ages is the fact that your baptism is something you ought to remember for the rest of your life. So I like Criswell's solution — a step toward Jesus, a step toward faith — then lovingly lead them to a deeper awareness of what's involved.

**Q: If you were talking to the parents of a young child who said, "I love Jesus and I want to be a Christian," what would you say to the family about their responsibility to that child's spiritual development?**

**A:** I would want them to know loving Jesus is a wonderful thing. I would want to cel-

brate it, not discourage it in any way. Rather, I would want to say to the parents of the child that baptism involves saying 'no' to your former way of life — repentance. Is this dear son or daughter of yours at a point of making that kind of commitment? Baptism involves more than love for Jesus. It involves saying 'no' and 'yes.' You need a lot of parental and pastoral discernment. Where the Church can come in and help is to provide a place for that nurturing and encouragement and a structure for that nurturing so a parent is not left alone. I hope I would have the wisdom and discernment and maybe even the courage to speak to parents in that kind of way. We want precious gifts of God, your son or daughter, to come to a life decisive commitment to Jesus Christ and this is a first step toward that. Let's recognize it, let's celebrate it, but let's keep moving in that direction.

**Q: If a church follows a process like you describe should parents be concerned that they are standing in the way of their child becoming a Christian?**

**A:** I wouldn't want to disparage the fact that there may be parents who would have those thoughts. It seems to me that those kinds of thoughts come out of a misplaced understanding of how God works in our lives in mysterious ways that we cannot understand. I would hope a deacon, or a leader in the church, could come alongside those parents and help them see how God does work beyond the structures we may put in the way of the Holy Spirit working. We all are in the hands of God, we trust in God's grace. In a way this is like what happens to a baby when they die in infancy. Do they go to hell if they have not been baptized? Not only Baptists but most believers say no. We trust in the gracious goodness and sovereignty of God. That's what we have to do. We have a responsibility to lead people to a better, deeper, more biblical understanding. I don't believe that baptism, whether it is infant baptism or believer's baptism, ipso facto removes the guilt of original sin apart

from the superintending grace of God. We do have a big God and His grace is gracious to the uttermost.

**Q: Baptists sometimes end up immersing the same person three or four times. Is that because we are not nurturing a growing faith?**

**A:** Well Baptists don't have anything that we call confirmation. What I would like to see us do is go back and recover some of the fuller baptismal theology and practices of the early Church. You know, there is a great debate among New Testament early Church historians as to when infant baptism actually began. In my best reading, the first expressed mention of it is the late second century, maybe the early third century. Before that there is no record of infant baptism.

There was the standard practice of baptism — what we would call believer's baptism or repenter's baptism. It was preceded by a period of catechesis which I think is what we have left out very often in our free church Baptist tradition. There needs to be a deep exposure to the Christian faith, to the Bible, to the Lord's Prayer, to the life of faith, to discipleship at some level as you are leading up to the point of baptism. To be baptized in the early Church was to put your life on the line. You were enrolling in the number of those who were quite likely to be martyred. That is not something you want to do lightly or casually. The baptism itself often took place on Easter eve and involved somewhat elaborate rituals or practices. One such practice was the saying of the faith — what became the Apostles' Creed — and it was often asked in such questions as, 'Do you believe God the Father Almighty? Do you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God?' I believe this to be owning the faith verbally.

Another thing they did was the laying on of hands. In Baptist history this became a controversial question. There were those who practiced the laying on of hands by every baptized believer, not just those being ordained. Laying on of hands at baptism has pretty much dropped out of Baptist practice all over the world. I've still seen it done

in England and I think it is a good thing. Baptism is the place where we are commissioned by Jesus to go into the world preaching the gospel. A solemn setting set apart by the laying on of hands is one way to do that. Baptism is really a big deal — following Jesus Christ, being baptized, being set aside to serve as a missionary for the gospel. Baptism is a place where all of that should come together. Whenever baptism is happening in the context of worship, a big deal ought to be made about it. It shouldn't be a footnote or an appendix.

**Q: As you interact with Baptist leaders from different parts of the world and they become familiar with the way Southern Baptists generally practice baptism, what kind of reactions do you hear from them?**

**A:** Well some are quite surprised, especially with the baptism of children at such a young age. That is not the standard Baptist practice around the world. Usually the average age would be somewhere around 14–16. A few years ago I was in Jamaica preaching at a Baptist church in connection with the Baptist World Alliance meeting there and they had a baptismal service scheduled for that day. I was able to witness it. It was a transformative event for those people who were being baptized. They gave personal testimonies of how their life had been rescued from disaster by the grace of God, what belonging to that community of faith meant, being surrounded by their friends and rejoicing. It was not a sour, dull event. It was full of jubilation.

We are celebrating resurrection, buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life. Death, burial and resurrection are not tidy events. I resist this effort to smother baptism in a kind of ritual understatement and I'm afraid when we baptize as often as we do and in such a casual way as we do, we're tempted to do that. ❧



BP photo

Figures for the last year of record show 3,547 preschool baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention and 204 in Alabama.



## Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

### COFFEE

▶ **William (Bill) Hart** is the new pastor of **Roeton Church, Brundidge**. He began May 10. Hart has served as pastor of Hodesville Church, Dothan; El Bethel Church, Chancellor;



HART

Pleasant Grove Church, Ozark; and Holmes Church, Arifton. He and his wife, Wilma, have two children.

### ALABAMA-CRENSHAW

▶ **South Luverne Church, Luverne**, will hold "Journey Off the Map" VBS on June 22-26, 5:30-8:30 nightly. Family night

will be June 28, 5 p.m. Sam Tate is pastor.

### CAHABA

▶ **Ocmulgee Church, Selma**, will celebrate its 195th anniversary with a homecoming June 14, 10 a.m. Former pastor Robert Taylor will be the guest speaker. A covered dish lunch will follow in the family life center. Danny Sumerlin is pastor.

### MUD CREEK

▶ **Sparks Gap Church, Bessemer**, will host special singers The Scrap Iron Quartet on June 28, 1:30 p.m. Everyone is invited. Johnny Thacker is pastor.

### TUSCALOOSA

▶ **Ray Hallman** is the new pastor of **Duncanville Church**. He began April 19. He previously served as pastor of Unity Church, Tuscaloosa; Daviston Church; and

Bethabara Church, Northport. He and his wife, Robin, have two children and two grandchildren.

### MORGAN

▶ **Shoal Creek Church,**

**Decatur**, ordained Cale Halloway to the ministry, who has been called to serve on staff at Global Youth Ministry in Georgia. The church also ordained Barry Mouser and Stephen Taylor as deacons, licensed Justin Dozier to the ministry and named Wayne Phillips deacon emeritus. Phillips was ordained as a deacon in 1971. Gary Linville is pastor. ☞



PHILLIPS

## Samford ranked No. 2 Christian university in US

Samford University in Birmingham was recently ranked No. 2 on the 2015 Best Christian Colleges and Universities list published by College Choice, an online publication dedicated to helping students and their families find the right college.

The list is based exclusively on factors college freshmen said were most important to their college decision. According to the most recent nationwide survey published by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, these factors include academic reputation, financial aid offerings, overall cost and success of graduates in the post-college job market.

Each of these factors were weighted equally in the ranking and data was derived from a variety of publicly available sources, including *U.S. News & World*

*Report*, the National Center for Education Statistics and PayScale.

Samford was founded in 1841 by the Alabama Baptist State Convention and is the 87th oldest institution for higher learning in the United States. According to its website, Samford aims to nurture persons in their development of intellect, creativity, faith and personhood.

### 86 percent retention

The university has almost 5,000 enrolled students and offers a wide variety of undergraduate and graduate degrees with a 12 to 1 student/faculty ratio. While 77 percent of applicants are accepted to Samford each year, 86 percent of them choose to return after their freshman year.

*U.S. News & World Report* ranked Samford No. 3 on its list

of Southern Regional Universities for the second year in a row and Forbes, Inc. recognized Samford as the top university in the state in 2014.

Also in the *U.S. News & World Report*, Samford ranked third in the South for "A Strong Commitment to Teaching," up one spot from its No. 4 ranking in 2014 in that category. Samford also claimed the No. 12 spot in the South's "Great Schools at Great Prices" category. ([collegechoice.net](http://collegechoice.net), TAB)

### VOICE YOUR OPINION

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

Remember to:

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

## ALABAMA UPDATES

PEOPLE, CHURCHES MAKING NEWS ACROSS THE STATE

### SBOM's Gilbreath to partially retire June 30

Although he originally felt called to be a pastor, Sammy Gilbreath has spent nearly 20 years at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) leading other pastors in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Gilbreath, director of SBOM's office of evangelism, will partially retire June 30 and begin working as evangelism director on a part-time basis. Also working part time in the evangelism office are two other state missionaries: Billy Harris and Phil Winningham.

While experimenting with the idea of regionalizing the evangelism office Gilbreath will move from his home in Montgomery to Florence to cover the northern region of the state. Winningham covers the central region and Hunt the southern region.

"We're not going to stop doing anything we do now but we will begin doing it more regionally," Gilbreath explained of his new position that will begin July 1. "Even in semi-retirement all our strategies (for churches and pastors) will be customized. We will continue to develop strategies to reach their needs and to reach their communities."

Prior to Gilbreath's time at SBOM he served as pastor of several Alabama Baptist churches including Ridgedale Baptist Church, Scottsboro; Flint River Baptist Church, Hazel Green; and Highland Baptist Church, Florence. He served as associate pastor/administrator for First Baptist Church, Huntsville. He also served as pastor of churches in Mississippi, Kentucky and South Carolina.

Gilbreath earned a bachelor's degree from Alabama A&M University in Huntsville; a master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; and a doctor of ministry degree from Drew University in Madison, N.J.

He and his wife, Carol, have two children and four grandchildren. (Neisha Roberts)



GILBREATH

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

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



## Ministry Tips

### MARKETPLACE WITNESS — OUTREACH AT FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS

By **Edwin F. Jenkins**  
Recently retired pastor of FBC Athens

Sometimes obvious opportunities seem to escape our awareness. A few years ago I landed upon an idea for an outreach ministry. I was concerned because most of my circle of influence was still limited basically to

those who already had a relationship to or had expressed an interest in Jesus Christ.

#### The Idea

I purposely went to various fast food restaurants, purchased my meal or coffee or tea (a true customer) and sat reading my Bible for an appropriate amount of time, without loitering. People of all ages, types and life

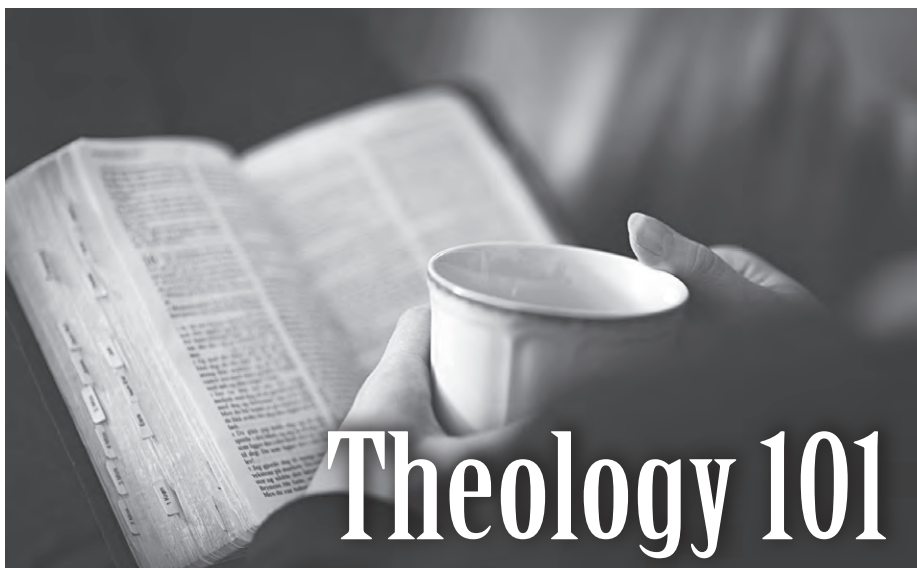
situations were continually coming and going. Some were in a hurry. Others were not. Some pause to talk. Sensitivity to the moment needed to be cultivated.

#### The Opportunity

Sometimes people simply needed a kind greeting or a genuine smile of affirmation. At times and when appropriate, which is

more often than one might think, I could initiate brief conversations. I discovered that many more people than we realize are willing to talk about life and what matters most. With a few loving questions or comments we can point people to the answers found in Jesus, our Lord. ☞





# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

**Such a Great Salvation**

## Salvation Past

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

**B**efore thinking about salvation as a present experience or a future blessing, we must begin with salvation's past accomplishment. Christians often testify to their salvation by using a past tense verb, "I was saved," possibly going on to describe a particular event as to its place and time.

One of the meaningful Bible terms referring to salvation past is justification. This term brings to mind a courtroom scene where a judge renders a verdict concerning the accused. The verdict might be either "guilty" or "not guilty." Either verdict expresses how the accused person henceforth stands in relation to the judge, the court and the law.

When a person is saved through personal faith in Christ, somewhat in the likeness of a judge in a court of law, God declares that the believer is no longer guilty of his or her sins. Through the miracle of divine grace and the Savior's death, God chooses to respond immediately to one's confession of faith by counting the person innocent of sin. The miraculous part of saving grace is that God's declaration of a sinner's innocence is unrelated to the person's works or worthiness.

In Job 25:24, Job asked the crucial question, "How then can man be justified with God?" His concern was how a sinful human can be right in God's sight. The New Testament answers that it is by "being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). As Christians have often confessed, "We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone."

### Acquitted and accepted

Many of us find it helpful simply to think of justification as being right with God. In thinking about this great salvation as justification or being right with God we need to embrace two other terms and the ideas they express: acquitted and accepted. Acquitted

means God the Judge releases the believing sinner from sin's penalty which the Bible declares to be death (Rom. 6:23). A Christian has been acquitted in the court of heaven of all charges that could be raised by our sin. Acquittal means we are no longer under sin's condemnation and subject to divine judgment. Our acquittal is instantaneous; it happens at the moment of saving faith in Jesus.

When we testify that we have been saved, we are referring to our release from the penalty of our sins. Another salvation term that captures this release is the common term "forgiveness." Justification and forgiveness have to do with freedom from the penalty of sin. We will explore further the meaning of forgiveness in a future session.

### 'No longer guilty'

A second term is needed to fully grasp the meaning of justification. Upon being acquitted a Christian also is accepted. To be released from all legal obligations to a court of law and to society is one thing, but to be fully accepted as innocent in the eyes of the judge, the court and society may be another thing. In a legal sense the verdict of "not guilty" or, in the case of our salvation, "no longer guilty" carries with it freedom without lingering prejudice. No lingering shadow of guilt remains in the eyes of the law, the court or the judge. In salvation God both releases us from guilt and receives us fully and without prejudice as His children. ☩

*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.*



## Employers may not discriminate based on religion, US Supreme Court rules

**T**he U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 1 that companies cannot discriminate against job applicants or employees for religious reasons, even if an accommodation is not requested.

The decision was a defeat for Abercrombie & Fitch (A&F), which refused to hire a Muslim girl in 2008 because she was wearing a black "hijab," or headscarf. It could benefit job applicants and employees who need time off for religious observances as well as those who adhere to strict dress codes.

Justice Antonin Scalia wrote the 8-1 decision for a near-unanimous court, save for Justice Clarence Thomas' dissent. Scalia reasoned that even if the clothier did not know Samantha Elauf's religion, it still motivated the decision to deny her employment.

"The rule for disparate-treatment claims ... is straightforward," Scalia wrote. "An employer may not make an applicant's religious practice, confirmed or otherwise, a factor in employment decisions."

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said the Supreme Court "got this one right."

K. Hollyn Hollman, general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, said in a written statement the court "confirmed the fundamental principle in [the federal law's] ban on religious discrimination in employment. Neither a person's religion nor the potential need to accommodate a religious practice should be a basis for denying a prospective employee a job."

During oral arguments in February, both liberal and conservative justices refused to believe A&F's insistence that Elauf, 17 at

the time, was turned down simply because of the head scarf, not her faith.

In his dissent, however, Thomas defended the company, claiming its "neutral look policy" cannot constitute intentional discrimination.

The court's decision could have implications for religious minorities' job opportunities and companies' hiring practices. Muslim women who cover their heads encounter some of the biggest problems. Businesses, on the other hand, claim that requiring them to cater to all religious minorities' observances is an "undue hardship."

### 'Look policy'

The clothier's "look policy" affects the type of clothing, jewelry and makeup its sales representatives can wear, including atop their heads. But it often grants exceptions upon request.

The circumstances in Elauf's case actually posed a narrow question: Must the job applicant request a religious accommodation, or should the employer recognize the need for it? During her job interview, Elauf never brought up her religion and her interviewer never asked.

A&F contended that employers should not be forced to inquire about a job applicant's religion for fear of appearing to discriminate.

It issued a statement following the court's decision noting "significant enhancements to our store associate policies, including the replacement of the 'look policy' with a new dress code ... and changed store associates' titles from 'model' to 'brand representative.'" (RNS, BP)

## Lamar Assoc. holds children's missions event



Photo courtesy of Lamar Baptist Association

Children in grades K-6 put together salvation bead key chains during Missions Madness 9 on May 2, an annual missions event hosted by Lamar Baptist Association. The 2015 event was hosted by FBC Sulligent with the theme "The Great Commission: It's My Job" based on Matthew 28:19-20. More than 80 children participated and nine associational churches were represented. Multiple churches provided food for the day, gift bags for missionary speakers and items for the missions projects. This year's projects were making snacks for Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries' Camp of Champions and salvation bead key chains that were sent to North American Mission Board missionary Justin Martin and his church planting team in Portland, Ore.

# Gospel-centered

## WorldSong combines missions, adventure for new camp experience

Many Alabama Baptists have happy memories of summer camp. Silly songs, arts and crafts, Bible studies, swimming in the pool and late-night giggles with new friends made for an unforgettable week every summer.

Yet the nostalgia of yesterday often is interrupted by a panicked thought: would today's media-saturated kids actually enjoy a week away from television, tablets and telephones?

The answer has proven surprising to many. It seems children don't just survive their week away, they seem to come home more alive, more excited and empowered to try new things and more spiritually rooted and gospel-focused than ever before.

Today's generation responds to the hands-on, interactive approach that WorldSong Missions Place has taken with their Missions Adventure Camp. The camp in Cook Springs has purposefully combined missions and adventure to create a well-rounded experience for campers. WorldSong is a ministry of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union (WMU).

### More than just exposure

Camp Director Hope Stephens explains that there are still the silly songs and camper bonding of days gone by, but now there is so much more.

"[The campers] get more than just a glancing exposure to missions; they get to taste food from the lands they study, dress in native dress, learn a few words in their language and hear firsthand stories from real, live missionaries at 'Culture Camp' every day," she said. "And then they learn how they don't have to leave home or even wait until they grow up to be

on mission right where they live." Cabin leaders are intentional with every moment they have with their girls (and boys during co-ed week). One returning leader, "Miss Kate," said her favorite thing about being a leader is using everyday ways to share the gospel and seeing the campers make the connection that missionaries do the same thing.

"While they're making a fun craft, they're learning all about how these everyday items can be used to start up a conversation about Christ," she said.

Aside from the missions-centered activities and lessons,



Every activity and conversation at WorldSong Missions Place is intentionally focused on Christ and His heart for missions.

Photo courtesy of Alabama WMU

the campers at WorldSong fall in love with the adventure side of Missions Adventure Camp from the very first day. Program director Kaley Stephens has designed activities that "teach us we're capable of so much more through Christ; we can go beyond the limits we have set for ourselves in our minds," she said.

### Inspirational growth

"Just seeing [the campers'] confidence grow and self-image develop over the course of a week is so inspirational," Stephens said.

Adventure activities include a rock wall, zip line, canoeing, archery, overnight primitive camping and more. Stephens said camp is a great way to introduce children to new and fun things safely and parents can know their

children are safe and cared for without having to spend a fortune for them to have a great time. And the fact that they're learning about Christ and His mission is icing on the cake.

Missions Adventure Camp takes place weekly throughout the summer starting June 8 and running through July 24 at WorldSong Missions Place just off of I-20. (WMU)

**For a complete schedule and registration information, visit [www.alabamawmu.org](http://www.alabamawmu.org).**

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[www.ChildrensAL.org/concussion](http://www.ChildrensAL.org/concussion)

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# A Certain Trumpet

Sermons by Alabama Baptists

## Portraits of Jesus

### Jesus is the Way Home – John 14:1-6

**M**ost everyone agrees with Dorothy in “The Wizard of Oz” — “There’s no place like home.” The trouble is identifying one’s true home and knowing how to arrive there. Do you know your ultimate home? Do you know the way there?

**The Predicament: A Misunderstanding of ‘Home’**

Jesus’ disciples believed they were home right where they were in their homeland of Israel. Granted, it was a real “fixer-upper” but the disciples believed Jesus had come to fix Israel’s political, economic, social and religious ills. How devastated they were to learn Jesus was going away (John 13:33). The homeland of Israel was not their true home. Home was with Jesus, but Jesus was leaving. The departure of Jesus was rocking the disciples’ world.

**The Principle: Being Troubled is a Choice (v. 1a)**

Don’t let your heart be troubled. We have the choice whether or not our hearts become troubled. While trouble may not be a choice, being troubled by trouble is. As disciples of Jesus today we face plenty of troubles — bereavement, divorce, bankruptcy and religious persecution. But you and I have the choice not to allow them to trouble our hearts. How then do we make the choice not to be troubled?

**The Prescription: When in Trouble, Believe (v. 1b)**

The treatment for trouble is trust. Jesus never failed His disciples and He would not fail them now. Jesus spoke in the present tense when He said, “Believe in God, believe also in Me” (John 14:1). A contemporary rendition might be, “Keep calm and keep on believing.” Jesus had never failed His followers and instructed them to continue trusting Him.

Perhaps they remembered the occasion when they were crossing the Sea of Galilee. A storm’s wind, waves, thunder and lightning stirred plenty of trouble all around them. The disciples allowed the trouble outside the boat to come inside the boat and trouble their hearts. All the while Jesus was taking a much-deserved nap. Jesus set the example of trust in the midst of trouble. His heart was not troubled by the surrounding storm. The disciples learned they could trust the One whose word would silence the storm.

**By Cecil Sanders**

*Cecil Sanders serves as pastor of First Baptist Church, Headland. He is a graduate of Wheaton College in Wheaton, Ill.; Dallas Theological Seminary in Texas; and Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham. He and his wife, Lynn, have been married 30 years and have two daughters and a son-in-law.*



Several of you are sailing on troubled seas at this moment. Storms are howling, lightning is flashing and thunder is clapping. You have a choice in the midst of the trouble to become troubled or remain at peace. Many of you are exhibiting the powerful testimony of an untroubled heart because you keep on believing Jesus. Even without resolution to your problem, you are confident that Jesus is trustworthy. With Jesus “in your boat” it is well with your soul.

**The Perspective: Our Temporary Separation is for Our Permanent Union (vv. 2-5)**

“In my Father’s house are many dwelling places” (John 14:2). Here is the weight of Jesus’ consolation. This broken world is not your home. Jesus did not come to fix what’s corrupted, polluted and ruined. Instead He came to safely deliver us to our true home. As C.S. Lewis proposed, “We were made for another world. Our ultimate destination is the Father’s house where there are many dwelling places. Take comfort followers of Christ. His going away is only temporary.”

Jesus had already spoken to the disciples about His going away. It would include His betrayal, trials, scourging, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and ascension. The nails of crucifixion are necessary for the construction of our heavenly home. The blood shed at Calvary is required to prepare us for that home. Jesus’ going away prepares a place for us and prepares us for that place.

The disciples readily understood the imagery Jesus was using in His words of comfort to them. They recognized the word picture of a Jewish betrothal and wedding. In Bible times when a Jewish man became “betrothed” to his bride, he would “go

away” for a time to prepare a place for them to live together as husband and wife. Surely their parting brought the sadness of separation, but they both knew it was only temporary. The groom was going home to build an addition to his father’s house. This new room would be the dwelling place for the couple. Once he completed the dwelling place he would return for his bride.

Thus Jesus says, “If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am there you may be also” (John 14:3). The purpose for Jesus’ temporary separation from His disciples was for their permanent union. What a glorious day it was when the groom returned for his bride. Taking her groom’s hand, the bride processed through the city streets amid joyful songs and dancing. Upon arrival at the father’s house the wedding ceremony and supper occurred followed by the couple entering their “dwelling place” in the father’s house.

The “blessed hope” of all believers is when Jesus comes again and receives us unto Himself to be wed to Him and dwell forever in our Father’s house (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Jesus teaches that temporary separation is for the purpose of permanent union. Believers know the way to where Jesus is going. So do not let your hearts be troubled. Keep on trusting Jesus.

**The Path: The Way Home is a Person — Jesus, the Lover of Your Soul (v. 6)**

The disciple Thomas questioned Jesus about the way home. Jesus responded that Thomas knew the way because he knew Him. He might have said, “Here’s the way, Thomas. It’s Me. I am the Way. Keep on believing every word I say because I am also the Truth. No word I have ever uttered is false nor is this one. And the way home is eternal life because I am the Life.”

In the context of trouble Jesus speaks comfort. “I love you. I laid down My life for you to give you forgiveness and to prepare you a place in the Father’s house — your true home. Will you accept My proposal? Will you be Mine? Trust Me alone as your Savior and Groom. My Holy Spirit becomes your engagement ring guaranteeing our coming wedding. I’ll be back soon to receive you to Myself forever. You know the Way. I am the Way. Put your hand in Mine. Love will lead you home.”

# ‘Deep blessing’

## Mission:Dignity buoys retired pastors, widows

By Roy Hayhurst  
GuideStone Financial Resources

**V**irginia Pangle summed up what Mission:Dignity means to a pastor’s widow like herself.

“I don’t have to worry about being cold, hungry or going without my medicine,” she said.

Mission:Dignity, a ministry of GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), ensures that Pangle, along with nearly 2,000 other retired Southern Baptist pastors, their spouses or widows, are able to have a sense of financial dignity in retirement.

**June 28 is Mission:Dignity Sunday in the Southern Baptist Convention.**

In Alabama, 117 people are currently served by Mission:Dignity, with about 60 percent being widows and 1 in 4 being a pastor’s widow age 85 or older.

The ministry, which is fully supported by gifts from individuals, Sunday School classes and churches, provides monthly grants to retired Southern Baptist workers in critical financial need. The neediest couples can receive up to \$600 each month in assistance.

Mission:Dignity Sunday, held the fourth Sunday of every June on SBC’s calendar, is set aside for churches to make a special offering for support of the ministry.

GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins said, “GuideStone was founded to serve those who gave sacrificially to spread the Word of

God. The very DNA of GuideStone, part of the fabric that our founder, William Lunsford, laid for us, is to care for pastors and their widows in old age. We’re

**For more information on Mission:Dignity, visit mission-dignitysb.org.**

privileged to carry on this ministry through Mission:Dignity.”

To help churches mark Mission:Dignity Sunday, GuideStone has created videos, bulletin inserts, posters, a PowerPoint slide and sermons for use June 28 or any Sunday. Materials are undated so churches can use the materials at any time. Churches can order materials through June 22 for delivery in time for Mission:Dignity at mdsunday.org. Churches also can request information by calling 1-888-984-8433.

John Ambra, Mission:Dignity director, said, “Some of our participants tell us that Mission:Dignity is the difference between having food or not, having medication or not or having to choose between heat or eating.”

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

# SHARE A STORY

## Christian workers in Central Asia in need of teams to help reach Zaza people

(continued from page 1)

house there was a little flash of the Spirit moving and (I saw) what it could look like out there.”

Many in the Zaza community are very sociable and they enjoy opening their homes to Americans to share a meal and tea. The hospitality of the culture provides great opportunities to share Bible stories as well.

“We have 20 or so seekers who are willing to read the Bible with us, talk about the stories and hear our testimonies,” said the Baptist worker.

“Many are even willing to believe in Jesus but as one of many gods.”

Baptism is often the “line in the sand,” he said.

“They are willing to read the Bible and consider Jesus a prophet or spiritual teacher, but when it comes to talking about substitutionary atonement or the Trinity, the conversation starts to break down.”

### Discipleship needed

For the handful of Zaza believers who have been baptized, there is no church to disciple them which is why one of the major missions efforts by the Zaza Alliance is a discipleship conference to be held in Central Asia in November. Gay would like to

see more Alabama Baptist pastors involved.

“The conference is part training, part discipleship and part vision trip,” Gay said. “It’s in the homeland of the Zaza people, so it’s a chance to go out and see where they live and to experience what life is like among them.”

Richard Alford, who is helping organize the conference, said one major emphasis of the gathering will be teaching volunteers how to evangelize with storytelling.

“We will be led by a very experienced seminary professor who will be training volunteers in the use of storytelling and then teaming American volunteers with local leaders to move us into a genuine alliance between believers in the two countries,” Alford said.

Trips in the summer and fall will include medical work as well as a focus on ethnographic research and prayer walking in order to more effectively plan future work among the Zaza people, Alford said.

The goal of each trip is to build relationships that will open the door for more work among the Zazas, he noted.

“We are looking for ways we can do more for the Zazas and are praying that these efforts will be

**For more information about the Zaza Conference and efforts to Central Asia, go to [www.montgomeryfbc.org/zazaconference](http://www.montgomeryfbc.org/zazaconference).**



IMB photo

## ABOUT THE ZAZA

**Location:** Central Asia

**Population:** approximately 3 million

**Language:** Zazaki

**Religion:** 100% Islam, though about half are Alevi and more open to reading the Bible

the starting point for a new church plant.”

Workers in Central Asia would like to see more churches praying persistently for the work in Central Asia, as well as more teams who are willing to come and interact with the people, the representative said.

In 2014 a women’s group from First, Montgomery, did health

work in the area. Every member of the group had two stories memorized and in the evenings they went into homes and shared those stories.

“They didn’t have to be theologians and didn’t have to know the language,” the representative said. “They just had to be willing to share a story. We could use more teams like that for sure.” ☞

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### CHURCH POSITIONS

**PASTOR:** Are you called to rural Missouri? Gainesville FBC is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resumé with Internet link/CD/DVD to: Gainesville First Baptist Church, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 627, Gainesville, MO 65655, or email: bjnn.kiger@gmail.com.

**MINISTER OF EDUCATION/ADMINISTRATOR:** Sardis Springs Baptist Church (Limestone Baptist Association) is accepting resúmes for the position of full-time minister of education/administrator through June 30. Interested parties should mail resúmes to: Sardis Springs Baptist Church, 18310 AL Hwy 251, Athens, AL 35613, or email resúmes to: sardis1@integrity.com.

**MINISTER OF MUSIC:** Bellevue Baptist Church, Gadsden, accepting resúmes for minister of music. Email resúmes and hyperlinks to YouTube sites with samples to: secretarybellevue@gmail.com, or mail resúmes and DVDs to: 150 Nocalula Dr., Gadsden, AL 35904.

**SONG LEADER:** East Huntsville Baptist Church is looking for an energetic song leader to lead us in a blend of traditional and contemporary music. We are a small church with no choir. Send resumé or contact Personnel Committee at: easthuntsvilleba@bellsouth.net.

**PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER:** Raleigh Avenue Baptist Church in Homewood is seeking a part-time music minister. Send resúmes to: RABC, ATTN: Personnel Committee, 309 Raleigh Ave., Homewood, AL 35209, or jeantowry@rabc.org.

**PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC:** Siberton Baptist seeking part-time minister of music. Send resumé to: Don Leverton, 605 Hannah Ave., Attalla, AL 35954 or Siberton Baptist Church, 620 Jones St., Attalla, AL 35954, ATTN: Zac Clay.

**MINISTER OF MUSIC & STUDENTS:** Linden Baptist Church is accepting resúmes for the full-time position of minister of music and students. Interested candidates may submit their resúmes by email to: scratt@servpro9855.com.

**MINISTER OF MUSIC & YOUTH DIRECTOR:** East Gardendale Baptist Church is accepting resúmes for these two bivocational positions. Applicants may submit resúmes to: EGBC, 360 Tarrant Rd., Gardendale, AL 35071, ATTN: Cathy Edwards or cathyegbc@att.net.

**STUDENT MINISTER:** Student minister for Turnerville Baptist Church. Looking for someone who is led to work with students, bivocational. Send resumé to: Turnerville Baptist Church, 13882 Roberts Rd., Chunchula, AL 36521. Phone: 251-675-3782 or email: turnerville3610@bellsouth.net.

**BIVOCATIONAL STUDENT MINISTER:** Evergreen Baptist Church, Vance, Ala., is seeking a bivocational student minister. Send resúmes to: P.O. Box 263, Vance, AL 35490.

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## Want to know GOD?

**Pastor Jeff Noblit**  
Grace Life Church of the Shoals,  
Muscle Shoals

Grace means God does for us what we in no way can deserve or merit. The greatness of God’s grace toward us is seen in that despite our deeply offensive fallen condition He chose to love and save us.

► In Romans 5:10, Paul calls us “enemies” of God. We were made to love God supremely. Instead we love ourselves, our sin and thus have become traitors. Romans 3:12 says, “There is none who does good, there is not even one.” As sinners in our hearts and attitudes we are actively working to overthrow God’s rightful place as Lord in this world and in our own lives.

► In Romans 5:8 we are called “sinners.” This means we fall short of God’s purpose in creating us. He made man to reflect His unique goodness and perfection. Instead of reflecting God’s goodness and perfection, we reflect Satan and his wickedness. Ephesians 2:2 states that we walk “according to the course of this world ... of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.”

► Paul calls us the “ungodly” in Romans 5:6. The idea behind this term is that we are the opposite of God. We are completely unlike Him in every way and we contradict Him in every way. God is truth; we often do not tell the truth. God is love; we often hate. God cannot delight in that which is in every way ungodly.

► Romans 5:6 describes us as “helpless.” This means we are completely without capacity to fix ourselves. We do not have the natural wisdom to see our need nor the power to correct ourselves to become acceptable to God.

While we are yet enemies, sinners, ungodly and helpless, is there hope? Yes. Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” While we were desperate and in every way unattractive and undesirable to God, in grace He chose to love us and crucified His own Son to save us. ☞

# Someone You Should Know

Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

## Pat Chumley



*Bellevue Baptist Church, Gadsden  
Etowah Baptist Association*

**FAVORITE VERSE:** Jeremiah 29:11

**FAVORITE HYMN:** "The Longer I Serve Him"

**HOBBIES:** Making crafts and decorating

**FAMILY STATUS:** Wife of 51 years to husband, Gerald; daughters

and sons-in-law, Kristi Mitchell and Stuart, Amanda Buckenham and Ted; four grandchildren

*Pat Chumley, 69, of Gadsden, believes "we can't give enough back to the Lord for everything He has done for us." She tries to be "His hands and feet" to show His love. She and her husband take children to church on Sundays, lead an adult Sunday School class and the Living Life Longer senior group at Bellevue Baptist Church, Gadsden. They also provide transportation and snacks for children to attend the church's Wednesday night program. Chumley serves on her church's benevolence and decorations committees and volunteers with Etowah Baptist Missions Center. For five years the Chumleys have been relief parents for Alabama Baptist Children's Home in Oxford and were Alabama Department of Human Resources foster parents prior to that. Through their parenting ministry they have cared for more than 60 children.*

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

*A: Christian family. I was raised in a Christian home. My granddad was a great Christian man. He helped to build First Baptist Church, Attalla. He also started Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in the Duck Springs area. I was saved when I was 12 years old. When I was young I felt called into missions. I serve where I am. I did home interior for 30 years and I would share and be a witness in the homes where I did parties. We have opportunities wherever we are to win people to the Lord.*

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

*A: As a child. I can't remember when I wasn't serving the Lord. We went to a country*

*church and there were always opportunities to serve — from scrubbing the floors to mowing the grass.*

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

*A: It demands commitment. A strong work ethic. (Being) very responsible.*

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

*A: A peace of spirit. It's a spiritual thing between you and God. People who don't know God don't understand why you do it.*

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

*A: My husband is a great support. He is my backbone.*

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

*A: As long as my health holds up and God keeps blessing me I plan to keep on keeping on until He calls me home. (We never) retire from God.*

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

*A: [It will] give me a purpose. We're here for a purpose and a reason. That's our goal — to live for Him until He calls us home. At the missions center I like to put outfits together for ladies who can't afford to buy a new dress. But they can come in there to get something nice.*

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

*A: He [is] my everything. He has always been there. I know He's there. He's made me a person who is worthwhile and useful. He doesn't put us in the world to please ourselves but to serve Him. I don't see how anybody who doesn't know the Lord can get through any day. 🙏*

# Seminary degrees

## Seminaries confer degrees on Alabama Baptists

**A**labama Baptists graduated with degrees at the master's level or higher from Southern Baptist seminaries and divinity schools in May 2015. *The Alabama Baptist* was provided the following list of graduates by the schools.

► **Beeson Divinity School:**

*Master of Arts in Theological Studies* — Elizabeth Ann Childs, Birmingham; Margaret Alice Drew, Birmingham; Jonathan Wesley Goode, Homewood; Vivian Synetta Baker Oliver, Birmingham

*Master of Divinity* — Jeffrey Lee Adams, Sylacauga; Samuel Philip Boyers, Pelham; Hunter Alan Bragg, Birmingham; Thomas Edwards Branagh, Vestavia Hills; Timothy Dwight Davis, Birmingham; James Wynn Gardner, Bessemer; Russell Lance Garrison, Alabaster; Aaron Edward Graff, Centreville; Bradley Keith Harris, Hoover; Samuel Jackson Hays, Vestavia Hills; Clay Allen Henderson, Hoover; Tyler Andrew Hoagland, Birmingham; Scott David Leveille, Hoover; Ryan Edwards Martin, Vestavia Hills; Nathanael Allen Newton, Birmingham; Eric Warren Parker, Birmingham; Bruce Lewis Persons, Birmingham; Lindsey Robin Smith, Birmingham; Lisa Burnette Taylor, Huntsville; Jared Lee Trostel,

Birmingham; Joshua Edward Turner, Hoover; Joseph Kyle Va-laer, Sterrett; William Buchanan Weir, Birmingham

► **Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

*Master of Arts in Christian Studies* — Jason Eric Smith, Grove Hill; Justin Edward Martin, Tuscaloosa  
*Master of Arts in Old Testament* — David Curtis Porch, Albertville  
*Master of Divinity with Christian Ministry* — Nicholas Ryan Alley, Wicksburg; Nathan Parker Farrow, Birmingham; Micah Gaston, Semmes  
*Doctor of Education* — David Braxton Hobson, Hueytown

► **Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

*Master of Theological Studies* — Jeffrey Alan Albright, Decatur; David Christopher Green, Montevallo  
*Doctor of Ministry in Preaching* — Clinton Davis Ellis, Jack

► **Southern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

*Master of Arts in Worship*

*Leadership* — Stephen Micah Loggins, Morris

*Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling* — Julie C. Evans, Prattville; Sarah Stevens Rice, Hartselle

*Master of Divinity* — Justin Thomas Abercrombie, Louisville; David Clay, Athens; Dane Hays, Birmingham

*Doctor of Philosophy* — John Steen, Auburn

► **Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary:**

*Master of Arts in Theological Studies* — Ryan Parazine, Mobile  
*Master of Arts in Biblical Languages* — Christopher C. Drymon, Northport

► **New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary:**

*Master of Arts in Biblical Studies* — Frank Pruden, Dora  
*Master of Divinity* — Daniel Beckworth, Andalusia; Jennifer Foster, Montgomery; Matthew Mays, Montgomery

*EDITOR'S NOTE* — *Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary did not have any Spring 2015 graduates from Alabama.* 🙏

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newspaper.



Photo by Lee Dymond

## One Mission Students commissions 80 for service

Eighty students were recently commissioned for service this summer through One Mission Students — the mobilization and sending arm of the office of collegiate and student ministries at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. One Mission Students works through Baptist Campus Ministries on campuses across the state as well as Alabama Baptist church collegiate ministries to mobilize, equip and send college students to fulfill the Great Commission in North America and around the world.

# Little Free Library

## Huffman Baptist thinks 'small' to reach community

By Neisha Roberts  
The Alabama Baptist

**T**ake a book, return a book. That's the latest, and certainly smallest, way that Huffman Baptist Church, Birmingham, is reaching out to its community.

It all started when Huffman Baptist's librarian, Ann Layne, read about a ministry at another church in another state — a Little Free Library (LFL).

"I thought it was neat and thought we needed to do this as a ministry at this church," Layne said, who's been a member for 53 years.

As Layne researched the idea

she discovered that LFL is an organization that started in Wisconsin. In honor of his mother's death, Todd Bol built a model of a schoolhouse as a tribute to her, a former teacher who loved reading. He filled it with books and put it in his front yard and built several more and gave them away. With the help of a friend, Bol created

the LFL organization in 2010. There are now more than 25,000 LFLs in the world.

In fall 2014, Bob Alvis, long-time Huffman member who is handy with woodworking, agreed to build what would be-

come Huffman's registered LFL.

Huffman's church library contains more than 14,000 books for members to check out and return,

but the LFL only contains 30 books and is perched on a post outside the church's recreation building on Huffman Road. The double-doors open on the schoolhouse-shaped box and the sign on top invites passersby to "take a book, return a book," although Suttle Mims, who serves on the library staff, said anyone can take a book for free and doesn't have to leave one in its place.

"So far it's amazing how well it's working in that people are taking books and bringing back different books," Mims said.

The first books to go in LFL were Bibles, Layne said, and so far the most selected books are Bibles and cookbooks. More than 800 books are set aside to rotate through LFL, many of which were donated by the Trussville Public Library. Layne, Mims, Carrie Windle and Lou Smith, also on the library staff, select a variety of books each week to appeal to children and adults and stock LFL.

Originally placed inside the recreation building during the



Photo by Neisha Roberts

Lauren Weems, a member of Huffman Baptist Church, Birmingham, and daughter of Pastor Steven Weems, looks through the selection of books at the church's Little Free Library.



Photo by Neisha Roberts

winter, LFL was in place when a six-week basketball program was being held at the church. Three-hundred people were in and out of the building during that time, Layne said, and many times she would see children and adults sitting in the stands reading a book.

### 'Just what I needed'

At one point a woman came to Layne and asked, "Can I really have this book for free? It's just what I needed today."

Layne told the woman she indeed could have it.

In May, LFL was moved outside to its permanent location and is in the path of Huffman Middle School students on their

walk to and from school.

Eventually the church wants to add benches next to the LFL and invite local business employees to come, sit and read on their lunch breaks, Layne said.

Pastor Steven Weems said he hopes to use LFL in partnership with upcoming ministries with the local middle school as well and wants to "get some kids reading around here." Layne said Weems has been supportive since day one.

"When we started this ministry we felt that if it met the needs of one person it had served its purpose," Layne said. "We're excited to see that it's already helping people." ❧

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# CAMPUS News



## JUDSON COLLEGE

▶ **Judson College Honors Program Presentations Celebrate Students' Academic Achievements:** The Judson College Honors Program hosted project presentations May 22 celebrating the scholarly achievements of academically distinguished students enrolled in the Honors Program.

Three Judson seniors presented research as the 2015 distinguished Honors Program graduates.

Winter Bruner, chemistry, biology and psychology triple-major, of Dothan, presented her research titled, "Identification of Novel Factors that Regulate DNA Replication Origin Specification."

Elise Danielle Urban, biology and chemistry double-major, of Theodore, presented her research project titled, "A Genetic Screen to Identify Novel Regulators of Oogenesis in the Fruit Fly, *Drosophila melanogaster*."

Kathryn Lee Hamner, business administration major, of Hoover, who also double minors in biology and accounting, presented her research titled, "The Convergence of GAAP and IFRS: Past, Present and Future."

▶ **Centreville Minister Wins Judson College Golf Tournament:** Alabama Baptist ministers from across the state gathered in Marion on May 11–12 for the 53rd

annual Judson College Ministers' Golf Tournament. Overall winners of the tournament were honored at the concluding luncheon May 12.

First place winner was Shannon Allen, pastor of Pine Grove Baptist Church, Centreville.

## UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

▶ **University of Mobile Honors Faculty and Staff at Annual Spring Luncheon:** The University of Mobile (UMobile) presented end-of-year awards to faculty and staff during the annual Faculty-Staff Luncheon in May.

The 2015 William A. Megginson Teaching Award was presented to Sue Gober, professor of education and chair of the Department of Elementary/Secondary Education.

Matthew Downs, assistant professor of history, received the Mitford Ray Megginson Research Award.

The 2015 Emma Francis Megginson Service Award was presented to Terri McNellage, administrative assistant for Adult and Professional Studies.

The university also recognized faculty and staff who retired following the 2014–2015 academic year.

▶ **University of Mobile Trio Sweeps Top SSAC Awards:** The University of Mobile (UMobile)

swept the major end-of-year awards at the 2015 Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC) Awards Banquet in Montgomery on May 17.

Joe Niland was named the SSAC Athletic Director of the Year, Jacob Lewis was selected as the SSAC Athletic Trainer of the Year and Matthew Hicks was chosen as the SSAC Sports Information Director of the Year.

## SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

▶ **Samford University's Beeson Divinity School Announces Gerald R. McDermott as New Anglican Chair of Divinity:** Gerald R. McDermott has been named to the Anglican Chair of Divinity in Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, beginning with the 2015 fall semester.

Formerly a professor of religion at Roanoke College in Salem, Va., McDermott is a Jonathan Edwards scholar whose recent book, "The Theology of Jonathan Edwards," was awarded by *Christianity Today* its top theology/ethics book in 2013.

McDermott is a distinguished senior fellow at the Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion and a research associate at the Jonathan Edwards Centre of the University of the Free State in South Africa.

▶ **Samford University's Online Nursing Programs Ranked Among Best for Veterans:** Online master's degree programs in Samford University's Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing have been ranked among the best in the nation for veterans, according to analysis and reports recently released by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Ranked No. 48, this is the first time Samford's school of nursing has been included in the ranking.



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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 14

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

### WALKING IN THE LIGHT John 1:5-2:6

#### Demonstrate Holiness (1:5-7)

After declaring himself an eyewitness (vv. 1-4), John proclaims to his readers what he heard from Jesus: "God is light" (v. 5).

Being light signifies that the very God who shined into a dark world is the source of all truth (Gen. 1). In Him there is no darkness. In fact He is the very opposite of darkness because darkness represents what is false and impure.

Those who claim to have fellowship with God and live dark lives deceive themselves. God only abides with those in the light. He has no fellowship with those living in darkness. The one claiming to be a Christian must realize he is called to walk in holiness.

Those living in the light have fellowship with other Christians. Those walking in darkness do not experience such communion. Children of light also have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus.

Living an unholy life shows one belongs to the darkness and has not been cleansed of his sins. His eternal destiny is not with those of light but with those of darkness.

#### Confess Sin (1:8-2:2)

It is false to believe Christians can become sinless in this life. When Christ returns, sin will have no part in the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 20-22). Until then believers live in the old cursed earth, where they struggle with sin (Gen. 3).

According to John, those who claim to have no sin deceive themselves and show that the truth of the gospel is not in them.

Though popular in some circles, Christian perfection is a misunderstanding of sanctification, the process of becoming holy like Christ. Believers are to struggle toward this goal, putting to death the deeds of the flesh (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5). When Christ returns — and not until then

— they will achieve the victory over sin they have so desired.

Believers have the confidence that Christ has made propitiation on their behalf. The term propitiation underscores that Christ was sacrificed and His blood was shed for the sins of the world, satisfying God's just requirement for iniquity (Lev. 16:14; Heb. 9:5).

Believers need only to confess their sins, knowing Jesus has made propitiation on their behalf. This is not a license to sin. Sinning is to walk in darkness, a sign of being unregenerate.

#### Seek to Obey (2:3-6)

Those who keep God's commands demonstrate they know God. John is not arguing for a works-based salvation. He simply points out that obedience is a fruit of believing the gospel.

As Martin Luther said, "We are saved by faith alone, but true faith is never alone." Faith is accompanied by a yearning to obey God, something which is unnatural to the unregenerate person.

Too often churches have assumed a person can be a Christian and lead a rebellious life. Such a person is often called a carnal Christian. John and the rest of the New Testament authors do not have a category for such a "Christian." To them true believers obey God's commands (John 14:23, 15:10; 1 John 2:3; James 2:14-26; and others).

Lack of obedience is a sign of an unbelieving heart. One may rightly say there is no such thing as a disobedient (carnal) Christian.

Christians should therefore strive to live worthy of the One who called them out of darkness (Col. 1:13; 1 Thess. 2:12). Those who heed this exhortation evidence are in the light and have fellowship with God and other believers. ☩



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## Bible Studies for Life By Noel Forlini, Ph.D. Adjunct Professor of Biblical Perspectives, Samford University

### BE CONFIDENT IN GOD'S POWER Joshua 3:7-17

I do not remember a single word of the sermon that day, only the decision I made. As I sat in chapel, I heard only one thing — a call to pursue teaching at the graduate or undergraduate level. I knew it would require moving away from what was comfortable and pursuing something that was not. I knew it would require all of me and that all of me might not even be enough. I knew it would require confidence in God. It was a crossroads moment in my life.

Any call from God places us at a crossroad where we decide to cross over or to stay where it is safe. At the crossing of the Jordan River, this was true for Joshua and the children of Israel.

#### Listen to what God tells you to do. (7-8)

Joshua put himself in a position to hear God when God called. His call to cross the Jordan was predicated upon an ongoing relationship with God and an ability to hear God's voice.

Listening to God involves making space for God and learning to discern His voice, as Jesus would later tell His disciples: "The sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out" (John 10:3b). Cultivating a relationship with the God who calls is central to hearing the voice of God when He calls.

The old hymn, "Lord, Here Am I," expresses the heart of what it means to listen to God's instruction: "Master, Thou callest, I gladly obey; only direct me, and I'll find Thy way. Teach me the mission appointed for me, what is my labor, and where it shall be. Master, Thou callest, and this I reply, 'Ready and willing, Lord, here am I.'"

Listening to God involves not only hearing but also trusting in the character of the One who calls. We must believe that God is good and is actively at work

in our lives and in the world. We must believe that God's plans and purposes are good and respond out of that place of trust. We must have confidence in the character of God.

#### Express your confidence through what you communicate. (9-13)

Joshua's call was not only about his relationship with God. It also was about his relationship with the children of Israel.

Throughout the biblical story, the Israelites lived up to their name — those who struggle with God. They struggled to trust God. They struggled to follow through with God's commands. They struggled to work together to fulfill their calling to be God's people in the world. They frequently expressed a desire to return to Egypt rather than cross into the Promised Land (Num. 11:4-6; 14:1-4).

In clinging to what they knew, the Israelites failed to trust God. How easy it is to cling to our fears rather than clinging to God. How frequently we fail to allow God to keep vigil over us. In the midst of their fear, however, Joshua expressed confidence in God's provision.

#### Express your confidence through your obedience. (14-17)

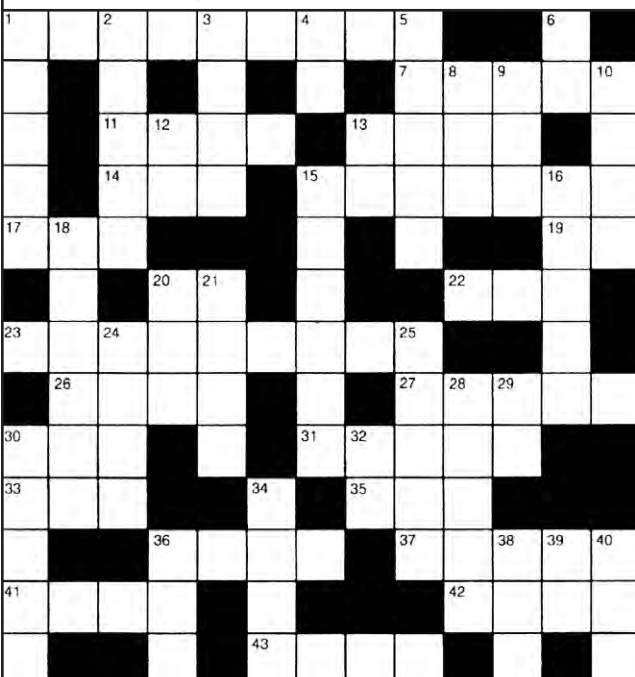
When God called the people to listen to Him, He intended for them to obey. In Hebrew, the word "shema" involves not merely hearing what is said but obeying it: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut. 6:4-5).

To hear God means we obey God. Obedience is not a one-time decision. It involves a continual crossing over into the hard places rather than shirking away in fear. In the life of the believer there may be many Jordan Rivers to cross.

At each crossing we, like Joshua and the children of Israel, express our confidence in God's power and character through our obedience. ☩

## Christian Crossword

By Carol Stengel Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



### Across

- A name of Christ. (Rev. 1:8)
- \_\_\_ not ye against the Lord. (Num. 14:9)
- We ought to \_\_\_ God rather than man. (Acts 5:29)
- Why do the heathen \_\_\_? (Ps. 2:1)
- Though they be \_\_\_ like crimson. (Isa. 1:18)
- O spare me, that I may \_\_\_ strength. (Ps. 38:13)
- Many will \_\_\_ in that day. (Matt. 7:22)
- Direction on the compass.
- Academic degree. (abbr.)
- I will \_\_\_ my tabernacle among you. (Lev. 26:11)
- He hath given \_\_\_ unto all men. (Acts 17:31)
- Two men \_\_\_ up into the temple to pray. (Luke 18:10)
- \_\_\_ of me. (Matt. 11:29)
- A charge for professional service.
- Condescend.

### Down

- Internal Revenue Service. (abbr.)
- Whom \_\_\_ ye that I am? (Luke 9:20)
- \_\_\_ found grace in the eyes of the Lord. (Gen. 6:8)
- Israel came by the way of the \_\_\_. (Num. 21:1)
- In his favour is \_\_\_. (Ps. 30:5)
- God doth \_\_\_ with man. (Deut. 5:24)
- Abstain from all appearance of \_\_\_. (1 Thess. 5:22)
- The self as distinguished from others.
- Girl's name. (abbr.)
- Lead astray.
- Ye will not believe, though it \_\_\_ told you. (Hab. 1:5)
- Prefix meaning "again."
- It \_\_\_ upon the earth 40 days and nights. (Gen. 7:12)
- \_\_\_ into his gates with thanksgiving. (Ps. 100:4)
- How ye ought to \_\_\_ every man. (Col. 4:6)
- A roll.
- Many of them also which used curious \_\_\_ brought their books together. (Acts 19:19)
- You are the God who \_\_\_ me. (Gen. 16:13)
- Behold, he calleth \_\_\_. (Mark 15:35)
- Joseph was sold into \_\_\_. (Gen. 37:36)
- Is there any taste in the white of \_\_\_ egg? (Job 6:6)
- The whole body \_\_\_ joined together. (Eph. 4:16)
- Used to form plurals.
- He hath \_\_\_ every thing beautiful. (Eccles. 3:11)
- The kingdom of heaven is like a \_\_\_. (Matt. 13:47)
- Suffix meaning "belongs to."
- Old Testament name for God.
- To glide on water or snow.



**MUSIC**

By Rick Sharp

**JARED ANDERSON**

*Where I Am Right Now*  
Centricity Music

Jared Anderson, one of Christian music’s notable songwriters, has released a new Extended Play (EP) album on Centricity Music, his first for them. “Where I Am Right Now” contains five songs, including the powerful “Almighty,” co-written with Ed Cash and performed and recorded by Chris Tomlin at Passion 2014. A 14-song CD, “Where I Am Right Now,” also is available, but only at Anderson’s tour dates.



The title song is highly personal and speaks of obedience to God’s calling. Anderson confesses that the two jobs he’d promised himself he would never hold were worship leader and Christian music artist.

Following his graduation in 2001 he reluctantly agreed to help with music in his home church. Then in 2005, a time he

describes as “the year of obedience,” Anderson realized God’s calling on his life wasn’t just on his actions, but also on his will. And yes, both of those jobs quickly became his vocations and his passion.

The rest of the EP covers a broad range of styles, from the decidedly doo-wop feel of “Sweet Salvation,” to a delicate piano ballad in “Forgiven,” and even a foot-stomping anthem in “Overboard.”

**DANEN KANE**

*Flesh and Soul*  
Independent

Wisconsin native Danen Kane released his second national project in March. “Flesh and Soul” is an interesting mix of finger-style guitar and driving rock. When shaken together with Kane’s high, clear pop vocals, some really exciting, albeit unusual, music falls out.

Perhaps that is the result of Kane’s late entry into the music world. He was 20 years old, a basketball-playing pre-law student, when he felt God’s calling on his life. He had been moved by some of the songs he heard at Campus Crusade for Christ (now Cru) and decided then and there that he wanted to learn to write and perform music.



Amazingly his first project, “Love Is Waiting,” released only a year later and received strong support from the Christian music industry, as well it should have. “Flesh and Soul” follows with an emotionally honest, ministering and inspirational rocker of a record. Any questions about Kane’s “luck” with the first record are answered here.

I’m pretty excited to see what’s next. 🙏

**Meet the reviewers**

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



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[Martine@kingdomresearch.org](mailto:Martine@kingdomresearch.org)

**Media reviews**



By Martine Bates Sharp, Ed.D.

**BOOKS**

**Jesus, Continued: Why the Spirit Inside You is Better Than Jesus Beside You**

J.D. Greear. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2014. 237 pp. (Paperback).

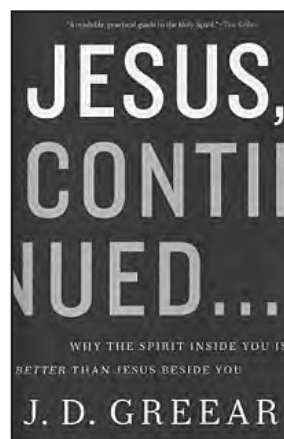
Let me begin by admitting I am a fan of J.D. Greear’s writing. Apparently I am not alone. When a book is endorsed by people like David Platt, Paige Patterson and Jim Cymbala you pretty much know it’s a winner.

Why the title? In the preface Greear points out that Jesus said to the disciples that it was better for Him to go and send the Holy Spirit. Greear points out, “They needed the Spirit’s presence so much that Jesus told them not to so much as lift a finger toward the Great Commission until the Spirit had arrived.”

After Pentecost they turned the world upside down.

One reason I like Greear’s work so much is that he is open and honest. In a chapter titled, “When You Can’t Feel God,” he admits that there are times in all of our lives when God seems to be absent. But is He really absent? Greear points to Gideon, who asked in Judges 6:13 — right before he destroyed the whole Midianite army with 300 men — “If the Lord is really with us ... where are all His wonderful deeds?” I’ll bet Gideon didn’t have to ask again. In the same way the Holy Spirit is always working in our lives even though we do not always recognize it.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians is often overlooked and neglected. Yet Jesus said the Holy Spirit’s presence was better than His own. Once you read this book I suspect you will not overlook nor neglect the Holy Spirit in your life again.



to Romania. All are engaging and interesting and show the author’s heart, which is devoted to listening to and acting on the voice of God.

Moon and her family are members of Central Baptist Church, Decatur, in Morgan Baptist Association.

**The Years the Locust Hath Eaten**

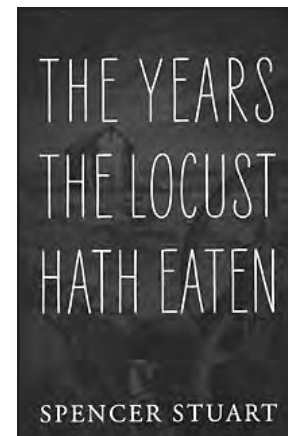
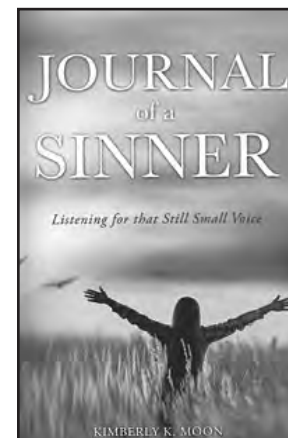
Spencer Stuart. Denver, Colo.: Outskirts Press, 2014. 799 pp. (Paperback).

Did you notice how many pages this book has? That is not a typo — it really has 799 pages of story, not appendices and front matter. That’s a lot of pages. But let’s talk about the story first.

In spite of the formidable length I enjoyed the book. The fictional story focuses on a Baptist pastor and the trials he faces, mostly through no fault of his own. While some of the characters border on caricatures — or at least, types — they are generally believable and well developed. Any Baptist will be immediately comfortable with the settings and the characters, the business meetings and the church structures. I know that church and those people and you do too. I recognized controversial denominational leaders and Alabama’s beloved Junior Hill even makes an appearance. There is no doubt about the author’s background.

It is not just a good story though. The overarching message is God’s provision and His faithfulness to us, driven home by the title and the ending, which I won’t give away.

If the author would cut the length by half I think he would have a successful book. The interesting story is burdened by too many details that do little to advance the action. As it is, the sheer size of the book is daunting and will prevent many from reading it. 🙏



**Journal of a Sinner: Listening for that Still Small Voice**

Kimberly K. Moon. Xulon Press, 2014. 215 pp. (Paperback).

Journal of a Sinner” is a collection of Kimberly Moon’s blog posts and journal entries. The book’s back cover notes that the book is intended “not for ‘the thousands,’ but for the one whom God is calling.” As I read the book I began to understand what she means by that; the author “talks” directly to the reader, pulling her in and inviting her to sit down and share a cup of coffee.

There does not appear to be a theme in the entries; instead the stories read like a random series of thoughts and experiences, ranging from childhood memories to her annual missions trips

If you have a book you would like reviewed, mail a copy to: P.O. Box 1504, Hartselle, AL 35640.

# 'Living for CHRIST'

## Garvin's 2014 season in Montgomery demonstrated 'he is a man of God'

By Bill Sorrell  
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

**W**hile making plays on the field, Grayson Garvin has not always stood his ground.

"On numerous occasions I have fallen down [or] tripped over my shoelaces," said

Garvin, a left-handed pitcher who is on the 40-man Tampa Bay Rays roster and who played the 2014 season for the Montgomery Biscuits.

Garvin does, however, make a stand for his faith.

"The reason that I play is to glorify Him with everything I have. I feel like my sole purpose is to glorify the Lord in whatever capacity that He has for me, whether that is on the baseball field or off."

Garvin was in sixth grade when he accepted Christ during a crusade at Hebron Baptist Church, Norcross, Ga. He was baptized two nights later.

"I was fortunate enough to grow up in a Christian home. My parents (Greg and Angela Garvin) really modeled for me what it was like to be ... a follower of Christ," said Garvin, 25.

"I think it was the realization that you are not perfect, not that I thought I was perfect, but without the Lord I can't have eternal life."

When Garvin was in 11th grade he realized his relationship with Christ "wasn't a one-way street. I needed to do more."

In college, "the Lord increased my boldness to be able to share my testimony and faith with others," he said.

### Pitcher of the Year

After playing baseball at Vanderbilt University in Nashville where he was 2011 Southeastern Conference (SEC) Pitcher of the Year and led the regular-season SEC champion Commodores to the College World Series, Garvin was drafted in the first round (59th overall) by the Rays.

"That was a big thrill being able to be drafted in that position," Garvin said.

While 2011 was a "big, fun year" 2012 was not. While playing for the Charlotte Stone Crabs, Garvin suffered an elbow injury that would require Tommy John surgery, a procedure that replaces a torn ligament with a tendon from the patient's forearm or thigh.

"I've had to rely and lean on Him a lot (during this

process). I think those type of situations have enhanced His story on me and ... I've been able to share the goodness that He has for everyone through the story that He is continuing to play out in my life."

Each morning Garvin prays Matthew 5:16, his favorite verse, which says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." This also is the verse he writes on his glove.

Montgomery catcher Jake DePew, who roomed with Garvin for two years, said that the way Garvin goes about his daily business shows that "he is a man of God."

Patience and humility have been "big things" Garvin said he has learned through the recovery process.

"The Lord doesn't always promise that things are going to be easy and I have continually been able to learn that through some of the struggles.

"I have felt an unbelievable peace through a lot of things that I have been through. A lot of people think that once we become believers that it is all going to be easy. That is not necessarily the case," he said.

Spiritual growth comes through Bible study, devotions, prayer, accountability partners and worship, he said. His home churches are North Point Community Church, Alpharetta, Ga., and Cross Point Community Church, Franklin, Tenn. Garvin lives in Nashville during the off-season.

Staying in shape spiritually is vital, he said. "There is no such thing as staying stagnant. Either you are growing or you are not. I really try to stay on top of my personal quiet times."

Since age 4, Garvin's dream has been to be a big-league pitcher.

"More than my goal to pitch in the big leagues is my goal to glorify the Lord. If He does have a different path for me, I am obviously open to that. The gifts the Lord has given me, I want to make the most of what I can."

Fulfillment comes through purpose. Having purpose has made a "night and day difference," he said.

"Feeling fulfilled is probably an understatement. It (faith) really gives a purpose to what I do. I feel like it would be tough not being a believer because I feel like you don't necessarily know what to live for. I feel like I am living for Christ. I try to sow seeds and be a small part of His greater plan." ❏



Grayson Garvin

Photo courtesy of the Montgomery Biscuits

## Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

### Green to lead Florida Baptist Convention

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — J. Thomas Green has been elected to lead the 1 million-member Florida Baptist State Convention as executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention.

The pastor of First Baptist Church, Brandon, Fla., was tapped by the Florida State Board of Missions during its May 29 meeting at Lake Yale Conference Center in Leesburg. He assumed his new role June 8.

Green, an Alabama native, earned his bachelor's degree from Samford University in Birmingham in 1980 and master of divinity degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

As the tenth executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention, Green, 57, succeeds John Sullivan who retired Feb. 28 after serving in that role from 1989 to 2015, the longest tenure in Florida Baptist history.

Green was elected as the Florida Baptist State Convention president in 2003 and 2004. He is completing a three-year term on the State Board, having previously served on it from 1999 to 2005. During his first tenure he was twice elected board president in 2000–2001 and 2001–2002.

He has served as pastor of First, Brandon, since April 1996. During his 19-year tenure, he led the church to double its membership to 5,700 from 2,723. Under his leadership the church has been a pacesetter among Florida Baptist churches in evangelism and baptisms with 100 individuals being led into baptismal waters each year.

He and his wife, Karen, have three children and three grandchildren. (Florida Baptist Convention)

### IMB missionary dies of malaria in Malawi

ZOMBA, Malawi — International Mission Board (IMB) missionary Susan Sanson, 67, died of malaria in Zomba, Malawi, on May 18.

She developed a sudden onset of malaria May 17 and began treatment. However, early the next morning her husband, Billy, woke to find her unresponsive. He rushed her to the hospital, but she passed away as medical staff was examining her.

Kevin Rodgers, an IMB strategy leader in Africa and a friend of the Sansons, said, "Susan was a unique, godly, precious child of the King, and while I know she is in His presence in perfect peace and joy, there is still a great burden of sadness that we will all have to work through in the days to come."

The Sansons moved to Malawi as IMB missionaries in 2000. Susan Sanson was involved in reaching out to, discipling and counseling university students, and also worked in Baptist churches in Zomba. Billy Sanson is a chaplain and university minister at Chancellor College in Zomba. (BP)



SANSON

### CP 2.57 percent ahead of year-to-date projection

NASHVILLE — Year-to-date contributions to Southern Baptist national and international missions and ministries received by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee (EC) are 2.57 percent above the year-to-date SBC Cooperative Program (CP) Allocation Budget projection and 2.09 percent above contributions received during the same time frame in 2014, according to a news release from SBC EC President and CEO Frank S. Page.

The year-to-date total represents money received by EC by the close of the last business day of May and includes receipts from state conventions, churches and individuals for distribution according to the 2014–15 SBC CP.

The \$128,551,618.17 received by EC for the first eight months of the fiscal year — Oct. 1, 2014, through May 31 — for distribution through CP represents 102.57 percent of the \$125,333,333.33 year-to-date budgeted projection to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. The total is \$2,633,111.07, or 2.09 percent more than the \$125,918,507.10, received through the end of May 2014.

May's CP allocation receipts for SBC work totaled \$17,363,411.14. Designated gifts received in May amounted to \$24,064,963.92. (BP)