

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



Aug. 27, 2015
Vol. 180, No. 34

Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

Toll free 1-800-803-5201
www.thealabamabaptist.org

INSIDE



Route 1520 offers support, recovery to those struggling with sexual addiction

◆ Page 5



Theology 101: Such a Great Salvation — Eternal Life

◆ Page 7



Samford's Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence expands offerings, gets new name

◆ Page 8



Photos by Jennifer Davis Rash

Top photo: Young participants in the Greater Birmingham Festival of Hope savor the final seconds of the night as Michael W. Smith closes out the Aug. 14–16 event. **Bottom photo:** Michael Tait and the Newsboys pump up the Aug. 15 crowd as the second of three nights wraps up.

Graham's Birmingham festival unites 300 churches, ministries

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

More than 1,600 people made some type of spiritual response during the Aug. 14–16 Greater Birmingham Festival of Hope with Franklin Graham.

Of those decisions, 934 were made by people watching the event on the Internet stream and 619 happened on site at UAB's Bartow Arena or dur-

ing training events. Four hundred and five of the on-site responses were decisions for salvation.

Each night an invitation time was given following Graham's message. Christian artists provided a variety of music leading up to Graham's time on the program. Headliner artists Kirk Franklin (Fri.), Newsboys (Sat.) and Michael W. Smith (Sun.) wrapped up each night with a concert following the invitation time.

Nearly 10,000 people attended the closing night, more than 8,000 the second night and nearly 5,000 the opening night.

Online viewers totaled 43,658, according to festival co-leader Kevin Moore, who provided all numbers coming out of the event.

He also noted that 300 churches and ministries from the Birmingham area united across racial and denominational lines to make the

event — which took two years to organize — happen in order to reach people for Jesus Christ.

Mike McLemore, executive director of Birmingham Baptist Association and member of the event leadership team, said, "The festival helped us ... bring the diverse cultures that make up the population of Birmingham and surrounding cities, as well as the different

(See 'Oneness,' page 9)

Augmented
reality

Exciting update

to The Alabama Baptist newspaper is here.

Be sure to check it out on page 3.

COMMENT

Hoping for a Surprise Ending

All of the hullabaloo promoting legalized gambling in Alabama is pure theater. It is designed to distract, entertain, even persuade, but little of it is the whole truth. Unfortunately that is the case with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians (PCI) as well as the state Legislature.

PCI has a spiffy TV campaign currently airing to promote themselves as good neighbors willing to solve Alabama's immediate budget crisis with a \$250 million donation to the state's General Fund. All the state has to do is sign a compact allowing them to continue their current activities.

Left unsaid is what prompted this sudden concern. Since the 2009 U.S. Supreme Court case decision in *Carcieri v. Salazar*, PCI has been fighting for its gambling life. That ruling said only Indian tribes recognized by the federal government prior to 1934 could benefit from the U.S. Department of the Interior's efforts to set aside state land for Indian reservation use.

PCI was not recognized until 1984 — 50 years later. The *Carcieri* decision voided actions taken by the Department of the Interior in Rhode Island. If that same principle is applied to Alabama, PCI could lose its whole gambling operation.

Filing suit

Citing the *Carcieri* decision, Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange has filed suit in federal court seeking to make PCI comply with state bingo laws rather than run their casino-type machines. The Escambia County tax assessor is litigating with PCI to collect county taxes based on the decision.

Even the Muscogee Creek Indian Nation has sued the Poarch Band based on the *Carcieri* decision. The Muscogee Nation seeks protection of its historical capitol and burial site known as Hickory Ground, which they charge the Poarch Band has desecrated by building a casino on the Wetumpka property.

Hickory Ground Tribal Town was the last capitol of the National Council of the Muscogee



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

(Creek) Nation. Muscogee Creeks lived there until forced to abandon their homeland in the Trail of Tears. In 1980 the property was placed on the national Register of Historic Places after being nominated by the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC).

Later, AHC received a \$165,000 grant from the Interior Department to purchase the property and transfer ownership to PCI. Muscogee Creeks charge that PCI "entered a covenant with AHC to preserve Hickory Ground against development" and promised the "acquisition will prevent development of the property."

Later, PCI violated its covenant, the lawsuit says, by digging up about 60 Indian graves and reburying them in order to construct a gambling facility on the Hickory Ground property. The construction was opposed by AHC, the governor of Alabama, the U.S. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and Creek Indians through the nation, the lawsuit says.

The only way PCI can protect itself from a potential economic disaster is to persuade the state of Alabama to sign a compact with them authorizing PCI to conduct gambling on its various locations.

The motivation behind the PCI offer may not be as altruistic as the TV commercials suggest. It may be pure economic greed. After all, reports indicate PCI clears more than \$300 million annually from its gambling enterprises. That is a pretty good take for a group that numbers only 3,064 members, according to its own website.

At the Statehouse in Montgomery it seems the players are acting out a script that ends with gambling permeating every corner of Alabama. The bill proposed by Senate Majority Leader Del Marsh, of Anniston, would protect the three PCI gambling casinos, establish four additional casinos and turn the state of Alabama into a sideshow huckster trying to rip off state residents through a lottery scheme.

At best this proposal is a Band-Aid to protect

legislators from having to make difficult decisions about responsible government spending and just tax policies. At worst it is a manipulative tool of the powerful to protect themselves at the expense of society's most vulnerable.

The state budget crisis is not a surprise. In past years state leadership chose to cover shortfalls by borrowing from other sources. Of the more than \$200 million shortfall projected for the coming year, \$160 million is debt repayment.

Instead of acting responsibly to raise revenue to match necessary spending, the Legislature could not even agree on a proposed budget during their recent special session. Most of the talk was about borrowing more money — this time from the state's Educational Trust Fund, which undergirds public schools.

Here the show's plot gets tricky. Educational leaders object, knowing that if the Legislature robs Peter (the Educational Trust Fund) to pay

Paul (the General Fund), proration will follow the next year because the state budget is not going to get better and the school reserves will be used up.

Educational leaders insist on a government promise to "backfill" or pay back the borrowed funds to avoid proration. Only at that point does the audience learn that "backfill" is a code word for gambling. With the state budget in shambles and

all reserves spent, the Legislature can argue that gambling is the only solution to keep schools out of proration and keep government's promise.

Since projected gambling revenue (which the Marsh study exaggerated as *The Alabama Baptist* reported in the May 21 issue) will not be enough to pay back the Educational Trust Fund and support necessary government spending, the play might end with the Legislature covering itself by raising taxes at the same time it legalizes gambling because "we had no other choice."

Multiplying problems

The play promotes a strange value system where players are willing to multiply Alabama's problems through dependence on gambling rather than acting responsibly and balancing income with expenses, even if it does include additional user fees.

But plays can have surprise endings. Few people expected the recent special session to end as it did. Hopefully the next act of this play (the second special session) will have a surprise ending where good overcomes evil and the players (the legislators) turn out to be heroes unwilling to throw Alabama to the gambling wolves.

Alabama deserves a future free of casinos and legalized gambling no matter who runs them. 🙏

***"Alabama deserves
a future free of
casinos and legalized
gambling no matter
who runs them."***

Connect with us
>>>>> **ONLINE** <<<<



thealabamabaptist.org



facebook.com/thealabamabaptist



twitter.com/alabamabaptist



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

(ISSN 0738-7741;
USPS 011-080)

© The Alabama Baptist, Inc.
is published weekly except for
one week in July and December
by The Alabama Baptist, Inc.,
at 3310 Independence Drive,
Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone:
205-870-4720. Statewide
phone: 1-800-803-5201. Fax:
205-879-6026. Website: www.
thealabamabaptist.org. Email:
news@thealabamabaptist.org or
circulation@thealabamabaptist.
org. Periodicals postage paid
at Birmingham, Ala., and
at additional mailing offices.

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

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

**DR. BOBBY S. TERRY
EDITOR**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Chairman George A. Foust,
Mike Shaw, Rosalie Hunt, Eddie
Davidson, Jane Bellew, Travis
Coleman, Helen W. Mayo, Ken
Megginson, William Melton, Jim
Oakley, Larry Patterson, Amelia
Pearson, Lawrence Phipps,
Arthur Williams, Rick Patrick,
Bradley Rushing, Travis Coleman
(ex-officio), Rick Lance (ex-officio).

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

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

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

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

**Full member of
Alabama Press Association**

**'Nation's Top Regional
Christian Newspaper'**

1999, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009,
2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014
as judged by Associated
Church Press, Evangelical
Press Association or Religion
Communicators Council



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Samford University and *The Alabama Baptist* partner to add 'seemingly holographic' experience to the weekly paper

By Christopher J. McCaghren
Special to *The Alabama Baptist*

Two weeks ago I wrote an article about our efforts at your Alabama Baptist educational institutions to engage online and other distance education initiatives in order to meet students wherever they are. Such initiatives require robust technologies, and at Samford we are continually experimenting with new technologies to bridge time and space gaps for our students and faculty.

One of the main challenges of education technology is increasing, not lessening, the interaction and engagement between teachers and students. The acts of teaching and learning are foundational to the human experience, and so to remove human interaction from the education equation seems somewhat counterproductive.

We often think of the physical world (the traditional classroom) and the virtual world (the online classroom) as two separate places. Indeed we often lament that as each generation passes, we become more and more engrossed in our devices and technology at the expense of true connection and being. But what if technology could help us bridge the gap between those two worlds in such a way that they work in concert with one another?

Drum roll please

I am excited to introduce a technology to you that does just that. Broadly defined it is known as augmented reality and it will change the way you interact with the world around you. In the graphic on this page you will find step-by-step instructions on how to experience this new technology for yourself, right here from the comfort of your newspaper.

Try it out

In fact, if you follow the steps outlined and hold your smartphone or tablet over

this article as if you are taking a photo of it, you will see this cutting-edge technology in action. If done correctly a seemingly holographic image will find its way on top of the article you are now reading.

TAB becomes classroom

Using this innovative technology, Samford's Ministry Training Institute (MTI) will be offering a free course in *The Alabama Baptist* over the next eight weeks beginning Sept. 3. Simply look for the picture of the MTI classroom in the newspaper, and use your smartphone or tablet to engage in a whole new way of learning. Each week while reading your newspaper, you will have the opportunity to hear some of the greatest theological and pastoral minds in our state lecture right from the printed page.

TAB articles come to life

In addition I am excited to announce that Samford University and *The Alabama Baptist* are partnering to bring this new technology to articles throughout your weekly edition, adding a new dimension of content and engagement to your reading experience.

Look for a note about augmented reality near photos, graphics and other pieces of art to know which parts of the paper are enhanced by augmented reality. Sometimes it will be the full page, such as page 1 of this issue.

Great potential

The potential for this new technology is incredible. As you may recall from my Aug. 13 article, the first efforts in distance education trace their roots back to a Boston newspaper in 1728. Now almost 300 years later a newspaper — this time *The Alabama Baptist* — is once again home to distance education.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Christopher J. McCaghren, Ed.D., is assistant to the president for external programs at Samford University in Birmingham. ☞

How to get started

- 1** Go to your app store and search for Aurasma.
- 2** Download the free Aurasma app on any iOS or Android device.
- 3** Option to set up an account or skip (either one is OK).
- 4** Open the Aurasma app and tap the ▲ icon at the bottom of the screen.
- 5** Tap the magnifying glass at the bottom of the screen and search for "ALBaptist."
- 6** Choose the "ALBaptist" profile and tap "Follow."
- 7** Tap the [] icon at the bottom of the screen.
- 8** You will see pulsating dots. Hold your device over an article or image marked as augmented reality and watch the paper come to life (pages 1 and 3 this week).
- 9** When your next issue of *TAB* arrives, open the app and hold your device over articles and images marked as augmented reality.

Source: Chris McCaghren, Samford University

A time to celebrate

Alabama Baptists are pacesetters in giving, Lance says

Football fans are ready to cheer and celebrate the tackles, touchdowns and even first downs as the South's favorite fall event gets underway.

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) and football enthusiast himself, has been cheering for his other favorite team — the Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC) family — since he was a teenager. He's been leading SBOM for almost 20 years and shared a few items of celebration for Alabama Baptists.

Alabama has been and remains a pacesetter among state conventions in dollars given through the Cooperative Program (CP). Alabama is neither the largest nor wealthiest state numerically or economically but no one can question the state convention's heartbeat for missions support in giving through CP, he said.

During the 2015 calendar

year, Alabama Baptists will send approximately \$31 million to the two Southern Baptist mission boards — more than \$20 million to IMB and more than \$10 million to NAMB. This does not include gifts sent directly from churches to the mission boards.

ABSC is frequently noted for its loyalty as a partner with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). That passion has not changed and will not, Lance said, noting that Alabama Baptists partner with as many as possible

in SBC life to support Great Commission ministries.

Since 2012, Alabama Baptists have adopted budgets that increase the SBC allocation by an average of 1 percent annually. That trend will hopefully continue until parity with SBC is reached. All ABSC entities/ministries have sacrificed to make that record possible.

SBOM staff has decreased in size from 121 to the current 73 full-time employees — ap-

proximately 42 percent. By July 1, 2016, it is anticipated that the number will be 67 or a decrease of 45.5 percent.

SBOM staff has been granted two 2 percent salary increases since 2010 while the SBC percentage has increased each year. No salary increase is anticipated for 2016.

Trustees of SBOM unanimously voted Aug. 14 to recommend a 2016 CP budget of \$40 million with 53 percent funding state convention ministries and 47 percent going to SBC ministries.

The 2016 budget recommendation — which also was unanimously affirmed by SBOM's executive committee and budget advisory subcommittee — includes:

53 percent — \$21,208,238 for state convention ministries: SBOM ministries (\$11,172,660) and Alabama entity ministries (\$10,035,578).

47 percent — \$18,791,762, for SBC ministries: SBC Executive Committee (\$17,992,424), SBC GuideStone (\$749,338) and SBC CP Advance (\$50,000).

The proposed budget will be voted on by state convention messengers at the ABSC annual meeting in November. (SBOM, TAB)

Alabama has been, and remains, a pacesetter among state conventions in dollars given through the Cooperative Program.

FBC Athens hosts Men's Night Out event



Photo courtesy of Limestone Baptist Association

FBC Athens hosts Men's Night Out with Brodie Croyle and Tommy Bowden on Aug. 15. Approximately 700 men and high school students attended the tailgate dinner and conference. Limestone Baptist Association, the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and several other churches contributed to the event. Joel Carwile is pastor of First, Athens.

Baptist NEWS BRIEFS

COMPILED FROM WIRE SERVICES

SBC Parliamentarian McCarty now a Baptist

ATLANTA — Barry McCarty, chief parliamentarian for 29 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meetings, decided Aug. 16 to become a Southern Baptist. He also is joining the faculty of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, as a professor of preaching and rhetoric.

McCarty has logged some 540 hours on the platform at SBC annual sessions and has served under 16 SBC presidents, beginning in 1986 with Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta.

McCarty also is a preacher, teacher, pastor and educator. He holds a Ph.D. in rhetoric and argumentation from the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania has served as president of Cincinnati Christian University in Ohio and until recently was pastor of Peachtree Christian Church, Atlanta.

McCarty cited three primary reasons for his decision to become a Southern Baptist. "First, while Southern Baptists are not a creedal people, they are a confessional people," he noted. "And at this point in history the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 is the best statement of faith I know of. Second, right now no one is speaking to our culture on the great moral issues with as much clarity or biblical integrity as Southern Baptists. Third, at this point in history no one is doing more to penetrate lostness around the world than Southern Baptists."

IMB missionary, mom killed in car wreck

CARTERSVILLE, Georgia — On the evening before she and her family had planned to return overseas, Kyra Lynn Karr, a Southern Baptist missionary to Italy, was killed in a traffic accident Aug. 13.

News reports indicate a tractor-trailer driver exited his vehicle to conduct a safety inspection but the safety brake was not engaged and the truck began to roll.

The vehicle hit the pickup in which Karr was traveling, crushing it against the highway guardrail on U.S. 41 in Bartow County, Georgia. Karr, 30, died at the scene. Her husband, Reid, and their two youngest children were transported to nearby hospitals where they were treated and released. Their oldest child was not with them at the time.

The tractor-trailer driver, Ivan Delgado, 52, of Rome, New York, was arrested and charged with DUI, police said.

The Karrs had been in the U.S. since mid-June and were returning home after a family outing to prepare to fly back to Italy the next day to begin their third term of service.

They were appointed as International Mission Board missionaries in 2009 and have been serving in Rome.

CP giving 1.40 percent ahead of year-to-date projection

NASHVILLE — Year-to-date contributions to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) national and international missions and ministries received by the SBC Executive Committee (EC) have exceeded \$158 million, according to a news release from EC President Frank S. Page.

July's Cooperative Program (CP) allocation receipts for SBC work totaled \$15,808,270.90, bringing the total to \$158,859,518.38 received through 10 months of the fiscal year (Oct. 1 through July 31). The year-to-date total for distribution through the CP Allocation Budget is \$2,192,851.71, or 1.40 percent, above the \$156,666,666.67 year-to-date CP projection for support of Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. (BP)



GRACE & healing

Route 1520 offers support, recovery to those struggling with sexual addiction



123rf.com

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Those in recovery for pornography and sex addiction come from all socioeconomic, racial and religious backgrounds. The one thing most have in common? Their exposure to pornography begins at a young age, often as young as 9 or 10 years old.

What some might see as a rite of passage from youth into adulthood can have disastrous consequences. The addiction results in cycles of sin that destroy families and separate addicts from the love and grace of God, said Traylor Lovvorn, founder of Route 1520, a ministry that provides counseling, group therapy support and resources for men and women who are affected by sex addiction and sexual sin.

Lovvorn may seem like an unlikely leader for an organization that deals with such a messy issue. The former pastor and church planter was called to the ministry in high school, graduated from Samford University in Birmingham and married his college sweetheart, Melody, in 1992.

But Lovvorn was hiding a very big secret during those years — an addiction to pornography and sex that led to the couple's divorce after 11 years of marriage.

Authentic grace

Separately the Lovvorns spent six years putting the pieces of their broken lives back together and, in the process both discovered authentic grace and healing from the pain of their pasts. They reconciled and remarried in 2008.

The couple now shares their "Perfectly Imperfect" story at marriage and parenting conferences, in a weekly podcast called "Undone Redone" and through the ministry of Route 1520.

As study after study shows the prevalence of pornography in American cul-

ture, even among Christians, the church cannot stay silent, Lovvorn said.

"Clinically sex addiction is an intimacy disorder and intimacy cannot be cured in isolation. The church needs to be a safe place where believers can confess their sins and pray in order to be healed," Lovvorn said.

Healing through weakness

Healing doesn't come through willpower and effort, however, which is why Route 1520's recovery model, called Group Now, focuses heavily on creating safe communities where members can connect at weakness.

"We want people to understand that recovery is a messy process because you are dealing with issues of the heart," Lovvorn said. "We want to create a community where people can experience lasting change,

not a quick fix. God changes us in community, and we want to help the local church create a safe community around this issue."

The Route 1520 process takes time and commitment but it has proven successful in the lives of men like Charles, a member of a Birmingham-area Group Now recovery community for the past several years.

Like many of the men in his group, Charles was exposed to pornography at a young age. In his case it was by some boys on a camping trip during 6th grade.

"I didn't have a proper perspective on what God teaches and what the Bible says about sexuality. Those guys introduced me to a new area of sexual stimulation that led to a wrong concept of what sex is all about," Charles said. "So when stressful situations came up, the sexual stimulation was a comfort, an escape. I would get temporary release, but afterwards I felt more shame."

The cycle of shame continued until his wife finally confronted him, causing

Charles to seek help from Route 1520.

"That's where I really learned that God cared for me even though I had this sin in my life. Counseling and the small group helped me understand grace, to understand that my motivation was to please God, not just to be good. Out of that realization, I really started making some progress," Charles said.

There are many other men — and increasingly women too — walking the same path as Charles, Lovvorn said. Many don't realize the seriousness of their addiction until it threatens their marriage or their job. Often their churches have never addressed the issue, which only adds to their shame.

"We can do so much for those struggling in silence with just the language we use from the pulpit," Lovvorn said. "If we begin to say things like 'for those of you who are struggling, we've got these resources,' we can begin to plant the seed in the struggler's mind that maybe the church does understand. Maybe [they're] not the only one."

Fear is a major reason the church is reluctant to address issues of sexual integrity, he added. Many pastors and deacons also struggle, and even if they don't, some are afraid that if they open a discussion on the topic of pornography and sex addiction, their motives will be questioned. Church leaders cannot ignore the problem, however.

Gary Harvey, education pastor at Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Vestavia Hills, in Birmingham Baptist Association, said, "We knew from pastoral counseling that we had couples who were privately dealing with issues of sexual integrity, but it was out of a marriage conference that we really recognized the need for a strategy to get men on a proven path toward healing."

Shades Mountain began a Group Now community this year. About 14 men come to the group each week, and Harvey expects to see that number grow.

'Small sampling'

"We are fully aware that those who are coming are only a very small sampling of the men in our church and our community who have this struggle. They're just the ones brave enough to seek help," Harvey said.

The reality is that the issue of sexual integrity will continue to be a concern in the church, Harvey said. That's also the message of Route 1520.

Lovvorn said, "We can look at the prevalence of sex addiction as bad news, but we can also see opportunities to bring the gospel into this need. Churches don't have to figure it all out themselves. We can effectively minister to men and women caught up in this lifestyle and help restore them. It's such an opportunity for the gospel." ❧

"We can look at the prevalence of sex addiction as bad news, but we can also see opportunities to bring the gospel into this need. ... We can effectively minister to men and women caught up in this lifestyle and help restore them."

Traylor Lovvorn
founder, Route 1520

Across ALABAMA'S Associations

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

BIRMINGHAM

► **First Church, Roebuck Plaza**, recently honored **Roger Isbell** for 30 years of service as minister of music. ► **East Gardendale Church, Gardendale**, will host evangelist Junior Hill on Aug. 27, 6:30 p.m. The Rushing Spring Church choir will provide special music. The church also will have a Red Book Hymnal Singing on Aug. 30, 6 p.m. Allen Davis is pastor.

CAREY

► **First Church, Ashland**, will hold summer revival Aug. 30–Sept. 2. Evening services will be at 6:30. Sunday morning service will be at 10:30. Rusty Craig is pastor.

CHILTON

► **Concord Church, Clanton**, will hold homecoming Sept. 6, 10 a.m., to celebrate 116 years of God's blessings. Ray and Rhonda Headley will sing and former interim pastor Robert Sandifer will preach. A covered dish lunch will follow. There will be no afternoon or evening services. For more information call Pastor Randal Mims at 334-341-0190.

COLBERT-LAUDERDALE

► **Mountain Springs Church, Tuscumbia**, will celebrate its 100th anniversary Sept. 6, 10:30 a.m. Lunch, a balloon launch and games will follow the morning service. Chris Ozment is pastor.

ETOWAH

► **First Church, Gadsden**, celebrated its 160th anniversary Aug. 23. Former pastor Harrell Cushing spoke during the special morning service, which was followed by dinner on the grounds. Mat Alexander is pastor.

GENEVA

► **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will host the nondenominational 39ers C.L.U.B. (Christians Living Under the Blood!) luncheon Sept. 8, 11 a.m. Virginia Collins will share about her missions trips to Ethiopia. For more information call 334-684-9617. Mike Shirah is pastor.

HALE

► **Dale Foster** is the new minister of music and youth for **Greensboro Church**. Foster previously served at First Church, Childersburg. He and his wife,

Julie, have two children. Dee McGuire III is pastor.

MARSHALL

► **Sardis Church, Boaz**, is now registering children for Upward basketball and cheerleading. Early registration lasts through Sept. 7. The deadline to register is Sept. 19. Visit registration.upward.org/UPW58905 to register. Michael Goforth is pastor.

ST. CLAIR

► **Brian Turnbull** is the new minister of music and education for **Mount Pisgah Church, Cropwell**. Prior to Mount Pisgah, he served in Meridian, Mississippi, as well as Calvary Church, Scottsboro, and First Church, DeArmanville. He and his wife, Leigh, have three children. Chris Aldridge is pastor. ► **McEntyre Church, Ashville**, will hold a singing Aug. 30, 2 p.m. with Alliance Quartet as special guests. Everyone is welcome. Bobby Joe Winingham is pastor. ☪

Billy Graham's son-in-law dies at 78

Danny Lotz, the husband of Bible teacher Anne Graham Lotz, died Aug. 19 in a Raleigh, North Carolina, hospital after he was found unconscious in a swimming pool outside his home Aug. 17.

Danny Lotz, 78, was the son-in-law of Billy Graham as well as a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill basketball star and a dentist.

A lifelong athletic supporter, Danny Lotz helped start the first chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) in North Carolina. He served on FCA's national board of directors for 40 years and was named to its Hall of Champions in 2002.

He also helped plant two churches in Raleigh, North Carolina, and was awarded The Order of the Long Leaf Pine on Jan. 28. (TAB, RNS)



LOTZ

Someone You Should Know

By Leigh Pritchett, Correspondent, *The Alabama Baptist*

Emmett P. Roper



ROPER

Reaves; one grandson

First Baptist Church, Jacksonville Calhoun Baptist Association

FAVORITE VERSE: Philippians 4:13

FAVORITE HYMN: "Amazing Grace"

HOBBIES: Operating HAM radio

FAMILY STATUS: Husband of nine years to wife, Lela; became widower in 2004 after 52 years of marriage to wife, Bobbie; daughter, Brenda

Emmett Roper, of Webster's Chapel, has been in ministry 62 years. He was a bivocational pastor in Jacksonville, Webster's Chapel and Pine Level; a full-time pastor in Columbia, Gadsden and Dothan; has published three books; and has taught classes on how to evangelize. Called to preach at 16, he had a radio show at 17 with another preacher. He has preached in a variety of places and spoke at a prayer breakfast for the Alabama Legislature. Roper also was moderator of Columbia Baptist Association, vice president of the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference and evangelism chairman for Etowah Baptist Association. The 78 year old, who deems himself "a country preacher," is a graduate of what is now Baptist College of Florida in Graceville.

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

A: The first person that witnessed to me was my grandmother who lived in our home. And Leon King, a committed Baptist deacon at Mount Gilead Baptist in Webster's Chapel who was in the insurance business, invited us and picked up my sister and me to take us to church. At age 11, in 1948 at Mount Gilead on a Tuesday night in August, I went forward in a revival meeting with bare feet and asked Jesus to come into my heart.

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

A: I was 16 years old. At

about 15 and a half, I rededicated my life to the Lord. I had to go to church to see my girlfriend (Bobbie, who became his wife). A series of impressions came to my mind and stayed on it constantly. I just felt in my mind that is what the Lord wanted me to do. He called me to be a preacher.

Q: What does your ministry demand?

A: It demands a daily walk with God, prayer, preparation and study — a daily devotional life, really. It's a 24/7 walk.

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

A: I do pulpit supply and teaching, one-on-one witnessing. I think my ministry today is encouraging young preachers and helping wherever I can. I want to continue to do this as long as God gives me a mind. I think you can serve God if you're bedridden. I don't intend to quit.

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

A: It'll let me go out of this life into heaven feeling like I contributed something good for the cause of Christ, for His kingdom.

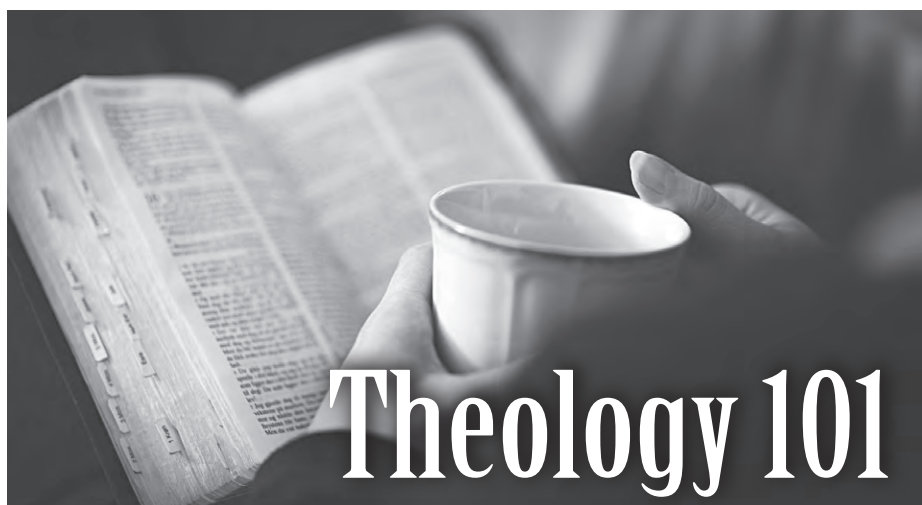
Q: What difference has Jesus Christ made in your life?

A: He's given me peace instead of fear. He's given me a purpose in life and that purpose was to serve Him as preacher, teacher, soul-winner. He's given me power (Phil. 4:13) not within myself but through Him. ☪

REFLECTIONS

"AND DEAR LORD, PLEASE HIDE THE PASTOR BEHIND THE PULPIT — ER, THE CROSS!"





Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Such a Great Salvation

Eternal Life

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

After many weeks, we come to the end of our theme about God's great salvation with a look at a common expression usually associated with discussions or sermons about salvation, namely eternal life.

Churchgoers hear these two words practically every time they attend a worship service. If we have ever memorized a Bible verse, we have probably memorized John 3:16, which ends with "shall not perish but have eternal life." Many of us likely share the same earthly understanding of eternal life as life that lasts forever. While this is a valid and true understanding, it is not the total meaning of eternal life. So we end this series with a fresh look at what the Bible wants us to understand about eternal life.

The core of salvation

Eternal, of course, does speak of something or someone that never ends. The word describes God, whom the Bible says is "the eternal God" who is our refuge and whose everlasting arms are underneath us (Deut. 33:27).

Psalms 90:1-2 puts God's eternal nature like this, "Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." Just as God is eternal, so is the life that He offers through the gospel. Salvation has eternal life at its core.

Eternal life, of course, is so much more than the mere extension of earthly life for all eternity. The challenges and problems of our earthly days are so significant that the extension of this life forever would not seem like a very gracious gift. Rather eternal life speaks not only of the duration of life but also of the kind of life. Eternal life has both quantity (endlessness) and quality (fullness). Eternal life is God's kind of life in that it is full and abundant, meaningful and fulfilling, inclusive

and outgoing, fruitful and purposeful.

Eternal life also is life in the present time for believers. In a very real and biblical sense, the onset of eternal life is not immediately following physical death. It begins at the moment of Christian conversion.

Full life in Christ

With due stress on the present tense of the verb "has," 1 John 5:11 declares, "This is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life, whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."

What begins at the time of personal faith in Christ continues beyond earthly life into eternity. In eternity this life takes on added fullness through inexpressible and unimaginable expansion. Rather than indwelling bodies of clay, the life that is eternal inhabits and finds expression in and through resurrection bodies. For Christians, death loses the sense of being an ending and takes on the sense of a doorway that opens to a life of unlimited enjoyment.

Jesus spoke of eternal life when talking with His Heavenly Father in prayer: "This is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

The possession of eternal life is inseparably connected with possessing Jesus as one's Lord and Savior. Jesus embodied the life of eternity when He came in His incarnation. He brings that same life to us when He comes into our hearts. ☩

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.



Former Birmingham minister Shahan enters 'not guilty' plea; trial scheduled for April 2016

By Neisha Roberts
The Alabama Baptist

It will be April 2016 before the trial for former Birmingham minister Richard Shahan gets underway, but a pretrial hearing was held Aug. 19. Shahan is accused of killing his wife, Karen Louise Shahan, in their home in Homewood in July 2013.

During the pretrial hearing Judge Laura Petro ruled on several motions that were filed Aug. 17 by Shahan's attorneys. The motions requested information on the potential jurors' criminal history, access to the crime scene, a list of State experts that may be called by the

prosecution during the trial and access to any PowerPoint or similar visual presentation "to determine ... if any unfairly prejudicial, inflammatory and/or otherwise inadmissible evidence or argument ... would infringe on the defendant's constitutional rights."

Petro granted the motion on the visual presentations and set Nov. 6 as a deadline for the prosecution to provide a list of experts they plan to call at trial. She also

approved the use of a jury questionnaire.

The defense is arguing that Shahan did not kill his wife but that someone broke into their home and killed her. Shahan was supposedly out of town visiting family in Tennessee at the time of his wife's murder. Her body, stabbed multiple times with an unknown object, was found at 11:15 a.m. on July 23, 2013.

Shahan was arrested Jan. 1, 2014, in the Nashville airport as he was trying to board a plane for Germany for a reported three-year missions trip. The prosecution has obtained more than 3,000 emails from Shahan's computer

indicating he was planning to flee the country and start a new life with another man in Europe. He was carrying \$27,000 in various currencies at the time of his arrest.

Plea entered

He has pleaded not guilty and has been under house arrest at his mother's home in Homewood since January 2014 after his release on a \$100,000 bond. ☩

For more background information on this case, visit www.thealabamabaptist.org and search "Richard Shahan."

FBC Fairview honors VBS director



Photo courtesy of East Cullman Baptist Association

First Baptist Church, Fairview, honors Jayne Cobb (right) for serving approximately 28 years as Vacation Bible School (VBS) director. She also served for several years at her former church. First, Fairview, presented her with a commemorative T-shirt quilt of past VBS themes Aug. 2. Cobb is pictured with her husband and faithful assistant, Bill.

Offering hope & help

Samford's Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence expands its programs, gets new name

By Michael J. Brooks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Samford University's Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence (RCPE), founded in 2003, plans to unveil a new name and an expanded mission in September. RCPE will become the Center for Congregational Resources (CCR), according to Director Michael Wilson.

"We will continue the several programs we've done from the beginning, but we're excited about some new projects too," Wilson said.

RCPE from its inception has offered Sabbath Leave grants to pastors and other staff for continuing education, physical fitness training, rest, spiritual renewal or any combination of the above.

One bivocational minister from rural Alabama was given a month in Birmingham and worked on all of the components.

"I took a course at Beeson Divinity School and met with a personal trainer at Samford," he said. "The grant paid for my tuition,

meals and lodging as well as for the supply preachers back home at my church. It was a wonderful time of renewal for me."

According to Wilson, RCPE also now offers shorter study leaves of about two weeks. Aimed at ministers who don't have time for a longer Sabbath leave, the in-house program on

the Samford campus offers focused time for study or research.

Additionally RCPE supports the Pastoral Enrichment Network, which gathers bivocational ministers from around the state for fellowship, encouragement and training.

"Generally these groups meet monthly and study a topic together," Wilson said. "We've part-

nered with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and the office of LeaderCare and church administration for this program."

RCPE also reaches across denominational lines in ways such as facilitating the interdenominational Alabama Wellness Retreat of the Ministering to Ministers Foundation (MTM).

"MTM brings together ministers in crisis, including those who've gone through involuntary termination, for a week of therapy, instruction and healing," Wilson said. "This event helps broken ministers find renewed resources to continue in ministry or in a different kind of ministry."

CCR, as RCPE will become in

September, will continue these programs but add a new component: coming alongside small-to-medium-sized membership churches to encourage them.

"I call this our Barnabas mission," Wilson said. "With declining denominational funding, many of the smaller-membership churches don't have the resources they need for

various tasks. We hope to offer them a hand."

As an example of the work he will be involved in this fall, Wilson said he got a call from a small church recently that was having difficulty securing a pastor.

"The church is five years old, and they've been without a pastor for two years," he said. "I met with them and discussed how we'd come alongside to help. I plan to invest time with them and function like a coach. We also plan a congregational event to listen to the concerns of the members and to help them find the way forward."

Team of strategists

Wilson, a Samford alum, served as an education director and associate pastor in churches in Alabama and Louisiana before becoming RCPE director in 2006.

He explained that he's in the process of bringing together a team of six to eight "strategists" who will assist him in offering coaching to the churches. The center will serve as a clearing-house to assist churches and

ministers with finding proven resources to help with the challenges and opportunities they identify.

Lilly Endowment

RCPE and the organization it will become, CCR, are part of Samford's Division of University Advancement.

Samford provides the administration costs, according to Wilson.

The organization received a grant from the Lilly Endowment of about \$800,000 to do its work

over a five-year period. The hope is that after five years the organization will be established and self-supporting.

"We have a small endowment presently, but it's not large enough to do what we need," Wilson said. "We will encourage churches and individuals to grow our endowment so that we can be a helper for the churches who contact us."

The goal, he said, is "to offer hope and help to congregations who are short of both and thus advance the work of Christ." ■

For more information, visit www.samford.edu/congregational-resources or contact Michael Wilson at 205-726-4064 or resource@samford.edu.

"We will encourage churches and individuals to grow our endowment so that we can be a helper for the churches who contact us."

**Michael Wilson
director, Samford University's
soon-to-be Center for
Congregational Resources**



LEEDS STAINED GLASS, INC.
SINCE 1995

Toll-free: 888.699.9679
AL local: 205.699.9679
Call for **FREE** on-site consultation
Ask for Terry Barnes, Owner

information@LeedsStainedGlass.com
Visit www.LeedsStainedGlass.com
for online gallery!



SAVE THE DATE

CLEAR the STAGE

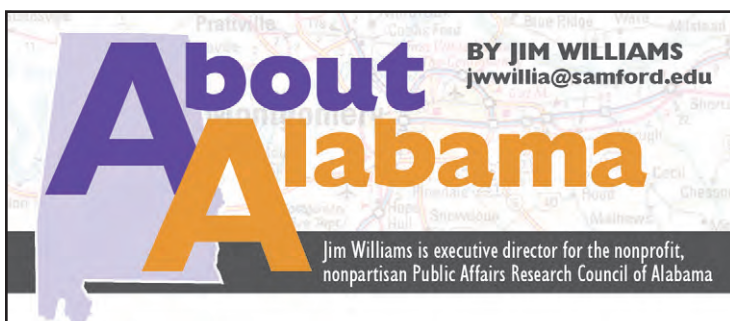
Making Room for What Matters

2015 ALABAMA BAPTIST PASTORS CONFERENCE

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2015

**Eastern Shore Baptist Church
6847 Park Drive • Daphne, AL 36526**

alpastorsconference.com



Teacher Quality Matters

The State of Alabama has an ambitious plan to improve its public schools. Its success is important to every Alabamian because the economic future of our state hangs in the balance. Alabama will not prosper in the future unless we are able to produce more high school graduates who are college and career ready. We simply won't have a workforce with the skills that will be demanded tomorrow.

This was brought home recently when the head of one of our highly successful auto manufacturers questioned the state's ability to provide the workforce that would be needed to expand in Alabama. The obvious lesson: the jobs won't come unless we have the workforce to fill them.

Workforce shortfall

Recently an official workforce analysis predicted a shortfall of almost 200,000 workers for positions available in Alabama by 2020.

It's not just more high school graduates that are needed, but more qualified high school graduates. About 65 percent of the jobs available in 2020 are expected to require some kind of postsecondary credential, while only 55 percent of today's workforce meets this requirement.

Alabama now has honest tests that tell us where the shortcomings in our public schools are. Grades 3–8 began

in 2014 to take "Aspire" tests in reading and math.

There was good news and bad news in the results for the state's 136 school systems. In the top 10, the success rate was high — more than 60 percent on average. But in the bottom 20 systems, the success rate fell to less than 20 percent on average.

The low-scoring school systems tend to have a lot of inexperienced teachers and trouble filling vacancies, particularly in such important fields as math and science. About 8 percent of teacher vacancies in the state are filled by people who lack not only experience but also the credentials that ordinarily would be required. Yet research shows that no school-related factor is more important to improving student performance than teacher quality.

If we expect to achieve the goals of our education plan, we must make meaningful changes. There is much we can do, with modest investments, to raise professional standards, create incentives to draw more of the best and brightest into education, enrich their teaching careers and reward faculty in successful schools.

Our economic future depends on wise investments in education. And more than anything else, teacher quality matters. (To see PARCA's new report on teacher quality, go to www.parcAlabama.org.)

Michael W. Smith headlines the final night of the Greater Birmingham Festival of Hope and sings for an overflow crowd of nearly 10,000.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

'What a beautiful picture ... right before our eyes'

(continued from page 1)
denominations that make up the faith community of Birmingham, together to celebrate our oneness in Christ.

"What a beautiful picture it was to see this happen right before our eyes," McLemore said. "Another huge goal that was accomplished was to reach out to the younger generation that represents the future of our churches. In every session this generation of young people and children were present and engaged in the celebration of the gospel."

McLemore noted that the festival was the largest evangelistic event held in Birmingham since the 1972 Billy Graham Crusade at Legion Field.

"This festival proved to be a huge success for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the good of our cities and counties, for the good of the entire faith community and a real big support to the ministries of the 300-plus churches that participated."

Of the 1,000 church members and ministry leaders who volunteered to help with the event, 800 were trained as counselors.

Each night before the event began, those trained as counselors lined up and waited to be pulled together individually into a group that included men's, women's and children's counselors.

The groups would sit in differ-

ent parts of the arena and move toward the floor of the arena as people around them responded to the invitation.

Scores of others worked tirelessly behind the scenes hours before the event began and hours after it ended each night. And once the event ended 30 church groups began following up with those who made decisions.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Franklin Graham's sermon during the Greater Birmingham Festival of Hope also reaches people in 100 different countries via live streaming online.

Ministry Tips



LEAVE A LEGACY

By Pastor Jesse Reeder
Moulton Baptist Church

Many times we want to measure our effectiveness as leaders by the number of lives that have been touched by God through us. Paul challenges us to have a greater measuring standard for our ministry.

"The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

God's use of you as a leader to bless the lives of others is indeed a great blessing. The most excellent blessing comes when God uses you as a leader to build up lead-

ers who will in turn teach others. Everyone wants to feel important and needed, and leaders are no different. However, we must be careful not to allow the feeling of importance slip into convictions of being irreplaceable.

The wise Christian, like Paul, realizes that our greater responsibility is to help

raise up leaders to take our place. Leaving a legacy is investing our time and resources into helping build leaders that God will be able to use to do even greater things for His glory. Whose life are you pouring yourself into so they can continue the mission?

Historical HIGHLIGHTS

FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



50 Years Ago August 1965

Rural Minister of the Year: Five Southern Baptists were named rural minister of the year for their respective states in award ceremonies at Emory University in Atlanta. The five were among 13 rural ministers of the year representing four denominations recognized by *The Progressive Farmer* magazine and Emory University. Alabama's rural minister of the year is Laney Bain, pastor of Dry Valley Baptist Church in Talladega County.

40 Years Ago August 1975

New Superintendent: Tom Collier, superintendent of the

Decatur branch of the Alabama Baptist Children's Home Inc., has assumed the duties of general superintendent of the children's homes, with main offices in Troy, effective September 1975. Collier succeeds R. Hobson Shirey, who has retired after 20 years with the children's homes.

30 Years Ago August 1985

Return of a Native: John Mark Baggett, of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, has been named vice president for development at Judson College, according to President N.H. McCrummen. Baggett is a native of Birmingham and the son of Hudson and June Baggett.

20 Years Ago August 1995

Transition Day at South Park Baptist: South Park Baptist Church co-pastor Hugh Foster was installed as the church's first black pastor, while Jim Hendrix, pastor since 1987, was taking the position of pastor emeritus. South Park has been in transition since 1992 when the declining, all-white church in west Birmingham voted to open the church doors to everyone and become a community church. Now worship attendance averages 60-75 and the church is about 70 percent black.

10 Years Ago August 2005

Retiring IMB Missionaries

Honored: Jerry Rankin, International Mission Board (IMB) president, praised retiring missionaries for their "faithfulness in service all these years" during a special service of recognition. Alabama Baptists honored include Fred and Janice Day, Bill and Gerry Colston and Louise Donaldson. Many of the retiring missionaries plan to continue to serve. Some are returning to missions through the masters program, an IMB missionary service option for retirees, while others are already on staff at churches. ☪

Advertise in
The Alabama Baptist
Contact Bill Gilmore at
bgilmore@thealabamabaptist.org.

Student teams share gospel in 'big' way

Emily sat on the floor of Miram's home, tearing bread apart with her hands.

It's breakfast during Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month, and Emily can't help but be burdened for the hearts of her Arab friends who are fasting to gain favor with Allah and get to heaven.

"If you died right now," Emily asked, "you would go to *jannah* (heaven)?"

The women shrugged their shoulders and said they had no way to know.

It was a burden for these women that drew Emily, a student at the University of Alabama, to spend her summer in Detroit, Michigan with Project 52.

Project 52, along with Nehemiah Teams, focuses on reaching the unreached through teams of student missionaries sent out each summer. Project 52 focuses on North America while Nehemiah Teams focuses on international locations.

Opening doors

"Our primary focus was evangelism," said Chris Townson, director of Project 52. "We come alongside Baptist partners as a second set of hands to help open doors and plant churches in strategic contexts."

This summer, 153 students from more than 20 states went to 13 countries and four U.S. cities.

"When we send them out, we hope they come back changed," Townson said. "We had guys in some of the hardest places in Africa. We had others on college campuses in Asia. All had very big opportunities to share the gospel."

And Alabama Baptists played a big part, he said. More than 15 churches from four Baptist associations provided housing, transportation and meals for the eight-day training and three-day debrief, which took place in Alabama.

"We could not do what we do without the support of Alabama Baptists," Townson said.

To read more, visit nehemiahteam.blogspot.com. (TAB)

TAB* CLASSIFIEDS

For information about placing a classified ad, contact the advertising department of *The Alabama Baptist at 205-870-4720, ext. 102, or ads@thealabamabaptist.org. Copy deadline is two weeks before publication.

CHURCH POSITIONS

BIVOCATIONAL/FULL-TIME PASTOR

New Market Baptist Church, New Market, Alabama, is seeking God's will for a pastor. Please send resumés to: nmbcp15@gmail.com, or mail to: New Market Baptist Church, P.O. Box 128, New Market, AL 35761.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

County Line Baptist Church, County Line, Alabama, is looking for a bivocational pastor. We are a small church who loves the Lord and has been together since 1897. Send resumé to: 74 Smith Mill Rd., Attn: Pulpit Committee, Trafford, AL 35172.

SONG LEADER

East Huntsville Baptist Church is looking to hire an energetic song leader. Leading us in a blend of traditional and contemporary music. Send resumé to: East Huntsville Baptist Church, ATTN: Personnel Committee, 808 Maysville Rd, Huntsville, AL 35801.

MINISTER OF MUSIC

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

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Rangeline Baptist Church of Demopolis, Alabama, is seeking

a part-time minister of music. We enjoy a blended mix of worship music. Mail resumé to: Rangeline Baptist Church, ATTN: Music Committee, 5805 County Rd. 19, Linden, AL 36748.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC

First Baptist Church of Chalkville is accepting resumés for part-time minister of music. Send resumé to: FBC of Chalkville, 2100 Old Springville Rd., Birmingham, AL 35215-4031, or email to: fbchalkville@att.net.

BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER (WORSHIP LEADER)

Bynum Baptist Church is seeking God's person who loves the Lord, who will lead others to worship Him and is gifted in music. Send resumé to: Bynum Baptist Church, P.O. Box 326, Bynum, AL 36253, or 141 Victory Dr., Eastaboga, AL 36260, or email: BynumBaptistChurch326@gmail.com.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC

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

YOUTH PASTOR

Church seeking a called bivocational youth pastor. Send resumé to: Calvary Baptist, 7570 15th Street Rd., Concord, AL 35023,

ATTN: Roger or boazroger@gmail.com.

FULL-TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTER

North Shelby Baptist Church is seeking a children's minister. Exciting opportunity for growth in a fast-growing suburb of Birmingham. Previous children's ministry experience and seminary training preferred. For full job description, visit www.northshelbybaptist.org/employment. Send resumés to: jon@northshelbybaptist.org.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

The Walker Baptist Association of Jasper, Alabama, is seeking a director of missions. Qualified candidates must be a committed Southern Baptist Christian who demonstrates a sense of call to mission service and evangelism. Candidate must understand Southern Baptist denominational issues and have the ability to work with diverse congregations. Resumés will be accepted until Sept. 10. Please send resumé by email to: westsidebc@charter.net, or mail to: DOM Search Committee, c/o Scott Argent, 1116 22nd St. W., Jasper, AL 35501.

BUSINESS

GREAT PRICES

Stair-lifts, walk-in tubs, lift-chairs and lightweight take-apart scooters. We service Alabama. 1-800-682-0658.

TIME TO REPLACE THAT OLD CHURCH SIGN?

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

TRAVEL/VACATION

AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE CONDOS

Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Alabama. Rent direct, Christian family owners. Lowest prices on the beach. Call 205-752-1231, 205-556-0368, 251-752-2366 or visit www.gulfshorescondos.com.

LOG CABIN

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

FOR SALE

BUS

1991 Prevost 47-passenger bus. Detroit diesel engine 8V-92. Automatic Allison 750 transmission. Restroom, window shades, large underneath luggage bins, excellent condition. Contact First Baptist Church of Springville at 205-467-7979.



Rashional thoughts

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Executive editor • jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

Would it make a difference if we all chipped in?

It is always someone else's fault, or so they say. And every year they collectively seem OK with patching things enough to survive for now and leaving the true crisis for someone else. At least it appears that way from the outside.

I have no doubt there are purists among our elected officials — the ones who truly want to make a difference, who want to build a brighter future.

But what happens once they get together and start hammering out the details of a policy or plan? Is it really as difficult as they make it seem to find a fair, honest and logical solution to the problems we face?

Take Alabama's state General Fund budget for instance. Are we seriously OK with how our elected officials have managed the funds for our state for longer than I've been alive? Are we really going to sit by and do nothing about it?

I confess I often feel as though I can check my "get involved" box by writing this column and then put the pressure on you to do the rest. I too need to do more.

Doing more

But I believe doing more isn't about all of us gathering in our circles of likeminded thinkers, standing on our soapboxes and complaining to each other. It has to be more than that.

It has to be productive, educational, helpful and kind. It can't contain one-sided, mean-spirited vocal lobs at the officials elected by us to manage our state government and, by default, numerous services we need in the state. It has to model the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

One thing is for certain — we will not all agree on how to manage the various parts and pieces nor will we agree on

how to spend the money.

But do we have to demonize each other in the process?

We have the power to change the person in any office each time an election is held for that office. We should use that power more often but we also should help the ones who are trying to lead with integrity do just that. Can you imagine trying to please all the people in your household, much less a legislative district?

At the same time, is it too Pollyanna to hope for a group of elected officials who might actually all come to the table understanding the situation at hand, their constituents' concerns and the need to be careful in their dealings? Is it too much to hope for a group of officials who are all working out of a spirit of honesty, fairness and true concern for all, not merely their own aspirations?

Granted a situation where every elected official is working for the good of the whole instead of the good of the one is probably too far beyond realistic.

But what about the ones who are? Are we doing everything in our power to keep them in office and protect them from the temptations that most certainly dangle before them daily?

Are we praying for them, encouraging them and staying informed on their decisions so we can serve as an accountability partner for them? Are we educating ourselves on the issues and being fair with our requests?

What if all of us did just one of these things? Would it make a difference?

Are we willing to fight for our no-compromise issues while being flexible on other issues to help find common ground? Or are we all sitting with arms crossed refusing to give an inch on even the lower priority issues, especially if it means working together?

And what about the two major political parties?

Have we lost so much soul among the top tiers of the parties — as well as the factions within

each party — that the obsessive need for control, funding and seat counts justifies all the means, no matter what they are?

I fear it is in those moments — when calm, researched and fair conversations are tossed aside for political ramblings — that frustrations escalate and poor decisions like legalizing and/or expanding gambling are made.

Strong enough?

Think about it, if you are tasked with solving a problem and everywhere you look people are yelling at you to side with them — some pressuring to the point of pain — you can't win. You are about to make everyone mad, so why not take the money and run? Why worry about everyone else's future, right?

I really hope this scenario doesn't play out and that we really do have a strong enough force of representatives and senators to fight the temptation to grab the façade being dangled in their faces.

Bob Terry said in his editorial on page 2 that he believes our state legislators have the potential to step up and be the heroes of this upcoming special session.

I agree because there really are true leaders among them. There are men and women with strong convictions and family values still willing to lead appropriately for the greater good no matter the consequences — even if it means they lose their seat of power because of the backlash.

After all, don't we all have to deal with decisions like that from time to time, where we are faced with sacrificing something we don't want to give up in order to do the right thing or help the greater good? Wouldn't it be easier to make those steps together rather than alone? 🙏

Rashional Extras...

4 ways to beat decision fatigue

By Michael Hyatt
Your Virtual Mentor

Excerpt taken from one of Michael Hyatt's blog posts at www.michaelhyatt.com.

Decision fatigue is what happens when we're too drained to do our best thinking and make the best calls.

Think about the consequences of our decisions, and it's clear this is something we can't afford to miss. Thankfully there are ways we can beat it before it beats us.

1. Don't think. It's not the kind of decisions that drain us. It's the number, whether it's a decision about what to eat, where to go, when to leave, how to get there and so on. Any decisions we can routinize, automate or turn into habits can help us conserve energy and stay sharp.

2. Get rest. It's crucial to get the sleep we need each night and even helpful to nap during the work day. It's also helpful to look at how we structure our days and weeks. When we get bogged down with tiny tasks early in the day, our productivity suffers. I try to lump what busy

work I can't eliminate or delegate into a couple of days each week so I can use the remainder for rest and focusing on big projects.

3. Hit pause. Powering through the weariness is sometimes necessary, but do you really want to make calls that will affect your month or year when you're depleted?

4. Eat well and exercise. Our time may be fixed but our energy is not. Since decision fatigue is just another form of fatigue, we also can combat it by healthy eating and working out. Exercise used to be the last thing I thought about. Now it's one of the first. Not only does it recharge my body, it also allows my mind to shift out of decider mode. It frees me up to randomly sort out ideas, imagine and dream.

As high-achievers we're prone to cram our schedules with a number of decisions guaranteed to wear us out. Add to that our tendency to think we're responsible for making every decision and pretty soon we're played out and don't even realize it.

Christianity is not a list of rules and regulations. It is the key to a lifestyle centered on a relationship with the God of the universe. When one comes to Christ, he/she does not come to Christ clean but comes to be cleansed. It is the power of Christ that is the saving factor. He is the One who does the cleansing. We bring our tired, pitiful lives to Him and He gives us life eternal and abundant. We undeservingly get to experience the life we were created for in the first place.

When we come to Christ, He does not tell us what to do or how to live. He empowers us to live the life we were designed to live. God empowers us to be. He does not limit us. He gives us power. Are you walking in the power of the Holy Spirit and being the person God has empowered you to be?

John Herring

Executive pastor, NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville
Managing partner, Life Bible Study and Iron Stream Media

Individuals on your team should have a common response to the questions below. If they don't, your vision needs clarity.

- ▶ What are we doing?
- ▶ Why are we doing it?
- ▶ When are we successful?
- ▶ Where is God taking us?

Will Mancini (Auxano.com, VisionRoom.com)
published in Facts & Trends Summer 2014 edition
factsandtrends.net





ALABAMA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES & FAMILY MINISTRIES SERVED 4,325 children and families last year, **LARGELY BECAUSE OF CHURCH SUPPORT AROUND ALABAMA.**

Without church partnerships, we would not be able to accomplish our vision of providing hope and wholeness for children and families in the name of Christ.

This year, our annual offering goal is \$2.8 million. Currently we've reached 49% of our goal!

\$2.8 million



\$1,382,126
(49%)



Here are a few ways you can rally your church to help us reach this goal:

SPECIAL OFFERING | Set aside time on a Sunday gathering for a special Children's Homes offering. Our church promotional materials offer a great platform for you to share with your congregation about our ministry and the impact of their support. By request, bulletin inserts are available to you at no charge. We've also created two new videos, perfect for sharing with your church.

CHURCH BUDGET | Consider adding ABCH in your church missions budget. By being able to count on set annual or monthly gifts, we can even more consistently provide for the spiritual, emotional, and physical care our children and families need.




ORPHAN SUNDAY | On November 8, Christians around the world will seek to raise awareness for children in need through Orphan Sunday. Inviting an ABCH representative to speak at your church or sharing one of our videos is a great way to get involved!

#GIVINGTUESDAY | What Black Friday is to retailers, #GivingTuesday is to non-profits. On Tuesday, December 1, people from around the world will come together for one common purpose: to celebrate generosity and to give to causes they believe in. This year our giving goal is to reach \$24,000 in 24 hours! Please mark this date on your calendar, and help us reach this goal!

Visit alabamachild.org/churchgiving for more details, and start rallying your church around reaching more children and families across Alabama!



Alabama Baptist
CHILDREN'S HOMES
& Family Ministries

(888) 720-8805 // alabamachild.org //   

CAMPUS

News



SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

► **Samford University Gets \$1 Million to Train Veterans as Nurses:** Samford University's Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing in Birmingham will launch a program designed specifically to meet the needs of veterans seeking a bachelor of science degree in nursing (B.S.N.). The program will offer a curricular pathway tailored to each veteran.

After development and review of a portfolio, students may opt to complete a traditional or accelerated B.S.N. track.

Veterans with prior health experience/training may receive credit for some courses and will have the opportunity to take refresher/remediation courses as needed.

School of nursing faculty will receive special preparation in order to equip them to teach veterans more effectively.

► **First Dean of School of Health Professions Named:** Alan P. Jung has been named the

first dean of Samford University's School of Health Professions effective Sept. 1. The school was established in 2013 as part of Samford's College of Health Sciences.

Jung is currently associate professor and chair of Samford's Department of Kinesiology, a position he has held for the past eight years.

He is a Fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine and the recipient of numerous teaching awards, including Samford's John H. Buchanan Award for Excellence in Classroom Teaching.

► **Samford University Conference Will Explore Church's Response to Transhumanism:** Samford University's Center for Science and Religion in Birmingham will host a conference on



JUNG

"Transhumanism and the Church: Theological Reflections on Technology and Human Enhancement" on Sept. 24–26.

The conference will consider the ways the Church might respond to technologies that could revolutionize our understanding of human nature. For more information, contact jareeves@samford.edu.

► **Samford University Holds Science Academy for Minority Youth:** Samford University's Howard College of Arts and Sciences in Birmingham hosted 24 high school students for its 2015 Minority Youth Science Academy (MYSA) on June 28–July 1.

The residential summer program, launched in 2014, helps prepare outstanding minority high school students who aspire to careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

MYSA participants networked with peers, met potential mentors, took field trips, learned about the college application process and explored many aspects of STEM education and careers.

The gallery is located in the Ben May Building on the university campus. Gallery hours are Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Sims is a member and former president of "artspace," one of the longest running nonprofit art galleries in Richmond, Virginia.

► **University of Mobile Performing Arts Series Announces 2015–2016 Season:** The University of Mobile (UMobile) Center for Performing Arts announces its 2015–2016 Performing Arts Series, which includes a variety of musical events from Big Band to a George and Ira Gershwin comedy. The season also includes the popular annual Christmas Spectacular.

To order season tickets, call the UMobile Center for Performing Arts at 251-442-2383 or email box office director Shadov Valentin at svalentin@umobile.edu.

► **RamCorps to Perform on Duck Commander Cruise:** When the Duck Commander Cruise sets sail this fall from Miami, the University of Mobile's (UMobile) RamCorps will share the stage with some familiar celebrities — the Robertson Family from the reality TV show "Duck Dynasty" and popular entertainers Ricky Skaggs and Lee Greenwood.

RamCorps is a Christ-centered 30-member high-impact visual brass and percussion ensemble from UMobile. They will perform on the Carnival cruise ship "Victory" and at two Ports of Call — Nassau and Freeport, both in

the Bahamas — during the Oct. 22–26 cruise.

► **'Black Hawk Down' Hero Guest Speaker at First Chapel:** Jeff Struecker, a "Black Hawk Down" hero, told University of Mobile students how God taught him faith from the front lines in fear-soaked times during the first chapel of fall semester Aug. 19.

Struecker is an author, pastor and former U.S. Army Ranger who was involved in the Battle of Mogadishu in 1993. He has co-authored five published books, including "The Road to Unafraid: How the Army's Top Ranger Faced Fear and Found Courage through Black Hawk Down and Beyond."

JUDSON COLLEGE

► **Judson College Nursing Students Pass National Licensure Exam:** The Judson College Department of Nursing in Marion announced that 100 percent of nursing students from this year's graduating cohort to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses have passed on their first attempt.

Students who passed the exam are Daphne Abrams and Maricela Ellis, of Demopolis; Emily Hand and Rae Lynn Liveoak, of Jemison; Victoria Langford and Tammy Goodson, of Marion; Tiffany Parker and Tryna Jarrell, of Greensboro; Alicia Steinlage, of Hueytown; Katelyn Dickinson, of Lynn; Tabitha Averette, of Helena; Ashley Guerrero, of Church Point, Louisiana; and Jane Bell, of Birmingham.

► **History Student Completes Summer Internship at Mount Vernon:** Marianna Nichols, a junior at Judson College in Marion, recently completed an internship at George Washington's estate in Mount Vernon, Virginia. She spent the months of June and July as a historic interpreter on Pioneer Farm.

Nichols and the six other historic trades interns in the George Washington Entrepreneur Internship program dressed in period clothing and performed demonstrations at each of the farm's sites, pausing to speak with visitors about the farm's history and present operation.

Nichols also volunteered with Mount Vernon's Archaeology Department on a project at a slave cemetery dig site. ☞



DIGITAL SIGNS



"Our church decided to purchase a sign from Reliable Signs, and we have been very pleased. They were very patient and not pushy at all. They actually did all they could to get us every rebate and discount possible. The sign is a major tool for us in our community and I tell people all the time 'it's a staff member who never stops spreading the Gospel for our Lord.'"

— Bro. Justin Salter
Smithville Baptist Church



www.reliablesigns.com
1.800.729.6844 • 205.664.0955

UNIVERSITY OF MOBILE

► **Abstract Artist on Exhibit at University of Mobile Art Gallery:** The University of Mobile's (UMobile) Marilyn Foley Art Gallery is featuring an exhibit by abstract artist Jessica L. Sims titled "A Chesterfeld Landscape" through Sept. 27.



A Contemporary Classical Vocal Group

FREE CONCERT

Whitesburg Baptist Church
Sunday, August 30 at 6:15 pm

WHITESBURGBAPTIST.ORG

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 30

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

THE FINAL ACT Revelation 21:1-7

God's New Provision (1-2)

The Bible begins with the words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and earth" (Gen. 1:1). This was God's pristine, untarnished creation. Here is where He placed Adam and Eve. They were to enjoy and have dominion over the world. Yet Adam and Eve fell short of this expectation. As a result of their sin God cursed them — He said they would die — and He cursed the earth (Gen. 3).

But this will all change one day. John has a vision of "a new heaven and a new earth, for the first earth had passed away" (Rev. 21:1). So the old, cursed world — where we presently live — will vanish. And a new creation will take its place. This is what God promises in Isaiah 65:17: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind." In the new creation believers will not even remember the sorrows of the old creation.

This is all made possible through Jesus Christ. The crushing blow that Jesus dealt to Satan on the cross reverses the effects of sin and death over mankind. Believers in Jesus will be raised to dwell on a new heaven and earth. This is the future that awaits those who put their faith in Jesus. There could not be a better ending.

God's Presence Celebrated (3-4)

God will dwell with His people in the new heavens and new earth (v. 3) as when Adam and Eve dwelled with God in the garden. It will be, if you will, life in a new Eden. Here God "will wipe every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away," fulfilling Isaiah's expectation of a new creation with no

trace of sin (Isa. 25:8, 35:10, 65:19).

By this point in the story, death has been cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). So there is no way it will spoil God's new creation. Sin will never again rear its ugly head to separate God and man. From this point on God will dwell with His people permanently.

The Promise Fulfilled (5-7)

The story that began in Genesis is now coming to an end. The old has passed and all things are being made new (v. 5).

Those who persevere in their faith in Christ "will receive an inheritance" (v. 7). What is the inheritance? It is the new heavens and earth. It is the same expectation that Paul has in Romans 4:13 in saying that Abraham and his offspring "are the heirs of the world." Everything promised in the future world belongs to God's children. In his commentary on Revelation, Jim Hamilton makes an important connection to what Paul says to the Corinthians: "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future — all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:21-23). We now see that the story ends well for Christians. It will end exactly as God intended it. We will go from old creation to new creation, curse to redemption, sorrow to joy and separation from God to eternal union with Him.

And as the story comes to an end it makes me think that fairytales are true. They are true in the sense that they look forward to a better place and a better time, a place with no sorrow or grief, a place where love really does win. They all, in their own way, look forward to a new heaven and new earth. Here the Lord and His bride, like Cinderella and her prince, will dwell forever in perfect harmony. You can almost hear the words "and they lived happily ever after." ❧

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

HOSPITALITY Luke 14:12-24

A friend of mine has been quietly ministering to a man with Asperger's Syndrome for the past several years. He frequents her workplace, always alone. He comes and sits there because his house is empty and watching people mill about helps him feel less alone. Many good, undoubtedly kind Christian people see this man every day yet my friend is the only person who has reached out to this man. She has helped him organize his house. She walks with him so he can get exercise. And every Thanksgiving for the past several years he comes to her house. I once told her that it takes a special kind of person to show that kind of love. Her response was humble: "Any kindness I have shown him is from God. And I honestly believe that I am called to help this man."

Invite others to your feasts. (12-14)

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus told a parable about a great feast and as is typical of Luke's Gospel the emphasis is on the poor, the downcast, those nobody seems to care about. Luke's is an ethic of hospitality and Jesus tells stories centered on wealth and poverty in the book (e.g. Luke 16:19-31). Even in Luke's version of the Beatitudes he amends Matthew's statements, "blessed are the poor in spirit" and "blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matt. 5:3, 6), to "blessed are the poor" (Luke 6:20-21) and "blessed are you who are hungry now." Luke's concern seems to be that the kingdom of heaven should be not only ethereal but rather something that transforms social situations now, "on earth as it is in heaven." When Jesus tells the parable about a great feast, He does so within the context not only of the coming

kingdom of heaven and those who will turn away but also within the everyday here-and-now realities of individuals who are in need. The social and theological ethic of Jesus is both eschatological — looking to the end — and also enmeshed in the physical, earthly "stuff" of the here and now. Those individuals who are poor and downcast are to be included, invited in, now.

Invite others to the King's feast. (15-24)

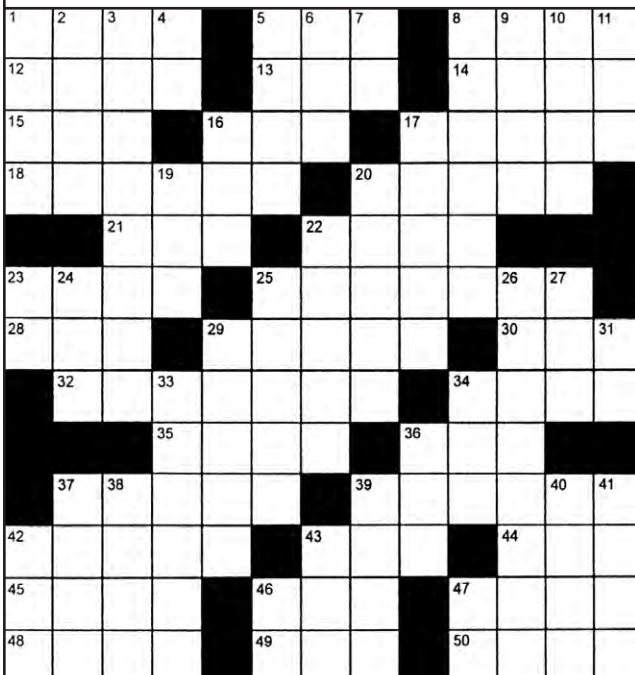
When reading the parable of the great feast in Luke, I can't help but ponder the social and religious ethic found in the epistle of James: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (James 1:27). For James, religion is not abstract. A person's religion, faith or relationship with God is expressed in the concrete realities of life here on earth. James goes on to admonish his readers not to show partiality between rich and poor, the socially connected or the down-on-their-luck (James 2:1-9).

Sometimes by inviting others into our homes and our lives, we invite them to God's feast. Loving God and loving neighbor, after all, are virtually interchangeable. When we show grace to others in the name of God we are demonstrating our love for God.

Jesus' parable also is a warning to those of us who are already invited to the feast not to forgo the invitation. Like the Church at Laodicea we cannot think we are already too rich. We must open the door to Jesus knocking or calling us to the feast in order for Him to come and eat with us (Rev. 3:17-22). We are called like my friend to invite others to join but we also are called to accept our invitation in humility and gratitude. ❧

Christian Crossword

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

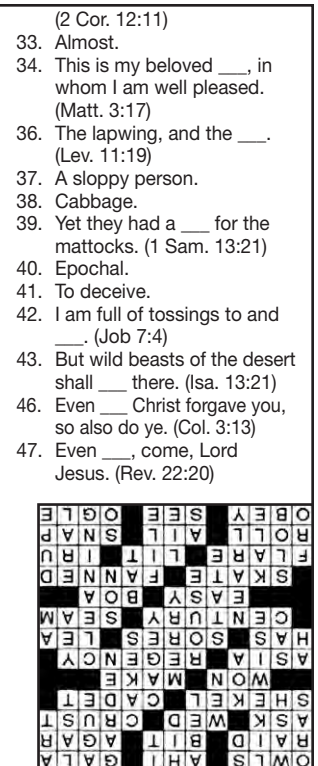


Across

- I am the brother to dragons, and a companion to _____. (Job 30:29)
- _____ the son of Abdiel. (1 Chron. 5:15)
- Festive.
- An invasion.
- Leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent _____ him. (Amos 5:19)
- For this _____ is Mount Sinai in Arabia. (Gal. 4:25)
- But let him _____ in faith. (James 1:6)
- To marry.
- Outer layer.
- The man took a golden earring of half a _____ weight. (Gen. 24:22)
- Trainee.
- A brother offended is harder to be _____ than a strong city. (Prov. 18:19)
- In that day when I _____ up my jewels. (Mal. 3:17)
- The churches of _____ salute you. (1 Cor. 16:19)
- Governing board.
- Possesses.
- The dogs came and licked his _____. (Luke 16:21)
- Meadow.

Down

- Era.
- Now the coat was without _____. (John 19:23)
- For my yoke is _____. (Matt. 11:30)
- A scarf.
- Roller or ice.
- Cooled.
- Blaze.
- Illuminated.
- _____, Elah and Naam. (1 Chron. 4:15)
- Who shall _____ us away the stone? (Mark 16:3)
- What _____ thee, Hagar? (Gen. 21:17)
- To break suddenly.
- Children, _____ your parents in the Lord. (Eph. 6:1)
- Thou shalt _____ thy children's children. (Ps. 128:6)
- To leer.
- treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Col 2:3)
- _____ is finished. (John 19:30)
- God sent him forth from the _____ of Eden. (Gen. 3:23)
- Terror, consumption, and the burning _____. (Lev. 26:16)
- And it shall come to pass in the _____ days. (Isa. 2:2)
- Rabbi, thou _____ the Son of God. (John 1:49)
- Blind, or broken, or maimed, of having a _____. (Lev. 22:22)
- And they baked unleavened _____ of the dough. (Ex. 12:39)
- All the Chaldeans, Pekod, and Shoa and _____. (Ezek. 23:23)
- Tricky.
- A _____ heart doeth good like a medicine. (Prov. 17:22)
- _____ sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity. (Isa. 1:4)
- A pouch.
- Who shall _____ him up. (Gen. 49:9)
- Washing.
- For all the promises of God in him are _____. (2 Cor. 1:20)
- The last _____ of that man is worse. (Matt. 12:45)
- I _____ become a fool



Scott MacIntyre



Photo courtesy of JAD Media Management

“I can attest that the joy of the Lord does not depend on our circumstances.”

Scott MacIntyre
singer/songwriter

Walking by faith

American Idol finalist MacIntyre waits for God’s plan to unfold amid hard times

By Leann Callaway
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

After capturing the attention and admiration of millions of viewers in 2009 as the first blind contestant on “American Idol,” Scott MacIntyre has inspired people around the world to persevere through hardships and obstacles while trusting God to light the way.

“Being on American Idol changed everything for me,” MacIntyre said. “When I was a little kid, I imagined myself performing music for people. I didn’t know if it would be in my backyard or on a stage, but this show definitely allowed that dream to become a reality.”

“My time on the show opened so many doors and created so many opportunities to perform with various musicians and tour all over the world. I’m so grateful for the experiences and the platform [it] provided to not only perform music but also to share about my faith in Christ.”

Reflecting Christ

Each week while appearing on the show, MacIntyre’s talent and positive attitude took the judges and fellow contestants by surprise.

“My prayer is always that people would see Christ in my personality and in my life, and I feel that was captured by the experiences that were shown on ‘American Idol,’” he said. “It encourages me to hear that my music reaches people at a deep level and they can see Christ in me.”

Following his eighth place finish, MacIntyre continued to encourage people to do great things for God’s glory with the release of his autobiographical book, “By Faith, Not by Sight.”

“During my travels I’ve met so many people who have shared that they don’t feel special, valued or like they are making a difference,” he said. “It’s so sad that people

are believing these lies because God’s Word very clearly states that each one of us is unique, valued and loved.

“I want to help people realize that they are beautiful and have significant worth to God because they are His creation and made in His image. Through my music and testimony, I want to help lead people to a deep relationship with Christ who will be their constant source of comfort and strength.”

Born with a rare eye disease, MacIntyre began playing the piano by ear at 3 years old. During his teenage years, he taught himself how to play other musical instruments including the guitar, bass, drums and organ.

He graduated from college with a degree in piano performance while being ranked by *USA Today* as one of the top 20 undergraduate seniors in the nation.

After being diagnosed with kidney disease and undergoing 10 months of dialysis, MacIntyre received his first kidney transplant in 2007 — only one year before he auditioned for “American Idol.”

A few years later, he once again began showing signs of kidney failure and was placed on the waiting list for a deceased donor kidney in September 2014 — just three days before his album, “Lighthouse,” was scheduled to release.

A time of spiritual growth

Although MacIntyre was uncertain how his own story would play out, he continued to walk by faith. The songs on this album were designed to reinforce the powerful message that trusting God in the midst of difficult circumstances is like shining a light into the darkness.

“The past few years have been an incredible time of spiritual growth,” MacIntyre noted. “My wife, Christina, and I have been learning to trust God each day — sometimes just focusing on one moment at a time when we

have received difficult news. We have lived in times of uncertainty, but we have also lived each day to the fullest by trusting God, walking by faith and waiting for His plan to unfold.”

God’s sovereign hand

One day as MacIntyre shared his story during a radio interview, one particular listener was tremendously impacted and took action by contacting Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville to find out about compatibility testing.

Once it was confirmed this candidate was a perfect match, he realized how God’s sovereign hand was guiding and directing his journey.

Typically the wait time for a deceased donor kidney is three to five years, and doctors expected that MacIntyre’s kidneys would fail within six months.

This unexpected gift from a living donor gave him a renewed sense of purpose for his platform.

“Someone freely gave without ever having met or talked personally with me,” he explained.

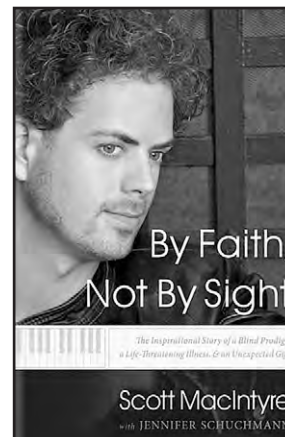
“They just wanted to meet a need. It really helps me understand the greater and more profound gift of God’s grace when we don’t deserve it.”

Since undergoing a successful kidney transplant this summer and a six-week

recovery period, MacIntyre is now eager to resume his concert schedule and share about God’s divine power, protection and provision.

“I can attest that the joy of the Lord does not depend on our circumstances,” he said. “Even in the midst of all these uncertainties, my wife and I believe that these have been the best years of our lives.

“That peace, assurance and joy can only come from a relationship with Jesus.” ❧



'Stay strong'

'Jesus means everything to me,' Chicago Bulls player says

By Bill Sorrell
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Tony Snell got an assignment during his rookie season in the NBA that was pretty embarrassing. A small forward and shooting guard with the Chicago Bulls, Snell had to sing "Happy Birthday" to teammates when their day arrived.

"I am not good at singing at all and I had to sing it loud," Snell said.

Even if he missed a few notes in the song, Snell has struck the right chords on the court. He has contributed to two straight playoff seasons with accurate shooting percentages. During the 2014-15 season, he hit 86 of 174 two-point baskets (.494), 73 of 197 three-pointers (.371) and 44 of 55 free throws (.800). He averaged six points per game in 19.6 minutes.

"My strength is I can shoot the ball really well. I can dribble really well, rebound and I am more of an unselfish person," said Snell, who was drafted in the first round of the 2013 NBA Draft and 20th overall. "I like to get my team involved but at the same time I have to get myself involved."

During the 2014 NBA Summer League, he was named first team and averaged 20 points, four rebounds and 2.8 assists.

During his rookie season in 2013-14, he averaged 4.5 points per game.

While playing three seasons at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, he led the Lobos to national rankings, to shares of two Mountain West Conference (MWC) regular season titles and to two NCAA tournament appearances. He averaged 17.7 points during the MWC tournament his junior season in 2012-13.

Growing up tough

Snell grew up tough in rough neighborhoods in Los Angeles, and he "didn't grow up as a rich kid," he said. "I kept praying that God will protect me and my family. We were just trying to get through the struggles."

When he was 5 or 6 years old, his mother, Sherika Brown, took him to church.

"I fell in love with God," Snell said. "I kept it go-

ing. As I kept growing up, I kept going to church."

He attended City of Refuge church in Gardena, California. A spiritual role model was Pastor Noel Jones. "He definitely helped me out, my mom and my whole family," Snell said. "Going to his church has been amazing."

Staying strong spiritually is vital, he said.

"There were some health issues in my family but I keep praying that God will give us strength to overcome whatever we are going through and just have faith. You have to stay strong at all times as far as being a Christian. I've learned that through believing I can overcome anything. I keep believing in God and know that He always has your back whatever you are going through."

As Snell grows in his faith, it has come to mean "everything to him," he said. "If you have faith, you believe in something and you keep believing it will happen."

Reading his Bible has helped him stay positive and helps him witness to his teammates through prayer. They see him praying before games and before meals.

"I pray every day when I wake up and before I go to sleep," he said.

Teammates also have provided motivation for Snell, who is 6 feet 7 inches tall and weighs 200 pounds.

While Michael Jordan was once a role model for Snell, he now looks up to the current Bulls.

"Seeing my teammates work hard makes me work hard because they are doing everything they can and they expect the same from me," he said.

Bulls power forward/center Paul Gasol said that Snell, 23, is an athletic player with a "lot of upsides. He has got a lot to learn still but he has got a lot of potential to become a really good player."

Snell is not accustomed to people recognizing him or knowing his name.

"I am a shy guy," he said. "(So) that is definitely new to me. I've got to keep being around my teammates and open up more."

Involved in community service projects, Snell talks to kids "to try to motivate them."

And there's a reason why.

"Jesus means everything to me," he said. "He is the one who brought me here. He is the one who gave me the gift to be where I am today." ❧

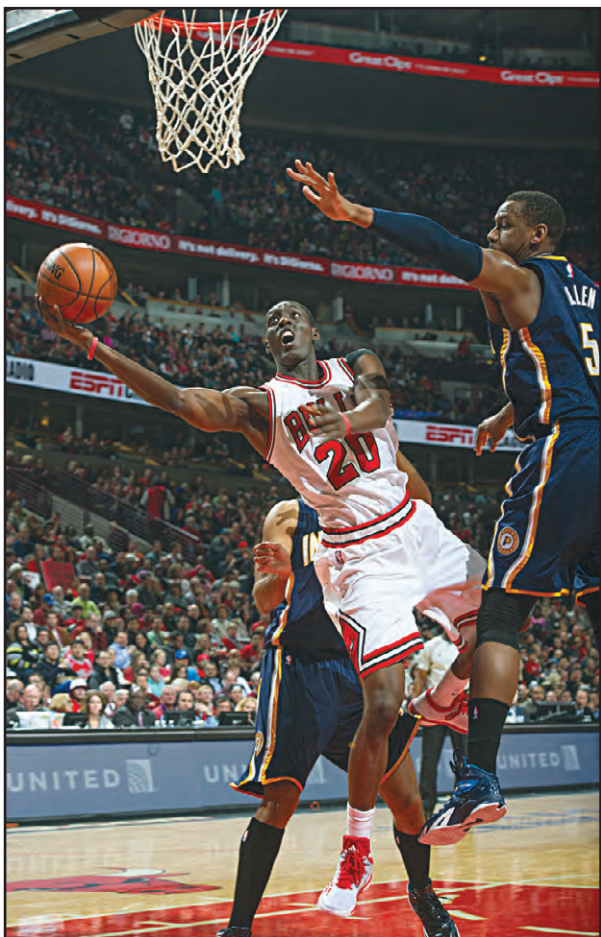


Photo by Bill Smith/Chicago Bulls

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



South Sudan releases 2 pastors from prison

JUBA, South Sudan — Two South Sudanese pastors on trial for crimes calling for the death penalty were convicted on lesser counts Aug. 5 and released on time served, sources said.

Yat Michael, 49, was convicted of "inciting hatred," according to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), for delivering a message of encouragement to a North Khartoum church in December 2014 in the face of a government-aided takeover of the congregation's property.

Peter Yein Reith, 36, was convicted of "breaching public peace," CSW reported, following his Jan. 11 arrest for submitting a letter from leaders of their denomination, the South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church, inquiring about the whereabouts of Michael.

Michael had been arrested following his homily Dec. 14. An international outcry erupted over their weeks-long incarceration without charges after the news broke Dec. 28, 2014, of Michael's arrest.

The wives of the pastors expressed their happiness.

"They have been just released after the court found them innocent of the more serious charges against them," one of the wives said. "Tell the whole church that God has heard your prayers and the pastors are now free. They have been released." (MS)

Kazakh officials raid children's summer camp

ALMATY, Kazakhstan — Some 20 police officers, prosecutor's office officials and education department officials raided a church-run children's summer camp near Kazakhstan's commercial capital, Almaty, on July 30.

Officials frightened the children and "behaved like they were detaining some criminals," said Pastor Sergei Li of Kapshagai Baptist Church.

Questioning went on from morning until late in the evening. Lieutenant Colonel Bayken Shalkarov, deputy head of Kapshagai Police, defended the raid saying, "The church taught children religion in violation of the law."

He said police are preparing administrative prosecutions but refused to say for what "offense." Asem Suttibayeva of Kapshagai Education Department said law-enforcement agencies required young specialists of the department to participate in the raid.

When an Almaty TV channel and its subsidiary Almaty News was asked why they attacked the Baptist church in news broadcasts, deputy chief editor Tatyana Lisitskaya responded, "The authorities gave us the materials for broadcast." (F18)

Uzbekistan heavily fines Presbyterian pastor

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan — Pastor Sergei Rychagov of Grace Presbyterian Church, Tashkent, was heavily fined for violating the Religion Law, missionary activity, "illegal" religious teaching and violating the procedure for holding religious meetings.

However, Rychagov learned of the fine only in June, Protestants said.

Police bullied five teenagers from a local orphanage who had been attending the church into writing statements against him, they added.

The officer who brought the case insisted that Rychagov had violated the law, while the judge who fined him refused to explain why he had done so.

In Urgench, Anti-Terrorism Police accused a local Baptist of "teaching religion illegally." Police have already seized religious literature and the man's car. (F18)



Find us on
Facebook

The Alabama Baptist
newspaper.